

Challenging the Documentary Hypothesis

Today I just discovered two books, coincidentally both released around the same time with the same title, called "*Who **really** wrote the Bible?*" which is a twist on the title of the book "*Who wrote the Bible?*"

" written by Richard Elliot Friedman, in which Friedman summarizes and expounds his views in favor of the Documentary Hypothesis. The former two books seek to challenge the Documentary Hypothesis and its assumptions. I was actually reading parts of Friedman's book yesterday for several hours at Barnes & Noble, particularly to read what his view is on what is commonly referred to as the Priestly document. In searching online for more information about that topic it was then that I ran into these two "Who really wrote the Bible?" books on Amazon.

The first book "[Who really wrote the Bible?](#)" is written by Eyal Rav-Noy and Gil Weinreich, and I found that there is also a great website that is the companion to this book which also has excerpts from the book here: [http://www.whoreally](http://www.whoreallywrotethebible.com/)

[ywrotethebible.com/](http://www.whoreallywrotethebible.com/)

. You can read about the authors themselves on

[their page here](#)

. What is funny is that the authors of both books discovered each other on Amazon, read each others' books, and left comments/reviews.

The author of the 'other' book [commented](#) on Rav-Noy and Weinreich's book saying, "*This book simply and entertainingly exposes the sloppy thinking and circular reasoning behind the Hypothesis. The authors also reveal connections between several passages within the Pentateuch that I had not seen before and explain the nuances of some Hebrew words in a way that only those who speak the language can.*"

The second "[Who really wrote the Bible?](#)" book was written by Clayton Howard Ford and apparently is the only one of the two that directly aims to refute Friedman's book in particular. Rav-Noy and Weinreich's book tackles the Documentary Hypothesis more broadly according to the comments and summary. In the comments under Eyal Rav-Noy's review of Ford's book

[Rav-Noy elaborates](#)

on the differences between their two books:

"The basic difference between my book and Ford's book is that Mr. Ford deals at length with debunking Friedman's book "Who Really Wrote the Bible." He does a perfect and entertaining job. He also takes much time in answering various questions Bible Critics have been asking for some time. My book deals less with Friedman and deals more with Biblical Criticism in general.

Part I explains why this subject is important and why it is completely baseless. Part II deals with various scholarly mistakes the Bible critics have made. Part III spends much time organizing the Bible, showing that there must have been one mind and a single author behind it all. "

I am planning on and am looking forward to reading both of their books to learn about their contributions to defending the unified authorship of the Pentateuch, among other things. When first reading the opening chapters of Friedman's book about a year ago I immediately became sceptical of his assumptions and speculations on "who did what, at what time, for such & such reasons", weaving an impossibly elaborate and far-fetched scheme of competing priests with differing traditions and ideologies who pitted their texts against one another. And I also of course reject such a view in light of the fact that I accept the divine inspiration of the Bible, which consequently would mean that the entirety of the text has coherency of purpose - although expressed through many stylistically varied ways (as are the four Gospels in the New Testament). As an aside, Ben Witherington has an excellent book called "[The Living Word of God](#)" which considers the inspiration of the Bible in the context of an oral Jewish/Hebraic culture if you want to explore that more.

Getting back to the topic though: Friedman's book presents a very convenient, self-constructed "imaginative" narrative to supplement and attempt to justify the DH which he constructed for his own purposes.

I look forward in particular to reading Ford's critiques of Friedman's book and also what sounds like investigations of the original Hebrew text in Rav-Noy and Weinreich's book. I just wanted to blog my thoughts while they are still fresh after having just discovered these two books. In the mean time, for the rest of you, please consider visiting Rav-Noy and Weinreich's website where you can learn a lot more about their book if you are interested. Maybe even buy one or both of the books too, as I definitely will.

*Additional online reading material that challenges the Documentary Hypothesis: [The Documentary Hypothesis](#)
by Duane Garrett*