

**How the Canon of the Old Testament Books Joshua
through to Second Kings Took place under the
Guidance of the “Spirit of Christ”.**

By Rev. Andrew R. Hardy

Training and Academic Coordinator for International Christian Youth Works

[www.icy.org.uk]

[ar.hardy@ntlworld.com]

Copy Right Andrew and Jennifer Hardy 2008

Introduction

In this paper I will be discussing the much debated and controversial field of literary criticism of some of the books of the Old Testament, and how some of the empirical observations of conservative evangelical literary and historical critics can help us to understand the way the Holy Spirit worked in the formation of the Old Testament Canon.

The books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings will be the focus of this paper. As a convinced, evangelical charismatic scholar myself, I have found this field of study very rewarding, and indeed faith enhancing as I have walked the path of dedicated understanding of God and his word to us. I am a convinced Christian, and I consider the books, letters, gospels and genres in Scripture to be real historical documents which communicate the words of God clearly to us as we reflect on them today.

The method of this study will be to consider the books under discussion generally as consideration is given to their historical and literary developments. They will be run through the three classical critical tools; of Source Criticism [Quelle], Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism. For those who do not understand these approaches here is a brief description of each:

1. Source Criticism – in this approach consideration is given to the integrity of the sources behind the documents we presently possess. The key question is to ask: “What sources did the author of the book concerned use to form his document?”
2. Form Criticism – looks to reconstruct the original Sitz im Leben [life situation] which gave rise to the way the story lines of a book was written. The central concept in this approach is

to discover the historical context which gave rise to the way the story was fashioned. Mostly each pericope [cut out or section] of various passages in the book give clues to why the author recorded the events to be found there under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. Redaction Criticism – focuses on the author as the creative mind behind the arrangement of the book and the sources found in it as he was guided by the Spirit. The quest is to find why the Holy Spirit working through that redactor chose to arrange the pericope sections in the way he did? What does this tell us about the intentions of the author and the meaning of the literature to be found there?

These approaches help us to reconstruct the way the Holy Spirit, who inspired holy men of old to give the message of God, in the way we now possess it in our bibles. Peter has this to say:

“The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and enquired about this salvation. They inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.” [1 Peter 1:10 – 12 RSV]

It is evident from this short quotation that the Apostle Peter has the following to say about the process of the formation of the Old Testament canon:

1. It was the “Spirit of Christ” who guided through “revelation” the truth that he would one day come as Saviour, and that he would suffer.
2. That the prophets and writers of the Old Testament Scriptures were guided by Christ in the process of the ongoing revelation about the future work of Christ.

3. That, even, heavenly angels do not have the sort of insight which was given to these writers or to the apostles of Christ.
4. That these writers were recording the future work of Christ for the benefit of all Christians post the Christ event.
5. That Revelation is progressive, and that the writers of the Old Testament had to enquire what they were being given to record meant. In other words they were writing with a limited appreciation of the full significance of their words, and that their words would become fully understood only once the Christ event had taken place in his earthly ministry and sufferings.

One of the key objectives of this paper is to demonstrate the progressive nature of the revelation given to us who now can look back on the Christ event, and the Old Testament Scriptures, to see how the Holy Spirit worked with prophets, and holy men, in the development of the canon of the Scriptures under present consideration.

First Things First – The Sources that were used to Construct Joshua through to 2 Kings

For ease of reference the books under consideration will be referenced as follows through the remainder of this paper:

- Joshua = JS
- Judges = JD
- Ruth = R

- 1 and 2 Samuel = S1 and S2 and when mentioned as a whole = S
- 1 and 2 Kings = K1 and K2 and when mentioned as a whole = K

So now consideration will be given to each of the books under consideration from a critical perspective looking at how the canon of JS through to K2 were brought together under the direct guidance of the “Spirit of Christ”.

An Overview of the Contribution of Literary and Historical Criticism to our understanding of how the books we now Possess came to take their Present Form

The Talmud [c. AD500] assigns the authorship of Joshua to Joshua himself. Evidence for this view is:

1. Rahab is said to be still alive at the time of the writing of the book [JS 6:25].
2. The author uses the 1st person plural pronoun “we” to indicate he included himself in the group crossing the Jordan with the start of the conquest of Canaan [JS 5:1].

Having said this JS 6:25 may refer to Rahab’s descendants as was a common practice among writers of the bible in this period, and not all Hebrew Texts of JS 5:1 use “we” but “they”. Moreover, the author of Joshua may have used “we” as in JS 5:6 to indicate solidarity with his ancestors. It seems, however, that there is little doubt that the book was written using original sources which Joshua himself wrote down, and a near contemporary compiled. However, a later hand, or hands have inserted things into the text of Joshua. There is evidence that JS through to K2 were woven together at a later date, probably 550BCE or may be 430BCE during the Babylonian captivity; in order to make sense of a continuous description of Israel’s heritage and history to maintain the national and theological identity of the Jewish people; now dispossessed of land, a king and a place of national identity. This view does not militate against the sources for Joshua now in its final form coming from

the time of Joshua, and Joshua himself and near contemporaries. Neither may this conclusion be drawn for JD, R, S1, S2, K1 or K2.

JD was probably compiled in a loose format by the prophet Samuel or one of those belonging to the School of the Prophets founded by Samuel 1020BCE. R probably could have been written by some such process as well, although source critically we do not know who wrote either JD or R. S1 Certainly could have had pericope contained in it written by Samuel, but S1 and S2 were possibly written by one of the prophets who had trained under Samuel the “Seer”. Indeed we know that both the prophet Gad and the Prophet Nathan arose from this school and were writers for sources making up Chronicles. And we know that K1 and K2 were based on three sources which “D” Redactor later used to write his account of the history of Israel. These were:

1. “The book of the annals of Solomon [1 Ki. 11:41].
2. The book of the annals of the kings of Israel [Not Chronicles] [1 Ki. 14:19].
3. The book of the annals of the kings of Judah [1 Ki. 14:29].
4. Moreover, for S1 and S2 accounts of Samuel, Nathan and Gad were joined together to produce S1 and S2 [1 Chron. 29:29]; It reads:

“Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the Chronicles of Samuel the Seer, and in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the chronicles of Gad the Seer.” [RSV].

Hence source critically we can see how God made provision for the historicity of the text of S1 through to K2 by these sources.

However, a later hand who finalised the composition of S1 through to K2, in and around 550 BCE can be seen in the way that JS through to K2 are linked together by overlapping conclusions and introductions – here is what one commentator has to say:

“Jos. 1:1 matches Dt. 34:1-12, especially v. 5, where Moses is called for the first time ‘servant of the Lord’. That accolade is bestowed on Joshua, also for the first time, at the end of Joshua [24:29]. The conclusion of Joshua [24:29 – 31] is repeated as part of the introduction to Judges [2:6 – 9]. The Deuteronomist’s style is most apparent in the farewell addresses by Moses [Dt. 31], Joshua [Jos. 23], Samuel [1 Sa. 12], David [1 Ki. 2:1-4] and Solomon [1 Ki. 8:54 – 61], capped by the editorial summary of the Deuteronomist himself [2 Ki. 17].” [D.A. Carson [with other eds] “The New Bible Commentary”, 1994, IVP, UK, p. 233].

The “Deuteronomist” spoken of above is the later editor from 550BCE or May be 430BCE [Possibly Ezra the Scribe] who gave final form to JS through to K2. None of this denies that Joshua’s words and deeds are not from Joshua himself and from a near date initial editor [redactor] who put the book together loosely [c. 1390 BCE]. The so called “Deuteronomist” [D] is a later redactor who looking back on the records of God’s words and actions through Joshua, David etc, brought them into a harmony with Moses teachings and charges found in Deuteronomy. It has been recognised by Scholars that the later “D” redactor wanted to point out how the future history of Israel leading to captivity in Babylon came about because of a failure to apply and adhere closely to the commands of Moses in Deuteronomy; to fulfil a complete purging of the Canaanites, and their pagan gods, who Israel kept on falling into the worship of. So the initial near date redactors tells the facts of the story and records events and Joshua’s words, and those of Samuel, David etc, but the later “D” redactor

550 or 430 BCE, guided by the Holy Spirit, brings all of the history of JS to K2 together to demonstrate that the captivity of Israel in Babylon, and the end of the messianic kingship through men like David, until the last king of Judah [586BCE]; was due to Israel's failure to be faithful to the charges of Moses in Deuteronomy. So our "D" redactor guided by the Holy Spirit brings home the interpretation of the failure of the law through Moses, and the proto messianic kingships of the kings of Judah and Israel [David through to Jehoiachim], to give Israel rest in the land given them by God. There is a preparation for the appearance of the true deliverer predicted by prophets like Isaiah and Daniel etc. "D's" role is to solidify the way this story is told in order to prepare us for Paul's grand conclusions in the New covenant redaction, although he did not of course know Paul, but his Spirit guided redaction build on the Christology of Paul:

"Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained by angels through an intermediary. Is the law against the promises of God? Certainly not; for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." [Gal. 3:19, 21,22 RSV]

The solidification of "D" redactor draws to a conclusion salvation history in a way which the Spirit of Jesus' later leads Paul to understand to mean that the grand hopes of Moses expressed in Deuteronomy, for the law and Israel's history, under the messianic kings like David etc [foreshadowing Christ] had failed to do. The whole system of the law and the kingship of Israel could only lead to failure because Israel could not keep the Deuteronomic law by whatever means it sought to please God. Babylonian captivity is the symbol of the failure of the system and leads new covenant people of Christ to conclude:

“Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” [Gal. 3:23 – 29 RSV]

Indeed Paul argues from the beginning, when discussing Israel’s history and the failure of Israel’s history under law, and the kings, who were meant to uphold it and enforce it with prophets and priests; that law would only lead to failure and that it all really came down to faith in the promise given to Abraham - who had been justified by faith alone without law [Romans 3 and 4]. Genesis also leads us to believe that he had accepted the coming Saviour in advance when he saw him foreshadowed in God’s replacement of a sacrifice in Isaac’s stead on Mount Moriah; thus giving Abraham an understanding, that as he a loving Father at great cost would have sacrificed his son - so God the Father would do this one day through his one and only son Jesus [John the Apostle records Jesus self consciousness about this John 8:56 - 59].

The point in the New Covenant dispensation, expressed well by both Paul and Jesus in John’s gospel, is that salvation had to be seen to be only a one way deal. It would not be down to the Law of Moses and the kings of Israel; and “D” redactor emphasizes this well in his careful ordering of material in JS through to K2. But it would solely be due to being set right with God by Faith in Christ who is the only answer for Human salvation [Gal. 3:23 – 29].

This brief synopsis demonstrates the Holy Spirit's broader aim in inspiring "D" Redactor in the period of 550BCE or 430BCE to summarise Israel's continuing captivity to sin because human beings cannot be saved by the law, or kings, who they at one time had asked for to be like other nations with the hope that they might save them from their enemies as other pagan kings did [1 Samuel 8]. The work of "D" redactor concludes Israel's state of hopeless affairs ending in captivity by tracing in his highlighted structuring of the materials found in JS through to K2; with instances of Israel's repeated failure to save itself. Hence the stage is set for Jesus, and he is neatly portrayed in Daniel's vision, in Daniel chapter 7; as the Son of man coming before the Ancient of Days to receive an everlasting kingdom. Jesus categorically considered he had fulfilled the hopes of Israel and that he was the Messianic king promised through Daniel at the end of the Babylonian captivity; to save all mankind, so all may be saved from every nation as one humanity without distinction [Mark 1:14,15; Daniel 7 and 9].

"D" redactor lived near to or just after the time Daniel received his visions of the coming Saviour and Daniel is pointed by the Spirit of Christ, at work in him, to the coming universal Saviour Jesus "the way, the truth and the life" [John 14:6]. It is important to remember what we started off quoting above from 1 Peter 1:10 – 12, that the "Spirit of Christ" guided both the initial redactors of the material found in JS through to K2 to lead logically in the end to the Christ of the Spirit who appeared to save us, and will soon return to take us home with him [2 Peter 3].

So we can see a process of the three major types of literary/historical criticism here revealing some of the clues as to how the Holy Spirit verifies the truth of his word as well as its final form in a process of progressive revelation. Neither Joshua, or the initial near date redactor of his time, writing about 1390 BCE, could see the full picture, as neither could David, or Samuel or Solomon, but

“D” redactor writing in the time or just after the captivity 550BCE or 430BCE was able, with hind sight, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to draw the accounts of JS through to K2 into a harmony. This gave a Deuteronomist view of the history of Israel failing to keep the stipulations of Moses found in Deuteronomy; with the conclusion that Israel’s history had proven “D” redactor’s point that the law, and the kings, had failed to live free from sin by human efforts. In the period following “D” redactor Israel sought to codify and harmonise the canon of the Old Testament with a view to attempt to help Israel to keep the law and Deuteronomic covenant once again. They built whole sets of traditions around the law, and the Old Testament writings, hoping to make sure Israel would never fail as it predecessors had. Israel returned finally to Judah under the comprehensive Persian decree of 457BC, permitting them to completely rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem and Jerusalem’s fortifications; thus fulfilling the starting date of Daniels prophecy of the 490 years which terminated with the crucifixion of Christ and the Stoning of Stephen in 31AD and 34AD; leading to a persecution which sent Christianity into the world [Acts 7 and 8]. From then on Christ for all nations, rather than a Christ for Israel alone, [not an idea found in the OT, but an expectation of Jews in Jesus’ day] thus reaching potential fulfilment [Gal. 3:28,29].

So to summarise we have learnt that the Initial near date redactor [INDR] was inspired by the Spirit to record events, words and works in near date historical proximity to events – the later “D” redactor inspired by the Spirit wove these various documents and accounts together as our quotation from above demonstrates he did [see on page 6]. This redactor could have well been Ezra the priest and Scribe, and his work demonstrated, guided by the “Spirit of Christ” working in him, that the Deuteronomic covenant had failed – later attempts by the Jews in the time of the return under the Persians led to failure; and indeed the nation of Israel murdering the true Messiah Jesus Christ Son of God. This was in fulfilment of the predictions of the ages as the “Spirit of Christ” had pointed former prophets and holy men to look forward to his coming.

Hence in the final analysis Israel failed to learn that the “Dueteronomist” redactor was right, that man could not work out salvation by his efforts, but only ask as Abraham had, when he trusted God for guidance and protection; which was reckoned to him as righteousness [Romans 3 and 4 and Genesis 15]. They needed to fully realise when the time fully came that Grace was the only answer as it is found in Christ Jesus [Galatians 3 and 4].

How the three types of Criticism Have led us to these Conclusions

How have the three literary historical critical methods helped us to reach these conclusions? Well I must start by saying that over the years the Holy Spirit has given me revelation knowledge in the light of these tools on how he guided the formation of the canonical books of JS through to K2. I have briefly discussed my revelation with those who are interested in the clues in JS through to K2 that later hands were involved in the final forms of the books under consideration here. So back to how these tools have helped me grow in faith and understanding of how God formed the canon.

In the first place in source critical terms we have seen in brief how a later redactor wove the various accounts of JS through to K2 together [Page 6]. This was not to say that he made up the content of his material in the final form books we have in JS through to K2 himself. Rather the evidence has been given to suggest that there were in all at least 9 sources behind JS through to K2;

1. Joshua himself as he is clearly recorded as having been the derivative source of the information in JS [Jos. 3 and 4 etc].
2. The INDR for JD.

3. Records from the judges of Israel for JD and R which possibly Samuel or Gad or Nathan compiled as an INDR.
4. Samuel the Seer for S1 and for K1.
5. Nathan the prophet for S1 and S2 and for K1.
6. Gad the Seer for S1 and S2 and for K1.
7. The chronicles of the annals of Solomon.
8. The Chronicles of the annals of the kings of Israel.
9. The Chronicles of the annals of the kings of Judah

“D” redactor had all of these sources at hand to construct the final forms of JS through to K2 guide by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or the “Spirit of Christ within him”.

1. JS demonstrates that the Joshua tribes had failed to drive out all the Canaanites therefore breaking the Deuteronomic directive to do so; which sets the basis for future failure to be faithful to God and to retain the blessing of their own Promised Land and home [Jos. 24 and Deut. 7].
2. Judges demonstrates the continuous formula of;
 - A. Israel sins against God and becomes subject to Canaanites they should have dispossessed [Jd 6:1].
 - B. They repent and cry to God for deliverance [Jd. 6:7].
 - C. God gives them a judge and deliverer [Jd. 6:11 and on].

This is a continuous refrain throughout judges; Israel serve other gods of Canaanite peoples who should have been driven out but again and again things go wrong, and they are dispossessed of lands which they should have kept if they were true to the Deuteronomic covenant of Moses.

“D” Redactor makes the point from this history, and his arrangement of the material, that Israel now in captivity in Babylon, starting with the conquest and deportation of Judah [605 BCE – 586 BCE], by Nebuchadnezzar the 2nd, was another example of this repeating historical cycle in the time of judges; even before kings show up as God’s “messiah’s”.

3. S1 and S2 demonstrate how kings were set over Israel because the people of Israel to some extent rejected God as their king, and they wanted to be like other nations. Samuel the Seer’s predictions, of how kings would let them down, because of their disobedience to Yahweh, did not deter them from seeking a king. Yahweh himself allowed them to first of all anoint Saul king who was filled with the spirit of kingship by God, and then David the ideal king after God’s own heart, and Solomon, all demonstrate that they are far from ideal; although the covenant with David which established his messianic kingship, as an eternal reality, was later consummated by Jesus the Son of David [1 Sam. 8 and Mat. 21:9]. “D” redactors’ point is made that kingship was doomed to fail to enable Israel to keep faith with the Deuteronomic covenant and hence the end of kingship and the Babylonian captivity left Israel vulnerable once again to its own failings.

Indeed during the so called silent years of the inter-testamental period 4th century onwards a new concept of the coming Son of David developed with the idea that he would be the final eternal redeemer, who would rule God’s people forever, after a catastrophic end to the present world; and with the advent of a new world made by God for his people. Isaiah 20 –

24 and 60 – 66 particularly set the foundations for this as does Daniel 2, 7, and 9, and Zechariah. But these views are developed further during the 400 years of so called silence by 1 Enoch and 2 Enoch, the beliefs of the Essene Community who believed that 2 Messiah's would come etc, one a kingly and the other a priestly one who would destroy the Goi-im – the Romans, and would set up an eternal kingdom in Jerusalem. The foundations for the idea of a kingly and priestly Messiah are clearly portrayed by "D" redactor in K2 where David and Solomon act as kingly defenders of God's people against his enemies, as well as being upholders of justice and mercy, and anointed priestly kings; who served at the alter before God – particular note should be made of Solomon's priestly acts during the dedication of his temple for Yahweh [1 Ki. 6].

This dual role of the messianic prototypes found in Solomon and David are one unity in "D" redactor's view, but to the Essenes they become two separate kings, who then are both joined in a unity in Jesus; who is both pictured as kingly and priestly in his Messiah-ship – which is discussed at length by the writer to the Hebrews in our New Testaments.

Hence the form critical overview of JS to K2 demonstrate the "D" redactor's point of inspired contact within terms of the final forms of books he leaves to us in the canon of Scripture we all read today in JS through to K2. The "sitz im Leben" behind "D" redactors composition of JS through to K2 is the failure of law and monarchy to produce a faithful Israel which leads to captivity; which with the Christ event in new covenant terms leads to the theology of salvation by faith through grace; and by the free gift of the Holy Spirit who brings about true faithful followers of Christ in his saved eternal kingdom [Ephesians 2:8 – 10; Romans 7 and 8; 6:23; John 5:24 etc].

Thirdly from a Redaction critical point of view JS through to K2 are woven together as a linear historical record of the true words and deeds of God through Joshua to the last of the kings as he is covenant-ly faithful while his people are not. “D” redactor wants to make this clear to the people of the captivity period and the post captivity return under the Medo-Persians to Judah. Again and again “D” makes his point of God’s faithfulness and Israel’s faithlessness. Israel fails to keep the Deuteronomic covenant and this leads to a realistic history of Israel’s failures demonstrating why Israel went into captivity.

The “Spirit of Christ” at work in our “D” redactor leads him to compile an authoritative picture of Israel’s high points and low points. In his canonical work Israel is to look to keep covenant faithfulness to the Mosaic Deuteronomic covenant. However, they fail as the inter-testamental period indicates, and finally they murder their true King Jesus Christ.

If “D” redactor had been around at this tragic point he would have probably wept and said something to the effect:

“Haven’t you learnt from history yet? Can’t you see what you’ve done? Have all my efforts to warn you fallen on deaf ears?”

The “Spirit of Christ” inspiring our intrepid “D” redactor prepared Israel for the consummation of its hopes in Jesus Christ the true fulfilment of their hopes for salvation by grace and faith, and not human attempts to keep law. And for New Covenant Christians he forged the way ahead to have a canonical record of the true history of Israel warts and all. The prime motive behind his editorial redactions of original sources, guided by the Spirit, was to prepare Israel for the good news of Christ their Saviour.

Conclusions

1 Peter 1:10 -12 quoted in full on page 6 of this paper has set the paradigm thesis on which this paper on Js through to K2 has been based. "D" redactor's role has been set in the context of his integrity and reliability to at least 9 different discernable sources he utilised thus confirming the accuracy of the original historical sources in this writer's view.

The form critical and redaction critical approaches to literature have demonstrated how the Holy Spirit inspired both the INDR compilers of sources into an insightful digest of a linear narrative progression of the history of Israel's failure to save itself, but God's faithfulness to point them forward to the coming Messiah; and the means by faith through the Mosaic Covenant, to keep on remembering the means of salvation through Jesus Christ our Substitution-ary sacrifice - for our sins outlined in prophetic foreshadowing in the Mosaic covenant.

In an age which doubts everything and which comes up with excuses not to believe, even as in many instances the use of the aforementioned critical tools have been utilised to do, seen through the right set of lenses, it can be demonstrated that "D" redactor was a man led by the "Spirit of Christ at work in him".

Selective Bibliography

Bruce F. F., "The Books and the Parchments", Pickering and Inglis, UK, 1984.

Carson D. A. [and other Eds], "New Bible Commentary", IVP, UK, 1994.

Fee Gordon, D, and Stuart Douglas, "How to Read the Bible for all its Worth", Scripture Union, UK, 1998.

Harrison R.K., "Introduction to the Old Testament", IVP, USA, 1983.

Lawrence Richard [Trans], "The Book of Enoch the Prophet", Adventures Unlimited Press, UK, 1883.

McDowell Josh., "More Evidence that demands a Verdict", Here's life Publisher's Inc., USA, 1981.

NIB, "The New Interpreter's Study Bible", Abingdon Press, USA, 2003.

Page Nick, "The Bible Book A User's Guide", Collins, UK, 2004.

Pawson David, "Unlocking the Bible Omnibus", Collins, UK, 2003.

Polano H. [Trans], "The Talmud", Frederick Warne & Co., LTD., UK, 1973.

Vermes Geza, "The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English", Penguin Books, UK, 1997.

Willmington's Harold, L., "Bible Handbook", Tyndale House Publishers, INC., USA, 1997.

Whiston William [Trans], "The Works of Josephus", Hendrickson Publishers, USA, 2004.

Yonge C. D. [Trans], "The Works of Philo", Hendrickson Publishers, USA, 2004.

De Vaux Roland, "Ancient Israel its life and Institutions", Darton Longman and Todd, UK,
1984.

NB: This is just a small selection of books which could have been added. Should you wish to
do some guided reading then contact ar.hardy@ntlworld.com.