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How Did the Old Testament Originate?

Despite our curiosity about just how we got the thirty-nine books that currently make up what we now call the Old Testament, we must admit, due to our ignorance, an inability to answer this question with any degree of finality or completeness. Neither the Bible nor a reliable tradition gives us a complete answer to this question. And almost everything said on this rather hotly debated topic needs to be carefully nuanced and subjected to any future data that we might receive.

This is not to say that there are not a lot of guesses that are available to fill the present vacuum of our knowledge. For example, a rather contrived legend from 2 Esdras 14:37-47, written about A.D. 100, had its own way of answering our question. According to this fanciful explanation, God commanded Ezra to drink a rather strong drink. And as he described it, "Thereupon my heart poured forth understanding. . . . And the Most High gave understanding to the five men [with me], and by turns they wrote what was dictated, in characters they did not know." Some forty days later, God commanded Ezra, "Make public the twenty-four [subsequently arranged into our present thirty-nine] books."

But that can hardly be correct, for it depends too strongly on the Greek concept that artistic ability is derived from a state of ecstasy. The Bible does not even hint that this might be a source of creativity, nor does it encourage a concept of revelation in which the writer was enabled to speak in ways

that he himself did not even understand at the time of his writing.

It is important to note as well that Jews contemporary with its writing never accepted the book containing this story as being equivalent to the other books they did accept as a revelation from God.

A more adequate way of describing how we got the Old Testament is to describe what little we know about the process in three rather distinct sets of evidence left in the text itself that reflect on the process. They include inspired utterances, inspired books, and collections of books.

Inspired Utterances

The Old Testament came to us over a period of a millennium—from somewhere around 1400 to 400 B.C. In fact, the writer of Hebrews (Heb 1:1) summed it up very nicely when he began his book by saying, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways." The "many times" covered the one thousand years just referred to—from the days of Moses to the time when the book of Chronicles was completed.

Nor must we miss the "many ways" that this text alludes to, for with Moses God spoke directly ("face to face" according to Num 12:6-8). To psalmists such as David, God spoke through inspired lyrics, while to others such as Israel's wise men, God spoke through their observation on creation and social behavior (see Prov 24:30-34). To the prophets, God spoke through visions, dreams and their hearing the word of God. The methods were just as varied as were the times and the writers.

But what was the first thing that God ever revealed to mortals? We cannot be certain, but it would seem that the tenfold repetition of the phrase "the generations of" (or translations to a similar effect such as "This is the account of" or "These are the histories of") in Genesis (e.g., 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:27) may lay claim to being the earliest record of source materials, which God was pleased to have his writer use as he wrote the book of Genesis. This would be a case of God guiding his writer to gather the materials together as the sources from which he then developed the history of these times that had preceded his own times by a wide margin. Therefore, as the writer was led to incorporate those parts from his sources into his inspired writings, with the parts being woven into a complete tapestry of divine revelation in that book, the resulting total composition was exactly what God had intended and wanted preserved for posterity as well as that day.

Such use of sources is no more startling to us than the similar case in the Gospel of Luke, where Luke was to make a careful investigation of all that

had been handed down from the beginning of the story in order to sort out what was accurate from what was inaccurate about the life and times of Jesus (Lk 1:1-4). Inspiration¹ in this case gave a discernment to the researcher-writer that guided the process of selection, arrangement and point of view. Moses (who I think is the most likely author of Genesis) was protected and given discernment in his task of sorting through the ten specific documents that he refers to in the book of Genesis as just mentioned. This, of course, is much different from talking about *hypothetical sources*, such as literary source criticism talks about in its well-known, but now diminishing in prestige, J, E, D and P alleged sources for the entire Pentateuch. No one has ever seen such J, E, D or P documents, or any allusions to them in any ancient literature paralleling the tenfold reference to "the accounts/generations of . . ." in Genesis. Thus, such hypothetical documents may be safely discounted in favor of real sources that are consistently referred to in the text or are identified from epigraphic materials discovered in the ancient Near East.

Another instance of inspired utterance that forms the core of the Old Testament canon is said to have come directly from the very "hand [or 'finger'] of God," the Ten Commandments. To be sure, God is Spirit (Jn 4:24), and thus technically does not have any corporeal form, to say nothing of hands. But surely the expression points in some unique way to the fact that the Decalogue came immediately from God.

As the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy explain it:

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God. (Ex 31:18)

And again:

These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me. (Deut 5:22)

There was no question on the part of Israel that these represented the very words of God to the people, for they responded: "The LORD our God

¹The claim of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit gave the writers of the Bible access to the "mind of God," not in a mechanical way, such as dictation or automatic writing, but in a holistic way. Thus, the writers assimilated all their experiences, their vocabulary and their own unique personality styles with the message God wanted to communicate through them.

has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire" (Deut 5:24).

Moses, of course, threw that first set of tablets of stone down in disgust and in deep dismay over his people having lapsed into religious prostitution around the golden calf. Moses' brother, Aaron, had set up this calf made of gold in Moses' absence of just under six weeks. To replace the shattered tablets, the Lord instructed Moses to "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke" (Ex 34:1). Once again, God was the direct author of the Ten Commandments. About this the text leaves little doubt.

To that core of the Decalogue, Moses added what is known as the Book of the Covenant (Ex 24:7). Now that the people had seen the lightning and heard the thunder on the mountain when Moses was with God, they shrank back and insisted that he be their representative through whom God would speak to them; otherwise they feared they would die (Ex 20:18-19). Thus, as the people remained at a distance, Moses once again approached the thick darkness where God was (Ex 20:21).

This time God revealed the contents of Exodus 21-23, the Book of the Covenant. This time, "Moses . . . wrote down everything the LORD had said" (Ex 24:4). Accordingly, both the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant came as divine utterances as Moses communed with God "face to face."

In a similar manner the prophets were often given divine utterances. One of the most startling cases that is an exception to the rule that God generally spoke through the Jewish prophets is the gentile prophet Balaam, son of Beor, from Upper Mesopotamia. For example, Balaam began his fourth prophecy with these words:

The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly,
the oracle of one who hears the words of God,
who has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:
I see him, but not now,
I behold him, but not near
A star will come out of Jacob;
a scepter will rise out of Israel. (Num 24:15-17)

The literal translation of Balaam's opening words is "the oracle of Balaam, son of Beor, the oracle of the man (Hebrew: *ne'um haggaber*).¹ This superscription parallels that found elsewhere: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man (Hebrew: *ne'um haggaber*)" (2 Sam 23:1); or "the sayings of Agur, son of Jakeh—an oracle. The oracle of the man (Hebrew: *ne'um haggaber*)" (Prov 30:1).² It is easy to see that no matter what the literary form of the biblical material, whether poetry, proverb or prose, the divine utterance was operative for all. Moreover, despite the fact that there was a clear confession that these who voiced or wrote the divine utterance were mere mortals ("the oracle of the man"), nevertheless, they clearly pointed to the fact that what they had seen, heard and had knowledge of was directly from the Almighty: it was "knowledge from the Most High." An audacious claim to say the least, unless, of course, it was a fair representation of the facts—which their contemporaries and their immediate descendants believed it was.

If we inquire exactly how a mere mortal could confess at one and the same time that what he had to say was both from a mortal ("the oracle of the man") and yet was nothing less than a hearing, seeing and sure knowledge of the words, visions and teaching from God himself, the last words of David will give us further insight as to how this operated. David introduced his final words in 2 Samuel 23:2-3 with this explanation: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. . . . The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me. . . ." This is very similar to the claim that the apostle Paul would make centuries later in 1 Corinthians 2:13—"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit." Notice that he does not have a mechanical view of inspiration in which he claims that the words were "dictated," or "whispered" into his brain, or put into some automatic form of writing; no, instead, Paul and David argue for a *living assimilation* of the truth of God, not at an ideational level, but with the Spirit of God *teaching* them and staying with the writers all the way up to the point of their *verbalizing* their messages. That is why many have correctly argued for *verbal, plenary inspiration*.

No less certain of the divine origin of his proverbs was King Solomon. His testimony was: "For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6). The fountain of truth was not

¹I am beholden to Bruce Waltke for bringing these references together for me in his article "How We Got the Old Testament," *Cruce* 30 (December 1994): 14.

human but divine, even while the channel and medium were undoubtedly human.

This claim rises to a crescendo in the sixteen writing prophets of the Old Testament. In excess of five thousand times they say, "Thus says the LORD." By so saying, they distinguish thoughts and words they receive from God himself from their own. For example, the prophet Nathan illustrates this distinction. The prophet gave his personal approval for David to go ahead and build a temple similar to the cedar palace he had just completed for himself in 2 Samuel 7:3. That very night, however, the Lord appeared to Nathan and nixed the whole idea, instructing him to give God's own word about such a contemplated project rather than his own opinion. Accordingly, not everything a prophet said was inspired: only when the prophet spoke as the oracle of God—and almost universally introduced that word with the introductory formula: "Thus says the LORD." At other times the prophet spoke as much "off the cuff" as any of us do on any other topic.

Often the original bases for the prophetic books were to be found in isolated oracles that were communicated to these prophets as they were lifted up above their earthly surroundings to capture a vision of the heavenly court itself. It was just such an oracle that was given by the prophet Micah of Moresheth. He warned:

Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets. (Mic 3:12)

We can gather some idea of what Micah's contemporaries and those who followed soon after his time thought of his claim to speak on behalf of God. For example, a century later a controversy broke out around the prophet Jeremiah concerning his negative prophecies about Jerusalem and the temple—so treasonous were they that many thought Jeremiah ought to die for uttering them, whether or not they were in God's name.

From the following interchange between the contesting parties, it is clear that King Hezekiah, a century earlier, had received this word as a word from God, as did the people of Micah's day, when the prophecy was originally uttered. Listen to Jeremiah 26:17-19.

Some of the elders of the land stepped forward and said to the entire assembly of people, "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, . . . 'This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets."

"Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah fear the LORD and seek his favor? And did not the LORD relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves!"

What Micah had said was received both in his own day and a century later in Jeremiah's day as being the word from God himself. Mortals may have uttered it, and the utterances may have been unpopular and damaging to national pride; nevertheless, what was spoken was received as a divine utterance even by those who disliked its content. So it was with all the prophets, just as we have argued for a lyricist like David, a composer of proverbs like Solomon, a recorder of the law like Moses, or a gentle prophet like Balaam. The word of a mortal was altogether to be distinguished from a word from God.

Inspired Books

As we have already seen in the case of Genesis, where the sources of the "accounts/generations of" were used to weld a complete book, the same can now be said to have happened with other books of the Bible.

When he finished writing it, Moses commanded the Levites to "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant. . . . There it will remain as a witness against you" (Deut 31:24-26). It was a self-contained unit, for the people were warned: "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you" (Deut 4:2). It is not clear whether this was merely the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant or the entire set of five books making up the Law of God. A good case can be made for the latter position from the way later authors refer to what was laid up before the Lord in the ark of the covenant.

However, that is precisely where some have had to pause, for there are several verses that fit what we now label as "post-Mosaic," a few verses that were *added* to the first five books after Moses' day. For example, there is the record of Moses' death in Deuteronomy 34:5-8. This record contains the particularly interesting statement that "to this day no one knows where his grave is" (v. 6), which could hardly be a prophecy, as some try to explain the description of Moses' death at this point. Again, it is doubtful that Moses wrote verses 10 and 12, "Since then, no prophet has arisen in

Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. . . . For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel."

In like manner, Deuteronomy 34:9-12, which recorded Joshua's succession to Moses, cannot likely be from the hand of Moses. This also would be an odd event for Moses to have recorded.

Similarly, Numbers 12:3—"Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Most translations put these words in parenthesis, for all instinctively recognize that these words are hardly attributable to Moses himself, given the extraordinary claims for what would then be noted as remarks of self-enhancement—hardly a demonstration of the humility that the text ascribes to this same Moses!

So what is the answer to these, and other post-Mosaic or amosaica (i.e., non-Mosaic materials)? It was Joshua who added these words to the first five books of the law under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For that is what Joshua 24:26 described him as doing: "And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God," in other words, in the Torah or Pentateuch. It would appear that Joshua was responsible for some, if not all, of the post-Mosaic under the same divine utterance as Moses, who gave the original and the greater part of the rest of the collection of the Torah.³ The fact that Moses had laid the Book of the Law before God in the tabernacle surely indicates that it had come to some form of completion in most of its

³G. C. H. Aalders, *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* (London: Tyndale Press, 1949), p. 108, opined, "With regard to these post-Mosaic and a-Mosaic some writers had recourse to the supposition that they can all be explained as editorial additions from a later hand. Theoretically this possibility cannot be denied. But the assumption assumes that a liberty was taken with the completed written text, which is objectionable, and hardly creditable. If we keep in mind how widespread was the use of cuneiform script in the ancient eastern world, and how the material of clay tablets was ill-adapted for making changes, . . . it is not easy to believe in the recasting of older documents to any large extent." W. Gunther Plant, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), p. 1580, comments, "Traditional opinions varied on the authorship of [Deuteronomy] chapter 34. According to one, the whole Torah was written by Moses, including all of the last chapter; according to another, Joshua wrote verses 5-12, while Ibn Ezra assigned all the chapter to Joshua. He advanced two reasons: the use of the third person in chapter 34 and the silence of the text on any final return of Moses from the mountain." The expression in Joshua 24:26, "the Book of the Law of God" occurs so frequently throughout the Old Testament as a reference to the Pentateuch as written by Moses that we must consider it to be the same here. In fact, the words Joshua used in Joshua 24:23 are the very words Jacob had employed in Genesis 35:2. Also see M. H. Segal, *The Pentateuch: Its Composition and Its Authorship* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1967), especially pp. 95-102.

present form. Therefore statements about its needing to be completed as late as the Babylonian exile (as some source-critical theories presume) are surely wide of the mark.

It might be that many of the books of the prophets began originally as collections of the divine sayings of the prophets. This was followed by an anthology of many of the earlier prophecies and then succeeded by a complete book. To be sure, such earlier prophets as those in the books of Samuel and Kings may instead record a long string of prophetic sources rather than one distinctive prophetic source for the whole book. One prophet may have been instructed to put the entire anthology together, such as Samuel for one or both of the books attributed to him, but we do not know who was responsible for Kings any more than we know who was responsible for Chronicles later on. In fact, the writer of Chronicles lists some seventy-five sources for his information. Thus, the way the books came into their final form is a mystery of the first order in most cases.

One hint on this process is given to us in Proverbs 25:1 where we are told "These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah." If Solomon's reign is to be dated from 971-931 B.C.,⁴ and the men of Hezekiah around 700 B.C., it is clear that a hiatus of some 250 years separates them, thereby making the book of Proverbs a compilation that extended over that number of years at the very least.

To this were added "sayings of Agur" (Prov 30:1) and the "sayings of King Lemuel" (Prov 31:1) along with the "sayings of the wise" (Prov 22:17-24:22) and another set of the "sayings of the wise" (Prov 24:23-34). Thus, the original Solomonic materials were located in Proverbs 1-24, argued Kenneth Kitchen, using comparable "instructions from Egypt, Mesopotamia and the rest of the Levant."⁵

Here is certain evidence that at least some of the books were later expanded. The book of the prophet Jeremiah exists in both a shorter and longer form. The short form is preserved in the Greek Septuagint and a Dead Sea Qumran scroll, both being about one-eighth shorter than the Hebrew "Masoretic" (preserved in the medieval Hebrew manuscripts) form of the book of Jeremiah on which the English translation of his prophecy is based.

⁴For evidence on this date, see Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), pp. 248-50, 269-83.

⁵Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: The Factual History of a Literary Form," *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977): 69-114.

This dual form of Jeremiah could possibly be explained by the fact that Jeremiah did have to compose two forms of this text due to the infamous and outrageous actions of the Judean king, who unceremoniously cut up each section of the scroll as it was originally read to him and tossed it into the fire. Thereupon, records Jeremiah 36:32, "Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoikim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them." Here is strong evidence for an expansion of the original composition of the book of Jeremiah.

It is a matter of record that the writers of Scripture themselves recognized a growing body of literature that was available to them. This "informing theology" served as the grounds or basis for the content of their own message that they were told by God to communicate to the people. Some would claim that the decision as to what books constituted an official list of those authoritative books (i.e., a canon) remained "open" until 400 B.C. or even later. However, that would be to miss the large number of "deuterographs,"⁶ that is, repetitions of earlier materials incorporated as the basis for the new injunctions. For example, one need only collect the hundreds of allusions to and citations of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 (those two chapters with their alternative prospects of blessing or cursing, depending on the nation's response to God) in the sixteen writing prophets to capture some idea of the high regard and authority that these earlier forms of divine revelation retained for later oracles of God. It is an astounding list, to say the least.

Bruce Walke has demonstrated the same high regard that later writers exhibited for what had been communicated earlier as the word of the Lord. Walke points to the sage Agur (a possible proselyte) in Proverbs 30 as one who recognizes in the Law of Moses and the hymns of David the inspired and authoritative word of God, as he evidently drew from these earlier sources. Agur introduces himself as deficient and ignorant in Proverbs 30:2-3, yet by verses 5 and 6 he comes to the conclusion that divine authority and resolution for his own perceived inadequacies are to be found in the divine revelations to David (Ps 18:30 [Hebrew v. 31]) and Moses (Deut 4:2). He complained:

I am the most ignorant of men;
I do not have a man's understanding.
I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.

So how would he ever know as he should know? He asked in verse 4 if anyone had ever gone up to heaven and had been able to come back down to earth to inform us of the truth we needed to know. Did anyone know his name, or the name of his son? If they did know either name, would they please speak up now, he urged in verse 4.

Then came the answer to his dilemma in verses 5 and 6:

Every word of God is flawless;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
Do not add to his words,
or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

Verse 5 is a quote from David's Psalm 18:30 while verse 6 is a quote from Moses' Deuteronomy 4:2. Therefore, Agur underscored the fact that already in his day these two writers and their words were received as authoritative and as divine oracles for their times.⁷

The Collection of Books

The Pentateuch. A great deal of skepticism remains around the oft repeated biblical claim that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. But by the time of Joshua, this piece of revelation must have been coming to its completion, for only Joshua is said to have added any words to this legislation (Josh 24:26).

Its status as divine and holy seems to be indicated specifically enough by God's instructions to place it in the ark of the covenant. There may be a question as to how much was completed at that time, but little more was added to it, as far as we know, beyond what Joshua added.

Deuteronomy and the Earlier Prophetic Books. The books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings have been viewed by scholars at large as having such a distinctive unity that they have been repeatedly called "the Deuteronomic history." Not only is the style, language and theology of these books similar, but the books seem also to be linked deliberately by items in the conclusion of one book that are repeated in the

⁶ A "deuterograph" refers to a text that is repeated in a later text, thus making it a "second writing" of that text. See Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

⁷ For this example, see Walke, "How We Got the Old Testament," p. 16.

introduction of the book that follows it. Thus Deuteronomy 34:5 overlaps with Joshua 1:1 and Joshua 24:29-31 becomes a part of Judges 2:6-9. Similar farewell speeches are found for Moses (Deut 34), Joshua (Josh 23), Samuel (1 Sam 12), David (1 Kings 2:1-4) and Solomon (1 Kings 8:54-61), all with a grand conclusion by the overall author of the entire collection in 2 Kings 17.

The entire collection could be viewed as a number of prophecies that found their fulfillment during the times in which this history was recorded.⁸

Prophecies. By the sixth century B.C., in the book of the prophet Daniel, there were clear references already to "the books" of the prophets (Dan 9:2).⁹ In fact, what Daniel had reference to was the prophecy of Jeremiah about Judah remaining in captivity for seventy years. Since Daniel was writing during Judah's captivity, that means he was writing scarcely more than seventy years since Jeremiah wrote his prophecy, and already regarded it as "Scriptures." Here is a strong argument for the *progressive recognition* of the Scriptures as they emerged from the hands of their writers rather than the more popular assertion that it was a church council or the like that declared what properly constituted Scripture and what did not.

The Psalter. Everyone has surely noticed that the book of Psalms is made up of five hymn books, as determined by the colophon (ending verses of the section, or tail-piece) that appears at the end of each book.

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

It is certain that some of the psalms are from the exilic and possibly even from the postexilic period, but how that affects the composition of the books remains problematical. As Psalm 72:20 notes, most of the first seventy-two psalms came from the hand of David, thus placing them around 1000 B.C. Recently Gerald Wilson has argued that Book 3 is representative of the exilic era and Books 4 and 5 come from the postexilic

period.¹⁰ While there is a good possibility that this is an accurate assessment of their dating and sequencing, the case has not been demonstrated as yet.

Nehemiah's collection. Finally, let it be noted that there is a tradition that many think is accurate regarding the fact that Nehemiah may well have housed in the temple those books that were regarded as inspired and authoritative. In 2 Maccabees 2:13, there is a reference to Nehemiah's library, "how he, founding a library, gathered together the books about the kings and prophets, and the books of David, and the letters of kings about sacred gifts."¹¹

Maccabees were not regarded by the Jewish community as inspired, but they were always treated respectfully as dependable accounts from the late second or first century B.C. of what happened during those troublesome days when the Jews fought back against their enemies.

Conclusion

The story of how the Old Testament originated is a fairly long and complicated story, but it is nonetheless fascinating and filled with more pieces of information than most would expect at first blush.

Believers have always seen a single hand and a superintending mind that guided the whole process: the hand and mind of God. This is because the writers of Scripture claimed that they were borne along by a power and ability higher than their own. But this is all too frequently dismissed simply out of hand by modern scholarship before the texts are shown to be guilty. If we are to use the American system of jurisprudence, the claims of the text must be held to be innocent until proven guilty by evidences to the contrary. Unfortunately, the reverse system seems to be in vogue in scholarship at the present moment: the text is guilty by virtue of its divine claims, miracles and talk about God. The scholar is judged, in this case, to be innocent of any false motives, but the text is impugned as full of all sorts of impossibilities due to its very nature of claiming to be from God himself. In an indictment of this so-called objectivity, the judgment of history has caught up with that bit of Enlightenment hubris and has exposed

⁸It was Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953), pp. 74-91, who demonstrated this phenomenon in 2 Samuel and the books of Kings.

⁹The classical defense of the sixth century date for Daniel, a hotly debated topic, comes from Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, 2 vols. (New York: Putnam, 1917, 1938); later reprinted in one volume (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1979).

¹⁰I thank Bruce Waltke for this reference in his "How We Got the Old Testament," p. 17. See also Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985).

¹¹Some would doubt that a testimony from 2 Maccabees should be given any credence. Others, however, would put 2 Maccabees in a separate category from 2 Esdras, which I quoted on p. 15.