

The Dark Bible

History

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The stories of the Bible evolved slowly over centuries before there were formed orthodox religions. There were many belief cults that spread stories and myths probably handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation before they were written down. Many of the stories originally came from Egyptian and Sumerian cults. Most of these cults were polytheistic in nature as practiced by the early Hebrews. Some of the oldest records of the stories of the Old Testament came from excavations in Mesopotamia where small cylinder seals depicting creation stories were found. These early artworks (dated at about 2500 B.C.E.) were the origin for the story of the Garden of Eden.

Virtually all human societies, before the advent of the northern invaders, practiced female goddess worship. It has been archaeologically confirmed that the earliest law, government, medicine, agriculture, architecture, metallurgy, wheeled vehicles, ceramics, textiles and written language were initially developed in societies that worshipped the Goddess. Later the goddesses became more war-like with the influence of the invaders who slowly replaced the goddesses with their mountain male war gods. So why doesn't the Bible mention anything about the Goddess? In fact it does, but in disguise from converting the name of the goddesses to masculine terms. Many times "Gods" in the Bible refers to goddesses; Ashtoreth, or Asherah, named of masculine gender, for example, actually refers to Astarte-- the Great Goddess. The Old Testament doesn't even have a word for "Goddess." The goddesses are sometimes referred to as Elohim (masculine plural form) which was later mistranslated into the singular "God." The Bible authors converted the ancient goddess symbols into icons of evil. As such, the snake, serpents, tree of knowledge, horns (of the bull), became associated with Satan. The end result gave women the status of inferiority, a result which we still see to this day.

The Old Testament consists of a body of literature spread over a period from approximately 1200 B.C.E. to 200 B.C.E. There exist no original writings of the Old Testament. However, there are hundreds of copies of fragments from copies that became the old testament that have been found in the form of Cuneiform tablets, papyrus paper, leather etchings and the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. The literature of the old testament was written in classical Hebrew except some brief portions which are in Aramaic. The traditional text was originally written in consonants, but the Rabbis later added vowels so that the words could be pronounced. Of course the Rabbis did their best in choosing the vowels that they thought gave the words their proper pronunciation. In the second century C.E., or even earlier, the Rabbis compiled a text from manuscripts as had survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and on this basis was established the traditional or massoretic text, so called from the Hebrew word massorah. This text incorporated the mistakes of generations of copyists, and in spite of the care bestowed on it, many errors of later copyists also found their way into it. The earliest surviving manuscripts of

this text date from the ninth to eleventh centuries C.E. It is this text which has been used for the present translations.

The New Testament has even fewer surviving texts and it is believed that it wasn't until about 60 or 70 years after Jesus' death that the Gospels were beginning to be written. There is no evidence that the New Testament was ever written by the original apostles themselves or anyone else that had seen Jesus. Although the oldest surviving Christian texts are believed to have been written by Paul, he had never seen the earthly Jesus. But there is nothing in Paul's letters that either hints at the existence of the Gospels or that even talks of a need for such memoirs of Jesus Christ. It is more probable that the Gospels were written by scribes that followed the apostles after Jesus' death. The oldest fragment of the New Testament yet known is a tiny snippet of a Gospel of John. The little flake of papyrus was dated by the style of its handwriting to about 130 C.E. Most of the new testament was originally written in old Greek. There have been over a hundred different versions of the Bible, written in most of the languages of the time; Greek, Latin, German, etc. Some versions left out certain biblical stories and others contained added stories. The complete compiled version of the old and new testament was probably finished at around 200-300 C.E. It wasn't until 1611 C.E. that the King James version of the Bible was completed.

*It's interesting that there were many competing Christian cults in the early years after Jesus's death. Some sects saw the universe in dualisms of goodness and sin, of light and darkness, God and the Devil. Other Christian sects performed odd rituals, some of which involved the swallowing of semen, thought to be a sacred substance. Many other Christians were also writing mystical stories and by the second century there were more than a dozen Gospels circulating, along with a whole library of other texts. These include letters of Jesus to foreign kings, letters of Paul to Aristotle, and histories of the disciples. In one of these secret Gospels, it describes Jesus taking naked young men off to secret initiation rites in the Garden of Gethsemene. There were Christian Gnostics (knowers) who believed that the church itself was a device of the Devil to keep man from God and from realizing his true nature. In those first centuries of Christianity there was no such thing as orthodoxy and when an organized orthodox church finally came, it was defined, almost inadvertently, in argument against many of the Gnostic sects. So the idea of the Bible as a single, sacred unalterable corpus of texts began in heresy but was then extended and used by churchmen in their efforts to define orthodoxy. One of the Bible's most influential editors was Irenaeus of Lyon who decided that there should only be four Gospels like the four zones of the world, the four winds, the four divisions of man's estate, and the four forms of the first living creatures -- the lion of Mark, the calf of Luke, the man of Matthew, and the eagle of John. In a single stroke, he had delineated the sacred book of the Christian church and left out the other Gospels. Irenaeus also wrote what Christianity was not, and in this way Christianity became an orthodox faith. A work of Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, became the starting point for later inquisitions. The salvation doctrines of Christianity survived and flourished because they afforded the priesthood considerable power. The priests alone held the keys to salvation and could threaten the unbelievers with eternal punishment. Hence, in the evolution of Christianity in the last two thousand years with priests preying on*

human fears, the religion has demonstrated extraordinary powers of survival. Even without the priests, the various versions of the Bible have had more influence on the history of the world, in the minds of men than any other literature.

Unfortunately, the beliefs in Scripture has been the trigger for the most violent actions against man in the history of humanity. The burning of competing Christian cults (called heretics) by early Christian churches were the seeds of violent atrocities against man. There later followed the destruction of Rome by the Christian Goths, and the secret pagan sacrifices consented by the Pope, the Vandals that had the Bible with them as they destroyed imperial North Africa, the crusades in the eleventh century fighting in the lands around the eastern Mediterranean, Palestine and Syria, capturing Jerusalem and setting kingdoms from Anatolia to the Egyptian border. In 1204 the Fourth Crusade plundered Constantinople the most holy city at that time, with Christians fighting Christians. And the slaughters continued.

According to Romer, "More heretics and scholars were burned in the Middle Ages than were ever killed in Carolingian times. For at this time the Inquisition came into its own, and torture, largely unused as an instrument of government since Roman days, was reintroduced." In the early 1500's the German heretic, Martin Luther, almost single handedly caused the split from the Roman Catholic church and created the beginnings of the Protestant church. This split is still influencing violence up to this day. Luther also helped spread the seeds of anti-Semitism with his preaching and books such as his "The Jews and their lies." It must be remembered that Hitler's holocaust could not have occurred if it weren't for German Christian beliefs and their support.

There is little reason to think that violence inspired by religion, will ever stop. One only has to look at the religious wars around the world to see belief's everlasting destructive potential. One only has to look at the Protestant-Catholic uprising in Ireland, the conflicts in the middle east with Jews fighting Moslems & Christians, the Iran-Iraq war, Sudan's civil war between Christians and Islamics. The desperate acts of fanatical individuals proclaiming to have killed in the name of Jesus, Mohammed, God or Satan would create a death list far longer than any crimes in history. The Holy Bible supports the notion that war and destruction is not only necessary, but moral. If we wish to become a peaceful species, it may well serve us to understand the forces involved that keep us in continual conflict.