

If we look at such a book as Understanding the Old Testament we find a picture illustrating the alleged origin of the Pentateuch. It shows the D document ~~x~~ originating in the ninth century, the E document in the eighth century, the P document in the fifth century, and so on. And from the point where each of these originates there is a solid line down to the point where two lines join together when the ~~J and E~~ J and E document are supposed to have been interwoven; then another line uniting this with the D document which was supposed to have been interwoven with the combined J-E, and then a line uniting that with the P document. However, a new feature which would surely strike Wellhausen as very strange has been added: that ~~is that~~ prior to the beginning of these solid lines there is a dotted line going way back for many centuries indicating oral tradition. The ~~reason~~ reason for this is ~~that~~ because that it is so many points of accuracy have been found in the J and E documents, and, to the great surprise of the critics, even in the P document, that it is now supposed that many sections of these documents go back ~~to~~ to a period centuries earlier and were transmitted orally until the time when they were combined in this original form.

Here we have a most interesting analogy ~~to~~ to Homer. Since it is now generally supposed that Homer wrote at some time in the ninth century ~~B.C.~~ B.C., and that whatever transmits has been passed on orally from a time at least three centuries earlier. There is some question as to whether what he wrote composed was written down immediately as some scholars would suggest, or whether it continued to be passed on by the singing of minstrels for another period of two or three ~~centuries~~ centuries. In any event we have an case in Homer where oral tradition has correctly transmitted a number of very interesting facts through a period of many centuries until the time when eventually it was written down. Thus we have a most interesting analogy to the situation of the Pentateuch.