

Biblical criticisms



The Bible is unarguably the most circulated book of all books in the world. It has been translated to several languages in different versions. The book has been described as the world's best and most widely distributed book by the Guinness Book of Record. The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in history. It was estimated that within the period of 1815-1975 alone, 2.5 billion copies sold.

Record has also shown us that at the end of 1993, the Bible has been fully translated into 337 different languages in the world while over 2,062 languages have translations of at least one book of the Bible. Due to its wide-spread influence, the Bible has been written by various Bible societies for easier comprehension and from their revelations. This has resulted in some textual difference in these various versions of the Bible.

The question is how can the original meaning of scriptures that have divergent textual interpretations by these versions be known? The answer to this is Biblical criticism. What then is Biblical Criticism? In its simplest form, this term is an umbrella term for the critical study and appraisal of textual, compositional and historical questions of Biblical scriptures without recourse to revelation. It uses the canon of reason rather than and historical principles in its study.

Summarily, the query inquisition made in biblical criticism concerns the preservation and transmission of biblical text and scriptures, this includes the manuscripts in which the text has been preserved, the date, its setting, its relationship, and what the most reliable form of the text is; the source and composition of the text, together with when and where it was created, how, why, by whom, for whom, and in what situation it was created, what

were the influence that were work when it was produced, and what sources were used in its composition; and the message of the text as expressed in its language, including the meaning of the words as well as the way in which they are arranged in meaningful forms of expression. There are different forms of biblical criticisms. Some of them have been in existence as far back as eighteenth century. The major types of biblical criticism are form criticism, textual criticism, philological criticism, literary criticism, traditional criticism.

There are also forms of biblical criticisms that have come to existence over the years. They are the literary approach, social-scientific criticism, cultural hermeneutics under which is canonical criticism. For the purpose of this essay, more attention will be drawn on the more recent form biblical criticism; the canonical criticism. Canonical criticism as the more recent form of biblical criticism is a form of cultural hermeneutic approach of biblical criticism that deals with the theological form of interpretation that puts into the center of its study the community background within which the text was produced and from which it is to be read.

It is a form of biblical criticism that deals with how scripture's final form was created in the context of a believing community and how the interpretations produced by that final form continually guides the reading practices such community. Canonical criticism as a form of biblical criticism has greatly affected biblical study in our world today. As a theological form of biblical study, it preaches that we ought to read Scripture from a universal perspective and not individualistically but as part of a worshiping community of fellow believers. It also seeks a practical goal in that it entails reading the

Scripture not just for academic or aesthetic reasons but in order to inhabit its narrative, to have our imagination converted to its values, and to promote love of God and neighbor. In addition to this, it serves as a historic framework.

For canonical critics, we ought to read Scripture in conversation with previous generations of believers, especially those of the pre-modern period.

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