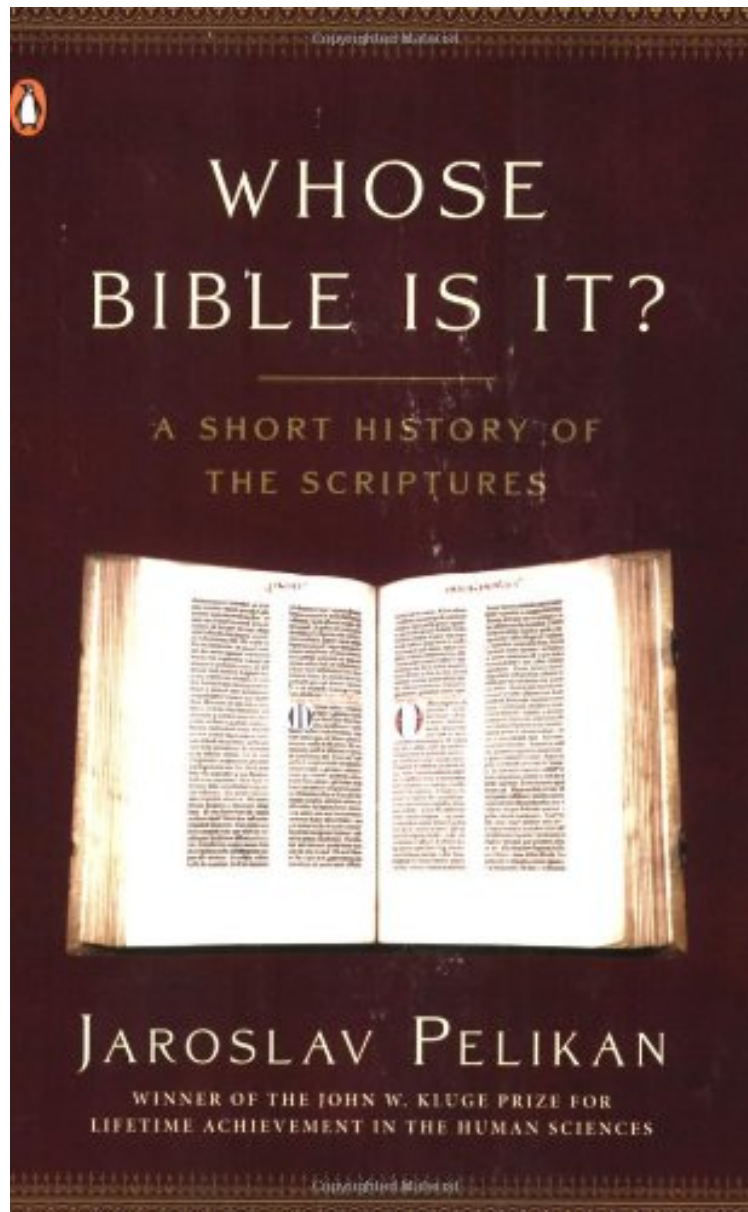


Whose Bible Is It?: A Short History of the Scriptures

Jaroslav Pelikan

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Jaroslav Pelikan : Whose Bible Is It?: A Short History of the Scriptures before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Whose Bible Is It?: A Short History of the Scriptures:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great read. Easy history for modern humans to understandBy

HeatherGreat read. Easy history for modern humans to understand.8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Many Faces of the BibleBy Marc RubyI decided to read this volume after a friend mentioned an interesting history of the creation of the King James version of the bible and I thought it behoved me to make sure I had a good picture of the several thousand years of biblical history that preceded the KJV. I really didn't expect it to be particularly interesting or insightful. Much to my surprise Pelikan managed to be both of those things, and a number of others, without displaying any particular axe to grind.The bible is hardly the staid, stodgy collection of pages that many of us think it is. Whether you think of it as a collection of tales and philosophy, or direct revelation, any number of peoples have adopted it, and changed either its wording or its interpretation. Often with unexpected results. Pelikan captures much of this as the bible shifts from the Torah, to the Tanach, and then the Septaguint, etc., etc., etc. This isn't dry history but a tale of human development and many of the great intellectual movements of Western culture.Pelikan is most interested in how to religions can use the same book and draw contradictory meanings from it. In Judaism, the bible is the public side of Jewish law and thought, as well is the (admittedly sometimes distorted) history of a people. It is important in itself. Christianity often views the Old Testament as the the source of evidence of Jesus' divine nature. As such the two can read the same text and see different things. In addition, They are reading in different languages with that whole set of complications. As Pelikan traces the history of the bible we begin to see a vast tapestry of the conflict between tradition and change. We begin to realise that this diversity is important and that what is needed is understanding, not conversion.There's no lack of scholarship here, but Pelikan is very good at avoiding excesses if detail which shedding light on the important facts. If you are looking for a book that discusses the bible without any layers of bias this is it.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Is the whole greater, or lesser, than the sum of the parts?By Delbert K. ClearVery readable--entertaining at times. Straightforward, historically accurate knowledge-base, drifts along between original meanings of words/phrases in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, and sometimes other languages without requiring an in-depth knowledge of these languages. Truly a book for the lay person who is "concerned" about the implications of claiming that the Bible, that we know best, is, or can be the absolute "Word of God." Falls a bit short in some chapters of really delivering the promise of the title--the last chapter is a good example--and does not wrap the book's basic premise, posed in a question form, with definitive resolution. This, of course, was probably his goal--to get the questions asked and parsed and left unresolved due to its fundamental resolvability. Perhaps his focus on any person's (as opposed to mankind's) relationship to God is individual,is the key to understanding the limits of the answer he gives.

Jaroslav Pelikan, widely regarded as one of the most distinguished historians of our day, now provides a clear and engaging account of the Bibles journey from oral narrative to Hebrew and Greek text to todays countless editions. Pelikan explores the evolution of the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic versions and the development of the printing press and its effect on the Reformation, the translation into modern languages, and varying schools of critical scholarship. Whose Bible Is It? is a triumph of scholarship that is also a pleasure to read.

From Publishers WeeklyStarred . Pelikan, Sterling professor emeritus of history at Yale University and author of a number of respected books in the area of Christian belief and tradition (e.g., *Jesus Through the Centuries*), presents an outstanding introduction to the development, use and acceptance of the biblical canon over the centuries. As the title suggests, different groups have claimed ownership to the canonization process. Even today, Bibles vary in their content and in their philosophy of translation. Beginning with the long heritage of the oral tradition, then exploring the writing and editing of the biblical texts, Pelikan takes the reader through the process of scripture building with a fluency and ease that is both accessible and understandable to the nonscholar. His treatment of modern critical methods is particularly well done. Pelikan has a sure sense of history and context, surrounding the story with a wealth of detail, including some well-chosen anecdotes that add to the reader's enjoyment. He appreciates the ways in which tradition and commentary have influenced both the text itself and our understanding of the text, all the while expressing a love for the Bible and a perceptive grasp of the processes that brought it to its current state. This excellent work merits wide circulation and study. (Mar. 7) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistAs the sacred text of Jews and Christians alike, the Bible has never lacked for claimants. Beginning with the ancient oral traditions surrounding Abraham and Moses, Pelikan recounts how the early Israelites finally recorded their beliefs in a Hebrew text. Continuous addition of historical and prophetic texts, the growth of rabbinic commentaries, and the translation of the text into Greek made construing scripture a complex task even before adherents to a new scriptural faith reinterpreted the entire Hebrew Bible as an Old Testament important chiefly for prophecies fulfilled in a radical New Testament. The writing of this Christian New Testament itself sparked controversies among divergent branches of Christianity, but it is the endless battles between Jews and Christians that Pelikan takes as his primary focus. In the surprisingly parallel strategies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jewish and Christian leaders defending scripture against rationalism, Pelikan sees a tragically missed opportunity to heal the religious breach. Hoping the twenty-first century brings something better, Pelikan concludes with an appeal for an interfaith understanding of the Bible that will sweep away centuries of antipathy. Bryce ChristensenCopyright

American Library Association. All rights reserved "A crisp, remarkably succinct history of the Bible as preserved, interpreted, translated and canonized by the various faiths that believe in it." Los Angeles Times "Engaging . . . an excellent overview." The New York Times Book "Outstanding . . . Pelikan takes the reader through the process of scripture building with a fluency and ease that is both accessible and understandable." Publishers Weekly (starred review) "Masterly . . . Pelikan weaves a tapestry of the power of the Word to mold religious communities, nations, and culture. . . . Engaging, concise, and highly readable." The Christian Science Monitor