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Book Review



González, Justo. *The Bible in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2022.

The Bible as we know it today took a complicated and fascinating journey to arrive in its present form. For many, this is a well-known story; but for others, it is shrouded in mystery, and the Bible in its current form is how it has always been. In *The Bible in the Early Church*, Justo González tells the story of the formation of the modern Old and New Testament canons.

The book is divided into three parts. The first explores how the Bible as an artifact changed throughout the centuries from the earliest forms in scrolls, papyrus, and tablets to the development of the codex. There is also a discussion of how the spaces between the letters, punctuation, and chapters and verses were added. Part two discusses how the Bible was used in the early church and how that changed as literacy developed and through more recent inventions such as the printing press. This section also explores how the Christian desire to evangelize and disciple led to an increase in literacy at times, thus allowing the Bible to be read by more people. The final section looks at how interpretation of the Bible has developed, beginning with how biblical writers interpreted each other and then how that tradition has continued in the Church. A chapter is then dedicated to models of interpretation and three biblical case studies are explored: Creation, the Exodus, and the Logos in the Gospel of John.

This book is a relatively short work on the subject without any references or citations. It is somewhere between a textbook for an Introduction to the Bible course and a church small group book. It is very clearly meant as a first foray into the history of the Bible that can serve to whet someone's appetite for more. In this regard, the book does achieve its purposes as it does not pretend to be anything other than a very basic primer on the subject. In fact, even in such a short work that purports to cover the "early church," nearly every chapter deals with the medieval church, the reformation era, and even the early modern period. Thus, a lot of ground is covered, and the title is a little misleading, since the time frame covered is generally through the 16th century. However, this book is a clear and well-written work that anyone should be able to understand. Thus, it fills a necessary spot in the literature of today to introduce the world of biblical scholarship to a new audience.

Reviewer

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