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Book Review: How We Got the Bible by Neil R. Lightfoot

How We Got the Bible. Neil R. Lightfoot, (3rd Edition), 2003, is a comprehensive and informative guide to the history and formation of the Bible. Lightfoot's writing style is engaging and easy to read, making the book understandable to both laymen and academic people alike. The book is well-researched and provides a detailed account of the development of the Bible, from the earliest manuscripts to the modern translations we use today. One of the book's strengths is its clear organization, which makes it easy to follow the complex history of the Bible's formation.

The book states that the modern Bible is very different from the original manuscripts and was heavily edited over time. He argues that the current Bible is based on the traditions, interpretations, and opinions of early editors and translators and not on the original manuscripts. He further claims that this editing process was heavily influenced by political, religious, and cultural pressures of the times in which the manuscripts were changed and re-interpreted. He also argues that the original manuscripts have been lost or destroyed, making it impossible to accurately reconstruct the original texts. We can understand this from chapters 12 to 15 of the book. It is organized in a linear fashion, with each chapter focusing on certain aspects of the

history of the Bible and its various manuscripts. The opening chapter serves as an introduction to the topic and sets the stage for the rest of the book. The following chapters explore the various ways in which the Bible has been copied, edited, and translated over the centuries. They also look at how social and political influences have affected the process and how this has shaped the Bible as we know it today. The arguments of the book are presented in a logical, step-by-step fashion, and uses evidence from a variety of sources to back up his claims. He also makes a compelling case for why the Bible has been edited over the centuries and why it is important to be aware of this history when studying it.

The author provided a comprehensive overview of the history of the Bible. He cites evidence from various sources, including books, manuscripts, and commentaries, to back up his claims. He also pays special attention to the ways in which political, religious, and social influences have shaped the modern Bible and provides examples of how this has happened in multiple places and times, such as the re-interpretation of certain texts to match the beliefs of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. He also presents a thoughtful analysis of how the various manuscripts were copied and edited over the centuries. In addition, Lightfoot provides illustrations and diagrams throughout the book to help readers better understand his points. Although I cannot see it in my eBook from Vital Source, it only says “[Image not included because of rights restrictions.]” So, I just look at them online. I have learned a lot. I have no expectations since this is the first time I am reading something about the origin of the Bible, so everything is really interesting to me. I am very clueless, and even with the Bible I am still learning how to read it through my classes at school. I am pretty convinced about everything that the author said here. I cannot tell what he did not do well or whether the pieces of evidence are

enough he provided are good enough, I am just glad to be learning the history of the Bible. And what I like about them the most is it provides historical context like in Chapter 3, he describes the political and cultural environment in which the New Testament was written, including the influence of Roman rule and the Jewish sects of the time. He also discusses the role of the apostle and the early Christian church in spreading the message of the gospel. In Chapter 5, he describes the various types of manuscripts and the challenges involved in comparing and evaluating them. He also provides examples of how textual critics use manuscript evidence to reconstruct the original text of the Bible. And In Chapter 6, he describes the criteria used to determine which books should be included in the New Testament and how the process evolved over time. He also discusses the challenges involved in the canonization of the Old Testament, including the role of the Septuagint and the different canons used by Jews and Christians. Overall, the book is excellent and provides a very informative introduction to the history of the Bible.

Works Cited

Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible*. Available from: VitalSource Bookshelf, (3rd Edition). Baker Publishing Group, 2003.