

An Outline  
Introduction to the  
Old Testament  
And  
Old Testament  
Scholarship

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## The Setting of the Old Testament

It is almost impossible to understand the significance of many Old Testament events and themes apart from the geographical, cultural, and historical situation that existed during the Old Testament times. Israel's history was keyed to its historical and geographical setting in the Ancient Near East, known in this little book as the "ANE." Its cultural setting, while having many physical characteristics in common with modern Africa, was unique in that it was influenced by Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor. And theologically, it was profoundly shaped by the promises, redemption, and law of God. All these must be seen if one is to 'come to grips with specific parts of the Old Testament.

### **Part One: Geography**

Geographically, Israel's location gave it potential influence that went far beyond its size, wealth, or military power.

The land Israel was given by God is perhaps the most strategic piece of property on earth. Bordered by the Mediterranean Sea (the Great Sea) on the west and the Arabian Desert on the east it is the land bridge between Asia and Africa.

In ancient times it was the western end of the Fertile Crescent, and contained the two main roads that (Way of the Sea [Via Maris-Isaiah 9:1] and The King's Highway [Numbers 20:17; 21: 22]. These roads were not strictly single tracks, but systems of roads that all led toward the same place.

This land bridge, though narrow, is very mountainous and contains many tiny highly peculiar geographical regions. The geology and topology of the area is very complex. The land is an important player in the Old Testament story and stimulated a diversity and creativity that was not found in other nations.

Palestine (from the Philistines) can be divided into four north-south zones, but for practical purposes we will also consider the Great Sea and the Desert, making a total of six regions.

- The Great Sea is that body of water, which we today call the Mediterranean Sea. Stretching along the eastern border of Palestine, it actually had minimal influence on Israelite cultural and historical development because of the lack of available harbors.
- Coastal Region
  - The Plain of Acco: North of Carmel, heavily populated in ancient times, with the town of Aphek
  - The Jezreel Valley: Connects the Coastal Plain with the Jordan Valley. Is bordered by Mt. Carmel on the West and Mt. Gilboa on the East. Megiddo is located on the Valley of the Jezreel.
  - The Sharon: From Joppa to Mt. Carmel; "Forested country"; level land used for grazing. Dominated by red sandstone. Song of Songs 2: 1 "I am a rose of Sharon"
  - The Philistine Coast: Named for a people who settled there in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. "The remnant from the coast of Capthor" (Jer. 47:4), the whole area was eventually named for them. Good soil and adequate rain made it one of the richest and most desirable regions of the area. Gaza was a metropolis and Ashkelon was the harbour (because of a gap in the sand dunes. Samson has

problems in Ashkelon (Jdg, 14: 19) and cities of the Philistine plain figure prominently in prophecy.

- The Shephelah: “Lowland” famous for its olives and sycamore trees, was densely populated in antiquity. Was the most valuable part of the Judean kingdom, and had a chain of fortresses to protect it from the Philistines. Many cities Gezer, Aijalon, Beth-horon; Beth-shemesh, Timnah, Lachish, etc. Were located on the valley roads that ran up into Judah.
- The Western Negev (b): “Dryland”. Begins 10-15 miles north of Beer-sheba, where the 300 mm (11.9 in)-100 mm (3.9 in) annual rainfall line is located. Settlement and agriculture is possible, but on an intermittent basis. Nomadic raiders (Amalekites- 1 Sam 27,30) were always a constant threat. But in spite of these, the Negev was where the patriarchs spent much of their time.
- Central Mountain Range (Wide in the North, and narrows towards the south.)
  - Galilee: Divided into Upper (above 1000 m elevation) and Lower Galilee (below 600 m elevation), the highest mountain region in Palestine, it is coolest, most densely vegetated area in the country. Isaiah 9:1 calls Galilee, “Galilee of the Gentiles” through which passes the Way of the Sea. Nazareth is in lower Galilee; much of Upper Galilee belongs to Lebanon today
  - Mount Ephraim (or simply Ephraim): Central and most important area of the hill country from the standpoint of settlement. Later in the Monarchy it was called. It is a very fertile area. Famous landmarks in the area include Mizpah, Bethel, Shiloh, (South), Shechem, Mount Ebal, and Tizrah. (North). Judges 21: 19 describes the yearly feast at Shiloh, and the road that runs through Ephraim
  - The Judean Hill Country: Similar to the hill country of Ephraim, it is a fertile plateau guarded by steep slopes where fruit trees, vines, and other plants proliferate. A road passed along its eastern edge and through its major cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beth-zur, and Hebron. The land east of that road drops about 3,000 feet to the Dead Sea in only 10-15 miles, ending in almost sheer vertical cliffs of 1,500. This area, stretching virtually the length of the Dead Sea is a wilderness that (except for En-gedi, a few small forts, and settlements) was never permanently inhabited, but was the home to rebels and monastics who hid the ancient scrolls and manuscripts we now call the Dead Sea Scrolls in dry caves. The wilderness of Judah made it almost impossible to cross the Judean plateau from East to West, thus guaranteeing that Judah would remain a rather “isolated and closed” country. Jerusalem, being at the north edge of the Judean Hill Country, was situated on the road that ran from Gezer through Beth-horon on down to Jericho. This was the southernmost route from the coastal plain to the Transjordan.
  - The Eastern Negev: A continuation of the Judean Hills, the elevation drops from the 1,000 m of Hebron to an elevation of 300-600 m. Becoming more arid as one progresses south, the elevation results in a small rainfall that still allows settlements to continue over longer periods of time. (Dependability of the rains.) Fifty-five miles south of the Negev, the land rises to an elevation of about 1,000 m at Ras Raman. This high table land is able to support farming, but the main importance of the area is the roads that go to the Sinai, Edom, and Egypt. These were guarded by a series of fortresses. South of the Wadi Raman, there is only completely barren and wild desert, the Wilderness of Zin.

- The Jordan Rift: From about 100 m in the north at Lake Hulah it drops to –400 m at the Dead Sea, rising again to 250 m before plunging again to Sea Level at the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqabah.) The general tendency of the climate in the Rift is from warm and dry in the north to a hot desert in the south.
  - The Huleh Valley: Lying mostly in Lebanon, this temperate valley contains the three springs that form the Jordan headwaters. Southwest of Lake Huleh (now drained) was the city of Hazor (Joshua 11)
  - Chinnereth: Known from the New Testament as the Sea of Galilee, it is 200 m below sea level, and only 10 miles south of Huleh. Thirteen miles long and seven miles wide at its maximum, it is subject to severe storms that blow down from the surrounding mountains. Chinnereth is 13 miles long and 7 miles at its widest. Fertile, well-watered valleys that were some of the most densely, continuously populated areas in the country, surround the sea.
  - The Jordan Valley: About 112 k long, it connects the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Deep and winding, the river is surrounded by dense and entangled vegetation. The river periodically floods a narrow strip (up to a mile wide), but further from the river the land is desert-like. Water for irrigation must be trapped from streams coming in from the rivers that flow down into the valley. Thus there are two very distinct seasons in the Jordan Valley: desert and tropical. Three major water courses enter the Jordan from the east: the Yarmuk, just below the Sea of Galilee; the Jabbok, about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea; and the Arnon, which enters about middle of the Dead Sea. Since smaller rivers are fairly numerous on the east side, there is a chain of important cities, including Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon. (Judges 8)
  - The Dead Sea: Known for its high salt content that makes marine life and normal vegetation along its shores impossible, the lake is about 45 miles (72 k) long. It is divided into two sections: the upper part is 30 miles (48 k) long and reaches a depth of 1,200 ft (400 m); the lower part is about 15 miles (24 k) long and is only 30-35 ft (10 m) deep. Geologists believe that this lower section sank in recent times. The Dead Sea is surrounded by a narrow shoreline and high cliffs, which are broken by deep canyons. Most of the soil is a salty marl, and at the southwest corner of the sea stands Jebel Usdum (Mount Sedom), a salt mountain with strange shapes and projections. (Lot's wife, Gen. 19: 26) Unbearably hot most of the year, a dusty haze (Gen. 19:28) covers the sea. However, oases are found wherever springs or rivers enter arable areas along side the Sea. These are celebrated in SOS 1:4, and include Jericho, seven miles to the north, En-gedi, and Zoar.
  - The Arabah: A 110 mile (176 k) continuation of the Jordan Rift to the Gulf of Elath, it contains only a few small oases. Its primary importance was due to its copper mines and the road that ran to Elath. Guarded by the Romans, it provided a route for the profitable trade with South Arabia and East Africa (Ophir?). It was a prize objective of Israel, Edom, and Rival powers. (1 Chron. 9:14; I Kings 9: 26; Ezek. 27).
- The Transjordanian Highlands: A well-watered mountain table land that gradually blends into the desert on the east, most of its waters run down into the Jordan Rift. Having no natural border with the desert, the land was subject to the raids of desert nomads. The rivers mentioned in connection with the Jordan Rift (the Zered,

Arnon, and Jabbok) served both to make travel difficult and as political boundaries between the countries of the area.

- Bashan: The northern district of the Transjordan, situated mainly north of the Yarmuk, it is the most fertile and prosperous area of the Transjordan (hence, the “cows of Bashan” in Amos 4:1). In addition to its fertility, it is guarded from the desert by Mount Hauran (Jebel Druze-Mt. Bashan; Psalm 68: 16) which reaches heights of 5,000+ ft. (1538 m). Settlement in the area was both early and continuous because the area was both fertile and protected from desert raiders. The northwest of Bashan is virtually a basaltic desert, isolated and difficult to penetrate. Famous for its independence, it was called “The Refuge”, an ideal asylum for rebels and bandits. Geshur, part of Bashan, kept its independence even during the reign of David (2 Samuel 13: 37f)
- Gilead: A higher and more rugged mountain region than Bashan (1000 m), it is located both north and south of the Jabbok. With no high peaks to the east it is more exposed to the desert and the desert culture. Due to the difficult terrain, its economy remained pastoral, and the tribe of Reuben in particular preserved its semi-nomadic lifestyle on the edge of the desert. (1 Chron. 5: 9) Gilead was a relatively narrow tableland, but was quite strategic in its control of the King’s Highway. As such it became wealthy. At times it was well organized and fortified, and sought to annex parts of Gilead. (Numbers 21: 24)
- Moab: Similar to Gilead, it is divided into two areas by the river Arnon, and separated from Edom by the Wadi Hesa. The level tableland in the north was called the “Mishor”, “The Plain” (Deut. 3: 10) and was always under dispute
- Edom (Mt. Seir): Pointing to the desert, it is well watered on the west because of the mountains (1,500-1,700 m), and a place of natural protection and independence for its population. Basically it stretched southward (from Wadi Hesa) until it disappeared into the desert. Its two administrative centers were Teman and Bozrah. Control of Edom meant control of the Kings Highway and the route to Elath. Edom refused Israel passage (Num. 22: 19) Only Uzziah completed the conquest of Edom (2 Kings 14: 22)
- The Desert: A barren wasteland of rock and gravel, the Syrian Desert covers some 518,000 sq. kilometres and receives less than 130 mm of rain a year. Only nomadic herders survive there.

## ***Part Two: The Historical Background of the Ancient Near East***

The History of the Old Testament is generally considered in three different streams: Egyptian; Mesopotamian; and Canaanite / Palestinian. These three histories are considered in this order primarily on the bases of the age of recorded histories of each area or civilization. Egypt’s recorded history begins about ca. 3100 BC; Mesopotamian (the land of the two rivers) recorded history began around c. 2800 BC with the Sumerian City States, and Abraham journeyed into the Canaanite/Palestine region sometime between 2100 and 1800 BC

### **Egypt**

The culture of Egypt was very old when Abram first journeyed into Egypt to escape the famine (Gen.12: 10). From time immemorial the civilization of Egypt was situated within a few kilometres of the Nile River. Egypt has been called the gift of the Nile. Without the waters

that flood the valley yearly, the fields of Egypt would dry up and blow away. This valley was isolated by the desert on either side, which led to the isolation of both Upper (Southern) and Lower Egypt (the North.) The history of the country was closely related to the fact that Upper and Lower Egypt were two different societies, so much so that Egypt has been called “two lands”. The following eras and events defined Egyptian history. Dates from Archer’s Introduction, and Wilson’s The Culture of Ancient Egypt are given.

| Era or Event         | Wilson, John | Archer, G. | Significance  |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|---|
| Egypt Dynasty I, II  | 3100-2700    | 3000-2600  | The process of unification begins under Menes   |
| Old Kingdom          | 2700-2200    | 2600-2250  | The pyramid age, security, order, cultural fixation   |
| First Intermediate   | 2200-2050    | 2250-2000  | A time of political weakness, pessimism, and Asiatic Incursion  |
| Middle Kingdom       | 2050-1800    | 2000-1780  | A Thebian dynasty reunited the land and Egyptian civilization again entered a period of cultural growth. However, this unity progressively declined                             |
| Second Intermediate  | 1800-1550    | 1780-1546  | This decline facilitated foreign invasion, most notably the Hyksos, who established their capital at Avaris. (1650-1540) During this time they ruled Egypt and parts of Canaan. |
| New Kingdom          | 1550-1216    | 1546-1085  | The New Kingdom reasserts native Egyptian control and the pharaohs of the period begin a period of Expansion.   |
| Weakness and anarchy | 1200-        |            | Broken into a number of small states, inflation ruins the economy, and the Egyptian spirit of optimism is gone.   |

### Mesopotamia

The history of Mesopotamia was equally as ancient, but assumed an almost entirely different character than the history of Egypt, with much more variety and discontinuity between different political states, cultures and empires. Geography was largely responsible for this. Egyptian civilization developed along the narrow, isolated valley of the Nile River. In the entirety of its history there were basically two kingdoms, the Northern and Southern kingdoms, Lower and Upper Egypt. On the other hand there were numerous cities in the Tigris-Euphrates River valley, most of which at one time or another sought to be the center of empires. Only two accomplished this with significant success. Assyria, which took its name from the city of Assur (later the capital would be Nineveh) and Babylonia, which of course took its name from Babylon.

| Period                                      | Dates     | Significance   |
|---|-----------|--|
| Early Dynastic Period: Sumerian City States | 2800-2360 | Significant cultural norms were established which would influence many of the various empires that would follow. |
| Empire of Akkad                             | 2330-2180 | Semites; Sargon I conquers Sumer; Akkadian established   |

|                             |                         |  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Ur III                      | c.2060-1950             | Final flower of Sumerian culture: Abraham  |
| Shamshi-Adad I <sup>1</sup> | 1813?-1780              | Extends Assyrian Power to the Mediteranean   |
| Hammurabi                   | 1728-1686               | Famous king and lawgiver of Babylon; defeats Assyria   |
| Babylon I Empire            | 1830-1530               | Fell to the Kassites, only to become strong under their rule   |
| Hittites                    | c. 1686-1216            | Asia Minor kingdom.  |
| Chaldea                     | 9 <sup>th</sup> cen-539 | Known also as Babylonia, allied with the Medes and help destroy the Assyrian empire in 612   |
| Arameans                    | c. 1000                 | Aggressive, influential Semitic invaders who would settle in the area of Syria; their language, Aramaic, would replace many other languages. |
| Sargon II                   | 722-705                 | Sargon captures Samaria and deports many people from the Northern Kingdom.   |
| Senacherib                  | 705-681                 | Invades Palestine  |
| Medes                       | 669-633                 | Conquered and allied with the Persians; destroy Babylon  |
| Nebuchadnezzar              | 605-562                 | Ruler of the neo-Babylonian Empire; builder; triumphed over the Egyptians at Carchemish  |

## Israel

The history of Israel begins with Abram's journey from Ur (probably Ur III) some time between 2000 and 1800 B.C. Some significant dates in Israel's history are as follows:

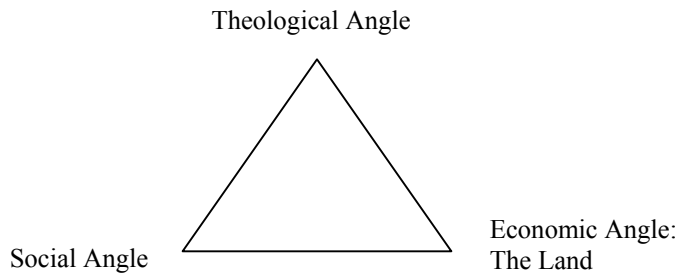
| Person/Event         | Date                | Significance  |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Abraham              | c. 2000-1800        | God announces his plan; faith is the correct response   |
| Joseph               | c. 1600?            | Abraham's descendents begin to bless the world.   |
| Exodus               | c. 1446<br>(or)1290 | Israel is redeemed from slavery; the sacrifice of a lamb is necessary for salvation. The Law is Given |
| Judges               | 1200-1020           | Obedience brings blessing; disobedience, curses   |
| Fall of Shiloh       | 1050                | From archaeological evidence; sign of Judgement   |
| Saul                 | 1050-1010           | Beginning of the monarchy; sign of disobedience   |
| David                | 1010-970            | Promise of the messianic kingship   |
| Solomon              | 970-931             |   |
| The Schism           | 922                 | Judah and Israel go their own ways.   |
| The Battle of Qarqar | 853                 | Indecisive battle of Shalmanezar against the coalition of Syria, Hamath, and Israel (under Ahab)      |
| Joash                | 837-800             | Judah king, rebuilt temple, but later apostasized   |
| Uzziah               | 790-739             | Regained control of Elath; is judged with leprousy  |
| Amos                 | c. 760              | Prophet from Judah, prophesied in the North   |
| Isaiah               | 740-680             | Prophet in Judah when the Northern Kingdom fell.  |
| Hezekiah             | 728-707             | Religious reform in Judah. Rebellion against Assyria  |
| Samaria Falls        | 722/721             | Israelites exiled to Assyria, to vanish without a trace.  |

<sup>1</sup>"Assyria," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000*. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

|                         |         |  |
|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Josiah                  | 640-609 | Renews the covenant; was killed by Neco  |
| Jeremiah                | 626-570 | The “weeping” prophet, he prophesys both judgment and hope in the last days of Judah; Dies in Egypt. |
| Daniel                  | 600-530 | Sovereignty of God; the righteous life; the restoration of Israel.                                   |
| Jerusalem Falls         | 586     | The exile will change the character of Judaism   |
| Babylon Falls           | 539     | The judgement of God; preparation for the return.  |
| Egypt Falls to Cambyses | 525     | Egypt under Persian Rule; the Middle East under Persian rule   |
| The Temple Rebuilt      |         | Darius implements Cyrus’s order; fulfills the prophesies of restoration.                             |
| Nehemiah                | 445     | Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem; Israel again a political entity.                                   |
| Malachi                 | 435     | The last OT prophet; canon is closed (Josephus)  |
| Alexander the Great     | 336-323 | The Hellenization of the ANE begins; Israel is under the Seleucids and Ptolomys.                     |

### ***The Ethical Life of the Old Testament***

The following is taken from *The Life of the Old Testament* in Christopher J. H. Wright’s *An Eye for An Eye* published by Intervarsity Press (Downers Grove:, 1983) Think of Israel’s life as a triangle with three angles. Each angle is connected to the others, and if taken away the triangle collapses. These aspects of ancient Israel’s life were its theology, its social life, and its relationship to the land.



#### **The Theological Angle**

1. God-Centered Origin: God acts first and calls people to respond. God takes the initiative in grace and redeeming action and then makes his ethical demand in light of it. Israel’s keeping of God’s laws was meant to be a response to what God had already done. Israel’s relationship with God was founded on his redeeming grace, and it was sustained by his forgiving grace. (Ex. 32-34)
2. God-Centered History: Israel’s faith was historically generated, grounded, and sustained. God acted, and continued to act in history; therefore, events and sequences of events took on [moral] significance. God is at work within the narrative—explicitly or behind the scenes—initiating, reacting, and controlling. However, God’s sovereignty did not negate human ethical freedom and responsibility. Gen. 50:20 “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” This activity of God was two-fold:

Redemptive and eschatological. “In redemption God has both a continuing and a future purpose.

3. God-Centered Content: God’s instruction and the people’s obedience was to be a reflection of the character of God himself. Deut. 10: 12 “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Lev. 19: 33-34 “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” I.e., “This is what I require of you because it is what I myself would do.” (p. 27)
4. God-Centered Motivation:
  - a. “This is what God has done for you. Therefore out of gratitude you should do the same for others. Lev. 25:35-38 “If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear God so that your countryman may to continue to live among you. You must not lend him money at interest or sell him food at a profit. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.
  - b. Thus, the great sin was to forget the great acts of God. Forgetting is not simply an intellectual act. At its heart is the “loss of gratitude” without which there is no genuine obedience. Deut. 8: 12-20
 

11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down,

13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,

14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.

16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you.

17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

20 Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

(NIV)

## The Social Angle

1. A redeemed *community*.
  - a “God’s answer to the international blight of sin was a new community, a nation that would be the pattern and model of redemption, as well as the vehicle by which the blessing of redemption would eventually embrace the rest of mankind.
  - b God’s purpose was not just righteous individuals, but a new community who in their social life would embody those qualities of righteousness, peace, justice and love which reflect God’s own character and his original purpose for mankind.
2. A distinctive community
  - a. Historical distinction: Abraham’s election, deliverance from slavery, and the covenant of Sinai.
  - b. Religious distinction: Yahweh was exclusive; they were to have no other gods.
  - c. Ethical distinction: Egalitarian (Not like the other nations, I Samuel 8: 19f.)
3. Israel as God’s Paradigm:
  - a. God’s message of redemption through Israel was not just verbal; it was visible and tangible. They, the medium, were themselves part of the message.
  - b. It would be as they lived out the quality of national and social life demanded by the law they were about to receive, with its great chords of freedom, justice, love and compassion, that they would function as God’s holy priesthood: as a nation, among the nations, for the nations. (Ps. 99: 1-4 Exod. 19:5-6)  
 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,  
 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."  
 (NIV)

## The Economic Angle

1. The Land as Israel’s Story. The Land was central to the Old Testament Story=Narrative.
  - a The promise to Abraham Gen. 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. The reality was that Abraham owned a burial site. (23)
  - b Isaac’s blessing on Jacob Gen. 28:4 May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."
  - c Joseph’s testimony to the Cupbearer Gen. 40:15 For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."
  - d Joseph’s instruction to his brothers. Gen. 50:24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."
  - e Exodus signifies the renewal of the promise but puts the emphasis on the presence of God (33:15f) at the tent of meeting. (40: 34-38)
  - f The land is the agent of God’s blessing or curse in the book of Leviticus. (Leviticus 18: 24-28; 20: 22-4)
  - g Numbers records the failed attempt to conquer the land, then the second spiritually dangerous challenge to resist temptation and enter the land (32). Though the book ends on an optimistic note, they are still not in the land.

- h Deuteronomy begins and ends in Moab, retelling the story, reaffirming, renewing, developing the law, and affirming that “the land itself will be both the arena and the agent of God’s blessing or curse, depending on whether or not the people of God obey (28-30). Moses leads the people to within a day’s march of the promise and dies. The promise remains a promise. (34:4)
  - i The theme of Joshua is the invasion, conquest, and division of the land.
  - j Judges records the struggle of Israel to survive within the land, and ends with an uneasy end to the conflict with the Benjamites. “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”
2. The Land as Divine Gift:
- a. The land-gift was a declaration of Israel’s dependency on God. Israel could make no “natural” claim to any of the land. They were from the start sojourners. They were completely dependent on God’s love and faithfulness. (See 3 below)
  - b. The land-gift was a declaration of God’s dependability. Deuteronomy 26: 5-10 closes with the confession “So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey..”
  - c. The land-gift was proof of the relationship between God and Israel. In some passages Israel is metaphorically called God’s son or offspring (Deut. 14:1;32:5). In others the land is called an inheritance (Duet 4:21, 38; 12: 9; 15:4; 19:10; 26:1).
  - d. The land-gift tradition generated individual property rights in Israel. The incident of Naboth’s vineyard in I Kings 21: 1-3 illustrates the fact that the land was not Naboth’s to “give, sell, or exchange”. It was that which his fathers had inherited from God.
  - e. Abuse of the land-gift often set the stage for the prophet’s message about economic exploitation. Micah would announce “Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds...They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellow man of his inheritance. (Micah 2:1f)
3. The Land Under Divine Ownership
- a. The Land was God’s and Israel was but “aliens and tenants.” (Leviticus 25: 23)  
The “resident aliens and tenants (strangers and sojourners RSV) referred to a class of people within Israelite society who did not own any land, being descendants of the old Canaanite population or else immigrant workers; they were wholly dependent, therefore, on being able to reside within a landed Israelite household.
  - b. God owns the land and demands accountability in the use of it. This accountability to God for the land included such things as tithes and firstfruits of the harvest, other harvest laws, and sabbatical legislation as it affected the land—the fallow year and the release of debt-pledges.
  - c. Responsibility to the family included the fundamental law of inalienability—that is, that land was not to be bought and sold commercially but preserved within a kinship framework.

4. The Land as “Spiritual Thermometer”. There were two facets to this.
  - a. The economic sphere is like a thermometer that revealed the theological relationship between God and Israel. (Ezekiel 37: 24-27)
  - b. The situation with the land also revealed the extent to which Israel was conforming to the social patterns that God required of her. (Ezekiel 36: 33-36)

## Unity, Inspiration, Infallibility, Inerrancy and Authority of the Old Testament

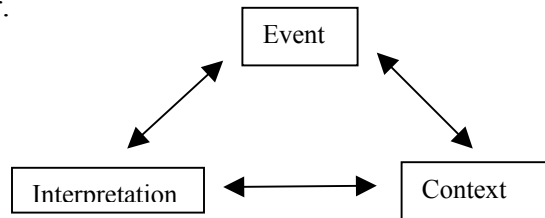
- I. The question in hand is “What Kind of book is the Old Testament? To do that we must first understand the terms with which we are working:
  - A. The Old Testament is a book of unity: “The Old Testament is the work of a single mind, the mind of the Divine author. It has singleness of purpose and program.”
  - B. Fulfilled prophecy is very important in demonstrating unity of the Bible and its divine source. For the Christian prophecy in the Old Testament is significantly fulfilled in the New Testament, and some prophecies are yet to be fulfilled in history. Prophecy is composed of two intertwined types.
    1. Forthtelling is speaking the word of God based on what he has already said. In essence, this is telling “forth” what God has said or is saying to man. Forthtelling judgement is often contingent on the law and it’s accompanying blessings and curses. As Doug Stuart puts it, “the prophets were covenant enforcement mediators.”<sup>2</sup>
    2. “Foretelling” is intertwined with forthtelling. It is what is typically thought of as prophecy. Certainly the prophets predicted the future, but often that future was the near future. Perhaps less than one percent of prophetic utterance actually was predictive of the distant future.
  - C. Inspiration: The word “inspire” means “to breathe into” and refers to the Scripture being “God-breathed. It is the words of God in the words of men. Inspiration has at least three implications:
    1. We can seek to understand the cultural context and meaning of the individual words and texts of Scripture. This is called the grammatical-historical approach to the Old Testament.
    2. It reflects the mystery and tension between the “sovereignty of God and free will of man.”
    3. It means that the Old Testament is more than a human book. It is a book authored by God, which bears His integrity and authority.
  - D. Inerrancy: Because the Old Testament is from God, and is His word to us, it is without error. Having said this, one must clarify what form of the Bible is without error, and what being without error means.
    1. At what point was (or is) the text of the Old Testament without error. Some people point to individual texts such as the textus recepticus from which the King James Version was translated. But most thoughtful commentators come to the conclusion that the autographs of the Old Testament (the original manuscripts) were inerrant, and that texts copied from them were subject to error, however minor.
    2. Infallibility is a concept that is slightly different than inerrancy. It refers to the absolute confidence we can have in the knowledge that comes from the text of Scripture as we

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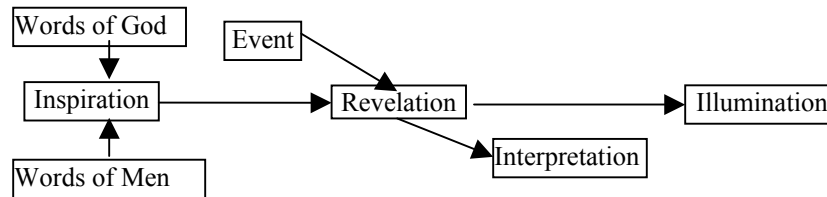
<sup>2</sup> Doug Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 167.

now have it. To understand infallibility one should compare infallible knowledge with ordinary knowledge.

- a. For something to be ordinary knowledge we assume that it is true and thus we also believe it. However, no matter how certain we are about the matter, ordinary knowledge is always to clarification and revision. Even scientific “knowledge” is subject to modification. Note how Newton’s understanding of gravitation was developed and modified by Einstein.
  - b. Infallible knowledge has absolute certainty. It is not subject to revision, or updating. It is final
- E. Revelation: The Bible is the revelation of the person of God, but that revelation must be understood as two fold, each “fold” being necessary to the whole
1. God revealed himself in actions, or events throughout the Old Testament. He was not a passive God; he took the initiative in showing himself. Without these events (heilsgschechte) we would have no knowledge of God. When God acts he creates history.
  2. At the same time, the Spirit of God interpreted the events through which Israel was redeemed as He move people to write about what God had done.
  3. Revelation, as we have it today, is an inseparable combination of both event and interpretation. It is both personal and propositional, as it continues to be in the life of every believer.



- F. The relationship between inspiration, revelation, and illumination can be visualized in this manner:



### Interpreting Difficult Old Testament Passages

There are many forms of Bible difficulties. Sometimes two passages appear to contradict each other. Sometimes a described event does not seem to agree with available historical records. In attempting to resolve difficulties like these Archer (p.36) suggests several steps:

- A. Be fully persuaded that an explanation or reconciliation exists. This proposition is grounded in faith in inspiration.
- B. Assume (trust) in the inerrancy of the autographs.
- C. Study the context and framework of the author and determine the original intent.
- D. Carefully study (exegete) the passage; study the keywords; look for parallel passages
- E. Harmonize parallel passages.[Compare with the emphasis on intent.]
- F. Consult Bible commentaries, dictionaries, lexical sources, encyclopedias

- G. When all else fails—check for transmission errors in the text.  
 H. Remember the historical accuracy of the Bible is unsurpassed and the transmitted texts are supported by thousands of extant manuscripts.

## The Literary Framework of the Old Testament

I. The language of the Old Testament provides the reader with important help in interpreting the way Old Testament authors thought. If through Inspiration we have in the Bible the “words of God in the Words of Man” it is very important that we understand some of the characteristics of the Bible as the “words of man.”

A. The Hebrew language is a Semitic language. A Semite is one who was descended from Shem (Genesis 6:10)

1. Sharing much in common with other Semitic languages, words that are only used once or twice in the Hebrew Bible are commonly used in these other languages. Developments in studying other Semitic languages have greatly advanced our understanding of certain difficult OT texts. (But care must be exercised.)
2. The family of languages include:

|          | East Semitic           | South Semitic   | Northwest Semitic   |  |
|----------|------------------------|---|---|--|
| Primary  | Akkadian               | Arabic  | Canaanite~  | Aramaic  |
| Dialects | Babylonian<br>Assyrian | North Arabic<br>South Arabic<br>Minean<br>Hadramautian<br>Qatabanean<br>Ethiopic<br>Amharic | Eblaic<br>Urgaritic<br>Phoenician*<br>Hebrew<br>Ammonite<br>Moabite | Old Aramaic<br>Biblical Aramaic<br>Imperial Aramaic<br>Nabataean<br>Syriac |

~Probable parent of Hebrew \*Closest to Hebrew

B. Peculiar characteristics:

1. Lays primary emphasis on the mode and completeness of an action: perfect, imperfect, qal, piel, hithpiel, etc. (iterative, causative, tolerative...)
2. Three root-letters for almost all verbs and nouns. (No vowels were transcribed during the biblical period.)
3. Guttural and laryngeal letters with special sounds.
4. Meaning dependent on the form or pattern of words.
5. Common basic consonantal vocabulary
6. Pronominal suffixes to nouns, verbs, and pronouns.
7. Written from right to left.
8. A syndetic or co-ordinating character: the use of and. Subordinating conjunctions are infrequent.

C. The four main phases of the Hebrew Language.

1. Biblical, or Classical Hebrew.
2. Rabbinical, or Late Hebrew in which the Mishna (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) and the Hebrew Portions of the Talmus and Midrash were written.
3. Medieval, or Rabbinic Hebrew in which the great philosophical, theological, and poetical works of the Middle Ages were composed. It was the lingua franca of Jews throughout the world during this period.
4. Modern Hebrew, developed in the twentieth century.

- C. Aramaic: Appearing as early as the ninth century B.C., this language (actually a group of dialects) replaced Hebrew as the language of the common person (Matt. 5:41;7:34). Parts of Daniel (2:4-7:28) and Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26) and Jeremiah 10:11 were written in the language. An interesting example of the transition from Aramaic to Hebrew occurs in 2 Kings 18: 25 <sup>26</sup> Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.”<sup>3</sup>
- D. Yiddish is a Jewish language written in the Hebrew Alphabet (The Aramaic Script) and spoken by the Ashkenazi Jews as early as the Middle Ages, but it is not a Semitic language. It was derived from a Medieval German dialect from the Rhine valley.

## II. The Literary Structure of Old Testament is different in the Hebrew and English Bibles.

A. The Hebrew Canon was three-fold and was composed of twenty-four books:

| <u>Law (Torah-5 Books)</u> | <u>Prophets (Nebhiim –8)</u> | <u>Writings (11 Books)</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Genesis                    | The Former Prophets          | Psalms                     |
| Exodus                     | Joshua                       | Job                        |
| Leviticus                  | Judges                       | Proverbs                   |
| Numbers                    | Samuel                       | Ruth                       |
| Deuteronomy                | Kings                        | Song of Solomon            |
|                            | The Latter Prophets          | Ecclesiastes               |
|                            | Isaiah                       | Lamentations               |
|                            | Jeremiah                     | Esther                     |
|                            | Exekiel                      | Daniel                     |
|                            | The Twelve                   | Ezra                       |
|                            |                              | Nehemiah                   |
|                            |                              | Chronicles                 |

1. Early in the history of the Torah the division of the books was based on those who occupied the office of prophet, and those who had the gift of prophecy (David, Solomon, Daniel, etc.)
  2. An early reference to this division is found in the Wisdom of Ben Sirach “the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers”.
- B. The fourfold division (Law, History, Poetry, Prophets) originated when the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek. (More on this in the next section.)
1. The Septuagint, or LXX (280-150B.C.) is the most famous of these translations. Tradition has it that 70 scholars worked for 70 days to produce the work.
  2. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate (a.d. 383-405) was based on the Septuagint.

## ***Khirbet Qumran, The Dead Sea Scrolls and OT Manuscript Evidence***

### I. Khirbet Qumran: Its History of Occupation.

- A. Eighth to twelfth centuries, perhaps 780-740 B.C., King Uzziah
1. Potsherds with Phoenician alphabets.
  2. Fragmentary ostraca, with royal seals.

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<sup>3</sup>The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

- B. 135-68 Involved a two-part occupation.
  1. 135 B.C. to 31 B.C. Buildings destroyed by an earthquake in 31.
  2. 31 B.C. to 68 A.D.
- C. 68 BC-86 AD witnessed a Roman garrison in the area, the Vespasian X legion
  1. A few rooms were constructed.
  2. Arrowheads were found.
- D. 132-135 Second Jewish Revolt.

## II. Khirbet Qumran: The evidence.

- A. Coins
- B. Pottery
- C. The Cemetery: 1000 graves
  1. N-S orientation of graves
  2. No funerary offerings
  3. Men, women, no children
- D. The Scriptorium: not used for living quarters.
  1. Benches, tables, ink wells, hand basins.
  2. A gathering room.
- E. Large number of cisterns. (Cisterns are pits for holding water)

## III. The Caves and manuscripts of Qumran.

- A. There are 11 caves that were inhabited by hermits who were the keepers of the scrolls or "libraries".
  1. Cave four was the main library (over 100 scrolls).
  2. Caves 1, 3, and 4 appeared to be key hiding places.
- B. Over four hundred different manuscripts were represented by the scrolls.
  1. Ten complete scrolls
  2. Tens of thousands of fragments, some texts represented by only one fragment.
  3. Basically, three families of texts were represented.
    - Massoretic Texts-Jeremiah**
    - Samaritan Pentateuch**
    - Septuagint (LXX) Jeremiah**
    - (Note: Archer suggests that there was a fourth type—the neutral family which did not fit in any of the above three categories.)**
  4. Some of the biblical, or extra-biblical material that was found:

Pentateuch  
 Former Prophets  
 Latter Prophets  
 Hagiographa  
 Apocrypha  
 Pseudepigrapha  
 Secterian Literature

Commentaries

Other:

Liturgical/Sapiential  
 Mishmarot  
 A description of the Heavenly Jerusalem  
 Zodiac

### C. Dead Sea Scrolls (From the Wadi Qumran, northwest coast of the Dead Sea)

1. In 1947 an Arab shepherd by the name of Mohammad Dib was searching for a lost sheep in the Judean wilderness. He idly tossed a rock into a hole in the cliff above him and heard something break. Returning with help, they discovered both whole and fragments of scrolls.
2. The black market in antiquities was flourishing at the time, but the American School of Oriental Research and the Hebrew University finally acquired the scrolls which had been taken from the cave.
3. In all, the scrolls (along with fragments) were discovered in 11 different caves between 1947 and 1956, the largest group uncovered in 1952 in the cave designated as Qumran 4. That cave contained thousands of fragments from about 570 documents.
4. Many were contained in earthenware jars, though numerous fragments would be sifted from the dust.
5. Most were made of leather; one of copper, the "treasure scroll" describing riches buried throughout the Judean wilderness.

### D. Name and description of some of the major Scrolls.

1. St. Mark's Monastery Isaiah Scroll: 1QIs<sup>a</sup> or the great scroll of Isaiah. (150-100BC) Sloppily copied but with helpful correctives.
2. Manual of Discipline-rules and regulations of the Qumran community
3. Commentary on the Book of Habakkuk. Chapter 1 and 2 (100-50 BC.)  
**Allusion:** "But the righteous shall live by his faith."**Interpreted:** This concerns all who observe the Law in the house of Judah, whom God will deliver from the house of Judgement because of their suffering and because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.
4. Genesis Apocryphon: Apocryphal accounts of the patriarchs. a. Lamech accuses his wife of committing adultery with angels. b. Abraham dreams a dream in which his is told to tell his wife that she is his sister. Men come and see Sarah and praise her to the Pharaoh "And I, Abraham, wept aloud that night, I and my nephew Lot, because Sarai had been taken from me by force."
5. The Hebrew University Isaiah Scroll. IQIs<sup>b</sup> (50B.C.) Close to the MT than IQIsa.
6. IQ Leviticus fragments— possibly fourth century B.C.
7. 4Q Deuteronomy B—written in hemistichs as poetry, not as prose. Favors the LXX.
8. 4Q Samuel A-twenty seven fragments 100 B.C.
9. 4Q Samuel B- 225 B.C. more sparing in matres lectionis Consistently agrees with the LXX.
10. 4Q XII-A Minor prophets in a third century B.C. cursive.
11. 4Q Qoha second century cursive text of Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth-form qhl)
12. 4Q Paleo-Exodus<sup>m</sup>- Favors the Samaritan Pentateuch.
13. 4Q Paleo-Exodus<sup>l</sup>- Closely agrees with the Masoretic Text. (100 B.C.)
14. 7Q Daniel- few fragments of Daniel in 2<sup>nd</sup> century handwriting, including the transition from Hebrew to Aramaic in 2:4
15. 11Q Psalms 37 Psalms (4 fragments), 6 noncanonical psalms, and a prose section listing a number of Psalms written by David.

16. The War Scroll: "War of the sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness: The men of the Army shall be from forty to fifty years old; The inspectors of the camp shall be from fifty to sixty." "The officers shall be from forty to fifty; The despoilers of the slain...and those who furnish provisions shall be from twenty-five to thirty years old."
17. Thanksgiving Hymns.

#### IV. Doctrines of the Qumran Sect:

A. The sect believed that only through the observance and study of the law could its members expect union with God.

1. Evident from the sheer number of biblical commentaries.
2. The manual of discipline required that each group give over one third of the nights of the year to the study of the laws.
3. A return to the law of Moses was one of the objectives of the Qumran Community.

B. Only people *thought* by the community to be worthy of the law and to be worthy of eventual fellowship with God were members of the community.

1. Membership in the community meant election to the Group of the Saved.
2. Each member of the community was set aside by God, as one of the "children of Grace" and each found the fruits of grace in wisdom, justice, and sanctity.

C. Spiritual Guides led the community to salvation.

1. Moses; his name was holy.
2. Zadok, the anointed one, who presumably founded the sect.
3. The teacher of Righteousness was the third guide; only through faith in him and fidelity to his doctrine could a member be saved.

D. The community believed in divine grace and predestination.

1. There existed a clear division between God's elect and the damned.
2. Fellowship with God and salvation through divine grace is the result of absolute predestination.

E. Dualism: represented in the contrast between light and darkness.

1. Spirits of light and truth.
2. Man's membership determines his end.
3. Created by God in equal measure.
4. Angels involved in a war in heaven.
5. The Sons of Light should hate the Sons of Darkness
6. Men are tempted, but most overcome.

F. Signs of Grace:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Outward signs.

G. Creation

1. Mysterious, unknowable
2. Rule based on creation
3. Divine rule demonstrated in nature.

H. Immortality of the soul, but not the whole person. The believed in the immortality of the individual (based on the soul) and thus the eternal nature of the community.

I. Resurrection: None foreseen, because the end was thought to be near.

V. The significance of Qumran varies with the commentator:

A. Initially, many scholars assumed the scrolls and their contents as the product solely of the Qumran Community, and its ascetic Essenes who lived there during the first century A. D.

B. A few scholars saw in the community and the scrolls a distinct connection and commonality between “Christianity and Essenism”, that, in fact, the doctrines of Qumran represented Jesus more than the New Testament--that it was real Christianity. This theory has been discounted by the vast majority of objective observers.

C. A number of current scholars suggest that “The diversity of the Qumran literature points to a Jewish culture in the first century that was vibrantly imaginative and in the midst of a spiritual struggle as religious power began to move away from a hereditary priesthood toward a more intellectual rabbinical system.” Furthermore, it clearly reveals that many aspects of the New Testament reflect the intellectual framework of the first century rather than later Greek thought.

II. Clearly, from the Qumran, there were three to four main manuscript families (A45)

A. The proto-Masoretic, from which the consonantal text of our present day Hebrew is derived.

B. The proto-Septuagintal, the Hebrew vorlage of the original Greek translations that became the Septuagint.

C. The proto-Samaritan, forming the basis for the later Samaritan text of the Hebrew Pentateuch.

D. A neutral family, standing more or less midway among the conflicting traditions of the first three families.

II. The conclusion of all this textual evidence does not distract from the reliability and authority of the MT tradition, except for perhaps 1 and 2 Samuel (and perhaps some portions of Deuteronomy), for which we have for some reason an unusually defective tradition

III. The Nash Papyrus—the Decalog and the shema (Exodus 20: 1-17 and Deut. 4: 4-9) 100 to 50 BC Close to the MT it was discovered in the Fayyum and was never part of a scroll, but was a catechetical document

### ***Other Manuscript Evidence***

I. Post Christian Hebrew Manuscripts:

A. British Museum Oriental- A.D. 850, with vowel points from around 950.

B. Codex Cairensis (Cairo) Seized by the Crusaders from the Karite Jews in Palestine, but ended up in Karite hands in Cairo.

C. Aleppo Codex (Beroea- northern Syria)- A.D. 925, entire Old Testament, minus ¼ (Torah, SS, Qoheleth, Esther, Daniel, Ezra) The manuscript was burned in an Arab riot, which is why beginning and ending material is missing.

- D. Leningrad Codex- 916, latter prophets with Babylonian punctuation.
- E. Leningrad MS B-19A- 1010, a faithful copy of a 980 manuscript. It is the Basis for Kittel's Biblia Hebraica. Quite possibly to be joined by the Aleppo Codex (C)
- F. Samaritan Pentateuch- 1616, Damascus. Contains 6,000 variants (mostly minor) and 1900 places where it agrees with the LXX. It contains a number of sectarian insertions. Once thought to be of little value, in recent years it has been judged (by Kathleen Kenyon, among others) to be of value in textual criticism.

II. The first printed editions of the Hebrew Bible were produced in 1477, 1488, and 1525-1526.  
 III. Other early versions of the Old Testament vary widely in their quality and therefore their "textual weight."

#### IV. Greek Versions:

- A. The Septuagint- translated sometime between 250 and 150 B.C. is mentioned as early as 130-100 B.C. by Aristaeus of Philocrates. Tradition has it that either 70 (or 72) scholars produced the work in 70 days. However, this story which comes primarily from the Letter of Aristeas is almost certainly a fabrication. The production of the work probably took over 100 years. The Septuagint was accepted as the Christian Bible, and since the Apocryphal Books had been added to the Greek text, the Apocrypha became a part of much of Christian Canon (The Vulgate, which was translated from the Greek, includes the Apocrypha).
- B. Septuagintal Manuscripts include:
  1. Rylands Papyrus 458, including Deut 23-28, preserved in a mummy wrapping.
  2. Qumran 4- a Leviticus fragment on papyrus. Agrees well with the LXX, but uses IAO instead of kurios
  3. Chester Beatty Papyrus, 150, a papyrus codex, containing parts of Numbers and Deuteronomy, with glosses in Fayyumic Coptic.
  4. Papyrus 911, end of the third century, contains Gen 1-35 in a preHexaplaric text.
  5. Freer Greek Manuscript V, 250-300, in an Egyptian hand, the XII except for Hosea.
  6. The hexapla, 240 A.D., produced by Origen, was a work which placed six (hence, hexa) versions of the Old Testament in parallel.

|        |            |                |             |            |                |
|--------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Hebrew | Hebrew     | Literal        | Idiomatic   | Septuagint | Greek          |
|        | translated | Greek          | translation |            | translation of |
|        | by Greek   | translation of | of          |            | Theodotion     |
|        | letters    | Aquila         | Symmachus   |            |                |

- a. Never copied because of its voluminous nature.
  - b. The original does not exist But partial copies are extant: Codex Sarravianus; Codex Marahalianus.
  - c. Copied into the Syriac
7. Hesychian
  8. Lucianian
- } The translators of these work were martyred in 311
9. Codex Vaticanus (B) Pre-Origen LXX
  10. Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph)-mixed tradition
  11. Codex Alexandrinus (A)- Egyptian in origin

Summary: The LXX versions vary greatly in quality from manuscript, but the general tendency of the translation is to move from fidelity in the Pentateuch to paraphrase in the prophets.

- V. Significant later Greek versions bear the stamp of individual translators:
- A. Aquila, 130 A.D. strictly literal in character, survives only in quotations and fragments.
  - B. Symmachus, 170 A.D. good idiomatic Greek. Possibly a Samaritan convert to Judaism
  - C. Theodotion, 180 or 190, a revision of a text from A.D. 30-50, quite possibly a non-Septuagintal text.
- VI. The Aramaic Targums were instructional materials that originated in the Jewish synagogues in the Babylonian Exile. These were Hebrew texts that were read, paraphrased, and explained in the Aramaic.
- A. Initially these paraphrased explanations were transmitted orally.
  - B. After 138 B.C. they may have been written down. They are more valuable for the history of interpretation than for textual criticism.
- VII. The Latin Versions
- A. Old Latin Version, the translation of the Septuagint. Called the Itala
    1. Wurzburg Codex, 450 A.D.
    2. Lyons Codex, 650 A.D.
  - B. Jerome's Vulgate, 390-404. Jerome translated the Septuagint into Latin and published it in a parallel version with the Itala. Thus it became corrupt. It was expurgated in 1590, and amended in 1592.
- VIII. Syriac Versions: These were Christian translations in Syriac, an Eastern Aramaic Dialect. In doing so, they adopted an alphabet somewhat similar to the Arabic script. These translations were made from the Greek, but later the Syrian Christians came to believe that theirs were the originals from which the Greek translations came.
- A. Peshitta, (Simple) from the Hebrew to the LXX. Achieved official status about 400 A.D.
  - B. Syriac Hexapla: The translation of the fifth column of Origen's Hexapla (616)
- IX. Coptic (2<sup>nd</sup>), Ethiopic (4<sup>th</sup>), Arabic (from the LXX, ca. 930), Armenian (5<sup>th</sup>), Gothic (330 A.D) Translations
- X. The Polyglot Bibles were composed of the Hebrew Bible plus all the other available translations of the time.
- A. The Complutensian Polyglot (The earliest) was published in 1522
  - B. All the other polyglots built on the Complutensian, adding various translations or targums to the original

### ***Lower Criticism of the Old Testament Manuscripts***

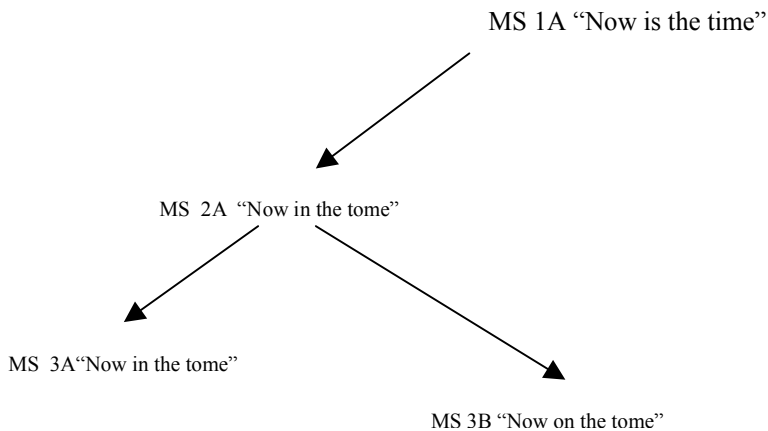
#### Twelve most common Manuscript Errors

- A. Haplography: Singular entry of a letter which should have been written twice.  
Letters → Letters
- B. Dittography: Writing twice that which should have been written only once.  
Fusion → Fusion
- C. Metathesis: Reversing the order of words or letters.  
Piece → Piece

- D. Fusion: Combining all or parts of two words into one.  
Any way → Anyway
- E. Fission: Dividing one word into two separate words.  
rarebit → rare bit
- F. Homophony: Substitution of a word that sounds like the one written.  
Whole → Hole
- G. Misreading letters. Confusion of letters with similar shapes.  
Top → Tap
- H. Vowel misreading: Misreading vowel letters as consonants.  
No parallel in English
- I. Homoeoarkton: Dropping of a line or a passage because the two adjoining lines have the same beginnings.  
May those who seek my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace.  
May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame. Ps 70:2-3  
Becomes  
May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame.
- J. Homoeoteleuton: Dropping of a line or a passage because the adjoining lines have the same endings. Same as I, except the ending of the lines are involved.
- K. Vowel point variations (600 A.D): Misreading weak vowels as actual consonants and changing the vowels to give a change in word meaning. Log → Leg
- L. Accidental omission of words in situations where no repetition is involved. I Samuel 13:1. (No number for age.)

Text families are determined through a variety of means: Calligraphy, orthography, writing technology, and errors (or textual similarities). Analysis works this way:

- A. Writing materials and technology have not remained constant through the centuries. Scrolls were made out of both papyrus or leather. Papyrus was first developed in Egypt, and some rolls of papyrus of more than 100 ft long have been found. The kind of papyrus, or the way the animal hides were tanned often helps date the scrolls
- B. The style of the alphabet and the form of the handwriting are also important in placing the date and source of the scroll. Handcopied alphabets changed over the centuries, but the shapes of the letters were remarkably consistent in any one period.
- C. Also, copists had very different ways of writing. The spacing between letters might be slightly different, or a copiest might form a letter with a specific peculiarity.
- D. Errors, or textual similarities (and differences) allow scholars to group scrolls into families. Because they were hand-copied, no two scrolls were exactly alike. They might contain spelling differences, omitted words, or different readings (See the section on manuscript errors). Texts that are quite similar in the ways noted above are said to be in textual "families", or traditions.
- E. Quite often the relationship between texts can be discerned. Say that MS-1 and MS-2 are very similar. They both contain many similar readings, spellings, and they can be dated closely in time. But T-2 has some changes that can only be explained as error that resulted when the copiest was copying from T-1. Here is a picture (very simplified of course) of how texts can be related.



In this little chart MS 1A has the reading “Now is the time”. When the copiest of 2A transfers the text, he writes “Now in the tome”, writing tome for time. The copiest of 3A copies the text faithfully, but 3B makes another change, “Now on the tome”. The similarities and differences of texts shows ancestry of manuscripts.

### **Canons of Textual Criticism**

Introduction: these “canons” or rules of textual criticism are listed in their general order of importance. However, in various cases each is subject to the others.

- I. Canon One: the Older reading is to be preferred.
  - A. However, the older manuscript may not be the most carefully copied manuscript.
  - B. This rule applies when the older MS is at least as reliable as the later MS and equally free from oddities or peculiarities.
- II. The more difficult reading is to be preferred. (Isaiah 53:3)
  - A. This applies as a generality because scribes were more apt to clarify or simplify the wording of the original.
  - B. However, the principle does not apply if:
    1. The difficulty arose from ignorance or inadvertance on the part of the copiest.
    2. The phrase or word does not make any sense, or directly contradicts the author’s clear meaning in other places.
- III. The shorter reading is to be preferred. Copiests were more likely to insert new materials than leave out any of the text before them. (Haplography or homoeoteleuton excluded.)
- IV. The reading that best explains all the variants is to be preferred. This assumes that the as the earlier text was the source of the divergent readings.
- V. The reading that has the widest geographical/family support is to be preferred. Generally, families of manuscripts were produced in specific geographic areas, and translations of those families came from relatively the same area. (Example: LXX → The Itala, the Coptic; where the Peshitta (“the simple”-Syriac Old Testament) and the Samaritan represent truly independent traditions.
- VI. The reading that most conforms to the style and diction of the author is to be preferred.
  - A. This is a statement of likelihood.
  - B. It has been overused in a rather arbitrary way by critical scholars.
- VII. The reading that reflects no doctrinal bias is to be preferred.

## **Summary of Textual Criticism**

1. Where the MT and other witnesses offer the same text and it is intelligible and sensible reading, keep it.
2. If there is a genuine difference between the MT and another manuscript tradition, preference should be given to the MT.
3. Where the MT is inferior (doubtful, impossible) give preference to the tradition that offers a satisfactory reading.
4. Where no witness offers a possible or probable text, a conjecture may legitimately be resorted to.
5. “In all textual-critical work, due regard must be given to the psychology of the scribe himself. ‘How must this error—if there is an error—have originated from his hand?’”

## **Notes on the Transmission of the Biblical Text**

- I. From the time of Ezra until about 200 A.D. the work of preserving the Hebrew text was the work of the “scribes”, called the *sopherim*. Sometime in the first century these copiers decided to count the verses, words, and letters of each book in the Old Testament, and to use those numbers as a check on the books that they were producing. If the number count did not match, something had been deleted, added, or changed in the copying.
  - A. The sopherim only worked with the consonantal text; vowel points were not invented until after 500 A.D.
  - B. The sopherim had a tendency to also change anthropomorphic idioms about God into forms that reflected their theology of the otherness of God.
- I. Along with the transmission of the Hebrew Bible, the Jews preserved a large amount of oral tradition relating to the interpretation of the Old Testament. These traditions are grouped together according to subject matter, date, and source.
  - A. The Midrash was a collected group of doctrinal and homiletical expositions on the Old Testament composed both in Hebrew and Aramaic, which were used in synagogue teaching. Individual expositions were themselves called midrashes (textual study or textual interpretation) and were brought together from about 100 B.C. to A.D. 300. It was composed of two sections, the Halakah, commentaries on the Law, and Haggada, a narrative commentary on the rest of the Old Testament.
  - B. The Talmud, composed from A.D. 100 to A.D. 500 is made up of two parts: The Mishna, a compendium of oral laws that (supposedly) went back to Moses, and the Gemara, an expanded commentary on the Mishna.
- II. The Massorettes, between A.D. 500 and 950, shaped the Hebrew Bible into what it is today.
  - A. They received the consonantal text of the Sopherim, and added the correct vowels and accents marks.
  - B. They applied a “moderate” (Archer, 70) amount of textual criticism to the texts with which they worked.
  - C. However, always reverent towards the texts they received, they worked out a system of *kethib* (K), which means “written” and *qere* (Q), which means loosely “should be read.” The most famous kethib-qere in scripture is the substitution of the vowels of adonay

(Lord) for the vowels of Yahweh, which produced what was taken in the English text to read Jehovah.

- D. In the margins of the text the Massorettes added notes about words and phrases. These notes were meant to clarify often very esoteric points about the text, or the occurrence of a term.
- E. The Massorettes also included the statistical counts that the scribes had put at the end of each book.
- F. The Massorettes and the sopherim preserved the Hebrew text with the highest degree of care, so much so that William F. Albright said “We may rest assured that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, though not infallible, has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other Near Eastern Literature.

### ***Further Aspects of the Old Testament Canon***

The Hebrew canon, as shown on page 16, is somewhat different from that which emerged in the Septuagint. In it twenty-four (Some sources suggested twenty-two) books are grouped under three headings: Law, Prophets, and Writings. In actual content, the books of the Hebrew Bible are the same as those accepted by the Protestant church since the Reformation. But the order of the books follows the same order as the books of the Vulgate, which was translated from the Septuagint. The relationship between these two arrangements, and how they came about provides interesting and useful insights into the canonization (from Gk. Kanon, “straight rod, or straight edge, or ruler) process through which our Bible came to be.

However, the Septuagint, contains fourteen additional books, commonly called the Apocrypha, which were not accepted into the Hebrew Bible and were not accepted as worthy of the canon (the accepted books of Scripture) in the post-Reformation period. The following discussion will first examine the ancient witnesses to the Masoretic Canon, the arguments against certain books, the “Antilegomena”, the arguments for and against the inclusion of the Apocrypha into the canon, and finally a survey of the ideas about how books were judged admissible to the canon.

#### Witnesses to the Canon

In the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, composed about 130 B.C., refers to the “Law, the Prophets, and the other books of our fathers”. Here the Kethubim (or Hagiographa) is referred to as “the othe Books of our fathers.” I Maccabees, composed about the same time places parts of Daniel and quotes from the Psalms also in the Kethubim. Luke 22:44 refers to the Old Testament as “the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

Josephus (A.D. 37-95), whose canon numbered 22, refers to “five books of Moses, thirteen books of the prophets, and the remaining books.” He also notes that “From Artaxerxes until out time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared to add anything to them, or take anything away from them, or to alter anything in them. As Archer points out Josephus makes three points:

1. Josephus divides the Hebrew canon along the lines of division found in the MT.
2. No writings after Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.) were accepted as authoritative, or canonical.

3. And thus, no additional materials from the period 425 B.C. to 90 A.D. were accepted into the scriptures.

In about A.D. 170 Bishop Melito of Sardis composed a list of the OT books that he accepted as authoritative. The list differed from today's canon in that it omitted Lamentations, Nehemiah, and Esther and included a book called Wisdom, which might have referred to the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. An explanation of the omission of Lamentations and Nehemiah is fairly straightforward. Lamentations was included in Jeremiah and Nehemiah was included in Ezra. The reason for Esther's omission is unknown. (A 80).

Origen catalogs twenty-four books in his Old Testament corpus; however, he included the Epistle of Jeremiah, which never included in either the Hebrew canon or the Apocrypha. Tertullian (A.D. 160-250) lists twenty-four books in the Old Testament. Jerome (A.D. 305-366) lists twenty-two, and places the books of the Apocrypha in a secondary position. (A 81)

### The Antilegomena

It is known that certain books were more or less contested in ancient times. These included Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Esther, Ezekiel, and Proverbs.

Ecclesiastes was criticized for its pessimism, its epicurean philosophy, and its denial of the life everlasting. However commentators finally allowed Ecclesiastes its special, relatively narrow purpose.

The Song of Songs (Canticles) was criticized for its sensual, almost erotic imagery. As early as Hillel, though, the book was seen as a metaphor of God's love affair with Israel (Re: Hosea?) and the church applied this hermeneutic to its relationship with Christ.

Esther was criticized for omitting the name of God. But as Archer notes, no book in the Old Testament is richer in the work and sovereignty of God.

Ezekiel fell under scrutiny because his account of the latter day temple (the one erected by Zerubbabel) differed with the details of the Mosaic tabernacle and the Solomonic temple in minor respects. This issue was resolved by positing that his temple might be a temple sometime in the future.

Proverbs was doubted because of apparent contradictions such as found in 26: 4-5. However, such contradictions result more from proverbs looking at the same issue from different perspectives.

The Antilegomena point to a very important fact which will be more fully discussed in "Tests of Canonicity", that is, the Hebrews of the Old and New Testament periods did read with a critical eye. Internal inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and a general incongruity with the Scriptures fully accepted were taken very seriously. While there is no evidence that all the books of the Old Testament were subjected to this analysis, it is clear that it was part of the process of canonization.

### The Apocrypha

Apocrypha means "hidden things", and can be used in at least two senses. Narrowly defined, it refers to the thirteen (13) books which came into some Bible versions through the Septuagint. (Archer states the number of Apocryphal books at 14, but it is unclear how he comes to this number.) More broadly defined, some writers have tended to refer to all Hebrew, Aramaic (and a few Greek) books from the two testamental periods that were not accepted into the Old or New Testament. This usage of the word is somewhat confusing because it includes the books

that are called the Pseudipigrapha, or false writings, which were mostly anonymous. The ancient rabbis called the intertestamental books not accepted into the canon the “outside books.”

A standard listing of apocryphal books includes: I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the rest of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Ben Sirach), Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the Additions of Daniel, the Prayer of Manasses, and I and II Maccabees.

Three arguments are typically used to prove that the Apocrypha should be included in the canon.

1. The apocrypha was in the early versions of the Bible.
2. Since the New Testament writers quote from the Septuagint, and the Septuagint contained the Apocrypha, the New Testament writers accepted that the Apocrypha was a part of the canon.
3. The Church Fathers quoted from these books as authoritative.

Archer counters with these arguments with these points:

1. In reference to one, all the versions that have the Apocrypha are traceable back to the Septuagint.
2. With regards to two, quoting from the Septuagint doesn't endorse all of the Septuagint. The New Testament quotes pagan writers, but that doesn't mean that it endorses the work of Arastur or Meander.
3. In the third case, some early Christian writers quote from the books, but not all did. In fact, a thinker like Athanasius affirms that the extrabiblical books are not in the canon, but are to be read.

### Tests of Canonicity

From the preceding discussions, it must be observed that the books of the Bible as we know it in the Hebrew and Protestant traditions was not an irrational process. Texts were questioned, and books were rejected as substandard to that which Scripture should be. Thus, Archer's “true test” of canonicity must be carefully considered.

Archer is correct in saying that “The only true test of canonicity is the testimony of God the Holy Spirit to the authority of His own word”, but it is clear from the arguments against books (the Antilegomena) that the earliest readers read at least the prophets and the writings with a critical eye.

Historically, different scholars (both liberal and conservative) have proposed different criteria for the admission of books to the canon. In all likelihood, each of these theories contains an element of truth. Some of these theorists include:

- A. J. G. Eichorn (1780) suggested that age was the best test for canonicity. It is quite true that books composed after Malachi were not considered canonical. So age was a consideration, but not the whole consideration. The Old Testament mentions books like the Book of Jashar. Certainly these books were ancient, but they were not included in the canon.
- B. F. Hitzig (1850) used language as a test. Undoubtedly this was a consideration, but it probably was a cultural accident rather than a defining characteristic.
- C. G. Wildeboer suggested that “conformity to the Torah” was in a key factor. Again, this seems self-evident. The Pentateuch, once established, was almost certainly the standard against which all books were unconsciously measured. Surely no book would have been accepted that had a sub-Mosaic view of God.

## History of the Documentary Theory of the Pentateuch

Introduction: With the exception of a few Jewish scholars such as Benedict Spinoza the Christian church has taken at face value the traditional claim that the first five books of the Bible were composed by Moses.

Spinoza was an example of a rationalist (in fact he was a pantheist) who on the basis of style and content questioned whether Moses was the source of the Pentateuch. Stylistic issues such as the use of the third person, he, in referring to Moses, and content questions like the report of the death of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy led Spinoza (1670) to suggest Ezra as the final composer of the Pentateuch.

Two hundred years later critical scholars would raise many of the same questions and come to amazingly similar answers.

### ***The Documentary Hypothesis***

The Documentary Hypothesis says that many authors used several different written sources (documents) to compose the Pentateuch over a period of five centuries, long after the time of Moses.

#### History of the Documentary Hypothesis, Early Stages

Most of the elements of the Documentary Hypothesis were in place before its most famous formulation by Julius Wellhausen in 1876/1878.

Jean Astruc, a French physician, conceived that Moses had used two different written sources in composing Genesis. Astruc came to this conclusion based on how the names of God, Elohim and Jehovah, were used in the first chapters of the book.

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn divided the book of Genesis and part of Exodus into Jahwist and Elohist sources, and sought to develop the characteristics of each. At first he considered Moses to be the editor who compiled these two sources. But under the pressure of the growing view that the Pentateuch was written after the time of Moses, he extended the J-E division through much of the Pentateuch.

#### History of the Documentary Hypothesis, Fragment or Supplement Theories

Willem De Wette in 1805 set out the view that all the Pentateuch came from the period after David, but in particular, Deuteronomy came from the period of Josiah (2 Kings 22), and was a book written to serve the governmental programme of reform and centralization. It became the D document. However, De Wette emphasized that the Pentateuch was composed more of fragments than from source documents.

Johann Vater adopted Alexander Geddes views and proposed that the book of Genesis into 39 fragments, some of which dated back to the Mosaic age, but which were not combined and arranged [redacted] into its final arrangement until the Babylonian Exile (587-538). Vater adopted this late date because of the existence of passages like Lev. 26: 27-45 and Deut. 28: 58-63, which predicted the Babylonian captivity and the later restoration from Exile. Vater reasoned first that predictive prophecy was impossible and secondly, that the historical records of Judges, Samuel, and Kings did not indicate that the Law of Moses existed during that period.

Friederich Bleek, in 1822, extended the method of literary source analysis to the book of Joshua. His emphasis on the literary characteristics of the first six books of the canon would popularize the concept of "the Hexateuch." Bleek's approach was much more conservative than others' of the period, but he still suggested that the books of Moses were first "supplemented and compiled" in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and later redacted (edited and arranged) in Josiah's time.

Franz Delitzsch, even more conservative than Ewald and Bleek, said that the Pentateuch was composed of several strands. Materials attributed to Moses that were actually his. Laws that were authentic Mosaic tradition, which were not codified by the priests until after the conquest of Canaan. A non-Mosaic part of document E, which was (probably) composed by Eleazar, third son of Aaron, who also incorporated the book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:23-23:33). An even later commentator supplemented the text, adding Deuteronomy to it. Together with Karl Friedrich Keil, Delitzsch published a series of commentaries that are still used today.

### History of the Documentary Hypothesis, the “Crystallization Theory”

Heinrich Ewald changed his position in the period from 1823 to 1840. Beginning with a “fragmentary” approach that stressed additions to the initial material, he finally posited that successive contributors actually functioned as editors of the Mosaic “corpus” (work) “reworking the entire body of materials rather than simply adding his own isolated contributions.” (Archer, 92)

### History of the Documentary Hypothesis, the Conservative Response

Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (The Genuineness of the Pentateuch, 1847) refuted the standard arguments for source criticism and strongly influenced Friedrich Keil. Keil would become the foremost German speaking conservative of the latter half of the nineteenth century. At Princeton University Joseph Addison Alexander and William Henry Green substantially criticized the “Documentarian School”, arguments that Archer suggests have never been successfully refuted by liberals.

### History of the Documentary Hypothesis, Further Developments

Hermann Hupfield re-evaluated the sources as they were described at the time, separating the “E” document into E1 and E2. Later E1 would be called P (by Graf, see below) and E2, simply E. The order of the documents would finally be PEJD. Hupfield also invented a “Final Redactor who rearranged and supplemented the books from Genesis through Numbers. As Archer points out, this redactor could be blamed for all the situations in which the data did not fit the theory.

Karl Heinrich Graf divided P into two streams, the historical and the legal. He claimed that the historical was very early, giving it the status of being first in the order of the documents, but the Priestly legal work was late, being from the time of the exile (587-539).

Abraham Kuenen argued that since the P document was a unity, and since at least part of it (the legislative part) had been dated in the exilic or post-exilic times by Graf, the whole document must be from that period. Assuming that P was indeed late, the order of the documents constituting the Pentateuch/Hexateuch complex was J, E, D, P. Two assumptions contained in the theory now became explicit:

The document order was based on an evolutionary theory of religion. This theory says that the earliest Israelite religion had an anthropomorphic view of God and was quite primitive in its ethical understanding. With the passing of time the Israelite prophets taught a higher view of God and a more refined system of ethics. Thus, the religion of Israel went from “primitive animism to sophisticated monotheism.”

Secondly, the entire Pentateuch was finally assembled by Ezra for the public reading ceremony mentioned in Nehemiah 8. “J” had originated in the earliest of times; E had been added later; D came in the time of Josiah; and P was formulated from the time of Ezekiel onwards. H (the Holiness Code of Lev. 17-26) came from Ezekiel’s time and the rest of P originated in the late sixth or early fifth century.

## History of the Documentary Hypothesis, Julius Wellhausen and afterwards

Julius Wellhausen became the most persuasive exponent of the Documentary Theory. In 1876 he published *The Composition of the Hexateuch*. Though the work made no significant new changes in what had gone before, it became the most influential work of its time in its argument for the acceptance of the JEDP sequence, an argument based primarily on an evolutionary understanding of religion. Wellhausen's (and Graf's) names have remained affixed to the theory until this day.

Most of the scholarship in the decades that followed has been a footnote to Wellhausen's argument. William Robertson Smith and Samuel R. Driver transmitted the theory to the English-speaking world. Even English Evangelicals like George Adam Smith adopted the approach. In the U.S. Charles Augustus Briggs and Henry Preserved Smith championed the theory.

## History of the Documentary Hypothesis: Its Continued Acceptance

Though the documentary hypothesis "has been rejected in whole or in part", it continues to be accepted as fact in most nonconservative institutions, and taught in "more or less" conservative schools of old line denominations. (Archer 96,97) However, in recent decades the Documentary Hypothesis has been challenged by and sometimes synthesized with another type of analysis, the Form Critical approach. This will be discussed in following chapters. In the theory the documents can be summarized this way:

"J" was written about 850 BC by an unknown writer in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Interested in personal biography, he portrayed God in anthropomorphic terms. Interested in ethics and theological reflection, he had little interest in sacrifice or ritual.

"E" was written about 750 BC emphasized more on concrete particulars, represented God as communicating through dreams and visions, and in the books of Exodus through Numbers exalts Moses as a miracle worker.

"D", composed under the direction of Hilkiyah during the revival of 621 BC spoke against local sanctuaries in favor of the temple in Jerusalem. Strongly influenced by the prophetic movement, the same school edited Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

"P" was composed in many stages, beginning in the time of Ezekiel, to Ezra. The earliest part of P was the Holiness Code (Lev 17-26) Concerned with a systematic account of the Israelite theocracy, it shows interest in origins, genealogical lists, and details of sacrifice and ritual

## The Development of the Documentary Hypothesis: A Summary

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Jean Astruc (1753) | Analyzes the sources from which Moses wrote into J, E<br>Later theories place J at 850 BC and E at 750 BC         |
| De Wette (1805)    | Discovers the "D" document, supposedly coming from the time of Josiah (621)                                       |
| Hupfeld (1853)     | Divides E into E1 and E2. E1 becomes P and E2 remains E   |
| Graf (1866)        | Conceives of P as two-fold. The early part is ancient. The latter part comes from the time of the exile (587-539) |
| Wellhausen ((1876) | Restated the Documentary Theory in its final form with great skill and persuasiveness                             |

## Old Testament Higher Criticism in the Twentieth Century

### ***In the last century much higher criticism had modified the Documentary Hypothesis in limited ways.***

- I. Otto Eisfeldt (Hexateuchsynopse-1922) claimed that a Lay Source (L) existed within J. This L reflected a nomadic, Rechabite ideal (2 Kings 10; Jeremiah 35: 1-19), completely hostile to the Canaanite way of life.
- II. Julius Morgenstern perceived Kenite document (K), which described details in the life of Moses and relations between the Israelites and Kenites.
- III. Robert Pfeiffer claims to have discovered a document in J and E that he names S, for Mount Seir, which was composed during the reign of Solomon

### ***However, the overall trend in the twentieth century has been to repudiate the five pillars of the hypothesis.***

- I. The criterion of divine names (Jahweh and Elohim) as an indication of diverse authorship.
- II. The origin of J, E, P as separate written documents, composed at different periods of time
- III. The priority of J to E in time of composition.
- IV. The separate origin of E as distinct from J
- V. The origin of D in the reign of Josiah (621 BC)

### **Against the criterion of divine names that delineates the J,E,D,P source documents.**

- I. In 1893 August Klostermann rejected the inerrancy of the Masoretic Hebrew text in the transmission of the divine names.
- II. Johannes Dahse showed that the LXX had non-corresponding names in “no less than 180 cases.” This means that the MT is not sufficiently inerrant in the textual transmission of the names to serve as the basis for such subtle and precise source division as the Documentarians have attempted.
- III. Harold M. Wiener also argued in 1909 that the names were not practical and safe way of deciding source division. He also pointed out that the “so-called disagreements between various laws could be easily reconciled, and therefore did not require diversity of authorship.
- IV. B. D. Eerdmans, still depending heavily on comparative religion techniques, rejected the Source theory in favor of a primitive polytheistic background of Genesis that indicated a far older background to Genesis than either 850 or 750 B. C.

### **Against the origin of J, E, and P as separate written documents, composed at different periods of time.**

- I. Against the Origin of J, E, and P as Separate source Documents Hermann Gunkel’s development of Form Criticism demonstrated that the JEP analysis was the product of men who simply did not understand how ancient literature like the Torah originated.
- II. Max Lohr, through a series of meticulous exegetical studies of the “P” passages demonstrated that the independent existence of such a source could not be established.
- III. Johannes Pederson rejected Wellhausen Source Criticism as inadequate to describe the culture of the ancient Hebrews.

- IV. Ivan Egnell (1945) argued that there never were any parallel continuous documents of prior origin from which the Torah was finally composed in its postexilic form. Moreover, the LXX text shows that the divine names are unsound criteria for Source Division. “We must understand that the true explanation for the usage of these names is to be found in the context in which they occur, for it is the context that determines which name is most important.
- V. Wilhelm Moeller demonstrated that Deuteronomy contains numerous references to Genesis through Numbers, which presupposes their existence prior to the composition of Deuteronomy, and their availability to the author himself.
- VI. Yehezkel Kaufmann argued (1946) that monotheism characterized Israel’s religion from the beginning.

#### Against the Priority of J to E

- I. R.H. Kennett (1920) argued that E was the earliest of the documents, written in Northern Israel about 650, for the mixed population settled in the land. Subsequently, J was written as a response to Josiah’s reform emphasis on the priority of the Jerusalem temple.

#### Against the Independent Existence of E as a Document Later Than J

- I. Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph argued (1933) that Genesis has only one writer (J), with a later editor (E) adding perhaps a few sections to the work. P, in their view, composed no story at all; this writer recorded legislation and wrote doctrinal sections. (Gen. 1 and 17)

#### Criticisms of the date of Deuteronomy (This is only a sampling of the views presented in the book.

- I. Martin Kegel argued in 1919 that since that the errant influential leaders in Josiah day did not raise the issue of the genuineness of the book of Deuteronomy, the book must have “been a very ancient book indeed by Josiah’s time.”
- II. In 1922 Gustav Holscher suggested that the conditions at the time of Josiah would not have supported a single sanctuary law, and the enforcement of such a law would have been impractical before the restoration of the exiles from Babylon. Thus Deuteronomy was drawn up around the time of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah.

Conclusion: In one way or another, most of these critics have undermined or even invalidated the Documentary Hypothesis, but have shown no tendency to embrace a conservative position. On the contrary, they have on the whole proposed that the books of the Pentateuch were written down around the year 500 BC, or even later.

### The Authorship of the Pentateuch

#### ***Weaknesses and Fallacies in the Wellhausen Theory***

- I. The documentary Theory has been Characterized by a subtle species of circular reasoning. I uses the premiss that “there is no such thing as supernatural revelation” to prove its conclusion “there is no such thing as supernatural revelation.”
- II. The Wellhausen Theory was allegedly based on the evidence of the text itself, and yet the evidence of the text was consistently evaded whenever it happens to go counter to

- the theory. The elusive Redactor or Interpolator are called upon to reconcile any problem with the facts.
- III. The Documentarians treat Hebrew authors differently from any other writers in history. The Hebrew writers were incapable of writing in different styles, using different names for God, etc. This is contrary to every known literature on earth.
  - IV. Subjective bias is shown in the treatment of Hebrew Scriptures as archaeological evidence. Pagan documents are seen to be more credible than the Hebrew Bible.
  - V. Wellhausen assumed that Israel's religion was purely human in origin, and was to be evaluated on the basis of evolution. However, no other religion (except offshoots of the Hebrew faith) has actually evolved into monotheism.
  - VI. It is assumed that text "discrepancies" cannot be reconciled, and that they represent different sources.
  - VII. Repetition and duplication, inspite of the fact that other ancient Semitic literatures show the same characteristics, necessarily indicate diverse authorship.
  - VIII. Critics, who have no other extant Hebrew literature, assume that they can reliably date documents and ammend words and whole phrases whenever the sense does not suit their ideas.
  - IX. Critics also assume that they can more reliably reconstruct the way things happened in the Old Testament period (3400 years later) than the writers of the Old Testament itself.(600 to 1000 years later by the critics' own dating)''''''

## Evidence for the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch

### ***Witness of Scripture:***

- I. In the Pentateuch itself we find five clear references to Moses witing all or parts of the it.
  - Exod 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."
  - Exod 24:4 Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.
  - Exod 34:27 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel."
  - Num 33:1-2 Here are the stages in the journey of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt by divisions under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. At the LORD's command Moses recorded the stages in their journey. This is their journey by stages:
  - Deut 31:9 So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.
  - Deut 31:11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing.
- II. Throughout the Old Testament we find references to books already written or Moses' authorship of the law (torah).
  - Josh 1:7-8 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

- Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.
- Josh 8:30-31 Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses-- an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings.
- I King 2:1-3 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.
- "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go,
- II Ki 14:5-6 After the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."
- II Ki 21:8 I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them."

III. The New Testament strongly affirms the law's Mosaic authorship.

- Matt 19:8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.
- John 5:46-47 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"
- John 7:19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"
- Acts 3:22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.
- Rom 10:5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

***The Internal Evidence of Scripture:***

- I. Eyewitness details appear in the account of the exodus which suggest actual participants in the event. Ex: Exodus 15: 27 "12 fountains and seventy palm trees at Elim"
- II. The author of Genesis and Exodus shows a intimate acquaintance with Egypt. He is familiar with Egyptian names, uses "a greater percentage of Egyptian words than anywhere else in the Old Testament.
- III. The author of the Torah demonstrates a foreign or "extra-Palestinian" perspective on Canaan. The weather and seasons of the narrative are Egyptian and the flora and fauna are distinctly Egyptian and Sinaitic. Exodus has many references to locations along the route of wandering, but the references to Palestinian geography are described by a comparison to some feature of Egyptian geography.

- IV. The setting of Exodus through Numbers is clearly that of the desert, not farms and pastureland of hundreds of years later. The narrative includes exact prescriptions for the tent of meeting and the location of the tribes around it. The scapegoat is sent into the desert. (Lev. 16:10) Instructions are given about designating a place for relieving themselves. (Ex. 23:12) The exact order of march is given in Numbers 10: 14-20.
- V. Archaic customs which ceased towards the end of the second millennium B.C. are mentioned. Many of these customs were confirmed at Nuzi. Abraham fathered Ismael (a legitimate child) through Sarah's handmaiden. Isaac's oral will was valid. The possession of the family teraphim guaranteed the right of inheritance. Hittite sources document the customs around the sale of the cave of Machpelah to Abraham
- VI. Significant examples of archaic language are found. However, scholars have suggested that the language of the Pentateuch is not different enough for it to have been written centuries earlier than, say, Amos or Isaiah. There are two answers to this object. First, the written language was limited to the consonantal text, and that natural language development could have gone on without significantly changing the traditional text. Secondly, a written Torah was
- VII. The Pentateuch has an order and harmony of arrangement which points to a single, Mosaic authorship.

### ***Moses Qualifications:***

- I. Moses' Cultural Background: Egypt was an extremely literate and sophisticated culture, with a great emphasis on writing that went back to its first dynasties. The first and most important inscriptions were written on stone as remembrances of military victories or pharaonic accomplishments.
- II. Moses' Education would have been in the court of "Egypt where he would have had the finest education that could be found anywhere. He would have been trained in writing, literature, law, and wisdom. He would have studied about the world under the finest teachers. In addition, he would have learned from his own people all the stories of the patriarchs, and about the culture of the civilization from where they came.
- III. Moses' Experience in the desert stretched out over 40 years—before he went back to Egypt to deliver his people. Afterwards, he spent 40 tedious years in the desert wanderings. There is no doubt that he could have written many books as he experienced and meditated on what God had done and was doing in Israel's life.

### **The Pentateuch and Archaeological Evidence**

Though the interpretation of some of the archaeological discoveries in the last century are disputed, it is fair to say that the overwhelming majority of archaeological finds point to the antiquity and accuracy of the Pentateuch. Most of this information was not available in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Old Testament literary theories were being developed. Many of these literary theories were based on assumptions that have been proven false by archaeological evidence. Archer organizes the evidence around those assumptions and demonstrates how the evidence contradicts the assumption.

**Assumption 1: Writing was unknown in Israel prior to c. 1000.**

We will consider instances of writing (from the earliest to the latest period) which demonstrate that writing was established in Palestine as early as 1500 B.C.

- I. The alphabetic inscriptions at the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim dating from 1500 BC precursored the Phoenician alphabet. It was used by Semitic miners who were employed by Egypt and who were possibly Hyksos slaves who had been expelled by Egypt. Also, potsherd inscriptions bearing the same script were found at Hazor. This points to the widespread use of the alphabetic script in Palestine
- II. The Ugaritic or Ras Shamra Tablets, dating from around 1400 B.C. These documents were written in the closest known language to Hebrew, and consisted of poetry dedicated to Canaanite gods. However, the crucial point is that they contained several terms relating to worship that Wellhausen attributed to post-exilic times.
- III. The earliest Hebrew document so far found is a school boy's exercise, called the Gezer Calendar. By comparing it to the scripts of surrounding countries we know it dates from about 925 B.C. It demonstrates that writing was so widespread that children in outlying areas were being taught how to write.

**Assumption 2: The Accounts of Abraham are Untrustworthy, Even Unhistorical**

- I. Precisely during the Abrahamic age, Ur III was a large and flourishing city with an advanced civilization. The average middle-class citizen lived in houses of ten to twenty rooms. Children were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion
- II. The proper name or variants of Abram have been discovered on tablets from the sixteenth century BC: *Abarama* or *Abamrama*
- III. Excavations demonstrate that Shechem and Bethel were inhabited during Abram's time. Later during the 12<sup>th</sup> century the cities would be desolate. A 9<sup>th</sup> century writer have likely represented the cities as being abandoned.
- IV. Nelson Gluek has uncovered more than seventy inhabitation sites in the Jordan valley, some dating to 3000 BC. Genesis 13 is an accurate picture of the valley's population during Abraham's time.
- V. With regards to Genesis 14, inscriptional data shows that Cheorlaomer, King of Elam, did establish a suzerainty relationship with Sumer and Akkad, that the names of the invading kings were from c. 2000, and that transportation routes from Mesopotamia to Palestine were adequate enough for wagon transport.
- VI. The Mari Tablets reveal the existence of the city of Nakhur (after Nahor, Genesis 24:10, 11:27), mention the Habiru (probably the Akkadian form of the Canaanite 'Ibri'm. These peoples were warlike "wanderers" or "people from the other side" (abar "cross over"). But it is not clear whether they were ethnically related to Abraham's family.
- VII. The Nuzi tablets, found at Nuzi on the Tigris in 1925, reveal many customs that are similar or even identical to the customs of the patriarchs. Examples of these might include the servant Eliezer as the "son of the house" (Gen. 15:2), the legitimacy of selling one's birthright (Genesis 25: 33); the binding character of a deathbed will; the right of owner of the family teraphim (or household gods) to the family's estate. However, though the methodology used in generalizing from a few selected Nuzi tablets has been severely criticized, many parallels in the legal texts to the patriarchal customs have been validated.

- VIII. The Hittite legal code states that the owner of an entire tract of land is required to perform the ilku, or feudal service, which according to Archer would almost certainly have required pagan religious services. Abraham gracefully declined.
- IX. Camels were not thought to have been domesticated before the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but further evidence shows that camels were useful animals as early as the 25<sup>th</sup> century BC.

***Assumption 3: The Laws of Israel were too advanced for the Mosaic Age***

- I. Many of the laws in the Pentateuch, particularly the laws in the covenant code, have parallel laws in the Code of Hammurabi. However, because of the different religious context the differences between the Torah and the Code of Hammurabi are more striking than the similarities.
- II. The Ras Shamra Tablets (1400 BC or earlier) mention many technical cultic terms for sacrifice (offerings made by fire, peace offering, sin offering, trespass offering, and even possibly heave offering). It also stipulate that boiling a kid in its mother's milk was an acceptable (magical?) way to approach a god. Hence it was prohibited in the Old Testament (Exodus 23:19; 34:26; and Deut 14: 21)
- III. Studies of the law codes of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, as well as the underlying legal assumptions of the Book of the Dead have demonstrated that standards and ideals of this period were often high indeed.
- IV. Lastly, the covenant framework of Exodus and Deuteronomy reflect quite clearly the eight points of the Syro-Anatolian treaties of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> BC, which were preserved in the Hittite archives at Boghazkoy. The structure of the Assyrian, Aramaic, and Phoenician treaties of the 8<sup>th</sup> century are quite different.

***Assumption 4: The Account of the Conquest of Transjordan is unhistorical***

- I. The Egyptian Execration Texts of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1900-1800 BC) confirm the political situation in Palestine during the period of the Pentateuch and Joshua.
- II. The Tell el-Amarna Tablets (1400-1370 BC) tell of both "fierce" invasions, disunity of the kings of Canaan (often of a city or city state), and their tendency to forsake their allegiance to Egypt.
- III. The "Israel" Stela of King Merneptah (1229 BC) which tells affirms that Israelites were in control of parts of the land by that time.

***Elba***

The ancient Tell Mardikh, 70 km south of Aleppo, was discovered to be the ancient city of Elba, which arose as early as 3500 B.C. Further excavations in 1974 revealed a library that contained more than 14,000 tablets, or tablet fragments, some of which dated before 2250 B.C. The language of the tablets was a remarkable synthesis of Akkadian syntax and Canaanite vocabulary. The tablets revealed some points that are relevant to the Old Testament:

- I. Many of the names of the kings and leading men of Elba bore a remarkable resemblance to names that were later used by the Hebrews themselves.
- II. Trade relations were maintained with cities like Dor, Hazor, Megiddo, Shalem (Jerusalem), Gaza, and Ashtaroth were mentioned in the tablets.
- III. Of particular interest in the trading list were the cities of Si-da-mu-ki and Sa-bi-im, which can be identified with Sodom and Zeboim, the cities destroyed by God in Genesis

## Genesis (From the Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית, or “in the beginning”)

### Outline of Genesis

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| I. The Beginning of Mankind           | 1:1-11:32   |
| A. Creation                           | 1:1-2:25    |
| B. Fall of Man and its Consequences   | 3:1-4:26    |
| C. Genealogy of the line of Faith     | 5:1-32      |
| D. The Flood                          | 6:1-9:17    |
| E. Genealogy of Noah’s Descendants    | 9:18-10:32  |
| F. The tower of Babel and the nations | 11:1-9      |
| II. The Genealogy and Life of Abraham | 11:10-25:18 |
| III. The Life of Isaac                | 25:19-26:35 |
| IV. The Life of Jacob (Israel)        | 27:1-37:1   |
| V. The Life of Joseph                 | 37:2-50:26  |

### Structure of Genesis

- I. The Hebrew Term toledot (“generation, offspring, descendants”) is used to introduce sections of the book (And possibly used to summarize what has proceeded.) In the NIV this word is translated “This is the account”. It likely reflects the very ancient structure of part of the book. It is possible that these chapters of Genesis initially existed in the form of ten tablets
  - A. Gen. 2:4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—
  - B. Gen. 5:1 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.
  - C. Gen. 6:9 This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.
  - D. Gen. 10:1 This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.
  - E. Gen. 11:10 This is the account of Shem. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad.
  - F. Gen. 11:27 This is the account of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot.
  - G. Gen. 25:12 This is the account of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's maidservant, Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham.
  - H. Gen. 25:19 This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac,
  - I. Gen. 36:9 This is the account of Esau (that is, Edom).
  - J. Gen. 37:2 This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.
  
- II. Within this framework, genealogies are treated systematically, moving from a secondary line to a primary line.
  - A. Cain’s line (4: 17-24) is mentioned before Seth’s (4: 25-26)
  - B. Japheth’s line (10: 1-4; 10: 6-8) is mentioned before Shem’s ((10: 20-22)
  - C. Lot and Ishmael’s line (19:29-30; 25: 12-15) is treated before Isaac’s line ((25:19)
  - D. Esau’s line (36: 1-10) before Jacob’s line (37:2)

- III. The primary concern of Genesis is not so much on the events from Chapters 1-12, but the developments from Chapter 12 onward. If Genesis 3-11 is a description of the problem of man's fall, then Genesis 12-50 is the beginning of the solution. The whole patriarchal section may be read as God's plan of redemption through one family (and eventually one person out of the family) for the sin-infested world of Genesis 3-11.

#### The Creation Story: Critical Issues

The Bible is unique in its description of the beginning of all things. The creator God does not fashion the world from himself. He is entirely separate from his creation. There is no pantheism or panentheism here. The world that he creates is not evil. It is good. There is no dualism here. The biblical account is a simple, elegant description of how everything came to be that is increasingly reconcilable with developing scientific knowledge.

- A. The most famous ANE "parallel" to the biblical account is the *Enuma Elish*, probably written before the time of Hammurabi (c. 1750 BC), but found in the library of Ashurbanipal (c. 640) Significant points of difference from the Genesis account include:

1. The two primordial forces were Apsu (fresh water) and Tiamat (saltwater), who brought forth a whole pantheon of gods, who plotted against other gods who had also been begotten into existence. The murder of Apsu, Tiamat's consort, provoked war in "heaven" with Marduk as the protagonist of Ea and Enlil.
2. The material comprising celestial bodies, land, and the such came from the corpse of Tiamat. Mankind, who would be the servant of the gods "that they might be at ease", was made from the blood of Kingu, who had incited Tiamat to rebel.
3. The points of contact between Enuma Elish ("When on high") and Genesis 1 occur at the end of Tablet IV and the beginning of Tablet V. However, the stages of creation come from the dead body of Tiamat.
4. The purpose of the account is to demonstrate the superiority of Marduk, god of Babylon over Mesopotamia and the other gods.

#### B. Scientific Evidence

1. "The Big Bang Theory": The theory, now accepted as a valid explanation of the universe's beginning says that somewhere between 15 and 22 billion years ago a great cosmic "explosion" unlike any explosion known in the present universe occurred. In less than one second ( $10^{-43}$  seconds) all matter and energy, as well as space and time were created. (see II,C)
    - a. In 1964 Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson successfully demonstrated that the predicted background radiation from the "big bang" did in fact exist.
    - b. Since then eight subsequent discoveries have shown beyond a "reasonable doubt" that the "big bang" theory is an accurate picture of the beginning of all things. It shows that the universe is not eternal, and that it had a beginning that we cannot penetrate or understand. At the instant of the beginning, the laws of this universe were not operative. Thus, by definition, the beginning of all things was a miracle.
  2. Molecular Biology has revealed what has been called "Darwin's Black Box," that is, the irreducible complexity of cellular systems. Life could not have "just happened". The machinery of life requires a designer. First argued by William Paley in *Natural Theology* in 1802, this view was vigorously attacked (and supposedly refuted) during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But as biologists have more and more understood the extreme irreducible complexity of the molecular foundations of life, it has become increasingly clear that life could not have been created by random mutation.
- C. *Creatio ex Nihilo* is the Christian doctrine that God created everything "out of nothing." Many passages in Scripture hint at this doctrine but three passages explicitly teach the truth.

In Romans 4: 17 Paul says that God “calls into existence the things that do not exist.”(RSV) In 2 Corinthians God said, “Let light shine out of darkness.” And in Hebrews 11:3 the writer that God created the world by his word “so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.” Significant conclusions follow from creation from nothing.

1. Nothing is the absence of any reality, physical or spiritual. God does not work with something called “chaos.” “God said, “Let there be light”, and there was light.
2. God does not involve himself, or his own being in the process. It is not part of him, nor is it an emanation from him.
3. God created everything. The entirety of reality as we know it came into existence through his act. ‘ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ refers to the totality of all, i. e., that which occurred at the “big bang.” “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3)
4. There is no dualism in God’s creation, or anything without spiritual significance. God saw all that he had created and declared that it was good (Genesis 1: 31)
5. The purpose of creation is to reveal God’s glory (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1: 20-23)

The age of the Universe and the earth is a crucial battleground between science and those who hold to “creation science” and who hold to a young earth (10,000 Years?). The young earth concept certainly owes much to the work of James Ussher (1581-1656) who popularized the idea that the world was created on 4004 BC But using scientific data of following kind, science estimates that the earth is 5 billion years old, and the universe is somewhere in the vicinity of 15-22 billion years old.

***Geological Time is predicated on a concept known as the uniformitarian theory. Simply put, this is the view that rate of change in various aspects of earth’s surface have proceeded at a relatively constant rate over the lifetime of the earth. However, there are those who dispute this basic assumption. They point to the evidences for massive catastrophes that have affected the rate at which the earth has changed.***

***Radioactive Decay of various isotopes represents another type of evidence for dating physical things, and the earth as a whole. Radioactive material decomposes, going from one type of material (called isotopes) to another, and finally to substances which are no longer radioactive.***

1. Uranium 238 goes through 16 changes over a period of 4 and one-half billion years.
  2. Rubidium 87 takes 60 billion years to reach its final state of Strontium 87
  3. Carbon 14 requires only 5,580 years to completely decay to Nitrogen 14,
  4. The Combined Isotope Method: Again, the above processes are subject to the presumption of uniformitism. But in the view of this author, uniformity in radioactive decay must be a given because the laws of physics are not in the same order as the evidence of geology. In any case, scientists have resorted to an analysis of materials that allow for the presence of the daughter materials in the original sample, the leaching out of materials etc.
- A. Astrophysical Evidence for the age of the universe is of a different kind entirely. In 1929 Edwin Hubble, using the Mount Wilson 100 in telescope demonstrated that the galaxies in the universe are expanding away from each other. By comparing his analysis of these distant objects, he calculated that this expanding universe had a beginning, and that that beginning was many billions of years ago. Hubble did this by using Einstein’s newly

published theory that the velocity of light is invariant with respect to every referential system.

B. The Meaning of Day in Genesis 1-2 is a hermeneutical issue that is crucial to relating the Genesis account to the scientific account. What does the Hebrew word *yom*, the word for day, actually mean. Archer provides three basic meanings, which will be slightly expanded.

1. The use of “*yom*” refers to a 24-hour day. Often this interpretation is tied to a disaster theory in which the earth “became formless and void” (See “The Gap Theory” below). In this scenario the creation of matter and energy occurs long before the events in verses 3 through 31, which take the literal seven twenty-four hour days.
2. The word day refers to a “revelational day” or days in which the beginning was revealed to Moses in a vision. From Archer’s discussion there are two possible variants of this approach. Moses might have viewed each of the seven visions on seven days, or the vision might have contained seven parts, each termed a day. There are several arguments against this approach. It is awkward to think that each part of the vision took a whole day; verses one and two do not seem to fit in any day; and lastly, it seems to open the possibility of any other Scriptural narrative of non-observable events being called “a vision”. However, other commentators have suggested that the vision could have contained cycles of events interpreted by Moses as days, (See three.) just as the events of creation are recorded from an observer’s viewpoint.
3. The word day refers to “geologic age or stage in the creative process.” This means that each stage of creation was a long period (How long we do not know.) that had a beginning and end. There are substantial reasons for accepting this interpretation. First, the word “*yom* “ has at least four different usages in the passage. It refers to the beginning and completion of something, as in “day one”. It is what God calls the light in verse five. It seems to refer to the daylight hours in sixteen. And finally, in chapter 2, verse 4 it refers to whole series of events from 1:1 to 2:3. Thus, the word day has a broad semantic range even within the creation passage. Secondly, the events of chapter two expand and illustrate the complexity of the events in the sixth day of chapter one. Man is created; placed in the garden to till it; is instructed to name each living creature; but found no mate among all the creatures that had been created. Then God created woman. Of course, all things are possible with God, but now man is involved. It is highly unlikely that such a complex of events happened in a twenty-four hour period.

A. Evolution. The theory of evolution, formulated in its most well-known form by Charles Darwin in 1859 has sought to replace the biblical account of creation. This ideological conflict has had profound consequences with respect to how man understands himself, and has provided much of the theoretical basis for what is called “secular humanism”. If man has no creator, then he is not accountable to anyone but himself. Unfortunately, much of scientific thinking has adopted evolution as a dogma that is both infallible and unquestionable.

A. The process of evolution (regardless of Darwin’s pious attempts to install God as the “First Cause”) is essentially materialistic. Changes within individual organism are random and lead to variations within any given species. These mutations provide various individuals within a species with different abilities to survive adverse circumstances. Only the “fittest” in any population survive, and thus the variety of living creatures

- changes, becoming more complex with time. Finally, homo sapiens emerged out of this extended process.
- B. Some Christian thinkers have adopted what might be called “theistic evolution’. They accept the process of evolution, but claim that it was directed by God, allowing for the emergence of new species. However this position ignores significant problems in the construction of biological systems themselves.
  - C. While “the survival of the fittest” is observed in limited instances, the criticisms of macro-evolution are wide ranging and incisive. They include:
    1. No mutation has ever be observed to make an animal more complex or brought new structures into existence.
    2. Simple organs in the fetus do not evolve into more complex systems.
    3. Natural selection is unable to explain innumerable instances of adaptation in which there is evidently no transitional stage.
    4. Regardless of the age of the universe and the earth, there simply is not enough time for evolution to have completed life at even a minimum complexity.
  - D. On the micro level (the cellular level) the complexity of the cell and its “mechanical systems” make random mutation unthinkable as the primary causation.
    1. At the molecular level of life, fully functioning systems involve an enormous number of interrelated and indispensable parts. Without the integration of all of the necessary elements of the system the whole organism fails.
    2. The “quantum theory of emergent evolution” (as Archer calls it) proposes that at certain stages of its development organisms go through extremely radical changes, or mutations. However, this is simply the substitution of a phantom, unobservable force or catalyst in the place of an a creator-designer.
  - E. Creation by design is thus the only plausible explanation for the beginning of life, and its complex systems.
- B. The Gap Theory postulates that Genesis 1:1 records the creation of a perfect world, but something happens between 1:1 and 1:2.
    - A. A perfect creation was spoiled, perhaps at the time Satan and his angels fell and were cast out of God’s presence. However, as Archer points out, “It means that the whole magnificent achievement of the original creation is dismissed with the bare statement of Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
    - B. C. I. Scofield popularized this theory at the beginning of the twentieth century, and suggested that it ocured five or six thousand years ago.
    - C. From this viewpoint, the Book of Genesis says virtually nothing about the original creation, or the subsequent events. “Astronomers, geophysicists, paleontologists, and anthropologists are measuring the ancient ruined creation, whereas the Bible addresses the recent, repaired creation.” (Ross, The Genesis Question, 25)
  - C. The age of man, in the light of paleontology, is ancient indeed. If one accepts the “age-day” theory of the seven creation days of Genesis, then one must somehow reconcile the genealogical tables of Genesis 5 and 10. However, if one holds to a young universe, an early date is impossible. In the last 150 years anthropological discoveries have both complicated and advanced the discussion
    - A. Various humanoid fossils have been discovered (the Swanscombe, the Picanthropus, and the Sinanthropus) which by various dating techniques lived from 200,000 to 500,000 years ago. However, these creatures were markedly different from homo sapiens as we know it.

- B. The Neandertal man, dated from 50,000 to 100,000 years ago is a markedly different case. His remains have been found with stone tools and the accompanying possibility of fire. However, it has now been proven that Neandertals were not the ancestors of man, and cannot be related to any known mammalian species.
- C. Studies of human mitochondrial DNA have indicated that the human male's common ancestor lived somewhere between 35,000 and 47,000 years ago, and the ancestor of the female and the human female's common ancestor lived from between a few thousand to a few ten thousand years earlier. The explanation for this: men descended from Noah after the Flood; women can trace their ancestry back to Eve. This raises the question whether or not the biblical genealogies can be reconciled with scientific record.
- D. In relationship to these scientific issues, the crucial biblical issue is whether the genealogies in Genesis are literal generations without any gaps, or whether the genealogies are representative of the history of the families. There are three answers to question:
1. The genealogies are literal generations that do not have any "gaps" in them. This position cannot be justified by an overall reading of Scripture. For example, though Luke 3:36 records that Cainan was the son of Arphaxad, Genesis 10:24 Shelah was the son of Arphaxad
  2. The genealogies record only the most prominent members of the ancestry in concern, or they record fathers in the sense of grandfathers or even great grandfathers. Several of the many examples that could be cited are:
 

Judg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.

Gen 15:15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.

IKing 15:24 Then Asa rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king.

Notice that Asa is the great-great grandson of David, and yet the author still terms David as his father. Such was the concept of fatherhood in the Old Testament
  3. The genealogies are a record of primogeniture—that is to say that Adam lived 930 years means that Adam and his direct line were at the head of family affairs for 930 years.
- E. In the final analysis, the date of the first man and woman is probably not directly related to anthropological discoveries (Save the DNA evidence in C). It appears that there were a number of homo sapien-like species that bore no genetic relationship to man, and which perished at some point in time. Man is ultimately defined by the image of God. Man was qualitatively different from all others, whether or not they appeared to be man-like.

#### Noah's Ark and the Flood

- I. The story of Noah and the ark raises several important issues. First, the unity and integrity of the story has been questioned from the time of Wellhausen, who split the narrative into J and P parts. Secondly, the extent of the flood has been questioned since the rise of geology during the nineteenth century. The issue at stake is whether the flood was local or worldwide. The former issue will not be treated in this section; the Documentary theory has been discussed. Our interest will be in summarizing the arguments involved in the extent of the flood.

### A. Arguments for the Local Flood

1. The Hebrew words used in the text does not specifically stipulate a world-wide flood. upon the earth (פֶּרֶסֶל; 6:17; 7:17, 23); under heaven (שְׁמַיִם; 6:17; 7:19); and upon the ground (פֶּדֶאֱמָה; 7:4, 23). פֶּרֶסֶל can mean 'land' (e.g. Gn. 10:10, שְׁמַיִם can mean, sky, or the visible part of heaven within the horizon (e.g. 1 Ki. 18:45), and the extent of פֶּדֶאֱמָה would be determined by these other two words<sup>4</sup>
2. There is little consistent geological evidence for a world-wide flood. Leonard Woolley discovered a very thick flood stratum (a thick layer of silt indicating that that a flood had occurred) at Ur that dated about 3800 BC., but only one other flood stratum (much thinner) has been discovered from that period. Other indicators of floods are from later times.
3. There are significant scientific problems that would result from a universal flood.
  - a. The water required for such a flood would be eight times that which our planet now possesses.
  - b. Where would the water go, when at the end of the flood it decreased, or abated? The atmosphere could not absorb it, nor could the earth's surface hold it.
  - c. Almost all plant life would have perished from the salt water created by the mixture of ocean and fresh water.
  - d. Freshwater fish would have died, and much of the marine life that lives in the top layer of the oceans.
  - e. There are areas of the world that show definite evidence of not being submersed
4. The above arguments can be answered in various ways, but in the final analysis even a local flood presents its own unanswerable questions. An example of this involves the current height of Mt. Ararat: 17,000. How could a local flood create a tidal wave that would submerge such a high mountain for an extended period of time.

### B. Arguments for the Universal Flood:

1. Exegetically, it is possible that the Hebrew description of the flood could refer to a universal flood.
2. There are evidences of some massive catastrophe at various parts of the earth where the earth was broken open, great cracks created, and large numbers of incomplete skeletons deposited in a calcite matrix.
3. Numerous oral and written traditions from around the world document a great flood event. A partial list of countries or cultures involved would include: Sumeria (In the Gilgamesh Epic), Egypt, Greece, India, China, Hawaii, Mexico, or the Algonquin indians of North America. All these record that mankind was destroyed by a great flood as a result of divine displeasure at human sin, and that only a few humans were saved by building a ship, raft, or floatable object of some sort. However, Archer notes: "Whether or not the worldwide prevalence of these traditions is reconcilable with a local-flood theory, at least they emphasize the inclusion of all human races in the descendants of Noah, rather than excepting some of the populations of areas of the world other than the Ancient Near East."
4. The ark itself was capable of holding the indicated animal life from all the earth. This is true because there are at the present only 290 species of land animals larger than the sheep. Most of the animals taken on board the ark would have been

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<sup>4</sup>The New Bible Dictionary, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

small animals. (Of course, this assumes that the biodiversity of that period was not much greater than that of today.)

5. It seems that there would have been no reason to take pairs (7 Pairs) of all the animals if the flood was not world-wide.
6. Lastly, but of course not least, the Bible in a number of places makes it quite clear that the judgement was on the entire human race (Gen. 6: 5,17; Matthew 24: 38,39 2 Peter 2:5, 3:6)

- II. So, what is the conclusion of the evidence?
  - A. First, the biblical account of the Flood differs radically from that of its closest neighbor, the Epic of Gilgamesh in the description of the ark, the length of the flood, and most of all in the description of the gods who initiated the whole thing.
  - B. Since the date of the flood is uncertain, the geology of the earth cannot be accurately described. This impacts both the universal and local theories. It is certain that the earth's surface is constantly changing. Mountains are constantly being uplifted and eroded. The rate of uplift in any one geological period cannot be established with certainty. Thus, the mountains of Ararat may have been much lower than their current elevation of today.
  - C. The world wide flood stories would appear to be derivatives of the biblical account because they all record a few survivors who were saved in the same manner. If the biblical principle that the flood was a judgement on all mankind (as this writer believes it to be) these stories, without realizing it, must have been referring to Noah and his family.
  - D. The extent of man's habitation at the time of Noah is really quite uncertain. We have seen in discussing the age of man that there seem to be hominid type of creatures across the face of the earth who were not genetically related to man. If man's habitat were limited and the creatures in concern were limited also, the flood might well have been limited too.
  - E. Tradition affirms the world wide flood. There is no problem in affirming tradition as long as we humbly understand the problems and possibilities of the flood.

#### The Table of Nations in Genesis 10

- I. In its present canonical location the table of nations fulfills two functions. First, it chronicles the descendants of Noah, which is why it is placed at the end of the Noah account. Secondly, it indicates the genealogical source of the nations created by the scattering of peoples in Genesis 12: 8-9. (See The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues, IV)
- II. A number of significant issues are raised by the account. At stake is whether the section defines actual genetic relationships, or was a geographical description of the nations at the time of the Exodus. These points can be made:
  - A. Canaan is the son of Ham (10:6), but the Canaanites are known to have spoken a West Semitic dialect closely related to Hebrew, or even the parent of Hebrew. It is quite possible that the Hamitic tribes which conquered Palestine in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC adopted the Semitic dialect. (Archer notes that this must have been accurate historical tradition from Moses' day because it is documented that the Canaanites spoke a Semitic language at least as early as Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 31:47))
  - B. Sheba (Seba) is related to both Ham (v.7) and Shem (v. 28). The solution to this apparent contradiction lies in the fact that intermarriage between the two families would have produced a group that could claim both lines as its ancestry.

- C. Cush is the father of Nimrod of Babylonia (v. 8-10). Yet in other texts he is associated with Ethiopia (Isa. 11:11; Ezek. 30:4) It is possible that the lower area of Mesopotamia was the initial home of Cush (Kush—as the Egyptians would know him), from whence the people of Cush extended their power to the Yemenite region of Arabia, and then invaded “Ethiopia” (today, Republic of Sudan). Also possible would have been the parallel migration of the other tribes (“clans”) of Ham, Mizraim, Put and Canaan to have migrated northward into Mizraim and Palestine.
- III. Using available linguistic data, the table covers an astonishingly broad range of people groups. Some of the people groups which can be derived from the table:
- Ashkenaz=Scythians
  - Elishan/Kittim=Cyprus
  - Phut=Put in Cyrenaica
  - Ludim-Lybbians
  - Lud=Lydians

### The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues

- I. The tower of Babel incident is not without some confirmation in ANE literature. An account of an event similar to that of Gen. 11: 1-9 was found on the stela of King Ur-Nammu: “The erection of this tower highly offended all the gods. In a night they threw down what man had built and impeded their progress. They were scattered abroad and their speech was strange.”
- II. Also, the technological setting of Genesis 11 is extremely accurate. The building materials for a such tower (ziggurat) in the plain of Shinar were baked bricks and pitch for mortar.
- III. The sin that God judged was the sin of pride, and with that pride an arrogant assumption that men could avoid obeying the command to “fill the earth”. “Then they said “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth.”
- IV. The judgement must have occurred sometime during the elapsed time of Genesis 10 because the family (extended now) of Noah were still essentially in one place.
- V. Most linguistic data does not seem to indicate that all the languages of the earth spontaneously proceeded from one original language. But this does not detract from the essence of the account. The people were judged because of their arrogant pride. That they ceased to understand each other does not mean that they immediately spoke completely different languages. But it did mark the beginning of language differentiation.

### Historical and Exegetical Notes on Abraham through Chapter

#### ***Abraham's Call***

- I. Genesis 11: 10 reviews and continues the line of Shem, this time with the goal of tracing the genealogy of Abraham.
- A. It appears that the call to go to Canaan was a two-stage calling. In verse 31 Terah took his Son Abram, Abram's wife Sarai, and Abram's nephew Lot, and set out for Canaan. In that text it does not say that they were called by God, and the later text in Gen. 15:7 simply says that "God brought Abram out of Ur" However, Stephen (in Acts 7:2) says "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran "Leave your country and your people, "God said, "and go to the land I will show you."
- B. In the primary call, found in Genesis 12: 1-3 God promises Abram both a blessing and that he would become a great nation. In verse 7 of the same chapter God adds those promises "To your offspring I will give this land." These three promises become central themes in the history of Israel.

### ***Abraham and Lot***

- I. The picture of Abraham at the end of chapter 12 and the beginning of chapter 13 is of an imperfect man who nevertheless worships and gives thanks to God. This is reflected in his generous spirit as he offers Lot which ever portion of land that he wants. In an almost casual way (v.7) Scripture tells us that "the Canaanites and Perizzites were also in the land at the time. This clearly agrees with archaeological evidence that the Jordan valley was heavily populated by people of the Canaanite Culture from at least 3000 BC onward.
- II. Chapter 14 begins with with war. The question of who King Amraphel of Shinar has largely dominated the historic discussion of the section. Once thought to be Hammurabi the great lawgiver, it now appears that Abraham lived before Hammurabi appeared on the scene (c. 1728-1686 BC.) This would have been well after Abram's time. Regardless of the identity of the king, archaeological evidence shows that the travel route from Mesopotamia to Palestine could sustain armies and even facilitate wagons which would then be used to haul the plunder back to Shinar. This was the time when "kings went out for war." (2 Samuel 11:1) Abraham belies his nomadic culture when he marshalls his 318 men and pursues the armies of the invading kings, routes them and recaptures the Lot, the other people who had been taken captive, and all the goods. He was on the way back to Hebron, passing through the King's Valley near Salem, when met both by Melchizadek and the King of Sodom. The passage illustrates how Abram's faith informs his worldview. He recognized and received the ministry of Melchizadek, but rejected any alliance with the King of Sodom.

### ***Abraham's Covenant Ceremony with God***

- I. Genesis 15 introduces the narrative that begins with Hagar and Ishmael (16) and continues on to the birth of Isaac (21). The issue at stake is the Abram's heir. Since he still remains childless, he has perhaps taken the step of adopting a male servant, in this case Eliezar of Damascus, as the heir and custodian of this estate. God, showing him the stars of the sky, reaffirms his promise and Abram responds in faith to God. God in his turn credits Abram's faith (in the promise) to him as righteousness, (right relationship with all). The ceremony that follows is for Abraham's sake. It is an ancient covenant ceremony, one of the strongest affirmations that could be made about the intent and faithfulness of an agreement. The form of

the ceremony involved cutting animals into parts and the two covenanting parties walking between them. The message would have been, “may this be done to me (or) you if we fail to be faithful to the covenant we are making. In the ceremony God not only affirmed the extent of his faithfulness, he also showed Abram the time when Abram’s heirs would actually return to the land to possess it.

- II. Chapter 16: Sarai’s offer of her handmaiden to Abram as a means of having a male (?) heir was well-documented in Old Assyrian marriage contracts, the Code of Hammurabi, and the Nuzi tablets. Abraham, influenced by Sarai, has a child by Hagar, whom we know as Ismael. It is in this context that we are first introduced to angels in the Bible. The word “angel” simply means messenger, and does not at this point refer to the ontological status of the messenger in concern. Some have speculated that since this angel speaks in the first person for God, the messenger might have been the second person of the Trinity.
- III. Chapter 17: God appears to Abraham, a man who has now gotten a son by his own means, and rebukes him “I am the God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.” (1) Instead of stressing the number of Abram’s descendants, God now says “You will be the father of many nations,” and emphasizes that the covenant between him and (the now) Abraham and Abraham’s dependents will be an everlasting covenant. As a sign of this covenant, Abraham is commanded to be circumcised and to circumcise every male in his household who is older than 8 days. The New Bible Commentary makes these observations on circumcision:

The covenant of circumcision operates on the principle of the spiritual union of the household in its head. The covenant is ‘between me and you and your descendants after you’ (Gn. 17:7), and vv. 26-27 notably express the same truth: ‘Abraham. . . Ishmael. . . and all the men of his house. . . were circumcised with him.’ Thus, from its inception, infant circumcision was the distinctive Israelite custom, not derived from Egyptian or other practice, and contrasting sharply with the puberty rites of other nations: the latter point to social acknowledgment of adult status, the former to a status before God and a prevenience of divine grace.

- IV. Genesis 18: Abraham receives the three visitors, one of which was the Lord or an angel who spoke for the Lord. Abraham offered the visitors Middle Eastern hospitality as they traveled along the road; they accepted. In their conversation under the tree, the Lord said, in Sarah’s hearing, that in a year Sarah will have a child. The story relates that overhearing the prophecy, Sarah laughs (to herself). But the Lord knows Sarah’s heart and confronts her. She lies about her unbelief. It should be noted that Abraham has done his own laughing. (17:17) It was rather fitting that the name Isaac meant “He laughs.”
- V. Genesis 19: When the two angels (the Lord, or the angel of the Lord is not with them) arrive at Sodom, Lot desperately offers them the traveler’s hospitality, knowing that they will be abused by the population if they are not protected. Lot may well be a foolish man, but his morals have remained distinct from those of Sodom. However, his daughters are willing to commit incest with their father to produce males for the family line. The disaster that befell Sodom and the surrounding cities must have been precipitated by an earthquake that released (or spewed up—NIV Study Bible) which may have caught fire (“hence the burning sulfur of v. 24) and may have caused a superheated, toxic salt cloud to rise from the Dead Sea, killing and coating anything in its path. (This author’s opinion.)

- VI. Genesis 22:20- 23 Though Abraham has been in the land for some time, he still has communication with the family. At the end of chapter 22 Abraham is notified of his brother's children. Sarah dies at 127, and Abraham must find a place to bury here. His negotiations with the local Hittites is an amazing record of oriental deference, shrewdness and greed. Abraham announces his need to the Hittites in verse 3; the Hittites give a very generous response, but it is clear that it will cost him a great deal of money to get a burial site. However, Abraham has already chosen exactly what he needs, and does not want buy a piece of property that will require him to do the *ilka*, or the feudal service to the Hittites and their gods. Ephron persists, knowing that Abraham does not have any other option under the circumstances, and sells him a piece of land at an extremely high price.
- VII. In Chapter 26 God renews the covenant with Isaac, giving him explicit instructions not to go to Egypt, but "Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." So Isaac stayed in Gerar. (Gen 26:3-6) It is there that Isaac fell to the same temptations with which his father Abraham struggled. When it came to their son Jacob's marriage they were determined that he not marry a Hittite or Canaanite woman as Esau had.
- VIII. Chapter 30: We now know that Jacob's ruse with the breeding of the sheep had no effect on the situation. It was God's sovereign power that brought him prosperity, not his attempt to employ magical powers. Later, when Jacob left Laban's household, Rachel stole the household gods for possibly several reasons. Perhaps she thought they might bring her protection and blessing. Possibly she could not think of living without worshipping them. Or maybe, if the Nuzi tradition is correct, ownership of the Teraphim indicated who had control over the inheritance of the family. Possibly, Rachel was getting revenge on her father for all the years that he had cheated her husband Jacob (also a schemer).
- IX. Chapter 35 reveals a Jacob who is now very thankful for what God has done for him in his long dreaded encounter with Esau. God commands him to go to Bethel and settle there. So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. (Gen 35:2-4) Jacob is finally understanding the character and plan of God in his life.
- X. Genesis 37 opens with a decided change in the activity of God. The days of angels or the Lord appearing directly to the patriarchs is behind. God is working in Joseph's life now through dreams. The setting (and chronology) for Joseph's captivity in Egypt is much debated. Much of it is tied to the Hyksos people who began to filter into Egypt from Syria and Palestine about 1900, taking control from about 1730 to 1570. Was Joseph taken down to Egypt before the rise of the Hyksos? Archer thinks so. But one must remember that he is reconciling the historical data to an early Exodus date: 1446. Yet his arguments are quite strong. 1) The attitude of the Egyptians towards Joseph's family; 2) The Egyptians of Joseph's time considered shepherding an abomination; 3) It would seem likely that had the Hebrews been allies with the Hyksos, they too would have been driven out around 1570 BC;

4) However, at this point the argument becomes confused. Did the Hyksos actually consider the Hebrews allies with the native Egyptians? If so, why did the Egyptians, who regained control of their land in 1570, keep the Hebrews in slavery until the Exodus. Archer makes some telling points, but the final solution of the chronology puzzle is not yet in.