

# Who Really Wrote the Bible?

FOURTH REVISED EDITION



ALSO BY CLAYTON HOWARD FORD

*The Logical Fallacies of the Documentary Hypothesis*

*The Christian's Biggest Challenge:  
And Other Hard Truths on Suffering*

*Proof*

*The Basic Doctrines of the Christian Faith:  
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# Who Really Wrote the Bible?

A Response to the  
Documentary Hypothesis

FOURTH REVISED EDITION

Clayton Howard Ford

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Cover photo provided by Oleg\_P at Shutterstock: A view of the Sinai Peninsula at sunrise from the trail leading to the summit of Mt. Sinai.

To Yahweh, my Father,  
who has taught me whatever truths I may know,  
and to Susan, my wife,  
for being by my side through thick and thin.



Open my eyes, that I may see  
Wondrous things from Your *torah*.  
Psalm 119:18



I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts  
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults.  
Some figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,  
Considered singly, or beheld too near,  
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,  
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.  
A prudent chief not always must display  
His pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array.  
But with th'occasion and the place comply,  
Conceal his force, nay seem sometimes to fly.  
Those oft are stratagems which error seem,  
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.

--Alexander Pope



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## ABBREVIATIONS

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version unless they are marked with one of the following:

AT – Author’s Translation

FV – Friedman’s Version (Friedman’s translation of the Pentateuch as found in *The Bible with Sources Revealed*)

NAS – New American Standard Bible



## INTRODUCTION

### What Difference Does It Make?

A debate is quietly raging in the halls of academia, a debate so significant that it has persisted for over two hundred years. Both sides have tenaciously clung to their positions, neither side willing to concede defeat to the other. Scholars on both sides of the issue have made careers out of defending their point of view. The books and articles written on this subject would fill a large library. And yet, until 1987, relatively few people knew about it. I did not encounter it until my graduate days in college. Everyone I knew who had not attended a Bible college or seminary had not heard of it, let alone been affected by it. I was content, therefore, to let the debate remain in the halls of academia while I went on to pursue other interests.

Then, in 1987, while riding home on a bus, I happened to see the title of an article in the *Los Angeles Times* that intrigued me.<sup>1</sup> It was about a soon to be released book that was bringing the debate to the general public. Upon its release, the book immediately caught

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<sup>1</sup> Janny Scott, "Who Wrote the Bible? One Author's Solution," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1987, Part 2, 4-5.

the attention of the national media. It was the subject of “Column One” in the *Wall Street Journal*.<sup>2</sup> And *U.S. News and World Report* devoted a two-page article to it.<sup>3</sup> The book is *Who Wrote the Bible?* by Richard Elliott Friedman, currently the Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Georgia and the Katzin Professor of Jewish Civilization Emeritus at the University of California, San Diego.<sup>4</sup>

The title of his book is misleading, for he does not discuss the authorship of the *entire* Bible. Instead, he focuses on the authorship of the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, collectively known to scholars as the Pentateuch, to the Jews as the *Torah*, but to most everyone else as the Five Books of Moses). Friedman is a documentarian, which means that he agrees with those in the debate who support the theory known as the Documentary Hypothesis. This theory states that the Five Books of Moses were not written by Moses at all. It postulates that four or more authors wrote four initially independent documents (all of them written hundreds of years after Moses supposedly lived), which editors then combined (along with some contributions of their own) to create the Pentateuch.

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<sup>2</sup> Jerry E. Bishop, “If Moses Didn’t Write the Book of Moses, Who Did, and When?” *The Wall Street Journal*, 210, No. 72 (Oct. 9, 1987): 1, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Alvin P. Sanoff and Harwell Wells, “Who wrote the first five books of the Bible?” *U.S. News and World Report*, 103 (Aug. 24, 1987): 52–53.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2019), hereafter referred to as *Wrote*. All further references are to this edition, unless specified otherwise.

Many of the people who were familiar with the debate (including myself) had assumed that the general public would not be interested in this subject. But Friedman guessed that there was a large enough group of people who would be. And he was correct. Though his book did not make the *New York Times* bestseller list, it did sell far more copies than his publisher had ever hoped to sell: it went through three printings in its first three months. Since then, he has responded to this interest by producing a second edition of his book in 1997, as well as writing other books that touch, in part at least, upon this debate.

Still, when people are first presented with this subject, many of them ask, "What difference does it make? Does it really matter if we know whether Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible?" My answer is that it does matter for one very simple reason.

According to the Gospels, during the three and a half years that he spent preaching and teaching in Israel, Jesus had many confrontations with the Jewish leaders who were trying to silence his ministry. In one of those confrontations, Jesus said to them,

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

"I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive

honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:39–47).

When Jesus referred to Moses’ writings, his Jewish audience understood him to mean the five books of the Pentateuch, and he did not contradict that understanding. Jesus here not only agrees with the traditional belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, he also says that what Moses wrote testifies to the validity of what Jesus himself had to say, including his claim that we obtain eternal life only by coming to him. What is at stake, then, is whether we hear the message of Jesus—and the confirming message of the Pentateuch—and believe his words and so come to have eternal life. If the Documentary Hypothesis is correct, then we cannot believe the writings of Moses, for Moses did not write anything. And if Moses did not write anything, then we will not believe the words of Jesus, for if Jesus is not correct about the authorship of the Pentateuch, something that can be checked, then how can we trust him to be correct when he tells us that we obtain eternal life by simply believing in him, something that cannot be checked? And if the Bible is incorrect about these things, then perhaps it is incorrect when it says that Jesus has risen from the dead. “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (1

Corinthians 15:17). The Hypothesis, therefore, strikes at the very heart of the Christian faith.

After reading Friedman's book, I decided that I would write a popular presentation of the traditional side of the debate, the position that defends the view that Moses did indeed write the Pentateuch. Within a year, I had written half of the book. I had arrived at the point where I was writing about the stories in which Abram/Abraham lied about his wife (claiming instead that she was his sister), when I ran into a problem so serious that I had to throw out all that I had already written and revamp my way of thinking.

The problem was that I finally realized that the arguments of the traditionalists were ineffective. The traditionalists had been using the same arguments against the Hypothesis for over two hundred years, yet the Hypothesis has persisted. And it has persisted in part because the traditionalists have failed to answer the question that the documentarians have been asking since the beginning of the debate, namely, "If Moses really did write the Pentateuch, why did he put it together in this fashion and not some other fashion? Why did he include these laws and these stories? Why did he not leave some of them out or include others?" In other words, the documentarians want to know what the overall plan of the Pentateuch is. The traditionalists have all along claimed that the Pentateuch had been written according to a plan, that Moses had some very good reasons for including the materials that he did, but I could not find anyone who could explain what that plan is to my satisfaction, let alone the satisfaction of the documentarians.

So, I set out on what has proven to be a twenty-one-year quest to find that plan. After engaging in much research, much thinking, and much prayer, I believe I have found that plan. This book presents the results of that quest. A few of the classic traditional arguments have made their way into this book, but most of what I present here I have not seen anywhere else. Much of this research and evidence will be new to both the traditionalists and the documentarians.

Who really wrote the Bible? You will not be surprised when I tell you who. You already know my answer to that question. But you may be surprised when I tell you *why* Moses is the one who really wrote the Bible.

#### *Note for the Second Edition*

The closure of the publisher for the first edition made the self-publication of this second edition necessary. It also gave the opportunity to correct minor errors.

My thanks go to my son, Christopher, for his help in producing this second edition.

*October 2017*

#### *Notes for the Third Edition*

Friedman released the second edition of *Wrote* again in January 2019 with a new epilogue in which he presented a new argument. I answer that argument in chapter 3.

In chapter 2, I divide chapter eight of his book into an S text and a W text. I originally wanted to print the S

text in bold, but the publisher of the first edition would not print in bold, so I was forced to use italics for the S text, even though Friedman used italics for emphasis, as most authors do. This edition goes back to my original plan and now has the S text in bold.

Since Friedman's list of terminology in *Sources* only includes words or phrases that appear three or more times in the Pentateuch, I have revised my list of vocabulary to include only words or phrases that appear three or more times in chapter eight of his book. I still end up with a list comparable to his.

As any good documentarian does, I have made some minor changes in how I divide the texts. In another ten years, I may change it again.<sup>5</sup>

March 2019

### *Notes for the Fourth Edition*

While preparing my book, *The Logical Fallacies of the Documentary Hypothesis*, I realized that I needed to correct and clarify some of the statements I made in this book. Those corrections and clarifications have been made.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the chart in the first edition of *Wrote* (p. 248), published in 1987, all of Gen. 25:8 belonged to P, but according to the second edition (p. 257) published in 1997 and released again in 2019 (p. 239), "The first word of the verse ('And he expired') and the second half of the verse are P. The rest is J." Yet, according to *Sources* (Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* [San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers]) (p. 71), published in 2003, all of it belongs to P again. That is just *one* example of Friedman changing his mind—and Friedman is just *one* of many documentarians who do so on a regular basis.

I also added material to many of the chapters, moved the endnotes to footnotes, and included a bibliography.

*December 2021*

## PART I

# An Explanation Needed

It will astonish people who know nothing of the 'Homeric Question' to learn that these splendidly constructed poems, and especially the *Iliad*, have in the past been picked to pieces by the men who studied them most carefully and should presumably have admired them most. They alleged certain incongruities in the narrative and argued that the *Iliad* is the composite product of a number of poets of varying merit, who had not even the doubtful advantage of sitting in committee, but lived at different times and each patched up his predecessor's work, dropping many stitches in the course of this sartorial process.

--E. V. Rieu<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, E.V. Rieu, trans. (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1950), xi.



## CHAPTER 1

# The Problem of the Pentateuch

What is the fallacy in this line of reasoning?

Whenever the light switch is turned off, the lights go out.

The lights are out.

Therefore, the light switch must be turned off.

The fallacy is that the conclusion is not *necessarily* true because the switch being turned off is only one of many possible events that can cause the lights to go out. Of course, when the lights do go out, we naturally begin to look for the actual cause of it and our first guess—our first hypothesis—might be that someone has turned off the switch. We then test the hypothesis by checking the switch. If we find that it is still turned on, then we might develop the hypothesis that the breaker has been tripped. We continue to develop and test hypotheses in this manner until we finally come to the right one, until we finally come to the actual cause of our problem. However, if we assume that the light switch is the one and only cause of the lights going out, we could spend hours flipping the switch back and forth to no effect,

never looking to find the actual cause. Our invalid assumption keeps us from looking elsewhere and so keeps us from finding the answer to our problem.

The documentarians have been flipping the switch back and forth for over two hundred years now. The Documentary Hypothesis was first accepted in the latter half of the eighteenth century, in that time of ferment known as the Age of Enlightenment. The people of that time chose to look in a new light at what they believed, how they lived, and what their efforts had achieved for them—and decided to throw it all out and start over again. Traditional social structures, religious beliefs, and moral values were dramatically altered or completely discarded. Tradition was replaced by reason. Faith was replaced by science. The power that was vested in the privileged traditional authorities was replaced by the power residing in the common man. Hence, this era witnessed the success of the American Revolution, the terror of the French Revolution, and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. It also saw the increasing popularity of the “Literary Dissectionists.”

These dissectionists (or “disintegrators,” as they were often called) subjected the Five Books of Moses, as well as the epics of Homer, to their scientific scalpels as they probed for evidence for or against the traditional views concerning the authorship of these works. Predictably, the traditional views did not survive the operation. Indeed, the scientific theories advanced by these dissectionists as alternatives to the traditional views became so widely accepted that anyone who still held to the traditional beliefs was stigmatized as either uninformed or unintelligent.

The dissection of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* began in 1795 with the publication of the *Prolegomena* [Introduction] to *Homer* by the German scholar F. A. Wolf.<sup>1</sup> He argued that no person could have composed poems as lengthy as these epics without writing them down (since the human memory is too limited). The problem is that writing did not exist in Homer's day. He concluded that Homer must have orally composed a series of small poems that were then orally passed down through the years by illiterate bards (a process that inevitably brought changes to the poems) until the sixth century BC, when editors spliced them together to form the epics and committed them to writing. To see Homer's true genius, therefore, one first had to disintegrate the epics into their original poems, though Wolf himself thought this would be difficult to do. Many of Wolf's successors decided that Homer's genius had little, if anything, to do with the original poems, that the poems must have been composed, not merely passed down, by these unknown bards. They also argued that the anomalies they found in the epics (such as differences in style and inconsistencies) were further proof of multiple authorships and that the anomalies could be used to delineate the original poems. Some scholars tried to defend the traditional authorship as well as the unity of at least major portions of each epic (hence the name "unitarians"), and the subject of the debate became known as "the Homeric Question." But the arguments of Wolf and his successors proved powerful. By the early 1900s, the disintegrators were arguing not so

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<sup>1</sup> F.A. Wolf, *Prolegomena to Homer*, Anthony Grafton, *et al.*, trans. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

much with the unitarians, for there were hardly any left, as with each other over where to cut up the epics and to which author they should assign each of the pieces. It seems that each scholar had his own ideas on the subject.

The Pentateuch was already being dissected by the time Wolf's book appeared. In 1780, a German professor named Johann Gottfried Eichhorn produced a book in which he observed that some passages in Genesis and Exodus consistently referred to God as *Yahweh* (God's Hebrew name, usually translated as "the LORD" in English versions), while other, sometimes similar, passages consistently referred to him as *Elohim* (el'-o-heem, the Hebrew word for "God"). At first, he thought these two sets of passages originally existed as two separate documents, or sources, which Moses had put together when he wrote his Five Books; he later came to believe that the two documents must have been written long after Moses had died. The same observation had been made by Henning Witter, a German minister, in 1711 and by Jean Astruc, a French physician, in 1753. Astruc had even constructed a theory similar to Eichhorn's original theory. But critical scholars did not accept these ideas until Eichhorn, who was respected within scholarly circles, published his work. Then the ideas spread through the scholarly ranks like wildfire.

Eichhorn's successors went on to discover literally hundreds of other anomalies within the Five Books of Moses. Most of these anomalies can be classified into three categories.

*Differences in Style*

The Pentateuch often changes styles as it moves from passage to passage. Genesis 1, for example, is a fast-paced, highly structured poem that gives us a summarized view of the creation process but very few details. Genesis 2, however, is a slow-paced narrative that leisurely describes various details as it meanders along. The vocabulary also changes from passage to passage. Thus, Genesis 1 says God *created* man, while Genesis 2 says God *fashioned* man. Some passages are flowing and readable while others are mechanical, tedious, and formulaic. Most of the genealogies in Genesis, for example, begin with the same formula: "These are the generations of X." The style of Deuteronomy, with its vast store of unique words and expressions, stands apart from any of the styles found in the other four books. Altogether, scholars believe they have identified four major writing styles within the five books of the Pentateuch.

*Doublets*

A doublet is two, often incompatible versions of the same story, law, or idea. Genesis 1 and 2 seem to be two versions of the Creation Story. The Flood Story appears to be two stories that someone combined and tried to pass off as a single story. Critical scholars have even detected some triplets. In Gen. 12:10–20, for example, Abram tells Pharaoh in Egypt that Sarai is his sister, even though she is really his wife. In Gen. 20:1–18, Abraham claims his wife is his sister, but this time he tells the lie to Abimelech in Gerar about Sarah. In Gen. 26:1–11, a husband again tells Abimelech in Gerar that his wife is his sister, but this time it is Abraham's

son, Isaac, who is lying about his wife Rebekah. We seem to have here three different versions of the same story.

### *Contradictions*

Genesis 1 says that man was created after the animals were, but Genesis 2 apparently says that man was created *before* the animals were. Portions of the Flood Story state that Noah was to take a pair of each animal into the ark, but other portions state that he was to take a pair of each unclean (non-sacrificial) animal and *seven* pairs of each clean animal. And exactly how did Joseph become a slave? Was he sold to the Ishmaelites, or was he kidnapped by the Midianites?

The contradictions also include conflicting theological viewpoints. Genesis 1 portrays God as transcendent, keeping himself separate from the universe even as he is creating it. Genesis 2 and 3, however, see God as personal and close and even picture him in anthropomorphic terms, that is, as if he had the body, thoughts, and emotions of a man. In Genesis 2, for example, God forms man out of the ground as if he were a potter shaping clay. He is then pictured as walking through the Garden of Eden in chapter three. The theological conflicts also include the disagreement over when God's name was first known to the Israelites. Some passages imply that God's name was not known until it was revealed to Moses at the burning bush or in Egypt. Other passages imply that God's name has been known since creation. Thus, Genesis 1 always uses Elohim, but Genesis 2 always uses Yahweh.

The documentarians argue that these hundreds of anomalies are proof that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because Moses or any other single author would have had complete control over his materials so that he could have avoided these anomalies by simply eliminating or rewriting certain texts. That the anomalies still exist means that the Pentateuch was constructed by someone who did *not* have complete control over his materials. They believe that the anomalies are best explained by the Hypothesis that four initially independent documents—each complete and consistent unto itself and each written by its own author in his own style, incorporating his own version of the stories and reflecting his own conception of God—were combined by a series of editors, who had little or no freedom to change the texts, to form the Pentateuch as we now have it.

### **The Classical Theory**

During the hundred years following Eichhorn, other scholars developed other theories to explain the anomalies of the Pentateuch, but two scholars from the late nineteenth century proved to be very influential in gaining the acceptance of the Hypothesis over these other theories. Karl Heinrich Graf, an Alsatian, worked out the order in which the four documents had been written by comparing the documents to each other and deducing which document was familiar with the others. Julius Wellhausen, a German whose two major works were published in 1876 and 1878, argued that the documents had not been composed in a vacuum, that they are the products of the forces that also helped shape

Israel's history. He accepted the notion that Israel's religion evolved from the primitive polytheism in the days of the judges to the moral monotheism in the days of the prophets to the ritualistic religion in the days of the exile. He then showed that Graf's order for the documents neatly fit this evolutionary scheme. Thus, he was able to tie the documents to his perceived view of the history of Israel's religion.

Many people found Graf's and Wellhausen's presentations both brilliant and attractive. Because of their work, a large number of scholars, seminary teachers, and ministers in Europe and America came to embrace and teach the Documentary Hypothesis. For this reason, the Hypothesis is sometimes called the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis, and Wellhausen's version of the Hypothesis is considered the classical model. This model, as somewhat modified by his followers, states that the Pentateuch consists of these four documents:

- J: This document was named thus because of its consistent use of Yahweh (which in Wellhausen's day was written and pronounced as Jehovah) in the book of Genesis. It was written sometime around 850 BC in the southern kingdom of Judah by an unknown author. For want of his real name, this author is called the Yahwist. This is the author who liked to use anthropomorphic terms and who thought God's name had been known since creation. The document can now be found in portions of Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers. Genesis 2 was originally part of this document.

E: This document consistently uses Elohim in Genesis. After Ex. 3:15, where God reveals to Moses that his name is Yahweh, it uses that name as well. It was written by an unknown author (the Elohist) in the northern kingdom of Israel before 722 BC (when that kingdom was destroyed), probably around 750 BC. This source can be found in all five books except Leviticus. A typical E story is that of Abraham's lie to Abimelech.

Around 650 BC an unknown editor (the documentarians refer to him as a redactor) combined the two to make a new document called JE. This redactor is known as RJE.

D: Wellhausen thought this document originally consisted of Deuteronomy 12–26, but the majority of liberal scholars say it consisted of Deuteronomy 5–26 and 28. It was composed in Judah in 622 BC by an author (the Deuteronomist) whose name is again unknown. The rest of Deuteronomy was added by a series of redactors during or after the exile to Babylon (587–516 BC).

P: This document is interested in things that would interest priests, such as covenants, sacrifices, the conduct of priests and religious rituals. It is also interested in dates, people's ages, genealogies, and lists. Its author (the Priestly writer) is also unknown but was almost certainly a priest. The document was completed around 500 BC after the Second Temple had been constructed in

Jerusalem by those who had returned from the exile. Like E, it uses Elohim in Genesis but switches almost exclusively to Yahweh after Ex. 6:3. This is the document with the mechanical, tedious, and formulaic style, and it is by far the largest document of the four. Genesis 1 and Leviticus were originally parts of P. Portions of P can be found in the other books as well.

Shortly after P was written, a redactor (known as R) or a series of redactors added D and P, along with some small passages of their own, to JE, making the Pentateuch as we now have it.

Of the four documents, only D has a fixed date for its composition: 622 BC. That is because the biblical records say that in 622 BC, which was the eighteenth year of Josiah, king of Judah, the king ordered the priests to cleanse and restore the Temple. In the process of doing so, the high priest, Hilkiah, discovered a book. This book was read to the king, who immediately launched a major religious reformation. The documentarians believe this book was D because the reforms Josiah instituted agreed with D's laws and because the book is called the "Book of the *Torah*," a name Deuteronomy gives itself. This date is central to Graf's dating of the documents. References within D show that the author was familiar with J and E, so those documents must have come before 622 BC. But the author of D was not familiar with P, so P must have come after 622 BC.

According to traditional views, Moses died about 1406 BC. Thus, the Hypothesis has radically departed from not only the traditional view of who wrote the

Five Books of Moses, but also the traditional view of when those books were written.

### The Different Theory

Some of the scholars in these two fields of study (Homer and the Pentateuch) knew of each other's work. Wolf referred to Eichhorn's book in his own work. The German scholar Wilamowitz, who viewed the *Iliad* as a "wretched patchwork," was a friend of Wellhausen's. Gilbert Murray, the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford from 1908 to 1936 and another disintegrator of Homer, illustrated his theory by drawing examples from the work of the documentarians and wondered why more Homeric scholars did not do the same.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps this is one reason why the histories and the ideas of both fields of study have paralleled each other in various ways. The disintegration of Homer and of the Pentateuch began at about the same time. Some scholars in both fields initially thought that Homer and Moses were illiterate. Both theories proved to be very influential. In 1934, Murray wrote, "I can find no true 'unitarians' left except Drerup."<sup>3</sup> In 1987, Friedman wrote, "At present...there is hardly a biblical scholar in the world actively working on the problem who would claim that the Five Books of Moses were written by Moses—or by any one person."<sup>4</sup>

This is not to imply that all scholars who reject the traditional view are documentarians, although many of

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<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

<sup>4</sup> *Wrote*, 14.

them are. Nor is this to imply that all documentarians have adopted the classical model of the Hypothesis. Friedman's version, for example, differs from Wellhausen's model at several important points.

1. The religious rituals in P all center around the Tabernacle, a sacred tent that served as the Israelites' traveling "Temple" during the Exodus. All sacrifices had to be brought to the Tabernacle. Yahweh often spoke to Moses and Aaron at the Tabernacle. Inside the Tabernacle was the ark of the covenant, which symbolized Yahweh's presence. The Priestly writer spends several chapters describing its construction, telling us which materials were used in its construction, and often giving us the measurements of those materials in cubits (a cubit equals approximately eighteen inches). Wellhausen thought this Tabernacle never existed: it was just the Priestly writer's symbol of the second Temple, which was constructed after the Israelites returned from exile. By centering the religious rituals around the Tabernacle in Moses' day, the writer was seeking to justify the centering of the religious rituals around the second Temple in his day. Friedman disagrees. He argues that the Tabernacle did exist, at least during the days of the *first* Temple which Solomon began building around 966 BC and which the Babylonians destroyed in 587 BC.
2. He also concludes that P must have been written not during the days of the second Temple, but

during the days of the first Temple, specifically during the reign of Hezekiah who ruled Judah from 715–687 BC.

3. He agrees with Wellhausen that D first appeared in 622 BC, but he believes that D originally consisted of the entire book of Deuteronomy except for the passages that either threaten the people with capture and exile if they disobey or refer to a possible return from exile if they repent. These passages, he argues, were added after the exile began in 587 BC by the same author who had composed the original document.
4. Most documentarians cautiously avoid naming the authors of the documents, believing there is not enough evidence to do so. Friedman, however, boldly advances his belief in the first edition of his book that Jeremiah the prophet or possibly Baruch, the prophet's secretary, was the author of Deuteronomy. According to the article in the *U.S. News and World Report*, many scholars find this to be his most controversial point. In the second edition of his book, he settles on Baruch as the author.
5. He also names Ezra as the redactor who combined P with JE and D, thereby forming the Pentateuch as we now have it.

In a later publication, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, Friedman argues that J extends beyond the Pentateuch through sections of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel to 1

Kings 2. Following the ancient Near Eastern tradition of naming a work after its first few words, he calls this work, which he says was written by a single author, *In the Day*.<sup>5</sup>

Friedman also differs from Wellhausen on how and why the documents came into existence. Wellhausen viewed the four documents as the products of the evolutionary development of Israel's faith from the primitive polytheism of J to the moral monotheism of D to the ritualistic religion of P. However, this view was based on the philosophy of Georg Hegel, a philosophy which has now been largely discredited. In place of Wellhausen's view, Friedman offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the historical events which shaped the production and redaction of the documents. He believes that most of the documents are the products of a long-running conflict between two groups of priests, one of which was willing to split up Solomon's kingdom just to gain the position and power it had lost to the other group.

These two groups were the Aaronids and the Shilonites. Both belonged to the tribe of Levi, but that is where the similarities end. The Aaronids were descended from Aaron; the Shilonites were possibly descended from Moses. The Aaronids made a distinction between priests and Levites; the Shilonites did not. The Aaronids claimed that they were the only legitimate priests; the Shilonites claimed that they too were legitimate priests. The Aaronids thought that the Levites, in-

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 55, hereafter referred to as *Hidden*.

cluding the Shilonites, were secondary officials under the authority of the priests; the Shilonites thought that, since they too were priests, they should have equal status with the Aaronids. The Aaronids said that only they were allowed to offer sacrifices, burn incense, and enter the Tabernacle or Temple; the Shilonites said they were allowed to do so also.

This dispute over the priesthood turned out to be a major conflict that affected the course of Israel's history. Several significant events led up to and maintained this dispute. At first, the two groups lived and functioned as priests in two different areas of Israel. The Aaronids were centered around Hebron in the southern half of Israel's territory while the Shilonites were centered around Shiloh in the northern half of Israel's territory. The Shiloh priests enjoyed the prestige of possessing the Tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the sacrificial altar, all of which had possibly been constructed by Moses, their ancestor. They offered the sacrifices, they burned the incense, and they were the religious authorities. They were in their glory days.

But those glory days came to a sudden end. In a major battle with the Philistines, the ark was captured, and Shiloh was apparently destroyed. The ark was eventually returned to Kiriath-jearim, a city in the southern half of Israel, while the Tabernacle and some of the priests moved to Nob. In a fit of rage, King Saul ordered the slaughter of the priests of Nob. Only one priest, Abiathar, escaped. He joined David, who himself was hiding from Saul.

When David became king, he appointed both Abiathar the Shilonite and Zadok, an Aaronid from Hebron, to be his priests and brought the ark to his capital,

Jerusalem. The Shilonites had to share the priesthood with the Aaronids, but at least they could function as priests again.

However, David's son, Solomon, dismissed Abiathar from being a high priest and gave Zadok the sole authority. The Shilonites were out of power and their precious Tabernacle, ark, and altar were given into the hands of the Aaronids. Here, then, was the beginning of the dispute.

The Shilonites saw their chance to regain their power when Solomon turned to idolatry. If the kingdom could be split in two, perhaps they would become the priests of the new kingdom. Ahijah the Shilonite, therefore, instigated Jeroboam to lead the ten northern tribes in a revolt against the Davidic king, something he successfully did after Solomon's death.

But then King Jeroboam betrayed the Shilonites. He set up two golden calves, one in the city of Dan and the other in Bethel, and then allowed anybody, including *non-Levites*, to be priests. The Shilonites, of course, did not participate in this idolatry, and so they continued to be priests who could not function as priests. They had only two options open to them: they could either move to the southern kingdom of Judah where the Aaronids were in power and hope to eventually share the priesthood again, which was unlikely to happen, or stay in the northern kingdom of Israel and hope that the Israelite king would one day kick out the false priests and restore the Shilonites to their rightful position. They decided to stay and wait for the tide to turn. During this period, they composed both E and the Deuteronomic law code (Deut. 12–26) as protests against the religious establishments in both Judah and Israel.

The tide did turn—for the worst. In 722 BC, Assyria conquered the northern kingdom. To avoid exile, refugees from the northern kingdom, including the Shilonites, fled to the southern kingdom, where Hezekiah now reigned. To reflect the reuniting of the peoples of these two kingdoms, an unknown redactor united J with E.

The Shilonites' renewed claims to the priesthood challenged the authority of the Aaronids. In response, the Aaronids produced P, a document which claimed that only they could be priests. King Hezekiah supported the Aaronids and even destroyed Nehushtan, the bronze snake that was so important to the Shilonites because Moses himself had made it. The Shilonites just could not win.

A hundred years later, Josiah became king of Judah, and the Shilonites again got a taste of the glory days. Josiah did not depose the Aaronids, but he did support the Shilonites and gave them access to the ark once again. In 622 BC, Josiah launched a massive religious reformation. He insisted that the people turn from idolatry and worship Yahweh only. Because previous kings had practiced idolatry in the Temple, Josiah ordered the priests to cleanse the Temple. During the course of this cleansing, Hilkiah the high priest came across the Book of the *Torah* (Hebrew for “law, instruction”). This book was the book of Deuteronomy, newly composed by Baruch who had taken the Shilonites' Deuteronomic law code and surrounded it with additions of his own.

After the discovery of the Book of the *Torah*, Baruch gathered together several sources, including Deuteronomy, and wrote the first edition of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr<sup>1</sup>). Scholars think that this history was

originally one continuous work that comprised what are now the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings. This first edition ended with the account of Josiah's reign and essentially declared Josiah to be the best thing to have happened to Israel since Moses. This edition's concluding word is:

Now before him [Josiah] there was no king like him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him (2 Kings 23:25).

This edition was very optimistic: Baruch apparently thought that because of Josiah's religious reformation, Judah was about to enter its golden age.

But that golden age and the Shilonites' glory days again came to a sudden end. Josiah unexpectedly died, and the succeeding kings turned to idolatry. The exile finally came, the Temple was destroyed, and the ark disappeared. The Aaronids were carried off to Babylon, while the Shilonites apparently fled to Egypt. The optimism expressed by the Deuteronomistic History now seemed foolish, so Baruch wrote a second edition of the history (Dtr<sup>2</sup>) that explained why the Israelites went into exile. Baruch also finished writing the prose portions of the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah himself apparently contributed only the poetic sections). Sometime during the exile, Ezekiel, who was a prophet and an Aaronid priest, produced his book.

When the exile came to an end, the Aaronids returned first. They firmly—and permanently—estab-

lished themselves as the sole, legitimate priesthood. There must have been enough Shilonites in Jerusalem to force Ezra to include their documents in his final redaction of the Pentateuch, but other than that, the Shilonites were no longer a threat. During this period, the Aaronids produced what are now First and Second Chronicles.

That is the history of the dispute according to Friedman. He also claims that this dispute can be seen in the documents produced by the two groups. E and D made Aaron look bad and Moses look good; P made Moses look bad and Aaron look good. E ignored or maligned the religious objects sacred to the Aaronids; Hezekiah destroyed Nehushtan. The Deuteronomistic History declared Josiah to be the best king; Chronicles declared Hezekiah to be the best king and liked Solomon as well. Deuteronomy said that all Levites were priests; P said that only the Aaronids were priests, and Chronicles agreed. The book of Jeremiah declared P to be a lie.

Thus, at some points Friedman differs with Wellhausen, and at others he advances where scholars have feared to tread.

### **The Persistent Theory**

The traditional scholars, of course, have not been silent. They have argued against the Hypothesis since its inception. Yet, the Hypothesis has persisted. Moses has not been restored as the author of the Pentateuch. The Hypothesis is still taught in colleges and seminaries. It is still discussed in commentaries and other books on the Bible. It has even escaped the shackles of academia and enjoyed acceptance among the general public,

thanks to Friedman's books. In the debate over the authorship of the Pentateuch, the documentarians still reign supreme. Why is this so? I believe this is so primarily because the traditional arguments have been largely ineffective.

Some traditional scholars have argued that the Hypothesis is mere conjecture and highly improbable because no other literary work has been created by the combination of other documents, but this is not true. Jeffrey H. Tigay has shown that the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which contains the ancient Mesopotamian version of the Flood Story, is a combination of earlier documents. He has also pointed to the well-known fact (well-known to biblical scholars, that is) that the *Diatessaron* was created in the late second century AD when Tatian combined the four Gospels into one continuous narrative. These works have the same kinds of anomalies which the Pentateuch does. Moreover, the anomalies arose because of the combinations of the documents. For example, the vocabulary of the *Diatessaron* varies from section to section because the different sections are derived from different Gospels. Since the anomalies in these works are similar to the anomalies found in the Pentateuch, one could argue, by analogy, that the anomalies in the Pentateuch also arose because of the combination of earlier documents. Hence, Tigay argues that these works, these analogues, give us a reason to believe that the Documentary Hypothesis is at least plausible, if not correct.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey H. Tigay, "The Stylistic Criterion of Source Criticism in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern and Postbiblical Literature," in Jeffrey H. Tigay, ed., *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

The traditionalists' main defense against the Hypothesis has been to show that the anomalies are not anomalies after all or that there are very good reasons for why an author would create these anomalies. Thus, a change in genre or subject often leads an author to change his style. And we can see that the contradictions are not really contradictions once we understand the Hebrew language and the context of the passages. For example, Genesis 2 does *not* say that the animals were fashioned after man was fashioned because the verb should be translated not in the past tense ("fashioned") but in the pluperfect ("had fashioned"), meaning that God had already fashioned the animals by the time he fashioned man. But those who try to explain the anomalies on a case-by-case basis are missing the point. The documentarians are not looking for *one* explanation for *each* of the anomalies: they are looking for *one* explanation for *all* of the anomalies. And they believe they have found that explanation in the Documentary Hypothesis. As Friedman points out,

Traditional rabbinic and Christian scholarship had offered explanations of the doublets, contradictions, and so on, all along, but it was doing it one verse at a time. If there were two thousand such problems, there were two thousand separate explanations for them. Critical scholarship explained it all with vastly fewer premises. The success of critical scholarship was a quintessential demonstration of the compelling quality of Occam's razor.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Hidden*, 351–352.

Besides, the traditionalists' explanations for the anomalies, especially those for the doublets, often do not go far enough. Let us take the two stories that brought the original version of this book to a dead halt. In Genesis, we find two stories in which the Israelites' ancestor lies to a king about his wife, claiming that she is his sister. In the first story, the ancestor's name is Abram; in the second, it is Abraham. In the first story, the wife's name is Sarai; in the second, it is Sarah. In the first story, the king is the Pharaoh of Egypt; in the second, he is Abimelech, king of Gerar. In the first story, Pharaoh's household suffers from plagues; in the second, Abimelech's women suffer from barrenness. In the first story, Yahweh reveals the truth through the plagues; in the second, Elohim reveals the truth through a dream. The documentarians believe that these two stories are two versions of the *same* story. Somewhere in the dark recesses of Israel's history, someone told a story about a man lying about his wife. This story was passed down through the generations and spread through the land until at least two versions were circulating in different parts of Israel. The Yahwist included one version in his document; the Elohist included the other version in his. A redactor then combined the documents, which is why we now have these two contradictory versions within the Pentateuch.

The traditionalists are correct in pointing out that these are in fact two similar but *different* stories that actually occurred in Abraham's life. Abraham and his wife had agreed to employ this subterfuge whenever they entered a foreign land (Gen. 20:13). When they entered Egypt, they enacted their plan. When they entered Gerar, they enacted it again. The difference in de-

tails came about because they were in different lands dealing with different people.

But this explanation fails to answer the question the documentarians have been asking all along: "If Moses did indeed write the Pentateuch, then why did he include both stories? Why did he not avoid the apparent anomaly by simply eliminating one (or both) of the stories?" It is not enough to say that Moses included them because they actually happened, for we know that Moses left out other details of Abraham's life. For example, Moses' successor, Joshua, knew that Abraham's father had been an idolater (Joshua 24:2), yet this fact is nowhere mentioned in Genesis. Moses, therefore, could have eliminated one or both of the stories. But he did not. Why? To my knowledge and the knowledge of the documentarians, no one has been able to answer that question.

As the documentarians see it, the anomalies prove that the Pentateuch could not have been written by a single author because the anomalies prove that the Pentateuch was not written according to a plan. They believe that every author constructs his or her literary work according to some sort of structure or organization or plan. Furthermore, they believe that the author of an historical work selects and arranges his or her materials according to a plan that supports that author's view of history. Thus, C. R. North has stated concerning one of the alleged documents, "Whether we can speak of a single author, J, depends very much upon whether we can discern the presence of a master-hand controlling its disparate materials and arranging them to serve the purposes of a definite interpretation

of history.”<sup>8</sup> Still another documentarian, Otto Eissfeldt, believes that one characteristic of historical narratives is that they “are artistically constructed according to a deliberate plan, and not something like merely chance series, loosely constructed of various elements, in which only the principle of chronological sequence was operative.”<sup>9</sup> Martin Noth was the first to propose the idea that Deuteronomy was once joined to the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings in one, long, continuous work known as “The Deuteronomistic History.” He argued that this history had been composed by a single author, whom he called Dtr.

Dtr. was not merely an editor but the author of a history which brought together material from highly varied traditions and arranged it according to a carefully conceived plan. In general Dtr. simply reproduced the literary sources available to him and merely provided a connecting narrative for isolated passages. We can prove, however, that in places he made a deliberate selection from the material at his disposal.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> C.R. North, “Pentateuchal Criticism,” in H.H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 59.

<sup>9</sup> Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, Peter R. Ackroyd, trans. (N.Y.: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), 143.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, Vol. 15 in the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1981), 10.

But a “carefully conceived plan,” according to the documentarians, is precisely what is missing from the Pentateuch. Noth says:

[The history and the books of Chronicles] owe their existence *as a whole*, their arrangement and structure, to the work of a particular writer, the “author,” who had at hand the earlier traditions and complexes of traditions as literary sources and who, by using these sources, composed and arranged the work as a whole for the first and last time. In these cases the understanding of the total work must begin with an analysis of the work of each particular “author.” The Pentateuch, on the other hand, does not have an “author” in this sense at all.<sup>11</sup>

And Eissfeldt bluntly declares “that we are not here concerned with a unified book, compiled according to a deliberate plan by one single author, Moses for example, is in general agreed.”<sup>12</sup> If Moses or any other single author had composed the Pentateuch, he would have written it according to a plan. And if he had written it according to a plan, he would not have changed his style or incorporated two or more versions of the same story or contradicted himself. That such anomalies exist within the Pentateuch is proof that the plan does not. And since the plan does not exist, the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses or by any other single author.

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<sup>11</sup> Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, Bernhard Anderson, trans. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Eissfeldt, 177.

Thus, the documentarians reject the traditional view because they cannot see how the plan and the anomalies could exist at the same time. To their minds, an adequate defense of the traditional view must show that the anomalies exist *even though* the Pentateuch was written according to a plan or, even better, show that the anomalies exist *because* the Pentateuch was written according to a plan. To this day, no one has been able to prove such a thing to their satisfaction.

This is why the documentarians have been sitting comfortably ensconced behind their defenses for the last two hundred years. Friedman asserts, "No other explanation of the evidence has come close to challenging it."<sup>13</sup> Noth believes that the doublets found in the J and E materials "can hardly be explained in any other way."<sup>14</sup> And Samuel Sandmel boldly declares, "Any disinclination to accept the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis as a point of departure stems from a theological reluctance. The evidence supports it."<sup>15</sup> At first sight, at least, the documentarians seem justified in their belief that the Documentary Hypothesis is the only adequate explanation for the anomalies.

### **The Debated Theory**

First sight, however, can be deceiving, especially if our eyes have not yet adjusted to the sudden darkness. That the switch must be turned off sounds like an

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<sup>13</sup> *Wrote*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Sandmel, *The Hebrew Scriptures: An Introduction to Their Literature and Religious Ideas* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1978), 334.

adequate explanation for why the lights are out, until someone actually checks the switch. In the case of the Hypothesis, when we actually check the switch, we find that it is still turned on. Despite Sandmel's declaration to the contrary, the evidence does *not* support the documentarians' explanation for why the anomalies exist.

Behind the impressive and formidable edifice that is the Documentary Hypothesis, the ranks of the documentarians are in turmoil. They can agree on the broad outline of the Hypothesis, but they have not and seemingly cannot agree on the details. Some argue that D was not written just before Hilkiah discovered the Book of the *Torah* in 622 BC; rather, it was written a century or more earlier. Still others argue that the book Hilkiah discovered could *not* have been D because D was written during or after the exile. Many, including Wellhausen, argue that P was written after the Exile; others, including Friedman, argue that it was written before the exile. Many argue that J is a unified document; others argue that it should be divided up into still smaller documents. Many argue that E existed as an independent document; others argue that the so-called E materials were just supplements to the original J document. Many argue that J, E, and P go no further than Deuteronomy; others can trace those documents all the way through the books of Kings. And they still have not completely agreed as to which verses belong to which documents. Even Friedman admits that a consensus has not yet been reached:

Scholars argue about the number of different authors who wrote any given biblical book. They argue about when the various documents were written

and about whether a particular verse belongs to this or that document. They express varying degrees of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the usefulness of the hypothesis for literary or historical purposes.<sup>16</sup>

And Albert de Pury, a Professor of Theology at the University of Geneva, admits that the documentarians are so uncertain as to what the J document actually contains and whether or not it was written by a single author that

...one can say that it is no longer possible today to speak of the “Yahwist” without acknowledging that the former consensus has vanished....

The debate on the Yahwist obviously is not closed. No new scholarly consensus is yet in sight. And new research, discoveries, and points of view may bring yet another turn in the appreciation of this complex literary corpus.<sup>17</sup>

As John Drane, a Lecturer in Religious Studies at Stirling University, has observed,

Considering that scholars have been trying to define the nature and contents of these source documents for a century now, it is not unreasonable to expect them to have come to some sort of conclusion on the matter. The fact that they have so strikingly failed to

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<sup>16</sup> *Wrote*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Albert de Pury, “Yahwist (“J”) Source,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6 (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 1016, 1018.

do so raises serious questions about their very existence.<sup>18</sup>

Even Sandmel, who does not seem to be motivated by “theological reluctance,” finally admits that he does not fully accept the classical version of the Hypothesis: “I have reservations about the generally accepted explanation of the literary history of the Pentateuch.”<sup>19</sup> And during the last few decades, the Hypothesis has come under increasingly heavy fire from nontraditional scholars, who are certainly not motivated by “theological reluctance” but who are becoming increasingly aware, as the traditionalists have known all along, that the Hypothesis is full of serious problems. Indeed, there are so many problems with the Hypothesis that, as long ago as 1950, the nontraditional scholar H. H. Rowley concluded that the only reason it has really persisted is that there is no other explanation to take its place:

That it is widely rejected in whole or in part is doubtless true, but there is no view put in its place that would not be more widely and emphatically rejected.... The Graf-Wellhausen view is only a working hypothesis, which can be abandoned with alacrity when a more satisfying view is found, but which cannot with profit be abandoned until then.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> John W. Drane, *The Old Testament Story* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 155.

<sup>19</sup> Sandmel, 339.

<sup>20</sup> H.H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, Hutchinson House, 1950), 46.

What is wrong with the Hypothesis? In *Wrote*, Friedman presents one seemingly plausible argument after another in favor of the Hypothesis. I could refute each of those arguments as I had intended to do in the original version of this book, and I will refute some of them when we must decide which of the anomalies are real and which of them are mere illusions. But I have discovered that it is no longer necessary to tear down the edifice brick by brick. In the foundation of the Hypothesis is a weakness so serious that a single blow to it will nullify all of the documentarians' arguments and bring the whole edifice down at once. That weakness is this: the anomalies within the Pentateuch do not *necessarily* prove what the documentarians think they prove.

The problem with Tigay's argument is that the diversity of literary techniques employed by the diversity of authors makes the use of analogues a very hazardous affair. In fact, analogues can prove whatever one desires as long as one points to the correct analogues. The critics, of course, have not limited their studies to the Five Books. They have also analyzed the other books of the Old Testament and have concluded that almost none of those books were written by the authors traditionally assigned to them either. The traditionalists have responded in part by charging the critics with inconsistency. Thus, while commenting on the critical positions concerning the books of Daniel and Jonah, Hobart Freeman complains:

We have here...a classic example of the inconsistency of modern critical scholarship. Their argument for denial of the authorship of the book of Jonah to the prophet himself (whose existence, like Daniel, as

a historical figure the critics admit) is that Jonah is always referred to in the *third* person in the book bearing his name.... Had Jonah composed the book he would have written in the *first* person concerning himself. However, in the case of Daniel who does this very thing, rather than its being evidence of Danielic authorship, Daniel's employment of the first person is set aside by the critical school as "a common literary device employed to give vividness to the narrative"<sup>21</sup>

Freeman's point is well taken: it *is* inconsistent of the critics to acknowledge a work's point of view whenever it happens to support their position and to dismiss it whenever it does not. But it is also just as inconsistent for the traditionalists to argue that the book of Daniel was written by Daniel *because* it was written in the first person and that the book of Jonah was written by Jonah *even though* it was written in the third person.

Furthermore, both positions are based on invalid assumptions. The traditional position assumes that *all* works written in the first person were authored by the person telling the story. This is true of many works, but the critics are correct in pointing out that the use of the first-person point of view is "a common literary device" employed by authors who wish to make their fictional stories seem more authentic. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example, seems to be the autobiography of a young girl named Scout but is in fact a fictional story by Harper

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<sup>21</sup> Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 264–265. Freeman quotes from Arthur S. Peake (ed.), *A Commentary on the Bible* (London: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1931), 522.

Lee. Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is in the first person, but the person telling the story is the fictional male doctor, not the actual female author. These analogues support the critics' position. However, analogues which *undermine* the critics' position also exist. Their position assumes that no author would refer to himself or herself in the third person. Yet, Caesar in his *Gallic Wars*, Josephus in his *Jewish Wars*, and Xenophon in his *Anabasis* did just that.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, an author from the critics' own ranks, Otto Eissfeldt, also did just that in his massive *The Old Testament: An Introduction*.

Smend's views have been accepted, in some cases with not insignificant modifications of his analysis, by the following among others: Eichrodt, Holzinger, Meinhold, and Eissfeldt. Eissfeldt, to obviate the confusion which can so easily arise from the use of the sigla J<sup>1</sup> and J<sup>2</sup>...introduced the siglum L (= lay source) for Smend's J<sup>1</sup>, and replaced his J<sup>2</sup> with a simple J.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hence, the old argument that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because it refers to him in the third person (see *Wrote*, 5-6) is also invalid.

<sup>23</sup> Eissfeldt, 169. This is not the only place he has done so in his book:

Bruston himself, the originator of this [newest documentary] hypothesis... made a start in that he endeavoured to trace two Yahwists whom he found in the Hexateuch [the Pentateuch plus Joshua], through Judg.-Kings, and Smend and Eissfeldt have carried on these attempts further (p. 246).

Thus, analogues can be used to prove and disprove either position. One could even use the analogues I have cited to argue that Daniel did not write the book of Daniel even though it was written in the first person and that Jonah did write the book of Jonah even though it was written in the third person. The variety of analogues that can be cited in this debate means that the point of view of a particular work cannot tell us anything conclusive about the author of that work. The first person/third person argument, therefore, is irrelevant to the question of authorship. We must look elsewhere for evidence and arguments to settle this question.

The Hypothesis faces the same difficulty. The anomalies within the Pentateuch *necessarily* prove that a single author did not write it only if we first assume that a single author cannot create such anomalies, for if a single author *can* create such anomalies, then the Pentateuch still could have been written by a single author such as Moses. Tigay has pointed to analogues that support this assumption and thus support the Documentary Hypothesis because his analogues prove that the anomalies within the Pentateuch could have been created by the combination of previously existing documents. But what if traditionalists could point to

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Finally Smend and Eissfeldt believe that, as in the Heptateuch [the Hexateuch plus Judges] ..., the solution of the problem here is to be found in the application of the theory of three sources... (p. 271).

...and in the next generation or the next but one Steuernagel (1912), Holscher, König (1926), Eissfeldt (1933) and Lods (1950) ... (p. 335).

analogues that prove the exact opposite? What if they could point to analogues that have anomalies but which are known to have only one author? This would prove that a single author *can* create such anomalies. This would prove that anomalies could exist within a work *even though* the work was written according to a plan (or maybe even better, *because* the work was written according to a plan). And this would render the anomalies of the Pentateuch irrelevant to the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch, for the anomalies would no longer be able to conclusively prove anything about authorship. Unfortunately for the Hypothesis, it relies primarily and almost exclusively upon the anomalies as its proof. It is the anomalies, after all, that have bothered the documentarians all along. It is the anomalies that have led them to believe that the Pentateuch was not written according to a plan. And it is the anomalies that have justified their division of the Pentateuch into documents in the first place. Rendering the anomalies irrelevant, therefore, would remove the only foundation supporting the Hypothesis.

Back in 1966, K. A. Kitchen, Lecturer in the School of Oriental Studies at Liverpool University, believed he had found such analogues. He pointed to “monumental Near Eastern texts that had *no* prehistory of hands and redactors” and argued that “any attempt to apply the criteria of the documentary theorists to Ancient Oriental compositions that have known histories but exhibit the same literary phenomena results in manifest

absurdities.”<sup>24</sup> Tigay objects to these analogues. It is true that some of Kitchen’s texts change their style, but, Tigay argues, stylistic changes *alone* do not qualify as significant anomalies. They must appear in conjunction with doublets and/or contradictions as they do in the Pentateuch.

None of the texts adduced by...Kitchen displays such a combination of criteria.... Hence none is truly analogous to the biblical texts which critics consider composite, and none can serve as a control against which to test the methods of biblical criticism. Only texts that display such *combinations* of evidence can serve this purpose.<sup>25</sup>

The documentarians usually insist that one anomaly in a text is not sufficient reason to divide a text into documents. A division is not justified until two or more anomalies appear together. Thus, Friedman divides the Flood Story between P and J because of the numerous anomalies he finds there.

But it is not only that it is possible to carve out two stories. What makes the case so powerful is that each story consistently uses its own language. The P story... consistently refers to the deity as God. The J story always uses the name Yahweh. P refers to the sex of the animals with the words “male and female” (Gen. 6:19; 7:9, 16). J uses the terms “man and his

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<sup>24</sup> K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1966), 117, 115, hereafter referred to as *AOOT*.

<sup>25</sup> Tigay, 152–153.

woman" (7:2) as well as male and female. P says that everything "expired" (6:17; 7:21). J says that everything "died" (7:22).

The two versions do not just differ on terminology. They differ on actual details of the story. P has one pair of each kind of animal. J has seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals. ("Clean" means fit for sacrifice. Sheep are clean; lions are unclean.) P pictures the flood as lasting a year (370 days). J says it was forty days and forty nights. P has Noah send out a raven. J says a dove. P obviously has a concern for ages, dates, and measurements in cubits. J does not.

Probably the most remarkable difference of all between the two is their different ways of picturing God. It is not just that they call the deity by different names. J pictures a deity who can regret things that he has done (6:6, 7), which raises interesting theological questions, such as whether an all-powerful, all-knowing being would ever regret past actions. It pictures a deity who can be "grieved to his heart" (6:6), who personally closes the ark (7:16) and smells Noah's sacrifice (8:21). This anthropomorphic quality of J is virtually entirely lacking in P. There God is regarded more as a transcendent controller of the universe.

The two flood stories are separable and complete. Each has its own language, its own details, and even its own conception of God.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Wrote*, 43-44.

According to Tigay, any text presented by the traditionalists to disprove the Hypothesis must display a similar combination of anomalies. Kitchen's texts, says Tigay, do not pass this test.

I, however, have found such a text. I have found an analogue that passes Tigay's test. I have found a book that displays the same combinations of anomalies that the Pentateuch displays, but which is known to have only one author. That book is *Who Wrote the Bible?* by Richard Elliott Friedman.



## CHAPTER 2

### Friedman's Analogues

After dividing the Flood Story between P and J, Friedman asserts,

The very fact that it is possible to separate out two continuous stories like this is remarkable itself, and it is strong evidence for the hypothesis. One need only try to do the same thing with any other book to see how impressive this phenomenon is.<sup>1</sup>

We will indeed try to do the same thing—with Friedman's own book.

We have seen that the Documentary Hypothesis rests on the assumption that a single author cannot create literary anomalies such as differences in style, doublets, and contradictions. Friedman, however, has inadvertently invalidated this assumption and therefore the entire Documentary Hypothesis by creating these very anomalies in his own writings.

First of all, Friedman changes his style. Both *Wrote* and an earlier work, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, claim to have the same author. In his "Notes" in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

back of *Wrote*, Friedman refers to the earlier work as “my *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*.”<sup>2</sup> Yet there are striking differences between the styles of the two works.

As you may recall, Martin Noth first proposed the theory that Deuteronomy was once joined to the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in one, long, continuous work known as “The Deuteronomistic History.” Friedman believes that there were two editions of this history, the first produced during Josiah’s reign, the second during the exile. As part of his attempt to support this theory, he points to an observation made by one of his teachers, Frank Moore Cross:

He referred to a problem that earlier investigators had reckoned as a clue as well. The Deuteronomistic writer occasionally speaks of things as existing “to this day,” when the things in question existed only while the kingdom was standing. Why would someone writing a history in, say, 560 B.C. refer to something as existing “to this day,” when that something had ended back in 587? For example, 1 Kings 8:8 refers to the poles that were used for hoisting and carrying the ark. It states there that the poles were placed inside the Temple of Solomon on the day it was dedicated and that “they have been there unto this day.” Why would someone write these words after the Temple had burned down? Even if the words were not his own, but rather appeared

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 256, n. 7. In those same “Notes,” Friedman also stated that the expressions shared by Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20 are “Listed in Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*” (253, n. 19), which demonstrates that he also could refer to himself in the third person.

already in one of his sources, why would he leave them in? Why not edit them out?<sup>3</sup>

This paragraph from *Wrote* appears as only one sentence in *Narrative*: “Cross also points to the notation of earlier literary critics that the expression ‘to this day’ occurs regularly, often referring to circumstances which obtained only while the kingdom of Judah was still standing.”<sup>4</sup> In *Narrative*, the argument is merely stated; in *Wrote*, it is stated then elaborated upon. This phenomenon occurs often: arguments which are developed in a few paragraphs in *Narrative* may occupy an entire chapter in *Wrote*.

In *Narrative*, Friedman uses Hebrew terms and often quotes the Hebrew text of the Old Testament; in *Wrote*, he rarely uses Hebrew terms and always quotes from his translation of the Hebrew text, never from the text itself. In *Narrative*, he is dispassionate and objective, calmly presenting his evidence; in *Wrote*, he presents the same information in a fashion that is designed to arouse the reader’s curiosity and thereby makes it much more interesting. Thus, the “literary critics” in *Narrative* become *Wrote*’s “investigators.” What began as a mere “notation” is now “reckoned as a clue.” In *Narrative*, Friedman rarely draws attention to himself; in *Wrote*, he draws so much attention to himself that the work often lapses into autobiography, as when he discusses the significance of the Tabernacle measurements:

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 22 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 5, hereafter referred to as *Narrative*.

When I first worked out the Tabernacle measurements a few years ago, I was stymied. The Tabernacle was twenty by eight by ten cubits—what did that prove? It was not proportional to either Temple or to anything else in the Bible. A few days later, though, I realized that there is in fact a space described in the Bible that is just these measurements: the space under the wings of the cherubs inside the Holy of Holies of the Temple.<sup>5</sup>

This comes out in *Narrative* as simply, “As we have already observed, these dimensions are by no reckoning proportionate to those of either Temple.... The measurements of the Tabernacle correspond rather to those of the space inside the Holy of Holies in the First Temple, beneath the wings of the cherubim.”<sup>6</sup>

In short, the style of *Narrative* can be described as scholarly and technical, solemn, and precise. It is closely akin to the style of P. The style of *Wrote*, however, has been described by David Noel Freedman, at the time the Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Michigan, as “eminently readable, even racy.”<sup>7</sup> It is closely akin to the style of J or E. Yet both books claim to have been written by the same person.

Even Friedman himself admitted that the style of *Wrote* was “new”: “One of the fine things that came about through this project was my acquaintance with Joann Ellison Rodgers, who helped me learn a new kind of writing....”<sup>8</sup> Portions of *Narrative* first appeared in

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<sup>5</sup> *Wrote*, 161.

<sup>6</sup> *Narrative*, 49.

<sup>7</sup> Back of dustcover on *Wrote*, 1987 edition.

<sup>8</sup> *Wrote*, 270.

1980. *Wrote* was published in 1987. Thus, in six or seven years, Friedman developed a new writing style. At that rate, he could easily develop four different styles within, say, forty years.

However, this new writing style was not the only one Friedman employed within *Wrote*: he often changed from one style to another. We have already noted that *Wrote's* style is "eminently readable." Yet the style of significant portions of his book resembles the style of P. Lists which mechanically follow an established formula (such as genealogies) are an integral part of P's style. Such lists can also be found in Friedman's book. Several appear at the end of the book: Friedman's "Notes," a "Selected Bibliography," an "Index," and a chart that tells which verse belongs to which source. Lists also appear within the text itself. Especially noteworthy are the two lists found on pages 47 and 48:

The group of stories that invoke *Elohim* are the stories of:

Dan  
 Naphtali  
 Gad  
 Asher  
 Issachar  
 Zebulon  
 Ephraim  
 Manasseh  
 Benjamin

...The group of stories that invoke the name of *Yahweh* are the stories of:

Reuben  
Simeon  
Levi  
Judah

Notice how the two lists begin with a recurring formula (“The group of stories that invoke X are the stories of:”) even as P’s genealogies begin with a recurring formula (“These are the generations of X”). Other lists can be found on pages 36 and 155.

According to Friedman himself, “P obviously has a concern for ages, dates, and measurements in cubits. J does not.”<sup>9</sup> Outside of chapter ten of *Wrote*, measurements and cubits are rarely if ever mentioned, but a good portion of chapter ten itself is devoted to discussing the Tabernacle’s measurements—in cubits. Friedman even begs his readers to “bear with me for just a little more counting of cubits,”<sup>10</sup> as if he feared his readers would not find the counting of cubits to be eminently readable.

An important aspect of style is the author’s peculiar vocabulary. Documentarians like to draw up lists of words and phrases that are allegedly peculiar to each of the sources. Of particular interest to these scholars are what I call the synonym pairs, pairs of words in which one word is exclusively used by one source while its synonym is exclusively used by another

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

source. These synonyms are used to justify the documentarian analysis of the Pentateuch. Thus, after dividing the Flood Story into two sources, Friedman states:

But it is not only that it is possible to carve out two stories. What makes the case so powerful is that each story consistently uses its own language. The P story...consistently refers to the deity as God. The J story always uses the name Yahweh. P refers to the sex of the animals with the words "male and female" (Gen. 6:19; 7:9, 16). J uses the terms "man and his woman" (7:2) as well as male and female. P says that everything "expired" (6:17; 7:21). J says that everything "died" (7:22).<sup>11</sup>

Yet this same argument can justify the contention that this quoted paragraph itself can be divided into two sources, each of which consistently uses its own language.

A	B
The P story... consistently refers to the deity as God.	The J story always uses the name Yahweh.
P refers to the sex of the animals with the words "male and female" (Gen. 6:19; 7:9, 16).	J uses the terms "man and his woman" (7:2) as well as male and female.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

P says that everything  
"expired" (6:17; 7:21).

J says that everything  
"died" (7:22).

A is interested only in P's version of the Flood Story, while B is interested only in J's version, even as P is interested in ages, dates, cubits, etc., while J is not. In the first pair of sentences, A uses "consistently refers," while B prefers "always uses." In the second pair of sentences, A again uses "refers" while B again prefers "uses." In addition, A uses the term "words" while B prefers the word "terms." The verb in both sentences of the third pair is *says*, but this does not damage the case at all. As Friedman himself points out, both P and J utilize the words "male and female," but he can still find two sources within the Flood Story.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Friedman employs his own synonyms even as he divides the Flood Story according to its synonyms.

Second, Friedman repeats himself, creating doublets. In *Narrative*, Friedman assigns Gen. 7:18 ("And the waters grew strong," FV) to J and 7:24 ("And the waters grew strong," FV) to P precisely because they say the same thing.<sup>13</sup> But in *Wrote* he also says the same thing twice during his discussion of Wellhausen's contribution to the Hypothesis. The first set of the following passages is from the "Introduction," the other set from chapter nine.

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<sup>12</sup> A case of this sort would further contend that the convoluted style of the paragraph's first sentence ("But it is not only that it is possible") stands in sharp contrast to the simple styles of the sources. The second sentence has A's term "consistently" and B's term "uses." All of this proves that the redactor wrote these two sentences in an effort to make the two sources appear as one.

<sup>13</sup> *Narrative*, 82.

Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) stands out as a powerful figure in the investigation into the authorship of the Bible and in the history of biblical scholarship in general.

...Julius Wellhausen stands out as a dominant figure of modern biblical scholarship.

Much of what Wellhausen had to say was taken from those who preceded him....

Much of what Wellhausen said came from those who preceded him.

His contribution does not so much constitute a beginning as a culmination in that history.

His own contribution does not so much constitute a beginning as a culmination.

...Wellhausen's contribution was to bring all of these components together, along with considerable research and argumentation of his own,

He brought all the pieces together, along with his own investigations and arguments, into a clear, organized synthesis.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Wrote*, 145.

into a clear, organized synthesis.<sup>15</sup>

Should we follow Friedman's own argument and assign these passages to two different documents (neither of which were written by Friedman) precisely because they say the same thing?

Third, Friedman contradicts himself. He argues that the Shilonite priests compiled the original Deuteronomic law code (Deut. 12–26). Years later, another Shilonite, Baruch, built the first edition of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr<sup>1</sup>) around this law code. The onset of the exile forced Baruch to revise parts of Dtr<sup>1</sup> and add new sections that bridged the gap between Josiah and the exile. The revisions and additions are called Dtr<sup>2</sup>. In *Wrote's* symbolism, D includes the law code, Dtr<sup>1</sup> and Dtr<sup>2</sup>.<sup>16</sup>

As evidence for this argument, Friedman urges that the development of the history paralleled the history of the Shilonites.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–12.

<sup>16</sup> Friedman equates D with the law code when he says that D uses “the crucial expression ‘place where Yahweh sets his name’ (or ‘causes his name to be mentioned,’ or ‘causes his name to dwell’)” (p. 110), phrases which occur in Deuteronomy only in the law code, and again when he says, “It was an age in which the law code which they had preserved was royally endorsed as the book of the Torah (D)” (p. 220). At least twice he quotes or refers to passages (Deut. 3:23–26; 30:11–14) which he says came from D but which he elsewhere identifies as coming from Dtr<sup>1</sup> (pp. 215–216, 251, n. 24). Finally, he equates D with both Dtr<sup>1</sup> and Dtr<sup>2</sup> when he says, “The sources—J, E, P, and D (Dtr<sup>1</sup> and Dtr<sup>2</sup>)—were not all completed until shortly before” the days of the second Temple (p. 200).

For example, the ark is not mentioned in E or in the Deuteronomic law code, both of which were written when the Shilonite priests did not have access to the ark. But the ark *is* mentioned in the parts of Deuteronomy that were written during the reign of Josiah (Dtr<sup>1</sup>), when the Shilonites *did* have access to the ark.<sup>17</sup>

Yet later, this statement is completely reversed: “Recall that Jeremiah is from the priests of Shiloh, who brought us E and D, the two sources that never mention the ark.”<sup>18</sup> Does D mention the ark or not? Friedman seems somewhat indecisive on this point. The 1997 edition of *Wrote* fixed the contradiction by revising the second statement: “Recall that Jeremiah is from the priests of Shiloh, who brought us E, the source that never mentions the ark, and D, the source that mentions it rarely (only in chapters 10 and 31).” This revision brings the book back into line with the assumption that a single author would never contradict himself, but one cannot help but wonder how and why Friedman contradicted himself in the first place.

That “the words ‘none arose like him’ are applied to only two people in the Bible”<sup>19</sup> (Moses in Deuteronomy

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>18</sup> *Wrote*, 168, 1987 edition.

<sup>19</sup> *Wrote*, 95. Actually, the words “none arose like him” are applied to a third person. In a dream, Yahweh says to King Solomon, “Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, and none shall arise like you after you” (1 Kings 3:12, AT). In the Hebrew, Yahweh’s words form an interesting pattern:

like you

34:10 and Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25) is said in chapter five of his book to be one piece of evidence that the Deuteronomist equated Josiah with Moses. This equation in turn is said to be evidence that Dtr<sup>1</sup> (which includes 2 Kings 23:25) was written during Josiah's reign. Yet, in the "Introduction," Friedman quotes Deut. 34:10 and then concludes "that these sound like the words of someone who lived a long time after Moses and had the opportunity to see other prophets and thus make the comparison."<sup>20</sup> Why is it when the words "none arose like him" are applied to Moses, they are

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there has not been  
before you  
and after you  
there will not arise  
like you.

This pattern is called a chiasm (key'-asm; see Chapter Six). When we turn to 2 Kings 23:25 and observe the Hebrew word order of the first few words and the last few words of the statement concerning Josiah, we find the same pattern:

like him  
there has not been  
before him  
and after him  
there did not arise  
like him.

Thus, the author of First and Second Kings equated Solomon with both Josiah and Moses, just as he equated Josiah with Moses. This equation, however, poses a serious problem for Friedman's theory, for he believes that First and Second Kings were composed by a Shilonite and the Shilonites supposedly loved Josiah and Moses but despised Solomon.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

proof that Deuteronomy must have been written long after Moses' death, but when they are applied to Josiah, they are proof that Dtr<sup>1</sup> must have been written while Josiah was still alive?

As further evidence that Dtr<sup>1</sup> was composed during Josiah's reign, Friedman alleges that the Deuteronomist rates every Judean king through Josiah as good, qualifiedly good or bad depending on what he did or did not do to the high places (elevated platforms used primarily for idolatrous worship). After Josiah, this criterion disappears. The last four kings are rated as bad, but the high places are never mentioned. The question is then asked: "If all of the Deuteronomistic history were the work of one person, why would he set up this criterion and apply it to every single king except the last four—the very four in whose reigns the kingdom finally fell?"<sup>21</sup> The author of this question is obviously implying that the history cannot be the work of one person. Yet the author of other passages in *Wrote* argues that the history *is* the work of one person—and this author never answers this question, as if it had never been brought up in his own writings. Do we have here two sources and two authors? Or do we have a single author who has forgotten to answer his own question?

One well-known alleged contradiction from the Pentateuch appears in the Joseph Story, where some passages say the Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt while other passages say the Midianites did it. In *Hidden*, Friedman calls this contradiction "utterly irreconcilable."<sup>22</sup> Yet, a similar phenomenon occurs in *Wrote*.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>22</sup> *Hidden*, 353.

Outside of chapter eight, we are told that the Aaronids were opposed by a group of priests known as the Shilonites. But in chapter eight itself, we are told that the Aaronids were in fact opposed by a different group of priests, known as the Mushites. It is true that back in chapter six the two groups are equated (just as the Midianites and the Ishmaelites are equated in Judges 8:24):

Moreover, the Shiloh priests were very possibly Mushite—i.e., descended from Moses—and a family with such a famous, noble ancestor would be even more likely to be conscious of its heritage.<sup>23</sup>

The term “Mushite” is here defined in its first appearance in the book. If we were documentarians, we could build a case that this first appearance could not possibly be original for when the term reappears in chapter eight, it is defined again. We could argue that if this first appearance had been original and if the book had come from one author, this second definition would have been unnecessary (assuming, of course, that the reader has not forgotten chapter six’s definition by the time he or she got to chapter eight). Obviously, the redactor, in an attempt to make his Shilonite source and his Mushite source appear as one document, inserted the words “Mushite—i.e.,” into the original Shilonite source.<sup>24</sup> When we remove this insertion, we still end up with an intelligible sentence:

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<sup>23</sup> *Wrote*, 111.

<sup>24</sup> The terms “Shilonite” and “Mushite” occur together again on p. 220: “...the Shilonite (possibly Mushite) priesthood...” But the words within the parentheses could have been added by a redactor.

Moreover, the Shiloh priests were very possibly descended from Moses, and a family with such a famous, noble ancestor would be even more likely to be conscious of its heritage.

The Mushite passages contradict the Shilonite passages. Within the Shilonite passages is a contradiction concerning D's mention of the ark, a contradiction that was apparently cleaned up by a redactor who was, nevertheless, not concerned enough to clean up the other contradictions. We shall see below that the Mushite passages can be further divided into two sources. If we were documentarians, we would be well on our way to finding four sources within this work by a single author.

### **Friedman's Combinations**

The above examples demonstrate that Friedman has created the very same anomalies that the Hypothesis says a single author would never create. But what Tigay is looking for are analogues that combine two or more of these anomalies. Fortunately, Friedman has supplied these analogues as well.

In *Wrote*, Friedman discusses not just once but twice the history of the Hypothesis:

Moreover, the investigators found that it was not only the names of the deity that lined up. They found various other terms and characteristics that regularly appeared in one or the other group. This tended to support the hypothesis that someone had taken two different old source documents, cut them

up, and woven them together to form the continuous story in the Five Books of Moses.

And so the next stage of the investigation was the process of separating the strands of the two old source documents. In the eighteenth century, three independent investigators arrived at similar conclusions based on such studies: a German minister (H.B. Witter), a French medical doctor (Jean Astruc), and a German professor (J.G. Eichhorn)....

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the two-source hypothesis was expanded. Scholars found evidence that there were not two major source documents in the Pentateuch after all—there were four!<sup>25</sup>

The investigators saw that they were not simply dealing with a book that repeated itself a great deal, and they were not dealing with a loose collection of somewhat similar stories. They had discovered two separate works that *someone* had cut up and combined into one.

The first of the three persons who made this discovery was a German minister, Henning Bernhard Witter, in 1711. His book made very little impact and was in fact forgotten until it was rediscovered two centuries later, in 1924.

The second person to see it was Jean Astruc, a French professor of medicine and court physician to Louis XV. He published his findings at the age of seventy, anonymously in Brussels and secretly in Paris in 1753. His book, too, made very little impression

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

on anyone. Some belittled it, perhaps partly because it was by a medical doctor and not by a scholar.

But when a third person, who was a scholar, made the same discovery and published it in 1780, the world could no longer ignore it. The third person was Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, a known and respected scholar in Germany and the son of a pastor....

The idea that the Bible's early history was a combination of two originally separate works by two different people lasted only eighteen years. Practically before anyone had a chance to consider the implications of this idea for the Bible and religion, investigators discovered that the first five books of the Bible were not, in fact, even by *two* writers—they were by *four*.<sup>26</sup>

This is an excellent example of two anomalies appearing in conjunction with each other, an example for which Tigay has been looking. Here we have a doublet which betrays a difference in style. Notice the change in vocabulary: "different" in the first passage becomes "separate" in the second, "source documents" becomes "works," "woven together" becomes "combined," "hypothesis" becomes "idea." In the first passage, the investigators "arrive at" or "find" things, whereas in the second, they "see" or "discover" things. In the first, the names tend to be initialized, but in the second, they are spelled out. In both, Astruc is a "medical doctor," but in the second, he is also a "professor of medicine and court physician." In the first, Eichhorn is a "professor,"

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

but in the second, he is a “scholar.” However, the most striking difference between the two is that the second passage is concerned with dates and even Astruc’s age (even as P is interested in dates and ages), while the first is not (even as J is not)!

Friedman also discusses not just once but twice the use of the divine names in the stories of the Pentateuch:

Investigators found that in most cases one of the two versions of a doublet story would refer to the deity by the divine name Yahweh (formerly mispronounced Jehovah), and the other version of the story would refer to the deity simply as “God.”<sup>27</sup>

Then they noticed that, quite often, one of the two versions of a story would refer to God by one name and the other version would refer to God by a different name.<sup>28</sup>

In the first passage of this doublet, he uses “deity,” while in the second, he uses “God.” In this next doublet, he uses “God” in the first passage and “Yahweh” in the second:

In JE, God walks in the garden of Eden, God personally makes Adam’s and Eve’s clothes, personally closes Noah’s ark, smells Noah’s sacrifice, wrestles

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

with Jacob, and speaks to Moses out of the burning bush.<sup>29</sup>

In J's story, Yahweh personally walks in the Garden of Eden, makes the humans' first clothes, closes the ark, and smells Noah's sacrifice.<sup>30</sup>

Notice how the two passages not only form a doublet that uses different names for God. Each also uses its own language. In the first, the clothes are "Adam's and Eve's," but in the second, they are simply "the humans'." In the first, the ark is Noah's, but in the second, it is just the ark. The two also differ on actual details. The author of the first passage is aware that God also wrestled with Jacob and spoke to Moses. The author of the second is apparently unaware of those stories. The first passage says that God did all these things in JE; the second says Yahweh did all these things only in J. So these two passages use two different languages, form a doublet, contradict each other, and use different names for God. All of this from the hand of a single author, Richard Elliott Friedman.

In still another doublet, Friedman presents contradictory views about Wellhausen and his version of the Hypothesis. We have already seen that some very positive comments about Wellhausen found in the "Introduction" have been duplicated in chapter nine. In that chapter, other positive comments have been intermingled and even combined with negative statements such as these:

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

Once Wellhausen accepted Reuss' claim that the law was later than the prophets [a claim which Friedman earlier in the chapter had discounted as false], and he accepted Graf's claim that the Tabernacle was nothing more than a symbol of the Temple [another false claim], the scene was set.

Wellhausen's picture was...wrong.

Wellhausen's claim, that P assumes centralized religion, was also wrong.

Wellhausen's other interpretations of the evidence are not compelling arguments either.<sup>31</sup>

What should we make of these conflicting statements? Was Wellhausen's theory "logical, coherent, persuasive," as Friedman states in one part of a sentence, or was it "wrong," as he states in the other part? Was Wellhausen an intelligent man, "a dominant figure of modern biblical scholarship," or was he a sheep, easily led into accepting false claims? Do we have here the work of two authors—one who admired Wellhausen and another who despised him? Or do we have here the admission from a single author that intelligent men can and do make simple mistakes that undermine their otherwise coherent and persuasive theories?

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 146, 147-148, 152.

## Friedman's Colleagues

Friedman is not the only documentarian to provide us with such analogues. The thirty-first chapter of Deuteronomy so puzzled another of Friedman's teachers, the late Dr. G. Ernest Wright, that he expressed his bewilderment twice using two different styles: "The order of material in this chapter seems rather badly mixed....[I]t is something of a mystery why the heterogeneous contents of this chapter are so badly disarranged."<sup>32</sup>

A few scholars have pointed out to their fellow documentarians that if they were to push their arguments to their logical conclusions, then they should divide J into smaller documents because it too contains contradictions, etc. Eissfeldt has felt he could detect an L document within J. Robert Pfeiffer has proffered S and S<sup>2</sup> sources. Other, less imaginative scholars have simply divided J into a J<sup>1</sup>, a J<sup>2</sup>, and even a J<sup>3</sup>. Of course, one gets the impression that J is being not divided but shattered, that we are no longer dealing with "internally consistent documents," to borrow Friedman's phrase, but with dustbins full of shards. Most documentarians, therefore, reject the efforts of these scholars as being too extreme. In rejecting these efforts, however, they place themselves in the odd position of defending the single authorship of J at all costs—even at the cost of being inconsistent. J. Philip Hyatt is one such documentarian. He admits that "there are some inconsistencies in the J narrative." One would think that he would argue,

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<sup>32</sup> George Ernest Wright, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in George Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. II (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1953), 513, 516.

therefore, that J must have been written by two or more authors. After all, earlier in the same article he declares,

Though these books are often referred to as the 5 Books of Moses, scholars long ago proved that Moses is not their author. This is clearly shown by the presence of strikingly different styles and vocabularies in various parts, anachronisms, duplicate or even triplicate narratives of the same incident, evidence of developing theological concepts and legal requirements, and outright disagreements in the laws and narratives that would not have existed if they had come from the pen of one man.

But this is not what he does. Instead, he insists that the single author of J “was a literary genius” and argues that we can explain away the inconsistencies in J “by viewing the Yahwist as a collector of traditions who did not always trouble himself to reconcile them.”<sup>33</sup> So, on the one hand, Hyatt argues that the inconsistencies within the Pentateuch necessarily prove that a single author could not have written it; on the other hand, he argues that the inconsistencies within J do *not* necessarily prove that a single author could not have written it. Hence, it is now Hyatt who, with the very same pen, is creating inconsistencies and outright disagreements.

Cuthbert Simpson is one of those documentarians who argue that J should be divided into a J<sup>1</sup> and a J<sup>2</sup>. He

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<sup>33</sup> J. Philip Hyatt, “The Compiling of Israel’s Story,” in Charles M. Laymon, ed., *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 1082, 1083.

believes that the writing of J<sup>2</sup> was motivated by the split of Israel into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom shortly after Solomon's death. In his article, "The Growth of the Hexateuch," which is found in the commentary entitled *The Interpreter's Bible*, he states what he believes was J<sup>2</sup>'s purpose for writing:

Furthermore, the content of his narrative shows that he was also eager to preserve the spiritual unity of Israel. He saw that the real unity of the people inhered not in the state, but in the will of the Lord who had brought them into a unique relationship with himself.<sup>34</sup>

Only two paragraphs later, he returns to discussing J<sup>2</sup>'s purpose for writing:

J<sup>2</sup> accordingly undertook the task of revising the J<sup>1</sup> narrative so that it would appeal more directly to the people of the north, and bring home to them the fact of the spiritual unity of the nation as a whole—a unity which inhered in the will of God.<sup>35</sup>

Then, in his "Introduction" to Genesis in that same commentary, he again discusses J<sup>2</sup>'s purpose for writing:

J<sup>2</sup> was concerned to counter the blow which this event had administered to the unity of Israel. He set

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<sup>34</sup> Cuthbert Simpson, "The Growth of the Hexateuch," in George Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. I (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1953), 194.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

about providing a history which would show that this unity inhered not in the political framework in which it had for a time found partial expression, but in the relationship of the people to Yahweh.<sup>36</sup>

These three passages are similar to each other, but their differences are striking. In the first passage, J<sup>2</sup> was “*eager to preserve the spiritual unity of Israel.*” In the third, J<sup>2</sup> was “*concerned to counter the blow which this event had administered to the unity of Israel.*” The same concept is expressed in both passages, but it is expressed in different styles. The unity for which J<sup>2</sup> was concerned is also described in different ways. In the first passage, it begins as “the spiritual unity of *Israel,*” then it becomes “the real unity of *the people.*” In the second passage, it is “the spiritual unity of *the nation as a whole,*” and in the third, it again becomes “the unity of *Israel,*” but with a difference: in the first two passages, the unity is a *spiritual* unity; in the third, it is simply a unity. In the first passage, this unity inhered “not in the *state*”; in the third, it inhered “not in the *political framework.*” In the first passage, this unity inhered “in the *will of the Lord,*” and in the second, it inhered “in the *will of God,*” but in the third, it inhered “in the *relationship of the people to Yahweh.*” Notice also that Simpson uses three different names for God: in the first passage, he uses “the Lord”; in the second, “God”; in the third, “Yahweh.” Thus, Simpson, a single author, has created not just a doublet but a triplet that employs three different styles and three different names for God.

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<sup>36</sup> Simpson, “Genesis,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. I, 445.

## Friedman's Documents

Still, the documentarians may argue that the analogues I have cited are merely short, isolated passages which have only a few anomalies. They are not long passages with numerous anomalies such as we find in the Pentateuch. A much longer passage which contains numerous anomalies and which can be divided into two or more continuous sources would be a much better analogue. And once again, Friedman has provided such an analogue.

The host of anomalies that we will find in the eighth chapter of *Wrote* can justify dividing this chapter into two previously existing sources. To separate out these two sources, I will simply analyze the text in the same fashion in which the documentarians analyze a Pentateuchal passage.

Chapter eight of *Wrote*, like most modern writings, has not been divided into verses, so I have adopted the following numbering system to make reference to the various parts of the chapter more convenient. The paragraphs of the chapter have been numbered consecutively. Within each paragraph, the sentences have also been numbered consecutively. Thus, a reference such as 6:4 is referring to the fourth sentence in the sixth paragraph.

I call the two sources S and W. The author of S (the Scholarly source) is concerned with historical knowledge. He is interested in knowing and stating facts. He also tells us when the facts are lacking. Appropriately, he relies on archaeological findings, and he often gives us exact dates and even census figures. In this last regard, he is like the theoretical Priestly writer. The

author of S never refers to the four documents J, E, D, and P, nor does he care to know who wrote them. After all, such information is still theoretical, not factual.

The author of W, on the other hand, is interested in knowing how people feel and how they react. He never mentions archaeology, he never gives us census figures, and, although he mentions the passage of time (such as “fifty years later,” 2:2), he never gives us exact dates. He is much more interested in how the exile affected the development of the Judahites’ psychology, how this in turn affected the development of their theology, and how both in turn affected the development of the Bible. He also believes that a study of this development will provide us clues as to who wrote the four documents. It is this ultimate interest that gives the source its name.

There are stylistic differences between the two sources, as the analysis will point out. Each source also has its distinctive bank of vocabulary. S’s vocabulary includes:

Disappear, disappearance – 20:3, 5; 22:1, 7; 23:1, 3; 24:2

Mystery, mysteries – 20:3; 22:1; 24:5

Neighbor, neighborly (all used in reference to Edom) – 3:3 (twice); 10:2

Object(s) – 20:6; 24:2; 25:6

W’s vocabulary includes:

Literature – 8:4, 5, 6

National – 4:6; 5:2; 6:2; 7:10; 12:5

Practical, practically – 5:3; 14:1; 15:1

Priesthood(s) – 16:3; 26:1, 7; 27:2

Relate, relationship – 12:1; 17:2, 6

Religion(s) – 6:1, 2 (twice), 8; 7:1, 3, 7 (twice), 10

Also, the words “leader(s)” and “leadership” occur four times in this chapter, and three of those occurrences are in W (4:5, 6; 17:3). “Exiles” appears twelve times in this chapter, and nine of those appearances are in W (2:1; 4:2; 8:5; 12:1, 4; 14:6; 19:5; 21:5; 27:4). The noun “exile” (meaning “the exile”) appears eight times and six of those appearances are in W (7:10; 8:1, 5; 12:6; 18:2; 27:3). W’s vocabulary list may be longer because it is the larger source.

In addition, there are the telltale synonym pairs: one source will use one word exclusively while the other source will use that word’s synonym exclusively. Both speak of the ark as being “carried away” (19:6 W; 20:4 S), but only W says the people were also “carried away” (4:7) or “carried off” (27:3); S says they were “deported” (24:9, 13). S refers to the Judahites as “Jews” (3:5; 14:5; 19:3; 33:4); W calls them “the people of Judah” (5:1; 7:1, 10). S refers to the Judahites who went to Egypt as “those in Egypt” or “those of Judah who fled to Egypt” (3:1; 11:1); W simply calls them “refugees” (2:1; 8:5; 12:1; 27:5, 6). S refers to those who returned from the Exile as “returnees” (24:12, 15); W calls them “ex-exiles” (36:5). S speaks of the exiles as “exuding” their feelings (10:1); W speaks of them as “expressing” their feelings (8:2–11, five times).

The detailed analysis that follows employs the format found in multivolume commentaries. A portion of the chapter will be quoted, followed by some comments about that portion. In the text, S is printed in bold and W in regular print. The redactor’s insertions

are enclosed in square brackets. Where the redactor has replaced an original word with a substitute to smooth the reading of the text, the original word is enclosed in braces ({} ) next to its substitute.

**1** <sup>1</sup>**The period that followed the disasters of 587 B.C. is the hardest for us to know.** <sup>2</sup>Even though it {the exile} is more recent than the other periods I have described, it is the hardest to write about. <sup>3</sup>There are two reasons for this. <sup>4</sup>The first is simply the lack of sources. <sup>5</sup>[Neither the Bible nor archeology has told us very much.]

**2** <sup>1</sup>There is very little in the narrative books of the Bible that tells us about what happened to the generation of exiles and refugees from Judah. <sup>2</sup>The story ends in the books of Kings and Chronicles with the fall of the kingdom, and the next books of historical narrative in the Bible (Ezra and Nehemiah) pick up the story fifty years later. <sup>3</sup>A small portion of the book of Daniel deals with those years, but it refers only to a few events in the lives of Daniel and his friends. <sup>4</sup>It does not deal with the fate of the nation. <sup>5</sup>Probably our best means is deducing information from parts of the books of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

**3** <sup>1</sup>**Archeology[ , too,] has revealed little about the fate of the exiled community in Babylonia or about those in Egypt.** <sup>2</sup>**We are not even sure about what was happening back in the land of Judah itself.** <sup>3</sup>**We have some evidence that Judah's old neighbor Edom had not been very neighborly, but had shared in the Babylonian conquest of Judah and was encroaching on Judah's territory.** <sup>4</sup>**And we know that the Samaritans continued to occupy the northern**

**territory that had once been the kingdom of Israel. <sup>5</sup>But we know hardly anything about how many of the Jews were able to remain in Judah or about what their lives were like there.**

Sentence 1:2 is a doublet of 1:1 but with a change in emphasis from “knowing” about the exile to “writing” about it. Sentence 1:1 best fits S because of the date and because of its interest in “knowing” the facts about the exile. Sentence 1:2 best fits the interests of W’s author because, as we shall see, he is interested in literature. The first reason why the exile is “the hardest to write about” is “the lack of sources” (1:4). “Sources” in W always refers to written sources only. In S, it includes both written and archaeological sources (22:9). This distinction is not yet clear in 1:4. By inserting 1:5 and the word “too” in 3:1, the redactor took advantage of this obscurity and made archaeology part of the first reason, thereby forcing the word in W’s text to take on S’s meaning. In this fashion, he deftly made the two documents appear as one from the beginning.

Paragraph three obviously belongs to S because of its emphasis on archaeology and on what we know and do not know based on archaeological information.

4 <sup>1</sup>The second reason why it is so difficult to talk about this period is that, for most of us, it is barely possible to know how it *felt*. <sup>2</sup>Outside of those of us who have actually had the experience of being an exile or refugee, it would take an enormous leap of sympathy (in the true Greek sense of the word *sym-pathos*, “to feel with”) to know what the exiles felt. <sup>3</sup>We would have to imagine seeing the defenses of the city where

we have lived all our lives torn down. <sup>4</sup>All the public buildings and all the most beautiful homes are burned. <sup>5</sup>The religious leaders of our community are executed. <sup>6</sup>The national leader's children are butchered in front of him, then his eyes are put out, and then he is led away in manacles. <sup>7</sup>We are carried away in a group of thousands, probably never to see our country again. <sup>8</sup>And then we live as outsiders in our conquerors' country. <sup>9</sup>It is a horror.

Here we are introduced to the W author's concern for the people's feelings and for their psychological reaction to their situation. In paragraph two, the author had referred to biblical literature. Thus, in W's first three paragraphs, we are introduced to the author's two major interests. From here he will explore how the second eventually affected the first.

5 <sup>1</sup>What were the exiled people of Judah to do? <sup>2</sup>How were they to maintain their identity as a national group and not simply be assimilated into the mass of the Babylonian empire? <sup>3</sup>Or to put it more practically, what did they have to hold on to?

6 <sup>1</sup>Probably the most important single thing was religion. <sup>2</sup>Other countries that the Babylonians conquered also had their own particular national religions, but one of the remarkable characteristics of pagan religions in the ancient world is that they were all extremely compatible. <sup>3</sup>The god who was identified with the wind may have been called Marduk in Babylon and Baal-Haddad in Canaan and Zeus in Greece, but he was still essentially the same god. <sup>4</sup>He was the wind. <sup>5</sup>The Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar was essentially the same

as the goddess Ashtoreth in Canaan and Aphrodite in Greece. <sup>6</sup>She was fertility. <sup>7</sup>And so on. <sup>8</sup>The interchangeability of the pagan deities made it possible for a conquered people to assimilate to their conquerors' religion.

<sup>7</sup> <sup>1</sup>But the religion of the people of Judah was different. <sup>2</sup>There was no god in the pagan pantheon who corresponded to Yahweh. <sup>3</sup>Scholars still debate the specific character of Judah's religion in this period. <sup>4</sup>Was it completely monotheistic in the modern sense? <sup>5</sup>Was Yahweh believed to be all-powerful? <sup>6</sup>Were other lesser deities tolerated? <sup>7</sup>But, whatever Judah's religion was, it was not compatible with pagan religion. <sup>8</sup>Yahweh was not a force in nature. <sup>9</sup>He was outside the natural realm, controlling its forces. <sup>10</sup>And so, by holding on to their national religion in exile, the people of Judah, intentionally or not, reinforced their ethnic identity.

These paragraphs are full of W's characteristic language (for example, "people of Judah," "practically," "national") and of the writer's interest in how the people's reaction and their religion related to each other. Paragraph five begins with a question. Of the 25 paragraphs assigned to W, nine begin with a question and another two begin with a statement which leads into a question. S never does this. This is one obvious difference between the styles of the two sources.

<sup>8</sup> <sup>1</sup>Were they content in exile? <sup>2</sup>Whatever tranquility or acceptance they found in Babylonia, the community still expressed longing for home. <sup>3</sup>They instituted five annual fast days to commemorate their misfortune. <sup>4</sup>And they expressed their feelings in literature, which

is preserved in several places in the Bible. <sup>5</sup>The literature of the exile includes Psalm 137 and the book of Lamentations, as well as several sections from the prophets: the last part of the book of Jeremiah, reflecting the refugees' life in Egypt; and the entire book of Ezekiel and the latter part of the book of Isaiah, reflecting the exiles' life in Babylonia. <sup>6</sup>It is not happy literature. <sup>7</sup>Some of it expresses bitterness. <sup>8</sup>Much of it expresses guilt. <sup>9</sup>(Why did this happen to us? <sup>10</sup>It must be that we did something wrong.) <sup>11</sup>Just about all of it expresses sadness.

**9 <sup>1</sup>Psalm 137, written by a Judean poet and preserved by the community among their psalms, is one indicator of the experience of exile:**

*<sup>2</sup>By the rivers of Babylon*

*<sup>3</sup>There we sat*

*<sup>4</sup>Also, we wept*

*<sup>5</sup>When we remembered Zion*

*<sup>6</sup>By the willows in her midst*

*<sup>7</sup>We hung up our harps*

*<sup>8</sup>For there our captors required of us words of song*

*<sup>9</sup>And our conquerors, joy*

*<sup>10</sup>"Sing us a song of Zion"*

*<sup>11</sup>How shall we sing a song of Yahweh on foreign soil?*

*<sup>12</sup>If I forget you Jerusalem*

*<sup>13</sup>Let my right arm forget*

*<sup>14</sup>Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth*

***15If I don't remember you  
16If I don't hold up Jerusalem  
17Over my highest joy***

***18Remember, Yahweh, the Edomites  
19With the day of Jerusalem  
20Who said, "Tear up, tear up  
21To the foundation of it"***

***22Despoiled daughter of Babylon  
23Happy is he who pays you back  
24Your payment  
25As you paid us***

***26Happy is he who takes hold and smashes  
27Your suckling babies  
28Against a rock***

**10** **<sup>1</sup>The poem does not exude affection for the Babylonians. <sup>2</sup>And it takes bitter note of the Edomites, Judah's kin and neighbor who abetted the conquering enemy.**

In paragraph eight, the W author begins his discussion of how the people's feelings led to the production of what became biblical literature, although he does not yet discuss the Pentateuchal sources.

Paragraph ten must have come from S because it refers to Edom's attack on Judah, which was mentioned back in paragraph three which is also S. Paragraph nine must also belong to S because it leads into paragraph ten and because of its strange relationship to paragraph eight. The author of 8:5 mentions Psalms 137 in

passing as if his readers were already familiar with it, but the author of paragraph nine introduces it and even quotes the entire psalm as if his readers were *not* familiar with it.

**11 <sup>1</sup>As for those of Judah who fled to Egypt, things did not go well for them either, because nineteen years later the Babylonians invaded Egypt. <sup>2</sup>We only know of a colony of Judean mercenaries at Elephantine, which was located at the first cataract of the Nile. <sup>3</sup>This fits with the report in Kings and Jeremiah that it was the Judean army that led the community to Egypt.**

12 <sup>1</sup>How were the exiles and refugees to relate their fate to *God*? <sup>2</sup>Questions of theology were not matters of purely theoretical speculation in this moment. <sup>3</sup>Theology and history were now on a collision course. <sup>4</sup>The way in which one understood God made a difference to the way in which one understood the situation in which the exiles found themselves. <sup>5</sup>Is Yahweh a *national* God? <sup>6</sup>If so, he is left behind in Judah, and the people are cut off from him in exile. <sup>7</sup>This very question is asked by the author of Psalm 137[, translated on the previous pages]: “How shall we sing a song of Yahweh on foreign soil?”

13 <sup>1</sup>Or is Yahweh a *universal* God? <sup>2</sup>And if so, why did he let this disaster happen? <sup>3</sup>That is, if Yahweh is the one true God of the whole world, why did he allow the Babylonians to destroy his Temple, carry off his anointed kings and priests, and exile the people? <sup>4</sup>Since the exiled community was hardly likely to believe that the Babylonians were stronger than Yahweh, the answer that was regularly suggested to them was that it

was their own fault. <sup>5</sup>They had failed to keep their covenant with Yahweh. <sup>6</sup>They had worshiped other gods. <sup>7</sup>The Babylonians were merely Yahweh's tool, which he was using to fulfill the covenant curses because Judah had broken its contract. <sup>8</sup>One of the logical consequences of monotheism is guilt.

14 <sup>1</sup>There were also practical problems. <sup>2</sup>Now that the Temple was destroyed, how were the people to worship God? <sup>3</sup>**The Egyptian group at Elephantine actually built a Temple there—which was clearly against the law of centralization in Deuteronomy.** <sup>4</sup>**The extraordinary thing about the Elephantine Temple is that they worshiped Yahweh and two other gods, one male and one female, there.** <sup>5</sup>**The Jews in other parts of the world apparently were not happy with this development, because when the Elephantine Temple was destroyed in the fifth century they would not help rebuild it.** <sup>6</sup>[As for the Babylonian community,] the prophet Ezekiel, who was one of the Babylonian exiles, envisioned a plan for a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. <sup>7</sup>He described the new Temple in detail, including its measurements in cubits, but the Temple that he pictured was never built.

Paragraph eleven refers to the Israelites who went to Egypt as “those of Judah who fled to Egypt” instead of “refugees,” W’s usual term. It tells us what we know about these people and it tells what happened to them but not how they reacted. All of this points to S as its source.

In paragraphs six and seven, the author of W discussed how religion affected the people’s reaction to the exile. In paragraphs twelve and thirteen, he

discusses the reverse. That 12:7 (W) translates Psalm 137:11 exactly as it was translated in paragraph nine (S) may mean that the redactor reworded one translation to match the other or that both authors were familiar with a translation found in a third source.

Paragraph fourteen picks up on the theme of practical problems first stated in 5:3 (W). This theme unites the W passages in paragraphs fourteen to sixteen. But in the midst of paragraph fourteen, S returns with a continuation of its discussion of the Elephantine Temple. This continuation was placed here instead of immediately after paragraph eleven because it fits in with the subject of worship and it provides a contrast to Ezekiel's Temple. The leap from S's Elephantine Temple in Egypt to Ezekiel's Temple vision in Babylon required a transitional phrase which the redactor provided in 14:6a.

15 <sup>1</sup>The other practical and pressing problem was: now that the monarchy was gone, who was to lead the people? <sup>2</sup>King Jehoahaz was imprisoned in Egypt. <sup>3</sup>He died there. <sup>4</sup>King Jehoiachin and King Zedekiah were imprisoned in Babylon. <sup>5</sup>We do not know what happened to Zedekiah, but, according to the very last sentences of the book of 2 Kings, Jehoiachin was released from prison thirty-seven years after his capture. <sup>6</sup>Still, that did not mean that he was reinstated as king.

16 <sup>1</sup>The priests, too, had lost their center, the Temple, and that meant that there were no more sacrifices to perform. <sup>2</sup>It meant that their authority, their income, and most of their functions were threatened. <sup>3</sup>It also meant that the rival priesthods, the Mushites (those

who traced their ancestry to Moses) and the Aaronids, did not have much left to fight over.

17 <sup>1</sup>In short, the Babylonian destruction of Judah had brought horrors and tremendous challenges and crises to this nation. <sup>2</sup>They were forced to reformulate their picture of themselves and of their relationship with their God. <sup>3</sup>They had to find a way to worship Yahweh without a Temple. <sup>4</sup>They had to find leadership without a king. <sup>5</sup>They had to learn to live as a minority ethnic group in great empires. <sup>6</sup>They had to determine what their relationship was to their homeland. <sup>7</sup>And they had to live with their defeat.

The practical problems continue in paragraphs fifteen and sixteen, where the loss of leadership is discussed. The term Mushite is first introduced and defined here. It was noted above that this term and its definition separates this source from the other sources which refer to these priests as Shilonites. Paragraph seventeen summarizes W's discussion to this point. It lists all the problems which faced the exiles. W now turns to the resolution of those problems.

18 <sup>1</sup>And then, after only fifty years, the impossible happened. <sup>2</sup>The exile ended, and they were allowed to go home.

19 **<sup>1</sup>In 538 B.C., the Persians conquered the Babylonians. <sup>2</sup>Babylonia, Egypt, and everything in between, including Judah, now were part of a tremendous, powerful Persian empire. <sup>3</sup>The ruler of this empire was Cyrus the Great. <sup>4</sup>In the same year that he took Babylon, Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Judah. <sup>5</sup>By royal decree, Cyrus permitted the exiles**

to rebuild their homeland and their Temple. <sup>6</sup>The precious implements of the Temple, which the Babylonians had carried away, were returned—with one exception: the ark.

Sentence 19:4 is a doublet of 18:2. Sentence 19:4 has the term “Jews,” a term used only by S. Sentence 19:1 mentions a date. All of this proves that 19:1–4 came from S. Sentence 19:5 came from W because it has the term “homeland,” used previously in paragraph seventeen (W). Sentence 19:6 also belongs to W because it leads into paragraph twenty-one, which, as we shall see, also came from W.

This raises the interesting observation that the author of W did not know about the Persian conquest of Babylon. He never mentions it. Nor does he mention that it was the Persians who allowed the exiles to return. He apparently thought that Cyrus was a Babylonian emperor!

**20 <sup>1</sup>For some reason, the biblical sources do not tell what happened to the ark containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments. <sup>2</sup>Archeology, too, has shed no light on this at all. <sup>3</sup>The disappearance of the ark is the first great mystery of this period, and it remains one of the great mysteries of the Bible. <sup>4</sup>There is no report that the ark was carried away or destroyed or hidden. <sup>5</sup>There is not even any comment such as “And then the ark disappeared, and we do not know what happened to it,” or “And no one knows where it is to this day.” <sup>6</sup>The most important object in the world, in the biblical view, simply ceases to be in the story.**

21 <sup>1</sup>Did it ever really exist? <sup>2</sup>For the purposes of our search, it is necessary to recognize at least that the earlier historical books *portray* it as existing, enshrined in the Temple. <sup>3</sup>The books of Kings and Chronicles say explicitly that the ark was placed in the inside room (the Holy of Holies) of the Temple on the day that King Solomon dedicated the Temple. <sup>4</sup>It then ceases to figure in any direct way in the story, and there is no report of what happened to it when the Temple was destroyed. <sup>5</sup>And now, in the report of the exiles' return to Judah, it is not mentioned, while the less important Temple utensils are. <sup>6</sup>The community that returned to Jerusalem rebuilt the Temple, but this second Temple did not contain the ark. <sup>7</sup>Nor did it have cherubs, the giant golden statues of winged sphinxes whose purpose, after all, was at least partly to spread their wings over the ark. <sup>8</sup>The second Temple's Holy of Holies apparently was an empty room. <sup>9</sup>All of this will be relevant to the search for who wrote the Bible.

These paragraphs form the most extensive doublet in this chapter. Both discuss the disappearance of the ark but with some subtle changes in wording. "Ceases to be in the story" of 20:6 becomes "ceases to figure in any direct way in the story" at 21:4. They also reflect the interests of the two authors. Paragraph twenty mentions archaeology; paragraph twenty-one does not. Paragraph twenty-one sees the disappearance as "relevant to the search for who wrote the Bible"; paragraph twenty does not. Thus, paragraph twenty was derived from S and paragraph twenty-one from W.

22 <sup>1</sup>The second great mystery of this period is the disappearance of the Davidic dynasty. <sup>2</sup>According to the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, those who returned from Babylonia were led by two men named Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel. <sup>3</sup>Both of these men were from the royal house of David. <sup>4</sup>They were descendants of King Jehoiachin. <sup>5</sup>Zerubbabel is also mentioned in the biblical books of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who prophesied in this period. <sup>6</sup>But Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel cease to be mentioned after the fifth chapter of Ezra. <sup>7</sup>There is no report of the disappearance of these men, no explanation of what happened to the royal family. <sup>8</sup>Rather, as with the ark, the monarchy simply ceases to be mentioned. <sup>9</sup>Neither the biblical nor the archeological sources indicate what happened to the family of the messiah, the descendants of David.

23 <sup>1</sup>Also, prophecy diminishes, and perhaps disappears, in this period. <sup>2</sup>The age of the great prophets is past. <sup>3</sup>The prophets Haggai and Zechariah preached at the time of Zerubbabel, but as the kings disappeared, so did the prophets.

That these two paragraphs came from S is apparent by their relationship to paragraph 20. The term “disappear” and its variations are employed in all three paragraphs, and the term “mystery” is used in paragraphs twenty and twenty-two. Neither term appears in paragraph twenty-one. In addition, archaeology is again mentioned in paragraph twenty-two.

24 <sup>1</sup>The fifty years of exile in Babylonia and Egypt are not described. <sup>2</sup>The nation's most sacred object and its royal family disappear. <sup>3</sup>Prophecy diminishes. <sup>4</sup>And there are more unknowns. <sup>5</sup>The entire period seems to be an age of mysteries. <sup>6</sup>How many of the people who were in Babylonia actually took advantage of the opportunity to return to Judah? <sup>7</sup>Did the majority stay or leave? <sup>8</sup>The Bible's figures are confusing. <sup>9</sup>According to the book of Jeremiah, 4,600 had been deported from Judah to Babylonia in 587; according to the book of 2 Kings, it was 11,600. <sup>10</sup>But according to the book of Ezra, 42,360 returned just fifty years later. <sup>11</sup>That is a very prolific community. <sup>12</sup>It is possible that this number of returnees includes some who came from Egypt. <sup>13</sup>Or it may include people from the northern tribes of Israel who were deported to Mesopotamia by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and who were now reunited with the exiles from Judah. <sup>14</sup>We just do not know. <sup>15</sup>We also do not know who was already in the land of Judah when the new returnees arrived. <sup>16</sup>Had *everyone* left the land for Babylonia or Egypt? <sup>17</sup>Probably not. <sup>18</sup>But who—and how many—stayed?

This paragraph summarizes S's discussion to this point even as paragraph seventeen had summarized W's discussion. The author again discusses what we know and do not know. Dates appear and census figures abound. The terms "mystery" and "disappear" are employed again.

25 <sup>1</sup>We do know something about how life developed in the land as the exiles returned and began to rebuild. <sup>2</sup>They completed building the second Temple, and it was dedicated on Passover, 516 B.C. <sup>3</sup>This was seen, at least by some, as the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jeremiah's. <sup>4</sup>We do not know the size of the second Temple, whether it was the same as the first Temple or not. <sup>5</sup>We do know that it did not have the ark, the cherubs, or the Urim and Thummim. <sup>6</sup>(The Urim and Thummim were sacred objects that were used by the High Priest, apparently to obtain oracles.) <sup>7</sup>We know that it had a High Priest. <sup>8</sup>We know that the High Priest was an Aaronid, not a Mushite.

26 <sup>1</sup>[Most important,] our sources indicate that the entire Temple priesthood was Aaronid at this time. <sup>2</sup>All other Levites were not recognized as legitimate priests. <sup>3</sup>Levites were regarded as secondary clergy, assistants to the Aaronids, who alone exercised the priestly prerogatives. <sup>4</sup>**The struggle between the Mushite and Aaronid priests was over.** <sup>5</sup>**Somehow, the Aaronids had won completely.** <sup>6</sup>Their {The Aaronids'} old claim that they alone were the legitimate priests was now the accepted view. <sup>7</sup>The triumph of the Aaronid priesthood in this period was to have tremendous implications for the formation of the Bible.

Paragraph twenty-five must belong to S. The contrast between what we know and what we do not know continues throughout the paragraph. Another date is given. Sentence 25:2 is a doublet of 21:6a (W), and 25:5 is a doublet of 21:6b-7 (W).

W, which had left off in paragraph twenty-one with a discussion of the second Temple's Holy of Holies, returns in paragraph twenty-six with a discussion of the second Temple's priesthood and the triumph of the Aaronids, another event which affected the development of the Bible. "Priesthood" was previously used in 16:3 (W). Sentences 26:4, 5 belong to S because they are a doublet of 26:7, because they form a transition from paragraph twenty-five to paragraph twenty-eight (both of which are S), and because paragraph twenty-six can be read without them. That these two sources refer to the Aaronids' rivals as Mushites, coupled with the fact that the Shilonite passages outside of chapter eight come from at least two other sources, can, from a documentarian standpoint, be taken as evidence that at least four sources were redacted to form *Who Wrote the Bible?*

27<sup>1</sup>How did the Aaronid priests come to be so completely in control? <sup>2</sup>Perhaps it was because they were the priesthood in power at the time of the fall of the kingdom. <sup>3</sup>Since the Babylonians took the upper classes into exile, it would thus be the Aaronid priests who would have been carried off to Babylon. <sup>4</sup>For example, the prophet Ezekiel was an Aaronid priest, and he was among the Babylonian exiles. <sup>5</sup>The Mushite priests, meanwhile, would have been more likely to be among the refugees in Egypt. <sup>6</sup>For example, the prophet Jeremiah, who was apparently a Mushite priest, was among the Egypt refugees. <sup>7</sup>Since it was now the Babylonian group that was leading the return and governing the new community (initially under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel), the Aaronid priests would be, at the very

least, in a position to dominate, and perhaps in a position to define who was a priest and who was not.

28 <sup>1</sup>**Another {The} reason why the Mushite priests lost to the Aaronids in this period may be that Mushites, notably Jeremiah, had been perceived to be pro-Babylonian.** <sup>2</sup>Now that the Persians had conquered the Babylonians, the Persian authorities might well have preferred to empower the Aaronid priests. <sup>3</sup>The Aaronids had been anti-Babylonian, as indicated by the fact that the Babylonians had executed the chief priests in 587.

Paragraphs twenty-seven and twenty-eight offer alternative explanations for the success of the Aaronids. In paragraph twenty-seven, we find W's terms "priesthood" and "refugees." Also, the mention of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel's leading the return is an unnecessary doublet of 22:2 (S). Paragraph twenty-eight offers a date and mentions the Persian conquest of Babylon, which W never mentions. Notice also that the author of S definitely identifies Jeremiah as a Mushite (28:1) while the author of W hesitates to do so (Jeremiah "was *apparently* a Mushite," 27:6).

29 <sup>1</sup>There is one more reason to be taken in to account to explain the success of the Aaronid priests in rebuilt Judah. <sup>2</sup>That is the influence and power of one man: Ezra.

30 <sup>1</sup>In the entire Bible, two men are known as lawgivers: Moses and Ezra. <sup>2</sup>**Ezra came from Babylon to Judah eighty years after the first group of exiles returned, in 458 B.C.** <sup>3</sup>He {Ezra} was a priest and a scribe. <sup>4</sup>The biblical record states explicitly that he was

an *Aaronid* priest. <sup>5</sup>It also indicates that he was no ordinary scribe. <sup>6</sup>His writing skills were associated with one document in particular: “the *torah* of Moses.”

31 <sup>1</sup>Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with two important documents in his hand. <sup>2</sup>One was this “*torah* of Moses,” and the other was a letter from the [Persian] emperor, Artaxerxes, giving him authority in Judah. <sup>3</sup>The emperor’s authorization empowered Ezra to teach and to enforce “the law of your God which is in your hand.” <sup>4</sup>The enforcement powers included fines, imprisonment, and the death penalty.

32 <sup>1</sup>What was this “*torah* of Moses,” this “law of your God which is in your hand”? <sup>2</sup>References to it in the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah include material from JE, D, and P. <sup>3</sup>It is therefore likely that the book that Ezra brought from Babylon to Judah was the full Torah—the Five Books of Moses—as we know it.

Sentence 30:2 obviously belongs to S because of the date. Sentence 31:1 is a doublet of 30:2, so it must belong to W. It follows that paragraphs thirty-one and thirty-two also belong to W since they discuss the two documents mentioned in 31:1. One of those documents is “the *torah* of Moses.” This means that 30:3–6 also came from W. The redactor must have inserted “Persian” in 31:2 because W does not know about the Persian conquest. If the emperor’s nationality were ever identified in the original text, the author of W would have identified him as Babylonian.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> If you think I am arguing in a circle, you are correct! But I am arguing exactly as the documentarians argue. They contend that E’s name for the land between the northern stretches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is Aram-naharaim. They further contend that E

33 <sup>1</sup>Ezra's political authority was somehow shared with a governor, Nehemiah, who also was appointed by the emperor. <sup>2</sup>With the backing of the emperor, who was perhaps the most powerful man in the world, Ezra and Nehemiah wielded considerable authority. <sup>3</sup>They rebuilt the city walls of Jerusalem that the Babylonians had torn down. <sup>4</sup>They enforced the observance of the Sabbath. <sup>5</sup>They forced intermarriages between Jews and others to be dissolved. <sup>6</sup>In the absence of any Judean kings, these two men were the leaders of the people. <sup>7</sup>Judah was not an independent country. <sup>8</sup>It was now a province of the Persian empire. <sup>9</sup>And Ezra and Nehemiah were the emperor's designated authorities. 34 <sup>1</sup>In the second Temple period, centralization was achieved. <sup>2</sup>There apparently was no competition from any other religious center in Judah. <sup>3</sup>What Hezekiah and Josiah had tried to do was now actually achieved. <sup>4</sup>One God, one Temple. <sup>5</sup>The Elephantine Temple was far away, and in any case it was destroyed around the time that Ezra was in Jerusalem.

Paragraph thirty-three belongs to S because of the use of "Jews," S's term, in 33:5 and because of the knowledge that the empire was a "Persian empire." It also emphasizes that Ezra the priest had to share political authority with Nehemiah, a non-priest, a fact which flatly contradicts paragraph thirty-six, where W says

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never calls that land Padan-aram, which is P's name for that land. So when Padan-aram shows up in an otherwise E passage (Genesis 33), they argue that a redactor must have inserted the name into the passage. See *Wrote*, p. 239.

the political authority was held by the priests alone. Thus, *W* apparently never knew about Nehemiah's role at this time. Paragraph thirty-four discusses the Elephantine Temple and its relationship to the centralization issue, a relationship also discussed in 14:3–5 (S).

35 <sup>1</sup>Ezra called a public assembly at the water gate of Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>He held it on the fall holiday, when the people would come from all over Judah to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>On that occasion he brought out the scroll of the Torah and read it to the assembled mass. <sup>4</sup>This was followed by a covenant ceremony in which the people renewed their commitment to their God and to their pact with him as written in this Torah.

36 <sup>1</sup>The period of restoration, the age of the second Temple, appears from biblical and postbiblical sources to have been a time of dedication to the book as never before. <sup>2</sup>Why? <sup>3</sup>Presumably because political authority was now more in the hands of the priests, who had more of an interest in it than the kings had had. <sup>4</sup>Perhaps, also, the book came to be especially treasured by the people at this time because it was a link to the past. <sup>5</sup>It was the connection that meant for the ex-exiles that this was a *rebuilding*, not just a new start. <sup>6</sup>As a work of history, it gave a feeling of heritage from an extraordinary past. <sup>7</sup>As a work of law, it showed a way to participate in the covenant—which is to say, in the heritage—in the present.

37 <sup>1</sup>How did Ezra come to have a copy of this book? <sup>2</sup>How did it come to have all the sources combined? <sup>3</sup>How was he able to promulgate it successfully as “the *torah* of Moses,” which was then accepted for two and a half millennia? <sup>4</sup>When we know who produced P and

who combined all the sources into one work, we shall know the answers to these questions, and much more.

The author of *W* has come full circle. He has discussed how the people's reaction to the exile ultimately affected the formation of the Pentateuch. Here he discusses the people's reaction to the Pentateuch now that it has been formed. He also refers to the people as "exiles" (36:5), not as "returnees," *S*'s term.

This, then, is how a documentarian would analyze and divide chapter eight of *Wrote*. Our analysis cannot be complete until we explain why these two sources came to be combined. The author of *W* sought to identify the authors of the four documents by digging up clues from the history of the Judahites. The approach itself was sound, but his grasp of history was that of a student's, not that of a scholar's. He knew the outline of that history, but he did not give any dates, and he was totally unaware that the Persians had conquered the Babylonians before the Jews were released from the exile or that Ezra shared political power with Nehemiah. *W*'s theory, therefore, was founded on an incomplete, even inaccurate, knowledge of history. The redactor accepted *W*'s theory but recognized this problem. He therefore sought to bolster *W*'s theory by combining *W* with *S* which was written by a scholar. Now *W*'s theory appears to be valid because it seems to be based on *S*'s grasp of history. However, because we have discovered what the redactor has done and have once again separated out the two sources, we can see how weak the foundation of *W*'s theory really is.

This analysis proves that the anomalies in this chapter can justify its division into two sources, even as the Pentateuchal anomalies seem to justify its division into four sources. However, as cogent as the analysis is, it cannot alter the fact that the entire chapter came from a single hand, that of Richard Elliott Friedman. The Documentary Hypothesis rests on the assumption that a single author cannot create literary anomalies such as differences in style, doublets, and contradictions. Yet, Friedman *has* created these very anomalies, which means that the Pentateuchal anomalies could also have been created by a single author. Friedman, therefore, has single-handedly invalidated the Hypothesis because he has inadvertently demonstrated that the anomalies within the Pentateuch do not *necessarily* prove that it must have been created by the combination of documents.

### Friedman's Arguments

Perhaps this is why, since the publication of *Wrote*, he has relied less and less upon the anomalies as his proof. In *Wrote*, he argued that the Flood Story should be divided between P and J because of the numerous anomalies he could find there: "Each has its own language, its own details, and even its own conception of God."<sup>38</sup> But in *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, written just six years after the second edition of *Wrote* was published, he says, "The name of God and the doublets were the starting-points of the investigation into the formation of the Bible. But they were not, and are not, major argu-

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<sup>38</sup> *Wrote*, 44.

ments or evidence in themselves.”<sup>39</sup> Rather, they become important only when we see how well they line up with other lines of evidence. Surprisingly, these lines of evidence no longer include style:

...since style is not usually a satisfactory criterion for distinguishing sources because it often involves subjective judgments. The exception is when we can observe an element of style that is definable and quantifiable. As an example of such an element, punning (paronomasia) occurs frequently in some of the sources but is rare in others.<sup>40</sup>

In lieu of the subjective elements of style, these lines of evidence include “hundreds of points of data” derived from the Pentateuch and other books of the Bible which together prove that the four documents once existed as separate entities. The anomalies are only some of those points of data. In *Sources*, he has gathered these points of data into what he believes is “the largest collection of evidence ever assembled in one place concerning this hypothesis,”<sup>41</sup> and has classified them under seven major headings:

**1. Linguistic:** Each document was written at a different stage during the development of the Hebrew language. Thus, J and E reflect an early stage of Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH), P reflects a later stage of CBH, and D reflects a still later stage. This means, of course, that P

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<sup>39</sup> *Sources*, 28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

must have come before D and the exile instead of after them, as Wellhausen thought.

**2. Terminology:** Each document uses its own terminology. Friedman lists twenty-four words and phrases which “occur disproportionately—or even entirely—in one source but not in others. The quantity of such terms that consistently belong to a particular source is considerable.” For example, “the phrase ‘fire came out from before YHWH’ occurs three times, all in P.”

**3. Consistent Content:** Each source has its own idea of when the divine name, Yahweh, was first revealed. The author of J thought it was known from the time of creation (thus, its consistent use of the name throughout Genesis), but the authors of E and P thought it had not been revealed until the time of Moses (thus their consistent avoidance of the name throughout Genesis). Each source also has its own theological outlook. Certain sacred objects appear frequently in some documents, but not in others. “In the P source, access to the divine is limited to the Aaronid priests.” D, however, thought “all Levites are priests.” “In all the stories in P, there are no mentions of dreams, of angels, or talking animals, though these things occur in J, E, and D.” There are also no blatant anthropomorphisms in P, as there are in J, E, and D. Also, “ages, dates, measurements, numbers, order, and precise instructions are an obvious, major concern in P. There is nothing even nearly comparable in degree in J, E, or D.”

**4. Continuity of Texts:** “One of the most compelling arguments for the existence of the source documents is

the fact that, when the sources are separated from one another, we can read each source as a flowing, sensible text. That is, the story continues without a break.”

**5. Connections with Other Parts of the Bible:** “When distinguished from one another, the individual sources each have specific affinities with particular portions of the Bible.” Thus, D has affinities with Jeremiah, P with Ezekiel, and J and E with Hosea. J has such strong affinities with the court history now found in 2 Samuel that Friedman has concluded they were written by the same author.

**6. Relationships among the Sources:** “The sources each have connections to specific circumstances in history. And they have identifiable relationships with each other.” J shows a particular interest in the southern kingdom of Judah while E shows an interest in the northern kingdom of Israel. For example, J pictures Abraham as living in Hebron, which became the capital of Judah. E talks about Shechem and Penuel, two cities built by the northern king, Jeroboam. P can be connected to the time of Hezekiah while D can be connected to the time of Josiah, a hundred years later. The P narrative follows that of JE, which means that P was written as an alternative to JE.

**7. Convergence:** “Above all, *the strongest evidence establishing the Documentary Hypothesis is that several different lines of evidence converge.*” The anomalies alone are not the strongest argument. It is that when we separate the doublets, the contradictions are also resolved and the divine names consistently fall into one

document but not the others. And when we separate the documents, the linguistic evidence consistently fits each document, the terminology consistently falls into one document or another, the texts in each document consistently flows together, etc. Thus, “the powerful argument is not any one of these matters. It is that all these matters *converge*.”<sup>42</sup>

He refers to these seven groups of data as his Seven Main Arguments in support of the Hypothesis.

I could respond to these arguments by taking them one at a time, as the traditionalists have done with the anomalies, and proving that each one of them is invalid. For example, in his first argument, he claims that all of the documents were written in CBH, which prevailed before the exile, and not in Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH), which prevailed after the exile. He further claims that JE comes from the earliest stage of CBH, P from a later stage, and D from a still later stage. He does not present any of his own evidence to support this, but relies on the studies conducted by Robert Polzin, Gary Rendsburg, Ziony Zevit, Jacob Milgrom, Avi Hurvitz, and Ronald Hendel.<sup>43</sup> However, Polzin concludes that P

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–31.

<sup>43</sup> The studies as cited in *Sources*: Robert Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976); Gary Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of P,” *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 12 (1980): 65–80; Ziony Zevit, “Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 94 (1982): 502–509; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, Anchor Bible 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 3–13; Milgrom, “Numbers, Book of,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, pp. 1148–1149; Avi Hurvitz, “The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code,” *Revue Bib-*

represents a stage of Hebrew between CBH and LBH, meaning that it was written sometime during the exile, after D. Rendsburg and Hurvitz criticize Polzin's arguments, while Zevit criticizes both Polzin and Rendsburg. Hurvitz and Zevit conclude that P was indeed written in CBH before the exile, but neither of them is willing to say when P appeared in relation to JE or D. In fact, in his most extensive study of P's linguistic characteristics, Hurvitz specifically points out that "the relationship of P to D and its implication for the dating of the Priestly Source" "could not even be touched upon within the limited scope of the present framework".<sup>44</sup> Rendsburg, meanwhile, concludes, completely contrary to Friedman, that "the entire Pentateuch may be considered a unified work and may be dated earlier than the composition of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel.... [A]s a whole the Pentateuch is ancient."<sup>45</sup> Milgrom concludes—on linguistic grounds—that P was written in CBH, but also concludes—not on linguistic grounds—that P appeared before D simply because it can be

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*lique* 81 (1974): 24–56; Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (Paris: Gabalda, 1982); Hurvitz, בין לשון ללשון (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1972); Hurvitz, "Continuity and Innovation in Biblical Hebrew—The Case of 'Semantic Change' in Post-Exilic Writings," *Abr-Naharaim* [sic, should be *Abr-Nahrain*, also known as *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*] Supp. 4 (1995) [also known as T. Muraoka, ed., *Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 1995), pp. 1–10; Hurvitz, "The Usage of שש and בון in the Bible and Its Implication for the Date of P," *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967): 117–121; Ronald Hendel, "'Begetting' and 'Being Born' in the Pentateuch: Notes on Historical Linguistics and Source Criticism," *Vetus Testamentum* 50 (2000): 38–46.

<sup>44</sup> Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study*, 151.

<sup>45</sup> Rendsburg, 78.

shown that the author of D used P as one of his sources.<sup>46</sup> Hendel, after studying the usage of the various verbal forms of *one* word, concludes that the data “support the classical view that the J source is earlier than the P source” (which, contra Friedman, “stems roughly from the exilic or early Persian period”) but also admits that the data “may not be sufficient to confirm any particular source-critical model.”<sup>47</sup> Nor does Hendel say whether J represents the earliest stage of CBH. In fact, *none* of the studies cited by Friedman speak about the three stages of CBH, let alone conclude that JE, P, and D represent those three stages. These studies, therefore, do not support Friedman’s first line of evidence. They do not even address it.

But why argue against each of his arguments when I can bring down all seven arguments at once for two simple reasons? Contrary to Friedman’s assertions, these “hundreds of points of data” do not outweigh the importance of the anomalies to the Hypothesis. Most of these points of data come to light only *after* we separate the four documents from the Pentateuch; none of these points of data would have ever compelled anyone to separate the Pentateuch in the first place. That J shows an interest in those things that became a part of the southern kingdom while E shows an interest in those things that became a part of the northern kingdom becomes apparent only after we first separate J and E from the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch as it now stands shows an interest in all of those things, with no obvious preference for one over the other. That the

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<sup>46</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Hendel, 46.

phrase “fire came out from before YHWH” occurs only in P becomes apparent only after we first separate out a document and call it P. Its three occurrences in the Pentateuch would never have compelled anyone to separate the Pentateuch into documents just to see if all three occurrences happened to appear in the same one. It was the anomalies that first compelled scholars to separate the documents; only then did these hundreds of points of data come to light. This is why Friedman’s arguments are merely pillars supporting the Hypothesis and not the foundation itself: they are still built upon the foundation of the anomalies, which were used to justify the division of the Pentateuch in the first place. But Friedman himself has helped to undermine that foundation, meaning that his pillars have nothing upon which to stand. They, like the Hypothesis itself, have come crashing to the ground.

However, the second and biggest problem with these arguments is that they, like the Pentateuchal anomalies themselves, do not *necessarily* prove that the Hypothesis is correct because most of his arguments can also be used to further justify the division of his own chapter.

**2. Terminology:** Friedman came up with a list of twenty-four words and phrases that “occur disproportionately—or even entirely—in one source but not in others” “which are consistent through nearly four hundred occurrences.”<sup>48</sup> From the eighth chapter of *Wrote*

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<sup>48</sup> *Sources*, 8, 28.

(which is less than 1/20 the size of the Pentateuch<sup>49</sup>) I came up with twenty-four such words and phrases which are consistent through ninety-five occurrences.

**3. Consistent Content:** “Ages, dates, measurements, numbers, order, and precise instructions are an obvious, major concern in P. There is nothing even nearly comparable in degree in J, E, or D.”<sup>50</sup> Dates and numbers, such as census figures, are an obvious concern in S. There is nothing even nearly comparable in degree in W. The latter source is much more interested in the development of the Israelites’ theology, which is why the word “God” appears ten times in W (twice in quotes from the Bible) but only once in S and why “Yahweh” appears eleven times in W (once in the Psalm he quotes) but only three times in S (twice in the Psalm).

**4. Continuity of Texts:** “One of the most compelling arguments for the existence of the source documents is the fact that, when the sources are separated from one another, we can read each source as a flowing, sensible text. That is, the story continues without a break.”<sup>51</sup> S and W also read as flowing sensible texts without a break when we separate them.

**6. Relationships among the Sources:** J shows an obvious interest in the southern kingdom of Judah and E in the northern kingdom of Israel. S shows an obvious interest in history, especially in the facts that can be con-

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<sup>49</sup> The Torah has 79,976 Hebrew words. Chapter 8 of *Wrote* has 3,605 words.

<sup>50</sup> *Sources*, 12.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

firmed by archaeology. *W*, however, shows an interest in psychology, especially in how people feel and react to their circumstances.

**7. Convergence:** “Above all, *the strongest evidence establishing the Documentary Hypothesis is that several different lines of evidence converge.*”<sup>52</sup> The evidence converges here as well. When we separate the two documents, the doublets, the terminology, the content, the continuity of the texts, and the interests all fall consistently to one document or the other. And when we separate these documents from the rest of *Wrote*, then the contradiction over whether the priests who opposed the Aaronids were Shilonites or Mushites is also resolved. Friedman’s arguments, therefore, lead us to conclude that chapter eight of his own book was created by the splicing together of two sources, even though we know that the chapter was written by a single author.

Thus, the anomalies of the Pentateuch and the arguments of Friedman do not *necessarily* prove that the Hypothesis is correct. Tigay has pointed to analogues that prove that the anomalies in the Five Books of Moses could have been created by the combination of documents. Perhaps the details of the Hypothesis need to be reworked, but at least the basic idea is plausible. Wright, Hyatt, Simpson, and especially Friedman, however, have inadvertently created analogues which prove that these same anomalies could have been created by a single author. Therefore, since the anomalies

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

cannot prove anything conclusive about the authorship of the Pentateuch, they are irrelevant to the question of who wrote the Pentateuch. We must look beyond the anomalies for evidence and arguments to settle the question of authorship. We must look for clues within the Five Books themselves, and we must look outside the Pentateuch for texts and archaeological findings that might relate to this question. Tigay, in fact, has done this for his analogues. He knows his analogues were created by the combination of documents not because these analogues have anomalies but because archaeology has uncovered copies of the original documents. His proof that his analogues were created by the combination of documents rests on something other than the anomalies. So too, any proof concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch must rest on something other than the anomalies.

Let us now see what that “something” is.



## CHAPTER 3

# Archaeology's Findings

When we look beyond the anomalies for evidence and arguments on behalf of the Documentary Hypothesis, what do we find? We find nothing. We find that the proof for the Hypothesis rests on nothing but the anomalies alone. Archaeology has yet to unearth any copies of J, E, D, or P. Nor has any known ancient writer testified of their existence or even mentioned them in passing. This is why Friedman's Seven Main Arguments supporting the Hypothesis, which are supposedly "the largest tabulation of evidence in one place to date,"<sup>1</sup> do not contain one piece of archaeological evidence. There is no objective evidence anywhere that the documents ever existed. In short, the only proof they have that the switch must be turned off is that the lights are out. The Hypothesis, therefore, dies from a lack of evidence.

Some may counter that this is simply an argument from silence, for archaeology may yet unearth copies of the documents. Of course this is an argument from silence, but it is a particularly telling argument against the Hypothesis because the documentarians use the same argument to undermine the reliability of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Bible. Up to about two hundred years ago, the Bible was the only witness to certain historical information. It was the only document to mention the existence of the Hittites and the city of Nineveh. It was the only one that knew that Belshazzar was reigning in Babylon when the Persians took it. Archaeology has since confirmed the validity of all of these statements and more.<sup>2</sup> And yet, the documentarians insist that the Bible cannot be viewed as a trustworthy historical document until every detail has been verified by archaeological discoveries or the testimony of extra-biblical writers. As Sandmel states,

In recent decades there has developed, as I have said, a rather strong insistence on the historical reliability of the materials in Genesis. This insistence comes especially from some archaeologists. They point to the correspondence which they assert exists between what Genesis relates and what is known as a result of deciphering certain tablets and inscriptions and of the excavation of ancient sites.

What is overlooked in this misguided emphasis is that it is not the correspondence of the general backgrounds that would establish historical reliability, but rather the confirmation of the particular. I have already noted that no mementos of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been found. Perhaps the issue can be further clarified by asking some pointed

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<sup>2</sup> For a thorough presentation of how archaeology has confirmed an overwhelming number of historical statements in the Old Testament, see K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003).

questions. Can the archaeologists confirm for us that creation took place in six days? Can they confirm that the serpent spoke to Eve? Can they confirm that Noah brought two (or seven!) living creatures of each species into his ark? Can they confirm that Abraham bargained with Yahve to save Sodom? Can they confirm that with trimmed poplar rods Jacob controlled the kinds of animals born to the flocks? Can they confirm that Moses' rod became a snake? Can they confirm that Joshua made the sun stand still? There is, therefore, a limit to what archaeology can prove.

What archaeology has confirmed, however, is that the general picture of early Palestinian life as depicted in the Tanak [the Jewish name for the Old Testament] is reliable.... But we should not move from excessive skepticism to excessive credulity. The traditions in Genesis are folk tales modified and embellished by religious belief. To seek to authenticate these as historically valid in the form in which Genesis relates them is to misapply a useful science.<sup>3</sup>

Joachim Rehork puts it more bluntly: "Is the Bible always right? We shall certainly be able to answer in the affirmative for those passages which have been confirmed by non-Biblical parallel sources or by archaeological discoveries."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sandmel, 347-348.

<sup>4</sup> Joachim Rehork, "Postscript to the Revised Edition," in Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition (N.Y.: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1980), 391.

But archaeology has not been able to confirm the particulars of the Documentary Hypothesis. Can the archaeologists confirm the existence of J, E, D, or P? Can they confirm that the documents were written when the Hypothesis says they were written? Can they confirm the existence of a series of redactors who combined these documents? Not at all. And if we were to apply Rehork's standard to the Documentary Hypothesis ("Is the Documentary Hypothesis always right? We shall certainly be able to answer in the affirmative for those parts which have been confirmed by non-Biblical parallel sources or by archaeological discoveries."), then we would have to conclude that the Hypothesis is the greatest myth ever concocted and perpetuated by Old Testament scholars.

Friedman thinks he has found a way around this lack of archaeological confirmation. He released the second edition of his book again in January 2019 with a new epilogue, and in that epilogue he states:

Some said they would not believe the documentary hypothesis unless we could find one of the source texts intact, prior to its being combined with the others, meaning a text of just J or just E. Such a text would have to be much older than the Dead Sea Scrolls (the oldest existing texts), so these skeptics must have figured that it would be impossible to produce such a text. But the scholar William Propp found a text in Ezekiel that quotes a Priestly text from the Pentateuch. The text is interrupted in the

Pentateuch by other texts, but Ezekiel quotes the text intact, without the intervening texts.<sup>5</sup>

The Priestly text to which Friedman refers consists of Ex. 2:23b-25 (which, following Propp's translation, ends with the statement, "God made himself known to them.") and Ex. 6:2-9 (part of which says, I "shall bring you to the land that I raised my arm to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.... I am Yahweh."). In the Pentateuch as we now have it, these two passages are separated by material from J and E, but in the original P document (if it had existed), they would have appeared contiguously.

Propp's argument is that Ezekiel paraphrases the two passages in 20:5-9 of his book as if they were one passage in whatever text he had been reading. The passage in Ezekiel's book begins with:

On the day of my choosing Israel, when I raised my arm to the seed of Jacob's house and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised my arm to them, saying, "I am Yahweh your god" (Propp's translation).

This is evidence that an independent P document existed in Ezekiel's time before it was redacted to JE and D to form the Pentateuch.<sup>6</sup>

However, this is not the only possible explanation for why Ezekiel pulled these two passages together.

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<sup>5</sup> *Wrote*, 226.

<sup>6</sup> William H.C. Propp, "The Priestly Source Recovered Intact?" *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 46, Fasc. 4 (Oct. 1996), 458-478.

Propp himself has noted how the documentarians have long noted the thematic similarities between the two passages, despite the intervening material. Both speak of God hearing the groan of Israel's children and both speak of God remembering his covenant. Ezekiel, too, could have noted the thematic similarities, despite the intervening material, and simply conflated the passages into his paraphrase. If the two passages also speak of God making himself known to the Israelites, then conflating the two would have been all the more compelling.

For example, Deuteronomy has a law which commands the Israelites to release their Hebrew servants after six years of service:

If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you (Deut. 15:12).

Leviticus also has a law about releasing Hebrew servants:

And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:39-40).

The Year of Jubilee occurred every fifty years. Leviticus says that the Israelites were to blow a trumpet that year and "proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all

its inhabitants” (Lev. 25:10). The releasing of the Hebrew servants was a part of this proclamation.

The two laws do not contradict each other, for if the servant’s seventh year came up before the Year of Jubilee, he was released, but if the Year of Jubilee came up before his six years of service was done, he was still released.

Obviously, a lot of material, including the entire book of Numbers, separates the two laws, but that did not stop Jeremiah from conflating the two. He tells us that King Zedekiah made a covenant with Judah’s leaders to “proclaim liberty” and set free every “male and female slave—a Hebrew man or woman” But then the leaders changed their minds and enslaved them again (Jer. 34:8-11). Yahweh speaks through Jeremiah and rebukes them for doing this:

“Thus says Yahweh, Elohim of Israel: ‘I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, “At the end of seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you.” But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear.

Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name. Then you turned around and profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom he had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought

them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves” (Jer. 34:13-16).

Notice that Jeremiah quotes Deuteronomy’s law almost verbatim, yet refers to it by the phrase found only in Leviticus: proclaiming liberty.

Yahweh then ironically uses Leviticus’ phrase to pronounce judgment on the leaders:

“Therefore thus says Yahweh: ‘You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,’ says Yahweh—‘to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth” (Jer. 34:17).

This judgment fulfills a curse found only in Deut. 28:25: “You shall become a trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth” (AT).

Many of Deuteronomy’s words and phrases appear throughout this passage from Jeremiah. He even quotes from Deuteronomy’s law almost verbatim. Yet he keeps using Leviticus’ phrase. Does this mean that he had found a document in which both of these laws had appeared in a single passage? Of course not. It simply means that Jeremiah had recognized their thematic similarities and conflated them in this passage, even as Ezekiel recognized the thematic similarities of Ex. 2:23b-25 and 6:2-9 and conflated them—if he is even paraphrasing Ex. 2:23b-25 at all.

Propp’s argument depends on the reading of Ex. 2:25 (“God made himself known to them”) found in the

Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament completed in the second century BC. He admits that not a single Hebrew manuscript supports this translation and to say that the translation must be correct because that is how it shows up in Ezekiel is to engage in circular reasoning. However, there is sufficient textual support for the Masoretic text reading (“God knew”). If this is the correct text for Ex. 2:25 (and Propp concedes that it most likely is), then Ezekiel is not paraphrasing that passage at all and Propp’s argument completely falls apart.

There is another form of circular reasoning occurring here. At best (assuming the Septuagint reading is correct after all), Propp has only proven that there is a relationship between Ezekiel’s passage and the two passages in Exodus but not what that relationship is. Is Ezekiel paraphrasing a passage from an independent P document? Or is he conflating two passages from the Pentateuch? Propp’s study does not prove the existence of the physical P document unless one proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the two passages belong to the P document. He acknowledges in the first part of his study that the best proof of the Hypothesis would be the finding of a physical copy of the P document: “An ancient manuscript of P would for ever [*sic*] end debate on the scope and nature of the Priestly stratum, but is unlikely to surface.” However,

Lacking such tangible proof, advocates for the Documentarian model of P rely on less direct evidence: contradictions between P and non-P, doublets between P and non-P, and the continuity of P when read without intervening non-Priestly matter.

In other words, because of the lack of archaeological confirmation, the documentarians must fall back on the anomalies for their proof that these passages belong to P. But the anomalies do not *necessarily* prove that there were documents in the first place. One cannot prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the two passages belong to the P document without producing the physical P document. In short, Propp's study does not prove the existence of the physical P document unless one presupposes the existence of the physical P document. The study only affirms its presupposition, but without that presupposition, it affirms nothing.

Once again, as he did with the linguistic studies, Friedman tries to make this study say more than even what the author is willing to say. He wants his readers to believe that Propp's study definitely proves that an independent P document existed in Ezekiel's time before it was redacted into the Pentateuch. But Propp himself says,

Have I recovered the intact Priestly Source and thereby proven part of the Documentary Hypothesis? Not really. Because my evidence is a disputed reading, the analysis has both the virtue (internal consistency) and liability (untestability) of any circular argument. The case for P as independent source must continue to rest primarily on the arguments advanced in the first part of this essay.

Those arguments, however, as we have seen, do not necessarily prove anything. And Ezekiel's paraphrase does not fill the void left by the lack of archaeological

confirmation. Propp's study, therefore, does not prop up the Hypothesis after all.

### **Four Documents or One Pentateuch?**

Strangely enough, the documentarians' insistence on archaeological confirmation to prove the trustworthiness of the Bible means that they should reject the most important tenet of Graf's dating scheme, namely that D was written in 622 BC. This tenet is not based on archaeological confirmation, for archaeology has yet to confirm that Hilkiah found D in 622 BC, let alone confirm that Josiah launched a religious reformation because of it. The only basis for this tenet is the testimony of the Scriptures—the very Scriptures which the documentarians themselves claim are not trustworthy. Yet, they are willing to accept the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Josiah and Hilkiah because it can be made to fit their Hypothesis, but they reject the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch because it cannot be made to fit their Hypothesis. Thus, the texts are made to fit the Hypothesis and not the Hypothesis to the texts. The Hypothesis, not the texts themselves, has become the final determiner of truth.

Besides, the documentarians are willing to accept the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Josiah and Hilkiah because they do not yet realize that the testimony provides more evidence against the Hypothesis than for it. The question we have to ask is, "Exactly what was in the Book of the *Torah* which Hilkiah found?" Most documentarians identify the Book as Deuteronomy, at least the parts of Deuteronomy that

belong to D. Several arguments support this identification. The primary one is that immediately after the Book's discovery, Josiah began to fulfill Deuteronomy's laws, particularly the law which states that all sacrifices must be made at the altar located in the place which Yahweh would choose; all other sacrificial sites must be destroyed. According to the books of First and Second Kings, the place Yahweh chose was the Temple at Jerusalem. Josiah destroyed all the sacrificial sites throughout Judah and Samaria except one: the Temple at Jerusalem.

Josiah's initial response after hearing the Book read to him was: "Great is the wrath of Yahweh that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book" (2 Kings 22:13). This suggests that the Book included the curses now found in Deuteronomy 28.

At the beginning of his reform, Josiah gathered all the people to the Temple, he read the Book to them, and then he and they made a covenant in which they promised to obey the laws of the Book. This is precisely the format Deuteronomy follows. Moses gives a long speech in which he sets forth the covenant with its accompanying laws. Then, in chapters twenty-nine and thirty, he urges the people to accept the covenant by obeying those laws.

Perhaps the strongest argument supporting this identification is that Deuteronomy refers to this same Book of the *Torah*. It tells us that Moses wrote "the words of this *torah* in a book." Then it tells us that Moses handed this Book to the Levites with this commandment: "Take this Book of the *Torah*, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God, that it

may be there as a witness against you” (Deut. 31:24, 26, AT). While some traditionalists think that Deuteronomy is referring to the entire *Torah* (that is, to the entire Pentateuch), most scholars believe it is referring only to itself. Thus, the Book of the *Torah* that Hilkiah found was Deuteronomy.

These are the arguments presented by the documentarians. To these I would add one more. While making his covenant with the people, Josiah promised “to walk after Yahweh.” He also promised “to keep His [Yahweh’s] commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul” (2 Kings 23:3, AT). These promises fulfill two commandments which can be found only in Deuteronomy: “You shall walk after Yahweh” (Deut. 13:4, AT). “This day Yahweh your Elohim commands you to observe these statutes and ordinances. You shall keep and do them with all your heart and all your soul” (Deut. 26:16, AT).

These arguments indicate that the Book of the *Torah* was D, or at least contained D. The same kinds of arguments, however, prove that the Book of the *Torah* must also have contained J, E, and P.

The Book is also known in Second Kings as “the Book of the Covenant.” Near the end of his reform, Josiah commanded the people to “Keep the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant” (2 Kings 23:21). At the beginning of his reform, when Josiah gathered the people to the Temple, “he read in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which was found in the house of Yahweh” (2 Kings 23:2, AT). This verse is repeated verbatim in Second Chronicles 34:30. The name “the Book of the

Covenant” appears in only one other place in the entire Old Testament:

Then he [Moses] took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the ears of the people (Ex. 24:7, AT).

According to the documentarians, this verse came from E. The Book which Moses read contained all the laws of Exodus 21–23, that is, all of E’s laws. Thus, the Book which Hilkiah found must have contained E as well.

The author of Second Kings also tells us that Josiah “smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherim [a type of idol]” (23:14, AT). This fulfills a law found only in Ex. 34:13, a J passage: “You shall smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim” (NAS). (Deuteronomy has a similar law, but its law states, “You shall...smash their sacred pillars and *hew* down their Asherim” [Deut. 7:5, NAS]).

That leaves only P. As part of his reform, Josiah

...brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense.... Nevertheless, the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren (2 Kings 23:8–9).

Why did Josiah do this? In *Narrative*, Friedman himself noted that Josiah’s treatment of these priests was similar to the treatment of the physically blemished priests proscribed by a law in P:

He may eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy; only he shall not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest he profane My sanctuaries (Lev. 21:22–23).<sup>7</sup>

To this observation I might add that they could not have been denied the unleavened bread because of this law in P:

And the remainder of it [the grain offering] Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it... All the males among the children of Aaron may eat it. It shall be a statute forever in your generations (Lev. 6:16, 18).

Some scholars have suggested that the Hebrew word for “gates” in Second Kings 23:8 should be translated as “satyrs,” in which case this verse would read, “And he [Josiah] broke down the high places of the satyrs...” If their suggestion is correct, then this verse could be alluding to Lev. 17:7: “And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the satyrs with which they play the harlot” (AT). Again, Friedman himself noted this relationship in *Narrative*.<sup>8</sup>

But the strongest evidence that the Book of the *Torah* contained P occurs in a passage that Friedman does not discuss at all. Second Kings reports that Josiah “defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might *make* his son or his

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<sup>7</sup> *Narrative*, 65–66.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

daughter *pass through* the fire to *Molech*" (2 Kings 23:10). Both P and D forbid sacrificing children, but only P specifically states, "You shall not *make* your descendants *pass through to Molech*" (Lev. 18:21, AT).

Thus, the author of Second Kings declares that Hilkiyah had found both the Book of the *Torah* (D) and the Book of the Covenant (E). He also depicts Josiah as obeying laws that the documentarians claim were originally in J, D, and P. Or to rephrase that in traditional terms, he declares that Hilkiyah found both Deuteronomy and Exodus and depicts Josiah as obeying laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. There is only one conclusion left: the book which Hilkiyah found in 622 BC was the entire Pentateuch.

This conclusion is further confirmed by Jeremiah's conflation of the two laws governing the release of the Hebrew servants. The documentarians say that the law in Leviticus originally came from P and the law in Deuteronomy originally came from D. And they could argue that because Jeremiah conflated the two does not necessarily mean that he found the two already combined in the Pentateuch. Perhaps. But the fact that he treats them as belonging to the one and only covenant which Yahweh made with the fathers when he brought them out of Egypt shows that he found them not in two documents, a P and a D, but in one and only one document: the Pentateuch.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> That Jeremiah conflates these two laws puts another nail into the coffin in which rests Friedman's myth that there was a rivalry between the Aaronids and the Shilonites. According to the myth, Jeremiah was a Shilonite who was "hostile to P" (*Wrote*, p. 149), yet here he is favorably using P's phrase, "proclaiming liberty."

This conclusion poses several problems for the Documentary Hypothesis, especially the classical version of it. This conclusion means that P could not have been written during or after the exile and that the Pentateuch could not have been redacted during that same time because the completed Pentateuch already existed before the exile. More importantly, this conclusion leads us to believe that the author of Second Kings thought that the title, “The Book of the *Torah*,” was the title of not just Deuteronomy but of the entire Pentateuch. This raises the possibility that this has always been the title of the Pentateuch from the very beginning. Joshua certainly thought so. In Josh. 23, he gathers the people together and says to them,

Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the *Torah* of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. *You shall not make mention of the name of their gods*, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them (Josh. 23:6-7).

This passage is full of phrases from Deuteronomy, but the words in italics are a reference to Ex. 23:13. Joshua, therefore, knew that the Book of the *Torah* of Moses was the entire Pentateuch. So when Deuteronomy tells us that Moses wrote “the words of this *torah* in a book” and then handed “this Book of the *Torah*” to the Levites, it is claiming that Moses wrote not just Deuteronomy, but the *entire* Pentateuch. Thus, if we let the biblical texts and not the Hypothesis be the final

determiner of truth, we must accept the traditional view and reject the Hypothesis.

The lack of archaeological and textual evidence in their favor means that the best the documentarians have been able to do is to show that the Pentateuch could have been created by the piecing together of several previously existing documents, but they have not been able to prove that this is how the Pentateuch *must* have been created. The foundation of the Hypothesis simply does not exist. The Hypothesis claims to be founded upon an unbiased reading of the texts, yet it accepts the validity of the texts only when they can be made to fit the Hypothesis. The Hypothesis claims to be founded upon scientific and objective methods, yet there is no objective evidence whatsoever to support it. And the Hypothesis claims to be founded upon true assumptions, such as the assumption that a single author would never create the anomalies we find in the Pentateuch, yet the works of the documentarians themselves prove these assumptions are false. Ultimately, the Hypothesis is founded upon nothing at all.

### **Archaeology's Support**

When we look beyond the anomalies for evidence and arguments on behalf of the traditional view, what do we find? We find much. We find that archaeology lends its support to the traditional view. First, whenever it turns up copies of the Pentateuch, they are copies of the *Pentateuch* as we have it, not copies of the documents. Second, as I noted earlier, archaeology has shown that the Bible has all along been telling us the truth about the things which we have confirmed, which

gives us confidence that it is telling us the truth about the things which we have yet to confirm. Third, archaeologists have found another analogue which provides evidence that the Pentateuch could have been written by a single author. They discovered an ancient Near Eastern work which exhibits the same types of anomalies which we find in the Pentateuch but which was written by a single author.<sup>10</sup>

The inscription known as the Poem, which was composed during the reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE), tells of the battle between the Pharaoh and the Hittites at Kadesh. The Poem was inscribed at eight locations throughout Egypt and archaeologists have also discovered two papyri which have portions of the Poem, suggesting that copies were distributed to the Egyptian population.<sup>11</sup>

Egyptologists agree that the Poem is unique among the literature of Egypt. As far as we know, this is Egypt's first narrative poem.<sup>12</sup> Among the vast multitude of inscriptions and written literature uncovered in Egypt, scholars cannot find another work that can be considered to be a source for the Poem.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Much of the information that follows is taken from Joshua A. Beraman, *Inconsistency in the Torah: Ancient Literary Convention and the Limits of Source Criticism* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19-25, hereafter referred to as *Inconsistency*.

<sup>11</sup> For translations into English see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 62-72, and K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated & Annotated: Translations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, repr., Wallasey, Great Britain: Abercromby Press, 2019), 1-11.

<sup>12</sup> Lichtheim, 6, 59; *Inconsistency*, 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Inconsistency*, 54.

Egyptologists also agree that the Poem is the work of a single author. Most likely an unknown scribe actually composed the work, but certainly Ramesses II would have authorized the project and approved the composition before it was inscribed. He is, therefore, the single author of the Poem.

Yet there are anomalies in the Poem, the same kind of anomalies scholars find in the Pentateuch. Most of these anomalies have been listed by Joshua A. Berman. [My additional observations are enclosed in square brackets.]

*Shift in narratorial voice:* The Poem narrates the events in the third person until line 88, where it suddenly shifts to the first person, so that Ramesses is now telling the story.

*Inconsistency concerning the Pharaoh's isolation:* The Poem pictures the Pharaoh fighting the Hittites by himself, his troops having abandoned him. Line 89 specifically says that his shield-bearer was not with him. Yet Ramesses encourages his shield-bearer, who is with him as he is surrounded by the Hittites, in lines 205-229, and he praises his shield-bearer and his household butlers for remaining with him throughout the battle in lines 273-274.

*Inconsistent lists of the enemy nations:* The Poem opens with a list of thirteen nations, including the Hittites, who opposed Ramesses (lines 2-6). Yet later, when the Pharaoh engages them, seventeen nations are listed (lines 43-47). [Later still, when the Hittite king sends the chiefs of these nations into

battle (lines 147-152), only eight are listed and one of them, Aleppo, does not appear in the other two lists.]

*Inconsistent accounts of Ramesses's divine paternity:* The Poem names both Montu (line 37) and Amun (lines 92 and 188) as the Pharaoh's father.

*Inconsistent references to the Pharaoh's steed:* Line 78 says that Pharaoh's chariot was pulled by his steed, Victory in Thebes, yet Ramesses later praises his *two* steeds, Victory in Thebes and Mut is Content (line 267).<sup>14</sup>

*Doubled reproach of the Pharaoh's troops:* Twice Pharaoh rebukes his troops for their cowardice (lines 168-203 and 251-276). [The language differs from one rebuke to the other. Also, in the first rebuke, he credits Amun for helping him defeat the Hittites, while in the second he credits his two steeds. Furthermore, that Ramesses rebukes his troops the first time means that they have joined him and should be ready to go with him into battle, especially following this stinging rebuke. Yet, immediately after this first rebuke, Menna, Ramesses' shield-bearer, is afraid because the troops have abandoned him and the Pharaoh.]<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Similar to Num. 13-14 mentioning only Caleb, then both Caleb and Joshua.

<sup>15</sup> *Inconsistency*, 54-55.

There is another contradictory doublet which Berman does not list here. In both the first and third engagements, a cry from the Hittite battleline warns the Hittite warriors not to approach Ramesses, for doing so is certain death. In the first cry, a single warrior cries out and likens Ramesses to Seth and Baal and says that those who do approach him will become so weak that they will be unable to use their weapons (lines 157-165). In the second cry, all of the warriors cry out to each other and liken Ramesses to Sekhmet and say that those who do approach him will be burnt to death (lines 285-289).<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, as Berman also points out, the Poem mixes genre. It is about four-fifths poetry and one-fifth prose.<sup>17</sup> What we have here, then, is another analogue for which Tigay has been looking: an ancient Near Eastern work which *combines* the same anomalies which we find in the Pentateuch, but was written by a single author. This is evidence that the Pentateuch could have been written by a single author, despite the anomalies.

Archaeology lends its support in still another way. It turns out that Deuteronomy is the key to dating the entire Pentateuch, even as D was the key to dating the four documents. Of all the books in the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy is the one that most emphatically insists that Moses wrote the Five Books:

And Moses wrote this *torah* and gave it to the priests, sons of Levi, who were carrying the ark of

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<sup>16</sup> Following Lichtheim's translation. In Kitchen's translation, there is only one warrior crying out in both scenes.

<sup>17</sup> *Inconsistency*, 23.

YHWH's covenant, and to all of Israel's elders (Deut. 31:9, FV).

And it was when Moses finished writing the words of this *torah* on a scroll to their end, and Moses commanded the Levites, who carried the ark of the covenant of YHWH, saying: "Take this scroll of the *torah* and set it at the side of the ark of the covenant of YHWH, your God..." (Deut. 31:24-26 FV).

If, therefore, we can place the date of Deuteronomy's writing in the time of Moses, we have good reason to believe that it is telling us the truth about the authorship of the Pentateuch.

This is where archaeology comes in. Archaeology has recovered over 30 vassal treaties that were drawn up by Near Eastern kings (primarily the Hittite kings) in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC. These treaties followed a fixed format consisting of six parts:

1. *Preamble or title*, identifying the author of the covenant.
2. *Historical prologue* or retrospect, mentioning previous relations between the two parties involved; past benefactions by the suzerain are a basis for the vassal's gratitude and future obedience.
3. *Stipulations*, basic and detailed; the obligations laid upon the vassal by the sovereign.
4. (a). *Deposition* of a copy of the covenant in the vassal's sanctuary and  
(b). *Periodic public reading* of the covenant terms to the people.

5. *Witnesses*, a long list of gods invoked to witness the covenant.
6. (a). *Curses*, invoked upon the vassal if he breaks the covenant, and  
(b). *Blessings*, invoked upon the vassal if he keeps the covenant.<sup>18</sup>

The book of Deuteronomy has all six parts: (1) preamble: 1:1-5; (2) historical prologue: 1:6-4:40; (3) stipulations, basic: 4:44-11:32, and detailed: 12:1-26:19; (4) deposition of a copy: 31:9, 24-26, and a requirement for periodic public reading: 31:10-13; (5) witnesses: 30:19, 32:1-43; (6) curses: 28:15-68, and blessings: 28:1-14. Besides sharing the same format, Deuteronomy and the treaties also have similar stipulations and even the same vocabulary.<sup>19</sup> This similarity between the vassal treaties and Deuteronomy means that Deuteronomy must have been written before 1200 BCE rather than during the first millennium BCE as the Documentary Hypothesis supposes, for the treaties of the first millennium lack the historical prologue and blessings. In other words, we can say that Deuteronomy must have been written during the time of Moses. The documentarians are hard pressed to explain how the author of Deuteronomy, who supposedly lived in Josiah's time, could accurately reproduce a structure that

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<sup>18</sup> *AOOT*, 92-93.

<sup>19</sup> *Inconsistency*, 87-91; Joshua Berman, "CTH 133 and the Hittite Provenance of Deuteronomy 13," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 130, no. 1 (Spring 2011), 25-44; Joshua Berman, *Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2020), 86-93; Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 283-294.

ceased to be used over 600 years earlier (or why such an author would want to do so since his audience would not understand its significance).

Archaeology has also confirmed certain information in the Pentateuch which a second millennium author living in Egypt would have known but which a first millennium author living in Canaan would not have known. The author of Exodus knew that the Israelites built Raamses (Ex. 1:11), a city that was abandoned by the Pharaohs about 1130 BCE. The book of Exodus explicitly states that Elohim did not take the Israelites by the most direct route to the Promised Land (along the southern coast of the Mediterranean) because they would encounter war (Ex. 13:17-18). Archaeologists have uncovered a string of Egyptian forts along that route which operated during the first half of the thirteenth century BCE. The floor plan of the Tabernacle mimics the floor plan of the tent of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE) which he used on military campaigns.<sup>20</sup> Jacob Milgrom points out that the design of the lampstand in the Tabernacle does not match the design of the lampstand in Solomon's Temple but does resemble the designs found in the late Bronze Age.<sup>21</sup> This data again suggests that the Pentateuch was written before 1200 BCE.

Then there is the evidence that is stronger than any linguistic evidence, namely the cultural literacy which the author assumes his intended audience has. An author's casual references to geographical features,

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<sup>20</sup> For these and other examples see Berman, *Ani Maamin*, 52-60, and Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 255-280.

<sup>21</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 10.

historical events, and cultural knowledge, which he assumes his intended audience to have, helps us to know who his intended audience was and when he wrote. For example, that I refer to President George W. Bush in passing means that I assume my intended audience knows who he is and that this book was written after he became President. Similarly, references within the Pentateuch tell us who the intended audience was and give us an idea as to when it was written. The author of Genesis did not describe the lushness of the Jordan Valley before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by comparing it to another site in Canaan. Instead, he described it as being “like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar” (Gen. 13:10). The author of Numbers told his readers that Hebron (a Canaanite city) “was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt” (Num. 13:22). And Berman presents a strong case that the author of Ex. 13:17-15:19, which relates the crossing of the sea, borrowed language and motifs from the Poem, replacing the Hittite alliance with the Egyptians and the Pharaoh with Yahweh, meaning that the author and his intended audience were very familiar with the Poem.<sup>22</sup> These references tell us that the intended audience did not grow up in Canaan but in Egypt, that they were familiar with Egyptian geography and chronology, that they had seen Zoar and knew when Zoan had been built and had read the Poem. This would not have been true of the Israelites who lived during the first millennium, when the documents were supposedly written according to the Hypothesis, but it would have been true of the Israelites who had lived in Egypt before 1200 BCE.

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<sup>22</sup> *Inconsistency*, 35-60.

The critical scholars object to this date for the composition of the Pentateuch, partly because the Hebrew language uses the definite article, “the.” Since the languages similar to Hebrew did not develop the definite article until long after the exodus, they argue that Hebrew itself did the same. However, the Israelites could have picked it up from the Egyptians, whose language (which is not similar to Hebrew) did develop the definite article quite early. Its use in Egyptian literature became popular during the Eighteenth Dynasty (1580-1314 BCE), that is, just before and during the time of the exodus itself. Archaeological discoveries have also traced its use back to the Twelfth Dynasty (1991-1962 BCE), that is, about the time Jacob and his family moved to Egypt.<sup>23</sup>

Another aspect of Hebrew syntax is also peculiar. Hebrew often introduces dialogue with the redundant formula, “And X spoke, saying.” The languages similar to Hebrew never developed the use of this extra “saying.” So why did Hebrew? Again, the Israelites must have picked it up from the Egyptians who again developed this very same syntax as early as the Twelfth Dynasty.<sup>24</sup>

The Pentateuch also indicates that the Israelites picked up more than just syntax from the Egyptians. As Gleason L. Archer, Jr., points out,

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<sup>23</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 121.

<sup>24</sup> Jesse L. Boyd III, “An Example of the Influence of Egyptian on the Development of the Hebrew Language During the Second Millennium B.C.,” in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Ronald F. Youngblood, eds., *A Tribute to Gleason Archer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 192-193.

a far greater number of Egyptian names and loan words are found in the Pentateuch than in any other section of Scripture. This is just what we would expect from an author who was brought up in Egypt, writing for a people who were reared in the same setting as he.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the peculiarities of the Pentateuch's language actually confirm the Israelites' own testimony that they had spent a considerable amount of time in Egypt before the exodus. And the peculiarities do not argue against the Pentateuch's having been written during the exodus.

Finally, there is the fact that Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers read as if they had been written by an eyewitness to the exodus. Thus, the author gives us the exact number of fountains and palm trees at Elim (Ex. 15:27). He also describes the appearance and even the taste of the manna which they ate during their journey (Ex. 16:31, Num. 11:7-8).

All of this archaeological and textual evidence confirms that the Pentateuch was written during the exodus, that is, during the time of Moses, who was the leader of the Israelites during the exodus. Add to this evidence the statements of Deuteronomy that Moses wrote the entire *Torah* and the statements of Exodus and Numbers that Moses wrote various portions of those books, and we have a good case that Moses was indeed the author of the Pentateuch:

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<sup>25</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 48.

And YHWH said to Moses, “Write this—a memorial—in a scroll and set it in Joshua’s ears, because I shall wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the skies!” (Ex. 17:14, FV).

And Moses wrote all of YHWH’s words (Ex. 24:4, FV).

And YHWH said to Moses, “Write these words for yourself, because I’ve made a covenant with you and with Israel based on these words.” (Ex. 34:27, FV).

And Moses wrote their stops for their travels by YHWH’s word, and these are their travels and their stops (Num. 33:2, FV).

Moses makes the perfect candidate for the author of the Pentateuch. He was familiar with Egyptian geography and chronology and the peculiarities of the Egyptian language because he had grown up there. He was an eyewitness to the exodus because he was the leader of the Israelites during the exodus. He was familiar with the treaty format around which he built Deuteronomy because he had been reared in Pharaoh’s household. And Deuteronomy pointedly says that Moses wrote it.

Thus, there is more objective evidence supporting the traditional view than there is supporting the Documentary Hypothesis. The traditional view is not some unconfirmed legend that has been handed down through the generations, as some allege, but is a statement supported by objective evidence and argumentation. The Hypothesis, however, is mere speculation

with no objective evidence or argumentation to support it whatsoever.

But can the traditional view explain the presence of the anomalies within the Pentateuch? The documentarians emphatically insist that it cannot. They have argued that the anomalies prove that the Pentateuch was not written according to a plan, which in turn means that it was not written by a single author. Yet, Friedman's analogue once again proves them wrong. Friedman was the single author of *Wrote*, which means—by the documentarians' own argument—he must have written it according to a plan. But anomalies still exist within his book, which means that it is possible for anomalies to exist within a literary work, including the Pentateuch, even though it was written according to a plan.

I believe I can do even better. I believe I can demonstrate that the anomalies exist within the Pentateuch *because* of the plan. The traditionalists have correctly argued that a proper understanding of the Hebrew language and the contexts of the passages demonstrates that the contradictions are not really contradictions at all. And they have correctly argued that a single author has many reasons for changing his style. To these, I will add one more argument: the doublets are not anomalies at all but are the pointers to Moses' plan. He deliberately created these anomalies according to his plan because they helped him to convey his message. In the discussion that follows, I risk being accused of resorting to the traditionalists' main defense of explaining the anomalies on a case-by-case basis, but we must look at some of these anomalies to see how they contribute to the plan and convey the message. Before we can

do that, however, we must decide which anomalies are real and which ones are mere illusions.



## PART II

# A New Explanation

The argument from design has always been the Homeric unitarian's chief recourse, and it is likely to remain so.

--Cedric H. Whitman<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cedric H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 10.



## CHAPTER 4

### Solving Contradictions

Now Anath goes to her house,  
The goddess proceeds to her palace.  
Not sated with battling in the plain,  
With her fighting between the two towns,  
She pictures the chairs as heroes,  
Pretending a table is warriors,  
And that the footstools are troops.  
Much battle she does and beholds,  
Her fighting contemplates Anath:  
Her liver swells with laughter,  
Her heart fills up with joy,  
Anath's liver exults;  
For she plunges knee-deep in knights' blood,  
Hip-deep in the gore of heroes.  
Then, sated with battling in the house,  
Fighting between the two tables....  
Maiden Anath washes her hands,  
Yabamat Liimmim her fingers;  
She washes her hands of knights' blood,  
Her fingers of gore of heroes....

Footstools turn back into footstools.<sup>1</sup>

Archaeologists found this piece of poetry while digging through the ruins of Ugarit, a trading center near the Mediterranean Sea in what is now Syria. The numerous clay tablets found there have intrigued biblical scholars because the Ugaritic language is very similar to Hebrew, more so than any other ancient Near Eastern language, and because the poetry is very similar in certain respects with the poetry of the Old Testament.

This particular piece of poetry could have been one of the most humorous in the entire Ugaritic literature if the motive behind it had not been so gruesome. Not satisfied with the amount of blood she has spilled in a major battle, the war goddess Anath returns home and, still covered with her victims' blood, engages in a mock battle with her furniture! This is one bloodthirsty war goddess. This is also one bloodthirsty war goddess with two names, one Anath, the other Yabamat Liimmim.

Almost all of the ancient gods and goddesses had at least two names. In the *Iliad*, the archer god is known as Phoebus, Apollo, Phoebus Apollo, and Smintheus. The Ugaritic craftsman-god was known as Kothar, Khasis, Kothar wa-Khasis, and Hayyin. All of these names appear in a brief passage from *The Tale of Aqhat*.<sup>2</sup> The Babylonians' chief god, Marduk, had fifty names, all of which are defined at the end of the Babylonian Creation Epic.<sup>3</sup> A hymn to the Egyptian god

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Third Edition with Supplement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 136, hereafter referred to as *ANET*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-72.

Osiris says that he was “many of names,” which was certainly true. One list, compiled around 1600 BC, has sixty names on it; another list, compiled about 1300 years later, has 158 names on it!<sup>4</sup>

So too, the book of Genesis offers several names for God. Yahweh and Elohim are the most popular, but there are also Yahweh Elohim (even as Phoebus and Apollo are combined in Phoebus Apollo or Kothar and Khasis are combined in Kothar wa-Khasis), El Elyon (God Most High, 14:18-22), El Roi (the God who sees, 16:13-14), El Shaddai (God Almighty, 17:1), and El Olam (Everlasting God, 21:33). The multiple names for God are not evidence of multiple authors; the single author of the Pentateuch was simply following ancient Oriental custom.

Documentarians now recognize this custom, but they still divide Genesis according to its use of Yahweh and Elohim because they believe the use of Yahweh in particular creates two major contradictions. In Ex. 3:13-15, Moses asks for God’s name, which seems to imply that he and the Israelites do not know what it is. God tells him that his name is Yahweh. Ex. 6:3 seems to suggest that Moses’ ancestors did not know God’s name, yet passages in Genesis clearly show that Moses’ ancestors did know this name. Surely these ancestors would have passed this name down to Moses and the other Israelites. So why did Moses not know this name? These contradictions can be explained, according to the documentarians, if we say that Ex. 3:13-15 came from

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<sup>4</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. 2 (London: Methuen and Company, 1904, reprint N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1969), 162, 176-185.

E, that Ex. 6:3 came from P (since it is a doublet of the previous passage) and that the passages up to Ex. 3 which have Yahweh came from J.

But is the theory of multiple authors the only explanation for these contradictions, indeed, for any contradiction we might encounter in any text? I think not. I can think of seven reasons why contradictions may appear in the work of a single author, three of them having to do with the author and four of them with the reader.

### **The Author's Reasons**

1. *Incompetence*: The contradictions exist because of incompetence. The author was an inferior writer who did not know a contradiction from a benediction, or he was a lazy writer who simply did not care about the quality of his work. Since the Pentateuch is usually considered to be a literary work of art, this explanation need not concern us.

2. *Ignorance*: The contradictions exist because of ignorance. The author was simply unaware that he had contradicted himself. He may have been a literary genius, but in any work that is as complex and sprawling as the Pentateuch is, it is easy to forget details and inadvertently create contradictions. This, I believe, is why Friedman contradicted himself so often.

3. *Intention*: The contradictions exist because of intent, that is, the author deliberately contradicted himself. At first sight, this may seem unreasonable, but an author may contradict himself to create irony. For

example, a satirical writer may pass himself off as an expert in a given field and then deliberately give contradictory or otherwise incorrect information so that he may poke fun at the mistakes of real experts. Intentional contradictions do have their uses.

### **The Reader's Reasons**

4. *Imagination*: The contradictions exist because the reader is imagining their existence. What the author does not see as a contradiction, the reader does because of a flaw in the reader's thinking. For example, Friedman says that parts of the Pentateuch view God as transcendent and cosmic while other parts view him as personal and close. The documentarians assume that the theology of a single author would never encompass both views of God, for then it would contradict itself. So they give the passages with the first view to P and the other passages to J, E, and D.

However, they have yet to explain why a compassionate God, who has the power to control the cosmos and who can therefore be at any place at any time he desires, cannot at times be cosmic and transcendent and at other times be personal and close. After all, to draw an analogy, the President of the United States is a powerful, relatively inaccessible person who lives far away in Washington, D.C., but he still has the ability to visit me in my home.

A fair handling of the Pentateuchal passages, even if we limit ourselves to the passages of one of the alleged documents, demonstrates that a single author *can* view God as both cosmic and personal, transcendent and

close. Friedman has pointed to passages in E which picture God as personal and close:

In E's story of Moses' striking the rock at Meribah, God is standing on the rock. In P's version of the story, he is not.... In J and in E, Moses actually sees God. In P he does not.... In E, as well, Moses pleads over the people's fate in the golden calf story, and later he pleads passionately and eloquently with a God he has come to know "the way a man talks to a fellow man." ...P never has humans speaking to God with such intimacy.<sup>5</sup>

But Eissfeldt has pointed to passages in E which picture the reverse:

Thus E emphasizes the remoteness of God from the world and from man more strongly than does the *Yahweh* stratum. Whereas in J's Hagar story (Gen. xvi, 4-14) the angel of *Yahweh* sojourns on the earth and addresses Hagar there (v. 7), in the corresponding E narrative (Gen. xxi, 8-21) the angel of God speaks his words to Hagar from heaven (v. 17). Similarly in J's Bethel narrative (Gen. xxviii, 13-16, 19) *Yahweh* stands upon the earth before Jacob (v. 13), whereas according to E (vv. 10-12, 17-18, 20-2) a ladder bearing the angels of God represent the bond between the earth and heaven and God (v. 12).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Wrote*, 215.

<sup>6</sup> Eissfeldt, 184.

The passages cited by Eissfeldt demonstrate that J does see God as personal and close, but transcendence can be found there also: “Yahweh rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh, from heaven” (Gen. 19:24, AT). After the Israelites had exhausted their food supply during the exodus, Yahweh promised to “rain bread from heaven for you” (Ex. 16:4).

In Deuteronomy, Moses recalls that Yahweh spoke to the people at Mt. Sinai “out of heaven” (4:36), a reference to Ex. 20:22, another E passage. He also instructs the people to ask Yahweh to “look down from your holy habitation, from heaven” (26:15). He even combines the two pictures of God: Yahweh “is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath” (4:39).

P also combines these two pictures. It sees God as sometimes transcendent and cosmic, but, like J, E and D, it also sees God as sometimes personal and close. P even sees God as wanting to live on the earth with his people.

And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them (Ex. 25:8).

I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their Elohim. And they shall know that I am Yahweh their Elohim, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them (Ex. 29:45-46).

I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you... (Lev. 26:11-12).

You shall put out both male and female [lepers]; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell (Num. 5:3).

Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I, Yahweh, dwell among the children of Israel (Num. 35:34).

Contrary to Friedman's assertion, there are instances in P in which humans do speak to God intimately. Abraham, for example, pleaded for God's favor to come upon Ishmael in Gen. 17:18. When Korah and some other Levites rebelled against Moses and Aaron and claimed that they too should have the priesthood, Moses became very angry and expressed this anger directly to Yahweh (Num. 16:15). Yahweh decided to wipe out all the Israelites for this rebellion but relented after Moses and Aaron pleaded with him (Num. 16:20-24).

Furthermore, according to P, God did occasionally come down to speak personally and closely with his chosen people. He appeared to Abraham and then "went up" when he was done talking to him (Gen. 17:1, 22). He also appeared to Jacob and then, when his speech was ended, he "went up" (Gen. 35:9, 13). To go up, he obviously had to have come down first!

Thus, the evidence leads us to conclude that it is possible for a single author, whether that author is one of the theoretical authors of the theoretical documents or the single author of the Pentateuch, to see God as both cosmic and close, transcendent and personal. Friedman admits as much when he discusses the

picture of God presented by the single author of *In the Day*:

In this work, God is sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden, sometimes just and sometimes merciful. One might be inclined to wonder whether these differences reflect multiple authors after all. But that is not the case. The different aspects of God fall within the texts that share the common terms and themes, the texts that connect to one another and allude to one another. The complexity of the divine in these works is not the result of mixing texts by two or three authors. It is the result of one author's rich conception of God.<sup>7</sup>

In Friedman's mind, the author of *In the Day* is the author of J. So Friedman admits that the author of J sees God as both hidden and manifest, cosmic and close, transcendent and personal.

When the documentarians contend, therefore, that P's theology differs from the theology of J, E, and D, they are merely imagining things.

5. *Ignorance*: The contradictions exist because the reader is ignoring parts of the text. The reader sees a contradiction where none exists because he or she is not taking into account *everything* the author has to say. For example, Friedman says that

in P there are no blatant anthropomorphisms. In JE, God walks in the garden of Eden, God personally

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<sup>7</sup> *Hidden*, 49.

makes Adam's and Eve's clothes, personally closes Noah's ark, smells Noah's sacrifice, wrestles with Jacob, and speaks to Moses out of the burning bush. None of these things are in P.<sup>8</sup>

He can say this only because he is ignoring the abundant anthropomorphisms within P. P's anthropomorphisms begin to appear in its very first story: the Creation Story of Gen. 1:1-2:4a. In that story, God speaks, sees, names, blesses and rests.<sup>9</sup> He does every one of these things in many of P's other stories. In those other stories, he also hears, knows and remembers,<sup>10</sup> and God himself speaks of his face, mouth, arm, hand, ears, and even his soul, which is capable of abhorrence, an otherwise human emotion.<sup>11</sup>

A celebrated example of an anthropomorphism in J—an example cited by Friedman in the quote above and by many other scholars—occurs near the end of the Flood Story when Noah sacrificed some animals and “Yahweh smelled a soothing aroma” (Gen. 8:21). Yet in P, Yahweh warns the Israelites that if they disobey him, “I will not smell the fragrance of your soothing aromas” (Lev. 26:31, AT). These are the only places in the entire Pentateuch in which Yahweh is said to smell.

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<sup>8</sup> *Wrote*, 171; see also *Sources*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Speaks*: Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29. *Sees*: 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. *Names*: 1:5, 8, 10. *Blesses*: 1:22, 28; 2:3. *Rests*: 2:2, 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Hears*: Gen. 17:20; Ex. 16:7. *Knows*: Ex. 2:25. *Remembers*: Gen. 8:1; 19:29; Ex. 2:24; 6:5.

<sup>11</sup> *Face*: Lev. 17:10; 20:3, 5, 6; 26:17. *Mouth*: Num. 20:24; 27:14. *Arm*: Ex. 6:6. *Hand*: Ex. 6:8; 7:4-5. *Ears*: Num. 14:28. *Soul*: Lev. 26:11, 30.

Another oft cited example of an anthropomorphism in J—also cited by Friedman above—is the scene in which Adam and Eve “heard the sound of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden” (Gen. 3:8). Yahweh is also seen walking through the Israelites’ army camp in D (Deut. 23:14). And yet, in P Yahweh promises the Israelites that if they do obey him, “I will walk among you...” (Lev. 26:12). Again, these are the only places in the entire Pentateuch in which Yahweh is said to walk. Anthropomorphisms cannot get more blatant than that.

The documentarians often deliberately “ignore” everything that the Pentateuchal author has to say in order to create contradictions where none actually exists. For example, the documentarians see a contradiction between Ex. 4:20, in which Moses takes Zipporah, his wife, to Egypt with him, and Ex. 18:2, in which Jethro brings Zipporah to Moses in the wilderness. Of course, the explanation in Ex. 18:2, “after he had sent her back,” cannot be allowed to stand, so it is given to the redactor.<sup>12</sup> By “ignoring” this explanation, the documentarians created a contradiction that does not actually exist.

6. *Inference*: The contradictions exist because the reader is inferring ideas which the author never stated or implied. The reader is simply reading his own ideas into the text and making it say more than it really is. For example, the supposed rivalry between the Aaronids and the Shilonites exists partly because of this reason. As you may recall, Friedman has said that the Shilonites wrote E and D, that they were descended from

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<sup>12</sup> *Sources*, 150.

Moses, and that they claimed they were legitimate priests. Friedman has also said that P was written by an Aaronid to disprove that claim. The Aaronid position was that only the descendants of Aaron were legitimate priests and that all other Levites, including the Shilonites, were secondary officials. We should expect, therefore, to find in P all the priestly functions being performed only by the Aaronids. And this, according to the documentarians, is exactly what we do find. The Priestly writer apparently believed that “only [an Aaronid] priest can enter the Tabernacle,” and he forbade “anyone but a priest to burn incense.” Furthermore, “all sacrifices in P are performed by Aaron or by his sons. The author of P, it seems, did not want to promote the idea that there was a precedent for anyone besides an Aaronid priest to offer a sacrifice.”<sup>13</sup> This is supposedly the reason why the author of P could not have written the scenes in which Noah, Abraham, and other non-priests offered sacrifices.

P does forbid non-priests from offering sacrifices, but those laws were instituted *after* Aaron was consecrated as Israel’s first official priest. Nowhere does P state or imply that these laws applied to non-priests who lived *before* Aaron’s consecration. The documentarians are simply inferring this to be so. Such a notion would have been absurd in real life in the ancient Near East. Animal sacrifices were an integral part of virtually all ancient Oriental religions. Sacrifices were made to placate the gods, to seek atonement, or to give thanks. When Noah was delivered from the flood, it behooved him to give thanks by offering sacrifices, but according

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<sup>13</sup> *Wrote*, 185, 176, 171.

to the story, there were no priests around to make the sacrifices for him! He had to offer them himself. It often behooved Abraham to offer sacrifices, but if he could not have offered them himself, to whom could he have gone? He was not about to go to the pagan priests who did not worship Yahweh, and he certainly was not going to live long enough to take them to Aaron!

Besides, P does have the precedent which the myth says is not there, and it is this precedent which also shatters Friedman's myth that there was a rivalry between the Aaronids and the Shilonites. Of all people, P portrays *Moses* as offering sacrifices and performing several other priestly functions, even though he was never an Aaronid priest. Moses was the first to set up the Tabernacle and its related religious implements. After he placed the altar of burnt offering, "he offered up the burnt offering and the grain offering on it, as YHWH had commanded Moses" (Ex. 40:29, FV). After he placed the altar of incense, "he burned the incense of fragrances on it, as YHWH had commanded Moses" (Ex. 40:27, FV). He then set up the laver and put water in it. According to P, Aaron and his sons were to use that water to wash their hands and feet before they entered the Tabernacle (Ex. 30:17-21). But who, according to P, actually used the laver?

And *Moses*, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet with water from it. Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as Yahweh had commanded Moses (Ex. 40:31-32, emphasis added).

P, in fact, depicts Moses as entering the Tabernacle quite often (Num. 7:89), even though it specifically states several times that if non-priests came even close to the Tabernacle, they should be put to death.

On the day the Tabernacle was set up, Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons for the priesthood. As part of this consecration ritual, Moses first sacrificed a bull as a sin offering. He then sacrificed a ram as a burnt offering. Then he sacrificed a second ram, called the ram of ordination. Aaron and his sons were then told to stay in the Tabernacle for seven days (Ex. 29:1-35; Lev. 8:1-36). On each of those seven days, Moses offered a bull on the altar of burnt offering to consecrate the altar (Ex. 29:36-37). Only then was Aaron allowed to offer his first sacrifice—but by then Moses had been offering sacrifices for a week! True, Moses never offered a sacrifice once Aaron's consecration was complete, but the Priestly writer, if he had been an Aaronid, would never have pictured Moses as offering *any* sacrifices if, in the author's day, Moses' descendants were claiming that they too were priests.

This portrait of Moses as a non-priest who nevertheless functioned as a priest is at least the kind of portrait we should have discovered in the allegedly Shilonite documents E and D, for such a portrait would have legitimized the Shilonites' claim that Moses' descendants were also priests. Yet these documents never claim that Moses had ever been a priest, nor do they convincingly picture him as having functioned as one. According to E, on one occasion before Aaron's consecration, Moses did sprinkle the blood of sacrificed animals on an altar and on the people, but Moses himself

did not sacrifice those animals: he had other men do it for him (Ex. 24:4-8).

Despite Friedman's assertions to the contrary, none of the biblical records supports his contention that there was a conflict between the Shilonites and the Aaronids. They never speak of a group of priests known as the Shilonites, nor do they ever say that Moses' descendants became legitimate priests. The book of Judges does give us a story which focuses on one of Moses' descendants and it is the only story in the entire Bible to do so (Judges 17-18). This descendant was named Jonathan and the story says he was a Levite. He did become a priest, but the author of Judges never accepts this priesthood as legitimate, for Jonathan became an idolatrous priest. Furthermore, Jonathan set up his priesthood in Dan, not Shiloh. The book of Deuteronomy threatens idolaters with exile. According to Judges, this event befell the Danites and Jonathan's idolatrous descendants. The author of Judges did not condone Jonathan's priesthood. He condemned it.

Indeed, every one of the books from Joshua through Second Kings fails to support his myth, even though, according to Friedman's theory, all of them (except Ruth) were written by a Shilonite. For example, they do not support his claim that the Shilonites originally possessed the Tabernacle and the ark in Shiloh while the Aaronids lived near Hebron. The book of Joshua does say that the Tabernacle was originally set up in Shiloh once the Israelites conquered Canaan, but it also says that the first high priest at Shiloh was Eleazar, the son of Aaron.<sup>14</sup> The book of Judges mentions only one legit-

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<sup>14</sup> Josh. 18:1; 19:51; 21:1-2.

imate priest: Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, and he is specifically said to have stood before the ark (Judges 20:27-28). First Samuel gives us the story of Eli, who was a priest at Shiloh and who was the great-great-grandfather of Abiathar, the allegedly Shilonite high priest who served during David's reign (1 Sam. 1-4). But First Samuel never says that Eli was a descendant of Moses. In First Kings, one man, Ahijah, is called a Shilonite, but he was a prophet and never a priest, and he too is never said to have been a descendant of Moses. He was called a Shilonite simply because he happened to live in Shiloh.<sup>15</sup>

The books of Chronicles were written by someone who accepted the Aaronid viewpoint. He, like the author of Judges, classifies Moses' descendants not as priests but as Levites, which is what we would have expected him to do (1 Chron. 23:14). However, this author also has a surprise for us. All of Aaron's descendants came from his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar. Because of this, each Aaronid belonged to one of two family lines, the Eleazarites and the Ithamarites. When David decided to organize the priests and the Levites into various divisions and assign each division a particular task, he decided to have one priest from each family line assist him (1 Chron. 24:1-6). From the Eleazarites he chose Zadok. Zadok was the Aaronid high priest who served alongside Abiathar while David was king. He became the sole high priest when Solomon dismissed Abiathar. From the Ithamarites David chose Ahimelech. Who was Ahimelech? He was the son of *Abiathar*. According to Chronicles, the family line from

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 11:29-39; 12:15; 14:1-16.

Ahimelech through Abiathar back to Eli was an Aaronid family line, not a Shilonite line. The two high priests which David had were not a Shilonite and an Aaronid: they were both Aaronids.

Thus, the Priestly writer could also have been the author of the allegedly Shilonite documents E and D because Friedman's myth that the authors were members of rival priesthoods does not stand. And the Priestly writer could have been the author of the J stories in which Noah, Abraham and others offered sacrifices for there is no reason why he would have been opposed to such sacrifices. Such opposition is never stated or even implied by the author of the Pentateuch; it is merely inferred by the documentarians.

*7. Interpretation:* The contradictions exist because the reader is incorrectly interpreting the text. The author has not really contradicted himself: the reader has simply misunderstood what the author has written. This does not happen often when one is reading a work originally written in one's native language, for both the reader and the author are familiar with its intricacies. It is far more likely to happen when one is reading a foreign language. If the reader does not completely understand the syntax, the idioms, the shades of meaning, or the other nuances of the language, the reader could easily misinterpret or mistranslate the text, thereby creating a contradiction where none exists.

Translated literally, Deut. 18:1 reads:

The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall not have a portion or inheritance in Israel...

The phrase *all the tribe of Levi* seems to stand in opposition to *the Levitical priests*, thereby meaning that all of the Levites were Levitical priests, which is how the documentarians interpret this verse. This contradicts the rest of the Pentateuch, which clearly indicates that only the descendants of Aaron could serve as priests; all the other Levites were to assist the Aaronid priests but could not serve as priests themselves. However, the documentarians are ignoring the author's culture. The Hebrew culture has given this idiom a meaning far different from the meaning the documentarians have given it.<sup>16</sup>

This idiom appears in many other portions of the law code, four of which are here translated literally:

You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah, all tree, beside the altar of Yahweh your God... (Deut.16:21).

But if it has in it a blemish, lameness or blindness, all blemish whatsoever, you shall not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God (Deut. 15:21).

You shall not sacrifice to Yahweh your God an ox or sheep which has in it a blemish, all evil thing whatsoever... (Deut. 17:1).

You shall not charge interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on all thing which may be charged with interest (Deut. 23:19).

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<sup>16</sup> The following argument is derived from A.H. Finn, *The Unity of the Pentateuch*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Marshall Brothers, Ltd.), 188-190.

In each verse, the author lists one, two, or three members of a group, then immediately expands the circle to include the entire group. An Asherah was a special tree used in the worship of pagan gods. The author first lists the Asherah, then immediately expands the circle to include all (that is, any) tree. The same thing happens in the other three verses and in 18:1. The author begins by listing one part of a group (the Levitical priests), then immediately expands the circle to include the entire group (all the tribe of Levi). Properly understood, then, Deut. 18:1 proves that the Levitical priests comprised only a part of the tribe of Levi, not the entire tribe.

Understanding the Hebrew language and idioms helps to resolve many of the alleged contradictions. Gen. 1 clearly states that the animals were created before man was, while Gen. 2 apparently says that the animals were created *after* man was: “And YHWH God fashioned from the ground every animal of the field and every bird of the skies and brought it to the human to see what he would call it” (verse 19, FV). But in the Hebrew language, many verbs that can be translated in the past tense (in this case, “fashioned”) can also be translated in the pluperfect tense (“had fashioned,” meaning that God had fashioned the animals *before* he created man, as Gen. 1 states). Context determines which translation is appropriate and the context in this case clearly dictates that the pluperfect is the perfect translation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It has been objected that translating Gen. 2:19 in the pluperfect tense is “contrary to idiom.” However, there are other places in the Old Testament that require translating the Hebrew with the English pluperfect: Jos. 2:22 (the pursuers *had* sought the spies before the

Similarly, in Gen. 6:19 Elohim tells Noah to take a pair of each kind of animal aboard the ark, but later Yahweh tells him to take seven pairs of each clean animal and a pair of each unclean animal aboard the ark. However, the Hebrew word for “pair,” *šəṇayim*, is also the Hebrew word for “pairs.” So Gen. 6:19 could and should be translated as Elohim telling Noah to take “pairs” of animals aboard the ark. Elohim first spoke to him generally about the number of animals he should take onto the ark; later, Yahweh spoke more specifically. This pair of passages is therefore quite compatible, not contradictory.<sup>18</sup>

Some passages in the Joseph Story say that Ishmaelites sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Other passages say that Midianites sold him into slavery in Egypt. Friedman calls this apparent contradiction “utterly irreconcilable.”<sup>19</sup> So the documentarians divide the story so that J has the Ishmaelites buying Joseph from his brothers and then selling him, while E has the Midianites pulling Joseph out of the pit and then selling him.

But this understanding of the story rests on a misunderstanding of this key passage:

And Midianite people, merchants, passed, and they pulled and lifted Joseph from the pit. And they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty weights of sil-

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pursuers returned), 1 Kings 13:12 (the sons *had* seen which way the prophet went before their father asked his question), and Is. 37:5 (the king’s servants *had* come to Isaiah before Isaiah spoke to them). See *AOOT*, 118, n. 19.

<sup>18</sup> *AOOT*, 120; see also W.J. Martin, *Stylistic Criteria and the Analysis of the Pentateuch* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1955), 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> *Hidden*, 353.

ver. And they brought Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 37:28, FV).

There are two cultural differences at work here. The first is the use of multiple names for a group of people. As we shall see, the cultures of the ancient Near East often referred to groups of people by more than one name. Thus, the Ishmaelites and the Midianites are not the names of *two* different peoples, but are the names of the *same* people, as Judg. 8:24 tells us: “For they [the Midianites] had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.”

The second is the Hebrews’ rather ambiguous use of the pronoun. In our culture, we are taught to use the pronoun so that it refers to the last noun (just as “it” in this sentence refers back to the last noun, “pronoun”). We are taught to do this because the ambiguous use of pronouns can lead to not only misunderstandings but also to unintentional humor. For example, according to the New American Standard Bible’s translation of 2 Chron. 35:11, during Josiah’s Passover celebration, “they slaughtered the Passover animals, and while the priests sprinkled the blood received from their hand, the Levites skinned them.” If “them” refers back to the priests and not the animals, then the priests did not sprinkle the blood for very long!

The Hebrews, however, apparently did not care if their usage of pronouns was ambiguous—they knew what they meant even if no one else did. The ambiguity is readily apparent in such passages as this one from Exodus:

And they [the Egyptians] set commanders of work-companies over it [the Israelites] in order to degrade it [the Israelites] with their [the Egyptians'] burdens. And they [the Israelites] built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses. And the more they [the Egyptians] degraded it [the Israelites], the more it [the Israelites] increased, and the more it [the Israelites] expanded; and they [the Egyptians] felt a disgust at the children of Israel. And Egypt made the children of Israel serve with harshness; and they [the Egyptians] made their [the Israelites'] lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks and with all work in the field—all their [the Israelites'] work that they [the Israelites] did for them [the Egyptians]—with harshness (Ex. 1:11-14, FV).

The pronouns here sometimes refer back to the Israelites and sometimes to the Egyptians, even though the other group may have been the last antecedent.

The ambiguity also shows up in the story of Jacob's marriage to Rachel.

And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to Rachel, his daughter—to her as a maid. And he also came to Rachel. And he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked with him another seven years (Gen. 29:29-30, FV).

Following our cultural standards, we should understand all the masculine pronouns as referring back to the last named man, but this would mean that the passage is telling us that Laban had relations with his

daughter on her wedding night and that he worked for himself for another seven years. But this is absurd. The pronoun “he” obviously refers back to Jacob, who was last named in the verse before.

This understanding of the Hebrew use of pronouns gives us a better understanding of the key passage in Joseph’s Story:

And Midianite people, merchants, passed, and they (his brothers) pulled and lifted Joseph from the pit. And they (his brothers) sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty weights of silver. And they (the Ishmaelites/Midianites) brought Joseph to Egypt.

We can clearly see that there is no contradiction—once we understand the Hebrew language as the Hebrews understood it.

### **A Question of Translation**

As it is usually translated, Ex. 6:3 states: “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them.” The latter half of the verse conflicts with the book of Genesis, which clearly testifies that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did know that God’s name was Yahweh. Faced with this contradiction, some scholars have devised an elaborate theory involving documents and redactors. They seem to have forgotten an important rule of translation,

namely that a passage should be interpreted in the light, not only of the local context, but also of the remote, for, to be fair to any statement, the mediate as

well as the immediate must be taken into consideration. When it became clear that the translation conflicted with the tenor and sometimes the text of what had gone before, the first suspicion should have fallen on the accuracy of the translation.

The latter half of verse three should be translated as a rhetorical question, making the whole verse read as follows: "I allowed myself to appear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, for did I not let myself be known to them by my name Yahweh?" The answer, of course, is yes, he did let himself be known to them by his name Yahweh. The verse now agrees with Genesis rather than contradicting it.<sup>20</sup>

An objection to this translation may be that in Hebrew a question usually begins with an interrogative pronoun or adverb (such as "who" or "where;" Hebrew does not use question marks). The latter half of verse 3 has neither, which is why most scholars fall into translating the verse in the usual manner. But in the standard textbook on Hebrew grammar, Dr. Wilhelm Gesenius, a highly respected scholar, has stated:

A question need not necessarily be introduced by a special interrogative pronoun or adverb... So especially, when the interrogative clause is connected with a preceding sentence by ׀ [a particle which is translated as *and*, *but*, or *for*, depending on context]

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<sup>20</sup> Martin, 16-19.

... or when (as in some of the examples just given) it is negative.<sup>21</sup>

One of his examples is Jonah 4:11. This verse is connected with the preceding sentence by the particle, it is negative, and it is missing an interrogative pronoun. It could be translated, "And I should not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city," but this translation conflicts with the context. God was obviously explaining to Jonah why he, God, *should* have compassion on Nineveh. This verse, therefore, must be translated as, "And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city?" Translating verse 11 as a rhetorical question and not as a negative statement makes sense because the question better fits the context.

The latter half of Ex. 6:3 is also connected with the preceding sentence by the particle, it is also negative, and it is also missing an interrogative pronoun or adverb. Translating it as a rhetorical question and not as a negative statement makes sense because the question better fits the context and eliminates the contradiction.

Translating it as a rhetorical question and not as a negative statement also shifts the meaning of the sentence from denying the knowledge of God's name in previous generations to emphasizing the importance of this name above that of his other name, El Shaddai. This emphasis is indicated in Genesis: Yahweh is used frequently, El Shaddai rarely. But, given the context of verse three, why would God want to emphasize this

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<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, A.E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 473.

name above the other? To answer that, we need to turn to the other problem text.

### **The Secret Name**

In the famous story in Exodus 3, God calls to Moses out of a bush that is on fire but is not being consumed. God introduces himself as “the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” He then commissions Moses to return to Egypt and deliver the Israelites from their slavery. Moses feels overwhelmed and tries to get God to change his mind by asking a series of questions that are intended to show God just how inadequate Moses is to the task. One of those questions is, “Here, I’m coming to the children of Israel, and I’ll say to them, ‘Your fathers’ God sent me to you.’ And they’ll say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13, FV).

God’s answer is, “I AM WHO I AM.” Then he tells Moses to say to the children of Israel that “I AM has sent me to you.” The words “I AM” in Hebrew is *‘ehyeh*. The third person form of the word is *yahweh*, which is the name God chose for himself.

The problem with Moses’ question is that it seems to imply that Moses and the Israelites do not know God’s name. Until now, they have known him only as Elohim. Yet Genesis makes it clear that Moses’ ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, knew that God’s name was Yahweh. Surely this name would have been passed down through the generations to Moses and the Israelites of his time. So why is Moses asking for God’s name? The problem is rectified, according to the documentarians, if we assign this passage to E and all the passages

in Genesis that use Yahweh to J. Thus, in E none of the Israelites, including their ancestors, knew God's name until God answers this question.

But the documentarian explanation does not rectify the problem at all, for in E Moses' ancestors know of several names for God. Abraham calls him El Olam (the Everlasting God; Gen. 21:33) and Jacob calls him El Shaddai (Gen. 43:14). If nothing else, these names should have been passed on to Moses and the Israelites of his time. But E also tells us that Jacob knew of another name for God (Gen. 28:21), and that name was none other than Yahweh itself! So the problem remains: why is Moses asking for God's name?

The answer cannot be found in the Documentary Hypothesis. Rather, the answer is to be found in the Israelites' propensity to fall into idolatry on a moment's notice. Jacob buried the idols of his children under a tree on his way to meet God at Bethel, which shows that the Israelites practiced idolatry before they went into Egypt. The Israelites had Aaron make a golden calf which they worshiped simply because Moses had been gone for a long time, which shows that they practiced idolatry after they came out of Egypt. It is not surprising, therefore, to find they practiced idolatry while in Egypt. Near the end of his life, Joshua says to the Israelites, "Now therefore, fear Yahweh, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and *in Egypt*. Serve Yahweh!" (Josh. 24:14, emphasis added). Ezekiel pictures Yahweh as commanding the Israelites living in Egypt before the exodus to avoid defiling themselves with the idols of Egypt, but they refused (Ezek. 20:7-8). Indeed, Ezekiel says the Israelites of his day will go into

exile to break the influence that the idolatry their ancestors had learned in Egypt still had over them (Ezek. 23). Since the Israelites had lived among the Egyptians for over four hundred years, they had plenty of time to learn and adopt the Egyptian system of beliefs.

The Israelites had also spent most of those four hundred years crying out to Yahweh to free them from their slavery, and by Moses' day they had become impatient with him. Asking him to deliver them was not producing the desired results, so they were looking for some way to force him to deliver them. The Egyptian belief in the secret name seemed to offer them exactly what they wanted.

In the Hebrew language, the word "name" carries the same connotations that it does in English. It can mean the label given to objects and people ("The name of Abram's wife was Sarai."<sup>22</sup>); a person's reputation ("A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches."<sup>23</sup>); or a person's authority ("And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus."<sup>24</sup>). But it also takes on one additional connotation: it represents the person's character<sup>25</sup> ("Holy and awesome is His name."<sup>26</sup>). In fact, a person's name *is* the person himself. To blaspheme God's name (Lev. 24:11) is to blaspheme God. To worship God's name is to worship God.

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<sup>22</sup> Gen. 11:29.

<sup>23</sup> Prov. 22:1.

<sup>24</sup> Esth. 8:10.

<sup>25</sup> By this I do not intend to say that the meaning of a person's name is reflective of his character: not everyone named Charming is actually charming. What I do mean is that the word *name* is often used as an appositive for the person himself or his character.

<sup>26</sup> Ps. 111:9.

The Egyptians took it one step further. They believed that a person's name was an integral part of his being. Where we might say that a man consists of his body, soul, and spirit, an ancient Egyptian would say that a man consists of his body, name, and *ka* (double). An inscription inside the tomb of Pepi I sees the king in his afterlife going "forward with his flesh, Pepi is happy with his name, and he liveth with his *ka*."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, it was impossible to live without a name. They believed that "a man only came into being upon this earth when his name had been pronounced" and that "the future life could only be attained after the gods of the world beyond the grave had become acquainted with it and uttered it."<sup>28</sup>

This belief applied to the gods as well. According to one creation story, when the creator god Neb-er-tcher began to create everything, he said, "I brought (*i.e.*, fashioned) my mouth, and I uttered my own name as a word of power, and thus I developed myself out of the primeval matter which had evolved multitudes of evolutions from the beginning of time."<sup>29</sup> According to *The Book of the Dead*, the sun god Re (or Rā) was "the creator of the name[s] of his limbs, which came into being in the form of the gods who are in the following of Rā." As E.A. Wallis Budge, the late Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, noted, "From this we see that all the 'gods' of Egypt were merely personifications of the NAMES of Rā, and that

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<sup>27</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, Vol. II of *Books on Egypt and Chaldea* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1901, reprint N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), 158.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

each god was one of his members, and that a name of a god was the god himself.”<sup>30</sup>

Conversely, blotting out a person’s name was the same as destroying that person. If anyone wished to destroy the evil power of a demon, then, in some cases, all one had to do was to make a wax figure of the demon, write its name on the figure and then destroy the figure, thereby destroying its name which was its power.<sup>31</sup> To the Egyptians, therefore, the name was a real, dynamic, active, even life-giving (or life-taking) force and was thus a source of great power.

Knowing this makes it easy to see why the Egyptians came to believe that if one retained a magical or secret name, a name which no one else knew, then one retained a source of power which no one else had. However, should someone happen to learn your secret name, then that person held that power over you and could make you do whatever he or she desired. Again, this belief also applied to the gods. Each god had a secret name. Should a person happen to learn the secret name of a god, the god would be forced by the power of magic to do whatever that person desired whenever that person spoke the name.

In a story which is a part of an Egyptian magic spell designed to counteract scorpion poison, Re is described as “abounding in names, unknown to that (god) and unknown to this (god).” Later in the story, Re himself says, “My father and my mother told me my name, (but) it was hidden in my body before I was born, in order that the power of a male or female magician

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

might not be made to play against me.” The goddess Isis, who was especially skilled at casting magic spells, decides that she wants to know this name, and so she fashions a poisonous snake which ambushes Re and bites him. Re immediately calls upon the other gods to cure him. Isis, of course, offers to cure him, but only if he answers her one request: “Tell me thy name, my divine father.”

Viewed out of context, Isis’ request, like Moses’ question, would seem absurd because Isis obviously knows Re’s name. Even though the text does not have the words “secret” or “hidden name,” the context makes it abundantly clear that this is what she wants.

Re, too, knows she wants this name, but he is not ready to give it to her. So he recites a list of his accomplishments and then ends it by saying, “I am Khepri in the morning, Re at noon, and Atum who is in the evening.” But Isis is not fooled. She already knows those names, and besides, if his secret name had been among those he had listed, he would have recovered. So Isis says to him, “Thy name is not really among these which thou hast told me. If thou tellest it to me, the poison will come forth, for a person whose name is pronounced lives.” Re finally reveals his secret name (which the author himself did not know or which he withheld from his Egyptian audience so only he would know!) and is cured.<sup>32</sup>

Moses, therefore, is not asking for God’s name because he does not know what it is. He is asking for

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<sup>32</sup> ANET, 12-14.

God's secret name.<sup>33</sup> But notice that he is not wanting to learn God's name for himself. He is picturing the Israelites in Egypt as wanting to know God's name. He sees himself coming to the Israelites and telling them that he has met with God. He sees the Israelites as figuring this to be their golden opportunity, for if Moses has really met with God, then perhaps he has learned God's secret name. So he sees their first reaction to his news not as rejoicing that God has finally answered their prayers but as wanting to extract information so they can force God to do their bidding.

This is why God's answer, "I AM WHO I AM," is so appropriate. In English, it sounds like a tautology, a statement that unnecessarily repeats itself. Of course, God is who God is, but that does not tell us who he is in the first place. It sounds like God is trying to evade Moses' question, even as Re tried to avoid Isis'.

But God is not Re and he is not evading Moses' question. In Hebrew, this syntax is used to express determination. Thus, when Moses returns to this mountain, God says to him, "I shall show grace to whomever I shall show grace, and I shall show mercy to whomever

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Buber, *The Kingship of God*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Richard Schieffmann, trans. (N.Y.: Harper and Row, Publisher, 1967), 105-106. In *The Exodus* (Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exodus* [N.Y.: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2017], 57-58), Friedman cites a study by Gary Rendsburg in which he notes that this allusion to the Egyptian belief in the hidden name is one of seven allusions to Egyptian traditions found in Ex. 1-15. Friedman says these allusions are all found in the E and P texts, which is further evidence that the Levites (who wrote E and P) came from Egypt. Of course, I would say this is evidence that Moses knew the Egyptian traditions (because he grew up there), but my point is that Friedman agrees that Moses' question is an allusion to the Egyptian belief in the hidden name.

I shall show mercy” (Ex. 33:19, FV), that is, God will determine to whom he will be gracious and to whom he will show mercy.<sup>34</sup> What God is saying to the Israelites, therefore, is, “I determine who I am. I chose to have this personality and this character, which means that I chose my own name. Unlike Re, I was not given a secret name by someone else. So your attempt at manipulating me through the use of my secret name will be in vain.”

His answer subtly—or perhaps not so subtly—reminds the Israelites that because he, and only he, determines who he is, he is a God who does not change. Ever changing circumstances do not determine who he is. Fleeting emotions do not determine who he is. And certainly their puny attempts at magic do not determine who he is. Nothing can make him change except himself. This fact may cause consternation among some of the Israelites who think he is not moving fast enough to free them from slavery, but it should also comfort them. For a God who does not change is a God who can be counted on to be there when you really need him and who can be counted on to follow through on his promises. He is not the kind of God who one day promises to do something and the next day changes his mind. He is an unchanging God, which means that he is a faithful God.

He reminds them of all of this in the next part of his answer to Moses when he says, “You shall say this to the children of Israel: ‘I Am’ has sent me to you... You shall say this to the children of Israel: YHWH, your fath-

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<sup>34</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1982), 150-151.

ers' God, Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God has sent me to you" (Ex. 3:14f, FV). He is the same God who introduced himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He has not changed since then. He was faithful then; he is faithful now. But this answer is also a mild rebuke, for when he answers Moses' request to reveal his secret name by giving him the name the Israelites already knew, he was telling them, "I have already revealed to you who I really am. I have already revealed to you the deepest, innermost part of me. You should have already known that my heart belongs to you and that I would be faithful to you. You should have never doubted me."

Thus, God recalls for the Israelites not only his chosen name but also the meaning of that name. The name Yahweh does not simply mean "He is," but "He is unchanging and therefore faithful." And it is his faithfulness, more so than any other aspect of his character, that he wishes everyone to think of when they think of him: "This is my name forever, and this is how I am to be remembered for generation after generation" (Ex. 3:15, FV).<sup>35</sup>

This is also why in Exodus 6 (and in Genesis) he emphasizes the name Yahweh over his other name, El Shaddai. To be sure, God is El Shaddai, the Almighty

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<sup>35</sup> Jacob Milgrom is a documentarian. Even so, his interpretation of Ex. 3:13-15 ("The Desecration of YHWH's Name: Its Parameters and Significance," in Chaim Cohen, *et al.*, eds., *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008], 69-81), which he presents "with trepidation," shares many points of similarity with my own.

One, which means that he is capable of delivering the Israelites from slavery. But just because someone is capable of doing something does not necessarily mean that he will actually do it. What the Israelites needed to know was that God is faithful, that he can be counted on to do what he said he would do. The actual deliverance was going to be a long process, and the march across the wilderness was going to be perilous. They needed to know that he could be trusted.

And so, he emphasizes his name again and again in his speech to Moses in Exodus 6:

And God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am YHWH, the Faithful One. I allowed myself to appear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, for did I not let myself be known to them by my name YHWH, the Faithful One? And I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their residences, in which they resided. And also: I've heard the cry of the children of Israel as Egypt is enslaving them, and I've remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the children of Israel: 'I am YHWH, the Faithful One, and I shall bring you out from under Egypt's burdens, and I shall rescue you from their toil, and I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with tremendous judgments, and I shall take you to me as a people, and I shall become your God, and you'll know that I am YHWH, the Faithful One, your God, who is bringing you out from under Egypt's burdens. And I shall bring you to the land that I raised my hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I shall give it to

you as a possession. I am YHWH, the Faithful One.”  
(Ex. 6:2-8, FV with some modifications).

There is no need to manipulate a faithful God. One can simply trust that he will do what he said he will do.

Thus, an understanding of the Hebrew (and Egyptian) culture and language reveals that the contradictions are merely illusions. There is no contradiction between Ex. 3 and Genesis or Ex. 6 and Genesis. Indeed, there is no contradiction at all in either the text or the theology of the Pentateuch. The documentarians are simply seeing something that is not really there.

But the differences in style and the doublets are very real anomalies. Any reader can quickly detect their presence within the Pentateuch. And yet, in this case, the documentarians are simply not seeing something that *is* really there: the reasons why Moses created these anomalies.

## CHAPTER 5

### Changing Styles

The fantasies of Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, have been rightly admired by millions of readers. One of those admirers is said to have been Queen Victoria. According to legend, when the Queen read *Alice*, she was so delighted by it that she requested Carroll to dedicate his next book to her. Imagine her surprise when his next book turned out to be a mathematical tome entitled *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants!*

Carroll himself denounced this anecdote as “an absolute fiction,” but literary buffs continue to tell it because it amusingly illustrates the contrast between Carroll’s diverse writings. In the *Treatise*, for example, mathematics is a straightforward, thoroughly logical process.

If there be given  $n$  Equations, not all homogeneous, containing Variables: a test for their being consistent is that either, first, there is one of them such that, when it is taken along with each of the remaining Equations successively, each pair of Equations, so formed, has its B-Block evanescent; or secondly,

there are  $m$  of them, where  $m$  is one of the numbers  $2, \dots, n$ , which contain at least  $m$  variables, and have their V-Block not evanescent, and are such that, when they are taken along with each of the remaining Equations successively, each set of Equations, so formed, has its B-Block evanescent.<sup>1</sup>

But in *Through the Looking Glass*, mathematics becomes something else again.

“Try another Subtraction sum. Take a bone from a dog: what remains?”

Alice considered. “The bone wouldn’t remain, of course, if I took it—and the dog wouldn’t remain: it would come to bite me—and I’m sure *I* shouldn’t remain!”

“Then you think nothing would remain?” said the Red Queen.

“I think that’s the answer.”

“Wrong, as usual,” said the Red Queen: “the dog’s temper would remain.”

“But I don’t see how—”

“Why, look here!” the Red Queen cried. “The dog would lose its temper, wouldn’t it?”

“Perhaps it would,” Alice replied cautiously.

“Then if the dog went away, its temper would remain!” the Queen exclaimed triumphantly.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants* (London: Macmillan, 1867), 61, as quoted in Francine F. Abelles, *The Mathematical Pamphlets of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and Related Pieces*, Vol. 2 of *The Pamphlets of Lewis Carroll*, edited by Stan Marx and Edward Guiliano (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 158-159.

Alice said, as gravely as she could, “They might go different ways.” But she couldn’t help thinking to herself, “What dreadful nonsense we *are* talking!”<sup>2</sup>

Nonsense indeed. If we had no objective evidence about Lewis Carroll outside of these two works, if the only information we had about him was the information that could be gleaned from the *Treatise* and from *Looking Glass*, it would be easy to believe that they were written by two different authors. The styles of the two works are completely different. The *Treatise* is a somber and stilted exposition of technical truths. *Looking Glass* is a wonderfully witty work of nonsense. The *Treatise* was written in the precise prose of the thesis. *Looking Glass* was written in the fluid prose of fiction. Even the title pages of the two books bear the names of two different authors: the author of *Looking Glass* was Lewis Carroll, but the author of the *Treatise* was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson!

Fortunately, we do have objective evidence about Carroll, and this evidence confirms that Dodgson was Carroll’s real name and that Dodgson did write both books. He is therefore one of the best proofs that a single author can change his style.

### The Reasons for Changing Styles

The documentarians argue that there is only one explanation for a change in style: a change in authors—

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (N.Y.: Airmont Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), 237-238.

which is one reason why they assign these two passages from the Pentateuch to two authors:

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "...These are the feasts of Yahweh, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is Yahweh's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it" (Lev. 23:1, 4-8).

"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to Yahweh your God, for in the month of Abib Yahweh your God brought you out of Egypt by night.... You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.... Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a sacred assembly to Yahweh your God. You shall do no work on it" (Deut. 16:1, 3, 8).

But the real explanation is that Moses has simply changed his style from one passage to the other—and for some very good reasons.

Style is the manner in which an author communicates his message to his audience. Many of us have read a book written so well that we have read it two or three times simply because of the enjoyment we received from its writing even though we knew how the story would end. Most of us have also read a book that was written so poorly that we tossed it after the first few pages. One of the differences between these two books is the style in which they were written. A good style helps an author to get his message across to his audience. A poor style prevents the audience from hearing the message at all.

This is why serious authors continually seek to improve their style. Benjamin Franklin saw early in his life the need for improving his style after he began corresponding with a friend of his.

Three or four Letters of a Side had pass'd, when my Father happen'd to find my Papers, and read them. Without entring into the Discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the Manner of my Writing, observ'd that tho' I had the Advantage of my Antagonist in correct Spelling & pointing (which I ow'd to the Printing House) I fell far short in elegance of Expression, in Method and in Perspicuity, of which he convinc'd me by several Instances. I saw the Justice of his Remarks, & thence grew more attentive to the *Manner* in Writing, and determin'd to endeavour at Improvement.

About this time I met with an odd Volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the Writing

excellent, & wish'd if possible to imitate it. With that View, I took some of the Papers, & making short Hints of the Sentiment in each Sentence, laid them by a few Days, and then without looking at the Book, try'd to compleat the Papers again, by expressing each hinted Sentiment at length & as fully as it had been express'd before, in any suitable Words, that should come to hand.

Then I compar'd my Spectator with the Original, discover'd some of my Faults & corrected them. But I found I wanted a Stock of Words or a Readiness in recollecting & using them, which I thought I should have acquir'd before that time, if I had gone on making Verses, since the continual Occasion for Words of the same Import but of different Length, to suit the Measure, or of different Sound for the Rhyme, would have laid me under a constant Necessity of searching for Variety, and also have tended to fix that Variety in my Mind, & make me Master of it. Therefore I took some of the Tales & turn'd them into Verse: And after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the Prose, turn'd them back again.... By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discover'd many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the Pleasure of Fancying that in certain Particulars of small Import, I had been lucky enough to improve the Method or the Language and this encourag'd me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English Writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Norwalk, Conn.: The Easton Press, 1976), 20-21.

Back when classical education dominated Western schools, teachers of rhetoric would deliberately force their students to change their styles. Franklin's method, which he apparently stumbled upon by himself, was only one of several methods that these teachers employed to accomplish this goal. Louis T. Milic, Chairman of the Department of English at Cleveland State University at the time he compiled his *Stylists on Style*, also included this passage from Franklin in his book. "Franklin's method," he said, "is still one of the best ways of increasing one's skill in writing: practice moving from one medium to another and emulation of a model."<sup>4</sup>

Franklin's method included, first of all, the imitation of a good style. Edward P.J. Corbett, who also included this passage from Franklin's *Autobiography* in his book, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, has pointed out that "Classical rhetoric books are filled with testimonies about the value of imitation for the refinement of the many skills involved in effective speaking or writing. Style is, after all, the most imitable of the skills that co-operate to produce effective discourse."<sup>5</sup> Imitation naturally forces the student to change his style, for to imitate the style of another author, one must first abandon his own.

Second, Franklin's method included writing the same ideas in two different genres; in this case, in both prose and poetry. The demands of poetry differ from the demands of prose. What can be expressed in one manner in prose must be expressed differently in

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<sup>4</sup> Louis T. Milic, ed., *Stylists on Style* (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 504.

<sup>5</sup> Edward P.J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1965), 448.

poetry. A change in genre, therefore, *requires* the student to change his style.

Another method, which Corbett mentions but which Franklin did not,

was to set the students the task of saying something in a variety of ways. This process usually started out with a model sentence which had to be converted into a variety of forms each retaining the basic thought of the original. Erasmus, for instance, in Chapter 33 of his widely-used little book, *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*, showed the students 150 ways of phrasing the Latin sentence, *Tuae literae me magnopere delectarunt* (Your letter has delighted me very much). This variety was achieved partly by the choice of different words, partly by different collocations of words.<sup>6</sup>

Erasmus' exercise is interesting in itself, for if style is not what the author says but how he says it, then Erasmus has proven that an author can change his style some 150 times! But his exercise had a more important point to it than merely showing the students that they could express the same thought in a variety of ways.

Obviously, not all of the 150 sentences were equally satisfactory or appropriate; in fact, some of them were monstrosities. But by artificially experimenting with various forms, the student becomes aware of the flexibility of the language in which he is working and learns to extend his own range. Ultimately

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 449.

he learns that although there is a variety of ways of saying something, there is a “best way” for his particular subject matter, occasion, or audience. What was “best” for one occasion or audience, he discovers, is not “best” for another occasion or audience.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the student learns that he is not and *must not be* bound by his inborn style. Several styles are available to him and like a master craftsman, who selects his tools according to the job at hand, a master author will select the style that is “best” for the situation in which he finds himself. A change in any one of a number of factors may require him to put away one style and select another.

A change in *subject* often requires a change in style. One does not write about the qualities of Shakespeare’s sonnets the way that one writes about the intricacies of differential calculus. The Pentateuch’s subject matter includes the creation of the world and the flood of the world, the enslavement of Israel and the deliverance of Israel, the making of a covenant and the breaking of that covenant, the blessing of Jacob’s sons and the rape of Jacob’s daughter. Naturally, we should not expect an author to write about rape the way he would write about the creation of the world. This is also one reason why Friedman changed his style within *Wrote*. For example, in most of the book, he avoided discussing the measurements of objects in cubits because his subjects did not require him to do so. In chapter ten, however, he devoted a considerable amount of space to the

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

measurements of the Tabernacle in cubits because the point he wished to make did require him to do so.

A change in *the occasion* which prompted the author to write often requires a change in style. When the President appears at a friendly gathering seeking to garner voter support, he delivers a speech written in one manner; when he appears before Congress seeking a declaration of war, he delivers a speech written in a different manner. So, too, when Moses reprimanded the people for breaking the covenant by making an idol, he spoke to them in one style; when he gave them his farewell speech just before he died, he spoke to them in another style. This is one reason why the style of Deuteronomy, which was Moses' farewell speech, differs from the styles of the other books, including Leviticus.

A change in *the intended audience* often requires a change in style. The kind of letter a man would send to his sweetheart is definitely not the kind of letter he would send to his boss. This, too, helps explain why Deuteronomy's style differs from the style of Leviticus. Even though Deuteronomy repeats many of the laws already found in Leviticus, Deuteronomy was generally directed to all of the people, whereas many of the laws in Leviticus were specifically directed to only the priests. This also explains why Friedman's style changed from *Narrative* to *Wrote*. He wrote *Narrative* for the scholar who is familiar with the Hebrew language, the works of the documentarians and the jargon of Old Testament scholars. *Wrote*, however, was intended for the lay person who is not familiar with any of these things.

A change in *genre* does require a change in style. As we saw earlier, this is why teachers of rhetoric had

their students write the same ideas in different genre. Lists, legal materials, narratives and poetry, all of which can be found in the Pentateuch, each have their own stylistic requirements. This, too, helps explain why Deuteronomy's style differs from that of Leviticus, for Deuteronomy is a different genre. Leviticus is a legal handbook, a list of laws; Deuteronomy is a speech, an exhortation delivered by Moses who is not merely repeating the laws but is encouraging the people to obey the laws with all of their heart.

A change in *character* requires a change in style, even within the same genre. Authors recognize that different people express themselves in different ways. When they move from one character to another, therefore, they change their writing style to match the speaking style of the new character. Again, this too helps explain why Deuteronomy's style differs from Leviticus. Most of the laws in Leviticus are given through speeches by Yahweh, who speaks to the people as their King and their Lord; the laws must be obeyed simply because he has said they must be obeyed. The laws in Deuteronomy, however, are given through a speech by Moses, who speaks to the people as a dying father would speak to the children whom he loves, giving them his last words of wisdom and urging them to obey the laws because doing so would greatly benefit them. The radical change from one character to another required a radical change in the writing style.

These are only some of the reasons why an author would change his style. There are others. Some authors, for example, naturally avoid wordiness, while other authors habitually ramble on, redundantly repeating themselves, seemingly preferring to employ as

many words as they possibly can use to express a charmingly simple idea when only one or two mere little words would have been sufficient to do the job.<sup>8</sup> However, succinct authors may resort to wordiness to prove a point. Indeed, Milic believes that a succinct author who is seeking emphasis should deliberately resort to wordiness—and *vice versa*.

The writer intent on effectiveness must overcome this tendency toward the entropy of his style by recourse to conscious means which will disappoint his reader's new expectations. Having established a new norm for the reader, the writer must find ways to achieve emphasis by departing from his norm. If he has a certain range of variation in his sentence-length, for example, he must, when he wants something to be specially noticeable, introduce a series of short sentences, perhaps even fragments. If his vocabulary has been steadily casual, he can use some formal or learned terms. He must strive to remain to some extent unpredictable. If there is a secret of good writing, perhaps that is it.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, an author should deliberately change his style often to keep his readers' interest. Variety is the spice of life, and the spice of very good writing.

This is why using style to identify the author of an anonymous work is an imprecise science. In his essay,

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<sup>8</sup> Thus, Williamson's comment on Whiston's translation of Josephus' works: "His principle seems to have been never to use one word if two or three will do" (Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, translated by G.A. Williamson [Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1959], 16).

<sup>9</sup> Milic, 16.

“An Approach to Style,” in the third edition of *The Elements of Style*, E.B. White, himself a noted author, states his belief that “With some writers, style not only reveals the spirit of the man but reveals his identity, as surely as would his fingerprints.” As if to prove his point, he quotes two literary passages from two different authors whom he does not identify until he says, “Anyone acquainted with Faulkner and Hemingway will have recognized them in these passages and perceived which was which.”<sup>10</sup> But that is the trick, isn’t it? One must first know which style is Faulkner’s and which style is Hemingway’s before one can match the passages with the authors. Finding a fingerprint at a crime scene does not identify the criminal until it is matched to a fingerprint whose owner’s identity is already known. So, too, the style of an anonymous passage does not identify its author until it is matched to a style whose author is already known. And Dodgson has proven to us that we must read *everything* an author has written before we can decide what constitutes his style and what does not.

Even so, that an author can change his style or even imitate the style of another means that the identification of the author cannot be certain. That the anonymous work and the work of the known author were written in the same style may mean that the author wrote both works; it may also mean that the anonymous author has imitated the style of the known author. Conversely, that the anonymous work and the work of the known author were written in different

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<sup>10</sup> William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), 68.

styles may mean that two authors wrote the works; it may also mean that the same author simply changed his style. Hence, style is not an accurate predictor of authorship. That is why the documentarians are on shaky ground when they argue that the four styles they have found within the Pentateuch *necessarily* mean that four authors contributed to it, especially since the four authors are still anonymous. They are like the detective who argues that the discovery at a crime scene of prints from four different fingers *necessarily* means that he is dealing with four different criminals, only to discover, to his chagrin, that all four prints (and therefore, all four fingers) belong to the same person. The Pentateuch may have been written in four different styles, but they all came from the same hand.

A change in subject and/or genre can not only dictate a change in style; it can also dictate a change in vocabulary. A legal document does not use the same vocabulary that a history written for the general public would use. This explains, for example, why the Pentateuch's legal vocabulary (usually given to P) differs from its narrative vocabulary (usually given to J and E).

But does an author have good reasons for changing his vocabulary *within* a story or law? That is, does he have good reasons for employing synonyms within a passage? Indeed, he does.

### **The Reasons for Changing Synonyms**

One of the main reasons for employing synonyms is to keep the reader from becoming so bored that he or she throws the author's work away. Nobody really wants to have steak every night of his or her life, nor does

anybody want to keep reading “the documentarians,” “the documentarians,” “the documentarians” again and again.

There are other reasons of course. Because each synonym has its own connotations attached to it (it is one thing to describe a man as “stout,” quite another to describe him as “fat”), an author may switch from one word to its synonym because its connotation fits the new context better. In chapter two of *Wrote*, up to page 44, Friedman refers to J, E, P and D as “sources.” But on pages 44 and 45, in a section entitled “The Doorstep,” he calls them “documents.” After this section, he calls them “sources” again. A documentarian explanation of this change in terms would say that someone has inserted a “Document” source into the original “Source” document, but this explanation ignores the obvious reason for the change. Why Friedman used “sources” I cannot say, but he briefly switched to “documents” because in that section he introduces the term “the Documentary Hypothesis.” Referring to them as documents and not as sources makes it clear why the theory is known as the *Documentary Hypothesis*.

The biblical critics like to divide Ex. 3:1-6 between J and E, in part because verses 2-4 uses the Hebrew word *r'h*, while verse 6b uses the Hebrew word *nbt*. Jean-Louis Ska points out, however, that both words are very often used together in both prose and poetry and that there is a nuance of meaning between the two. The first means “to see,” whereas the second means “to look at, to gaze, to stare.” The scene reaches its climax when Moses realizes that he is encountering not just a burning bush, but God himself, and becomes afraid to not just see God, but to look at, gaze at, or stare at God.

So the author switches terms because the new term is more appropriate—not because we have switched authors.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes skillful authors alternate terms to achieve alliteration. Rendsburg notes that the author of Genesis uses *mll* (“said”) in 21:7, its only use outside of poetry, for its alliterative effect with *mul* (“circumcise”) in verse 4 and *nml* (“wean”) in verse 8 (twice) (not to mention, which he does not, its immediate alliteration within the verse, *miy millel*).<sup>12</sup> Yet Friedman assigns verse 7 to J, verse 4 to P, and verse 8 to E.<sup>13</sup>

An author may choose one word over its synonyms because it sounds better in the sentence. Then again, a writer may switch from one word to another simply because he or she wants to do so. I have found from experience that the choices I make as to which words I will write can depend on my frame of mind or even my emotional mood at the time. If the ideas are flying fast and furious, I will resort to simple words like “use.” But sometimes I become aware of how often I am using “use,” so I will deliberately employ one of its synonyms

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<sup>11</sup> Jean-Louis Ska, “The Limits of Interpretation,” in Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz, eds., *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*, FAT 78 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 121-122.

<sup>12</sup> Gary Rendsburg, “Hurwitz Redux: On the Continued Scholarly Inattention to a Simple Principle of Hebrew Philology,” in Ian Young, ed., *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 369 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 106-107. For more examples of alliteration in the Pentateuch, see his “Alliteration in the Exodus Narrative,” in Cohen, 83-100.

<sup>13</sup> *Sources*, 62-63.

or I will rewrite the passage so that I do not have to utilize any of those words.

There are times when a good author will shun synonyms and repeat a particular word within a passage because only that word fits the context, or doing so effectively emphasizes his main point, or he is afraid that his readers will lose his train of thought if he changes terms. And when that author does use synonyms, he will use them judiciously. When the reader cannot see the text for the synonyms, when the reader begins to guess which synonym will appear next, synonyms lose their value. What the author is saying and how he is saying it must draw the reader's attention to the author's message, not turn him away from it.

An abundance of synonyms was available to ancient Near Eastern authors. "Thus, in the Arabic, there are 1000 different words or names for 'sword,' 500 for 'lion,' 200 for 'serpent,' 400 for 'misfortune,' 80 for 'honey.'"<sup>14</sup> The stela of the Egyptian King Kamose, written about 1560 BC, has five different words for "boats."<sup>15</sup> Looking in the standard Hebrew lexicon, also written by Dr. Wilhelm Gesenius, I can count seven Hebrew words that can be translated as "law," nine that can be translated as "darkness," eleven that can be translated as "counsel," and twenty-seven that can be translated as "destruction."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> John W. Haley, *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, reprint edition (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977), 17, referencing Bleek, *Introduction to Old Testament*, i.43.

<sup>15</sup> *AOOT*, 124.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, translator, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974).

Hebrew even has two words for “I.” As could be expected, the critical scholars have used these words to divide the Pentateuch. But Ugaritic also has two words for “I.” Cyrus H. Gordon, a scholar who has specialized in Ugaritic, flatly states, “Both forms may occur in the same text....”<sup>17</sup>

Some Hebrew synonyms occur almost right next to each other, even within the alleged documents despite the diligence of the documentarians to keep them separate. As Friedman himself has noted, J refers to the sex of the animals who were to board the ark with the terms “man and his woman” as well as “male and female” (Gen. 7:2-3). In E, the young Ishmael is referred to as both a child and a boy (Gen. 21:16-17). Hebrew has two words for “sack,” both of which are found almost side-by-side in J (Gen. 42:27-28); two for “leaven,” both of which are found almost side-by-side in P (Lev. 2:11); and three for “city,” two of which are found almost side-by-side in D (Deut. 2:36).

The ancient Orientals were also in the habit of giving more than one name to one place, even as we do. We sometimes refer to New York City as “the Big Apple.” The United States is also known as America, and Great Britain is also known as England or the United Kingdom. Pharaoh Merenptah’s “Israel Stela” (so called because it is the first known stela to mention the Israelites) has two names for Egypt and five for the city of Memphis. In the prologue to Hammurapi’s laws, the region of Nippur is also known as Dur-an-ki.<sup>18</sup> In the

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<sup>17</sup> Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, *Analecta Orientalia* 38 (Rome: Pontificus Institutum Biblicum, 1965), 35.

<sup>18</sup> *AOOT*, 124, n. 44.

Old Testament, the land between the northern stretches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is known as Padan-aram and Aram-naharaim. The mountain upon which Moses received the Ten Commandments is called both Horeb and Sinai.

The ancient Orientals were even in the habit of giving more than one name to groups of people and even individuals.

In Egypt, many people had double names like the Israel/Jacob or Jethro/Reuel of the Old Testament, *e.g.*, Sebek-khu called Djaa whose stela in Manchester University Museum exemplifies the use of three names for one Palestinian populace: Mentiu-Setet ('Asiatic Beduin'), Retenu ('Syrians') and 'Amu ('Asiatics') – just like the Ishmaelites/Midianites or Canaanites/Amorites of the Old Testament. For personal and group names elsewhere, *cf.* in Mesopotamia the sage Ahiqar (or Ahuqar) who is Aba'-enlildari (not to mention Tiglath-pileser III = Pul, and Shalmaneser V = Ululai). In the Hittite Empire, a series of kings had double names, while 'Mitanni' and 'Hanigalbat' and 'Mitanni' and 'Hurrians' occur as double designations of the state and people of Mitanni.<sup>19</sup>

Strictly speaking, the two names of God are not synonyms: Yahweh is God's name; Elohim is a generic term ("god") which can be used of other gods. However, in practice, the two names are often treated as if they were synonyms. Umberto Cassuto says that the authors

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

of the Old Testament followed a set of rules which determined which name was used in which context and these rules seem to work in most, if not in all, instances, especially in the Pentateuch.<sup>20</sup>

The use of synonyms and different styles, therefore, does not necessarily denote diverse documents: it may be indicative of the author's purposes and preferences. Critical scholars are willing to concede that changes in style *alone* do not prove anything. They become significant only when they appear in conjunction with other anomalies such as repetitions. But what if the repetitions themselves are a part of the author's style? What if the repetitions are simply another tool that an author uses to communicate his message to his readers? Is this possible? Can an author have legitimate reasons for repeating himself?

Indeed, he does.

### **The Reasons for Repetitions**

First, an author can have *literary* reasons for repeating himself, that is, he repeats himself to achieve certain literary goals. The author's first goal is to communicate his ideas to his readers. Sometimes his ideas may get lost in the unfolding plot of his story or in the plethora of evidence supporting his reasoning, so the author may use repetition to emphasize his main points, as Sandmel does in his book. During his explanation of the

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<sup>20</sup> Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, I. Abrahams, trans. (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2006), 18-49, especially 36-38.

Documentary Hypothesis, he brings up what he feels is an important point:

That which is notable and still broadly adhered to in the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis is the amazing correspondence between the sequence of the documents (with D associated with Josiah, and P with the postexilic period) and the contents of the prophetic literature.

Then, after presenting his evidence to support this statement, he states it again: "To repeat, the pre-exilic prophets are in agreement with Graf-Wellhausen."<sup>21</sup>

The thesis is a wonderfully efficient way for an author to communicate a particular point. The point he wishes to make (the thesis) is stated in the opening paragraph. The author then presents his reasoning and evidence in the body of the thesis. His main point is then repeated (usually with some variation in wording) in the conclusion. The repetition helps the reader to remember the author's main point. In a long work covering a large amount of material, the author may organize the work as if it were a series of related theses, each one designed to present one important point. Wright, for example, introduced his discussion of Deut. 31 by stating his main point ("The order of material in this chapter seems rather badly mixed."), then concluded his discussion by repeating that point ("...[I]t is something of a mystery why the heterogeneous contents of this chapter are so badly disarranged.") but with some variation because authors know that strict repetition

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<sup>21</sup> Sandmel, 332, 333.

will often bore their readers.<sup>22</sup> And an author cannot communicate his ideas to readers who have lost any interest in what he has to say.

When this device of introducing and concluding a section of a large work with the same idea or statement appears in biblical passages, it is called an *inclusio* because everything between the two statements is included within the same section. The device sets the passage apart from those before and after it and is intended by the author to communicate an important idea.

Gen. 36 provides us with two examples of this device. The chapter contains two genealogies of Esau, both of which begin with Genesis' usual introduction to genealogies: "These are the generations of Esau." The first genealogy, which emphasizes his role as the begetter of children, then begins and ends with "He is Edom." The second genealogy, which emphasizes his role as the founder of a nation, begins by tacking the phrase "the father of Edom" (meaning that he was the father of the Edomites) to the end of Genesis' usual introduction. It then concludes the genealogy by saying, "He is Esau, the father of Edom." Friedman assigns the first half of the second genealogy to P and the remainder to J, thus splitting a passage that the author had obviously intended to be read as a single passage.

Besides trying to keep his readers' interest in such a long work as the Pentateuch, Moses had an additional hurdle to overcome in order to communicate his ideas to his readers. The majority of the people of his day simply could not afford to obtain a copy of the Five Books for themselves. Books back then had to be writ-

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<sup>22</sup> Wright, 513, 516.

ten by hand on long strips of parchment, a rather expensive process. Realizing this, Moses designed the Pentateuch not so much to be *read* as to be *heard*. In Deuteronomy, Moses says to the priests and elders, “At the end of seven years...you shall read this instruction in front of all Israel in their ears” (Deut. 31:10-11, FV). The problem with having something read to you is that you might not catch everything the first time through—and you do not have the advantage the reader has of being able to flip back a few pages to catch what you may have missed. This is one reason why the Pentateuch has so many repetitions. As Robert Alter has observed,

If you were a Judean herdsman standing in the outer circle of listeners while the story of the Ten Plagues was being read, you might miss a few phrases when God instructs Moses about turning the Nile into blood (Exodus. 7:17-18), but you could easily pick up what you had lost when the instructions were almost immediately repeated verbatim as narrated action (Exod. 7:20-21). If you were close enough to the reader to catch every word, you could still enjoy the satisfaction of hearing each individual term of God’s grim prediction, first stated in the prophetic future, then repeated as accomplished fact, with an occasional elegant variation of the verbatim repetition through the substitution of a synonym....<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1981), 90-91.

Thus, Moses repeated himself for the simple literary reason that the repetitions helped him to achieve his goal of communicating his ideas to his listeners.

Second, an author can have *pedagogical* reasons for repeating himself, that is, he repeats himself because he is trying to teach his readers. Moses also designed the Pentateuch not so much to *entertain* as to *educate*: he expected his hearers to learn from the Pentateuch. Thus, he goes on to say that the priests must read the law to the people “so they will learn and will fear YHWH, your God, and they will be watchful to do all the words of this instruction” (Deut. 31:12, FV). The problem is that the majority of students do not automatically retain everything they have heard the first time they hear it. But the more often they hear it, the more likely they are to retain it.

Referring specifically to the laws of Deuteronomy, Calum Carmichael, Professor of Comparative Literature and Adjunct Professor of Law at Cornell University, has noted that

...the frequent repetition of rules for sacrifice and worship does not suggest a heterogeneous code of rules, composed at different times and places, but rather reflects a setting of instruction. Matters are repeated, especially in this opening part of instruction, in order to fix the teaching in the mind of the hearer.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Calum Carmichael, *The Laws of Deuteronomy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 69.

Teachers and writers who wish to teach their readers know the value of repetition. Repetition is particularly useful when memorizing a large amount of data or when the information is new to the student. This is why teachers repeat the multiplication facts until everyone is sick of them—and knows them. This is also why the documentarians sometimes repeat themselves. Professor Sandmel, in a book which “assumes little or no previous knowledge on the part of the reader,” concludes his explanation of the Documentary Hypothesis by saying,

...since the contents of this chapter may be a burden for the student to retain, I shall deliberately repeat relevant portions of it, especially those dealing with the work of the P author or authors, in the ensuing discussion of the individual books of the Pentateuch.

And repeat himself he does. In the previous paragraph he says,

After P had completed this work, he revised it by inserting such material as J, E, RJE, or H. Like RJE, he was not disturbed by the presence of contradictory elements. Therefore, he can allow the proximity of two conflicting genealogies of the generations from Adam to Noah; he can allow two divergent stories of creation to appear side by side. Possibly, especially in view of the elasticity of the religious mind, he regarded divergencies as identities. Or perhaps he was not sufficiently concerned, not reckoning that subsequent generations, especially modern scholars, would examine his work minutely.

Then, only ten pages later, in the next chapter, he returns to this subject:

Since P was dealing with man, not with the Hebrews, he was constrained to set forth universal aspects of man. The old legends he quoted were not inconsistent to his mind as they are to ours. He first told us (1:26-8) of the creation of man and woman. What looks to us like a repetition (2:4ff.) was to him only a filling in of details. And while in this repetition we moderns can see a view of God discordant with P's first presentation, no such discordancy troubled the author.<sup>25</sup>

Notice that the two creation stories are "divergent" in the first passage but "discordant" in the second. Apparently, this discordant divergency did not trouble Professor Sandmel.

Rote memorization is the simplest form of educational repetition. More sophisticated teaching methods also employ repetition. Educational psychologists tell us that our minds do not simply store information: they organize information into some sort of structure. New information is assimilated into the structure by relating it to something we already know. Unfortunately, the structure is not always sensible. A young child who has been bitten by a dog tends to stay away from *all* four-legged animals. His mind's structure lumps all animals into one category. When the child learns to differentiate between dogs and cats, the structure will expand to include the new category. Good teaching methods do

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<sup>25</sup> Sandmel, vii, 339, 349.

not leave the structure to chance: they provide both the facts and the structure.

In one such method, the teacher will provide a small amount of information concerning a new subject. Then, days or weeks later, when the teacher is ready to present more information on the same subject, he or she will help the students to correctly relate the new information to the older information by first reminding them of the older information. Friedman employed this method in his discussion of Julius Wellhausen. In the Introduction to *Wrote*, he gives us some basic information about Wellhausen. He tells us that Wellhausen was a “powerful figure” in the history of biblical scholarship because he brought the ideas of his predecessors as well as his own ideas “into a clear, organized synthesis.” Nine chapters later, Friedman wishes to present more information on Wellhausen. Specifically, he wants to critique Wellhausen’s theory. But before he does so, he first repeats some of the information given in the Introduction (thereby creating a doublet). This helps us to recall who Wellhausen was and to connect the new information to the previous information. Notice, too, that I have just used the same method in this very discussion.

In another method, the teacher will present an overview or summary of the subject. This becomes the structure for the subject. The teacher will then go through the overview again, filling in the details as he or she goes along. For example, a teacher may spend a day or two summarizing the Age of Discovery, briefly mentioning the names of several discoverers. During the following days, the teacher will repeat this information but give details concerning Columbus, Magellan,

De Soto, and others. Or, after giving the overview, the teacher may emphasize only one part of the subject. For example, the teacher might give information on Columbus alone. The overview helps the students to view the part from the perspective of the whole.

Friedman employed this method also. In the Introduction, he presents a brief history of the development of the Documentary Hypothesis. There he mentions H.B. Witter, Jean Astruc, and J.G. Eichhorn only in passing. In Chapter two, he returns to only one part of that history and gives us much more information concerning these three men. The following outlines will help us to see what he has done:

*Introduction*

*Chapter 2*

I. Early Questions

II. The First Stage

A. Isaac Ibn Yashush

B. Abraham Ibn Ezra

C. Bonfils

D. Tostatus and

Carlstadt

III. The Second Stage:

Andreas Van Maes

IV. The Third Stage

A. Thomas Hobbes

B. Isaac de la Peyrere

C. Spinoza

D. Simon and

Hampden

V. Doublets and the  
Names of God

VI. The Next Stage:  
Two Sources (H.B.  
Witter, Jean Astruc,  
J.G. Eichhorn)

VII. Two More Sources  
Discovered

VIII. The Hypothesis  
A. Karl Heinrich Graf  
and Wilhelm Vatke  
B. Julius Wellhausen

IX. The Present State

I. Doublets and the  
Names of God

II. Two Sources  
A. Henning Bernard  
Witter  
B. Jean Astruc  
C. Johann Gottfried  
Eichhorn

III. Two More Sources  
Discovered

Moses also employed this method when he wrote  
what appears to be two creation stories:

*Genesis 1*

Introduction

I. The First Day: Light

II. The Second Day:  
Atmosphere

III. The Third Day:

A. Dry Land

B. Plants

*Genesis 2*

IV. The Fourth Day:

Sun, Moon, and Stars

V. The Fifth Day: Fish

and Birds

VI. The Sixth Day

A. Animals

B. Man and Woman

The Sixth Day

A. Man

B. Woman

VII. The Seventh Day: Rest

Gen. 1 is an overview of the entire creation process from beginning to end. It is simple, concise and cyclic. The events in each of the first six days follow a set pattern: God speaks, something is created, God sees that it is good, and then the day ends. The overview gives us the structure to which we can relate new information about the creation. But it provides us with very few details.

So in Gen. 2 Moses returns to the one part of the process which interests him and his readers the most: the sixth day, when the man and woman were created. This retelling of the sixth day's events is much less rigid than Gen. 1 but is definitely more detailed. The flowing narrative presents the information which the strict structure of Gen. 1 could not. The two chapters are complementary, not contradictory.

Third, an author can have *historical* reasons for repeating himself, that is, he repeats himself because the events he is recording actually repeated themselves in history. For many of us, events repeat themselves because we are creatures of habit: we always go to the

same place for vacation, we always visit the relatives at Christmas, we always eat at the same restaurant every Friday night. Those of us who have a regularly scheduled job get up at the same time every work day, go to work at the same time every day, perform the same set of tasks every day, and go home at the same time every day. Occasionally, however, other factors can change the routine. An accident may force us to take a different route, or friends invite us for a drink after work. So a set of events may repeat themselves over and over again, but sometimes with some variation. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find Abraham lying twice, but with some variation in the events the second time around.

Of course, it is easy for events to repeat themselves when one *plans* on making them happen again. In his defense before Abimelech, Abraham says, "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, 'He is my brother'''" (Gen. 20:13). Thus, Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah had *planned* on instigating this subterfuge whenever they came to a new place. They instigated it when they entered Egypt and they instigated it again when they came to Gerar. They may have instigated it *more* than these two times, but these are the only two instances that have been recorded.

Habit and routine and even planning cannot account for all repetitious events. On May 9, 1961, James Gentile stepped up to the plate and hit a grand slam. A person, even a professional player, does not often get the privilege of doing this, but the next time Gentile

stepped up to the plate in the same game, he hit another one. Habit and routine certainly did not load the bases for him or give him the perfect pitch each time. And yet, Gentile's achievement is not unique. James Northrup also hit back-to-back grand slams on June 24, 1968, and so did Frank Robinson on June 26, 1970, which proves that a series of events can occur to more than one person.

In fact, the same series of events can occur to a man and his son—or even to his grandson. From the records of ancient Egypt, we learn that some events which occurred during the reign of Tuthmosis I occurred again during the reign of his grandson, Tuthmosis III. Both men conducted similar military campaigns along the Euphrates River, both erected stelae there, and both then hunted elephants at Niy.<sup>26</sup> From the records of sports statisticians we learn that Tom Morris, Sr., won the British Open four times, winning his last one in 1867 with a score of 170. His son, Tom Morris, Jr., won the Open the following year, also with a score of 170. He also went on to win a total of four British Opens.<sup>27</sup>

John W. Haley recalls the remarkable stories of

the two Presidents Edwards, father and son. Both were named Jonathan Edwards, and were the grandsons of clergymen. "Both were pious in their youth, were distinguished scholars, and were tutors for equal periods in the colleges where they were respectively educated. Both were settled in the min-

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<sup>26</sup> *AOOT*, 121, n. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Frank G. Menke, *The Encyclopedia of Sports*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1977), 507, 522.

istry as successors to their maternal grandfathers, were dismissed on account of their religious opinions, and were again settled in retired country towns, over congregations singularly attached to them, where they had leisure to pursue their favorite studies, and to prepare and publish their valuable works. Both were removed from these stations to become presidents of colleges, and both died shortly after their respective inaugurations; the one in the fifty-sixth, and the other in the fifty-seventh year of his age; each having preached, on the first Sabbath of the year of his death, on the text: "This year thou shalt die."<sup>28</sup>

In our own time, we have witnessed a father and his son, one named George H. Bush and the other George W. Bush, become President of our country and then lead us into a war against Iraq. The two stories are similar, but they also vary from each other. The two wars were started for different reasons, the first to free Kuwait from Iraq's incursion, the second to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The two wars also produced different results. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, was not deposed at the end of the first war, but was deposed during the second.

The similarities of these numerous events (down to the similarity of the names) seem uncanny because the sons or grandson could not possibly have deliberately imitated his father's or grandfather's life at every point, and one is tempted to think that in each case we have here two versions of the same story. Yet the historical

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<sup>28</sup> Haley, 26-27.

records prove that the events which actually occurred in the life of the father or grandfather actually repeated themselves in the life of the son or grandson. Thus, the author who records the lives of both the man and his son or grandson will seem to be creating a doublet when all he is doing is faithfully recording actual history, as Moses did when he recorded the stories in which Abraham and his son Isaac lied about their wives.

Fourth, an author can have *cultural* reasons for repeating himself, that is, he repeats himself because his culture expects him to do so. One of the great principles of the ancient Israelite law was that a person could not be executed for a crime unless two or three witnesses confirmed his guilt. That same law hinted that this principle could be applied to other situations as well: "By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established" (Deut. 19:15). Jesus referred to this principle when offering proof to the Israelites that the amazing things he was saying about himself were in fact true: "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me" (John 8:17-18). Joseph referred to this principle when he said to Pharaoh, "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Gen. 41:32). Joseph's future was established by the two dreams he had and his ability to interpret dreams was established by his successful interpretation of not just one, but two dreams, those of the cupbearer and the baker.

Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in Genesis, but its length is achieved in part by telling the complete story

twice. Abraham sends his chief servant back to the town where his relatives live to find a wife for his son, Isaac. Upon his arrival, the servant prays to Yahweh that the woman intended to be Isaac's wife would come to the well by which he is standing and water his camels. Rebekah comes to the well before he finishes his prayer and offers to water his camels. The miraculous element in this story was so extraordinary that Moses confirmed the truth of the matter by having the servant tell the whole story again to Rebekah's relatives. He could have summarized the servant's telling of the story in only one or two verses as he does at the end of the story when the servant tells the story once again, this time to Isaac. But by having the servant tell the whole story to Rebekah's relatives, Moses makes himself, the narrator, the first witness and the servant the second witness, who confirms the truth of the story.

There is another cultural reason why Moses repeated himself, a far more prominent reason. It involves the use of a literary device common to the cultures of the ancient Near East. It is the device that will explain to us why Moses included doublets within the Pentateuch. It is, in fact, the device that will help us to see what the documentarians have been wanting to see all along: the overall plan of the Pentateuch. This device is known as *parallelism*.



## CHAPTER 6

# The Plan of the Pentateuch

Back in the middle of the eighteenth century, back before the Documentary Hypothesis became popular, two men were puzzled by the repetitions in the Old Testament. Both men solved the puzzle as best as they could and both men published their solutions in 1753. But their solutions were as different as night and day.

The first man was Jean Astruc, the court physician for Louis XV in Paris. He was interested in the repetitions he had found in Genesis. Like all good doctors, he was a keen observer and had a scientific mind, but he had one failing: he simply could not diagnose why a single author would want to use repetitions. He theorized that Moses must have come across two complete memoirs, or documents, and ten fragmentary memoirs which he then placed in four columns so that they could be compared; later copyists mistakenly merged the four columns into one.<sup>1</sup> The documentarians never did adopt his theory in all its details, but they did

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les memoires originaux dont il parait que Moysse s'est servi, pour composer le livre de la Geneses* (Conjectures on the Original Memoirs which Moses Seems to Have Used in Composing the Book of Genesis), 1753.

accept his observations and his idea that the repetitions resulted from a collation of documents. For this reason, some scholars call him the father of the Documentary Hypothesis.

The second man was Robert Lowth, who at the time was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He naturally was interested in the repetitions he had found in Biblical poetry. Because he specialized in literary studies, he had a better feel for what an author would do than did Astruc. He did not see the poetic repetitions as evidence of multiple authors; instead, he saw them as evidence that the Hebrew poets often employed a literary device which he called *parallelism*.<sup>2</sup> His views *were* adopted by many scholars, including the documentarians. But that is because the documentarians have not fully comprehended the implications Lowth's theory has for the study of the Pentateuch.

### Poetic Parallelism

The most common building block of Hebrew poetry is the bicolon, which is simply two lines of verse. Lowth's observation was that the units of the two lines often parallel each other in some way. He was not the first to observe this, even as Astruc was not the first to see the repetitions in Genesis, but he was the first to systematize his observations. He grouped his examples of this parallelism into three major categories, the first two of which will be discussed here. Scholars since Lowth's

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, reprint edition (Georg Olms Verlag, 1969).

time have divided these categories into several subcategories.

The first category is *Synonymous Parallelism*. In this category, the units of the second line are synonymous to the units of the first line. There are three subcategories to this type of parallelism.

The first is *Complete Synonymous Parallelism*: every unit in the first line has a corresponding unit in the second line.

A	B	C
I will praise	/Yahweh	/while I live;
I will sing	/to my Elohim	/while I have my
praises		being. <sup>3</sup>
A'	B'	C'

In this example, and in succeeding examples, the units have been separated by a virgule (/). Each unit in the first line has been designated with a letter. The first unit in the second line has been designated A' (read "A prime"): the "A" shows that it corresponds to unit A in the first line and the prime mark shows that it belongs to the second line of the parallelism.

Notice that the second line repeats the basic idea of the first line by using synonymous or otherwise related terms. This allows the author to repeat his ideas but with variation. More often, however, because synonyms rarely share exactly the same sphere of meaning, the use of synonyms or otherwise related terms allows the author to expand, focus, exemplify, or fill out his ideas, thereby expressing his meaning more clearly and

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<sup>3</sup> Ps. 146:2 (AT)

dramatically than if he had left the first line alone. That is the beauty of synonymous parallelism.

You may have noticed that the author has *Yahweh* in the first line and *Elohim* in the second. Parallelism does not require the author to use synonymous names; later, we shall come across an example of parallelism in which *Yahweh* appears in both lines. Even so, the biblical authors sometimes alternated between the two divine names just for the sake of the parallelism.

The second subcategory is *Incomplete Synonymous Parallelism*: one or more of the corresponding units in the second line is missing.

A	B	C
Receive	/my instruction,	/and not silver,
	/And knowledge	/rather than choice gold. <sup>4</sup>
	B'	C'

Usually it is the verb that is missing. The author expects the reader to carry the missing unit down from the first line into the second.

The third subcategory is *Chiastic* (key-as'-tic) *Synonymous Parallelism*. In the above two types, the units of the second line follow the order of the units of the first line. In chiastic parallelism, the units of the second line reverse the order.

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<sup>4</sup> Prov. 8:10

A	B
Upon the lion and the cobra You will trample down	/you will tread, /the young lion and the serpent. <sup>5</sup>
B'	A'

If you were to draw lines to connect the corresponding units, you would get an X:

A	B
\	/
X	X
/	\
B'	A'

The letter X in Greek is called *chi* (pronounced “key”), which is why this structure is called a chiasm or chias-tic parallelism.

Here is another example:

A	B
Because he has set his love upon Me, I will set him on high,	/therefore I will deliver him; /because he has known My name. <sup>6</sup>
B'	A'

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<sup>5</sup> Ps. 91:13 (AT)

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 91:14

It is perhaps obvious why B and B' go together, but not so obvious why A and A' go together. How could merely knowing God's name be the same as loving him?

As we saw earlier, in the Hebrew language, a person's name *is* the person himself. To know God's name, therefore, means to know God himself. To know God, however, is not merely to have all the facts about him stored up in your head. In Hebrew thinking, to know someone often means to know him or her so well and so intimately that you become one with that person, spiritually and/or physically. (That is why the Hebrews use the word *know* as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.) To know God is to know what is in his heart, to know what he would and would not do. To know God is to grieve when he grieves and to rejoice when he rejoices. To know God is to know him so intimately that your character becomes one with his. Of course, such intimacy can only be gained and maintained through love. Therefore, to know him is to love him. And that, in expanded form, is what the poet had said in his simple chiasm.

The second category is *Antithetical Parallelism*, which is seen most frequently in Proverbs. This category accomplishes the same goals as synonymous parallelism, but it does so by contrasting opposing objects, actions or ideas. Thus, one or more units in the second line will be the antithesis of its corresponding unit (the thesis) in the first line. The antithetical units will be designated with a negative sign, for example, -A'. Since the three subcategories of this type are the same three as in synonymous parallelism, I will merely list them and give an example for each.

*Complete Antithetical Parallelism:*

A	B	C
The memory	/of the righteous	/is blessed,
But the name	/of the wicked	/will rot. <sup>7</sup>
A'	-B'	-C'

*Incomplete Antithetical Parallelism:*

A	B	C
The lips of the righteous	/know	/what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked	/	/what is perverse. <sup>8</sup>
-A'		-C'

*Chiastic Antithetical Parallelism:*

A	B
For Yahweh knows	the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly	shall perish. <sup>9</sup>
-B'	-A'

This time we see *knows* as the opposite of *perish*. *Way*, in this verse, does not simply mean the path or the direction in which one is traveling. It means one's whole lifestyle and, therefore, one's whole life. If Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, then his immortal

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<sup>7</sup> Prov. 10:7

<sup>8</sup> Prov. 10:32

<sup>9</sup> Ps. 1:6.

life becomes one with the mortal life of the righteous one. By this means, the righteous one is kept alive. The ungodly one, however, has no such intimacy with God and will therefore perish one day.

Scholars since Lowth's time have defined an additional major category called *Climactic Parallelism*. In this parallelism, which requires at least three lines to achieve its effect, the author will repeat a statement again and again but each time will add something new until a climax is reached.

Give unto Yahweh, O you mighty ones,  
Give unto Yahweh glory and strength.  
Give unto Yahweh the glory due to his name;  
Worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness.<sup>10</sup>

There is always a progression in the ideas, emotions or actions involved. This allows the author to emphasize and build upon his ideas and images until he is ready to spring the point he wishes to make.

Sometimes the poet will achieve the same effect with other forms of parallelism. In this example from the book of Isaiah, the parts of the body are chiasmically arranged in a pattern that culminates in a climactic thought:

Make the *heart* of this people dull,  
And their *ears* heavy,  
And shut their *eyes*;  
Lest they see with their *eyes*,  
And hear with their *ears*,

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<sup>10</sup> Ps. 29:1-2.

And understand with their *heart*,

And return and be healed.<sup>11</sup>

### Prosaic Parallelism

Not all Hebrew poetry uses parallelism, so it would be a mistake to find it in every verse. However, it is employed quite often, making it one of the more important characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

The genius of parallelism, I believe, is that it parallels not so much words and clauses as ideas or units of thought. A word conveys a unit of thought. So does a clause, a sentence, even a paragraph. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars have discovered that units of thought larger than the poetic line can also parallel one another.

Elmer B. Smick, Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has discovered a pattern of parallelisms in Job 29. Some critical scholars believe verses 21-25 should follow verses 7-10 because the subjects of both passages are the same. However, moving those verses would upset the chapter's symmetrical pattern:

- A Blessing, vv. 2-6
- B Honor, vv. 7-11
- C Job's Benevolence, vv. 12-17
- A' Blessing, vv. 18-20
- B' Honor, vv. 21-25.

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<sup>11</sup> Is. 6:10.

This is not an example of incomplete synonymous parallelism; rather, unit C should be seen as the thought which holds the rest of the chapter together. This is how Smick interprets this structure:

The chapter deals with both active and passive aspects of Job's former life. He was blessed by God and honored by men. But he was also socially active, a benefactor and leader. His benevolence was an important part of the high position he held in his society, where social righteousness was expected of every ruling elder. The Ugaritic literature and Hammurapi's lawcode both stress the responsibility of rulers to protect the poor and champion the cause of widows and orphans. Job in asserting his benevolence places a description of it in the climactic position in this oration, with the key line (v. 14) in the exact middle of the poem. This verse sums up his benevolence in a striking metaphor about his being clothed with righteousness. Such benevolence established his right to the honor and blessing the surrounding verses describe.<sup>12</sup>

Just as Job's benevolence was central to his life and brought to him blessings and honor, so too the description of Job's benevolence is central to the chapter and brings together the descriptions of Job's blessings and honor. Thus, the chapter's structure is an accurate reflection of Job's life.

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<sup>12</sup> Elmer B. Smick, "Architectonics, Structured Poems, and Rhetorical Devices in the Book of Job," in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Ronald F. Youngblood, eds., *A Tribute to Gleason Archer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 92-93.

Of course, poetry is not the only medium through which units of thought are expressed. Prose is one as well. However,

a particularly vexing problem for scholars has been that of distinguishing biblical “poetry” from “prose.” ...[T]here is an increasing awareness that in biblical Hebrew even more than in other languages, the precise distinction between poetry and prose is difficult to draw.

The distinction was blurred by Lowth himself when, in that same book, he demonstrated that the supposedly prosaic prophetic books often employ the same parallelisms found in biblical poetry. Since then, scholars have come to learn that such parallelisms “can frequently be found here and there in ordinary narratives, particularly in dialogue, as well as in legal material, blessings and curses, oracles and prayers.”<sup>13</sup>

This passage from the Flood Story in which the animals enter the ark provides an excellent example of climactic parallelism being used in an ordinary narrative:

They and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort,

And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life.

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<sup>13</sup> James L. Kugel, “Poetry,” in Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 804.

So those that entered, male and female of all flesh,  
went in as Elohim had commanded him;

And Yahweh shut him in.<sup>14</sup>

The documentarians give the last line to J (because it uses “Yahweh”) and the rest of the verses to P (because they use “Elohim”). But dividing these verses ruins the climactic effect. The animals’ entrance into the ark is described not once but three times (each time telling us something new about the animals) followed by the climactic closing of the door. The first description tells us what kind of animals entered the ark. The second description tells us that they went in two by two. The third description tells us that they entered as male and female and went in by God’s command. It is as if Moses is confirming the truth of the matter by saying, “The animals entered the ark, yes they did, they really did.”

Not all repetitious passages within the Pentateuch are employing parallelism, so it would be a mistake to find it in every passage. However, discovering parallels in the otherwise prosaic passages that do employ it can help us discern the author’s message and sometimes lead us to profound theological insights. Leviticus 24 relates the story of an Israelite who “blasphemed the Name and cursed.” This is a euphemistic way of saying that the man had blasphemed Yahweh himself. The man was placed in custody and then Yahweh was consulted about what should be done to him. Yahweh declared that he should be taken outside the camp and stoned to death.

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<sup>14</sup> Gen. 7:14-16.

What is intriguing is Yahweh's reason for stoning him:

- A "Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death (v. 17).
- B Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal (v. 18).
- C If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so it shall be done to him— (v. 19)
- D fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; (v. 20a)
- C' as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him (v. 20b).
- B' And whoever kills an animal shall restore it (v. 21a);
- A' but whoever kills a man shall be put to death" (v. 21b).

This is how a chiasm is diagrammed when it involves large units or a large number of units. The central unit of this kind of chiasm is the turning point or the climax of a story or is the principle which holds the rest of the units together or is in some other manner the most important unit of the structure. The principle which holds these units together is the famous *lex talionis*: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Yahweh's point is that the criminal should compensate for his crime accordingly; this is why the man should be stoned. But wait a minute! The man's crime was blasphemy, not murder. Surely blasphemy is not the same as murder? To Yahweh, it is.

The Hebrew word for “blaspheme” means “to pierce” and “to hollow out.” To blaspheme Yahweh is to pierce him, to hollow him out, to reduce him to an empty shell. That is the same thing as murdering him. Obviously, it is a futile act since Yahweh is immortal, but it is still an act of violence against Yahweh’s person. It is an act which cannot be tolerated. The person who attempts to reduce Yahweh must himself be reduced until there is nothing left but an empty corpse.

### **Popular Parallelism**

The Hebrews were not the only ones to use parallelism in their literature. It can also be found in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian, and Arabic texts. You can see examples of parallelism in the Ugaritic poem at the beginning of Chapter Four.

Parallelism can also be found in Egyptian literature. The Poem, for example, is a large chiasm:

Introduction: Pharaoh’s Attributes (1-24)

A The march to Kadesh (25-40)

B The Hittite King gathers his troops, initiates attack (41-91)

C Pharaoh petitions Amun (92-127)

D Ramesses’ first attack (128-165)

E Ramesses rebukes his troops (166-204)

F The dismay of his shield-bearer (205-219)

G Ramesses' second attack (220-223)

F' Troops praise Ramesses (224-250)

E' Ramesses rebukes his troops (251-276)

D' Ramesses' third attack (277-294)

C' The Hittite King petitions Pharaoh (295-322)

B' Pharaoh gathers his troops, declaration of peace (323-330)

A' The march home (331-343)

It could be argued that this chiastic structure merely reflects the natural order of events from the march to Kadesh to the battle to the march home. Three factors, however, tell us that this structure was artificially created. First, the story of the battle is told again in another inscription, known to scholars as the Bulletin. This inscription has been found in seven locations and in three of these it sits side-by-side with the Poem.<sup>15</sup> Yet the Bulletin does not tell of the march to Kadesh or of the march home, it does not tell of Pharaoh rebuking his troops, it does not tell of Pharaoh petitioning Amun or of the Hittite King petitioning the Pharaoh, and it

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<sup>15</sup> *Inconsistency*, 20.

records only one attack, not three as in the Poem.<sup>16</sup> Second, the first and third attacks are told in some detail, but the description of the second attack, in the center of the chiasm, is a summary statement, as if it were stating the theme of the Poem:

His majesty then rushed forward,  
At a gallop he charged the midst of the foe,  
For the sixth time he charged them.  
I was after them like Baal in his moment of power,  
I slew them without pause (lines 220-223).<sup>17</sup>

Third, Pharaoh rebukes his troops in E, which means that his troops have returned to him, but in F the shield-bearer and Pharaoh are alone, with the troops nowhere near them. The first rebuke is placed here, despite creating this anomaly, because it corresponds to the rebuke in E', which follows the reappearance of the troops in F'. The chiastic structure of the Poem, therefore, has been deliberately constructed, with the center stating the theme of the Poem: Pharaoh was so fearless and so mighty that he defeated Egypt's enemies all by himself.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Lichtheim, 60-62.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the correspondence between F and F' is not obvious. In F, the shield-bearer asks Pharaoh why he bothers to save his troops (line 212) and in F', the troops praise Pharaoh for doing exactly that (line 240). The shield-bearer's dismay in F assumes that Ramesses is incapable of defeating the enemy alone. The Pharaoh's answer assures the shield-bearer that he is, in fact, capable of defeating the enemy alone and again in F', the troops praise him for doing exactly that.

This structure explains why we find seemingly contradictory doublets—the two rebukes by Pharaoh and the two cries by the Hittites, which compare Ramesses to a god or gods and warn the other warriors not to approach the Pharaoh, lest they die—in the Poem. In each doublet, the two passages appear opposite of each other in the structure, thus helping to emphasize the central point. The doublets are not anomalies. They are not mistakes. They were deliberately created by the author to help him convey his message.

### Planned Parallelism

The beauty of understanding parallelism is that it helps us to understand why Moses did what he did in the Pentateuch. Discovering parallelisms within the text not only helps us to understand Moses' message but also helps us to understand the plan by which he conveyed that message.

For example, the thirty-first chapter of Deuteronomy greatly bewildered the late Dr. G. Ernest Wright: "The order of material in this chapter seems rather badly mixed.... [I]t is something of a mystery why the heterogeneous contents of this chapter are so badly disarranged." In that chapter, Moses tells Israel to be strong and of good courage because Yahweh will never leave them or forsake them. He then tells Joshua the same thing. He finishes writing the Book of the *Torah* and gives it to the priests with the command that they gather all Israel together every seven years and read the Book to them. Yahweh tells Moses to bring Joshua to the Tent of Meeting so that Yahweh can commission him as the new leader once Moses dies. Moses brings

him to the Tent. Yahweh then tells Moses to write down a Song that he says will be a witness against Israel for their unfaithfulness to him. Moses writes down the Song. Only then does Yahweh commission Joshua. Moses again finishes writing the Book of the *Torah* (presumably adding the record of what has just happened) and commands the Levites to place the Book beside the ark of the covenant and gather the elders so that he can recite the Song to them. Moses and Joshua then recite the Song to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 32. Wright did not understand why Joshua was not immediately commissioned upon his appearance at the Tent of Meeting, nor did he understand why the recitation of the Song did not immediately follow its writing. In other words, he thought that verses 16-22, in which Moses writes down the Song, were in the wrong place. Being a documentarian, he came up with a typically documentarian answer for this problem: "The evidence suggests the attempt by an editor to copy a series of MS [manuscript] fragments without editing or relating them."<sup>19</sup> Wright came up with this solution because he could not see how the parts of this chapter related to each other. And so, he saw no unity, no plan. All he saw was chaos.

But the order of events itself suggests that something deliberate is going on here. At the beginning of chapter 31, Moses addresses all of Israel. The chapter then shifts first to Joshua, who is told by Moses to be strong and of good courage, then to Moses, who writes the Book of the *Torah* and commands the Levites to read the Book to the people every seven years so they

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<sup>19</sup> Wright, 513, 516.

will learn to be faithful to Yahweh. The chapter then shifts back to Joshua, who is summoned to the Tent of Meeting because he will replace Moses after Moses dies and then back to Moses, who is told by Yahweh to write a Song because Israel will prove to be unfaithful after Moses dies. The chapter once again shifts to Joshua, who is now told by Yahweh as he commissions him to be strong and of good courage, then back again to Moses who finishes writing the Book and commands the Levites to gather the elders and officers now so that he can recite the Song to them. Then, at the beginning of chapter 32, the shifting stops as Moses and Joshua together address all of Israel, this time reciting the Song. This shifting back and forth between Joshua and Moses is deliberately consistent and can be outlined according to this pattern:

Introduction:

Moses to all Israel:

Be strong and of good courage;

Yahweh will not leave you (31:1-6)

*Joshua*

J1 Moses to Joshua:

Be strong and of good  
courage (31:7-8)

*Moses*

M1 Moses writes the

Book of the *Torah*,  
commands the Levites  
to gather the people  
every seven years and  
read it so they will  
learn to be faithful to

Yahweh (31:9-13)

J2 Yahweh tells Moses to bring Joshua to the Tent of Meeting so he can commission him as the new leader once Moses dies (31:14)

M2 Yahweh tells Moses that Israel will be unfaithful after Moses dies, commands him to write the Song (31:15-22)

J3 Yahweh to Joshua: Be strong and of good courage (31:23)

M3 Moses writes the Book of the *Torah*, commands the Levites to gather the elders and officers now so he can recite the Song to them (31:24-29)

Conclusion:

Moses and Joshua to all Israel (the Song):

Yahweh will leave you because of your unfaithfulness (32:1-44)

The third section concerning Joshua combines the other two: first, he is told by Moses to be strong and of good courage, then he is brought to the Tent of Meeting to be commissioned, then he is told again (this time by Yahweh when he is commissioned) to be strong and of good courage. So, too, the third section concerning

Moses combines the other two: first, Moses writes the Book of the *Torah* and commands the people to gather so that it can be read to them, then he is told by Yahweh to write the Song, then he finishes writing the Book of the *Torah* and commands the elders to gather so he can recite the Song to them. Notice also that the Introduction ties in with what immediately succeeds it (J1), for in both sections the people and Joshua are told to be strong and of good courage for Yahweh will be with them. So, too, the Conclusion ties in with what immediately precedes it (M3), for in M3 Moses commands the elders to gather so he can recite the Song and in the Conclusion he actually recites the Song.

In these chapters, Yahweh is making preparations for the future. Moses will die soon and Israel will need a new leader. So he commissions Joshua to take Moses' place. Yahweh also knows that Israel will prove to be unfaithful after Moses dies, so he has Moses write the Song as a witness against Israel for her future unfaithfulness. By seesawing back and forth between these two preparations, Moses is contrasting Yahweh's faithfulness to Joshua with Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh. Yahweh promises to abandon Israel (for a time) because of her unfaithfulness, but he promises Joshua that he will always be with him. The implication is that Joshua will prove faithful to Yahweh even after Moses dies, which makes Israel's unfaithfulness all the more reprehensible, for they could have chosen to remain faithful even as Joshua did.

And so, Deuteronomy 31 is not the chaos that Wright saw. It was created according to a definite plan so that it could convey a definite message. Of course, some may argue that Deuteronomy 31 follows a

pattern because Wright's editor simply arranged the fragments into this pattern before he copied them. The chapter still could have been written by several authors. There is no denying that this is a possibility. But those who would argue this way are missing the point. The only reason Wright gave for positing multiple authors and an editor in the first place was that the chapter did not seem to be following a plan. Now that we have shown that it *is* following a plan, there is no need to posit multiple authors and an editor at all. The same is true for the Pentateuch. The only reason the documentarians have given for dividing the Pentateuch into documents is that it does not seem to be following a plan. As we shall soon see, it *is* following a plan, so there is no longer a need to divide it up into documents. Those who wish to go on supporting the Documentary Hypothesis must find some other grounds for doing so.

### **Parallels within Parallels**

Ironically, at least one documentarian, Sean E. McEvenue, has also used this very reasoning to argue that a passage in Genesis was written by a single author. Even though the documentarians assign all of Gen. 17 to P, there are so many repetitions in it that some scholars have postulated up to five stages of development for this chapter alone. In other words, they believe that up to five authors, all of whom agreed with P and wrote in P's style, contributed to this chapter. But McEvenue argues that the repetitions are evidence that this passage was written by a single author who was employing

parallelism.<sup>20</sup> In that chapter, Yahweh appears to Abram and confirms his covenant with him. God then goes on to change Abram's name to Abraham, establishes circumcision as the sign of this covenant, changes Sarai's name to Sarah and announces that Isaac shall be born the following year. The chapter ends with Abraham circumcising every male in his house.

I have divided this chapter into several parallel structures that are based partially on McEvenue's observations and partially on my own observations. The chapter as a whole can be divided into four large units that are synonymously parallel:

A Yahweh speaks about Abram: Confirmation of Covenant and Change of Name (vv. 1-8)	B Circumcision Commanded (vv. 9-14)
A' Elohim speaks about Sarai: Change of Name and Conception of Seed (vv. 15-22)	B' Circumcision Completed (vv. 23-27)

Each of these units can be broken down further. It turns out that A and A' are two halves of a chiasm:

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<sup>20</sup> Sean E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971), 145-177.

- A a Yahweh appears to Abram (v. 1a).  
b Yahweh speaks: "I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly" (vv. 1b-2).  
c Abram falls on his face (v. 3a).  
d Elohim speaks: "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham.... I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you" (vv. 3b-8).
- A' d' Elohim speaks: "You shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ...She shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her" (vv. 15-16).  
c' Abraham falls on his face (vv. 17-18).  
b' Elohim speaks: "I will establish My covenant with him [Isaac].... I...will multiply him [Ishmael] exceedingly" (vv. 19-21).  
a' Elohim goes up from Abraham (v. 22).

On the other hand, B and B' are complete chiasms in and of themselves:

- B a Elohim said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; (vv. 9-10)  
b and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you (v. 11).

- c He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant (v. 12).
  - c' He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, (v. 13a)
  - b' and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant (v. 13b).
  - a' And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant" (v. 14).
- B' a So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as Elohim had said to him (v. 23).
- b Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin (v. 24).
  - b' And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin (v. 25).
  - a' That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him (vv. 26-27).

Within A', the unit marked b' can be broken down even further:

- b' 1 Then Elohim said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; (v. 19a)
  - 2 I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him (v. 19b).
    - 3 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation (v. 20).
- 2' But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, (v. 21a)
  - 1' whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year" (v. 21b).

And so, there is a chiasm inside a chiasm which is a part of a series of chiasms within a synonymously parallel structure.

By placing Ishmael in the exact center of this last chiasm, Elohim assures Abraham that Ishmael is indeed important to him and that he will provide for him. However, twice Elohim tells Abraham that he will grant his covenant, not to Ishmael, but to Isaac, whose birth is also mentioned twice. By mentioning these facts twice, Elohim emphasizes the difference between Ishmael and Isaac, and also assures Abraham that both the birth and the granting of the covenant will certainly come to pass.

It is appropriate that the commandment on circumcision (unit B) should appear where it does, even though it breaks up the chiasm in A and A'. This commandment, after all, affects Abraham, not Sarah, and unit A is concerned with what God will do for Abraham, while A' begins with what God will do for Sarah. The fulfillment of this commandment had to be placed at the end of the chapter because the terms of the covenant had to be completely spelled out before Abraham could begin participating in it. The structure of this chapter, therefore, has some logic to it, but it also demonstrates the virtuosity with which a Hebrew author could combine several types of parallelism to form one coherent passage.

McEvenue argues that this parallelism explains the repetitions within this chapter better than the documentarian explanation involving five different authors. Because he has discerned the plan within this chapter, he no longer sees a need to divide it up among multiple authors. Unfortunately, McEvenue has not gone on to find the parallelism that unites the entire Pentateuch. If he had, he would no longer be a documentarian.

### **The Plan of Abraham's Story**

McEvenue and I are not the only ones who have used parallelism to discern the plan of a passage and used that plan to argue for the existence of a single author. We have seen that there was a time when classical scholars did to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* what the documentarians have done to the Pentateuch. They argued that the numerous literary anomalies within those two epics proved that several authors (none of whom were

Homer) wrote various passages over several centuries which editors then combined to form the epics. Their theory came out about the same time that the Hypothesis did and was very popular for over a hundred years. Then the German scholar, Wolfgang Schadewaldt, proved that the *Iliad* had been written according to a plan. He argued that the themes of the first chapter mirrored the themes of the last chapter, that the themes of the second chapter mirrored the themes of the penultimate chapter, etc. He showed that the epic was so intricately structured that to remove any one piece would collapse the whole structure.<sup>21</sup> Following Schadewaldt's lead, Cedric H. Whitman, an Associate Professor at Harvard, demonstrated that the *Iliad*, like Gen. 17, uses parallelisms within parallelisms and has argued that the epic as a whole is one giant chiasm. Today, the classical scholars are virtually unanimous in their declaration that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are unified poems.

Other scholars have also found parallelisms in various passages of the Pentateuch and have argued for the single authorship of such passages. Friedman despises these efforts. "It is amazing that at this point," he writes, "when such a mass of evidence is available, some writers still discuss this at so low a level as...whether a beautiful literary structure (for example, a chiasm) is evidence for a single author."<sup>22</sup> He sees

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<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Iliasstudien* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1938). Unfortunately, I do not know of any English translations of this work. You can find a useful synopsis of Schadewaldt's arguments in Howard Clarke, *Homer's Readers* (Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1981), 282-283.

<sup>22</sup> *Sources*, 31.

such efforts as attempts to avoid the evidence in favor of the Hypothesis.

Actually, these efforts are attempts to help the documentarians see what is really there in the text. For example, Gen. 21:1 says,

And Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said  
And Yahweh did for Sarah as He had spoken.

Friedman sees this verse as containing a “rather clumsy repetition of the datum,”<sup>23</sup> so he and virtually all the other documentarians give the first line to J and the second to P (even though P is not supposed to have used *Yahweh* before Ex. 6:3). But everyone else can see that this is an example of complete synonymous parallelism used by the single author to emphasize Yahweh’s faithfulness to his promises. The “mass of evidence” which supposedly supports the Hypothesis exists only because the documentarians do not see what is really there. What the critical scholars see as proof that several authors contributed to the development of Gen. 17 is in fact proof that the only author has woven together different types of parallelism to form a coherent passage. What Wright sees as evidence that Deuteronomy 31 was not written according to a plan is in fact evidence pointing to that very plan. And what the documentarians see as literary anomalies created by the splicing together of several documents are in fact the literary clues left by the single author to lead us to his overall plan. Their invalid assumption that a single author cannot create literary anomalies has blinded

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<sup>23</sup> *Narrative*, 86.

them and kept them from finding the real answer to why the anomalies exist within the Pentateuch.

To understand what I mean, let us return to the two stories which brought the original version of this book to a dead halt. The stories in which Abram/Abraham lied about his wife are only two parts of the overall Story of Abraham, which happens to follow a chiastic pattern:

A Abram's Early Life (11:27-32)

B The Call of God (12:1-9)

C A Changed Man (12:10-21:34)

B' Confirmation of the Call (22:1-19)

A' Abraham's Later Life (22:20-25:11)

The units marked A and A' can be broken down further:

A a Birth: Abram, Nahor and Haran are born (11:27)

b Death: Haran dies (11:28)

c Marriage: Abram and Nahor marry (11:29)

a' Birth (lack of): Sarai has no children (11:30)

b' Death: Family moves to Haran; Terah dies (11:31-32)

A' a Birth: Nahor's children are born (22:20-24)

b Death: Sarah dies (23:1-20)

c Marriage: Isaac marries Rebekah (24:1-67)

a' Birth: Abraham's concubine gives birth (25:1-4)

b' Death: Abraham sends children away, he dies

(25:5-11)

This is the same abca'b' structure we saw in Job 29. It is as if Moses is saying that marriage is what keeps the cycle of birth and death going.

The two stories about Abram/Abraham's lie occur in unit C. The documentarians see the two stories as a doublet, but this is not the only so-called "doublet" within this unit. There are also two stories about his nephew Lot. In the first, Abram rescues Lot from captivity after Sodom and Gomorrah are conquered by four kings. In the second, Abraham prays for Lot's rescue when he learns that Yahweh is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. There are also two stories about a covenant being made with Abram/Abraham. In the first, God promises that Abram will have more descendants than there are stars in the sky. In the second, Abraham agrees not to harm the descendants of Abimelech. There are also two stories concerning Sarai's handmaiden, Hagar. In the first, Sarai gives Hagar to Abram so she can have children through her. Hagar gets pregnant, but then is treated so badly by Sarai that she runs away. An angel of Yahweh sends her back. In the second, Hagar's son mocks Sarah's son, so Sarah demands that Abraham send her away. Abraham does so after consulting with God.

What is interesting is that in each case the Israelites' ancestor is called Abram in the first story and Abraham in the second. And in each case, his wife is called Sarai in the first story and Sarah in the second. And in each case the first story comes before Gen. 17 and the second comes after Gen. 17, the very chapter in which both of them get their names changed. This would sug-

gest that Moses is using a parallelism which has Gen. 17 as its center, and so he is:

- a 1 Abram lies about Sarai to Pharaoh (12:10-20)  
2 Abram rescues Lot from the four kings (13:1-14:24)
  
- b 1 God makes a covenant with Abram (15:1-21)  
2 Hagar runs away from Sarai (16:1-16)
  
- c Abram's and Sarai's names are changed (17:1-27)
  
- a' 2' Abraham prays for Lot's rescue (18:1-19:38)  
1' Abraham lies about Sarah to Abimelech (20:1-18)
  
- b' 2' Sarah wants Hagar sent away (21:1-21)  
1' Abimelech makes a covenant with Abraham (21:22-34)

Unit C has the same abca'b' pattern that units A and A' do, with these exceptions: all the units except unit c are further broken down into two stories each and the themes of birth and death are reversed. Notice that the two stories in a are reversed in a', and the two stories in b are reversed in b'. Arranging the stories this way makes unit c the center of not just one but two chiasms, that formed by aca' and that formed by bcb'. Units a and a' convey the death theme. Pharaoh's household suffers from a plague and Sodom is conquered by an army. Later, Sodom and Gomorrah and their inhabitants are destroyed by God and Abimelech's women suffer from barrenness, which, to the ancient Near Eastern mind, meant that Abimelech's life would not

carry on in his descendants. Units b and b' convey the birth theme. Hagar gives birth to Ishmael at the end of b while Sarah gives birth to Isaac at the beginning of b'. The covenant God makes with Abram concerns Abram's descendants while the covenant Abimelech makes with Abraham concerns Abimelech's descendants.

That the themes found in A and A' are carried over to C suggests that unit c also conveys the theme of marriage, and indeed it does. It was the ancient Near Eastern custom for a person in authority, when he gained possession of another person, to change the name of that person, thereby signifying that that person now belonged to him. By changing Abram's name to Abraham, God was signifying that Abraham now belonged to God. But he also said that this possession worked both ways, for he said that he would be Abraham's God. He also said that this mutual possession would extend to Abraham's descendants: "I will be their God." This mutual possession is precisely the type of relationship we find in a marriage. Notice that this concept of an intimate relationship with a personal God is being expressed in a passage supposedly written by P, which supposedly emphasizes the remoteness of a cosmic God, access to whom can supposedly be obtained only through the priests.

In Exodus through Deuteronomy, we find God making another covenant with Abraham's descendants. In that covenant, he again makes it clear that he and the people would mutually possess each other: "I will be your God, and you shall be My people" (Lev. 26:12). Notice again that this concept is being expressed by another supposedly P passage. The prophet Hosea sees

this covenant as a marriage relationship, to which Abraham's descendants have proven unfaithful. This is why God says to Israel through the prophet: "You are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hos. 1:9). In fact, as far as God is concerned, the relationship has been completely severed: "She is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!" (Hos. 2:2). For this reason, "I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel" (Hos. 1:6). However, Hosea sees God as renewing and restoring this relationship with Israel:

"And it shall be, in that day,"  
Says Yahweh,  
"That you will call Me 'My Husband,'  
And no longer call Me 'My Master,' ....  
I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know Yahweh....  
And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained  
mercy;  
Then I will say to those who were not My people,  
'You are My people!'  
And they shall say, 'You are my God!'" (Hos. 2:16-  
23).

Jeremiah also sees this covenant as a marriage relationship to which Abraham's descendants have proven unfaithful and he also sees God as renewing this relationship through a new covenant which would replace the old:

"Behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says Yahweh. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Yahweh. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).

This new covenant is the covenant which Jesus established with his disciples during the Last Supper. When Jesus took the cup of wine and handed it to his disciples, he said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). We who are not familiar with the first-century Jewish culture do not immediately understand the significance of that act, but the disciples, who grew up in that culture, knew exactly what Jesus was doing.

Marriages in that culture were arranged by the families of the bridegroom and bride. The bridegroom and his father would meet with the bride and her father usually about a year before the ceremony would take place. The fathers would agree on the "bride price" which the bridegroom would pay to the bride's father for the loss of his daughter. The bridegroom's father would then pour some wine into a cup and hand it to his son. The bridegroom would offer this cup to his

bride and say, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood, which I offer to you." It was his way of saying, "I love you so much I will even die for you. Will you marry me?" The bride accepted his proposal by taking the cup and drinking from it.<sup>24</sup>

The disciples immediately understood that Jesus was proposing marriage to them. When he offered the new covenant to them, they understood that he was offering a renewal of the marriage relationship with God himself.

As both Hosea and Jeremiah saw, the key to fulfilling the new covenant (and the old one as well) is knowing God. God did not want the Israelites to simply obey a set of rules and regulations. He wanted them to enter into a deep, intimate and personal relationship with him. He wanted them to become one with him, just like a man and a woman become one with each other in the marriage relationship.

This is the relationship that God was offering Abraham: a deep, intimate, personal, marriage relationship. And because a change in name not only signifies a change in ownership but also a change in character, God was saying that this relationship would change Abraham for the better.

Which is precisely why Moses kept both stories in which Abram/Abraham lied about his wife. It is also why he kept the other so-called "doublets," for the similarities and the differences between the stories were designed to illustrate this change in Abraham's character. When Lot is captured in the first story, Abram takes

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<sup>24</sup> Ray Vander Laan, "His Body, His Blood," *Focus on the Family with Dr. James Dobson* (Vol. 23, No. 4, April 1999), 7.

matters into his own hands and rescues him. But in the second story, Abraham prays for Lot's rescue and leaves the matter in the hands of Yahweh. When Hagar despises Sarai because she is pregnant and Sarai is not, Sarai demands that Abram do something about it. Abram decides he really does not want to get involved and simply says, "Do to her as you please." So Sarai mistreats Hagar so badly that Hagar runs away. But when Hagar's son mocks the newborn Isaac and Sarah again demands that Abraham do something about it, Abraham is displeased with Sarah's request and is concerned for the safety of Hagar and her son. He sends them away only after he prays and God assures him that he will take care of them. When Pharaoh rebukes Abram after he discovers that Abram has lied to him, Abram says nothing. He offers no defense for his actions but he also offers no apologies. He simply takes Pharaoh's gifts and leaves, apparently unconcerned that Pharaoh's household has suffered from plagues because of his subterfuge. Abraham lies to Abimelech as well, which means that he still has some changing to do, but this time he prays for Abimelech's household so that the women can again bear children. For the most part, Abram was a selfish person, but Abraham cared for the people around him.

It has been argued that the change in Abram's name is so subtle (in the Hebrew, Abram is changed to Abraham by adding only one letter) as to be almost meaningless, but this subtle change reflects the subtle yet real changes in Abraham's character. These changes apparently earned him the respect of the people among whom he lived. In the first covenant, Abram was the recipient, humbly submitting to what God required. But

in the second covenant, Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, treated Abraham as if he were an equal, as if he too were a king.

What we have here in Abraham's Story, then, is not a loose collection of stories haphazardly spliced together by editors but a series of contrasting stories within a parallel structure constructed by a single author who knows how to get his message across. What we have here is form following function, the structure perfectly matching the message: If you want to change, you must have an intimate relationship with God at the center of your life.

### **The Plan of the Fall**

The message of Abraham's Story contrasts with yet complements the message of the Story of the Fall. It has been assumed by many of both the documentarians and the traditionalists that the so-called Second Creation Story in Genesis 2 is a separate unit from the Story of the Fall which follows it. But Moses has left us some clues to show us that this is not so. For example, at the end of Genesis 2, after God brings Adam's wife to him, he names her "Woman" and then we are told that they were both naked. In the middle of the Story of the Fall, after God curses both the man and the woman, Adam again names his wife, this time calling her "Eve," and then we are told that God clothed them with animal skins. At the end of the Story of the Fall, Yahweh expels the man from the Garden of Eden. The woman was obviously with him, but the text specifically mentions only the man. Why? Because at the beginning of the Second Creation Story, God places the man, and only

the man, into the Garden of Eden. And both stories are the only ones to use the compound name, Yahweh Elohim. The two stories are really only one story which is unified by its chiasmic parallelism:

A Yahweh Elohim places the man into the Garden of Eden (2:4-17)

B Yahweh Elohim blesses the man with a woman (2:18-25)

C The Fall (3:1-7)

-B' Yahweh Elohim curses the man and the woman (3:8-21)

-A' Yahweh Elohim expels the man from the Garden of Eden (3:22-24)

The tragic events of the last two units contrast with the idyllic setting of the first two units, making the center unit the turning point of the story. The message of the story is clear: sin brings with it tragic consequences. Yet the structure of the Story also conveys another message which becomes clear once we realize that Yahweh Elohim appears in all five units except the center one: Adam and Eve fell into sin because they were apart from God. The Story of the Fall, then, tells us what our problem is: we keep falling into sin because we are apart from God. Abraham's Story presents the solution: if we want to overcome sin, we must do the opposite. We must marry God and never divorce him again.

## The Plan of Genesis

As Genesis 17 had parallel structures within parallel structures, so too the parallel structures of the Stories of the Fall and of Abraham (as well as the parallel structures of the other stories) are parts of the parallel structure uniting the book of Genesis. And once again, Moses has left us clues pointing us to this structure. The book, of course, begins with the Creation Story. Thereafter, we find repeated throughout the book the phrase, "These are the generations of." The Hebrew word for *generations* can also mean *history*, specifically a family history. So the phrase is telling us that what follows is a family history. It appears at the beginning of the Story of the Fall. It appears at the beginning of Abraham's Story. In fact, it appears at the beginning of all the major stories and genealogies in Genesis. Altogether it appears eleven times, marking off eleven major units. Those eleven units, plus the Creation Story, make twelve units within the book of Genesis, a number which should not surprise us since twelve was an important number to the Israelites.

The twelve units are evenly divided between six units of stories and six units of genealogies. Genesis begins and ends with a story (the Creation and Joseph's Story). The ten units in between can be divided into two groups of five, each of which follows the pattern of story, genealogy, story, genealogy, genealogy. The overall structure of Genesis, then, is thus:

A The Creation (1:1-2:3)

B The History of the  
Heavens and the  
Earth (The Fall, 2:4-  
3:24)

Appendix: Cain and  
his brother (4:1-26)

B' The History of  
Terah (Abraham's  
Story, 11:27-25:11)

C The History of Adam  
(Adam's Genealogy,  
5:1-32)

Appendix: The Sons  
of God (6:1-8)

C' The History of  
Ishmael (Ishmael's  
Genealogy, 25:12-18)

D The History of Noah  
(The Flood, 6:9-9:19)

Appendix: Ham and  
his brothers (9:20-29)

D' The History of Isaac  
(Isaac and Jacob's  
Story, 25:19-35:29)

E The History of the  
Sons of Noah (Gene-  
alogy of Noah's Sons,  
10:1-32)

Appendix: The Tower  
of Babel (11:1-9)

E' The History of Esau  
(Esau's Genealogy,  
36:1-8)

F The History of Shem  
(Shem's Genealogy,  
11:10-26)

F' The History of Esau  
(Esau's Genealogy,  
36:9-43)  
Appendix: Jacob in  
Canaan (37:1)

A' The History of Jacob  
(Joseph's Story, 37:2-50:26)

Seeing the structure of Genesis laid out in this fashion helps us to see the points of similarity between the various units. Thus, we see that story lines up with story, genealogy lines up with genealogy. In A, the man and woman are commanded to “Be fruitful and multiply” (1:28). The command is repeated in D and D’ (9:1, 7; 35:11), both of which are the middle unit in their respective group. The command is finally fulfilled in A’ (47:27).

The structure also helps us to see the points of contrast. In the first group, the first four units have an appendix while the fifth does not. By contrast, the first four units in the second group do not have an appendix while the fifth does. The genealogies in the first group follow the chosen line of people from Adam through Noah and Shem to Terah, from whom Abraham came. By contrast, the genealogies in the second group follow the lines of the rejected sons (Ishmael and Esau), the ones to whom the covenant was not extended. The structure, therefore, demonstrates that the two groups are similar in some ways and yet opposite in other ways. This suggests that the themes of the two groups

would also be similar yet opposite. In other words, the theme of the second group would contrast yet complement the theme of the first group.

We have already seen how this is true of Abraham's Story and the Fall. The themes of the two stories contrast yet complement each other. The Fall tells us what the problem is; Abraham's Story tells us what the solution is. So it goes for the rest of the stories. The Flood reminds us that our problem does not lie outside of us but inside of us, for "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (8:21). Notice that Yahweh says this *after* everything has been destroyed. Our problem is our heart, not our environment. By contrast, Jacob's name is changed not just once but twice, meaning that Abraham's covenant, which has been extended to him (35:9-13), is also changing him for the better. The first group tells us what our problem is; the second group tells us what the solution is. The overall theme of Genesis, then, is that we need to have an intimate relationship with God. We need to be married to God. We need to know God.

### **The Plan of the Pentateuch**

Genesis, in turn, is only one piece in the overall plan of the Pentateuch. And once again, Moses has left us some clues as to what that plan is. In the Hebrew, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers all begin with the word "and," meaning that these books are a continuation of what came before them. It should not surprise us that Genesis does not begin with "and," but Deuteronomy also does not, even though it follows the other four books. Genesis ends with Jacob's blessing of his children, fol-

lowed by a chapter in which he and Joseph die. Deuteronomy ends with Moses' blessing of the children of Israel, followed by a chapter in which he dies.

Genesis and Deuteronomy are also related to each other in another way. Genesis teaches us that we should have an intimate relationship with God, that we should know God. But an intimate relationship with God can only be maintained through love. To know him is to love him. That is precisely the theme of Deuteronomy. Moses repeatedly calls the Israelites to a relationship in which they love God, not just serve him (Deut. 6:5; 30:16, 20). On the one hand, Genesis is a historical narrative, full of stories and very little law. On the other hand, Deuteronomy is mostly a series of speeches which contains some stories and a large quantity of law. Yet the themes of the two books are the same, for knowing God and loving God are the same thing.

Both Exodus and Numbers are a mixture of story and law. Their emphasis is on believing and obeying God. After Yahweh destroyed the Egyptian army in the sea, the people "believed Yahweh and his servant Moses" (Ex. 14:31). Yahweh gave the people specific instructions on when they were to gather the manna and how much they were to gather, but when some of the people fail to follow those instructions, Yahweh says to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?" (Ex. 16:28). When the spies return with a pessimistic view of their chances to conquer the Promised Land, Yahweh says to Moses, "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?" (Num. 14:11). When the people insist on invading the Promised Land anyway, Moses

says, “Now why do you transgress the command of Yahweh?” (Num. 14:41). Yahweh tells Moses that he will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land after he struck the rock to get water out of it instead of speaking to it as Yahweh had told him to do “because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Num. 20:12).

These two themes, however, are the same thing. The Bible teaches us that believing God and obeying God go hand in hand, which means that disbelieving God and disobeying God also go hand in hand. Moses disobeyed God because he did not believe him. In the Gospel of John, we find John the Baptist telling his disciples, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36, AT). The Jews once asked Jesus, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” In other words, what must we do to obey God? Jesus’ answer was, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:28-29). We will not obey God if we do not believe that what he is telling us to do is the right thing to do. Obedience, therefore, is based on belief in the trustworthiness of God’s character.

Leviticus is virtually all law. Even the few stories in it (such as the story about the man who blasphemed the name of God) serve only to remind the Israelites of the importance of obeying God’s law. The book makes it clear that the goal of the law is to make the people of Israel holy. In fact, God tells them that they should “be holy, for I am holy” (11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26).

The apostle Peter makes it clear that holiness is also the goal of the Christian life: “As He who called you is

holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, *'Be holy, for I am holy'*" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). We Christians

are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

Peter here refers back to Hosea's view that our covenant relationship with God is in fact a marriage relationship. Holiness is ultimately rooted in our relationship with God. Because we love and know him, we know his character, which means we can believe him to be trustworthy. And because we believe he is trustworthy, we obey him. And when we obey him, we become holy. Two people who are locked into an intimate relationship eventually become like each other. When we lock ourselves into an intimate relationship with God, we will eventually become like he is. We will become holy because he is holy.

The goal of God's relationship with us, therefore, is to change us for the better by replacing our sinfulness with his holiness. And with this goal, the overall structure of the Pentateuch agrees:

A Genesis: Knowing God

B Exodus: Believing and Obeying God

C Leviticus: Being Holy Like God

B' Numbers: Believing and Obeying God

A' Deuteronomy: Loving God

And so, the Pentateuch was indeed written according to a plan. And because it was written according to a plan, by the documentarians' own argument, it must have been written by a single author. The Documentary Hypothesis is not the only adequate explanation for the anomalies within the Pentateuch. The traditional view is one as well. But the traditional view is the only one that has any objective evidence whatsoever supporting it. There is no objective evidence at all to support the Hypothesis. We've checked the switch and it is still on.

Besides, the principle of Occam's razor is in our favor. The Hypothesis can be stated succinctly: in Friedman's own words, the anomalies are the "product of several source works that were combined by editors to form the Five Books of Moses."<sup>25</sup> But the traditional view can be stated more succinctly still: The anomalies were created when Moses wrote the Pentateuch according to his plan.

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<sup>25</sup> *Hidden*, 5.



## CONCLUSION

### The Difference It Makes

Moses, then, had a very good reason for including the two stories in which Abram/Abraham lied about his wife. Their presence within Genesis is not evidence that the Pentateuch was created by the splicing together of several documents; rather, they are evidence that the Pentateuch was written by “a skillful author trying to teach his people the difference it makes to have a covenant with God.”<sup>1</sup> That difference included a change in character. Because of this covenant relationship with God, because of this deep, intimate, personal, marriage relationship with God, Abram became more holy. Abram became more like God. Abram became Abraham.

Moses further told Abraham’s descendants that if they also entered into this marriage relationship with God, they would see another major difference.

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death,

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was* (Nashville.: Abingdon Press, 1985), 96.

blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love Yahweh your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days (Deut. 30:19-20).

Obviously, the people to whom he was speaking already had life. He was telling them that if they enter into an intimate relationship with God, they would obtain a better quality of life. They would obtain a life full of blessings. They would obtain a life free of curses (see Deut. 28). They would, in fact, obtain *God's* life, for God does not just have life: he *is* life. To have this life, they must have God. Separation from God is death, but union with God is life.

The New Testament calls this better quality of life "eternal life." Eternal life is not simply living forever, for those who are cast into the lake of fire also live forever. Eternal life is a better life, a life lived forever with God. And God wants each and every one of us to live forever with him. He wants us to enter into an intimate relationship with him. He wants us to choose life. Nothing would make him happier.

If we choose to enter into this relationship, if we choose to obtain this better quality of life, does that mean that we will live a life free from pain and suffering and trouble? In heaven, yes; on earth, no. Jesus told us we would have tribulation here on earth (John 16:33). But eternal life will eventually produce in us here on earth love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). In other words, eternal life will make us better people.

That is because eternal life resides in the only person who has all of these characteristics: God's Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus does not just have eternal life: he *is* eternal life.

"I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11-12).

To obtain this life, we must obtain Jesus. We must enter into an intimate relationship with him. We must become one of his disciples and accept his marriage proposal. When we do, our lives will become one with his life. This union eventually will change us until we become more like Jesus, more like God.

This is why Jesus said that eternal life is obtained only by coming to him. But he also said that we will not believe him if we do not believe the writings of Moses, for the writings of Moses agree with and confirm the words of Jesus. Moses said that this better quality of life is obtained by believing and obeying God. Jesus said the same thing: "Most assuredly, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). Moses said that this better quality of life is obtained by knowing and loving God. Jesus said the same thing: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). If Moses did not

write the Pentateuch, then his writings do not confirm the words of Jesus. And if Moses did not write the Pentateuch, then Jesus is mistaken when he says that Moses wrote of him. How then can we believe that he is telling us the truth when he says that we obtain eternal life only by coming to him?

Thankfully, we can believe the words of Jesus. We can believe him when he says that we obtain eternal life only by coming to him. We can believe him when he says that we obtain eternal life by knowing him and believing in him. We can believe all of this because Jesus was not mistaken after all when he said that Moses was indeed the one who really wrote the Bible.

I urge you, therefore, as Moses urged Abraham's descendants, become a better person. Choose Jesus. Choose life. See the difference it makes.

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