Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch

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Preface

This volume follows the trail blazed so well by four outstanding dictionary volumes on the New Testament. We appreciate the high standards set by our predecessors, and we are honored to be able to present this volume on the Pentateuch. We pray that this volume, though a reverse of the canonical ordering, might fill as fruitful a niche as has the New Testament series.

Our generation has seen a revolution in many aspects of pentateuchal study, and the dust has not yet settled, if it ever will. Many see this revolution as long overdue. Among them is W. McKane, formerly of St Andrews University, who in 1978 wrote: "Old Testament scholarship suffers from the burden of too many received critical assumptions hung about the neck of its practitioners like Coleridge's albatross. It needs the transfusion of a kind of scholarship which is not a further development of critical positions accepted as premises but is rather an *ab initio* investigation, unburdened by too many bibliographical cases, and concentrating a fresh eye on the Hebrew Bible" (*VT* 28 [1978] 381). The same needs to be said for traditional assumptions, those views passed down from generation to generation that often go unexamined and become hallmarks of orthodoxy. While not intrinsically wrong, unexamined views cannot be clearly called our own; they must first be examined.

New eyes are especially needed in looking at this portion of Scripture. Here the story is started: foundations are laid and trajectories initiated which will move through the rest of Scripture and beyond. Here important theological presuppositions are laid out which developed and matured into those of three major world religions. Here fundamentals of life in relationship with God and one's fellow people are established in a manner especially needful in societies currently questioning absolutes and concrete underpinnings for behavior.

While not every topic can be examined in equal detail in the genre of a dictionary, the format followed here allows greater luxury than most. With no article less than a thousand words, and some articles exceeding ten thousand words, this volume explores a wide range of subjects all relevant to understanding the Pentateuch better. The variety of themes examined provides a richness of content usually not found in monographs or periodicals. Some articles touch on areas rarely examined. Other articles provide helpful surveys, leading one into an understanding of the current state of discussion. Others take critical assumptions to task, seeking at least to identify the albatross if not to remove it. All seek to provide a better understanding and appreciation of an important area of biblical knowledge.

The combination of introductory and innovative articles should serve well a number of audiences. Students just entering the field will find it useful to see where things have been and where they are now. Church educators in the pulpit and the classroom will be able to see what has happened since they were themselves in front of the lectern, and scholars currently engaging in research may be challenged to examine old areas anew and to explore new areas afresh.

Our thanks go out to many for assistance in bringing this project to a conclusion. First to Dan Reid, who envisioned the entire dictionary project, commissioned us to undertake this part of it, and spurred us on with encouragement, suggestions and, most of all, friendship. To those who undertook to write these articles, we thank you, especially some who did several, and at least one to whom we came several times at short notice. You were willing not only to help but also to excel in your contributions. Special thanks also to Bob Buller, whose considerable expertise as copyeditor greatly improved this project and led to his being an article contributor.

We hope that this volume will instruct, encourage and challenge many. Most of all we desire that it will not be just an academic tool but will help readers to experience the wishes of Deuteronomy 30:20: "that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice and hold fast to him."

T. Desmond Alexander
David W. Baker

How to Use This Dictionary

Abbreviations
Comprehensive tables of abbreviations for general matters as well as for scholarly, biblical and ancient literature may be found on pages xiii-xviii.

Authorship of Articles
The authors of articles are indicated by their first initials and last name at the end of each article. A full list of contributors may be found on pages xx-xxii, in alphabetical order by their last name. The contribution of each author is listed following their identification.

Bibliographies
A bibliography will be found at the end of each article. The bibliographies include works cited in the articles and other significant related works. Bibliographical entries are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name, and multiple works by an author are listed alphabetically by title. In articles focused on the books of the Pentateuch, the bibliographies are divided into the categories "Commentaries" and "Studies."

Cross-References
This dictionary has been extensively cross-referenced in order to aid readers in making the most of material appearing throughout the volume. Five types of cross-referencing will be found:

1. One-line entries appearing in alphabetical order throughout the dictionary direct readers to articles where a topic is discussed:

ALPHABET. *See* WRITING.

2. An asterisk in the body of an article precedes a word that relates directly to another article by that title (or closely worded title) in the dictionary. For example, "*tabernacle" directs the reader to an article titled "Tabernacle." Asterisks typically are found only at the first occurrence of a word in an article.

3. A cross-reference appearing within parentheses in the body of an article directs the reader to an article by that title. For example, (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of) directs the reader to an article by that title.

4. Cross-references have been appended to the end of articles, immediately preceding the bibliography, to direct readers to articles significantly related to the subject:

See also COVENANT; DECALOGUE; LAW.

5. Occasionally references are made to articles in the companion volumes, the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (DJG)*, the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (DPL)*, the *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments (DLNTD)* and the *Dictionary of New Testament Background (DNTB)*. These references are found within the body of the text of articles. For example, a reference such as (*see DJG*, Gentiles) refers to the article "Gentiles" in the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, and a reference such as (*see DLNTD*, Apocalyptic, Apocalypticism §1) refers to a specific section within the article "Apocalyptic, Apocalypticism" in the *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*.

Indexes
Since most of the dictionary articles cover broad topics in some depth, the *subject index* is intended to assist readers in finding relevant information on narrower topics that might, for instance, appear in a standard Bible dictionary. For example, while there is no article titled "Calendar," the subject index might direct the

reader to pages where calendrical issues are discussed in the articles on "Agriculture," "Festivals and Feasts" or elsewhere.

A *Scripture index* is provided to assist readers in gaining quick access to the numerous Scripture texts referred to throughout the dictionary.

An *articles index* found at the end of the dictionary allows readers to review quickly the breadth of topics covered and select the ones most apt to serve their interests or needs. For those who wish to identify the articles written by specific contributors, they are listed with the name of the contributors in the list of contributors.

Maps

A map of "Possible Routes of the Exodus" appears on page 278. Maps of "Palestine in the Patriarchal Period" and "The Ancient Near East in the Patriarchal Period" appear on pages 920-21.

Transliteration

Hebrew has been transliterated according to a system set out on page xix.

Abbreviations

General Abbreviations

2d ed.	second edition
3d ed.	third edition
κτλ	etc.
Akk	Akkadian
c.	*circa*, about (with dates), column
cf.	*confer*, compare
chap.	chapter
cyl.	cylinder
DSS	Deas Sea Scrolls
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
Eng	English
esp.	especially
ET	English translation
fig.	figure
Gk	Greek
Heb	Hebrew
i.e.	*id est*, that is
lit.	literal, literally
mg.	margin
M.R.	map reference
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
NS	new series
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
passim	throughout, frequently
pl.	plural
repr.	reprint
rev.	revised (edition)
Sum	Sumerian
vol.	volume
x	times (2x = two times, etc.)
§ or §§	section or paragraph number(s)

Texts and Translations of the Bible

ESV	English Standard Version
JB	Jerusalem Bible
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

REB	Revised English Bible
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
TEV	Today 's English Version (=Good News Bible)

Books of the Bible

Old Testament	1-2 Kings	Is	Mic	Mk	1-2 Thess
Gen	1-2 Chron	Jer	Nahum	Lk	1-2 Tim
Ex	Ezra	Lam	Hab	Jn	Tit
Lev	Neh	Ezek	Zeph	Acts	Philem
Num	Esther	Dan	Hag	Rom	Heb
Deut	Job	Hos	Zech	1-2 Cor	Jas
Josh	Ps	Joel	Mal	Gal	1-2 Pet
Judg	Prov	Amos		Eph	1-2-3 Jn
Ruth	Eccles	Obad	*New Testament*	Phil	Jude
1-2 Sam	Song	Jon	Mt	Col	Rev

Ancient Near Eastern and Later Jewish Literature

1 En.	*1 Enoch*	*L.A.E.*	*Life of Adam and Eve*
2 En.	*2 Enoch*	*Lev. Rab.*	*Leviticus Rabbah*
1Qap Gen	*Genesis Apocryphon*	*m.*	Mishnah
ʾAbot R. Nat.	*ʾAbot de Rabbi Nathan*	*Mart. Ascen. Isa.*	*Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*
Apoc. Adam	*Apocalypse of Adam*	*Meg.*	*Megillah*
Apos. Con.	*Apostolic Constitutions and Canons*	*Mek.*	*Mekilta*
As. Mos.	*Assumption of Moses*	*Nid.*	*Niddah*
b.	Babylonian Talmud	*Pesaḥ.*	*Pesaḥim*
B. Bat.	*Baba Batra*	*Šabb.*	*Šabbat*
B. Qam.	*Baba Qamma*	*Sanh.*	*Sanhedrin*
Ber.	*Berakot*	*Sipre Num.*	*Sipre Numbers*
En.	*Enoch*	*t.*	Tosefta
Esdr	Esdras	*T. Adam*	*Testament of Adam*
Ex. Rab.	*Exodus Rabbah*	*T. Benj.*	*Testament of Benjamin*
Gen. Rab.	*Genesis Rabbah*	*T. Isaac*	*Testament of Isaac*
Gilg.	Gilgamesh Epic	*Tanḥ.*	*Tanḥuma*
Hul.	*Ḥullin*	*Tem.*	*Temurah*
Jub.	*Jubilees*	*Tg. Neof.*	*Targum Neofiti*
Jdt	Judith	*Tg. Onq.*	*Targum Onqelos*
L.A.B.	*Liber antiquitatum biblicarum (Pseudo-Philo)*	*Tg. Ps.-J.*	*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

Classical and Early Christian Literature

Ammanianus Marcellinus	
Res gest.	*Res gestae*
Chrysostom	
Hom. Jo.	*Homiliae in Joannem*
Clement of Alexandria	
Strom.	*Stromata*
Const. ap.	*Constitutiones apostolicae*
Cyril of Jerusalem	
Cat.	*Catechesis*
Diodorus Siculus	
Bib. Hist.	*Bibliotheca Historica*
Epiphanius	
Pan.	*Panarion (adversus haereses)*
Herodotus	
Hist.	*Historiae*
Irenaeus	
Haer.	*Adversus haereses*
Josephus	
Ag. Ap.	*Against Apion*
Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*
Justin Martyr	
1 Apol.	*Apologia i*
Origen	
Cels.	*Contra Celsum*
Hom. Exod.	*Homiliae in Exodum*
Philo	
Gig.	*De gigantibus*
Spec.	*De specialibus legibus*
Virt.	*De virtutibus*
Vit. Mos.	*De vita Mosis*

Pliny	
Nat.	*Naturalis historia*
Pseudo-Clementines	
Recogn.	*Recognitions*
Quintilian	
Inst.	*Institutio oratoria*
Tacitus	
Hist.	*Historiae*
Tertullian	
Res.	*De resurrectione carnis*

Periodicals, Reference Works and Serials

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AAWHMSU	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen; Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary,* ed. D. N. Freedman (6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AbrN	*Abr-Nahrain*
AcT	*Acta Theologica*
AEL	*Ancient Egyptian Literature,* M. Lichtheim (3 vols.; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971-1980)
ÄgAbh	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums
AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch,* W. von Soden (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1981)
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament,* ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954)
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament,* ed. J. B. Pritchard (3d ed.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969)
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARA	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
ARMT	Archives royales de Mari, transcrite et traduite
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ASORDS	American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series
ASORMS	American Schools of Oriental Research Monograph Series
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
AsTJ	*Asbury Theological Journal*
ATJ	*Ashland Theological Journal*
ATR	*Australasian Theological Review*
AUSDDS	Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907)
BEB	*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible,* ed. W. A. Elwell (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988)
BeO	*Bibbia e Oriente*
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibSem	Biblical Seminar
BJPES	*Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRev	*Bible Review*
BSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BSC	Bible Student's Commentary
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BurH	*Buried History*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago,* ed. A. L. Oppenheim et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956-)
CAH^2	*Cambridge Ancient History,* 2d ed.
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East,* ed. J. Sasson (4 vols.; New York: Scribner, 1995)
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
Chm	*Churchman*
COED	*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	*The Context of Scripture,* ed. W. W. Hallo (3 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997-)
COut	Commentaar op het Oude Testament
CT	*Christianity Today*
CTA	*Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939,* ed. A. Herdner (Mission de Ras Shamra 10; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963)
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
DBSup	*Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément,* ed. L. Pirot and A. Robert (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1928-)
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew,* ed. D. J. A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-)
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995)
DDD^2	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst (2d rev. ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999)
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DNWSI	*Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions,* J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling (2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995)
EA	El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of J. A. Knudtzon, *Die el-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908-1915 [repr. Aalen: O. Zeller, 1964]; continued in A. F. Rainey, *El-Amarna Tablets,* 359-379 (2d rev. ed.; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978)
EBC	*The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* ed. F. E. Gaebelein (12 vols; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979-1992)
EDBT	*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology,* ed. W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996)
EgT	*Église et théologie*
Enc	*Encounter*
EncIs	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954-)
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (16 vols.; Jerusalem: Keter, 1972)
ER	*Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. M. Eliade (16 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1987)
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
EstEcl	*Estudios ecclesiásticos*
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FCI	Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FPSJCO	First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins
GBSNT	Guides to Biblical Scholarship: New Testament
GBSOT	Guides to Biblical Scholarship: Old Testament
GesB	*Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament,* W. Gesenius and F. Buhl (17th ed.; Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 1921)
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910)
GTJ	*Grace Theological Journal*
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner and J. J. Stamm (4 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994-1999)
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HBD	*HarperCollins Bible Dictionary,* ed. P. J. Achtemeier et al. (2d ed.; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996)
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
Hen	*Henoch*
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
IBHS	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990)
IBS	*Irish Biblical Studies*
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* ed. G. A. Buttrick (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962)
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
ILR	*Israel Law Review*
Int	*Interpretation*
IOS	Israel Oriental Studies
ISBE	*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. G. W. Bromiley (rev. ed.; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988)
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JBTh	*Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
Jeev	*Jeevadhara*
JEOL	*Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap (Genootschap) Ex oriente lux*
JES	*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Norwest Semitic Languages*
Joüon	P. A. Joüon, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2 vols.; Subsidia biblica 14/1-2; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991)
JPOS	*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSSM	Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften,* ed. H. Donner and W. Röllig (2d ed.; 3 vols. in 1; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966-1969)
KBL	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (2d ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958)
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit,* ed. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartín (AOAT 24/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976)
LÄ	*Lexikon der Ägyptologie,* ed. W. Helck, E. Otto and W. Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972-)
LTJ	*Lutheran Theological Journal*
MAD	Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary
MCAAS	*Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*
MdB	*Le Monde de la Bible*
MLBS	Mercer Library of Biblical Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
NBD	*New Bible Dictionary,* ed. J. D. Douglas (2d ed.; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982)
NCB	New Century Bible
NEASB	*Near East Archaeology Society Bulletin*
NHL	*Nag Hammadi Library in English,* ed. J. M. Robinson (4th rev. ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996)
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible,* ed. L. E. Keck et al. (12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1994-)
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* ed. W. A. VanGemeren (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997)
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OEANE	*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East,* ed. E. M. Meyers (5 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensa analecta
Or	*Orientalia*
OrAnt	*Oriens antiquus*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* ed. J. H. Charlesworth (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1987)
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
Presb	*Presbyterion*
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
PSB	*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RefLitM	*Reformed Liturgy and Music*
RevistB	*Revista bíblica*
RILP	Roehampton Institute London Papers
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie,* ed. E. Ebeling et al. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1928-)
RTR	*Reformed Theological Review*
SAALT	State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBLBSNA	Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Scholarship in North America
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources

	for Biblical Study
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SCCNH	Studies in the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
ScrHier	Scripta hierosolymitana
Sem	*Semitica*
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplements to *Numen*)
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
SSEJC	Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
ST	Studia theologica
StPatr	Studia patristica
StudBib	*Studia Biblica*
StudOr	Studia orientalia
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (10 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976)
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-)
Them	*Themelios*
Theo	*Theologika*
THS	Tyndale House Studies
ThWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament,* ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer,1970-)
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament,* ed. E. Jenni, with C. Westermann (3 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997)
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TRev	*Theological Review*
TS	Texts and Studies
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* ed. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr. and B. K. Waltke (2 vols.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980)
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
USFISFCJ	University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism
UT	*Ugaritic Textbook,* C. H. Gordon (AnOr 38; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965)
Vid	*Vidyajyoti*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
WHJP	World History of the Jewish People
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WW	*Word and World*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZPEB	*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible,* ed. M. C. Tenney (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975)
ZS	*Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Transliteration of Hebrew

Consonants

א	=	ʾ
ב	=	b
ג	=	g
ד	=	d
ה	=	h
ו	=	w
ז	=	z
ח	=	ḥ
ט	=	ṭ
י	=	y
כ, ך	=	k
ל	=	l
מ, ם	=	m
נ	=	n
ס	=	s
ע	=	ʿ
פ, ף	=	p
צ, ץ	=	ṣ
ק	=	q
ר	=	r
שׁ	=	ś
שׂ	=	š
ת	=	t

Short Vowels

ַ	=	a
ֶ	=	e
ִ	=	i
ָ	=	o
ֻ	=	u

Very Short Vowels

ֲ	=	ă
ֱ	=	ĕ
ְ	=	ĕ (if vocal)
ֳ	=	ŏ

Long Vowels

(ָה)	=	â
ֵי	=	ê
ִי	=	î
וֹ	=	û
	=	ā
	=	ē
	=	ō

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A

AARON

The only person by this name in the Hebrew Bible, Aaron's identity is unambiguous. He was the elder brother of *Moses and a descendant of *Levi (Ex 4:14). Aaron at first served as Moses' assistant, particularly as his spokesman (Ex 4:15-16; 7:1-2), and then became Israel's first chief *priest (Ex 28:1-5). From that time forward only descendants of Aaron could legitimately function in that role (Ex 29:9; 40:15; Num 3:10; 18:7). The narrative does not disclose the circumstances of Aaron's birth, but it is obvious that it took place before the proclamation of *Pharaoh's decree that every male child born to the Hebrews must die (Ex 1:22—2:3). There is likewise no etiological explanation of his name. Most likely, it, like the name of his grandson Phinehas, is of Egyptian origin, *ʿrn* ("the name is great") or the like.

1. Aaron the Prophet
2. Aaron the Priest
3. Aaron and Historical Criticism

1. Aaron the Prophet.

1.1. The Setting and Circumstances of His Birth. According to the *chronology of the Masoretic Text, the exodus of Israel from *Egypt took place in the middle of the fifteenth century B.C. (1 Kings 6:1; *see* Exodus, Date of). Moses was eighty years old at the time (Ex 7:7), his birth thus having occurred toward the end of the sixteenth century, about 1525 B.C. Aaron was three years older (Ex 7:7). In terms of Egyptian history this was the so-called New Kingdom era, specifically the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Hyksos, who had ruled Egypt for about 150 years (1730-1580 B.C.), had been expelled by Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and in the aftermath of that expulsion the Hebrews may have come under suspicion as possible collaborators with the Hyksos (Ex 1:8-10). This set the stage for Egyptian repression of the Hebrews, a pogrom that eventually ended in infanticide (Ex 1:22).

Aaron's apparent exemption from the royal decree suggests that it became effective sometime between the time of his birth and that of Moses. In any event, he obviously was spared and lived to grow up in the household of his father Amram and mother Jochebed (Ex 6:20).

1.2. His Ancestral Lineage. Aaron's parents were "of the house of Levi" *(mibbêt lēwî)*, that is, descendants of Jacob's son of that name (Ex 2:1). More specifically, they traced their lineage back to Levi through Kohath, a son of Levi (Ex 6:16-20; 1 Chron 6:1-3). The four generations (Levi and Aaron inclusive) involved comports well with the promise to *Abraham that his descendants would depart from Egypt in the fourth generation (Gen 15:16). However, the reference to the sojourn as four hundred years (Gen 15:13)—or precisely 430 in the exodus narrative itself (Ex 12:40)—suggests that the Aaronic *genealogy is not "closed," that is, without missing generations. He perhaps was of the tribe of Levi, clan of Kohath, and family *(bêt ʾāb)* of Amram (cf. Josh 7:16-18). The main point to the genealogies, however, is to link Aaron to the tribe that was eventually set apart by Yahweh to minister in the sacred office (cf. Num 3:5-10), thus establishing Aaron's levitical and priestly credentials (cf. Num 18:1-7).

1.3. His Role as Prophet. Aaron's first ministry was not as priest, however, but as *prophet. When it was safe for Moses to return to Egypt from Midianite exile (Ex 2:23; 4:19), Yahweh instructed him to do so and to take steps to lead God's people from there to the land God had promised to the patriarchs (Ex 3:7-10; 6:10-11). Moses demurred, arguing that he lacked the necessary oratorical skills and persuasive powers (cf. Ex 4:1-2, 10, 13; 6:30). To this Yahweh re-

plied that Moses would speak to the people and to Pharaoh through Aaron. Aaron, he said, was a forceful speaker (*dabbēr yĕdabbēr*, Ex 4:14). He would become Moses' mouth, and Moses would be to him like God (Ex 4:16). That is, Aaron would be a prophet between Moses and the people, a spokesman on his behalf. To underscore this relationship and Aaron's proclamatory role, Yahweh went on to tell Moses that Moses would be like God to Pharaoh and that Aaron would be his prophet. This time the classic term for prophet (*nābîʾ*) occurs, solidifying the fact that Aaron was a prophet not only by gift but by office (Ex 7:1-2).

The gift and calling of Aaron are confirmed, albeit in a rather negative way, in his confrontation with Moses en route to Canaan (Num 12:1-15). Envious of his younger brother's leadership role, Aaron—together with his sister *Miriam—used the pretext of Moses' having married a Cushite woman to challenge Moses' uniqueness as a prophet. Aaron's premise seems to be that since Moses had violated some social or even religious norm, he had undermined his authority as a spokesman for Yahweh. "Is it indeed only by means of Moses that Yahweh has spoken?" he asks. "Has he not also spoken by us?"

The claims of Aaron and Miriam (cf. Ex 15:20-21) to prophetism were indeed legitimate, as Moses' forbearance (*ʿānāw*, "humility," Num 12:3) and Yahweh's acquiescence make clear. However, they, unlike Moses, were "ordinary" prophets who received revelation by visions and *dreams (Num 12:6). Moses received God's self-disclosures in a direct manner (*peh ʾel peh*, "mouth unto mouth," Num 12:8; cf. Deut 34:10). When Aaron understood this difference, he confessed his hubris and begged Moses to intercede for his sister, who had been struck with a loathsome skin disease for her equally presumptuous insubordination (Num 12:11-12). The tradition is silent thereafter with regard to Aaron's prophetic activity.

2. Aaron the Priest.

2.1. Antecedents to the Aaronic Priesthood. Though Aaron was founder of a new postexodus order of priests, Israel already had some kind of priestly cult in place while still in Egypt. This is presupposed by Moses' demand to Pharaoh to let Israel leave Egypt to worship Yahweh in the desert (Ex 3:18; cf. 5:1, 8; 7:16; 8:8, 25-28; 10:9, 25-26). It is explicit following the exodus when, at Sinai, Yahweh cautioned Moses to see to it that the priests sanctified themselves in view of the impending epiphany on the mountain and that they should not attempt to penetrate the boundary lines surrounding Yahweh's glory (Ex 19:22, 24).

2.2. Intimations of the Aaronic Priesthood. Aaron's official appointment to the priesthood was preceded by certain events and allusions that pointed in that direction. For example, Moses asked him to gather up some manna in a pot to "be laid up before Yahweh," that is, in the sanctuary before the ark of the covenant (Ex 16:33-34). Though proleptic, this hints at a future priestly role for Aaron. Likewise, his association with the pre-exodus priests at Sinai attests to his increasing priestly involvement (Ex 19:24). Most striking of all is Aaron's participation in the covenant ceremony attendant to the giving of the commandments (Ex 24). He with his sons and seventy elders were allowed to ascend Sinai part way (Ex 24:9). Such gradual nearness to the Holy One was preparatory to even greater intimacy.

2.3. Aaron's Call and Ordination to the Priesthood. The first clear statement of Aaron's priestly status comes in the midst of the instructions about the building and equipping of the *tabernacle (Ex 28—29). He and his four sons were to be brought near (*haqrēb*), that is, presented to Yahweh, in order to commence their ministry (Ex 28:1). They first put on sacred garments (*see* Priestly Clothing), drawing attention to two facets of the priestly ministry: glory (*kābôd*) and beauty (*tipʾeret*). The worship of Yahweh thus had transcendent, even frightening, forms but it was also invested with aesthetic attraction. All of the items of apparel are rich in symbolism, suggesting that the priest in his very appearance was a metaphor of divine-human mediation.

Investiture to the office included being set apart (*lĕqaddēš*) to it through proper *sacrifices and rituals (Ex 29:1-18) and being dedicated in it through further such ceremonies (Ex 29:19-34). Only through these procedures could they and their priestly descendants be qualified to serve (*lĕkahēn*, lit., "to be or serve as priest," Ex 29:44).

2.4. Aaron as Chief Priest. In addition to brief narrative descriptions of Aaron fulfilling his regular priestly duties (cf., e.g., Lev 8:31-36; 9:8-24) are the accounts of his deeds with or under Moses in the course of the desert sojourn. The first of these records his leadership of Israel in the apostate act of casting a *golden idol in Moses' absence on the summit of Sinai (Ex 32:1-29). Though Aaron

construed the image to be a representation of Yahweh (Ex 32:4-5), this itself was a flagrant violation of the second commandment (Ex 20:4-6) even before the tablets of the *Decalogue had been brought down from the mountain. Only Moses' fervent intercession spared Aaron and his priesthood. Ironically, Aaron's own levitical kinsmen took sword in hand to slay the ringleaders of the idolatry (Ex 32:25-29) of which their priestly head had been an instigator. A subsequent challenge came to him from certain Reubenites and other Levites who resented his priestly leadership (Num 16:1-35). In a public showdown orchestrated by Moses, Aaron and the Aaronic priesthood were conclusively vindicated. Only Aaronides would ever be qualified to burn incense, that is, to minister before Yahweh as intercessors (Num 16:40, 47-48).

In a third episode Aaron, with Moses, angered Yahweh by striking the rock for water rather than merely commanding it to yield its life-giving streams (Num 20:2-13). The result was their disbarment from the Promised Land, a penalty that followed their failure to set Yahweh apart *(lĕhaqdîšēnî)* as the one who bestows the blessings of life (Num 20:12). To strike the rock was human effort, androcentric; merely to speak would have shown dependence on divine power and be theocentric.

The account of Aaron's death follows shortly. After arriving at Mount Hor in the Arabah, Moses, having been told that Aaron's demise was imminent, stripped his brother of his priestly apparel and put them on Aaron's son *Eleazar, his successor to the holy office (Num 20:22-29). After the customary thirty-day lament the community resumed its life of desert sojourn.

3. Aaron and Historical Criticism.

Post-Enlightenment criticism has painted quite a different picture of Israel's cultic history—including, of course, the priesthood—from that of ancient Jewish and Christian tradition. Beginning with de Wette's assertion that Deuteronomy (D) was of seventh-century provenience and subsequent arguments that the Priestly source (P) presupposes D, the consensus today in critical scholarship is that priesthood as described in such meticulous detail in the Pentateuch is by and large a postexilic phenomenon.

However, the extreme view of an earlier era that the whole apparatus of priestly religion was a late, antiprophetic and degenerative movement no longer commands attention. The undeniable evidence of such systems from elsewhere in the ancient Near East and from a period earlier than even the traditional date for Moses has put to rest the theory that the priestly religion of the Old Testament was the product of a religious evolutionism that placed it necessarily at the end of the process because of its alleged tendency toward professionalism and institutionalism. Still, the idea persists that the P source as such is a late redaction of priestly traditions that in their final form are a far cry from the Bible's own witness to their origins and pristine shape.

A casualty of this way of assessing the biblical witness is any notion of the actual historical existence of Aaron, at least as the flesh-and-blood person of the texts. Later OT (Ezra 7:5; Ps 77:20; 99:6; 105:26; 115:10-12; Mic 6:4) as well as NT (Lk 1:5; Acts 7:40; Heb 5:4) testimony notwithstanding, Aaron is thought at best to be a shadowy figure to whom later tradition pointed as a sufficient explanation for the origin of the priestly office and order. Such an assessment plays down the authenticity of the canonical tradition and is inadequate to explain the persistence of Aaron and his descendants as integral to the entire scope of the biblical religious history.

See also ALTARS; LEVI, LEVITES; MIRIAM; PRIESTLY CLOTHING; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD.

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AARONIC/AARONIDE PRIESTHOOD. *See* AARON.

AARON'S ROD. *See* ROD, STAFF.

ABEL

Abel, the second son of *Adam and *Eve, appears only briefly in the biblical record, yet that appearance is long enough to secure God's earliest approval for an offering and long enough to become a lightning rod to his dejected brother's wrath. In the process Abel becomes the first victim of murder.

1. Biblical Evidence
2. Trends in Interpretation
3. Implications

1. Biblical Evidence.

Abel appears only briefly in the OT, where he attracts both the favor of God and the lethal envy of his brother *Cain (Gen 4). In the NT the story of Abel supplies illustrations of obtaining divine favor (Hebrews) and of guilt incurred by murdering the innocent (Gospels and 1 John).

1.1. Old Testament.

1.1.1. Abel Obtains God's Favor (Genesis 4:1-5). Abel enters the biblical narrative with minimal introduction. Unlike Cain, even Abel's name surfaces without explanation. The reader is left to speculate that this character may turn out to be a fleeting figure (Abel, from *hebel,* "breath" or "futility"). Abel turns to animal husbandry, while his elder brother struggles to bring produce from the soil.

In time each presents the Lord an offering *(minḥâ)* from his respective productivity: earth's fruit and the flock's firstborn. This constitutes the first presentation to God in the biblical record. Abel and his animals earn divine commendation, while Cain and his crops do not. Scripture refrains from explaining, leaving ample room for speculation. Several scholars advise caution at this point, arguing that acceptance of offering is an issue peripheral to the point of the text. We should focus instead on regard for one's brother (see the valuable narrative study in van Wolde, 33), response to correction and violent consequences of unbridled anger (Krasovec, 10; cf. Heck, 137 n. 26; and Radday, 75). Others maintain that we can discern the reason for divine favor, though explanations vary. These may be summarized in three primary opinions.

The first opinion infers that as God favored one offering over another his actions were simply *inscrutable.* Westermann surmises that he responded immutably (Westermann, 296) and Brueggemann that the divine preference is simply inexplicable (Brueggemann, 56).

The second focuses on *the genre or source of the offering.* Several explanations arise from this opinion. Perhaps both brothers knew that God preferred an animal offering, though not yet specified in the Torah (von Rad, 104). Two weaknesses undermine this explanation. First, if it could be shown that God had given instructions concerning gifts or sacrifices, this proposal would be greatly strengthened (as presumed by Calvin [Lewis, 493]). Sacrificial instruction later in the Torah will leave nothing to assumption (cf. Lev 1—7). Why a fact so salient here would be left unspecified is problematic if God expected an animal offering.

Second, consider the term for "offering" (see the excellent summary in Waltke, 366-68). The brothers each presented a *minḥâ* ("offering"). In a noncultic setting *Jacob dispatched an advance *minḥâ* as a gift to pacify vindictive *Esau prior to their face-to-face encounter (Gen 32:19). Nothing was slain. This usage recalls the underlying meaning of *minḥâ,* deriving from *mnḥ,* "to give" (Anderson, 27-29).

If animal slaying were integral to this act of worship, the writer could have selected any of several other terms that often (or in some cases always) required slaying an animal. These include *ʿōlâ* ("burnt offering"), *zebaḥ šĕlāmîm* ("fellowship offering"), *ḥaṭṭāʾt* ("sin offering") and *ʾāšām* ("guilt offering"), to list the primary sacrificial categories. In contrast, *minḥâ* in Leviticus is restricted to grain offerings, absent of blood. Thus by its definition a *minḥâ* was designed to obtain favor—not expiation—thus explaining why it need not include animal sacrifice. Is it possible that the Septuagint's translation *thysia* ("sacrifice") for Cain's *minḥâ* ("offering," Gen 4:3) has misled interpreters to presume a divine requirement of blood in the elder brother's gift (Lewis, 496)?

Another explanation supporting the *genre or source offering* opinion recalls the curse upon soil uttered to Adam (Gen 3:17). Perhaps any subsequent offering from blighted fields was thereby rejected (see the sensitive reading in Spina, 319-32; cf. Herion, 53). If later rescission of this inferred prohibition were more explicit, it would ease concurrence. By the time we reach Leviticus a *minḥâ* consisting of grain harvested from the ground is prescribed, not proscribed.

A third opinion recommends that *the character of the offerer* may best explain God's response. Early interpreters such as the writer of Hebrews, Josephus, Irenaeus and Augustine attributed Abel's initial success to his more noble character (Heb 11:4; Lewis, 484-89). Later writers agree, often observing that Abel brought gifts of higher quality (not superior genre), as conveyed by "firstborn" and "fat portions" (Cassuto, 205; Speiser, 30; Heck, 134; Waltke, 368-69). Further, *ḥēleb* ("fat") may form a complementary assonantal link to Abel's name. After a thorough consideration of the evidence, W. Lane concludes: "The general tenor of Scripture indicates that the superior quality of Abel's offering derived from the integrity of his heart rather than from the nature of the offering itself" (Lane, 334).

The evaluation formula itself appears to focus principal attention on the offerer, since each brother is specified by name before mention of his offering: "*Abel* and his offering ... *Cain* and his offering" (Gen 4:4-5, emphasis added; cf. Heck, 139). As the story unfolds in the ensuing verses, the flawed character of the elder brother will become glaringly evident.

1.1.2. Abel Succumbs to Cain's Anger (Genesis 4:6-16). As Cain capitulates to resentment and envy, Abel succumbs as the first fatal casualty of intrafamilial strife. Younger brother fades to a voiceless victim, with *blood-stained soil his only advocate. God, champion of the victimized, responds to fratricide, personally ensuring that injustice will not go unanswered (cf. Prov 22:22-23). The cry of blood is testimony sufficient to sway the divine court (Brueggemann [60] detects lawsuit language in questions posed to Cain).

1.2. New Testament.

1.2.1. The Gospels. Abel appears in the Gospels as Jesus warns religious leaders against callous opposition to his message (Mt 23:35 par. Lk 11:51). With hyperbole he lays against his contemporaries the blame for the murder of all from ages past who by conduct or communication confronted others with the need to repent. If by Zechariah the postexilic prophet is intended, then the expression "from Abel to Zechariah" forms a set of chronological bookends, an A-to-Z of martyred messengers. (This infers a martyrdom for postexilic Zechariah, which was not reported in the OT. Uriah in Jer 26:20-23 was the latest OT martyr recorded.) If instead Zechariah the martyr is intended (2 Chron 24:20) and if Chronicles is the last book of the OT, then "from Abel to Zechariah" forms a canonical front-to-back statement of comprehensiveness.

1.2.2. Hebrews 11:4; 12:24. In Hebrews the writer makes a case for faith as an attribute attracting divine favor. He produces Abel as the earliest individual receiving such commendation (Heb 11:4). Later he recalls the personification of Abel's blood "speaking" from the earth (Heb 12:24; cf. Gen 4:10). Jesus' blood speaks as well, the writer observes—even "better than" Abel's. Instead of simply crying out for vindication, Jesus' blood announces the inauguration of an entire era of *grace and reconciliation.

1.2.3. 1 John 3:12. It is an exhortation to love each other that brings Cain and his brother to 1 John 3:12. Cain supplies a counterillustration. There the writer traces murder to its source: prior wicked deeds on Cain's part confronted the righteous deeds of his brother, resulting in a deadly combustion. By pointing to prior deeds of each, John's interpretation sounds very much like the conversation between Abel and Cain supplied by *Targum Neofiti* (neatly filling the lacuna in MT at Gen 4:8a). According to this source, Abel explains: "It was because my deeds were better than yours that my sacrifice was accepted with favor and your sacrifice was not" (Kugel, 177, cf. 181).

2. Trends in Interpretation.

In addition to the interpretations noted above, several other approaches merit mention. (For a historical review of interpretations on Abel's offering from the Septuagint forward, see Lewis's useful survey.)

Liberation theology recognizes the Cain-Abel account as significant for the theme of victimization. Depending on the writer, liberation theology may focus on either Abel or Cain as victim. While Abel's suffering is transparent from the text, in a materialist reading Cain may be recognized as suffering as a peasant farmer dispossessed by the dominant society (McEntire, 25-26). M. McEntire seeks to characterize God not only by his involvement but also by divine absence at conspicuous points (McEntire, 28, 30). For example, why did God warn Cain of pending temptation but not Abel of pending murder?

H. Maccoby presumes that behind the biblical account is a myth akin to Romulus's killing of Remus. He infers this fratricide took place originally as a human sacrifice that obtained divine favor. In time biblical compilers altered the

account to disparage human sacrifice (Maccoby, 11, 32). If the textual evidence could match the creativity of this revisionist interpretation, it might prove more compelling.

3. Implications.

Two implications flow from the life of Abel (not to mention those stemming from Cain). The first concerns God's attitude toward acts of worship. If Abel's gift was preferred because of *the offerer's character*, we encounter here a truth that biblical writers will later reiterate: cultic observance has worth if it springs from inward integrity (cf. Amos 5:21). Only then will gifts (and givers) obtain divine favor (cf. Mt 5:23-24). Alternatively, if Abel was preferred because his *offering* complied with unrecorded stipulations, such obedience would likewise recommend reception.

Second, injustice by its nature summons divine retribution. Aggrieved minds of prophets and martyrs alike may find rest in the fact that at the proper time God will bring justice on behalf of those innocently victimized (cf. Hab 2:8; Rev 6:10).

See also CAIN.

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P. B. Overland

ABIHU. *See* NADAB AND ABIHU.

ABIMELECH

Abimelech ("my father is king" or "father of a king") is the name (or cognomen, i.e., the title applied to Philistine rulers, as *Pharaoh* was applied by the Egyptians) of the king of Gerar (not to be confused with the Israelite judge named Abimelech in Judg 9). In Genesis 20; 21:22-34 and 26:1-33, this character (or pair of characters) plays a major role as the antagonist of the patriarchs *Abraham and *Isaac. Both patriarchs face Abimelech first in the setting of the wife-sister motif, then in a dispute over water rights that is resolved by a covenant ceremony.

1. Philistine Identity
2. Abimelech and the Ancestors

1. Philistine Identity.

Abimelech is identified as a Philistine in Genesis 26:1 (cf. Gen 21:32), an apparently anachronistic identification, since the Philistines did not arrive in Canaan until about 1200 B.C. It is possible to view this identification as proleptic in anticipation of the later arrival of the Philistines (Wenham, 94). K. A. Kitchen suggests that the Philistines of Genesis may have come from the Aegean area, noting that the description of the Philistines in Genesis is inconsistent with their descriptions in Judges and Samuel:

> Those [Philistines] in Genesis live around Gerar, and under a king, not in the "pentapolis" (i.e., Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron) under "lords." . . . [T]hey are rela-

> tively peaceable, not forever waging wars, despite having an army commander. It is therefore, more prudent to compare the Philistines of Abraham and Isaac with such people as the Caphtorim of Deuteronomy 2:23, and to view the term itself as a thirteenth- to twelfth-century term used of an earlier Aegean group such as the Caphtorim by the narrator. (Kitchen, 56)

The suggestion's plausibility is supported by the ample archaeological evidence of Aegean contact with the Levant as early as the third millennium B.C. (Yamauchi, 26-32). J. Van Seters, however, takes the identification of Abimelech as Philistine as evidence of the narrative's lack of historicity (Van Seters, 52).

2. Abimelech and the Ancestors.

2.1. Characterization. In his dealings with the Hebrew ancestors, Abimelech is variously characterized as (1) a sincere, morally upright, just, God-fearing king who seeks to make amends when caught in a controversy (Gen 20:9, 14-16; 21:23; 26:11); (2) an obtuse if not incompetent ruler whose intelligence apparatus inevitably fails him, leaving him susceptible not only to being duped by the patriarchs (Gen 20:2; 26:7) but also ignorant of his own servants' actions (Gen 21:26; 26:29); (3) an individual of unfailing spiritual insight that enables him to converse with God through a *dream (Gen 20:3-7) and to recognize the presence and blessing of God with the patriarchs (Gen 21:22; 26:28-29); and (4) one who eagerly enters into covenant relationships with the patriarchs (Gen 21:23, 32; 26:28-29). While these apparently contradictory portrayals of the narratival character serve the interest of the story, we will see below that the demands on the chieftain of the Philistine territory required a leader skilled in negotiating with such nomads as Abraham and Isaac and in maintaining the interests of the agriculturists he ruled. Although Abimelech does not hesitate to refer to God in negotiations with the patriarchs, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that Abimelech shared the faith of the ancestors.

2.2. Wife-Sister Motif. Abimelech encounters both Abraham and Isaac when these nomadic pastoralists enter Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur, in search of water and pasture. In their fear of the powerful ruler, both use the "wife-sister" deception to try to protect their own lives. Because of the obvious parallel with Genesis 12:10-20, scholars have puzzled over the original form of the story. The suggestion has also been made that the "wife-sister" deception is a literary doublet or triplet in which the ancestor is portrayed as one who used deception "as a measure of self-defense by an immigrant against a powerful, indigenous ruler" (Matthews, 21). It has also been suggested that the original story featured the lesser-known Isaac and Abimelech but grew through folkloric retelling to feature the greater Abram and *Pharaoh and the increased danger to the ancestress (von Rad, 271). J. Van Seters argues for the dependence of the later stories on the earlier ones in the sequence and regards the Genesis 12 account the oldest of the three, an oral folktale told with simplicity (Van Seters, 167-91). T. D. Alexander questions this approach, arguing that the episodes derive from a single author.

Scholars have found theological purposes for the use of the wife-sister motif (Clines, 45). In each case the ancestors have just received a divine promise of progeny (Abraham in Gen 18:10, 14; Isaac in Gen 26:4). Both patriarchs jeopardize the promise by reacting in fear to Abimelech's presence and failing to trust God's protection, while in both cases Abimelech, the Philistine king, acts with integrity to protect the matriarch from contact that would have undermined the promise. Thus God does not allow the divine promise to be thwarted (Martens, 32). S. McEvenue suggests a reading that concerns God's intervention in distinct realms of reality: international relations, relations with other racial groups and individual human feelings.

The wife-sister stories can be read as a test of the promise to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 that the patriarch will be a source of *blessing (or even curse) to the nations. The stories describe a situation in which both Abimelech and the patriarchs "are depicted in terms of a relationship fraught with possibility, both for good and evil, wherein both parties are responsible for behaving properly toward one another" (Biddle, 611). G. C. Nicol offers a similar reading of the stories using the categories of "promise," "threat" and "resolution."

Several attempts have been made to understand the socioeconomic context of the wife-sister stories. J. K. Hoffmeier suggests that the patriarchs offered their wives to Abimelech in diplomatic marriages. G. M. Freeman contends that the stories indicate that both Abraham and

Isaac made personal treaties with the Philistines that were not binding on later generations. According to V. H. Matthews (118-26), the Abimelech account describes the constant interaction between the more settled agriculturalists (the Philistines) and the nomadic pastoralists (the ancestors). Abimelech, as chieftain of this territory, exercised the authority to regulate the social and economic conflicts in the region. The ebb and flow of the relative strength of the patriarchs and Abimelech can be charted through their negotiations for water rights. Using advantage gained through the "wife-sister" deception, the patriarchs were given greater freedom to expand their herds to the limit of available resources. Their growing prosperity and privileged status provoked hostility among the more sedentary Philistines. The provocation of bringing Phicol, the military commander, to the negotiations again shifted the balance of power. Eventually both patriarchs were able to negotiate a covenant of nonaggression with Abimelech. The narratives illustrate how crucial the maintenance of good relations with the indigenous peoples was to the later readers of these stories.

See also ABRAHAM; ISAAC; WOMEN.

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F. L. Jost

ABRAHAM

As progenitor of the Israelite nation, Abraham is clearly one of the most important figures portrayed in the Pentateuch. Not only is he Israel's biological ancestor, the father of the special line of seed through which *blessing would come to all nations, but he is also the role model for the *covenant community, both in the faith he exercises and the obedience he exhibits. Therefore, although the central focus in approximately twelve chapters of Genesis, Abraham's significance extends far beyond the amount of space allocated to him—both in the Pentateuch itself and in the OT as a whole.

1. Name(s)
2. Career
3. Character
4. Religion
5. Family and Relatives
6. Significance

1. Name(s).

Abraham is the first character in the Bible to have two names and the only one (with the possible exception of *Sarah) to have two that are so similar in sound and perhaps also in significance—although the latter conclusion, despite the general consensus, is still debatable. The initial form of the patriarch's name, *Abram,* combines the noun *ʾāb* ("father") with the verb *rwm* ("to be high, exalted") and can mean either "he is of exalted (i.e., good) ancestry" or, as is more likely, "exalted father"—a reference to the deity's status rather than that of Abraham's ancestors.

Most scholars interpret the patriarch's name change simply in terms of a dialectal variant, dismissing the explanation of the longer epithet given in the text (i.e., "father of multitudinous nations," Gen 17:5) as "popular etymology." However, while there is no attestation of a cognate root in biblical Hebrew, the existence of the Arabic root *rhm* ("multitude") provides some linguistic support for retaining the meaning of

"Abraham" suggested in the biblical text and detecting a switch in focus in the two names (i.e., between the fatherhood of God and the fatherhood of the patriarch). Thus understood, the etymology implied in Genesis 17 may reflect a subtle wordplay on two synonymous terms *(rāhām* and *hămôn)* to reinforce the fundamental idea of multitudinous expansion. Alternatively, N. Sarna (124) adopts Ibn Ezra's suggestion of reading the consonants as an acronym for *ʾābîr* ("mighty one") plus *hămôn* ("multitude") plus *gôyim* ("nations"). This ingenious explanation, however, has not won widespread support.

Apart from the rationale offered in Genesis 17:5, no convincing explanation has been offered for the fact that Israel's progenitor should have these two names. Significantly, each name is used in a way that is entirely consistent with the name change at this point in the Genesis narrative, *Abram* being used some sixty times in Genesis 11:26—17:5, and *Abraham* occurring almost 130 times from Genesis 17:5 to the end of the book. Therefore, even if the two names are understood simply as dialectal variants, an explanation in terms of the different literary sources or oral traditions that have allegedly been amalgamated in the process of compilation seems to be ruled out.

2. Career.

Abraham's career is recorded in Genesis 11:27—25:11, the largest of the sections introduced by the "*tôlĕdôt* formulas" that provide a literary framework in the book of Genesis (*see* Genesis, Book of §1.1). The cycle relates how Abraham's clan migrates from *Ur (southern Babylonia), settles in *Haran (Upper Mesopotamia) en route to Canaan and how subsequently Abraham (seventy-five years old; Gen 12:4) and his family separate themselves from their clan to take up a seminomadic existence in and around the land of Canaan. This decision on Abraham's part is explained as his obedient response to a divine directive, to which several *promises are attached (Gen 12:1-4a). The story that unfolds in the ensuing narrative highlights Abraham's devotion to Yahweh and, despite some vacillation, his enduring confidence that the promises made by this deity will eventually be fulfilled.

Yahweh's instruction and promises to Abraham are essentially twofold: (1) Yahweh commands Abraham's physical relocation, offering him the assurance of future nationhood (i.e., "descendants" and *"land"; Gen 12:1-2a); (2) Abraham is instructed to "be a blessing" (Gen 12:2b) and given the promise of international blessing ("all the families of the ground will experience blessing through you," Gen 12:3b). While the meaning of the first part of Yahweh's speech is fairly straightforward, the same cannot be said of the second (Gen 12:2b-3), which has unfortunately been taken by many translators and commentators as simply an extension of the blessings promised in Genesis 12:2. However, several recent studies have highlighted the linguistic and literary grounds for retaining the imperative sense of the Hebrew here, thus understanding the promise of international blessing as in some way consequent upon Abraham's subsequent behavior.

Abraham, it must be said, appears to trip up at the first hurdle. Having symbolically mapped out his territory in Canaan (Gen 12:6-9) and despite further divine assurances (Gen 12:7), Abraham abandons the Promised Land in face of a severe famine and travels down to Egypt (Gen 12:10-20). This episode in the patriarch's career is a rather unfortunate one: Abraham places both himself and his family in grave peril by the ruse of passing off Sarah as his sister (which, though technically correct, is nevertheless deliberately misleading; cf. Gen 20:12). Only divine intervention averts disaster and keeps the promise of descendants alive.

The nationhood dimension of the divine promise continues as the primary focus in the two chapters that follow (Gen 13—14), both of which involve Abraham's nephew *Lot. Precisely why Lot had accompanied Abraham is never clearly explained, although there are some grounds for seeing this as the first of Abraham's attempts to provide for himself a surrogate heir (cf. Gen 11:30; 15:2-3). This would certainly explain why Lot has such a prominent place in the Abraham narrative up until the birth of a physical son to Abraham (Gen 16) and, if L. A. Turner has correctly identified a reference to Lot in the enigmatic parts of Genesis 15:2-3 (see below), why the suggestion of a surrogate heir through *Hagar is made only after Yahweh's promise of a biological son in Genesis 15.

Significantly, in both of the early incidents involving Lot (Gen 13—14), the issue primarily

at stake is the prospect of nationhood. The fracas between Abraham and Lot's herdsmen is over territorial rights and is resolved by Abraham's magnanimous decision to give Lot first choice of territory. Notably, Lot's departure from Abraham is followed with a reiteration of the nationhood aspect (land and seed) of Yahweh's promise (Gen 13:14-17) and Abraham's symbolic staking out of his territorial claim at Hebron (Gen 13:18). In the subsequent episode (Gen 14), the prospect of Abraham becoming a "great nation" and having a "great name" (Gen 12:2) is to some measure foreshadowed (see McConville). Moreover, Abraham's extraordinary identification with *Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem (with whom Abraham's royal descendants would ultimately be linked; cf. Ps110:4) may allude to the special status and role of Abraham's seed and heirs (i.e., "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation"; cf. Ex 19:6).

Whatever hopes Abraham may have entertained for Lot, they are clearly dislodged by Yahweh in Genesis 15, the first place where the patriarch expresses any reservations about the fulfillment of the divine promises (cf. Gen 15:1-2, 7-8). Here Yahweh clarifies his promises, ruling out the notion of a nonbiological son and heir altogether (Gen 15:3-5) and guaranteeing both dimensions of the nationhood promise (seed and land) through the making of a *covenant (Gen 15:9-21). While the symbolic meaning of the strange ritual associated with the establishment of this particular covenant has not been determined to any degree of certainty (see Williamson 2000b, 103-4), the fact that Yahweh alone (as represented by the flaming torch and smoking furnace) passes between the dismembered animals seems to highlight its unilateral nature. Unlike the eternal covenant announced in Genesis 17, the fulfillment of the promise of nationhood is not conditioned by Abraham's subsequent ethical behavior (cf. Gen 17:1). Thus understood, the covenant of Genesis 15 guarantees the fulfillment of only the first dimension of the programmatic agenda of Genesis 12:1-3, that of nationhood.

However, while the territorial aspect of the promise has been firmly resolved in the mind of Abraham by the end of Genesis 15, the same cannot be said of the related dimension (i.e., seed). Although biological descendants have been divinely guaranteed, Yahweh has not expressly said whether or not these will come through Sarah. Thus, beginning with Genesis 16, there is a shift in emphasis from the promissory focus of nationhood generally to the legitimate line of Abrahamic descent through which this nation, and ultimately the blessing of all nations, will come.

Genesis 16 relates how Abraham himself complicates matters when, at his wife's bidding, he obtains (at the age of eighty-six; Gen 16:16) a surrogate heir through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian *slave-girl. Yahweh's preservation of Hagar and her unborn child, and in particular his promise of numerical expansion concerning *Ishmael (cf. Gen 16:10), leave open the possibility that the programmatic agenda of Genesis 12:1-3 will be realized through Abraham and Hagar's son. It is this prospect, apparently entertained by Abraham himself (cf. Gen 17:18), that makes necessary Yahweh's further revelation (when Abraham was ninety-nine; Gen 17:1) of a covenant to be perpetuated with the special line of Abrahamic descent through Sarah's son, *Isaac (Gen 17:19-21). This covenant guarantees not simply the blessing of a single nation descended from Abraham but the blessing of a multitude of nations—whose "father" (in the sense of spiritual benefactor) Abraham will be. How the latter will materialize is elucidated in Genesis 17:6-8. From Isaac's line of Abrahamic descent will come a royal line of "seed" (the "kings" of Gen 17:6, 16; cf. 35:11) who will reign over the "great nation" promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2) and who will culminate in an individual through whom all the nations of the earth will obtain blessing (cf. Gen 22:18).

This emphasis on the special line of Abrahamic descent through which the nations obtain blessing is maintained in subsequent chapters of the Abraham narrative. The unusual nature of Isaac's conception—and thus the miracle needed to establish this special line—is highlighted by the account of a further *theophany in Genesis 18:1-15. The following two incidents—Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Gen 18:16-33) and Lot's deliverance from its destruction (Gen 19:1-29)—seem to highlight not only that others may obtain blessing through Abraham (Gen 19:29) but also that to experience such blessings others must emulate Abraham's righteous behavior (Gen 18:17-19). Interpreted in this light, the disturbing incident with which the story of Lot concludes (Gen 19:30-38) highlights the stark difference between the behavior

of Lot's descendants and that which was expected of Abraham (cf. Gen 17:1) and all those incorporated within the covenant of *circumcision (Gen 18:19).

In the following chapters the special line of Abrahamic descent is brought into even sharper focus. The promise of a son and heir, along with all the other promises, is placed in jeopardy when Abraham again attempts to pass his wife off as his sister (Gen 20:1-18). Once more disaster is averted by divine intervention, and so the promised son is born (Abraham is now one hundred years old; Gen 21:5). The special line of Abrahamic descent, anticipated in Genesis 17, is at last established (Gen 21:1-7). Not surprisingly, the next issue to be resolved is the covenantal status of Ishmael vis-à-vis Isaac (Gen 21:8-21). Although Ishmael will enjoy some of the promised blessings (Gen 21:13; cf. 17:20), Isaac alone is to be the covenant heir (Gen 21:12; cf. 17:19, 21). Thus Hagar and Ishmael are banished from Abraham's household.

Given the nature of *Abimelech's concerns—not only for himself but for his descendants (Gen 21:23)—and the way Abraham's second encounter with him illustrates the patriarch's potential to mediate blessing to others (Gen 21:22-34), it seems unlikely that the primary focus of the narrative has shifted from Abraham's seed. Indeed, rather than being a literary intrusion, this pericope may also alert the astute reader to the covenantal significance of the following chapter, in which we read of God himself swearing an oath. Before Abraham can enter into such a covenant with God, however, his submission to the divine imperative of Genesis 17:1 must first be demonstrated, thus explaining the otherwise anomalous test narrated in Genesis 22. Once Abraham demonstrates the extent of his faith and obedience, God's choice of Abraham as the one through whom "all the families of the ground will experience blessing" is vindicated and the eternal covenant announced in Genesis 17 is established.

The rest of the Abraham narrative (Gen 22:20—25:11), essentially an appendix (see Alexander 1998, 202 n. 26), focuses chiefly on how the special line of Abrahamic descent is maintained. Rebekah, Isaac's bride-to-be, is introduced in the short *genealogy of Genesis 22:20-24. The following chapters mark the transfer of the divine promises from Abraham to Isaac, recording the death and burial of Sarah (Gen 23), the obtaining of a wife for Isaac (Gen 24) and the means by which Abraham ensures and Yahweh confirms Isaac's status as Abraham's exclusive heir (Gen 25:1-11). The length at which Abraham's purchase of the cave at Machpelah is recorded highlights the importance of the Promised Land in the ensuing narrative. But as well as having literary significance, patriarchal *burial in the Promised Land is clearly an expression of confidence that God's promises will eventually be fulfilled (cf. Gen 49:29-32; 50:25). Thus even in death (at the age of 175; Gen 25:7), Abraham's confidence in God's promises is graphically portrayed.

3. Character.

As the above survey of Abraham's career graphically illustrates, Abraham's character can be summed up in one word: *faith. It was faith in God's promises that induced him to exchange an urban-based life in Ur (Gen 15:7; cf. Neh 9:7)—and subsequently (however the opening clause of Gen 12:1 is understood) Haran (cf. Acts 7:2-4)—for the seminomadic lifestyle he adopted in the land of Canaan. It was this same faith in God's promises that underpinned his unselfish offer to Lot (giving him first choice in the dispute that erupted over pasturage for their animals; Gen 13), prompted his tithe to Melchizedek (Gen 14:19-21) and persuaded him to refuse a share in the spoils of war (Gen 14:21-24). It is for his faith that Abraham is accredited with a righteous standing before God (Gen 15:6), and it is his faith that explains his unhesitating obedience to God's commands (e.g., to circumcise himself and his household [Gen 17:23-27]; to expel Hagar and Ishmael [Gen 21:8-14]; to sacrifice his beloved son and promised heir [Gen 22:1-18]). Ironically, it is the chapter in which Abraham's doubts are first articulated that expresses the significance of Abraham's faith—as the means of his righteous status before God (Gen 15:6). Thus throughout the Abraham narrative faith is the key aspect of the patriarch's character to which the writer repeatedly draws our attention.

Nevertheless, Abraham's was not an unquestioning faith or one that was immune to doubt. As already noted in the above panoramic sketch of his career, on more than one occasion Abraham felt it necessary to question the logic of God's plans, and he did so not only in relation to his personal circumstances (cf. Gen 15:2-3, 8;

17:17-18) but also in connection with God's dealings with others (Gen 18:23-32). Moreover, on several occasions Abraham betrays a distinct lack of faith: twice placing Sarah—and thus the promised seed—in jeopardy (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18), once laughing at the very idea of such an elderly couple producing a child (Gen 17:17).

However, these few occasions when Abraham failed to express absolute certainty in Yahweh's plans do not detract from Abraham's status as the exemplar par excellence of faith (Rom 4:11). Indeed, the climactic location of the supreme test of faith and Abraham's submissive response (Gen 22) highlights that, in the final analysis, faith triumphed over doubt—even to the extent of believing that, were it necessary, God would restore life to the dead (cf. Gen 22:5; Heb 11:19). Thus these two contrasting images of the patriarch's character (faith and doubt) should not be interpreted as being contradictory or mutually exclusive but rather as indicative of the genuine struggles between mental certainty and stark reality that even Abraham, "the father of those who believe," had to overcome.

4. Religion.

The nature of Abraham's *religion is inextricably bound up with the identity of the deity whom he worshiped. This issue is complicated by the fact that a number of different epithets are used of the patriarchal deity in the book of Genesis (e.g., El Elyon, El Shaddai, El Olam, El Bethel). The rich variety of divine appellations in Genesis was the basis for A. Alt's thesis (3-86) that Israel's ancestors originally worshiped several different gods and that these deities were only later identified with each other and subsequently assimilated into Yahwism (*see* God, Names of). Thus, according to Alt, patriarchal religion was essentially polytheistic, despite its monotheistic presentation in the final form of the book of Genesis. Alt's thesis has been criticized on several grounds: the remoteness of the material with which he compared the patriarchal texts (Nabatean and Palmyrene inscriptions dating from, or just prior to, the early Christian era); his contention that the patriarchal deities were originally anonymous (known only by the names of their devotees); and his assertion that the various El gods mentioned in Genesis were associated with specific localities.

A different understanding of patriarchal religion, propounded by F. M. Cross, employs comparative material (e.g., Ugaritic) that is much closer to the patriarchal era (i.e., Middle Bronze Age). Unlike Alt, Cross acknowledges a basic continuity between the deity of the patriarchs (who all worshiped the same cosmic Canaanite deity, El, despite the use of different epithets) and Yahweh (another epithet of El). Against this, however, one could contend with M. Haran that the patriarchs avoided worship at existing Canaanite shrines, preferring rather to erect independent altars, and that El Shaddai was primarily a Hebrew deity (cf. Gen 10:21). While G. J. Wenham (171) correctly notes the circularity of such observations (they depend on the antiquity and reliability of the Genesis traditions), it would be ironic indeed, given the antipathy to Canaanite religion in the biblical traditions (especially if the latter are thought to be later retrojections; see below), if Israel's ancestors were in fact simply devotees of the chief god in the Canaanite pantheon. Admittedly, a cursory reading of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek (Gen 14) could reinforce such an interpretation. However, as J. G. McConville (94) points out, Abraham clearly identifies Melchizedek's "God Most High" as Yahweh (Gen 14:22). Consequently, to equate Abraham's and Melchizedek's concept of "God Most High" is strangely to miss the point.

The question of whether Abraham's concept of God was monotheistic (as opposed to being simply henotheistic) is more difficult. While Abraham's use of the plural verb form (although cf. the Samaritan Pentateuch) in association with *ʾĕlōhîm* in Genesis 20:13 could be interpreted as proof that he had not abandoned polytheism (cf. Josh 24:2), this may simply be an instance of Abraham accommodating his speech to the worldview of Abimelech. Moreover, while household gods feature in the patriarchal stories (Gen 31:19-35; 35:2, 4), it is surely misleading to suggest that these were "highly valued" (Wenham, 160); indeed, their use seems to have been restricted to *Jacob's family and appears more to have been tolerated by the patriarch than actively encouraged. Thus there is no incontestable evidence within the Genesis material that patriarchal religion was in any sense polytheistic. Indeed, as A. R. Millard boldly concludes from the example of Akhenaten in Egypt and the long antiquity of the Rudâ cult in Assyria, "the possibility has to be allowed that in the 2nd millennium B.C. there was a fam-

ily, then a people worshipping one God alone . . . without leaving any trace apart from the traditions preserved in writings formed at a later date" (Millard 1994, 129).

The identity of Abraham's deity is further complicated by Exodus 6:2-3, a text that—read in association with Exodus 3:13-15—may be taken to suggest that Abraham and the other patriarchs were ignorant of the name *Yahweh*. Such an interpretation, however, does not sit easily with the frequent use of Yahweh—both in the narrative and (admittedly less frequently) in the dialogues of the Genesis material. Genesis portrays Abraham's deity, whatever other appellations he attracts, as Yahweh, the God who was worshiped subsequently by the Israelites. While some have argued that this is an editorial feature, reflecting the later theological understanding of the biblical compiler rather than genuine patriarchal knowledge of God (so Wenham; Moberly), the typical diachronic explanation is to ascribe the allegedly conflicting viewpoints (as to when God disclosed himself as Yahweh) to different underlying sources or traditions. Both these explanations, however, fail to account adequately for the rationale of the final editor(s), whose literary finesse is now widely acknowledged, and which may in fact be reflected in the actual distribution of the divine names in Genesis (see Alexander 1997, 96-101). A further drawback of these two explanations is their failure to allow for any differences in theological nuance between Yahweh and Elohim (see Alexander 1997, 99-100).

In view of the frequent deployment of the name Yahweh in Genesis, therefore, other scholars have challenged the above interpretation of Exodus 6:3. Drawing attention to the unusual syntax of Exodus 6:3 (and the enigmatic nature of Ex 3:13-15), such scholars have concluded that these texts do not necessarily claim that the patriarchs were ignorant of God's name as Yahweh. Some have suggested (most recently, Alexander 1997) that the key clause in Exodus 6:3 should be understood as a rhetorical question: "By my name, Yahweh, was I not known to Abraham?" Others have placed more emphasis on the actual significance of the divine name, claiming that patriarchal knowledge was deficient in respect to the actual meaning of Yahweh. In a recent variation on the latter explanation, C. R. Seitz plausibly interprets Exodus 6:3 in the light of God's enigmatic reply to Moses in Exodus 3:13-15 (i.e., "I will be who I will be"), persuasively concluding that "God was not known in his name YHWH fully until the events at the sea" (Seitz, 247).

While debate on the precise significance of Exodus 6:3 will continue, there can be no question as to the identity of Abraham's God as far as the final editor of Genesis was concerned: Abraham was a follower of Yahweh, and thus his religion, however primitive, was a form of Yahwism. This is supported by the many points of commonality: *altars, *sacrifices, prayer, vows, circumcision, tithes. Granted, there are notable dissimilarities (e.g., patriarchal worship involved practices later deemed improper, apparently operated without the mediation of *priests and lacked key aspects of the later cult such as the *tabernacle and the celebration of the *exodus; patriarchal marriages took place within relations proscribed in the Mosaic law). Some of these, however, were innovations that occurred due to God's activity in the time of *Moses. Nevertheless, while the religious practices of the patriarchs differed significantly from normative Mosaic Yahwism (and comparative ancient Near Eastern religions; see Pagolu), it was the central tenet they shared—that Yahweh (Wenham; Moberly) had formed a unique relationship with Abraham and his descendants—that united patriarchal religion and Mosaic Yahwism and gave them their most distinctive religious trait.

5. Family and Relatives.

Abraham's father, *Terah, was a descendant of *Shem (Gen 11:10-26). Terah's motives in migrating from Ur to Canaan (Gen 11:31) are not recorded in Genesis, although, according to the NT, he was apparently influenced to some extent by Abraham's decision (cf. Acts 7:2-4). In any case, rather than making the final leg of the journey, Terah settled in Haran, where he subsequently died (at the age of 205, according to the MT, when Abraham was 135; cf. Gen 11:26, 32; the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, gives Terah's age in Gen 11:32 as 145).

Abraham's two brothers, *Nahor and *Haran, are of secondary significance in the Abraham narrative—indeed their significance relates not to themselves but rather to their offspring. For reasons nowhere explicitly stated, Haran's son Lot accompanied Abraham to Canaan. However, as suggested above, it seems likely that Abraham saw in him a potential sur-

rogate heir, thus explaining his attitude and actions toward him. Nahor's chief significance lies in the fact that his son, Bethuel, fathered Rebekah, the wife of Isaac (Gen 22:20-23).

Sarah, Abraham's wife, plays a crucial role in the Abraham narrative. Her barrenness, highlighted from the beginning (Gen 11:30), proves to be the recurring test of Abraham's faith in the promises of God. While the wife-sister incidents highlight how Abraham placed the promise in jeopardy, the Hagar episodes indicate that Sarah herself was not faultless.

The significance of Hagar, Sarah's maid and Abraham's concubine, lies not only in the fact that through her Abraham fathered Ishmael but perhaps also in her Egyptian nationality. As Zakovitch has recently suggested (516-19), Abraham's dealings with *Egypt, and Hagar in particular, may account to some extent for Egypt's later maltreatment of his descendants.

Ishmael and Isaac are undoubtedly the two most important characters in the Abraham narrative (except for Abraham and Sarah). Ishmael is something of an enigmatic character in the plot. Despite the circumstances of his conception, he is incorporated (to some extent, at least) in the promises of a "great nation" (cf. Gen 12:2; 17:20; 21:13, 18), innumerable descendants (cf. Gen 15:5; 16:10; 17:20), blessing (Gen 12:2; 17:20) and, arguably, a great name (cf. Gen 12:3; 17:20; 25:16). Nevertheless, a clear distinction is maintained between the covenantal status of Ishmael and that of Isaac (cf. Gen 17:18-21; 21:11-13). While Ishmael is undoubtedly a covenant beneficiary, Isaac is exclusively the covenant heir. The significance of the latter, it seems, was the perpetuation of a special line of Abrahamic descent from which would come a special nation, a line of kings and, ultimately, a royal individual through whom the promise of international blessing would be fulfilled (see Williamson 2000b, 151-74).

The significance of another wife, Keturah, after the death of Sarah (the most straightforward reading of the canonical arrangement of the narrative) and her children to Abraham seems to lie chiefly in the fact that the children Abraham fathered through her were, like Ishmael, not counted as his heirs (cf. Gen 25:5-6). Thus, while (like Ishmael's descendants) Keturah's children reflect a fulfillment of the divine promise to increase Abraham's descendants numerically, they play no part in the fulfillment of the promise in Genesis 17:2-6 to make Abraham the "father of multitudinous nations"; this promissory aspect belongs exclusively to Isaac (Gen 17:15-16; 21:12).

As well as the members of his immediate family, Abraham's household included numerous servants (Gen 14:14; 17:23-27; 18:7; 22:3; 24:2, 35, 59), among whom belonged (probably) the herdsmen of Genesis 13:7-8. Some of these servants, presumably including Hagar, were acquired during Abraham's stay in Egypt (Gen 12:16), as were others after his tryst with Abimelech (Gen 20:14). While admitting that the picture of Abraham with his private army in Genesis 14 contrasts markedly with the general portrayal of the patriarch elsewhere in the narrative as a nomadic shepherd, F. I. Andersen draws attention to at least one other text that supports this more illustrious characterization (Gen 23:6). Wiseman's observation (145-46) is also pertinent: Abraham's rank and dignity were also acknowledged by the kings of Egypt (Gen 12:10-20) and Gerar (Gen 20), who, given the circumstances, would undoubtedly have dismissed an insignificant foreigner rather than lavish gifts upon him.

Eliezer, as observed above, is another problematic character in the story, due largely to the uncertain meaning of the Hebrew words in Genesis 15:2-3. The one of whom Abraham speaks in these verses has been generally identified as a surrogate heir, one "Eliezer of Damascus, Abraham's household slave." L. A. Turner, however, challenges the traditional interpretation on the grounds that the meaning of the *hapax legomenon* (word appearing only once in the Hebrew Bible) *mešeq* is assumed, as is the supposition that Abraham speaks of the same individual in both verses. Turner (73) maintains that while Genesis 15:2 may admittedly refer to one Eliezer, his precise identity and role is far from clear, as is his relationship to the person described as a *ben bêtî* in the following verse. Turner suggests, rather, that whatever the identity and role of the former individual (Eliezer), the "son of my house" in view in Genesis 15:3b is none other than Lot, Abraham's nephew.

Nevertheless, however the *ben bêtî* of Genesis 15 is interpreted, it is clear from Genesis 24:2 that some sort of hierarchical structure existed among Abraham's servants and that the one with overall responsibility was a male. Thus, while the connection is not made explicitly in

the text itself, the servant whom Abraham commissioned to find a wife for his son may have been the Eliezer of whom we read in Genesis 15.

6. Significance.

Abraham's significance is at least threefold, in that the Bible presents him as a national ancestor, a historical figure and a theological character of tremendous importance.

6.1. National. Abraham was of paramount importance in relation to the nation of Israel. Not only was he the nation's progenitor (Ex 2:24; 4:5; 32:13; cf. Mic 7:20), but also Israel's territorial claims and concept of God are traced back ultimately to him (Ex 3:6, 15; 4:5; cf. Ps 47:9).

This representation of Abraham in Genesis as the father of Isaac, the grandfather of Jacob and, consequently, the national ancestor of all Israel is viewed by many *traditio-historical critics, however, as quite artificial. While his connections with Hebron suggest to such scholars that Abraham was indeed an ancestor of the Judean tribes that settled in this vicinity, R. E. Clements (1.53-54) typically maintains that his elevation to ancestor of all Israel did not take place until the period of the united monarchy, when relations between Israel and Judah were conducive to such a claim. Such a reconstruction, however, is driven by scholarly presuppositions over the identification and dating of alleged sources/traditions, which increasingly have been challenged by recent scholarship, conservative and otherwise. It also raises serious questions over the historical value of the patriarchal traditions concerning Israel's ancestry, despite the fact that (1) Genesis clearly purports to be portraying real historical figures; (2) more complex oral folk histories have been accurately preserved by other tribal groups; and (3) such a tracing of national ancestry was by no means unique in the world of the first millennium. Admittedly, there is nothing among comparative material that is precisely like the biography of Abraham; nevertheless, there are ancestral traditions that are analogous to some extent.

6.2. Historical. Given the radical skepticism that has arisen in some circles with respect to later OT historiography (e.g., in the monarchy period), it is not surprising that for such scholars "the quest for the historical Abraham is a basically fruitless occupation" (Thompson, 315), echoing similar sentiments expressed over a century ago by J. Wellhausen. While the latter's influence had been eroded by the biblical *archaeology movement's insistence on the historical plausibility of the patriarchal traditions, growing twentieth-century confidence in their authentic witness to the world of the second millennium B.C. was strongly challenged in the mid 1970s by T. L. Thompson and J. Van Seters. Like Wellhausen, they maintained that the patriarchal stories constitute an imaginative projection of Israel's later hopes into a created past that simply reflects the period in which it was written. Exposing some serious flaws in the methodology of W. F. Albright, C. H. Gordon and others, Van Seters maintained that comparative ancient Near Eastern evidence (e.g., the Nuzi archives) used to support a Middle Bronze Age setting for the patriarchal narratives was inconclusive, especially since equally good parallels could be drawn from the first millennium B.C. While such a depreciation of all the second-millennium comparative material—as well as Thompson's and Van Seters's own methodology—has not gone unchallenged (e.g., see Selman, 108-29), the very concept of a historical patriarchal age can no longer simply be assumed but must be defended rigorously. Nevertheless, the socioeconomic and religious distinctives portrayed in Genesis 12—50 sit most uncomfortably with the idea that it is a poorly disguised retrojection from a later age.

However, even when the antiquity of the patriarchal traditions is accepted, historical difficulties remain. Given the absence of absolute chronology in Genesis (e.g., exact synchronisms with extrabiblical events), it is impossible to date Abraham (or the other patriarchs) precisely. In fact proposed dates for the patriarchs range from a date in the Early Bronze Age (2800-2400 B.C.) to a date in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.), the most probable being somewhere in the early part of the second millennium. The biblical chronology, working back from 1 Kings 6:1, collates to a date of about 2092 B.C. for Abraham's arrival in Canaan. However, both 1 Kings 6:1 and the related chronological data are open to different interpretations (*see* Exodus, Date of; Chronology). Moreover, the LXX of Exodus 12:40 also includes the period in Canaan with Israel's 430 years in Egypt (suggesting a date of 1877 B.C. for Abraham's journey to Canaan), so dating Abraham's migration is clearly not as straightforward as may first appear.

Nevertheless, while fixing absolute dates for

Abraham is best avoided, the biblical portrayal of him certainly fits an early second-millennium setting: personal and place names associated with the patriarchs have appropriate attestation; the seminomadic lifestyle of the patriarchs, as well as key terms in the narratives, are exemplified in texts from Mari (located between Ur and Haran); some (although, by no means all; cf. Van Seters) of the customs attested to in the patriarchal texts find parallels only in second-millennium comparative material.

Moreover, alleged anachronisms in the Abraham narrative (e.g., the presence of Philistines [Gen 21:32, 34]; the domestic use of camels [Gen 12:16; 24:10]) do not necessarily undermine it as an authentic witness to the patriarchal age. As A. R. Millard contends (1992, 1.39), Philistines (or a group so called by a later writer) may have resided in Canaan long before their attestation in other written sources, and camels may have been domesticated centuries prior to their general use. Therefore, although ancient Near Eastern comparative material cannot be said to prove the historicity of the biblical Abraham, it does confirm that his portrayal in Genesis is entirely plausible and thus, from the historian's viewpoint, his actual existence more likely.

6.3. Theological. Prior to the Abraham narrative the book of Genesis presents two major phases in God's dealings with humanity and does so in terms of two individuals, *Adam and *Noah. The Abraham narrative, therefore, represents the third phase in salvation history, thus indicating the patriarch's theological significance.

The ancestry of Abraham's father, Terah, is traced back through Shem to Noah (Gen 10:1-32; 11:10-26), who is in turn traced back to Adam through *Seth (Gen 5:1-32). In this way a theological continuum is suggested between Abraham (and the promises God made to him) and the "protevangelium" of Genesis 3:15. Moreover, God's promise to make Abraham both fruitful and numerous (Gen 17:2, 6) seems to allude to the divine mandate given to Adam and subsequently to Noah (cf. Gen 1:28; 9:7), suggesting that this divine enabling of Abraham is but the next step in the outworking of God's original purposes. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the call of Abraham with the tower of *Babel incident suggests that the promissory agenda of Genesis 12:1-3 comprises the element of divine *grace that otherwise would, somewhat anomalously, be missing. Thus the phase of salvation history that begins with the call of Abraham carries forward the plan initially disclosed in the aftermath of Adam and Eve's rebellion in the garden of *Eden and subsequently maintained through the deliverance of Noah and his family from the *flood.

The promises of Genesis 12:1-3 set the agenda, not simply for the rest of the book of Genesis, but for all of the subsequent material in Genesis to Kings—indeed, arguably well beyond that to the NT fulfillment through Jesus Christ (see Williamson 2000a). Thus understood, while the primary fulfillment of these promises relates to the nation of Israel, their ultimate focus is on something far more extensive: the international community of faith.

Some aspects of the programmatic agenda are partially realized within Genesis—Kings. While none of the promises (other than the establishment of the special Abrahamic line of "seed') is fulfilled in Genesis, the book of Exodus emphasizes the phenomenal expansion of Abraham's descendants in Egypt (Ex 1:6-10; 12:37). It further illustrates that two key precursors to inheriting the Promised Land have been met: Abraham's descendants have become temporary residents in a different land, where they have been oppressed as slaves (Gen 15:13), thus setting the stage for the promised deliverance (Gen 15:14) that unfolds in the chapters that follow. Therefore, Exodus marks the initial stages in the fulfillment of the divine promise concerning nationhood, a prospect that is only finally realized after the conquest (under *Joshua) and total subjugation of Canaan (under David). However, this fulfillment of the posterity and territorial aspects of the patriarchal promise was merely a foreshadowing of an even greater fulfillment to come, a fulfillment anticipated especially in the OT's prophetic literature (e.g., Hos 1:10-11; Zech 10:6-10).

The other major aspect of the patriarchal promise (i.e., the blessing of the nations) remains an unfulfilled hope for the duration of the OT era. While there may be allusions to the promise in the activities of Joseph (Gen 41:57) and the reign of Solomon (cf. 1 Kings 4:34; 9:26—10:25), it is again clear from the prophetic literature that the consummation of this hope was still future (cf. Is 19:24-25; Jer 4:2;

Zech 8:13, 20-23). This same future orientation is reflected in Psalm 72:17, a psalm that, significantly, links the mediating role associated with Abraham and his seed to a future and ideal Davidic king.

In view of these OT expectations, therefore, it is not surprising that Jesus Christ is presented as a royal descendant of Abraham through David and that in him the patriarchal promises find their ultimate fulfillment: Abraham's innumerable descendants encompass a global community of faith, incorporating both biological and spiritual "seed"; the territory promised to Abraham encompasses not only the land of Israel but the whole earth (Rom 4:13); and through Jesus, Abraham's royal descendant, people from every tongue and tribe and nation obtain eternal blessing. Thus Abraham's theological significance extends far beyond the actual verses allocated to him; he is indubitably one of the most theologically significant characters in all of Scripture.

See also COVENANT; GENESIS, BOOK OF; HAGAR; HARAN; ISAAC; ISHMAEL; MELCHIZEDEK; NAHOR; PROMISES, DIVINE; SARAH; TERAH; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH; UR.

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ABRAHAMIC COVENANT(S). *See* ABRAHAM; COVENANT.

ABRAM. *See* ABRAHAM.

ABORTION. *See* BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER.

ADAM

The name *Adam* derives from the root *'dm*. This root occurs some 605 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is also found in contemporary Hebrew epigraphic material and in later Hebrew, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. As a verb, the root *'dm* means "to be red" (Is 1:18, etc.). It is associated with the color red or brown in words such as *'ādōm*, "red, brown" (Zech 1:8, etc.); *'ōdem*, "ruby" (Ezek 28:13, 17; 39:10); *'ĕdôm*, "Edom"; *'ădamdām*, "reddish" (Lev 13:19, 24, 42-43, 49; 14:37); and the well-known word for "earth, ground," *'ădāmâ* (Gen. 2:5, etc.).

'ādām is used with four senses in the Hebrew text: a generic term for humanity; a specific term for an individual male; a personal name; and a place name. Other usages have been suggested: "skin, hide, leather" (Hos 11:4); and "ground, earth, steppe" (Gen 16:12; Job 36:28; Jer 32:20; Zech 9:1). However, the four senses identified above suit all these occurrences as well. Therefore, there is no need for additional meanings that may be introduced from cognate forms in other Semitic languages or from other forms of the root in Hebrew (Hess 1988). The place name *'ādām* occurs in Joshua 3:16, where it describes a location in the Jordan Valley usually identified with Tell ed-Dâmiyeh. The first three usages are found in the Pentateuch. In fact, they occur within the first four chapters of Genesis.

1. *'ādām* in Genesis 1
2. *'ādām* in Genesis 2—3
3. *'ādām* in Genesis 4
4. The Name Adam Outside the Bible

1. *'ādām* in Genesis 1.

The first appearance of *'ādām* is found in Genesis 1:26-27. There it occurs twice, describing the divine *creation of humanity on the sixth day. It is clear that the *'ādām* created is intended as a collective. In Genesis 1:27, *'ādām* in the first half of the verse is set in parallel with "male and female" in the second half. The intent is to include all members of the human race in the *'ādām* that God created.

God determines to make *'ādām* in "our image" and "our likeness." Suggestions about the meaning of these terms have multiplied. Some think the one term was used in an earlier period and the second was added later as a gloss to explain the first. Others suggest that *image* and *likeness* reflect physical and spiritual dimensions of the *'ādām*. However, none of these is conclusive. An Assyrian and Aramaic bilingual inscription dating to the ninth century B.C. and originating in northern Syria includes both these expressions, spelled the same in the Aramaic version as in Hebrew (Hess 1991). The Akkadian version translates both by the same word, "statue." Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the Hebrew usage of these two terms was, as with Aramaic, stylistic variation used to describe the same thing. It reflects poetic repetition that emphasizes the idea.

However, *'ādām* was not a statue. Instead, man and woman were commanded to be fruitful and to subdue the earth. The command or expectation to reproduce occurs with all the animals created in Genesis 1 and is best understood as part of the creation order rather than as distinctive to the *image of God (Bird). This image stresses the dominion or stewardship of the earth that *'ādām* is commanded to complete. To be sure, fruitfulness is part of the fulfillment, because dominion is not possible without populating the earth. Yet the idea of dominion is a useful one with which to compare the statue mentioned above. A royal statue at a distant corner of the empire represented the king's authority when the ruler could not be physically present. So also, at the completion of God's creation, he left *'ādām* as his image to represent his authority on earth. This suggests that the function of the image is to reflect the divine will on earth in such a way as to extend God's kingdom into every area of nature, society and culture. This is exactly what happens with the first man in Genesis 2.

2. *'ādām* in Genesis 2—3.

The creation of *'ādām* in Genesis 2:7 is described with a wordplay on *'ădāmâ*, the "ground" from which *'ādām* was created. Thus *'ādām*, having received the breath of life and in origin coming from the ground itself, is eminently suited to take care of the garden and all that God has placed in it.

In Genesis 2 *'ādām* occurs with reference to a single individual who is the focus of attention. Whenever *'ādām* appears here it is always with

either the definite article or an inseparable preposition. Although the latter cases would not require *ʾādām* to be definite (and indeed the Masoretic Text does not vocalize it that way), the older consonantal text allows for the possibility of an original definite article before every *ʾādām* in the text.

If this is the case and *ʾādām* is definite, then "the man" may suggest a number of possible interpretations. First, there is no occurrence of the personal name *Adam* in this narrative. In Hebrew (unlike Greek), personal names do not accept a definite article. Second, such an articular noun used to refer to an individual has two linguistic properties: meaning and reference. A common noun such as *ʾādām* in Genesis 1 has meaning insofar as *ʾādām* is capable of a definition, namely, "humanity." However, it has limited reference. *ʾādām* does not distinguish one individual from another or one group from another. A proper name (e.g., Adam), on the other hand, has little meaning. Although many personal names in modern society have no conscious meaning, in the ancient world nearly all names carried some sort of meaning. This is true of Adam, especially since there is wordplay between *ʾādām* and *ʾădāmâ*, the ground from which the *ʾādām* was taken and to which he will return. However, in all cases the primary concern of a personal name is reference, to distinguish the name bearer from everyone else. "The man" of Genesis 2 fulfills both roles. Like a common noun, it has meaning insofar as it is translated and that translation enhances the understanding of the first man. Like a proper name, it has reference insofar as it designates the first man in the garden of *Eden. This in-between state is occupied by one class of nouns (among others): titles.

How is *ʾādām* a title in Genesis 2 (Hess 1990, 5-7)? As an articular noun it can be translated "the man." This means that it is definite. Another way of giving a noun definition in Semitic languages is to place it in construct with a definite noun that follows. There are a number of examples of a word translated "man" being rendered definite in this way. However, it is not *ʾādām* but *ʾîš* that is used in these cases. Most significant is the use of this construction to describe rulers of a town or region. Thus in 2 Samuel 10:6 and 8 the expression *ʾîš ṭôb* may be rendered, "ruler of Tob." If so, this understanding has parallels in cuneiform texts throughout the ancient Near East. Especially interesting are the titles given rulers of Palestine and Syria in the fourteenth-century B.C. Amarna letters. There the logographic sign for "man" is *lú*, which is followed by a place name to designate an individual as ruler of that town or region. This includes the local leaders of Acco, Amurru, Ashkelon, Beirut, Byblos, Gezer, Lachish, Megiddo and Sidon.

It is appropriate to compare this usage of *lú* to that of *ʾādām* as found in Genesis 2. Both of these terms have a similar semantic range, referring both to "man" in particular and to "humanity" in general. In Genesis 2 and the titles discussed above, both are definite, since *ʾādām* is preceded by a definite article, and *lú* is in a construct state with a definite noun. Both refer to a particular individual who is given the responsibility of caring for or ruling over a particular area of geography, whether a city or a garden.

These similarities imply that *ʾādām* is a title that reflects a middle point in the continuum from the general usage of *ʾādām* in Genesis 1 to the personal name Adam at the end of Genesis 4 (Hess 1990, 8). The responsibility of the *ʾādām* in Genesis 2 is detailed by the instructions that God gave in Genesis 2:15-17. There the *ʾādām* is to work and take care of the garden (*ʿbd* and *šmr*). He is also forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The first part of this illustrates the stewardship responsibility that the *ʾādām* has, namely, ordering and watching over the garden that God has created. The second part describes a limit placed upon the *ʾādām:* he is not to touch one tree. The longer description anticipates the dialogue between the snake and the woman in Genesis 3. Genesis 2:18-20 illustrates another expression of the image of God. The *ʾādām* is not only responsible for the garden but also the one who takes care of the animals. He does this by naming them and thus discerning the essential characteristics of each. This is not so much an expression of authority as it is a classification of the animal kingdom and thereby an ordering of them (Ramsey). In this way the *ʾādām* continues in obedience to the will of God to reflect that will in the image of God by ordering and promoting the welfare of the created order (just as God had done in the creation itself).

The creation of the woman is the culmination of God's acts through which he finds an ap-

propriate helper (*ʿēzer*) for the *ʾādām* (*see* Eve). The helper is recognized as one who comes from the flesh of *ʾādām* and is thus of the same material, unlike either the garden or the animal world. Through the act of naming, the *ʾādām* also recognizes the newly created being as "woman," *ʾiššâ*, taken from the "man," *ʾîš*. The wordplay introduces a new Hebrew word for man, *ʾîš* rather than *ʾādām*. This is necessary because the addition of a feminine ending to *ʾādām* would result in the word for ground, *ʾădāmâ*, as already noted. However, the addition of the same ending to *ʾîš* produces the desired result of a word for "woman," *ʾiššâ*. This wordplay leads to the pronouncement that the man will leave his family and create a new family with his wife (again, *ʾiššâ*). The concern of Genesis 2:24 is to bring back into one flesh what was divided in the creation of woman in Genesis 2:22.

In Genesis 3 the man recedes as the woman and the snake engage in conversation and then action. Only at the conclusion in Genesis 3:6 does the *ʾādām* participate. Even then it is a passive role in which he receives and eats what the woman has given to him. Yet it is to the *ʾādām* (Gen 3:9) that God calls. He is the one who first confesses the shame of nakedness that the fruit has now enabled him and the woman to experience. It is this shame that separates him from God and, as he blames the woman (Gen 3:12), alienates him from her as well. Thus the harmony of relationships established at the end of Genesis 2, and symbolized there by the absence of shame despite nakedness, begins to disintegrate here and throughout the remainder of Genesis 1—11 and throughout human history (Hauser). This alienation is defined by the judgments that God proclaims upon the snake, the woman and the man.

The desire of the woman for the *ʾādām* and his dominion in Genesis 3:16 must be compared with the words of God to Cain in Genesis 4:7, where the rare word for "desire" as well as the word for "rule" also appear together (Hess 1993a). In both cases the desire is one of authority, and the struggle is one of the wills that exists between people. The statement of male dominance is a judgment of the way life would be, not an expression of the divine will. It is no more sinful to reject and seek to overturn it than it is sinful to use weed killer in light of Genesis 3:18.

Although the *ʾādām* of Genesis 3:17 was not cursed, the *ʾădāmâ* ("ground") received a curse. Again, the wordplay calls to mind Genesis 2:7 and the dependence of the man upon the ground. The curse not only alienated the *ʾādām* from the ground but also increased the labor required to complete the tasks of tilling and keeping the garden. However, this was not to last long because the *ʾādām* and the woman were expelled from the garden and left to face the world apart from the close relationship with God that they originally enjoyed. This follows the three events of Genesis 3:20-22: the naming of Eve, divine provision in the garments of skin and God's recognition that the *ʾādām* has become like the divine because he knows good and evil. As with the previous namings, that of Eve reflects a discernment derived from the judgments of Genesis 3:15-16. God's provision of leather garments may anticipate the *sacrifices of Leviticus in providing access to God through the death of an innocent animal. However, at this point in Genesis its main purpose is to provide a permanent means of ending the shame of nakedness. Because this is associated with the knowledge of good and evil obtained from eating the fruit, it is appropriate that the discussion of these implications should follow in Genesis 3:22. This knowledge was gained in explicit disobedience to God, so the "eternal life" derived by eating from the tree of life (*see* Eden, Garden of) would also be contrary to the divine will.

3. *ʾādām* in Genesis 4.

The noun *ʾādām* appears again in Genesis 4:1, 25 and 5:1-5. All of these are birth announcements. Genesis 4:1 describes *Cain's birth. Although most translations render the *ʾādām* here as the personal name Adam, that is incorrect. Alone among its occurrences in Genesis 4 and 5, in 4:1 it has the definite article. Grammatically, it cannot be a personal name in Hebrew. It is better rendered, "the man," as in Genesis 2 and 3. Thus this usage ties the *ʾādām* of the preceding chapters with the founder of the human race and the line of Cain (Gen 4:1). The occurrence of the same phrase in Genesis 4:25 suggests that the nonarticular *ʾādām* there is identical to the one in verse 1. As the founder of Seth's line, *ʾādām* here becomes the personal name Adam. Just as the *ʾādām* with the article tied together these genealogies with the story of the garden of Eden, so the Adam of Genesis 5:1-5 relates this genealogy to

the figures described in Genesis 1:26-28 by the references to the image of God in both texts.

As a personal name, Adam occurs again in the OT only at the beginning of the great genealogy of Chronicles (1 Chron 1:1). There it refers to the Adam of Genesis 1—5. No other usage of the personal name Adam can be found in biblical Israel.

4. The Name Adam Outside the Bible.
The name *Adam* is not unknown outside the Bible (Hess 1993b, 59-65; 1997, 31-32). As early as the third millennium B.C. at Tell Mardikh, the site of ancient Ebla in northern Syria, the personal name occurs as *a-da-ma* and variants. It may also occur there as a divine name, Adama, which forms part of a name for a month on the Eblaite calendar. In the early second millennium B.C. there is a female name at Mari, *a-da-mu.* Other names with the "Adam" form come from different sites at this time. The name virtually disappears from records in the late second millennium B.C. Only at thirteenth-century Emar (in northern Syria) is it found, and there it is as a divine name, *a-dam,* that is part of a month name, just like at Ebla. Otherwise, there is no certain occurrence of the personal name in West Semitic before the Hellenistic period. The implication is that the earlier into West Semitic texts that one looks, the more likely one is to discover the use of the name Adam. The name all but disappears from the textual record by the time of Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan. Therefore, as a personal name Adam preserves an authentic memory of an early time when it was so used. A similar pattern of occurrences can be found with many of the other names in the early *genealogies of Genesis 1—11.

See also CREATION; EDEN, GARDEN OF; EVE; IMAGE OF GOD.

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ʾĀDÔN, ʾĂDŌNAY. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

ADULTERY. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture, or farming, involves raising crops and livestock for human consumption. It is the foundation of survival for any nation, since it provides, among other things, the food supply for its population. Members of some societies are further removed from agricultural concerns, since they are able to acquire its products through barter or purchase. In preindustrial societies such as ancient Israel, however, all people were more directly involved in the processes of agriculture. While Canaan is portrayed as a fertile land (Deut 8:8-9), in reality expertise in the means of production was vital because it was an area where the climatic and soil conditions were often marginal at best. Acquisition of agricultural expertise and its dissemination was one of the functions of the *family unit.

Family life among the patriarchs was agriculturally based. Their herds and flocks were an important part of their holdings (e.g., Gen 13:5; 26:14; 32:7; 45:10). They also grew the crops necessary to sustain themselves and their livestock (Gen 18:6; 27:28; 37:7). While their life at first glance might appear to have been that of

nomads, constantly wandering from place to place, they needed to be at least semisedentary, remaining in one location long enough for the maturation of the planted crops. Some of their number also moved to different locations seasonally in order to pasture their flocks in optimum grazing land (Gen 37:12-17). This type of mix between having a permanent abode for the sake of crops and also seasonally changing locations for the sake of herds and flocks, known as "dimorphic pastoralism" or "enclosed nomadism," was common in the ancient Near East (Rowton 1974; 1976).

1. Geography
2. Livestock
3. Crops
4. Theology

1. Geography.

Geography and climate were the biggest challenges to agriculture in Canaan. Water supply was determinative of what could be grown, as well as where and when it could be grown. These factors were not uniform throughout the area. Water in *Egypt, for example, was provided by the flooding Nile and by irrigation (Deut 11:10), and areas of Palestine were similar in at least some periods (cf. Gen 13:10). Israel's supply was generally depicted differently (Deut 8:7-9), with rainfall, which was seasonal, having an important place in agricultural production (Deist, 124). Mainly carried by winds from the west over the Mediterranean, rainfall amounts were usually higher closer to the sea and decreased further inland as well as from north to south (Hopkins, 84-94, 325; King and Stager, 86). Since rain was so important to agriculture, Hebrew has several different terms for various types and times of rainfall (Deist, 106, 125). Other water sources besides streams, which were often seasonal, and rain included pools and springs, as well as man-made wells (Num 21:17-18) or cisterns and even dew (Deut 33:28; Hopkins, 98-99).

Topography was also problematic in the central hill country, where much of the Israelite habitation was located prior to the Iron Age, since there was little level land on which to plant. Terraces, which were labor intensive to construct and maintain, were needed to help prevent erosion and preserve rainwater (Hopkins, 173-86; King and Stager, 87; Meyers, 9). All of these factors and others contributed to the at times very indistinct boundary between *land that was fertile and usable, and the *wilderness, or steppe, which was too marginal to support permanent sedentary habitation.

2. Livestock.

Animal husbandry is reflected in Scripture as being an ancient practice (Gen 4:2). Animals were domesticated for two purposes: as beasts of burden and as sources of material products, such as hair, hides, meat, milk and the like. The former use is discussed in more detail elsewhere (*see* Zoology §7). Lists of livestock belonging to people most often include donkeys, oxen, camels and sheep (Gen 12:16; 30:43; 32:5; Ex 22:9). Camels were used for long-range transportation (e.g., Gen 24; 31:17). Donkeys were also used as beasts of burden (Gen 42:26; Ex 4:20; Num 22:21) and joined bovines in plowing the fields in preparation for sowing (Is 30:24). Cattle were also used to tread out grain (Deut 25:4).

Cattle terminology is rich in the Bible, since they were so important to the economy. F. Deist usefully lays out the various terms employed, showing those which designated domesticated cattle generally (*bāqār;* e.g., Gen 33:13; Ex 22:1 [MT 21:37]), farmyard cattle (*šôr;* Ex 34:19), those used in agriculture (*ʾelep;* Deut 7:13; 28:4, 18, 51), their young (*ʿēgel* or *ʿeglâ;* Gen 15:9; Lev 9:2, 3, 8; Deut 21:3, 4, 6), those used for sacrificial purposes (*pār;* Ex 29:1; Num 28:11) and the bull (*ʾabbîr;* Is 34:7; cf. Gen 49:24). There is some overlap between the uses of these terms. At times the meat of cattle was used for food (Gen 9:4; 18:7; Deut 14:4; cf. 1 Sam 28:24; Lk 15:23-30), though this was relatively rare and only on special occasions, since it would deplete the "capital" of the herds rather than using the renewable "interest," such as their milk, which was more widely consumed (Gen 18:8; Deut 32:14; cf. Hopkins, 247-48). Leather, from either cattle or the flocks, was used for clothing (e.g., Gen 3:21; Lev 13:48, 56-59; Num 31:20; e.g., shoes, EA 22.23), water vessels (Gen 21:14; Num 24:7) and, in the Amarna tablets (fourteenth century B.C.), for such military applications as shields and armor (EA 22.37-41), though these are not mentioned in the Pentateuch (cf. 2 Sam 1:21; Is 21:5; Nahum 2:3).

Cattle are important enough that they are included among those things to be provided with *sabbath rest (Deut 5:14), and they are to be returned to their rightful owner if they stray (Ex

23:4). Part of this importance was due to the role they played in the sacrificial system (Gen 8:20), where they were offered on behalf of the people as burnt (Lev 1:3), fellowship (Lev 3:1) and *sin offerings for the priest and the people (Lev 4:3, 14). Part of the meat of some of these sacrifices was also a major portion of the priestly livelihood (Lev 6:26; 7:32-34).

Flocks of sheep and goats played even a more important role in Israel's daily life, since they were more plentiful and thus available to a wider spectrum of society (see the economic distinction between those having access to cattle, sheep or birds for sacrifice in Lev 1). Deist (161-62) provides a useful discussion of the Hebrew words used in this semantic field. The flock also provided milk (Gen 18:8; Ex 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21; 32:14) and meat (Gen 27:9; 31:38; Ex 12:8; Deut 32:14). Their skins (Ex 25:5; 26:14; 35:7) and hair or wool (for cloth: Ex 25:4; 35:6; Lev 13:48; Num 31:20; Deut 22:11; in ritual: Num 19:5-6) were also useful. The flock played a major role in the Israelite sacrificial system (see, e.g., Gen 4:4; 8:20; 15:9; 22:7-8, 13; Ex 12:21; Lev 1—7). Sheep and cattle were used in a covenant ceremony, possibly as a ratification gift offered by the lesser of the parties to the greater (Gen 21:28-31; Wenham, 93). They could also be the means of compensation for shepherding (Gen 31:8, 41) or even for prostitution (Gen 38:17).

Birds were also used both for food (quail: Ex 16:13; Num 11:31-33) and as sacrifices (Gen 15:9; Lev 1:14; 5:7; 12:6; 15:14, 29-30). These would have been available for capture, though they might also have been domesticated. There is not sufficient textual or archaeological evidence to determine this.

Though not usually considered among livestock, the bee, which was domesticated in Egypt from the early dynastic period, was exploited for honey in Israel (Deut 32:13). However, most of the references to "honey" in the Pentateuch probably refer to a product derived from fruit rather than from the honey bee (see 3.5 below).

3. Crops.

According to the biblical text, the use of field crops is as old as humanity itself (Gen 4:2). The importance of crops to the Israelite domestic economy is shown by several calendars that describe the agricultural year. The Gezer Calendar, from the tenth century B.C., speaks of an agricultural year's activities beginning in the autumn. They are laid out in the following order: the harvest [of grapes and olives; *ʾsp*], sowing [of grain], late-planting, chopping flax, barley harvest, harvest and measuring(?), pruning [of vines] and summer fruit (*COS* 2.85.222; cf. Ex 23:14-19; 34:18-23; Lev 23:9-43; Deut 16:9-17). These crops will be studied in that order.

3.1. Grapes. Grapes provided the area of Canaan with food and drink from as early as the Early Bronze I period (3500-3000 B.C.; Walsh, 13; King and Stager, 98-102; cf. Gen 9:20). They provide what is proverbially stated as one of the nation's three staples of "grain, new wine and oil" (e.g., Num 18:12; Deut 28:51). Israel's warm, dry climate lent itself to grape production, as did the low humus, a high alkaline soil of the hill country (Walsh, 31). Vines require water in the winter, which is Israel's rainy season, but they prefer the heat and dryness of Israel's summers, so conditions, like those of other places on the Mediterranean, such as Italy and France, are ideal for viticulture (Hepper, 97; Walsh, 30). Selecting the best ground, building and maintaining terraces to retain the meager water, planting and protecting the developing crop, and harvesting and processing fruit in wine presses and fermentation vats made grape and wine production a very labor intensive activity (cf. Is 5:1-2; Walsh, 87-207; King and Stager, 98-101).

The fruit of the vine could be eaten fresh (Is 65:21) or dried and preserved as raisins (Hepper, 100), but much of it was made into wine, a common Israelite beverage. There are several terms for wine, denoting different types, colors or even locales. The Hebrew word *yayin* is the most widely used term, occurring 141 times in the OT and twenty-six times in the Pentateuch. The Hebrew *tîrôš* ("new wine") occurs thirty-eight times in the OT, ten times in the Pentateuch; *ʿāsîs* (unfermented juice) five times in the OT, none in the Pentateuch; and *ḥemer* ("red wine") occurs only in Deuteronomy 32:14. A distillate of the grape, a type of brandy, is probably what is meant by *šēkār* ("strong drink"), which occurs twenty-three times in the OT, six times in the Pentateuch. Wine was provided not only for guests (e.g., Gen 14:18) but also for everyday consumption (Gen 19:32; 27:25). The use of any grape product was forbidden for the Nazirite, a person who was specially consecrated to God (Num 6:1-8).

3.2. Olives. Olives provided the second of the three Israelite staples, oil (see 3.1 above). Olive

trees were also well suited for the climatic and soil conditions of the Israelite hill country and foothills (Hepper, 103-9; King and Stager, 95-98). Wild olives were used as early as the seventh millennium B.C., with domesticated olives dating from the Chalcolithic period (Eitam, 19; King and Stager, 96). The time it takes from planting an olive tree to its maturing means that olive growers must be sedentary. Harvesting the ripe fruit was done by hand or by striking the branches with a stick (Deut 24:20; Is 17:6; 24:13) before the overripe olives could fall off of their own accord (Deut 28:40). The ripe fruit was then crushed in an olive press in a two-step process. First it was crushed between two heavy stones, with hot water poured over the mash and the rising, first-quality, virgin olive oil skimmed off the top (Ex 27:20; Lev 24:2). Additional, lower-quality oil was then squeezed out of the pulp using a beam-press (Eitam, 21-22; King and Stager, 96-97, with illustrations).

The Hebrew word *zayit* designates the olive and occurs thirty-eight times in the OT, ten times in the Pentateuch. Oil is called more generally *šemen*—193 times in the OT, 105 of these in the Pentateuch—or *yiṣhār*, twenty-three times in the OT, seven of these in the Pentateuch. It is textually unclear whether the unprocessed olive was consumed (see Hepper, 107), but the oil was ubiquitous not only in Israelite society but throughout the ancient Near East. It was used in food (Num 11:8), as an emollient for the body (Deut 33:24) and for medical purposes (e.g., Is 1:6; Lk 11:34). The majority of biblical texts that speak of the use of oil are regarding religious rituals. It was used as fuel in lamps within the sanctuary (Ex 25:6; 27:20) and also had this use in domestic contexts (e.g., Mt 25:1-5). It could be poured or dabbed on an object or person for anointing (e.g., Gen 28:18; 35:14; Ex 29:7, 21), purifying and dedicating what was anointed. Sometimes it took the form of ointments and perfumes, where aromatic elements were added for scent to the oil (e.g., Ex 25:6; 30:22-29). Oil mixed with grain also played an important role in various *sacrifices (e.g., Ex 29:2, 23, 40; Lev 2:1).

Another useful product of the olive tree was its wood, which was used for construction (Liphschitz, 141).

3.3. Grain. The third staple for societal life (see 3.1 above) was grain. The two main varieties grown in the region were barley and wheat. The field was probably prepared by two separate plowings, initially after the first rain in the fall in order to break up the soil so that it would better hold the moisture, and then in association with sowing (Is 28:24; Hopkins, 214). This would have been done with a "scratch plow" made of a blade or share with a metal, hardwood or stone tip (iron tips would appear later in Israel's history) attached to a stick that was held to guide the plow. This stick was fastened on a longer pole, which was itself attached to a perpendicular yoke. Oxen or donkeys pulled this implement (Deut 22:10), making a scratch in the earth (King and Stager, 92). The seeds would then have been broadcast or planted in furrows and covered (Gen 8:22; Ex 23:10, 16; Lev 25:3, 11; Deut 28:38). Wheat (*ḥiṭṭâ;* thirty times in the OT, six times in the Pentateuch) is usually mentioned first of the two grains (e.g., Deut 8:8; Is 28:25). Three different types of wheat were grown: einkorn, bread (or common) and emmer (perhaps *kussemet* ["spelt"], Ex 9:32; King and Stager, 94), the last being most important (Hepper, 85). One variety of emmer had seven ears (Gen 41:5; Hepper, 85). Barley (*śĕʿōrâ;* thirty-four times in the OT, five times in the Pentateuch) was more salt resistant and needed less water than wheat, and so it had a wider growing range and a quicker maturing cycle (King and Stager, 94).

Wheat was planted in December, later than was barley, and harvested soon after it as well (Ex 9:31-32; Committee, 196; Hopkins, 224). D. C. Hopkins describes the various stages of the harvesting process for both grains: cutting the stalks, collecting and moving them to the threshing floor, drying so that the seeds would more easily separate from their covering, threshing to separate seed from hull, winnowing to let the lighter chaff blow away from the heavier grain, measuring and storing (Hopkins, 224; Deist, 153-54). Cutting or harvesting (*qāṣîr;* Gen 8:22; 30:14; Ex 34:21) was done with a sickle (*ḥermēš;* Deut 16:9; 23:25 [MT 23:26]) made of small blades of flint attached to a handle of wood or bone (Borowski 1992, 3.64). Before use, grain was either roasted or ground and milled using stones (Ex 11:5; Deut 24:6). Barley was coarser and seems to have been considered inferior, the food of animals and the poor (1 Kings 4:28 [MT 5:8]; cf. 2 Kings 7:1, where barley is half the price of wheat). Both wheat and barley were used for food (e.g., Gen 18:6; 2 Sam 17:28; 2 Kings

4:42) and also for rituals, though wheat, due to its higher value, was used more than barley (e.g., Ex 29:2; Lev 2; 5:11; 6:15 [MT 6:8]; 7:12; 14:10, 21; cf. Num 5:15 for barley).

In Mesopotamia, beer was made from wheat and barley and was among the most common beverages. It is not clear that the Israelites used this, since wine was so plentiful (King and Stager, 102).

3.4. Late-Planting. That which was planted late according to the Gezer Calendar could have been various vegetables, which were planted during the winter (cf. Thompson, 141). They are not mentioned in relation to the land of Canaan but were an element of Egyptian society for which the wandering Israelites longed: "We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic" (Num 11:5). The first two terms—*cucumbers* and *melons*—occur only here in the Hebrew Bible (Is 1:8; Jer 10:5 are from the same lexical root as the first term), which could indicate that they were not commonly grown in Israel, possibly due to the amount of water needed by these succulents. The latter three are members of the lily family and were common in Egypt (Committee, 159-60). They are less likely to have survived and be found by archaeologists, though some have been recovered in Israel (Hepper, 126-27).

3.5. Summer Fruits. The Hebrew term *qayiṣ* ("summer fruits"; cf. Jer 14:10, 12; Amos 8:1) does not occur in the Pentateuch other than in Genesis 8:22, where its use as the opposite end of the spectrum from winter signifies the season of summer. Deuteronomy 8:8 does list several candidates for inclusion in the category of summer fruits, namely, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey. The fig (*tĕʾēnâ;* thirty-nine times in the OT, four times in the Pentateuch) is often mentioned in conjunction with the grape (e.g., Num 20:5). Proper care of the fig tree allows for two or three harvests per year, one of the reasons that it was such an important crop (Committee, 118; King and Stager, 104). Its high sugar content made it a valuable source of energy. Pomegranates (*rimmôn;* thirty-two times in the OT, eleven times in the Pentateuch) were used for their juicy pulp, and their flowers have medicinal value (Committee, 169). Its importance, along with figs and grapes, is shown by the spies bringing them back to indicate the bounty of the land (Num 13:23). They were also symbolically important since ornaments based on their shape were used as part of the *priestly clothing (Ex 28:33; 39:24) as well as for the columns of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:20). Honey seems out of place in this list of crops, but it is unlikely that it here refers to the product of the bee (see 2 above). It probably refers to the sweet nectar of the date (Hepper, 118; King and Stager, 104).

The date is one of several other fruits not included in the list in Deuteronomy 8:8. The date palm (*tāmār;* twelve times in the OT, four times in the Pentateuch) was such a common part of life that several places and people were named after it (e.g., person: Gen 38; 2 Sam 13; city: Gen 14:7; Ezek 47:19; 48:28; cf. Jericho, "the city of date palms," Deut 34:3). Its sweet fruit was eaten fresh or dried into cakes (2 Sam 6:19). Its representation was also used in religious art of the temple (1 Kings 6:29, 32, 35). Its wood was used for building, as were its leaves for roofing material, to make booths during the *wilderness wandering for the *Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:40; cf. Mt 21:8; Mk 11:8) and to make baskets (Hepper, 117; King and Stager, 104).

Nuts were also part of the diet of Israel, pistachios (*boṭnîm;* only Gen 43:11) and almonds (*šāqēd;* four times in the OT, twice in the Pentateuch) being part of "the best products of the land," gifts fit for a pharaoh (Gen 43:11). The almond was given a place of honor by having *Aaron's almond-wood staff that miraculously budded (Num 17:8) placed in the ark as a permanent reminder of God's power (Heb 9:4).

4. Theology.

In the OT, God is understood as not only the creator of all things but also as the sustainer and provider of everything necessary for life. This includes plants (Gen 1:11-12) and animals (Gen 1:24-25). At *creation, God gifted his creatures, human and beast, with vegetation for food (Gen 1:29-30; cf. 2:9; 3:18-19). Subsequently, after the Fall, humanity was permitted to eat flesh (Gen 9:3), though that had not been specifically denied to them earlier (Mathews, 401). Its earlier consumption is implied by Abel's occupation as shepherd and the use of animals in sacrifice (Gen 4:2-4). As a reminder of the ultimate source of these foundational elements of life, Israel was called to present a tithe of them back to God (Deut 12:17; 14:23) for the use of his ministers,

the priests and Levites (Num 18:8-13; Deut 18:4).

While these good gifts were made available to all, special abundance was promised for those who maintained their covenant relationship with God (Deut 7:13-14). Israel viewed God's provision as more than simply the products themselves, but also the prerequisites for these agricultural products. The very rain and its timing, so vital to adequate yields in a marginal environment, were under God's control (Deut 11:13-15). These verses show that Israel was well aware of the "circle of life"—rain providing for the grass that was consumed by the cattle, which were in turn for human use.

An agricultural product, the fruit of a forbidden tree, was pictured as the immediate precipitating factor in causing a breach between God and his creatures (Gen 3:6-7); and another, the leaves of the fig tree, was used by Adam and Eve to try to ameliorate the resulting situation (Gen 3:7). God used the very agricultural endeavor itself to punish the rebellion in Eden, increasing the labor and the hindrances to full production (Gen 3:17-18), but God also exhibited *grace in allowing the agricultural cycle to continue to provide for fallen humanity (Gen 3:18). God could also withhold his bounty when his people subsequently rebelled, breaking their covenant with him (Deut 28:18, 23-24, 38-42, 51). This is not the final word, however, since *Moses in his farewell song and blessings reminds the people of the literal fruits of faithfulness in their past (Deut 32:13-14), which could also be their future (Deut 33:28).

See also ARTS AND CRAFTS; FIRSTFRUITS; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT

The position of the "alien" in ancient Near Eastern society was generally one of dependence, with a certain amount of cultural isolation. This was the fundamental experience of Israel's own great patriarchs in Genesis, from the point when God called *Abraham to abandon his own land, people and family in favor of God's *covenant. Exodus expands this identity to the entire community of Israel as they "sojourn" in Egypt at the point of their formation as a nation, making this concept foundational to Israelite self-understanding. Within pentateuchal law the "alien" was generally assumed to be a non-Israelite foreigner residing within the community. As such, with a few exceptions, the alien was generally subject to Israelite law, including religious law. The traditional application of alien status to the patriarchs shows that it was not simply an indication of foreign ethnicity, however, but a particularly vulnerable socioeconomic status calling for special protections in line with ancient hos-

pitality traditions. The pentateuchal laws regarding aliens demonstrate a clear humanitarian concern, including guarantees of evenhanded justice without prejudice to their status, fair payment of wages, gleaning rights to the leftover harvest, other provision of food from the triennial tithe, inclusion in feasts alongside the *orphan and *widow, and inclusion in the *sabbath rest. The call to treat the alien with justice and special consideration was motivated by Israelite identification with the vulnerable position of the alien, which had been such a formative part of their own experience.

1. Terms and Translations
2. The Identity of the *Gēr*
3. Treatment of the Alien in Pentateuchal Law

1. Terms and Translations.

The English word "alien" in the Pentateuch most commonly translates the Hebrew word *gēr* (root: *gwr*), but also on occasion *zār* (root: *zwr*) or *nokrî* (root: *nkr*) and its cognates. Hebrew *gēr* has been translated variously as "alien," "sojourner," "stranger," "foreigner," "non-Israelite," "immigrant," "temporary resident," "resi-dent alien," "foreign resident," "protected citizen" or "client." Perhaps its closest modern equivalent, in terms of its most common usage for people who have been displaced by famine (as in Gen 12:10; 26:3; 47:4; Ruth 1:1; 1 Kings 17:20; 2 Kings 8:1) or war (as in 2 Sam 4:3; Is 16:4), would be "refugee." It often occurs in conjunction with *tôšāb* ("resident, dweller," or perhaps more aptly "squatter"), where they should properly be understood together as a hendiadys meaning "resident alien" (similarly to "resident hireling" for *tôšāb* plus *śākîr*), as argued by J. Milgrom.

Gēr is a noun deriving from the Hebrew root *gwr* ("to sojourn, tarry as a sojourner"), with likely cognates in Arabic ("neighbor, patron, protector"), Ethiopic ("neighbor"), Ugaritic ("dweller"?) and Aramaic ("client"; later Christian Palestinian usage associates it with proselytes or neighbors and in some cases with adultery). A connection with Akkadian *gerû* ("to be hostile") and its participial form *gārû* ("enemy") is also possible, arguably tying in with Hebrew roots *gwr* II (= *grh:* "to attack, strive") and *gwr* III (= *ygr:* "to be afraid"). The root is also attested in Phoenician personal names, where it would seem to denote dependence or client status in relation to a deity, as in "client/protégé of [deity]." In a Moabite inscription (the Mesha Stela) it appears to designate a distinct people-group, male and female, within Israel. The nominal forms of *gēr* occur over ninety times in the Hebrew Bible, with its verbal root *gwr* I occurring over eighty times in the Qal. An appreciable percentage of these are found in Leviticus, with Deuteronomy and Jeremiah also claiming a good share (see further BDB; Kellermann).

In many legal contexts *gēr* is used as a technical term for a particular social status, carefully distinguished from and standing between the "native" *(ʾezraḥ)* and "brother" *(ʾāḥ)* on the one hand, and the "foreigner" *(nokrî)* on the other (Milgrom, 2252; Kellermann; Spencer). In other instances usage of the terms *nokrı* and *zār* ("stranger, foreigner") overlap with *gēr,* and they are occasionally found in poetic parallel with it, but they more clearly address the ethnic "foreigner" as non-Israelite. These terms or their cognates are often used of foreign *women/wives (1 Kings 11:1, 8; especially in Ezra) as well as foreign worship of "strange" or foreign gods (Gen 35:2-4; Deut 31:16; 32:12; cf. Josh 24:20, 23; Judg 10:16; 1 Sam 7:3). The *nokrî* is distinguished as a non-Israelite (one "coming from a distant land" in Deut 29:22 [MT 29:21]) who is barred from the throne (Deut 17:15) and excluded from the privilege of interest-free charity loans for which impoverished Israelites qualified (Deut 23:19-20 [MT 23:20-21]), as well as being excluded from the debt release (Deut 15:3; cf. the exemption of aliens from the prohibition of permanent servitude in Lev 25:45). D. Kellermann proposes that during the late monarchic period, as *gēr* was applied increasingly to displaced northern Israelite refugees or, in the later period, to foreign proselytes, the term *nokrî* was used in legal contexts to replace the older position of *gēr* as the sojourning foreigner. Since *gēr* is used for both *Israelites and non-Israelites in different contexts, it clearly indicates something more than simple ethnicity, but the relationship between these three terms is complex, as is the identity of the *gēr* in the first place.

2. The Identity of the *Gēr*.

While the primary identity of the *gēr* in pentateuchal law is that of the non-Israelite foreigner, it is significant that the term is applied within the Pentateuch not just to people who are ethnically non-Israelite but also to Israelites

themselves when they find themselves in a comparable socioeconomic situation of the temporary resident with no land and no established family support network.

2.1. The Israelite **Gēr.** The complex nature of what it means to be a *gēr* is revealed by its assignment to Israelites of various categories. The patriarchs themselves all carried this status initially within the land of Canaan and other places where they traveled, as well as later in the land of *Egypt. This is, in part, how the Israelites conceived their own self-identity. In the creedal formula of Deuteronomy 26:5 we find the "sojourner" designation applied to the generic ancestor of Israel thus: "My father was a wandering *[ʾōbēd]* Aramean; he went down to Egypt and sojourned *[gwr]* there." A similar pronouncement of historical self-identification with the *gēr* is found in Psalm 39:12 (MT 39:13)—"For a sojourner *[gēr]* am I with you, a squatter *[tôšāb]*, like all my fathers?"—as well as in 1 Chronicles 29:15: "For sojourners are we before you, and squatters, like all our fathers."

The term *gēr* and its cognates are applied to each of the patriarchs individually—to *Abraham (Gen 17:7-8; 20:1; 21:34; 23:4), *Lot (Gen 19:9), *Isaac (Gen 35:27; 37:1), *Jacob (Gen 28:4; 32:4 [MT 32:5]), *Esau (Gen 36:6-7) and *Joseph and his brothers (Gen 47:4, 9)—and collectively, in the context of their time in Canaan (Gen 17:7-8; 21:23; 23:4; 36:6-7; Ex 6:4 [cf. Ps 105:6-15 = 1 Chron 16:13-22]) and their more temporary stays in other places, such as Gerar (Gen 20:1; 26:3), *Haran (Gen 32:3-4 [MT 32:4-5]) and Egypt (Gen 12:10), often because of situations of famine. Abraham applied the term to himself among the Hittites at Hebron in Genesis 23:4 when he sought to purchase a burial plot for his wife Sarah: "I am a resident alien [*gēr wĕtôšāb;* i.e., a sojourning squatter] among you." The patriarchs were thus conceived as being nomadic wanderers, native to neither Egypt nor Canaan, having left family and inheritance behind in accordance with God's call in Genesis 12, and not owning land save a *burial cave at Hebron (Gen 23) and a small plot on which to pitch a tent near Shechem (Gen 33:19).

Gēr status in the Exodus tradition is even more revealing. *Moses is given *gēr* status with respect to his time in Midian (Ex 2:22; 18:3). For the Israelites generally, it is applied to their longer experience in Egypt (Gen 15:13; 47:4, 9; Ex 22:21 [MT 22:20]; 23:9; Lev 19:34; Deut 10:19; 23:7 [MT 23:8]). The Israelite experience as aliens in Egypt is then used regularly in the *law as an argument not to mistreat non-Israelite foreigners (Ex 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; Deut 10:19; 16:9-12). The same usage also then appears with respect to Israelites exiled in Babylon (Ezra 1:2-4), a situation directly parallel to the Israelite position in Egypt or in other foreign lands in the Pentateuch. The experience of the alien is thus fundamental to the character of Israel, being conceived as a basic part of their self-identity as a nation from their very formation in the exodus.

Interestingly, while *gēr* is not applied to *Levites in its nominal form, they are said to "sojourn" *(gwr)* in the sense that they did not receive their own tribal inheritance of land in Israel (Josh 13:14) and thus "sojourn" among the other Israelite tribes (Deut 18:6; cf. Gen 49:5-7; Judg 17:7-9; 19:1). In other texts the Levites are listed *alongside* aliens, widows and orphans as qualifying to benefit from the tithe (Deut 14:29; 26:12-13) and joining in celebrating the *Feasts of Weeks and Tabernacles (Deut 16:11, 14). Thus the special legal status and protections otherwise applied to foreigners (as well as orphans and widows) were also conferred on them, just as the "poor brother" in Leviticus 25:35 was also to be treated kindly as given *gēr* status. Thus here the force of the term is to confer a special status of "protected citizen" by virtue of landlessness (cf. 2 Chron 15:9, where the term is applied to people of Ephraim, Manasseh and *Simeon "sojourning" in Judah). Leviticus 25:23 also applies the term to Yahweh himself as a mark of solidarity with Israel (cf. Jer 14:8).

2.2. The **Gēr** ***as a Non-Israelite Foreigner in Legal Contexts.*** The situation as envisioned in Genesis for the preconquest, patriarchal experience of sojourning then also clearly fits the *primary* understanding and usage of this term within pentateuchal law (especially clear in the second half of Leviticus) for non-Israelite foreigners later dwelling within the land of Israel, anticipating the post-settlement period. The *book of the covenant in Exodus (e.g., Ex 22:21-24 [MT 22:20-23]; 23:9-12) stresses fair treatment for the *gēr* in legal disputes, proscription of oppression and benefit from the sabbath rest (as also in Ex 20:10). It then offers a clear justification of identification: "Do not oppress the alien . . . for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (e.g., Ex 23:9). Here, as commonly in Leviticus, the law assumes

the *gēr* to be living as a dependent within an Israelite household. J. Joosten (54-76) argues that this usage of *gēr* in the second half of Leviticus is evidence for an assumed audience of Israelites already living within the traditional *borders of the land of Israel. The most detailed recent treatment of this topic, written from a documentary perspective, is given by C. van Houten, who attempts to distinguish the legal status and treatment of the *gēr*, as well as the identity of the *gēr*, historically through several distinct periods.

2.3. **Gēr** ***as Denoting Dependent Socioeconomic Status.*** The Hebrew term *gēr* refers generally to a person not native to the local area and thus usually without family ties or landed property (Ex 12:19; Lev 24:16; Num 15:30). In Israel such a person would generally not be *able* to obtain property, at least not permanently (according to the Jubilee laws in Leviticus 25). One possible exception to this would be the *gērût kimhām*, or "guest's feudal tenure," granted by David to Barzillai the Gittite (2 Sam 19:31-34; 1 Kings 2:7; Jer 41:17), as noted by Kellermann (444, citing Alt). This case is truly exceptional however. The natural expectation is that the *gēr* would be a landless, seminomadic wanderer (as the patriarchs were) or else some sort of dependent client or "hireling" (i.e., of a *land-owning Israelite)—perhaps a day-laborer or a mercenary in the army (2 Sam 1:13). Such people were reportedly used by David and Solomon as stone-cutters and burden-bearers (1 Chron 22:2; 2 Chron 2:16-18). They were not automatically *slaves, however, and were able to own possessions, herds and even slaves (as did the patriarchs in their status as wanderers). Lot apparently even owned his own house, though dwelling as a *gēr* in Sodom (Gen 19:9). In Leviticus 25 we have indication of a real possibility that a *gēr* might prosper substantially (through a trade of some sort) and thus acquire the means to purchase property and slaves or otherwise settle in the land as an independent/non-dependent party and even act as a creditor (as in Deut 28:43-44, where such a condition is construed as a societal curse). In this case the main concern of the text is that this reversed state of affairs—foreigners owning and enslaving Israelites and their land—should not be perpetuated. Likewise in Genesis 19:9 the Canaanites are insulted that Lot, as an "alien," would presume to act as a "judge" over them. Strong evidence indicates that these "resident aliens" were not initially assimilated to mainstream Israelite society but continued to be distinguished as foreigners (as shown in the Moabite Stone, where they are specified as a separate group among the Israelites) in ways that affected the application of law as well as social status. Van Houten suggests that the "outsider" may initially have been defined as a "noncitizen" in the wake of the creation of a centralized monarchic state. F. M. Cross explains the social situation in the context of kinship-based early Israelite society, demonstrating the necessity of such protections as were afforded the alien at a time when tribe and clan were the basis and seat of legal status as well as economic security and opportunity. Interestingly, he also identifies in this context the self-designation of "Hebrew," relating to Egyptian *ʿapiru*, as originally indicating a similar sort of "client-class" status that only later took on "ethnic overtones" (Cross, 69 n. 57). C. J. H. Wright (253-59) proposes that the term *Hebrew* in Deuteronomy 15:12 likewise be understood as a landless Israelite (disputed, however, by Milgrom, 2252). These proposals create a remarkable parallel to the earlier Israelite identification with and usage of the term *gēr*. In this context, the *gēr* (as client) may be seen to indicate an individual with no family or tribal affiliation in the community and without full rights of citizenship. That is, such a one is not a "full member of Israelite society, but someone of different and lower status" who is thus "dependent on a patron for protection" (Spencer, 103).

3. Treatment of the Alien in Pentateuchal Law. In legal matters, with a few exceptions, the alien was generally to be treated the same as the native Israelite, or with greater consideration. In matters of criminal and even civil law it is not at all surprising that a foreign resident would be fully subject. Equal treatment under the law was maintained out of a sense of justice and equity, as well as for the protection of the community. Application of religious and ritual law to foreigners is a bit more surprising, though within the Holiness Code in the second half of Leviticus, the need to maintain purity in the community and prevent "contamination" of the land may have had an influence. Where "alien" status may have been applied in later stages to northern Israelite refugees (Kellermann, van Houten), full subjection to Israelite religious

laws would be expected. However, as applied to non-Israelite foreigners, exclusion from certain religious obligations and privileges is only logical, as is found in a number of instances. Special protections were afforded aliens (along with the orphan and widow) out of consideration for their more vulnerable socioeconomic position.

3.1. The Alien as Generally Subject to Israelite Law, Including Religious Law. The resident alien in pentateuchal law would seem generally to be envisioned as subject to Israelite law, just as a native Israelite would be. He was responsible first of all to know the law and was subject to its standard punishments. Thus Deuteronomy 31:10-13 explicitly includes the alien *(gēr)* in the assembly gathered to hear the reading of the law each seventh year, while Deuteronomy 29:11 (MT 29:10) specifies that resident aliens working as wood-choppers and water-carriers in the camp were included in the covenant renewal, just as Joshua 8:33 depicts the alien and native standing alike together at the renewal of the covenant at Shechem. The equal application of criminal law, in which "the same law must apply to the alien as to the native-born" (as in Lev 24:22, probably referring specifically to the collection of personal injury laws in Lev 24:17-21, and in Num 35:15, where *cities of refuge are available to Israelites and aliens who kill someone accidentally), is only logical, as is the call to treat the alien justly (Lev 19:33-34; Deut 24:14-15, 17-18).

Significantly, however, the laws imposed on aliens include not only criminal laws but also a number of religious laws as well, and this would seem to be true across all of the pentateuchal sources as defined by critical scholarship (*see* Source Criticism). Laws explicitly applied to the alien include ritual dietary restrictions (e.g., Ex 12:19, where anyone eating yeast during Passover must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether alien or native-born, and Lev 17:10-15, where Israelites and aliens alike are forbidden to eat blood but must drain out the blood from any hunted animal and cover it with earth or be cut off) and sexual taboos (e.g., Lev 18:26, where the risk of defiling the land demands that native-born and resident alien alike be subject to the various sexuality and other laws as specified in Lev 18:6-23). Aliens were even subject to religious purity laws (e.g., Num 19:10, where ritual cleansing laws are applied to Israelite and resident alien alike). In the Holiness Code we find harsh standards of judgment imposed on impious aliens equally as on natives, with the alien being subject to the death penalty for religious crimes such as blasphemy and foreign worship. A blaspheming son of mixed Egyptian-Israelite marriage is put to death (Lev 24:10-14). Blasphemers are subject to the death penalty, whether alien or native-born (Lev 24:15-16). Israelites and aliens alike are subject to the death penalty for giving children to Molech (Lev 20:2). According to Numbers 15:30-31, anyone sinning defiantly, native or alien, was to be cut off from the people as a blasphemer for despising Yahweh's word.

On the other hand, aliens could also find forgiveness of *sin before Yahweh through ritual atonement, as in Numbers 15:26, where aliens are forgiven for unintentional sin along with the rest of the Israelite community when atonement is made, or Numbers 15:29, where it is stated that the same law applies to anyone who sins unintentionally, whether alien or native. Aliens could offer *sacrifices and burnt offerings to Yahweh and fulfill religious vows as long as they abided by the same regulations as Israelites. For example, an alien could offer burnt offerings or sacrifices, but had to do so only at the tent of meeting or be cut off from the people (Lev 17:8-9), with the sacrifices subject to the same requirement of being without defect as were those of Israelites (Lev 22:18-20). They could present burnt offerings, but only in accordance with the law, the same rules applying to the alien as to the native (Num 15:13-16).

Resident aliens were in some instances allowed or even required to participate in and benefit from Israelite religious festivals, including the sabbath rest (Ex 20:10; 23:12; Deut 5:14), the Day of *Atonement—when native-born and resident alien alike were to fast and refrain from work because "atonement is being made for you, to cleanse you" (Lev 16:29-30)—and the Passover (as seen in Exodus 12:48-49, where circumcised aliens could participate in Passover, the same law applying to the native-born and the resident alien, and in Numbers 9:14, where a resident alien could celebrate Passover, but only in accordance with the law, the same laws applying to the alien and native-born). The alien was also explicitly allowed to participate in the harvest feasts of Weeks (Deut 16:11), Tabernacles (Deut 16:14) and Firstfruits (Deut 26:11).

In Exodus 12:48-49, the general principle ap-

plying the same law to the alien *(gēr)* as to the native *(ʾezraḥ)* was established in the context of provision for circumcised aliens and purchased slaves to participate in the Passover, while uncircumcised hirelings *(śākîr)*, temporary residents *(tôšāb)* and foreigners *(nēkār)* were to be excluded. Thus, on condition of circumcision, the alien here would seem essentially to have been allowed to become an Israelite (a "convert" or "proselyte," as translated in the LXX), since the circumcision indicated full covenantal commitment and integration. Thus D. Kellermann (447) notes that in a number of pentateuchal passages the *gēr* is treated as a "fully integrated proselyte" (cf. Ezek 47:22-23, where the *gēr* even qualifies to receive a portion of land as an inheritance, equally with the native Israelite). Through all of this one gains the distinct general impression that resident aliens were envisioned as being accorded equal treatment under the law (Lev 19:33-34; cf. Deut 24:14-15, 17-18), with only a few exceptions.

3.2. Exclusion of Foreign Residents from Legal Obligation or Privilege. In some instances aliens or foreigners were excluded from certain obligations and privileges. For example, resident aliens and foreigners were apparently exempt from certain dietary restrictions (*see* Foods, Clean and Unclean). Eating the meat of animals that were found dead was acceptable for foreigners and aliens "living within your gates," but not for Israelites, who were to be a people holy to Yahweh their God (Deut 14:21). On the other hand, a resident alien *(gēr)* could face permanent slavery, in contrast to the native Israelite, who was protected from that fate (Lev 25:39-43, 46, 54-55), since the slave release granted to the impoverished "brother" (along with "resident hireling" status) was explicitly denied to slaves bought from surrounding nations *(gôyim)* and to resident aliens, who could be considered as inheritable property (Lev 25:44-46). Thus, according to this passage, the "alien" was clearly treated differentially as a "second-class citizen." The "foreigner" *(nokrî)* was similarly excluded from the debt release (Deut 15:2-3) and the prohibition on taking interest (Deut 23:19-20 [MT 23:20-21]), in contrast to the brother *(ʾāḥ)* and companion *(rēaʿ)*. Deuteronomy 17:15 further specifies that no foreigner *(nokrî)* could be king, but only "one from among your brothers."

In the context of the conquest, according to the command of Deuteronomy 7:1-4, foreign inhabitants of the Promised Land were subject to the "ban" *(see Ḥērem)* and intermarriage with foreigners was forbidden out of fear of religious contamination. While some accommodations were made (as in Deut 21:10-14, where Israelites were allowed to marry captive women from among their conquered enemies, presumably of foreign ethnicity), intermarriage continued to be frowned on (Gen 24:3; 27:46; 28:1-2, 6-9; Ex 34:16; Lev 21:14; Num 12:1; Josh 23:12; Judg 14:3; more vehemently in postexilic Ezra and Nehemiah), usually on the grounds that it would lead to idolatry. The proposal of the Shechemites to intermarry with the Israelites on the condition of circumcision in Genesis 34 was quickly followed by a massacre of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi. Foreign wives also played a part in the downfall of Samson, Solomon, Ahab and others. Yet some notable exceptions to this rule are evident, where foreign wives are depicted positively as capable of being fully integrated to Israelite laws and societal expectations. Tamar (Gen 38), Zipporah (Ex 4:24-26; 18:1-6; Num 12:1), Rahab (Josh 2) and Ruth serve as exemplary models of righteousness and faith that put native-born Israelites to shame.

The foreign alien could also be singled out for special scrutiny. Israelite slaves acquired by resident aliens were seen as being at special risk for the abuses prohibited by Israelite law, lending a special urgency to rights of redemption. Israelites were therefore enjoined to check up on resident aliens, since it was not assumed that they would abide by the laws voluntarily. The law of release, along with the non-oppressive treatment clause, was to be enforced on the alien creditor by Israelite kinsmen, who were to ensure that the laws were honored (Lev 25:47-55). Israelite authority to impose such provisions via traditional kinship institutions was assumed. The implicit assumption here is that the foreigner is less likely to be swayed to obedience by appeal to religiously based justifications, and thus would need more immediate inducement. The great irony of the Levite's concubine was that a Canaanite town had been bypassed in favor of an Israelite town precisely out of an expectation of finding greater kindness among the Israelites (Judg 19:11-15).

Pentateuchal law made no provision for aliens to gain full Israelite status (at least until the third generation for Edomites and Egyptians [Deut 23:7-8]). Certain protective accommoda-

tions were made, however, and even the differential treatment of the alien in Leviticus 25 (as noted above) is matched by more positive elements. The assumed audience of Israelite landowners is urged to help the "brother" (*'āḥ*) who becomes poor "as one would help a resident alien" (*gēr wĕtôšāb*; Lev 25:35), implying that charitable treatment of aliens was assumed. This is followed directly by a proscription of taking interest on loans to the impoverished brother (Lev 25:36-37). While the alien is not mentioned in this provision, the context and literary structure suggests that the interest-free charity loan to the brother was modeled after established practice for the resident alien, who had traditionally enjoyed the special protected status of the orphan and widow. In Leviticus 25:47-55, meanwhile, it appears possible for the resident alien to acquire land (at least temporarily) and even Israelite slaves, showing that the barriers to success were not insurmountable. Certain foreigners (Edomites and Egyptians) were even explicitly approved for acceptance into the congregation in the third generation (Deut 23:3-8), with Israel's past experience as aliens in Egypt cited as justification.

3.3 Special Protections Afforded to the Alien, Rooted in Hospitality. Along with other particularly vulnerable groups in Israelite society such as the orphan and widow, who were also most likely to be landless and thus incapable of economic independence, the alien was afforded a number of special protections in pentateuchal law. This demonstrates a clear humanitarian concern. The protected status also reflects the fact that these groups were especially vulnerable to injustice—easily taken advantage of for lack of anyone naturally obliged to stand up for them. Yahweh himself thus takes on the role of ensuring justice for them (Deut 10:18-19).

It may well be that these protections were rooted in and modeled after an older ancient Near Eastern tradition of hospitality toward the traveler. From the earliest hospitality traditions, as reflected in Genesis, the *gēr* was accorded special consideration both in charitable provision for basic needs of food and shelter and also in protection from injustice. As observed by van Houten (160), these hospitality traditions (and *gēr* status) clearly could apply to any kind of stranger, including Israelites from other tribes as well as foreigners (see, e.g., its application in Judg 17:7-13; 19:16-21). In the earliest settings we find a number of stories reflecting a strong emphasis on requirements of hospitality to strangers (Gen 18:1-8; 24:10-33; 26:1-11; cf., e.g., Job 31:32). Clearly Israelite and other ancient Near Eastern hospitality traditions would seem to apply most directly to the sojourner, perhaps in part a function of this special legal status. It was this violation of the hospitality tradition, and possibly violation of the protected *gēr* status, that contributed to the horror of the crimes of Sodom in Genesis 19:6-9. The *gēr* was expected to receive special protection, as did Isaac in Gerar (Gen 26:11).

Special protections against injustice were invoked for the alien in formal legal contexts as well, perhaps modeled after hospitality traditions but formalized as law. Thus the Covenant Code dictates that Israelites were neither to mistreat nor oppress an alien, for they had been aliens in Egypt (Ex 22:21 [MT 22:20]; 23:9). The same motivation was used to encourage the Israelites to treat aliens just like the native-born, loving them as themselves (Lev 19:33-34). Specifically this meant providing fair judgment in legal disputes for Israelites and aliens alike (Deut 1:16-17), not taking advantage of a needy hireling, whether alien or native, but paying wages on time (Deut 24:14) and not depriving an alien of justice, again remembering the former Israelite slavery in Egypt (Deut 24:17-18). Deuteronomy 27:19 highlights the withholding of justice from the alien as a cause for bringing curses on the people. Aliens were to be treated fairly and righteously, against all temptation to take advantage of them.

Out of consideration for their especially vulnerable economic position—that is, not having any inheritance of land or family ties to fall back on in time of crisis—aliens were given rights and privileges similar to or even exceeding those of the native Israelite. Pentateuchal law answered their precarious vulnerability to economic hardship with charitable provision of basic necessities like food for the alien. The gleanings of the harvest and the leftover or fallen grapes were reserved for the poor and the alien (Lev 19:10; 23:22; Deut 24:19-22). The triennial tithe was to be available for aliens along with Levites, orphans and widows (Deut 14:28-29; 26:12-13). Aliens were to be included in celebratory feasts along with orphans and widows (Deut 16:11, 14). The alien was also to share freely in the sabbatical-year produce, which was

to be available for aliens along with landowners' families, slaves, hirelings and animals (Lev 25:6; cf. Ex 23:11, where it is to be given to the poor generally and then the wild animals).

Thus Israelite law made special provision for resident aliens, along with orphans and widows, to safeguard their more vulnerable socioeconomic condition. Leviticus 19:34 takes the principle of Leviticus 19:18, to love one's neighbor as oneself, and extends it to the alien, specifying that the "alien *[gēr]* sojourning *[gûr]* with you" was to be treated just as the native-born *('ezraḥ)*: "You must love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God!" Deuteronomy 10:18-19 then takes this concern to a profound theological level by identifying Yahweh as one who loves aliens by giving them food and clothing. Indeed, since Yahweh himself loves aliens, the Israelites were also to love them, remembering that they had been aliens in the land of Egypt. Thus loving aliens becomes a type of *imitatio Dei*–realizing our nature as being created in the *image of a loving God.

See also ISRAELITES; NATIONS OF CANAAN; ORPHAN; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SLAVE, SLAVERY; WIDOW.

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ALIENATION. *See* SIN, GUILT.

ALPHABET. *See* WRITING.

ALTAR OF INCENSE. *See* TABERNACLE.

ALTARS

Altars appear both in the narratives and cultic codes of the Pentateuch. Generally speaking, any place at which *sacrifices or offerings are made to a deity may be called an altar. The Hebrew equivalent, *mizbēaḥ,* derives from a verb that denotes the slaughter of animals or the offering of blood sacrifices, signifying the integral connection between the site and its function. The term is extended in the Pentateuch to include an edifice (crude or elaborate) on which any kind of offering is made. Because altars constitute central elements of the sacrificial cult, much of the priestly legislation in the Pentateuch is concerned with regulating activities associated with them. Within the narrative portions of the Pentateuch, altars assume a significance beyond marking places of sacrifice and serve as memorials and shrines. They may also acquire a metaphorical sense and appear at key points to mark transitions in social status or in human/divine relationships.

1. Types of Altars
2. Altars and Sacrifice
3. The Symbolic Significance of Altars

1. Types of Altars.

The altars mentioned in the Pentateuch may be divided into two categories: open-air altars and altars connected to the *tabernacle. Open-air altars stand alone, apart from other structures. Various individuals construct them throughout the Pentateuch as impromptu places of sacrifice and worship. *Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifice upon disembarking from the ark (Gen 8:20-22). *Abram constructs a series of altars in the land of Canaan, at Moreh (Gen 12:7; cf. Gen 22:2), between Bethel and Ai (Gen 12:8; cf. Gen 13:3-4) and at Mamre in the vicinity of Hebron (Gen 13:18). *Isaac and *Jacob follow suit and erect altars at Beer-sheba (Gen 26:25), Shechem (Gen 33:20) and Bethel (Gen 35:1-3, 7). *Moses

also builds altars, one to mark Israel's victory over the Amalekites (Ex 17:14-16) and another to ratify the *covenant at Sinai (Ex 24:4-8). In thematic counterpoint, *Balaam repeatedly directs that seven altars be constructed for the sacrifice of burnt offerings as requisites for the reception of divine oracles (Num 23:4-7a, 13-18a; 23:27—24:3). Taken together these instances reveal that a solitary altar could be constructed either to provide a location for a particular sacrificial act or to establish a permanent site of worship (cf. 1 Sam 14:33-35; 1 Kings 18:23-38).

The open-air altars mentioned in the Pentateuch seem generally to have been constructed from earth and stone and have much in common with those constructed throughout Syria and Palestine. Earthen altars are in evidence at Mari, and altars carved or fashioned from stone are widely attested (although most of these seem to have been located within temple enclosures). Altars at Megiddo, Hazor, Arad and Beer-sheba represent some of the better-known examples. An Iron I cultic site on Mount Ebal has been associated with the altar that Joshua constructed (Deut 27:1-9; Josh 8:30-35), but the identification has been disputed.

A series of three laws dictates how earthen and stone altars are to be constructed (Ex 20:24-26). The first law declares that altars made simply of earth may be constructed anywhere sacrifices are offered and Yahweh's name is invoked (Ex 20:24). The second authorizes altars of stone but stipulates that the stones may not be cut by any implement, explaining that such a practice would profane the altar (Ex 20:25). The rationale behind the practice is not clear, although the context suggests a concern to differentiate the stone altars of Israel from those of the surrounding nations. The proscription against altar steps (Ex 20:26) may express a similar concern. The rationale, "that your nakedness not be exposed," may intend to thwart any connection between sexuality and sacrifice, an association common in Canaanite cults (cf. Deut 12:27).

The altars associated with the tabernacle display a much different character. Instead of stone or earth, these altars are carefully crafted out of wood and metal. Instructions for the tabernacle include directions that an altar for burnt offerings be constructed of acacia with bronze overlay and placed in the outer courtyard of the complex (Ex 27:1-8; 40:6-7). Also included are directions for a second, smaller altar that is to be fashioned out of acacia, but with gold overlay. Set inside the tent on the tabernacle's central axis, it was located in front of the curtain that marks off the most holy place where the ark of the covenant was located (Ex 30:1-10). Both the metals and placement of the two altars symbolized the gradation of sacred space that characterized the tabernacle complex. The sacrificial altar, associated with *blood and death, was made of a less precious metal and placed outside the tent, well out of view of the ark. The incense altar was covered with pure gold. It sent up a fragrant cloud that permeated the tent, and it was strategically placed to mark the transference of items from the courtyard into the holy place.

Unlike the open-air altars constructed elsewhere in the Pentateuch, the altars for burnt offering and incense were portable. Poles could be inserted into rings attached on opposite sides, ensuring that both could be quickly and easily transported (Ex 27:7; 30:4-5; 38:5-7; cf. Num 4:5-15). Those ministering before these altars also differed from those who served at open-air altars. Whereas ministry at the latter was undertaken by a variety of individuals, often on an occasional basis, ministry at the altars of the tabernacle was restricted to *Aaron and his sons (Num 18:1-7) and involved regular as well as occasional sacrifices (Ex 29:38-42). Because the offerings presented on these altars ascended to Yahweh, the altars themselves represented the unifying center of Israel's religious and communal life.

Horns extended from the four corners of the bronze altar and incense altar. The purpose of the "horns of the altar" remains unclear, although the feature is common on Canaanite altars, and horns are present on a large sandstone block altar discovered at Beer-sheba. Whatever their function, the protuberances marked the extremities of the altar. Dabbing the blood of the sin offering on the horns purified the entire altar, just as dabbing blood on the earlobes, thumbs and big toes of the *priests purified the entire person (Lev 4:4, 7; 8:14-15, 22-24; cf. Ex 30:10). Grasping the horns of the altar provided sanctuary for fugitives, probably because the individual doing so participated in the *holiness of the altar and thus was not to be killed (Ex 29:37; compare, however, Ex 21:14; 1 Kings 1:49-53; 2:28-31).

2. Altars and Sacrifice.

Because they represented the locus of interaction between Israel and Yahweh, the altars of the tabernacle constituted the symbolic center of the priestly cult, and activity connected with them was strictly regulated. Only Aaron or his descendants were to approach these altars with offerings and then only in a state of ritual cleanness. In addition, any of a number of physical abnormalities could disqualify a prospective priest (Lev 21:16-23). Offerings presented on the bronze altar followed a prescribed set of protocols. Aaron (and by extension those who would serve as high priest) wore an elaborate set of vestments, comprising an ephod of rich colors, a breastplate with precious stones (containing the Urim and Thummim), a blue embroidered robe, a turban with a blue cord and gold rosette, and a fringed tunic (Ex 28:1-39; *see* Priestly Clothing). Aaron's sons (the priests) also wore special garb, consisting of tunics, sashes, headdresses and linen undergarments (Ex 28:40-43).

Rituals for the various blood sacrifices followed prescribed rules and sequences. As was the case with priests, animals displaying physical abnormalities could not approach the altar (Lev 1:3; 3:1; 4:3; 5:15; 22:21-25; cf. Ex 30:9). Those bringing the sacrifice (lay or priest) slaughtered the animal, skinned it and cut it in pieces. The priest and his attendants tended the altar fire and burned designated portions, arranging them on the altar after the entrails and legs had been washed (Lev 1:1-9). In all forms of blood sacrifice, the blood of the victim, which had been collected in basins, was dashed against the sides of the altar (Lev 1:5; 3:2; 7:2; 17:6), although in the case of the purification offering the blood was applied only to the horns, with the remainder poured at the base of the altar (Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 34). After the sacrificial portion had been burned, the priest removed the ashes from the altar and dumped them in a ritually clean area (Lev 6:8-11 [MT 6:1-4]).

The laws defining the proper approach and procedures before the tabernacle altars were of the utmost importance. The seriousness of the laws is underscored throughout priestly literature by warnings that those who breach sacrificial protocols are subject to death (Ex 28:43; Lev 8:35; 16:1-5; Num 4:17-19; cf. Lev 10:1-7; *see* Nadab and Abihu). The warnings were deemed necessary in order to preserve the sanctity of the altars and their environs. The altars marked the intersection of the mystical and the material, a site where transitions and transactions could take place between the ordinary world of human experience and the holy sphere that marked the divine world. The incense altar and the altar for burnt offerings possessed an intense degree of holiness; both were designated "most holy" (Ex 30:10; 40:10).

The holiness of the altars was imparted through rituals of consecration. The altar for burnt offerings received particular attention and was anointed with a unique fragrant oil that was also used to anoint Aaron and his sons during their investiture as priests (Ex 30:22-33; 40:9-15). The application of oil and blood both to the altar and to Aaron, his sons and the vestments signified an integral and exclusive connection between the altar and those who were to attend it (Lev 8:10-30). Once the altar had been consecrated, a perpetual fire was kept burning on it, symbolizing the abiding and unchanging holiness that infused it (Lev 6:12-13 [MT 6:5-6]).

The holiness possessed by the altars could be communicated to anything that came into contact with them; whoever or whatever touched the altar became holy as well (Ex 29:35-37). This heightened degree of holiness, however, also made the altars particularly vulnerable to defilement. Contact with unclean objects or individuals or the presentation of unsuitable or inappropriate offerings could profane the altars, that is, rob them of their resident holiness. With the loss of holiness, they could not continue as portals to the sphere of the holy and thus were no longer suitable places for offerings to Yahweh. For this reason, one of the most important priestly tasks involved maintaining and guarding the boundaries around the altars.

Particular rituals were undertaken to purify the altar of any uncleanness that may have become attached to it. Blood from the sin offering, the sacrifice specifically devoted to purifying people and objects from inadvertent or prolonged uncleanness, was applied to the altar as well, cleansing it from any defilement that may have accrued from the sacrificial event. Part of the purification ritual for those who had become ritually unclean involved sprinkling blood seven times before the curtain of the sanctuary, dabbing blood on the horns of the incense altar (located in the holy place) and pouring the rest of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offerings outside the tent of meeting (Lev 4:1—

5:13). The Day of *Atonement (Lev 16:1-34) also aimed at purifying the altars as well as the nation. During the day a goat was slaughtered and its blood was brought first into the holy place. The priest sprinkled its blood on and before the mercy seat, which purified the sanctuary of uncleanness. The priest then brought blood back out to the sacrificial altar and applied its blood, along with the blood of a bull slaughtered earlier, to the horns of the altar. He concluded by sprinkling blood on the altar seven times, and with this action the purification of the altar was completed (Lev 16:16-19).

3. The Symbolic Significance of Altars.

Because they marked the intersection of existential boundaries, altars could assume a significance beyond their role as a place of sacrifice. The Pentateuch contains many references to the construction of altars that functioned more as memorials and shrines. The phrase "X built an altar there to Yahweh" occurs frequently, generally with no report that sacrifices were offered on it. Noah constructed an altar to Yahweh after the *flood and offered sacrifice on it as an act of thanksgiving and worship (Gen 8:20). However, there is no mention of sacrifice in the stories that report the construction of altars at Moreh (Gen 12:7), Mamre (Gen 13:18), Beer-sheba (Gen 26:25), Shechem (Gen 33:20) and at sites in the environs of Bethel (Gen 12:8; 35:7). Instead, the stories intimate that the altars were constructed for various purposes. Abram constructed the altars at Moreh and Mamre to confirm the divine blessings of descendants and land (Gen 12:7; 13:18). Isaac and Jacob built altars to mark the sites of theophanies (Gen 26:25; 35:7), and the stories connected with the events emphasize the transmission of the patriarchal *promises and blessings. Jacob erected an altar in the field of Hamor to establish possession of a plot of ground in Canaan (Gen 33:20), thereby marking his claim to it. Similarly, Moses commemorated Israel's victory over the Amalekites by constructing an altar (Ex 17:15). These instances reveal that altars functioned in diverse ways beyond their association with sacrifice: as reminders of divine promises, claims to property, and memorials of divine encounters and great events.

Altars served as meeting places between God and human beings. The stories associated with the construction of altars display etiological concerns that demonstrate the continuing relevance of the sites as places of worship. (Explanations of a sanctuary's origins would be of particular interest to those who worshiped there.) Bethel and its environs receive particular attention in the biblical text. Abram, after traveling the length of the Promised Land, returned to the altar between Bethel and Ai and called on the name of Yahweh there (Gen 13:3-4). Likewise, Yahweh commanded Jacob to return to Bethel, the site of an earlier theophany, and to erect an altar there (Gen 35:1). Jacob did so, and another theophany soon followed (Gen 35:5-15). Bethel would later become one of the most prominent shrines in Israel and, after the division of the Israelite kingdom, the primary sanctuary of the northern kingdom (cf. Amos 7:13).

Names ascribed to altars reinforced their role as memorials and places of worship. The altar at Bethel was given the name El-Bethel ("the God of Bethel"), that near Shechem was called El-Elohe-Israel ("God, the God of Israel"), and the altar built to commemorate the victory over the Amalekites was named Yahweh-Nissi (a title of uncertain meaning, often translated "Yahweh is my banner"). The divine elements in each of these names forged a conceptual link between the deity and the altar, intimating that the site itself was permeated with the holy.

Altars also function as metaphors in the narrative literature of the Pentateuch. Their significance as sites of transference and transformation make them powerful symbols for communicating cosmic and social transition. Such is the case with Noah, whose construction of an altar and offering of sacrifice signals a recreation and renewal of the earth after the flood. The construction of altars also marks the beginning and end of Abraham's story. The biblical text places a report that Abram built altars in Canaan at the beginning of the narrative, shortly after the introduction of the divine promises (Gen 12:1-3, 7-8). The promises are reaffirmed near the end of his story after he nearly sacrifices Isaac on an altar he has constructed on Mount Moriah (a site reminiscent of Moreh, where he had initially constructed an altar; Gen 22:2, 9; cf. Gen 12:6-7). Jacob's story also appropriates an altar as a framing metaphor. While fleeing to Paddan-aram, Jacob experienced a theophany at Bethel and erected a sacred pillar to mark the spot (Gen 28:1-22). On his return from Paddan-aram, God commanded him to build an altar at Bethel, which he did af-

ter experiencing another theophany (Gen 35:5-15). Finally, the construction of an altar and the offering of sacrifices marked the transition of Israel from a nation of escaped slaves to the covenant people of Yahweh (Ex 24:4-8). A further transformation is anticipated by the command that the Israelites erect a stone altar after entering Canaan, thereby symbolizing their transition from a nomadic people to a landed nation (Deut 27:5-8).

See also BLOOD; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; RELIGION; TABERNACLE.

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AMARNA TEXTS. *See* EXODUS, DATE OF.

AMMONITES. *See* LOT.

AMORITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

ANACHRONISMS. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

ANCESTORS, VENERATION OF. *See* BURIAL AND MOURNING.

ANCESTRAL RELIGION. *See* RELIGION.

ANGEL OF THE LORD. *See* THEOPHANY.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY. *See* AGRICULTURE.

ANIMALS. *See* ZOOLOGY.

APODITIC LAW. *See* DECALOGUE; FORM CRITICISM; LAW.

ARCHAEOLOGY

This article will survey the material and textual remains from the regions that played a major role in narratives of the Pentateuch. The regions that will be most discussed will be the Tigris-Euphrates Valley (i.e., Syro-Mesopotamia and southeast Turkey south of the Taurus Mountain range) and coastal Syria, where civilization began and the patriarchs originated, according to Genesis. The Egyptian Delta region, Sinai and Palestine (the coastal areas, inland and the other side of the Jordan) will be analyzed to a lesser extent. In terms of chronology, we will survey the Near East from the advent of urbanism in the eighth millennium B.C. to the end of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1200 B.C.), probably the latest possible date for the exodus and wilderness sojourn. This is a general survey of the archaeology of the ancient Near East. Many more specific links with the Pentateuch will be addressed in appropriate articles.

1. Introduction
2. Tigris-Euphrates Region
3. The Prehistoric Periods of the Near East
4. Early Bronze Age (c. 3000-2100 B.C.)
5. Middle Bronze Age (2100-1600 B.C.)
6. Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 B.C.)

1. Introduction.

For the ancient Near East, the historian is almost exclusively dependent upon archaeological investigation, unlike the later classical periods, which have a continuous literary tradition. Even Egypt has the dubious benefit of Manetho, an Egyptian priest living during Ptolemaic rule (third century B.C.), who has virtually formed our framework of Egyptian history. However, the works of his Mesopotamian equivalent, Berossos, survive only in a very fragmented form. Because of this, the potential contribution of archaeology to history in the remainder of the Near East is immense. For the ancient Greek, the term "archaeology" was synonymous with "ancient history." Both Thucydides in his prologue (1.2-17) and Josephus in his title *(Antiquities* [or *Archaeology*] *of the Jews)* used the word to denote the study of texts and monuments or the study of antiquities (i.e. ancient history). Strangely enough, the term *archaiologia* did not pass into Latin and thus did not enter into Western Europe until it was "resurrected" by scholars in the seventeenth century, who modified the meaning somewhat. The word now designates the study of the material remains of an ancient civilization, while written sources, even if discovered in archaeological excavations, are usually the domain of the sciences of epigraphy or philology. Only recently have

the disciplines been interested in reuniting the study of the texts and material remains. This is why we have purposed in this study to analyze both material and textual remains.

Those who study the ancient Near East study a dead civilization. When Xenophon, the Greek general and historian, traversed the boundaries of Assyria at the beginning of the fourth century B.C., he traveled past both Nimrud and Nineveh. Although he noticed both of these cities, he called them by their Greek names, and assumed that the region was part of Media and that the Persians destroyed the two cities. Thus, he was unaware that they were two of the great Assyrian capitals, which had become abandoned mounds in the preceding two centuries. The Bible and various Greek sources became powerful factors in keeping alive the memory of ancient Near Eastern civilizations.

Yet it was not simply the interest in biblical studies that drove the Europeans to the Near East in the early nineteenth century. France and Great Britain were looking for land routes to India and took great means to exert their influence on these areas. Archaeology was thus an unconscious extension of European imperialism.

The French under P. E. Botta, who had begun working unknowingly at Nineveh in 1842, carried out the first major excavations. The ancient name of the mound was Ninua, a fact that was known by the medieval Arab geographers and Jewish travelers (e.g., Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century A.D.), but not to the European travelers or, for the most part, the European adventurers. Botta soon left Nineveh and directed his attentions to Khorsabad, where he found the palace of the Assyrian king Sargon II. Ironically, he mistakenly thought he had discovered Nineveh. Botta's discoveries at Khorsabad created an immense interest in Mesopotamian antiquities in Europe. Although the French government sponsored work on drawing the reliefs that had been brought to Paris, Botta never received the public recognition afforded many other adventurers to the Middle East.

Soon thereafter, the Englishman A. H. Layard began work at Nimrud in 1845. Like Botta, he also thought he had found Nineveh, and his famous work, *Nineveh and Its Remains* is in fact primarily a discussion of material from Nimrud. Layard found at Nimrud the first dramatic sculptural link to the OT, the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III and the citation concerning Jehu of Israel. But this link was not proven until the obelisk was deciphered years later.

2. Tigris-Euphrates Region.

The Tigris-Euphrates region, known in Greek antiquity as Mesopotamia, played a significant role in the first book of the Pentateuch, Genesis. The writers of the Bible claimed that their ancestors originated in this area from Haran (or Harran; *see* Haran) in the Upper Euphrates region. The past century and a half of archaeological research in this region has offered a great deal of background information on the greater geographic and chronological background to pentateuchal history, religion and culture. Although research in Iraq has been interrupted because of the Gulf War in the 1990s, scholars have had the opportunity to analyze material from the previous years of research in Iraq. The situation in the Syrian portion of Mesopotamia, however, has been somewhat different. Compared to Iraq, Syria had not been the recipient of much archaeological investigation until the past generation. There are now, however, numerous archaeological expeditions to Syria, many of which are concerned with periods that shed light on the Pentateuch. Like Iraq, the last generation of research in Syria has witnessed salvage projects in areas threatened by modern dam construction and other development projects, as well as many major projects that have revolutionized our understanding of the region.

3. The Prehistoric Periods of the Near East.

3.1. The Early Neolithic Periods (c. 10,000-5200 B.C.). It is not possible at this point to place the first eleven chapters of Genesis into a working chronological context that is consistent with archaeological investigations. However, a study of the early Neolithic periods of the Near East provides an excellent working context in which to understand the early portions of Genesis.

Recent archaeological research has shown that the early Neolithic period in the Near East (before the Halaf period, c. 5200 B.C.) was far more widespread than previously considered. Not only did it flourish along coastal Palestine, but there is also now overwhelming evidence of widespread and uniform material culture from the Mediterranean coast to eastern Syria and northern Iraq.

The Natufian period (c. 10,000-8300 B.C.), which may have been centered in coastal Syria and Palestine, is also evidenced along the Middle Euphrates region of Syria at Dibsi Faraj, Nahr el-Homr, Abu Hureya and Mureybit, and the Eski-Mosul Dam region.

Our understanding of the Neolithic Hassuna/Samarra periods in Northern Iraq has also changed because of recent work. Previously, the earliest village known was Jarmo in the hill country of northeastern Iraq. However, obsidian blades and other cultural material unlike any previously found in Iraq have been found in the Sinjar area (about 60 km north of Mosul in northern Iraq), at the mounds of Yarim Tepe I, primarily at the site of Maghzaliyah. Other sites in the Sinjar region and at the sites of Umm Dabagiyah, Tell es-Sawwan and Arpachiyah show evidence for the beginning of agriculture and the transition to sedentary life. Furthermore, substantial houses with rectangular rooms grouped around a courtyard have been found at Hassuna, as well as unique pottery styles in graves at Samarra.

Syria likewise was a significant cultural force in the post-Natufian Neolithic periods with major centers of occupation in Habur and Balikh regions (both of which have been systematically surveyed) showing evidence of Neolithic levels at Tell Abu Hureyra, Tell Mureybet, Chagar Bazar, Bouqras, Tell Assouad, Tell Hammam al-Turkman, a brief sounding at Tell al-Sinn, and others. The Habur River region has exposed innovations in agricultural technology from the development of new cereals and livestock to the use of animal-drawn plows and new storage techniques.

3.2. Halaf (c. 5200-4800 B.C.). There appears to have been a sudden spread of Halaf-period (c. 5200-4800 B.C.) material culture into the remainder of northern Syria, Iraq and southern Turkey, as evidenced from the site of Yarim Tepe. A Halaf sequence from the Habur triangle has been found at Tell Aqab, south of the Turkish border. Moreover, there are a number of small Halaf-period sites in the upper Balikh Valley in Syria, as well as a few larger permanent settlements. In fact, the earliest seals in Syria have been found at Halaf-period levels at Sabi Abyad. A number of small sites (such as Khirbit Garsour) have also been recently studied in the northern Jezira in Iraq. The Halaf period in northern Iraq is well represented at Tell Arpachiyah, the earliest levels at Tepe Gawra and sites in the Sinjar region. Similar to earlier periods, the Halaf cultures appear to have employed methods of administration and agriculture that did not include many large settlements. It is clear that the Halaf period was an integral part of the Near East, not an intrusive period, as was once thought.

3.3. Ubaid (c. 5500-4000 B.C.). The Ubaid culture of southern Iraq was the first to expand into the north and into the Syrian Euphrates region. Various Syrian sites have Ubaid-period remains, including Tell Brak, Tell Leilan, Tell Hammam al-Turkman, Tell Zaidan, Carchemish, Samsat, Tell Aqab, Tell Mefesh, a number of the mounds on the plain of Antioch and Hama. Of special interest are the Ubaid remains at Tell Mashnaqa, just south of the Habur triangle, where over a dozen Ubaid-period burials (probably attesting the existence of a cemetery) have been found, far removed from southern Mesopotamia. An entire ceramic sequence from the Halaf to Ubaid periods can be seen in Syria from Halula. In fact, sixteen Ubaid sites have been identified in a survey of the Balikh Valley. The gradual transition from Halaf to Ubaid culture is reflected in the change in pottery styles at Tepe Gawra, Telul al-Thalathat, Grai Resh in the Sinjar region and Tell Uqair.

3.4. Uruk Civilization. The site of Warka (ancient Uruk, or biblical Erech [Gen 10:10], reputedly built by Nimrod), along the Euphrates in southern Mesopotamia, has been the recipient of periodic archaeological excavations for well over a century. The site has indirectly shed light upon the beginnings of world history, as recorded in the early chapters of Genesis (primarily Gen 10—11). Uruk was a major Sumerian center for over four thousand years and is presently the earliest attested urban center in the history of the world. Massive urbanization began in the Uruk period in southern Iraq (c. 3800-2900 B.C.). Recent archaeological excavations and surveys in Syria and northern Iraq (and as far away as Turkey) have exposed evidence of Uruk-type material remains far from their origin in southern Mesopotamia. Some have theorized that there was an Uruk expansion or colonization into outlying areas. Because lower Mesopotamia lacked the natural resources to sustain their newly formed complex social system, it has been posited that the inhabitants had to import them from the periphery.

However, it is not certain as to the nature of this colonization. The establishment of a network of strategically located enclaves and garrisons may have accomplished it. The Uruk "colonies" may have had direct control of the upper Tigris and intensified trade contacts in other areas. There is also some archaeological evidence of military conflict between the colonies and indigenous populations.

In northern Mesopotamia, only a small number of urban-sized enclaves were found, surrounded by a cluster of dependent villages. The enclaves are found along the Euphrates, the Habur (e.g., Tell Brak) and Nineveh.

Many of the Uruk-type settlements were large and heavily fortified. Their locations suggest that the Uruk state(s) desired to facilitate downstream commerce. Smaller stations along the waterways also existed, which were linked between large urban enclaves. Although many of the enclaves were fortified, there does not appear to be evidence of an attempt to control the hinterland but rather a takeover of strategic locations, tapping into preexisting trade networks, causing some to call this an "informal empire." This trading relationship came to an abrupt end in the succeeding Jemdet Nasr period (c. 3000 B.C.) but had a profound impact on the sociopolitical and economic evolution of the indigenous cultures in Syria and northern Mesopotamia in particular.

There is evidence of institutional change with the imitation of Uruk architecture, artifacts, ceramics and sealing practices at many sites in the outlying areas. The Uruk expansion may have acted as a catalyst to foster complex growth and independent sociopolitical systems in northern Iraq and Syria.

In particular, the sites of Tell Kannas, Habuba Kabira, Jebel Aruda and possibly Tell al-Hadidi on the Middle Euphrates attest to this widespread expansion of the larger urban centers in southern Mesopotamia. The central district at Habuba Kabira was a densely settled town with living quarters and workshops, as well as cult and administrative activities. The site provides the first evidence for town planning in Syria in this period. There is, however, no evidence of any agricultural activities that would have sustained the town. The site itself was occupied for less than two centuries. Moreover, further south on the Euphrates there is evidence of small and relatively isolated sites at Qrayya and Tell Ramadi, where Uruk-period domestic architecture and artifacts have been found. Surface finds dating to the Uruk period have also been found at Tell Barri (ancient Kahat) in the upper Habur region.

Tell Brak was of great importance in this period. It had a sequence of Uruk-period temples similar to the slightly later Sin temples at Khafaje, in addition to a ring of late Uruk-period settlements surrounding it. The site, however, had a long prehistory and was not an implanted colony like Habuba Kabira. Some of the earliest stratified clay sealings in the ancient Near East have been found at Brak. The site was very large in this period, and the large corpus of sealings attests to well-developed administrative practices, showing a social and economic complexity previously not known in the Habur region.

The distribution of these sites appears to show a network of settlements along the Balikh and Habur River basins, as well as the Middle Euphrates region, forming a long chain of towns following the Euphrates River to the north into the Anatolian plateau, apparently consciously placed in strategic locations along lines of communication. Sites that show this widespread distribution include Tell Leilan and surface finds from Hamoukar in northeastern Syria, Tell Hammam al-Turkman, Tell Zaidan and Jebel Belene on the Balikh River; Carchemish and Samsat in the upper Euphrates region; and Hama and Tell Judeideh along the Orontes River. However, of great importance is the fact that there do not appear to be many Uruk-period sites away from the major rivers in the outlying regions, although there is some evidence in the Syrian Desert. Few sites were founded upon existing sociopolitical entities, with the exception of Samsat, Carchemish and Tell Brak.

The indigenous native settlements in Syria that were distant from the colonies continued to thrive with the traditions of agricultural and craft productions with which they were accustomed. There is evidence at Habuba Kabira that the local population supported the colonists with foodstuffs. It is still not clear as to whether these centers were directly under southern control or were dominated by local elites. The function of these so-called colonies witnesses to the Uruk culture's need for materials that were not present in the south but only available over great distances. Such commodities may have included copper ores, lapis lazuli and other semi-

precious materials. The nature of the exchanges remains obscure. The Uruk culture was apparently not interested in a broad acquisition of territory or domination of agricultural enterprises. The colonies, however, were relatively short-lived, and none were maintained in the succeeding periods. This abandonment may indicate that either other sources for materials were now available, that local communities had successfully thwarted the southern domination of trade routes or that the need for colonists became obsolete due to the emergence of other forms of exchange.

The first evidence of *writing (in the form of the archaic cuneiform script) in human history comes during the late Uruk period. Over five thousand discarded archaic tablets and fragments dated to 3100 B.C. have been found at Uruk, most of which were found in a refuse area in the sacred precinct. Many of these texts shed light on early accounting practices. Some have argued that writing did not originate as a means of rendering language but as a system of recording information, developing as a consequence of the increasing demands of an expanded state and economy. Moreover, it was expected that earlier stages of pictographs existed (most likely written on perishable materials) because of the uniformity in the use and shape of particular signs in the archaic script. Although many Neolithic sites employed counting symbols (normally called tokens) as early as the ninth millennium B.C., by the early Uruk period the tokens were for the most part discarded and impressed clay tablets were used, soon replaced with the pictographic texts. A number of the signs employed in the impressed texts were later graphically represented in the archaic cuneiform texts. It has therefore been argued that the archaic script was the solution for an immediate problem and that writing was the next stage in the process of recording information.

It is unclear, however, where to place the early chapters of Genesis in the framework of the Uruk civilization. The term *Eden, for example, has a Sumerian counterpart, *edin,* a term used for uncultivated pastureland in the south of Mesopotamia. It also has been assumed that Shinar, the land that was repopulated after the biblical *flood, was the Hebrew name for Shimmer (or Sumer). Although this provides a cultural context for the early chapters of Genesis, it is not possible at present to place the early Genesis material in any chronological context or specifically equate it with the Uruk civilization of the fourth millennium B.C.

4. Early Bronze (c. 3000-2100 B.C.).

The Early Bronze Age represents the rise of city-states in the southern part of Iraq, or Sumer, the homeland of *Abraham. Thus, a study of this period provides a context in which better to understand the early chapters of Genesis.

4.1. Southern Mesopotamia. Although there has been ongoing work at Abu Salabikh and reconsideration of work at Fara (ancient Shuruppak) and Kish, recent large-scale excavations at Tell al-Hiba (ancient Lagash) have arguably helped the most to shed light on the Early Dynastic (or Early Bronze) periods of Mesopotamia (c. 2900-2300 B.C.). For example, the Ibgal temple at Lagash has an oval exterior similar to the oval temple type found at Khafajeh. The earliest brewery yet found was at Lagash, dated to about 2500 B.C. Research has shown that much of the city of Lagash was abandoned in the late Early Dynastic period, only to be rebuilt by Gudea in the twenty-second century B.C.

The city of *Ur (biblical Ur of the Chaldeans) in southern Mesopotamia, well known as the city of Abraham's youth (although many are arguing for a northern location of Ur, since a modestly sized city with that name has been located near Haran), was a significant Early Bronze Age cultural and political center. Numerous royal (or aristocratic) tombs have been found dated to the mid-third millennium B.C., showing the rich and lavish state of affairs in this city. Moreover, Ur was the centerpiece of a powerful unified state (known as the Third Dynasty of Ur) in Mesopotamia in the last century of the third millennium B.C. It was the last major state that employed Sumerian as the language of governmental bureaucracy. There is also strong evidence at Ur in this period of a new ethnic group in southern Mesopotamia, the Amorites, who began slowly to infiltrate the region from Syria by the last quarter of the third millennium B.C. Although there are no texts in Amorite, it is apparent by a study of their personal names that Amorite was a West Semitic language, related to biblical Hebrew. It is quite possible that Abraham's ancestors were Amorites who entered into southern Mesopotamia and resided at Ur.

In this period, the indigenous cultures in northern Iraq and Syria became more powerful,

and there is less evidence of southern Mesopotamian interference until the middle of the third millennium B.C., when the Sumerian and Sargonic kings struggled to control these regions. Thus, southern Mesopotamia was no longer unique in its urbanism. The political and economic organization of northern Iraq and Syria in the first half of the third millennium B.C., however, is presently unknown but was probably centered around small towns without any central control. It is not clear whether these newly created walled towns were initiated by the southerners or were autonomous creations.

The ceramic remains for this period for northern Iraq and Syria have been called Ninevite V after the pottery style found at the prehistoric sounding at Nineveh. The pottery type is found from Assyria to the Habur Plains and is dated 3300 to 2500 B.C. Nineveh V pottery has specifically been found in the Lower Jagjagh survey, around Leilan and on the Middle Habur. It is especially prevalent in northern Iraq at Tepe Gawra, Tell Billa, in the Sinjar region at Telul al-Thalathat V (where there is an extensive granary with a Nineveh V assemblage) and Tell Mohammed Arab in the Eski-Mosul Dam region. Survey data concerning Nineveh V ware has also been done.

Whereas the Uruk culture was able to penetrate the northern areas with relative ease, by the mid-third millennium B.C. the Sumerian and Sargonic kings were required to exercise force to control local rulers and walled towns, as the south was no longer unique in its incipient urbanism. A new type of settlement in dry-farming regions began to foster a new relationship with southern Mesopotamia. Both the Habur region (Hamoukar, Tell Leilan, Tell Mozan, Tell Brak, Tell ʿAtij, Tell Khuera and Tell Gudeda) and the plains of Aleppo in coastal Syria (Byblos, Homs, Ebla and Qatna on the Euphrates) permitted the extensive cultivation of wheat and barley without major irrigation. Instead, farmers employed dry-farming and extensive raising of sheep and goatherds.

4.2. Northern Iraq. There are extensive urban remains in northern Iraq from the second half of the second millennium at a number of sites. There is a sequence of rebuilding of an Ishtar temple at Ashur as well as remains from nearby Yorghun Tepe, including some tablets from the Old Akkadian period. A deep sounding at Tell Taya on the Sinjar Plain produced occupation levels in the late Early Dynastic III/Sargonic periods. A deep sounding was also done at Tell al-Rimah. Akkadian-period remains have been found in the Hamrin Basin at several sites, including Akkadian texts that have been located in the Hamrin Basin at Tell Sleimeh, some of which indicate that the site's ancient name was Awal.

4.3. Upper/Middle Euphrates/Balikh Regions. The northwestern portion of the Euphrates River holds a special place in the study of Genesis, as it was the ancestral homeland of the patriarchs, who apparently were based in the vicinity of Haran along the upper Euphrates River Valley. Thus, this area (biblical Aram Naharaim) provides a context for some of the narratives in Genesis.

Along the upper Euphrates, the Euphrates Salvage Project has uncovered on the mounds of Tell Banat a series of White Monuments dated to the second half of the third millennium B.C. In fact, the presence of such monumental construction, as well as other public buildings, and a sophisticated ceramic industry suggest a very complex social hierarchy for this region during this period. The excavators have postulated that Tell Banat may have been an autonomous state or functioned as a cultic or mortuary area. Further south near the confluence of the Euphrates and Balikh Rivers is Tell Biʾa (ancient Tuttul), which has remains dating to the Early Dynastic Period (c. 2900-2300 B.C.). Along with a number of public buildings, the excavators have uncovered four above-ground tombs belonging to rulers of Tuttul. These tombs bear a striking resemblance to the roughly contemporary royal tombs at Ur (although they are subterranean). The Tuttul tombs were partially looted in antiquity but had ceramics, jewelry and furniture like the Ur tombs. Moreover, the Shakanakku Palace (c. 2100 B.C.) is a more modest version of one found at contemporary Mari.

Further north in the Middle Euphrates region there is also evidence of occupation in the late third millennium B.C. at Selenkahiye and Tell al-Hadidi. Selenkahiye appears to have been founded about 2400 B.C. and was possibly a merchant colony of a Sumerian city. Its destruction coincides with the fall of the Ur III dynasty (c. 2000 B.C.). The Early Bronze remains at Tell al-Hadidi have shown it also to be a new urban center in the latter half of this period. Still further north, the Tishreen Dam Salvage

Project, just south of Carchemish on the Euphrates near the Turkish border, has revealed occupation in that area, showing an increase in the number of settlements in the second half of the third millennium B.C., including Tell Gudeda and Tell el-Bazey. Of note is the site of Tell es-Sweyhat, which had a substantial settlement with an upper and lower town in the late third millennium B.C. A series of salvage operations undertaken since 1993 have revealed a cemetery that may have had over one hundred tombs, some of which had not been looted. One tomb in particular had at least ten individuals, one of whom was a woman who was near two crossed bronze/copper straight pins, limestone rings and a series of beads at her breast. The arrangement of the beads is reminiscent of those worn by females on contemporary Mari reliefs.

4.4. Lower Euphrates Regions. During the third millennium B.C., Mari (Tell Hariri) on the Euphrates exhibited notable cultural independence from the Sumerian south. Recent excavations have shown that the city may have been founded either at the end of the Early Dynastic I or the beginning of the Early Dynastic II period. The excavators may have located a dike in the hills south of the mound, a branching canal that traversed the city and a number of canal feeders, permitting the production of wheat. The city had a large wall, three rebuildings of the Ishtar temple and a large Sargonic palace. Graves reminiscent of tombs of the Ur III period have been uncovered in a small structure of the same period (c. 2100 B.C.). Forty Akkadian-period texts have been recently found at Mari. North of Mari on the Euphrates River is the site of Tell Ashara (ancient Terqa), which had a massive defensive system rivaling any other site of this period. The continuing excavations in this region reveal that this area was of paramount importance in the third millennium B.C.

4.5. Habur Region. Investigations in the Syrian Habur region have also revealed much about the Hurrians, a major ethnic group firmly rooted in the Mesopotamian tradition. The origins of the Hurrians are shrouded in obscurity. They are first described in Sumero-Akkadian sources as inhabiting the land of Subartu, a term used primarily to describe upper Mesopotamia (the Habur and Balikh River basins in Syria, as well as the Tigris River basin in northern Iraq). Although the earliest attestation of the term *Subartu* dates to about 2400 B.C., evidence of Hurrian occupation of the area does not appear in sources until the reign of the Sargonic king Naram-sin (c. 2200 B.C.), where we find names of Hurrian chieftains, place names and names of individuals who were prisoners of war. Since their language is similar to the later Urartian tongue, it is presumed that the Hurrians immigrated to the area sometime before this from the north, possibly from the Trans-Caucasian region in Armenia. At any rate, by 2200 B.C. north Mesopotamia was thoroughly Hurrianized, with well-established Hurrian states, which continued until the rise of a powerful, Hurrian-based kingdom of Mitanni (c. 1600 B.C.). The earliest historical text relating to a Hurrian monarch (a bronze tablet now in the Louvre) mentions a certain Atal-Sin, king of Urkesh and Nawar (c. 2200 B.C.). The city of Urkesh is also mentioned in the earliest-known document in the Hurrian language, a building inscription of Tish-atal, king of Urkesh (c. 2100 B.C.).

One of the main Hurrian sites was Tell Khuera, which had similarities with the Sumerian south. It showed evidence of the large stone architecture of this period as well as a clearly defined upper and lower citadel typical of many of the northern Syrian centers. Judging from the absence of Uruk-period occupation, it is apparent that this site was founded during this period. Another nearby Hurrian center in the last quarter of the millennium was Tell Barri.

Also in the Habur region is the site of Tell Beydar, which has a major defense system, an upper and lower citadel, and evidence of nearly 150 tablets contemporary with Early Dynastic texts found at Ebla, Abu Salabikh and Fara. Nearly all of them were found under the original floor of a domestic residence.

Tell ʿAtij along the Middle Habur Valley was occupied during the first half of the third millennium B.C. It consists of two small mounds with a thirty-meter-wide river channel in between. The most conspicuous buildings on the site are a series of semivaulted silos that were used as grain storage facilities. Near the structures were a number of clay tokens, probably used to calculate grain quantities. The site apparently specialized in the storage of agricultural products and was likely a trading post, possibly having an economic relationship with the site of Mari in the south. In fact, other small sites have been identified as specializing in agricultural production, including Tell al-Raqaʿi,

Mashnaqa and Ziyada. Moreover, defensive systems were found protecting storerooms at Rad Shaqrah, Kerman and Tell Gudeda, while a massive wall protected the entire site of Bderi. No such wall or storage facilities have yet been found at the large site of Melebiya. Small traces of third-millennium B.C. material have been found at Mulla Mutar. In sum, the Middle Habur Valley was well populated in this period and likely had close connections with southern Mesopotamia.

Another large site excavated in this region is Tell Mozan (ancient Urkesh), which has a city wall and one of the largest bent-axis temple structures in this period, which was located on the high mound. The structure has walls 1.6 meters wide and a statue of a lion in a building interpreted as a cella. The first stratified epigraphic remains in the Habur Plains of Syria have recently been found at Urkesh (c. 2300-2200 B.C.). Two stratified administrative tablets written in Akkadian, but with Sumerian and Hurrian personal names, have been discovered. The most recent seasons of excavation have established that Tell Mozan, a Hurrian capital in the third millennium B.C., was indeed Urkesh. Seal imprints with the name "Tupkish, King of Urkesh" have been found, along with the name of Queen Uqnitum and her many retainers. In fact, most of the seal impressions belonged to the queen and her staff. The glyptic style is distinct from that found in southern Mesopotamia and even from nearby Tell Brak. Of over one thousand impressions found, more than 170 were inscribed. It has even been suggested that a Hurrian scribal equivalent to Semitic Ebla may have existed in this region.

Tell Brak (ancient Nagar) had a number of large Akkadian-period buildings and a unique ceramic sequence from the Uruk to Akkadian periods. Hundreds of clay sealings have been uncovered that contain scenes such as banquets, chariots and contests. One trench (HS3) exposed a large hoard of silver objects.

Near the border of Iraq on the Habur Plains of Syria is Tell Leilan. There the lower town shows evidence of third- and second-millennium B.C. settlements, where a number of domestic units, drain-filled alleys and planned streets were encountered. The lower town appears to have been built about 2600 to 2400 B.C., and the excavators have speculated that there was a profound social transformation that occurred soon after, changing Tell Leilan into a class-based society. The excavators have noticed that many walled cities of the type at Tell Leilan were constructed at this time. It also has been speculated that these cities were not formed through intimate contact with the southern centralized states (i.e., Sargonic Akkad) but were the result of an indigenous and autonomous process. Probably the urbanization in this area may have caused the southern states to move into the area during the Sargonic period. Many of these walled towns were in fact larger in size than their southern counterparts. A recent survey confirmed the fact that after the period of Akkadian centralization at Leilan, there is no evidence of occupation at the site for a period of about three centuries (c. 2200-1900 B.C.). The town was thus repopulated and became the basis of Shamshi-Adad's state at the end of the nineteenth century B.C.

4.6. Coastal Syria. The most important site along coastal Syria in this period, no doubt, was Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla), near the Orontes River. Ebla was one of the few sites west of the Euphrates that showed signs of sophistication equal to any contemporary urban center in southern Mesopotamia. The city displayed cultural autonomy but historical continuity with Sumer, as the inhabitants employed the cuneiform script. Thousands of cuneiform tablets have been uncovered, predominantly from a major palatial archive, written in a previously unknown Semitic language now called Eblaite. For example, many of the religious texts at Ebla have their counterparts in the southeast; however, incantations written in Eblaite have no counterpart elsewhere and feature geographic and divine names pointing to a native Syrian context. In fact, both Ebla and Mari shared a common writing system, language and calendar in this period. Most likely, Ebla borrowed cultural phenomena from the east. Recently excavators at Ebla have uncovered a large palace (called the Archaic Palace) dated to about 2150 B.C., which was probably the royal palace at Ebla during the Ur III period. After a brief abandonment following the intrusion of Sargonic Akkad, settlement reappeared in the northern region of the town, centered on this palace. Although it is apparent that our knowledge of northern Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C. is fragmentary and that no complete synthesis can be made, this region provides a rich and diverse context for understand-

ing the sociocultural and historical context of the world of the Pentateuch.

4.7. Palestine. Palestine as described in the Pentateuch was, at the end of the Early Bronze Age (c. 2400-2000 B.C.), in a posturban phase but had numerous small settlements, camps and isolated cemeteries in the Jordan Valley and the Negev-Sinai. Many of these small settlements are permanent agricultural villages that were not built on the older urban sites, most of which were abandoned. However, there is pastoral nomadism, as well. Palestine during this period appears to have been an isolated appendage of Syria, which, as has been seen, was heavily urbanized (e.g., the international character of the Ebla archives). Contact between the two areas is evident in Syrian pottery at several sites, probably brought by migrating pastoralists, somewhat like the description of Abraham's travels in Genesis. Contacts with Egypt in this period are nearly nonexistent.

It is not certain just how the patriarchal narratives relate to this sparse description of Palestine. Certainly the patriarchs experienced a Palestine that was sparsely populated, with few, if any, major urban centers. If one takes a conservative view of biblical *chronology, then Abraham flourished beginning about 2100 B.C. during a period of great upheaval and abandonment of major urban centers in both Syria and Palestine. It is equally possible, however, that Abraham and his family lived in the succeeding Middle Bronze Age, which has a good deal more documentation that sheds light on the narratives (see 5.2 below).

4.8. Egypt. Evidence for Semitic involvement in Egypt during the Old Kingdom (c. 2700-2190 B.C.) comes primarily from epigraphic sources and artistic depictions on reliefs. First Dynasty monarchs were required to defend Egypt's borderlands from hostile Sinaitic bedouin, as depicted in numerous reliefs and short inscriptions. Egypt's Delta certainly provided excellent grazing grounds for the Asiatic bedouin. The biography of Weni, a Sixth Dynasty bureaucrat, describes a number of offensive raids against the pastoral nomadic population in Palestine.

5. Middle Bronze (2100-1600 B.C.).

5.1. Syro-Mesopotamia and Coastal Syria. Although the large sites of Isin, Larsa and Tell ed-Der have exposed Middle Bronze Age material that is roughly contemporary with the Genesis patriarchs, a number of moderately sized sites have also been excavated in both Syria and Iraq that have increased our overall understanding of this period. One of these is Mashkan-shapir in the northernmost part of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. The city was a major trade center and the residence of the last Larsa kings. Its heyday was brief, but whole building plans have been uncovered that have increased our understanding of regional urbanism and town planning.

Khirbit ed-Diniye (ancient Haradum, 90 km southeast of Mari, situated on the Iraqi portion of the Middle Euphrates) was a new river town apparently founded in the eighteenth century B.C. (after the fall of Mari) as a frontier province of Babylon, lasting for over a century. Although the site of Haradum is small, it had town-wall fortifications. It was a planned urban center exhibiting a regular town layout, with straight streets connecting at right angles. The regularity of the city plan is a rare discovery in Syro-Mesopotamia, permitting the student a chance to view an elaborate urban plan.

In this period (named the Old Syrian period in Syria), Syria continued to have close cultural relations with the Mesopotamian south. Excavations have been made at a number of major political centers, such as Shubat-Enlil (Tell Leilan), a major Assyrian center at this time ruled by Shamshi-Adad I (1814-1781 B.C.). It is evident that during his reign the upper Habur triangle emerged for the first time as a dominant power. The area had not previously been integrated into a unified political system. However, soon after his reign the area reverted back to small, relatively independent and unintegrated city-states, much like the political polities of the third millennium B.C.

About 50 kilometers north of Mari was Terqa, which gained importance later in this period. There is a body of architectural documentation (a temple complex, an administrative complex and private houses) coming from this site dated to the so-called "dark age" between the fall of Mari (c. 1760 B.C.) and Babylon (c. 1595 B.C.). At this time, Terqa was most likely the capital of the kingdom of Khana on the Middle Euphrates. Moreover, Terqa was a major Amorite center in this period and thus sheds light on the overall cultural environment of the patriarchs.

5.2. Palestine. There was a major change in settlement patterns during the Middle Bronze

Age in Palestine, as many of the Early Bronze Age sites in the central agricultural zone were reoccupied, and many new small, unwalled sites were established, such as Aphek (which became urbanized later in the period). Ceramics at many sites (Dan, Akko, Beth-shan [Beth-shean], Shechem and Gezer) betray a continued Syrian influence upon Palestine. By about 1800 B.C. there were a large number of major urban centers, such as Dan, Hazor, Akko, Shechem, Aphek, Jerusalem, Jericho and Ashdod. There is clear evidence in Palestine of Egyptian and Cypriote imports. By the end of the period (c. 1650-1500 B.C.) there were a number of new heavily fortified sites (e.g., Gezer), and many older sites were refurbished with embankments, plastered glacis, outer revetment walls, casemate walls and dry moats. Two of the largest of these refurbished sites are Shechem and Gezer, both of which also exhibited large towers, a citadel and large gates with multiple entries.

However, by about 1550 B.C. virtually every major urban center was destroyed, most likely due to the removal of the Asiatic Hyksos from Egypt. The destruction is best evidenced at Gezer and Shechem. There is clear evidence at the end of the Middle Bronze Age of literacy in Palestine, as some examples of the Proto-Sinaitic script have been found at Gezer and fragments of cuneiform texts have been found at Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer and Hebron (*see* Writing).

5.3. Egypt: Middle Kingdom/Hyksos Period. Evidence of Semitic involvement in Egypt is even more significant during the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period (c. 2000-1550 B.C.) than in the third millennium B.C. Many Asiatics were prisoners of war, merchants or individuals sent to Egypt as diplomatic gifts. Moreover, there is archaeological evidence for Semitic settlement in the northeast Delta at Tell el-Dabʿa, Wadi Tumilat, Tell el-Maskhuta and elsewhere. The Genesis patriarchs appear to fit a period about 1800 to 1550 B.C. for being in the area, somewhat contemporary with the Hyksos rule. It has been speculated that since the Hyksos had a predominantly Semitic population, the Hebrews would have been more "welcome" in the Sinai region in this period and that the Hyksos dynasties would have been more amenable to a Semitic Hebrew such as *Joseph in a position of authority. Of course, there is no concrete evidence for Joseph and his clan in Egypt as of yet, although the heavy Semitic presence in the area argues for the plausibility of the biblical traditions of patriarchal (and preexodus) involvement in the region.

6. Late Bronze (1600-1200 B.C.).

6.1. Syro-Mesopotamia and Coastal Syria. Archaeological investigations have shown evidence of an abandonment of much of southern Mesopotamia at the end of the eighteenth century, lasting for about four centuries. This was a long period of deurbanization, possibly resulting in part from a change in the course of the Euphrates River. Work at the site of Dilbat in central Iraq, however, has closed this intellectual gap in knowledge. Surface surveys in the surrounding area and countryside show that earlier sites were under later accumulation of the alluvium.

Syria in this period suffered domination from both Egypt and the Hittites and endured a Mitanni dynasty in the Habur River region, in addition to nomadic pressure and sedentarization especially from the Arameans. Arising out of the ruins of Babylon, the Hurrians (kingdom of Mitanni) reasserted themselves in the Habur region, uniting Syria for first time since Shamshi-Adad I.

The kingdom of Mitanni was a confederation of Hurrian states in upper Mesopotamia in this period. Its capital was Washukanni, which has not been located for certain but may have been Tell Fekheriye located near the headwaters of the Habur River. By at least 1450 B.C., Mitanni was the most powerful state in the Tigris-Euphrates region. Our knowledge of Mitanni does not come from palatial archives but from correspondence with neighboring polities, including Egypt, the Hittites and Babylonia, as well as Mitanni vassal states such as Nuzi, Terqa and Alalakh. From these fragmented sources, it is apparent that *Mitanni* was a political term used most often to describe the confederation of Hurrian states and vassals. In fact, each of these vassals had its own king who was bound to Mitanni by a treaty sworn by oath and sacrifice. Although the state of Mitanni was composed primarily of Hurrians, there was a significant substratum of individuals with Indo-European personal names as well as West Semitic speaking peoples, Hittites and Assyrians.

One of the most influential coastal Syrian cities during this period was Ugarit. It was a major trading post on the Mediterranean coast that

was tributary to Hatti and not Mitanni. The art and architecture of this site have proved to be different from other earlier Syrian excavations, providing evidence of an independent cultural tradition. Current hydrographic surveys show that the town water at Ugarit evidently came from two small rivers encircling the mound. Furthermore, remains of a stone mound have been discovered and have been interpreted as functioning as a river dam. This research enabled archaeologists to locate the main entrance to the town.

Although much of Syria was under political domination by Hatti in the latter part of this period, it had many thriving centers other than Ugarit with independent cultural traditions, such as Emar on the Euphrates. Although there is evidence of Hittite presence at Emar, especially as regards architecture, there was apparently no influx of Hittite population, and the culture was not deeply affected by their political and bureaucratic presence. Emar has not had the publicity of either Ebla, Mari or, for that matter, Ugarit, but the texts of Emar may shed more light on biblical customs than do the other textual corpora. It is physically closer in proximity to Israel than any of the others, and nearly two thousand texts were found at the salvage operations at Emar. The relationship of Emar to biblical studies is most striking in the religious sphere. The concept of anointing is found at Emar, as the NIN.DINGIR priestess is anointed on the first day of the festival. The Emar festivals have various requirements that are to be compared to the *levitical regulations, and the elements of the biblical festival system have some correspondence to the *zukru* calendar. Emar also has the prophetic office of *nabu,* already well known at Mari. Some have argued that the Emar inheritance texts bear a resemblance to the Nuzi material and thus to the social customs mentioned in Genesis 31. There also appear to be connections concerning the care of the dead at Emar and Israel. In fact, it is possible that Emar's diverse urban and village Syrian communal life offers a closer social comparison for Israel than even Ugarit. At any rate, the Emar indigenous ritual texts represent a unique source of understanding ancient Syrian religions, with texts that are distinct from the Ugaritic corpus.

Archaeological investigations at Alalakh on the coast of Syria have shed light on the greater Syro-Palestinian context of the Bible. The Habiru have also been attested there but are viewed as an important mercenary class in the Alalakh texts. This term, of course, has been compared to the biblical term *Hebrew* on many occasions. The social customs at Alalakh (e.g., marriage contracts) have been compared to the patriarchal periods, although it is admitted that the parallels from Alalakh are less clear. Certainly the connection of Alalakh *ḫupšu* (*CAD* Ḫ.241-42) with Hebrew *hopšî* ("free") is vague at best. The cumulative weight of comparisons with the Bible shows a common cultural milieu for both, and one needs to view Alalakh and patriarchal comparisons on a case-by-case basis.

The cuneiform texts discovered at the excavations at Nuzi (1925-1931) have long been a mine of comparative information for the OT. Very soon after their discovery there was a flurry of scholarship observing the striking, putative parallels to the biblical patriarchs in the socioeconomic and legal spheres (B. Eichler). The consensus was that the two also must have shared the same chronological proximity. However, in the past generation there has not been a consensus as to the relative importance of the Nuzi material for biblical studies (see B. Eichler; Selman; and Morrison). There has been a reevaluation, and some have rejected any Nuzi connections to the Bible altogether. However, the academic pendulum has swung back to the middle, with a more responsible attitude toward the usefulness and importance of the Nuzi tablets for understanding the Pentateuch. Though the Nuzi-biblical parallels cannot solve chronological issues, they are a source of documentation for the socioeconomic practices in Mesopotamia, which will help illuminate biblical law and practices. Other text collections (e.g., from Alalakh and Emar) show that the Nuzi customs may have been common throughout a wide chronological and geographic range.

6.2. Egypt: New Kingdom. As in previous periods, there was a large Semitic population in Egypt during the New Kingdom period (c. 1540-1100 B.C.). Laborers making bricks are depicted on the tomb of Rekhmire, vizier of Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.), some of whom were taken as prisoners of war from Canaan. In fact, the annals of Thutmose III and later New Kingdom pharaohs describe thousands of such Asiatic prisoners taken in this manner. Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.) campaigned extensively in

Canaan during this period. At any rate, it appears that there were thousands of Asiatics in the Delta region of Egypt, who were most likely assigned to various building projects.

6.3. Palestine. Late Bronze Age Palestine shows clear evidence of Egyptian New Kingdom dominance and political control, especially in the later half of the period (c. 1400-1200 B.C.), because of the Amarna archives from Egypt. A number of significant sites have been excavated, including Tell Abu Hawam, Aphek, Gezer and Jerusalem in the Sorek Valley; Lachish and Ashdod in the northern Negev; as well as Tell Deir ʿAlla and Pella across the Jordan River. These sites and others exhibited a reuse of Middle Bronze Age fortifications or were unwalled (except Gezer). Large Egyptian-type buildings have been found at Gezer, Aphek, Ashdod and elsewhere, and rich tombs have been found at Dan, Shechem, Gezer and Jerusalem. The archaeological record appears to confirm the Amarna letters, which describe Palestine as tributary to the Egyptian Empire. They also describe the Habiru, a people-group who apparently harassed the local chieftains in Canaan who were tributary to the Egyptian Empire. The relationship of the term Habiru to the Hebrew tribes is, at best, unclear. There is also evidence of destruction at the end of the period (c. 1250-1150 B.C.) at sites such as Hazor and Lachish. Other sites (Aphek and Ashdod) appear to have been destroyed by the Philistines or other "Sea Peoples," while still others (Megiddo, Beth-shan [Beth-shean], Shechem and Gezer) show little evidence of destruction and continuity with the later Iron Ages.

It will doubtless take generations for biblical scholars to digest the relevant archaeological data from Syro-Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the Near East that will shed light on the general and cultural milieu of the Pentateuch. The sheer wealth of information coming from these regions affords many opportunities to understand better the biblical world.

See also EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; HARAN.

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ARK, NOAH'S. *See* FLOOD; NOAH.

ARK OF THE COVENANT. *See* CHERUBIM; RELIGION; TABERNACLE.

ARK OF THE TESTIMONY. *See* RELIGION; TABERNACLE.

ARMY. *See* WARFARE.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Some aspects of culture require the skills of artisans or craftspeople. In societies having sufficient economic resources, such folk can be set aside for these tasks with a primary eye toward products functioning as artistic expressions. In societies such as developing *Israel in the Pentateuch (in contrast to neighboring *Egypt and Mesopotamia), without an economic foundation strong enough to permit many society members to produce much "art for art's sake," skilled work served a more practical function. Even when life was directed toward subsistence, however, aesthetics still augmented practicality.

A useful entrée into this field is the record of the development of culture in the *genealogy in Genesis 4:19-22. Jabal is associated with tents and livestock (Gen 4:20). The latter is an aspect of *agriculture, but the production of the former involved technical expertise in either leather or fabric work. Jubal, his brother, is linked with music, specifically the harp and flute (Gen 4:21). The former, some kind of stringed instrument (King and Stager, 291-94; Lawergren), probably derived from military applications, as is the case with much contemporary Western technology. The archer's bow had been in use for millennia, and the sound of its strings was adapted in the production of the harp and lyre (see Braun, 58-65, concerning early harps). The flute, a wind instrument (King and Stager, 294-97), was most probably carved out from bone (Mitchell, 42). Percussion instruments also play a role in the Pentateuch (Ex 15:20). Music and dance play an important part in celebration (Gen 31:27; Ex 15:1-21; 32:19).

Tubal-cain "made all kinds of bronze and iron tools" (NRSV; cf. Deut 8:9). If this is taken as indicating a skill in metallurgy (either compounding alloys or separating metals from their ores), the production of iron in particular would be anachronistic since such skills were developed only in the eponymous Bronze (3500-1200 B.C.) and Iron (1200-586 B.C.) periods. Native arsenical copper was mined and worked in the areas of Arad and Beer-sheba, with a significant production complex at Timnaʿ from as early as the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 B.C.; Rothenberg; King and Stager, 164-67). It is soft enough that it can be cold-hammered for shape. Bronze, an alloy of tin and copper, was stronger and longer lasting, but its production developed later (cf. 1 Kings 7:45-46; Ezek 27:12). Iron ore was found in Palestine (Deut 8:9), but its smelting and casting required high temperatures that were not attainable technologically before the nineteenth century B.C. (King and Stager, 167-69; Deist, 211-14). Natural, meteoric iron was available early, however, though it would be rare. It requires neither smelting nor casting, just shaping, which could be done by grinding (Mitchell, 42). Its rarity in the earlier periods is indicated by its restriction to the elite (Deut 3:11; cf. Josh 6:19) and the biblical comments that others had iron technology prior to its availability to Israel (e.g., Josh 17:16, 18; Judg 1:19; 1 Sam 13:20-21).

Two main spheres constitute the life of a people: the domestic or private, and the public, which includes religion and trade. While there is overlap between these in a number of ways, they each have special areas of skill relevant for this study. These will serve as the organizing framework here.

1. Domestic Sphere
2. Public Sphere

1. Domestic Sphere.

Families provide the context for the continuation of a society through childbearing and nurture. The latter aspect includes aspects of socialization into the larger culture, as well as into the dynamics of the family unit itself. This education includes those skills necessary to provide for the sustenance and livelihood of the family unit. The society of the Israelites and their ancestors as presented in the OT was mainly agriculturally based throughout their history, but especially in the earlier, presettlement period described in the Pentateuch. The various aspects of agricultural preparation and production, which are necessary skills for the family, are treated elsewhere (*see* Agriculture). The production of foodstuffs was not the end, however, since *food processing* was needed both for consumption and for storage.

The females did most of these tasks. They were especially burdened since they had to do this work in addition to childbearing and seasonal labor in agriculture. Much of this work was procedural, involving several sequential steps, and thus required skill. For example, the provision of bread for guests involved several steps, some of which are noted in Scripture. When *Abraham asked *Sarah to provide for visitors (Gen 18:6; cf. 27:17; Ex 2:20), she needed to "get flour," which would have necessitated the prior soaking, milling and grinding of the grain. Milling and grinding were done with two flat stones (called *rēḥayim,* a grammatically dual form indicating the two stones; Ex 11:5; Num 11:8). The smaller upper stone (*rākeb;* Deut 24:6) was small enough to lift easily (cf. Judg 9:53), while the lower stone was much larger (Job 41:24 [MT 41:16]). This implement was so important to the life of the people that it was protected from confiscation for debt (Deut 24:6). Sarah was to take the flour and "knead it," which would have been preceded by mixing it with other ingredients that had also been previously gathered and prepared, setting it to rise before kneading it. It would then have been baked in an oven for which wood had been cut and provided and which would have been heated to a temperature previously found to be ideal for the bread. Moreover, the baking would have necessitated a certain time in the oven, which also would have been determined by previous experience (cf. Gen 40:1, where this process was undertaken by a professional baker). Two hours per day is the estimated time required for this part of a woman's daily tasks (Meyers, 25; see King and Stager, 65-67, 94-95). Other foodstuffs needed time and skill in preparation, much of it within fairly tight time parameters, since refrigeration was unknown. Food needed processing soon after it became available lest it spoil. This included, in addition to the previously mentioned grain, olives (Deut 8:8; King and Stager, 95-98), dates and other fruit (Deut 8:8), herbs and spices (Gen 43:11; cf. 37:25; Num 11:5-6; King and Stager, 103-7), vegetables, legumes and milk products (Gen 18:8; cf. Deut 32:14; Job 10:10).

Food preparation also necessitated its storage, which involved the use of *pottery.* To produce pottery, clay is formed into the desired shape and then fired in a kiln at high enough temperatures that the very chemical composition of the clay changes, resulting in a material as indestructible as stone. Since pottery is in this form (rather than the carbon-based material of much else discussed in this article, which quickly decays), it is much more widely preserved in archaeological sites. Its ubiquitous remains at archaeological sites, as well as its stylistic change over time (which has been typologically classified by archaeologists), makes it a useful resource for relative dating between various ancient sites as well as for providing a useful diachronic timeline not only of Israel but of the entire ancient Near East (e.g., Lapp, 5.433-44; Amiran). Early pottery was simply shaped by hand, but by the Middle Bronze Age (MB; 1925-1550 B.C.) wheels were developed on which the material could be more consistently turned and formed. These could be hand-turned or foot- or kick-turned, the latter being much faster.

The pottery production process had several stages. The right kind of clay needed to be located and collected. It was then kneaded or trodden to increase its plasticity and to remove air bubbles. Sometimes this also involved tempering by adding foreign material such as straw, dung or minerals to give it the desired consistency. It was then placed in a pit with water for storage and to settle. When ready for use, it was brought to the wheel, where it was thrown or shaped. It was at this stage that aesthetic elements could be incorporated, adding decoration to function. Various colored slips or emulsions of fine clay suspended in water, with added coloring, could be applied to the outside of the ves-

sel. In the Late Bronze Age (LB; 1550-1220 B.C.), for example, a white slip was added and decoration was painted with a chocolate color. Other painted or incised patterns were used through the various periods. In the Early Bronze Age (EB; 3200-2250 B.C.) one of the earliest designs is known as basket-weave or net painting, with lines and designs making it look like a basket (Amiran, 46-59; Stager, 1990). The LB was characterized by bichrome ware, designs in red and black (see King and Stager, 133-46; Deist, 214-16).

In addition to preparing and storing foodstuffs for the family, there was also a need for *clothing preparation.* An important aspect of agricultural life in the ancient Near East was raising sheep and goats (e.g., Gen 32:5; 47:16; Deut 14:4). In addition to milk, and to a much lesser extent meat, these both provided wool. Preparing wool for use involved skill in shearing (Gen 31:19; 38:12-13; Deut 15:19), cleaning, carding and spinning (Ex 35:25) to make the threads (cf. Gen 14:23). Thread and cords were also made from flax (linen; cf. Ex 9:31; Gezer Calendar in *COS* 2.85:222) and cotton (cf. Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9-11). All of these could be dyed (Ex 25:4; Num 15:38; King and Stager, 159-62; Deist, 217-18) and woven (Ex 35:35; King and Stager, 152-58; Deist, 218-20) to produce cloth, then sewn (Gen 3:7) or tailored (Ex 28:3) to produce the garments (Gen 41:42; see Deist, 216-20; King and Stager, 146-62). Mention of such domestic work is rare in the Pentateuch, but archaeology shows such skills in use from as early as the Neolithic period.

In addition to fabric garments, some clothing (e.g., sandals) was made from *leather,* which was produced by tanning animal skins. This involved preparing the leather by removing dirt, hair, flesh, fat and blood. Leather garments are mentioned but once in the Pentateuch (Gen 3:21; cf. 2 Kings 1:8), though archaeologists have found leather artifacts from the period (King and Stager, 163-64). Animal-skin water containers are mentioned in the Pentateuch (Gen 21:14).

Feeding and clothing the family was supplemented by a need for *medical care,* since injuries and other maladies were common (Deut 28:22). While Yahweh was the main provider of *life and health (Ex 15:26), there needed to be some people in society who had special medical skills, such as the midwives who looked after Israelite births in Egypt (Ex 1:15). Others likely had skill with the medicinal properties of herbs (e.g., Gen 30:14-15 [mandrakes as aphrodisiac or for contraception]; 37:25; 43:11 [balm]). Part of the job of the *priests was to diagnose and prescribe rituals for purification, if not for healing (Lev 13—14; see King and Stager, 71-84).

2. Public Sphere.

Many of the domestic crafts were also employed in the cultic setting as well, mainly in association with shrines such as the *tabernacle. Such works were not simply utilitarian; rather, aesthetics played a greater role in this public presentation to God, so special workmanship found a place here. The description of tabernacle construction (Ex 25—31) shows several of the elements discussed above. Regarding the Israelites' donations to build it, Moses was instructed: "This is the offering that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue, purple, and crimson yarns and fine linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, fine leather, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and for the breastpiece" (Ex 25:3-7 NRSV). In addition to bronze, gold and silver were also part of the fabric of the shrine. People used gold for jewelry (Ex 11:2; 32:2; 34:4-6; Num 31:50; see the picture of a LB II jewelry hoard in King and Stager, 172), and it could be cast or hammered into statues (Ex 25:18; 37:7) or furniture (Ex 25:31, 38; 37:17, 22; Num 8:4) as well as made into thread. This thread, woven (Ex 35:35) in with the dyed threads of mixed wool and linen (Ex 25:4), made up the high-priestly ephod (Ex 28:6; 39:3) and possibly the tabernacle curtains (Ex 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35) if the cherubim embroidered into these were done with the gold thread. Silver, often used with gold, both sharing a malleable character, also found a place in the tabernacle furnishings (Ex 26:19; 36:24; cf. 3:22; 11:2; 12:35; King and Stager, 169-76).

Leather from a sea creature was also prepared and used in ways similar to that of mammals, here in the outer layer of curtains of the tabernacle (Ex 26:14) as well as for coverings (along with other fabrics) for the tabernacle implements when transported (Num 4:6-14). Wood, in addition to its use in shipbuilding (Gen 6:14), was used for framing the tabernacle shrine (Ex 26:15; 36:20) as well as for furniture such as the tabernacle equipment (altars: Ex 27:1; 30:1;

37:25; 38:1; ark: Ex 25:10; 37:1; Deut 10:3; table: Ex 25:23; 37:10). The ease with which one can carve wood also made it a suitable material for making idols to pagan gods (Deut 4:28; 28:36).

The stimulation of the olfactory senses was also part of cultic practice, with incense and other scents being employed (Ex 25:6). Olive oil was the base of the scents, though some could be used dry. Various ingredients from plants and animal excretions were mixed to produce the desired scents (e.g., Ex 30:23-25, 34-36; 37:29; Matthews, 226-28). They were used not only for incense (cf. Lev 2:1-2, 15-16) and as a cosmetic but also as part of *burial procedure (Gen 50:2-3, 26; Jn 19:39; Bloch-Smith, 1.785; Jones, 490-95).

Precious and semiprecious stones also found a place in cultic practice. Onyx was used in the *priestly clothing, inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes "in the way a gem-cutter engraves a seal" (Ex 28:9-11, quote from v. 11; 35:9; 39:6). Seals were common in the ancient Near East. Since many rulers and administrators could not write, they used professional scribes, and the impressed seal indicated under whose authority the document had been produced. Seals were generally either circular, as on a ring, or a cylinder that could be rolled onto a document, which was often written on clay (*see* Writing; cf. Gen 38:18). These, while fulfilling a mundane function in commerce, could also find a place in the cult. They were often things of beauty, at times due to the material from which they were made and at times due to the intricate carving, which could include scenes as well as writing (Albenda, 420-21, 424-25; Magness-Gardiner, 1062-64; Collon; Deutsch and Lemaire).

Within the context of preparing the cultic furnishings, two men are singled out. Bezalel and Oholiab were designated as skilled craftsmen (Ex 31:1-11; 38:22-23) and were involved in numerous different areas. The fact that they were from the tribes of *Judah and *Dan respectively (Ex 31:2, 6) indicates that skills were not the realm of just one tribe, as was the priesthood, which was the exclusive province of the tribe of *Levi. These two seem to have been master craftsmen who would have supervised other skilled workers in performing the massive task before them.

Not all the products of skilled workers were destined for domestic consumption. Some were available to the wider community or even those outside the community. While there was trade in agricultural products (e.g., Gen 41:56—42:6; Ex 22:1; Deut 2:6; Ezek 27:17), processed goods also became an element of trade and commerce (King and Stager, 189-200; Snell, 6.625-29). This is evident from the imported pottery found in Palestine, though there is little evidence of Israelite export of pottery. Trade in metals such as copper and silver is evidenced from the El Amarna tablets of the fourteenth century B.C. (EA 35.10-22), where we also learn of the exchange of diplomatic gifts in the form of (semi)precious stones (e.g., EA 2:rev.6-9; 7.49-62; 8.43-47; 10.43-49), gold (e.g., EA 3.13-22; 4.36-50; 7.63-72), furniture of ivory and ebony (EA 5.13-33), cloth (EA 12.12-22), and chariots and horses (EA 16.9-12; 17.36-40). Two texts provide lengthy lists of goods for dowries (EA 13, 14).

When commerce and trade become an important motivation for producing goods within a culture, there is a corresponding shift away from the domestic base in which production started. One aspect of this shift is the new need to produce items in bulk rather than individually. It is not clear that this stage of production reached a significant level in Palestine during the period covered by the Pentateuch, though it was attained during the course of OT history. While surrounding areas such as Egypt and Mesopotamia yield archaeological remains of workshops and special quarters in the towns where crafters worked, the evidence is not as clear in Palestine. Some of the domestic crafts, however, could have reached the status of a "cottage industry" in which commercial goods were produced at home. This is difficult to determine archaeologically, however, and there is no clear evidence of it in the texts.

See also AGRICULTURE; PRIESTLY CLOTHING; TABERNACLE.

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ASHER

There is no certainty about the origin of the name *Asher.* It may have a religious origin as the male form of Asherah (the consort of El, leader of the Canaanite gods; Edelman, 482). On the other hand, it may be linked with the god Ashur of Assyria or be the abbreviation of a name such as Asarel, meaning "El has filled with joy" (Wenham, 246). Because of the wording in Genesis 30:13 and the similarity of *Asher* to the Hebrew noun *'ašrê* ("blessing, happiness"), the name is sometimes linked with a hypothetical verbal root meaning "to call blessed" (see also Ps 72:17; Prov 31:28). In the Pentateuch *Asher* refers to one of the sons of Jacob and the clan of Israel that bears his name.

1. Son of Jacob
2. Israelite Clan

1. Son of Jacob.

Asher was born into a strife-filled family at Paddan-aram in Mesopotamia, the eighth son of the patriarch *Jacob. Jacob's two wives, Leah and Rachel, were rivals, and each gave their servants, Zilpah and Bilhah respectively, to Jacob to produce children through them. When Leah's servant Zilpah bore her second son, she named him Asher as a mark of her happiness. Asher's elder brother was *Gad (Gen 30:12-13; 35:26). These two men were among the twelve sons of Israel who, with their households, accompanied the patriarch Jacob/Israel into Egypt (Ex 1:4). Asher himself had four sons—Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah—and one daughter, Serah (Gen 46:17; 1Chron 7:30 with an extended genealogy).

2. Israelite Clan.

2.1. The Clan's History: From Egypt to Canaan. The fighting-age males of the clan numbered 41,500 at the start of the *wilderness experience; when the wanderings came to an end some thirty-eight years later, that number had increased to 53,400 (Num 1:41; 26:47). Recent studies of the large numbers involved in these lists have suggested that they are symbolic, intended to make a theological point, namely, that God's promise to the patriarchs of countless descendants was in the process of being fulfilled (Davies). Alternatively, C. J. Humphreys has revived and refined an older argument that the word *'elep* can mean a military unit ("troop") and that this should replace the translation "thousand." This gives Asher forty-one troops with a total of five hundred fighting men in Numbers 1 and fifty-three troops with a total of four hundred men in Numbers 26. The numbers of men in each troop varied.

The order of the clans varies in the different lists, which is probably due to the different purposes of the lists. Sometimes the interest is *genealogy; at other times the arrangement reflects the order for camping or marching. This accounts for the different positions given to Asher (Ashley, 51-53). Pagiel was the clan leader during the wilderness experience (Num 1:13; 7:72-77). When the *blessings and curses were to be announced on Mount Ebal in the Promised Land, Asher was designated to be among those clans representing the curses (Deut 27:13). These clans were the descendants of Jacob's relationships with the slave women.

2.2. The Clan's Prospects. The future for the Asherite clan was predicted in Jacob's patriarchal blessing on his son: "Asher will feast every day and provide dishes fit for a king" (Gen 49:20). Some interpret this as a sarcastic reference to highlight the absurdity of the political

and economic situation of the writer's day. For example, Gevirtz translates it, "Asher, who rations his bread, he gives delicacies to (the) king!" meaning that Asher, though so poor that it rations its bread, still provides the king with delicacies. He holds that this reflects a time near Solomon's death, after he had surrendered twenty cities to Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kings 9:10-14; Gevirtz 154, 159, 161). However, good fortune was also predicted for the clan of Asher by Moses in his final blessing: "Asher is the most blessed of sons; may he be the favorite among his brothers and bathe his feet in oil. May your bolts be of iron and bronze and your strength last as long as you live" (Deut 33:24-25). Porter has recently suggested that these verses picture Asher as an individual warrior. He points to the principal concern of the chapter with military matters and says that *min'āl,* translated "bolt," can also mean "sandal" or "shoe" (cf. KJV). Taken with the references to "iron and bronze," the text predicts that Asher will walk over his defeated enemies.

2.3. Historical Questions. In the mid-twentieth century it seemed to scholars that the world of the patriarchs was emerging with considerable historical clarity. However, the tide has turned back somewhat. P. K. McCarter, for example, has returned to the view of the first half of the twentieth century when he writes, "The 12 sons of Israel are fictional eponyms of the 12 tribes of Israel" (McCarter, 28-29). In this view, the blessings reflect the work of later clans seeking a narrative justification for their relationship. It is also argued that the people of Asher were "an indigenous Canaanite group of people" who were incorporated into Israel only at the time of the monarchy (Ahlström, 278-79). Evidence for this is found in some thirteenth-century Egyptian references (Ahlström, 278-79). The case for a historical reading of the patriarchs and the biblical text also has its supporters. K. A. Kitchen, for example, argues that the proper Egyptian transcription of the name *Asher* is *i-š-r;* thus, the Egyp-tian references to *i-s-r* are irrelevant (1966, 70-71). In a later article Kitchen cites W. F. Albright's evidence for an authentic Northwest Semitic personal name from about the time of Jacob (c. 1750 B.C.; Kitchen *IBD,* 130; text in *ANET,* 553-54). Given the nature of the archaeological discoveries, it is highly unlikely that evidence proving beyond doubt the existence of Asher and his descendants will ever be uncovered. Absence of evidence, however, is not proof that Asher did not live.

See also BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; ISSACHAR; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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ASSEMBLY, SACRED. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

ASTROLOGY. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

ASYLUM. *See* CITIES OF REFUGE.

ATONEMENT. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

ATONEMENT, DAY OF

The Day of Atonement, observed on the tenth day of the seventh month, is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. There are three high days in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar: the blowing of trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth and the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, observed from the fif-

teenth to the twenty-second (Lev 23:23-36; *see* Festivals and Feasts). In contrast to the Feast of Booths, the most gala festival, the Day of Atonement is a day of deep solemnity, requiring fasting and self-denial.

Observance of this day in ancient Israel laid the foundation for God to forgive the people all sins committed since the previous Day of Atonement. Thereby God could continue to be present, blessing the covenant community. By faithfully performing the disciplines of this day, the people reaffirmed their relationship with God.

The Day of Atonement was so strategic in Israel's convenantal relationship with God that the year of Jubilee, the fiftieth year, when all family property returned to the original owner and all enslaved debtors were released, began on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:8-12). This year of liberty appropriately began on the day that won for all Israelites release from the burden of the past year's sins. For those who had been compelled to lease out their land or who had become bondservants, this solemn day was assuredly a glad day.

1. References to Day of Atonement
2. The Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16
3. Prescription for Future Observance
4. Azazel
5. Implications for Jesus' Death

1. References to Day of Atonement.

The primary description of the Day of Atonement is found in Leviticus 16. Other regulations pertaining to this day are found in the cultic calendars in Leviticus 23:26-32 and Numbers 29:7-11. Although the historical books, Joshua—2 Kings and 1 Chronicles—Ezra, do not mention the Day of Atonement, this fact is not that surprising because it was a single day's observance that did not require the people to make pilgrimage to the central shrine. The importance of this day in the preexilic period is, thus, hard to assess. The clearest NT reference to it comes in Acts 27:9, where it is referred to as "the Fast."

2. The Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

2.1. The Structure of Leviticus 16. The primary description of the Day of Atonement appears in Leviticus 16, the center of the book of Leviticus, which itself is the center of the Pentateuch. The very position of the regulations for the Day of Atonement in the Pentateuch underscores its importance in Israel's life before God.

The basic outline of Leviticus 16 is as follows:

A. A historical connection (Lev 16:1)

B. Instructions about the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:2-28)

1. General instructions on preparations for this high day (Lev 16:2-10)
2. The rituals (Lev 16:11-28)
   a. The central rituals (Lev 16:11-22)
      1) The high priest's presentation of a bull as an offering (Lev 16:11-14)
      2) The high priest's presentation of the people's goat as a purification offering (Lev 16:15-19)
      3) The confession of sins over the living goat (Lev 16:20-22)
   b. Additional presentation of two whole offerings (Lev 16:23-28)

C. Regulations about annual observances of this day (Lev 16:29-34)

The material in Leviticus 16 has two major purposes. First, within the narrative of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land it recounts the first observance of the Day of Atonement shortly after God killed *Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, for having offered unauthorized fire (Lev 10:1-5). The rites performed on that observance of this high day not only cleansed the sanctuary from the sins of the *priests and the people but also removed the pollution released by the brazen offense of Nadab and Abihu. Second, this account serves as the regulation for the annual observance of this day of purgation. This latter purpose clearly comes to the fore in Leviticus 16:29-34. The instructions in that section specifically address future generations; that is, reference is made not to Aaron but to the high priest who is consecrated to serve in his father's place (Lev 16:32).

The key rituals performed on this day achieved three spiritual goals. (1) The purification (or sin) offerings and the whole offerings expiated the sins of the priests and of the entire congregation and (2) cleansed the sanctuary from the pollution of those sins. (3) The release of the goat to Azazel removed from the community all liability for those transgressions.

In seeking to understand these achievements, it is important to be aware of the multiple consequences that result from a sin. In committing a sin, a person harms the one sinned against and simultaneously commits an offense against God. In addition, every act of sinning re-

leases a pollution. In ancient Israel the penetrating force of that pollution into the tabernacle depended on the standing of the one who had sinned and on the character of the sin (cf. Lev 4). Pollution from inadvertent sins committed by individuals became attached to the horns of the *altar of whole burnt offering. Pollution from the sins of the congregation as a whole, and the Aaronide priests in particular, penetrated as far as the altar of incense in the outer room of the tent of meeting. Pollution released by blatant sins entered the very holy of holies. In addition, committing a sin unleashed a negative power that strengthened the force of evil in the community.

In order to achieve complete atonement, all of these consequences from a sin had to be addressed. In ancient Israel, a person or the community, on becoming aware of having committed a sin, addressed the first two consequences by presenting either a purification (sin) offering (Lev 4:1—5:13) or a reparation (guilt) offering (Lev 5:14—6:7 [MT 5:14-26]), depending on the nature of the transgression. The other consequences were removed by the rites performed on the Day of Atonement. On that day the blood rites from the two purification (sin) offerings purged the sanctuary of the accumulated pollution released by all the sins committed during the year; as a result, the sanctuary was empowered to continue to function as the place for the people to meet God. The rite involving the scapegoat removed the burden or power of those sins from the community, thereby freeing the people from all obligation for their sins.

2.2. Initial Preparation for the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:2-10 sketches the proceedings for the Day of Atonement, focusing on the garments the high priest wore and the animals to be sacrificed.

2.2.1. The High Priest. The key player on the Day of Atonement was the high priest. After bringing a bull and a ram into the court of the sanctuary as his own offerings, he put on garments made of linen—tunic, pants, sash and turban—rather than his special high-priestly garments that conveyed dignity and glory. His linen garments were similar to those of the other priests, though not identical (e.g., the high priest wore a turban on this occasion, not his regular headdress).

As some rabbis note (*y. Yoma* 7:2), angels are clothed in linen (cf. Ezek 9:2-3). The similarity between the high priest's simpler linen clothing and that worn by angels establishes a solid basis for explaining how the high priest could enter God's very presence being clothed more simply than on the other days he officiated at the sanctuary. The simplicity of these clothes meant that he entered God's presence devoid of arrogance. His appearing in simpler garments for the main rituals of this day may also have had practical value. As he performed the several blood rites, his clothes would likely have become stained with blood. As a result, he would have needed a change of clothes sometime during the ceremony. If the high priest had been permitted to wear his special garments at the outset, he would have needed two sets of the elegant clothes, which would have been very costly. Furthermore, because his elegant attire had gold worked into the fabric, it would have been very difficult to clean them from the blood that would have gotten on them while performing the various rites.

The high ceremonies began with Aaron bathing his entire body rather than only his hands and feet, as he regularly did when serving at the altar (Lev 16:4b; cf. Ex 30:19). Immersion was required to make sure that the high priest did not enter the holy of holies with any dirt or uncleanness on his body. At the conclusion of the rituals in the holy of holies the high priest again bathed to make sure that he carried nothing away from this most holy chamber. The bathing of his entire body and the changing of clothes before and after the high rituals performed in the holy of holies served as the boundary markers for the most solemn rituals.

The regulation also addresses the acute danger that the high priest faced on entering the holy of holies. If he gazed on God's throne or was impure, the divine glory would consume him, just as it had devoured Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-3). To protect himself, the high priest first entered the holy of holies with a censer, offering up incense to form a cloud that would screen him from beholding God.

2.2.2. Presentation of the Sacrificial Animals. At the beginning of the Day of Atonement, the high priest and representatives of the congregation brought the animals for sacrifice to the tent of meeting. The high priest presented a young bull to serve for a purification (sin) offering and a ram for a whole burnt offering (Lev 16:3). A bull, the most prized sacrificial animal, was re-

quired because of the high priest's high standing in the covenant community. Then the high priest received from the congregation two male goats, one for a purification (sin) offering and one to be released into the wilderness, and a ram for a whole burnt offering. The high priest took the two goats to the entrance of the tent (i.e., presented them before Yahweh). There he cast lots over them. One lot designated the goat that was for Yahweh; it was to be sacrificed at the altar. The other lot designated the goat for Azazel; it was to be released into the wilderness.

2.3. The Main Ritual. The high ritual for the Day of Atonement is described in Leviticus 16:11-28 and has three distinct stages: (1) special blood rites were performed with the blood from the purification offerings in the holy of holies; (2) sins were confessed over the goat for Azazel, and it was released into the wilderness; and (3) regular whole offerings were presented.

2.3.1. The Presentation of the Purification Offerings. The high priest sacrificed his bull as a purification offering for himself and his house at the main altar. This offering had to be made first so that the priest might be able effectively to present the congregation's purification offering.

Before entering the holy of holies with the blood of his bull, the high priest took a censer filled with burning coals. In the outer room of the tent, close to the curtain, he most likely placed on the coals the special fine incense, fragrant and finely ground, so that as he entered the holy of holies a cloud would rise from the censer filling that room with smoke to protect him from beholding God's presence. Since the fragrances prescribed did not produce much smoke, rabbinic tradition says that the high priest had to add a smoke-producing substance to the incense to make sure there was a cloud (cf. Lev 16:2, 12-13; Milgrom 1991, 1024-31). He then went out to the main altar, took from the sacrificed bull's blood, which had been put in a basin and stirred by a priest to keep it from coagulating, and brought it into the holy of holies. There the high priest sprinkled some of the blood once at the east side on the atonement slate, and then he sprinkled it seven times before the mercy seat, or atonement slate *(kappōret)*. According to the Mishnah (*m. Yoma* 5:3), he sprinkled blood seven times downward rather than directly toward the atonement slate. It is not stated that the high priest was to put blood directly on the atonement slate, probably because the cloud hindered him from seeing it clearly. Since he sprinkled blood in the direction of this slate, some blood would likely have fallen on it.

It is important to make a note about the "mercy seat," or "atonement cover" (NIV). This object made of gold sat on the ark of the covenant and was the base for the *cherubim. Although some scholars hold that it functioned as a lid for the ark (chest) of the covenant, the weight of opinion does not favor that view. Its name *(kappōret)* comes from the root *kpr,* "to atone." This name conveys that its primary purpose was to function as the place where Israel could find full expiation from her sins in order to keep in force her covenant relationship with the holy God. In this light the translation "atonement slate" is preferable. Its location between the ark that housed the tablets of the covenant and the cherubim over which God was enthroned communicated that expiation was foundational for Israel to maintain the covenant with a holy God. The blood rites in the holy of holies thus provided a spiritual-judicial basis that enabled the holy God to forgive the sins of the priests and the congregation and thus preserve the covenant relationship with the people he had redeemed from slavery.

2.3.2. The Congregation's Purification Offering. Having made expiation for his own sins and those of his house, the high priest went out to the main altar and sacrificed the people's goat as a purification (sin) offering in the court. He then took blood from this goat into the holy of holies. There he sprinkled the blood just as he had done with his own purification offering, cleansing the sanctuary from the impurities released by the congregation's sins.

The high priest moved to the outer room of the tabernacle and performed blood rites there (Lev 16:16b). In Leviticus 16 the directions for these blood rites are cryptic, probably because they were the same as those for the high purification offerings regulated in Leviticus 4:6-7, 17-18. The Mishnah says the high priest set down the basin holding the blood from the people's purification (sin) offering and took up the basin containing the blood of his own offering (*m. Yoma* 5:4). If he followed the regulation in Leviticus 4:6-7, he sprinkled some of that blood seven times before the curtain that separated the outer room from the holy of holies (Lev 4:6, 17) and then daubed blood on the horns of the altar of

incense. He then set down this basin and took the basin with the blood from the congregation's offerings and performed the same rites. The Mishnah says, however, that he sprinkled the curtain in an upward direction one time and then downward seven times. It makes no mention of his sprinkling the incense altar, but other rabbinical sources interpret the first sprinkling as done on the incense altar. According to tradition, after this sprinkling he mixed the blood from the two sacrifices for the rituals at the main altar.

2.3.3. Rituals at the Main Altar. The high priest next went out to the main altar. There he daubed blood from these offerings on the four horns of the main altar and sprinkled blood on it seven times. These blood rites cleansed the main altar from the pollution of the congregation's inadvertent sins, thus restoring its power as on the day of its consecration (Ex 40:10).

After the high priest completed these blood rituals, all the remains from the two purification offerings, including the flesh, hides and dung, were taken outside the camp and burned. The person charged with this duty returned to the camp, but only after bathing to remove all uncleanness.

2.4. Presentation of the Living Goat. Next the living goat was brought to the high priest, who laid both hands on it and confessed over it the sins of the priests and the congregation, thereby transferring the burden or obligations of all the sins committed within the last year onto this goat. Three terms for sins are employed in his confession (Lev 16:21): wickedness (*ʿăwōnōt*), rebellion (*pĕšāʿîm*) and sins (*ḥaṭṭāʾôt*). These three terms encompass the entire spectrum of human sinning, from blunders to premeditated wrongs. Laden with all the congregation's sins committed during the past year, this goat was released into the wilderness, which was viewed by the ancients as an ominous region (see 4 below). The goat carried the congregation's sins to the realm of demonic power, thereby breaking the power of these sins for producing disharmony and harm in the community. In later times the priests made sure that the goat did not return to the inhabited area by pushing it over a cliff (*m. Yoma* 6:6).

2.5. The High Priest Offering Up Whole Offerings. Having completed these special rituals, the high priest took off his clothes, bathed and put on his elegant attire. At the main altar in the court he then offered up the two whole burnt offerings: one for himself and one for the people. As the first offerings after the high rites of atonement, they inaugurated worship for the new liturgical year and made atonement for both the priestly order and the congregation. The text does not state what these sacrifices expiated. Possibly they made atonement for human sinfulness in general.

3. Prescription for Future Observance.

The paragraph at the end of the ritual (Lev 16:29-34) establishes the preceding regulation as the basis for annual observances of the Day of Atonement. In addition, it instructs the people to afflict themselves and not to do any work. The prescription for this day found in Leviticus 23:26-32 likewise lays great stress on these two disciplines. The term "sabbath of solemn rest" (Lev 16:31) is a superlative that forbids work of all kinds, even activities allowed on other holy days. In addition, the people are to afflict themselves. The text does not prescribe what is included in this self-affliction. Generally this requirement is understood to mean a fast of both food and water. Yet other self-disciplines are intended, otherwise the ordinary word for "fast" would have been used. Most likely included were abstinence from contact with the opposite sex, from anointing or bathing oneself and from wearing sandals (*m. Yoma* 8:1). That is, all things done for pleasure were to be avoided. Over the centuries the rigor of the self-affliction most likely increased. The penalty for not afflicting oneself was exclusion from access to the sanctuary and possibly from the community itself, and God would destroy whoever worked on this day (Lev 23:29-30).

While the regulations of Leviticus 16 center on the external ritual, this emphasis on self-affliction offers insight into the personal attitude that God desired each Israelite to have on this day. In the thought of the OT, self-affliction (*ʿinnâ nepeš*) was aimed at humbling the inner spirit so that a person sought God earnestly and contritely (cf. Ps 51:17 [MT 51:19]). Contrite repentance fortified the high blood rites performed in the most holy place.

In these instructions there is no requirement for the people to go up to the temple in Jerusalem as part of the observance. Apparently the majority of citizens remained at home, observing this high day by solemnly keeping the disci-

plines of self-affliction, while the high priest faithfully carried out the rituals of this day. The people were, nevertheless, aware of the activities taking place at the central shrine, for the account in Leviticus 16 was recorded for their instruction.

4. Azazel.

The congregation's second goat was designated "for Azazel." There are three main interpretations for this term. First, some argue that Azazel is the name of the goat that carried away the sins, that is, "the scapegoat." Azazel is then a composite Hebrew term meaning "the goat that departs." This position goes back to the versions. The Septuagint renders Azazel "the one who carries away" (*apopompaios,* Lev 16:8, 10a) and "the one set apart for release" (*ho diestalmenos eis aphesin,* Lev 16:26). The Vulgate employs "scapegoat" *(caper emissarius).* The major obstacle to this position is that the regulation "for Azazel" stands parallel to "for Yahweh" (Lev 16:8), suggesting that Azazel in some significant way is similar in position to Yahweh, rather than being a term for the goat released.

Second, some suggest that Azazel is the name of a remote, forbidding place in the wilderness where the sin-laden goat went. Statements in the Targum and the Talmud support this position (*Tg. Ps.-J.; b. Yoma* 67b). However, assigning a name to the place where the goat went would have had little value since throughout the centuries Israel observed this day in a variety of places. A stronger argument against this position is the fact that the place where the goat goes is called "a solitary place" in Leviticus 16:22. Referring to that place with this rare term would have been superfluous if Azazel itself meant a desolate place in the wilderness.

A third view takes Azazel as the name of a demon that lived in the desolate wilderness. These remote desert regions were occupied by wild animals that gave off eerie howls and screams, taken by the ancients to symbolize death and destruction (Is 34:11-15). Satyrs, goatlike demons, were thought to live in these remote, waterless places. In fact, the Hebrew word for *satyr (śāʿîr)* is literally "the hairy one," and this word is also used for goats. In a few places it means "goat idols" or "goatlike demons" (Lev 17:7; 2 Chron 11:15; Is 13:21; 34:14). Thus this sin-laden goat was driven to a goatlike demon named Azazel.

Intertestamental apocalyptic literature, most likely drawing on language from the ritual for the Day of Atonement, took Azazel to be the prince of the demons (*1 Enoch* 8:1; 9:6; 10:4, 8; 13:1-2; cf. 11QTemple 26:3-13). Several ancient rabbis espoused this view. The position is supported by the fact that the expression "for Azazel" in Leviticus 16:8 stands parallel to "for Yahweh," suggesting that the two parties belonged to similar categories. In this case the two were opposing spiritual forces. According to this view, this goat took Israel's sins away from the congregation into a desolate region, the abode of Azazel, in order to remove completely from the community the evil power generated by Israel's sins. In returning all these sins to the demonic power, this ritual removed the power of these sins for harm and discord in the congregation.

A strong argument against the identification of Azazel as a demon is that God would not tolerate any sacrifice being offered to a demon. In response, there are four solid facts that prove that this goat was not a sacrifice: (1) it was not ritually slaughtered; (2) its blood was not manipulated at the altar; (3) since the sins of the people made it unclean, it could not be presented as an offering to Yahweh; and (4) it was Yahweh, not the congregation, who determined which goat took on this role. Thus there are no indications of any kind that this goat was a sacrifice. Moreover, there is no hint that Azazel even desired to receive this goat. So the identification of Azazel as a (chief) demon does not detract in any way from Yahweh's complete sovereignty in all the rituals performed on the Day of Atonement. This identification, however, acknowledges that a sin, being more than an act, participates with the force of evil present in this world.

5. Implications for Jesus' Death.

The book of Hebrews in particular pictures Christ as the great high priest who achieved in his death once for all time the entire efficacy of the annual Day of Atonement (Heb 9:1—10:14; 12:2; *see DLNTD,* Death of Christ §2). Being himself free from sin, Jesus functioned as the perfect high priest. In contrast to the ancient high priest, Jesus did not have to offer any sacrifice for himself first, nor did he have to offer a sacrifice every year. In his death Jesus was at the same time the perfect sacrifice. After shedding his blood on earth, Jesus ascended into heaven,

where he completed the work of atonement in the perfect heavenly sanctuary, the prototype of the earthly sanctuary.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross was far superior to the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement. Achieving full atonement for all who believe in him, his death eliminated the need for animal sacrifice and for the observance of an annual Day of Atonement. Whereas the ancient high priest entered the holy of holies, performed the rites while standing and then departed, not to return until the next Day of Atonement, Jesus ascended into heaven, sat down at the Father's right hand and is ever present in the heavenly holy of holies making intercession for all who believe in him. As a result, through the priestly work of Jesus a believer gains full reconciliation with God and also has direct access to God for all petitions. Thus an understanding of the Day of Atonement sheds great light on what Jesus achieved in his sacrificial death.

According to Hebrews 13:9-12, God has given believers an altar at which they have higher privileges than the priests who ministered at the altar in the sanctuary. This altar is a metaphor for Jesus' death on the cross. In fact, his sacrifice was the perfect antitype of the purification (sin) offerings made on the Day of Atonement, for like the carcasses and remains of those offerings, which were completely consumed by fire outside the camp (Lev 16:27), Jesus died outside the walls of Jerusalem. His blood, therefore, sanctifies all those who believe, giving them firm confidence in their relationship with God. At this altar believers continually receive spiritual nourishment by faith.

Paul too may have the Day of Atonement in mind when writing in Romans 3:24-25: "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a place of atonement [NRSV mg.; NIV and NRSV translate Gk *hilastērion* as "a sacrifice of atonement,"] by his blood, effective through faith" (NRSV). This may be a reference to the atonement slate and its efficacious role on the Day of Atonement. The Greek term *hilastērion,* "a place of atonement," is used to translate Hebrew *kappōret,* "atonement slate." But since this Greek term is not used exclusively in the Septuagint for *kappōret,* its usage here is not sufficient evidence for claiming conclusively that Paul meant the atonement slate. However, given Paul's goal of establishing the definitive, superior achievement of Christ's sacrificial death, it is likely that he is alluding to the rites done in the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, for those blood rites were the most powerful atoning rites in the OT legislation. As Jesus hung on the cross, God made Jesus' body the atonement slate, thereby empowering the shedding of his blood to achieve full expiation for all sins of all humanity. In God's economy, on that day the atonement slate, which was concealed behind the curtain in the holy of holies, was placed, as it were, in full public view, outside the walls of Jerusalem. Thereby Jesus' death achieved full atonement for all who accept his sacrifice, regardless of their race, gender or generation (see *DPL,* Expiation, Propitiation, Mercy Seat).

Thus what the annual observance of the Day of Atonement achieved for all Israelites for the coming year, Jesus achieved in his sacrificial death on the cross both for all people and for all time. Christ, as sacrifice and priest, accomplished also the benefits gained by the people's two goats offered on that day: like the goat for Yahweh, his death atoned for all human sins; like the goat for Azazel, his death and resurrection broke the power of evil energized by those sins.

See also BLOOD; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS, SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; SIN, GUILT.

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ATRAHASIS EPIC. *See* FLOOD; NOAH.

AUTHORITY. *See* BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH

During the past two centuries the quest to identify the author of the Pentateuch has become one of the most complex and provocative issues in biblical studies. For some, to doubt the long-standing tradition of Mosaic authorship is the greatest heresy. For others, to support unquestioningly the belief that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch is the hallmark of blind, uncritical thinking. As a prelude to entering this minefield, we shall review briefly and somewhat selectively the history of biblical scholarship as it relates to the composition of the Pentateuch (for a fuller survey, *see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of). After identifying the central issues relating to the subject of authorship, we shall explore three main strands of evidence.

1. Recent History of Scholarship
2. Summary of Main Issues Arising out of Survey of Scholarship
3. Date of Final Editing
4. Conclusion

1. Recent History of Scholarship.

Prior to the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, Jewish and Christian scholars were in the main unanimous in affirming Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The origin of the first five books of the Bible was clearly associated with Moses, who consequently was venerated as one of the most outstanding figures in the history of ancient Israel (*see* Source Criticism §§1 and 2). While some scholars, for example, the medieval Jewish writer Ibn Ezra (1092/93-1167), were conscious that the Pentateuch contained material that appeared to contradict the concept of Mosaic authorship, the authority of synagogue and church on this issue was never seriously challenged.

All this gradually changed when the intellectual ideas associated with the Enlightenment elevated "human reason" over "divine revelation." Those adopting this new approach distrusted other authorities, believing that the road to truth lay through reason, observation and experiment. In this climate some scholars began to express more openly reservations about religious traditions and dogmas, often in the context of exploring new approaches to other areas of human life. The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) epitomizes this in *Leviathan,* a lengthy treatise on human government in which he argues against the divine right of kings to rule over others. Hobbes (417-18) devotes several pages to various arguments against Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

While the Enlightenment introduced a new willingness to question traditional ideas, there was initially little momentum toward rejecting Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, the door was opened for further developments to occur. Consequently, by the start of the twentieth century a new consensus emerged, supported by many leading Jewish and Christian scholars, rejecting the long-standing tradition that Moses was responsible for writing the Pentateuch.

During the final quarter of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, various scholars experimented with the idea that the Pentateuch displayed signs of multiple authorship. In particular, the use of two different divine names in Genesis (Elohim [God] and Yahweh [LORD]; *see* God, Names of) led some scholars to suggest that either several documents or numerous fragments had been combined together to form the present text. In 1792 A. Geddes (1737-1802) argued that the books of Genesis to Joshua had been composed during

the reign of Solomon from fragmentary sources, some of which favored the name Elohim and others Yahweh. A more radical approach was advocated by W. M. L. de Wette (1780-1849) in 1805, when he suggested that the composition of the book of Deuteronomy should be linked directly to the religious reforms undertaken by King Josiah about 621 B.C. Building on this, de Wette proposed that the oldest parts of the Pentateuch came from the time of David at the earliest.

The dating of Deuteronomy to Josiah's reign became an integral part of further theories regarding the composition of the Pentateuch. Building on the concept of multiple authors, many scholars came to the opinion that the Pentateuch was composed of four main documents. Eventually, the theory evolved that these four sources—known today by the terms Yahwistic (J); Elohistic (E); Deuteronomic (D); Priestly (P)—had been combined to form the Pentateuch. Although many scholars contributed to the debate regarding the nature of these four source documents, J. Wellhausen (1844-1918) did more than most in shaping and promoting the idea that these sources should be dated: J (c. 840 B.C.); E (c. 700 B.C.); D (c. 623 B.C.); P (c. 500-450 B.C.). On the basis of these dates, the Documentary Hypothesis, as it came to be known, clearly placed the composition of the Pentateuch long after the time of Moses. The impact of this new approach was such that by 1890 all but the most conservative of biblical scholars had rejected the concept of Mosaic authorship.

Having established a framework for future pentateuchal (and OT) studies, biblical scholarship proceeded to explore related issues. In the early twentieth century H. Gunkel pioneered studies in the oral traditions that lay behind the source documents, raising the possibility that traditions contained in J, E, D and P might have been composed some time prior to their inclusion in these sources. With attention now focused on the origin of the source documents, G. von Rad proposed that existing cultic traditions had been collected and edited by the Yahwist. Modifying slightly the Documentary Hypothesis, von Rad dated the Yahwist's activity a century earlier, to the time of David, arguing that the Yahwist had been an author and theologian of some genius.

Although further developments occurred, many scholars accepted that the Yahwist, more than anyone else, had established the basic shape of the Pentateuch as we now know it. While biblical scholarship generally applauded the contribution of the Yahwist, the role of the Priestly writer, who was viewed as the one responsible for the final editing of the Pentateuch, received considerably less attention and almost no acclaim.

In spite of the broad support given to it, the Documentary Hypothesis was never without detractors, although initially they came chiefly from the ranks of conservative Christian and Jewish scholars. However, by the final quarter of the twentieth century, a new generation of scholars began to reexamine the process by which the Pentateuch was composed. Prominent among the advocates of a new approach are R. Rendtorff, J. Van Seters, J. Milgrom and N. Whybray (1987; for a fuller discussion of these writers and others, see Wenham 1999; Alexander 2002).

Influenced by what he saw to be irreconcilable incompatibilities between the approaches of source and *form criticism, Rendtorff has forcefully argued that there never was a Yahwist. In a different vein, Van Seters has redefined the nature of the Yahwist, arguing that he was a figure of the exilic period. Milgrom belongs to a growing band of scholars who, although broadly sympathetic to the idea of various sources, challenge Wellhausen's dating of them; in particular he proposes that P is to be dated prior to D. Rejecting the criteria by which the different source documents are distinguished, Whybray favors placing the composition of the Pentateuch in the exilic/postexilic period. While proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis still exist (e.g., Nicholson), there is an ever growing unease that it fails to provide the best explanation for the composition of the Pentateuch. As Whybray (1995, 12-13) has recently remarked: "There is at the present moment no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the dates of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years."

2. Summary of Main Issues Arising out of Survey of Scholarship.

Although biblical scholarship is deeply divided on the issue of how the Pentateuch was composed, there is widespread agreement that the

Pentateuch, as it now stands, is an edited work and not a piece of literature that was penned *ab initio* by one individual. Various factors indicate strongly that the Pentateuch was created through a process involving the editing of already-existing materials, regardless of whether the editor was *Moses or someone else. The Pentateuch itself occasionally refers to the existence of other documents that were presumably written down before the whole of Genesis through Deuteronomy was composed (e.g., Gen 5:1; Ex 17:14; 24:7; 34:27; Num 21:14-15; 33:2; Deut 31:9, 22, 24).

Furthermore, biblical scholarship has struggled to explain the composition of the Pentateuch using various models: fragmentary; documentary; supplementary; or a complex mixture of these. Central to all of these is the idea that different kinds of material have been united. Whereas a fragmentary approach stresses the disparate nature of the materials that have been edited together, documentary and supplementary approaches emphasize a degree of unity running throughout much of the material. In Genesis, for example, the presence of the *tôlĕdôt* headings ("These are the generations of . . ."; Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2) at the start of new sections within the book suggests that they have been used by the book's editor to give it a distinctive structure. In this process, the editor may well have taken over some already-existing headings that were attached to *genealogical lists (e.g., Gen 5:1). Given that the contents of Genesis span a long period of time and consist of different kinds of writing (e.g., genealogical lists; short narrative episodes [e.g., the tower of *Babel incident]; longer narratives [e.g., the *Joseph story]), it seems only reasonable to assume that one person was not responsible for composing everything. This would also seem to be the case as regards the different poetic portions found in Genesis (Gen 4:23-24; 9:25-27; 27:27-29, 39-40; 48:20; 49:2-27). Genesis 14 displays peculiar features that point to the incorporation of an ancient text into the account of *Abraham's life (e.g., the use of explanatory notes to provide updated names for several places), although this could also have occurred at a later stage involving the transmission of the whole Pentateuch (*see* Source Criticism §2.1.1). When we move beyond Genesis to the rest of the Pentateuch, it becomes even clearer that different blocks of material, each with its own distinctive features, have been united to form the whole.

All of these factors point in the direction of preexisting material having been taken over and edited to form the Pentateuch as we now know it. This best explains features within the Pentateuch that point toward, on the one hand, the overall unity of the narrative plot and, on the other hand, a clear lack of homogeneity as regards the contents of the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. In the light of these contrasting features, the Pentateuch is best understood as a literary collage. What remains in dispute, however, is the nature of the editorial process, the identity of the one (or those) responsible and the dating of it.

Throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century, the Documentary Hypothesis has been the dominant explanation for the process by which the Pentateuch was composed. However, the history of Pentateuch criticism reveals that the solutions given by the Documentary Hypothesis to explain this process evolved over a long period of time. Today many of the assumptions, which were accepted toward the end of the nineteenth century, are no longer considered valid (Whybray 1987).

Furthermore, given our present knowledge and the lack of relevant, external evidence, serious doubts exist regarding the ability of scholars to uncover the process by which the Pentateuch was composed. While NT scholarship is almost unanimous is supporting the idea that Matthew had before him a copy of Mark's Gospel, it is highly unlikely that beginning with Matthew, scholars could uncover, using internal evidence alone, a source document identical to Mark. In the light of such considerations, we ought to ask seriously: Is it possible for contemporary scholars to recover with any certainty the process by which the Pentateuch was composed, especially when no other relevant texts are available (Alexander 1997)?

Accepting that the Pentateuch is a literary collage, the question of the date of final editing becomes even more complex, for editing allows for the possibility that different parts may have been composed over a wide range of time and by different writers.

Before asking what date should be assigned to the composition of the Pentateuch, a number of general observations will be made. First, it is

not possible to assign a date of writing to all of the individual components that make up the Pentateuch. Scholars differ greatly in the dates they give to particular portions, and often these dates tend to be relative rather than absolute. Second, even if it were possible to claim categorically that every passage in the Pentateuch was pre-Mosaic, this would not of itself prove that Moses was the final editor. While it allows for this possibility, it is equally feasible that an editor long after the time of Moses may have been responsible for the present shape of the Pentateuch. Third, even if it could be demonstrated beyond doubt that the date of final editing was late (e.g., exilic or postexilic), this does not automatically indicate that everything contained in the Pentateuch must also be dated to the exilic/postexilic period. It is always possible that traditions that go back many centuries have been brought together at a later time. Fourth, due to the very limited scope of extrabiblical sources from Palestine, our knowledge of the preexilic period in ancient Israel is limited, and scholars diverge greatly in their assessment of it. Much depends on the historical reliability that scholars assign to the relevant biblical material found mainly in the books of Genesis to Kings. Yet even if one accepts that this material provides an accurate picture of this period, the picture is far from comprehensive, and there are many gaps in our knowledge. These observations highlight the complexity of the main issues surrounding the authorship of the Pentateuch.

3. Date of Final Editing.

If the Pentateuch is a literary collage that was formed to a greater or lesser extent through the bringing together of disparate materials, what can we discover about the final date of composition? Three different approaches may help determine the date of editing, although, as we shall observe, they all present problems. First, if we can isolate and date the latest tradition preserved in the Pentateuch, then we may conclude that the final editing must have taken place after this date. Second, by discovering specific references to the Pentateuch in other writing, it may be possible to establish the date at which it came into being. Third, if we can ascertain the purpose behind the writing of the Pentateuch, this may guide us to when it was composed.

3.1. Latest Tradition. It goes without saying that the final editing of the Pentateuch cannot be earlier than the date of composition of the latest tradition preserved in the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. This, however, leads us into the very complex issue of determining the actual date at which every tradition within the Pentateuch was committed to writing. Given that the Pentateuch consists of a large number of traditions, representing a variety of literary genres, the task of dating each tradition is far from easy. Unfortunately, many of the individual traditions preserved in the Pentateuch lack criteria by which an absolute date may be assigned to them. Moreover, opinions may differ significantly regarding the date of a particular tradition; different scholars may assign the same passage to quite different periods of time.

The narratives in Genesis concerning Abraham and his immediate descendants provide many examples of the complexities of trying to determine the date of individual traditions. Due to the influence of the Documentary Hypothesis, toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, it was widely held that the stories about the patriarchs were invented by scribes living at the time of the Israelite monarchy. This view, however, was subsequently challenged during the middle of the twentieth century by various biblical archaeologists, the most prominent being W. F. Albright, who saw the patriarchal traditions as reflecting early second-millennium customs. Then, in the final quarter of the twentieth century, due largely to the influence of T. L. Thompson and J. Van Seters, the pendulum started to swing back in favor of the idea that the stories concerning the patriarchs should be viewed as literary creations from the middle of the first millennium B.C., having no links with the early second millennium B.C. Although the overall approach of Thompson and Van Seters has not gone uncontested (see Millard and Wiseman), some of their criticisms are valid regarding the way in which extrabiblical parallels have been used to justify the historicity of patriarchal traditions.

The problem of dating individual traditions may be illustrated using the following example based on Genesis 23. In 1953 M. R. Lehmann argued that the account of Abraham's purchase of the cave at Hebron reveals an intimate knowledge of Hittite law and custom dating from the second millennium B.C. According to Lehmann, the bargaining between Abraham and Ephron

was concerned not merely with the possession of a piece of land but also with obligations to the king entailed through ownership of land. Abraham wanted to avoid these obligations, but Ephron was keen to rid himself of them. Basing his argument on several statutes from a Hittite law code found at Boghazköy in Asia Minor, Lehmann concluded,

> We have thus found that Genesis 23 is permeated with intimate knowledge of intricate subtleties of Hittite laws and customs, correctly corresponding to the time of Abraham and fitting in with the Hittite features of the Biblical account. With the final destruction of the Hittite capital of Hattusas about 1200 B.C.E., these laws must have fallen into utter oblivion. This is another instance in which a late dating must be firmly rejected. Our study again confirms the authenticity of the "background material" of the Old Testament, which makes it such an invaluable source for the study of all aspects of social, economic and legal aspects of the periods of history it depicts. (Lehman, 18; cf. Kidner, 146)

Given Lehmann's suggestion, however, that Abraham wished to avoid any feudal services due to the Hittite king, it is surely strange that no reference, either direct or indirect, is made to the monarch.

A very different approach has been suggested by G. M. Tucker, who develops the idea that the account of Abraham's purchase of the cave resembles in form a *Neo-Babylonian dialogue document*, used around 700-500 B.C. for the transference of property or other possessions. "The similarities between this type of contract and Genesis 23 are striking, though the OT narrative preserves a much fuller account of the negotiations. The dialogue document's pattern is reflected in Ephron's quoted 'offer' (VS. 15), Abraham's acceptance described in the third person (VS. 16aα), the payment clause (VS. 16aβb), and the transfer clause (VSS. 17-18) which includes a description of the property" (Tucker 1966, 82). While Thompson (295-96) and Van Seters (98-100) have embraced Tucker's claim that the legal details found in Genesis 23 reflect best Neo-Babylonian customs, several difficulties arise. First, Tucker's suggestion that a "dialogue document" underlies Genesis 23 is restricted to only verses 15-18. Second, "dialogue documents" are attested in the early second millennium B.C. (Selman, 117/124). This undermines the suggestion that the legal aspects of the narrative are necessarily late.

An alternative approach to the legal features outlined in Genesis 23 has been proposed by R. Westbrook, based on what he terms "a legal fiction of double transfer." Westbrook notes that in land transactions from Ugarit, "a number take the curious form of a tripartite transaction whereby the king intervenes not merely as a witness but as an intermediary through whose hands the property passes from one party to the other" (Westbrook, 36). Similar transactions are found in Hittite documents from Boghazköy and in Elamite documents dated about 1600 B.C. Westbrook suggests that the part played by the Hittites in Abraham's purchase of the cave from Ephron can be explained best by this "double transfer" (cf. Gen 23:17, 20; 25:9-10). In the light of this, the account in Genesis 23 may possibly reflect a practice in existence long before the development of Neo-Babylonian dialogue documents.

As this example illustrates, it is possible to uncover various ancient Near Eastern customs that may possibly parallel the events recorded in Genesis 23. While the views of Lehmann and Tucker are less compelling than that of Westbrook, it may well be that none of the above suggestions is applicable.

In the light of this, some general observations should be made. Any attempt to date a particular tradition is hampered by the limited and sporadic nature of the evidence available. On the basis of past and current archaeological discoveries, it is not possible to reconstruct a continuous, detailed picture of life within every society throughout the ancient Near East. This is especially so for Israel/Palestine during the whole of the second millennium and the first half of the first millennium B.C. While much archaeological evidence has been uncovered, it represents, relatively speaking, only the tip of an iceberg, and many gaps in our knowledge exist. For this reason, due to the absence of more appropriate materials, scholars have often been forced to compare biblical traditions with customs found in Mesopotamia, hundreds of miles away. Not surprisingly, such parallels occasionally prove to be less than satisfactory.

A further complication is the fact that new archaeological evidence does not come to light in a uniform manner. A chance find may provide an abundance of artifacts relating to a specific

site. On the other hand, a systematic survey of part of a major site may uncover relatively little. As archaeologists have long acknowledged, *absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.* This becomes an even greater factor when we are dealing with the early second millennium B.C. Moreover, we need to have realistic expectations as to what kind of evidence is likely to be discovered after three or four thousand years. Is it likely, for example, that extrabiblical documents or artifacts shall ever be found documenting the lives of seminomadic people such as the patriarchs in Genesis?

In addition, it is always dangerous to assume that a particular social custom may be dated to a narrowly defined period of time. We now know that the custom of a wife giving her husband a slave girl (see Gen 16:1-4; 30:3-5, 9-10) was practiced over a period of one thousand years, ranging from the early second millennium B.C. through to the middle of the first millennium B.C.

Care also needs to be taken that we are not guilty of eisegesis regarding the biblical text. Often the biblical description of a custom is exceptionally brief and open to various interpre-tations (e.g., as noted above with Abraham's purchase of the cave of Ephron). The danger is ever present that an extrabiblical custom is "read into" the biblical text. E. A. Spesier's analysis of the wife-sister incidents in Genesis exemplifies the hazard of such an approach (see Speiser and the critique by Greengus).

All these factors make the task of dating the pentateuchal traditions, especially those associated with Genesis, exceptionally difficult. When scholars differ noticeably in their estimation of the date of a particular tradition, the reasons for doing so are often very tentative. Although it is clearly beyond the scope of this article to consider the dating of every tradition found within the Pentateuch, a number of general observations shall be made in support of the idea that greater weight ought to be given to the view that the pentateuchal traditions are authentic rather than later fictional creations, as some scholars have recently argued (e.g., Mullen).

As regards the book of Genesis, it is noteworthy that various social customs and religious practices stand at odds with what developed in the time of Moses and afterward. The freedom with which the patriarchs built altars at different locations and offered sacrifices (Gen 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7) stands in marked contrast to the religious practices associated with Mosaic Yahwism, with its emphasis upon the role of priests and the importance of a central sanctuary (see Moberly; Pagolu). This contrast is even greater when we move to the postexilic period.

Similarly, there are several prominent examples of the patriarchs acting in ways that would have been abhorrent to those living under the legislation and customs associated with the Sinai covenant. According to Genesis 20:12 Abraham married his half-sister *Sarah, yet this practice is forbidden in Leviticus 18:9, 11; 20:17; and Deuteronomy 27:22. Similarly, whereas Leviticus 18:18 prohibits a man from marrying two sisters, Jacob married Leah and her sister Rachel (Gen 29:15-30).

The Pentateuch also contains traditions that stand strangely at odds with later attitudes. For example, as Nicholson (159-60) highlights, Esau's firstborn status in Genesis is unlikely to have been invented by a Jewish writer of the exilic/postexilic period. On the contrary, this would have been a major embarrassment to Jews who viewed the Edomites as archenemies (e.g., Jer 49; Lam 4:22; Ezek 25:12-13; 35:15; Obadiah). The same argument could also be applied to the prominence given to Joseph in Genesis, over against the less-important role played by his older brother Judah. If this latter tradition was created by a Judean writer, it is hard to imagine that he would have given pride of place to Joseph, from whom the Ephraimites, associated with the northern kingdom of Israel, claimed a royal lineage. This would suggest that the traditions concerning Esau and Joseph are preserved due to their authenticity rather than their appeal to contemporaries living in the exilic/postexilic age. Why invent traditions that give a special standing to those who were later viewed with some disdain?

Whereas the preceding comments have focused on Genesis, A. P. Ross (35) makes a similar point regarding the traditions concerning the *tabernacle. If these traditions were created in the exilic or postexilic period, it "yields the improbable scenario in which the nation in exile longs to return to their land but instead receives instructions to build a portable shrine for the desert."

Alongside the difficulty of explaining why various traditions should have been invented in

the exilic or postexilic period, other features point to the antiquity of various elements within the Pentateuch. For example, F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman's study of the poetic sections embedded in the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy points to an early date of composition for these. Given that poetry, in contrast to narrative, is less likely to be modified by later editors, the dating of these materials is highly significant. Rendsburg (1982) notes that within the Pentateuch the Hebrew personal pronoun *hû'*, which normally denotes the third-person masculine "he," occasionally refers to the third-person feminine "she." According to Rendsburg, this is best explained as reflecting an early linguistic feature. From a different perspective, G. J. Wenham (1980) observes the absence of personal names in Genesis that have been formed using a theophoric element derived from the divine name YHWH. This evidence points toward a date of composition prior to the first millennium B.C., when it became very common for personal names to incorporate elements from YHWH. (For further linguistic evidence supporting an early date for the pentateuchal traditions, *see* Language of the Pentateuch.)

Over against these indicators of ancient material, we should also observe that there are various features in the Pentateuch that point toward a date of composition after the time of Moses. For example, the use of the name Dan in Genesis 14:14 is anachronistic; according to Judges 18:29 the designation "Dan" was given to the city of Laish after the Israelites entered the land of Canaan. In addition, would Moses have written of himself, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3 NRSV)? (For a fuller list of post-Mosaic traditions, *see* Source Criticism §2.1.1; cf. Aalders, 105-10.) Significantly, some of the features that are viewed as clearly post-Mosaic are in keeping with the idea that older traditions were edited at a later date.

3.2. External Evidence. Another way by which we may attempt to date the composition of the Pentateuch is to find references to it in other documents. While at first sight such an approach may seem straightforward, various difficulties arise regarding the Pentateuch.

There is a limited range of materials from which to glean evidence. Through to the postexilic period, we must rely almost exclusively on the biblical books of Joshua to Kings, alongside the writings of the preexilic prophets. These writings provide a very limited picture of a period of history that spans about eight hundred years (for a discussion of several important extrabiblical texts, see Waaler).

The identification of references to the entire Pentateuch in the earliest relevant extant documents is complicated by the fact that no single title appears to have been used to denote the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. The designation "Pentateuch" (derived from the Greek *pentateuchos,* "five-volume work") came into use about the third century A.D. Prior to this various expressions were used, often involving one or both of the terms *Moses* and *Torah* (usually translated as "*Law," although "Instruction" would convey better the sense of the Hebrew word in English). Thus, in the prologue to the Greek translation of Sirach, written about 132 B.C., the author refers to the threefold division of the OT using the following expressions: "the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them"; "the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors"; "the Law itself, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books" (NRSV). Here the term *Law* is clearly used to denote the Pentateuch.

Yet a survey of earlier materials, reveals that the term *law* is first used in a more restricted manner. According to the book of Deuteronomy, Moses set before the people "the law," a body of material that is introduced by the narrator in Deuteronomy 4:44 and extends from 5:1 to 26:19 (or possibly 30:20). Later Moses gave a written copy of this law to the priests (Deut 31:9), instructing them to read it to the people on a regular basis (Deut 31:11). In the meantime they were to place it beside the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:26). Interestingly, within the "book of the law," Moses gave instructions that the future king should make for himself a copy of "this law" in order that he would be guided by its contents (Deut 17:18-20). This same "book of the law" is referred to in Joshua 1:7-8: "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way pros-

perous, and then you shall be successful" (NRSV). In the light of Deuteronomy, there can be no doubt, although this is not always appreciated, that the book of the law mentioned at the start of Joshua is *not* the Pentateuch as we know it. Rather, the expression "book of the law" denotes the contents of Deuteronomy 5—26 (or perhaps 5—30).

From this starting point, it becomes clear that further references to the "book of the law of Moses" (e.g., Josh 8:31; 23:6; 2 Kings 14:6; Neh 8:1), "the law of Moses" (e.g., Josh 8:32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 23:25; 2 Chron 23:18; 30:16; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Dan 9:11, 13), "the book of Moses" (e.g., 2 Chron 25:4; 35:12; Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1), the "book of the law" (e.g., 2 Kings 22:8, 11; 2 Chron 17:9; cf. 2 Chron 34:14) and "the law" (e.g., 2 Kings 21:8; 2 Chron 25:4;) probably refer to the material now preserved in Deuteronomy 5—26(30). On some occasions, there can be no doubt that the text of Deuteronomy 5—26 is in view. Quoting Deuteronomy 24:16, the author of 2 Kings 14:6 (cf. 2 Chron 25:4) states that Amaziah (c. 800-783 B.C.) "did not put to death the children of the murderers; according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the LORD commanded, 'The parents shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be put to death for the parents; but all shall be put to death for their own sins' " (NRSV). Although no quotation is provided, Nehemiah 13:1 unmistakably alludes to Deuteronomy 23:3, which states that Ammonites and Moabites should be excluded from the assembly of God. On other occasions dependence upon Deuteronomy 5—26(30) is more difficult to prove. For example, Joshua 8:31, which states, "as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, 'an altar of unhewn stones, on which no iron tool has been used,' " would seem at first sight to be alluding to Exodus 20:25. However, there is no mention of *iron* in Exodus 20. Alternatively, Deuteronomy 27:5, which itself depends upon Exodus 20:25, specifically uses the term *iron*. It may be, therefore, that the author of Joshua 8:31 is alluding to Deuteronomy 27:5.

While the earliest OT evidence strongly suggests that the designation "the book of the law of Moses" and its related variants denotes the core chapters of Deuteronomy alone, an important development takes place in the postexilic period. At this stage, the designation "law" comes to embrace more than the material contained in Deuteronomy 5—26(30). Thus, for example, a subtle change in wording by the Chronicler in 2 Chronicles 25:4 (compare 2 Kings 14:6) suggests that he may have viewed the "book of Moses" as a subset of "the law." More significantly, the reference in Nehemiah 8:13-14 to the written "law" probably relates to Leviticus 23:34-43, although H. G. M. Williamson (294-95) observes that at least one feature is dependent upon Deuteronomy 16:13-15. A similar observation is applicable to Nehemiah 10:34-36, which presupposes a knowledge of Exodus 13:13; 34:20; Numbers 18:15-18; and Deuteronomy 15:19-23. Interestingly, in these latter two examples, the name of Moses is not associated with the law; the "law of the LORD" encompasses the "law of Moses" but goes beyond it to include materials found in Exodus and Leviticus.

The evidence considered above does not go far toward supporting the idea that the Pentateuch, as we know it, existed in the preexilic period. The most that we can conclude is that much of the book of Deuteronomy existed in written form. However, even here we need to take into account the incident recorded in 2 Kings 22 concerning Hilkiah's discovery of the "book of the law" during the reign of Josiah. While, as we have noted earlier, many biblical scholars from the time of de Wette onward have mistakenly dated the composition of Deuteronomy to this event, about 620 B.C., a different implication may be drawn from the narrative. Josiah's reaction to the discovery of this document reveals that the detailed contents of this "book of the law" must have been largely unknown at the start of the final quarter of the seventh century B.C. This indicates that for some period of time it could not have been read. Indeed, apart from brief references to the "book of the law" in the time of David/Solomon (1 Kings 2:3) and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:6), little mention is made of it prior to 620 B.C. (Another brief reference to the law is found in 2 Kings 17:13, although it is not clear that this is the "book of the law." The "book of the law of the LORD" is also mentioned in 2 Chron 17:9 in connection with the reign of Jehoshaphat [c. 873-849 B.C.].)

It is hardly surprising, however, that knowledge of the "book of the law" should have been neglected, if not deliberately suppressed, by the Judean and Israelite monarchies. As the book of Kings reveals, the contents of Deuteronomy offer a serious indictment of the practices of many

kings. To take but one example, Solomon's desire for wealth (1 Kings 9:10—10:29), horses from Egypt (1 Kings 10:28-29) and many wives (1 Kings 11:1-8) stands in marked contrast to the advice given in Deuteronomy 17:16-17. Given the overall spiral of spiritual and moral decline that followed on from the reign of Solomon and eventually led to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Babylonians, it is hardly surprising that specific references to the "book of the law" are few and brief.

While this is so, clear evidence exists that the "book of the law" (i.e., Deut 5—26 [30]) was composed well before the time of Josiah. We see this in the writings associated with the prophets. In particular, the book of Hosea presupposes that the prophet's contemporaries knew the "law of Moses" and accepted its authority. As F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman (75) state, "Hosea's discourses are threaded with Deuteronomic ideas in a way that shows they were already authoritative in Israel" (cf. Brueggemann, 38-40). Hosea, however, is not the only prophet to have been influenced by the legal traditions found within the Pentateuch. As Tucker (1988, 214), writing about the eighth-century B.C. prophets, observes, "The law, in the sense of authoritative and binding expectations for behavior, comes before even the earliest prophets." Marshall's study of the dating of the legal materials in the *book of the covenant (Ex 21—22) also points toward a premonarchic date.

Although there is a clear absence of external sources to confirm the composition of the whole of the Pentateuch as we know it prior to the postexilic period, the lack of evidence needs to be treated cautiously. Moreover, considerable evidence exists indicating that many traditions found within the Pentateuch were clearly known in the preexilic period. Consequently, we must ask, are these traditions known from a preexisting Pentateuch, or was the Pentateuch composed later on the basis of much earlier traditions? Given our present knowledge, the weight of evidence probably favors the latter of these options.

3.3. Purpose of Composition. What prompted the bringing together of the various traditions that now make up the Pentateuch? If this can be determined, it may prove a helpful guide toward the date of final editing.

As we approach this issue, it is important to observe that the individual books of the Pentateuch have been linked together in two significant ways. First, specific connections exist between adjacent books. For example, the opening verses of Exodus presuppose that the reader is already familiar with the main details of the story of Joseph in Genesis 37—50. Exodus 13:19 refers back to Joseph's comments in Genesis 50:25 concerning his bones being taken up out of *Egypt. The account of the appointment of Aaron and his sons as *priests in Leviticus 8:1-36 presupposes the instructions given in Exodus 29:1-46. God's comment in Numbers 20:12 regarding the death of Moses outside the Promised Land is fulfilled in Deuteronomy 34:1-8. While these, and others, demonstrate that the books of the Pentateuch, in their present form, are interdependent, it should also be noted that this feature extends beyond the Pentateuch into the books of Joshua to Kings. Thus, the opening verses of Joshua presuppose that the reader is familiar with events narrated in Deuteronomy.

Second, the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy are bound together by a narrative plot that has at its heart two strands involving the divine *promises of (1) land and (2) a royal deliverer. Although the first of these is usually associated with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, it has important antecedents in Genesis 1—11, where attention is drawn to humanity's special but troubled relationship with the ground/earth. The promise of land dominates the narrative plot in the Pentateuch, linking the patriarchs of Genesis with the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and their protracted journey to the land of Canaan. Closely associated to the theme of land, the promise of a royal deliverer is tied in Genesis to the unique lineage that is traced from Adam through Seth to Noah and then, via Shem and his descendants, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Through this particular family line God's blessing will eventually be mediated to the nations (e.g., Gen 12:3; 22:18). While this anticipated royal line is initially associated with Joseph and his son Ephraim, leading directly to Joshua, we discover that in the time of Samuel God rejected this lineage in favor of another descended from Judah (Ps 78:59-72; see Alexander 2002, 101-28; cf. P. R. Williamson).

The divine promises of land and a royal deliverer both remain unfulfilled by the end of Deuteronomy, making the Pentateuch an "unfinished story." The absence of an account of

the Israelite occupation of the Promised Land led many scholars to think of a Hexateuch (Genesis to Joshua). A further development occurred when M. Noth introduced the concept of a Deuteronom(ist)ic Historian, who composed the books of Deuteronomy to Kings in the exilic period. Focusing on the unity of these latter books, Noth dismissed the concept of a Pentateuch in favor of a Tetrateuch (Genesis to Numbers). While Noth's proposal has been very influential, it is not without problems (see McConville), and it fails to account adequately for the important relationship between the Tetrateuch and the so-called Deuteronomistic History.

The narrative plot centered on the divine promises of land and a royal deliverer moves to a preliminary climax with the appointment of David as king and his establishment of Jerusalem as the cultic and political capital of the nation. At last, under David and Solomon, the Israelites come to possess all the land promised to Abraham. Furthermore, God guarantees David that his kingdom will be established forever (2 Sam 7:11-16; cf. Ps 89:19-37). Yet, as Kings reveals, the Davidic dynasty fails to mediate divine blessing to the nations, but rather, through its disobedience, brings God's wrath on itself and the nation of Israel. After Solomon, the kingdom is divided, with first the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah being decimated by the Assyrians and Babylonians respectively. By the end of Kings, the promise of international blessing seems far from being fulfilled.

In the light of the coherent narrative plot that runs from Genesis through Kings, which cannot be easily broken at either the end of Numbers or Deuteronomy, it seems best to assume that all of the material in Genesis to Kings was brought together at one time to form the extended narrative that comprises these books. Given the diversity of materials and styles of presentation contained in Genesis to Kings, earlier traditions were clearly used to compose this complex literary collage.

The books of Genesis to Kings were probably given their present shape shortly after 561 B.C., the date of Jehoiachin's release from prison (2 Kings 25:27). While the process by which these books were compiled remains obscure, they were probably written to give hope to those affected by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the demise of the Davidic dynasty, the deportation of many leading Judean citizens to Babylon and the flight of others to Egypt. The books of Genesis to Kings not only offer an explanation for the occurrence of these traumatic events by focusing on the nation's failure to be faithful to Yahweh (see esp. Deut 28:15-68; 29:16-28), but they also preserve the hope that God will one day raise up a descendant of David through whom God will bless all the nations of the earth. Similar optimism comes in other writings, some of which originate prior to the exile (e.g., Is 9:1-7; 11:1-5; Jer 23:5-6; 30:8-9; Ezek 17:22-24; 34:23-24; 37:24; Amos 9:11-12).

4. Conclusion.

Since the Pentateuch itself offers no clear statement regarding the one responsible for creating it, we should exercise extreme caution before stating that its author can be identified with certainty. While the long-standing tradition of Mosaic authorship is based upon clear statements that Moses was responsible for writing substantial parts of the Pentateuch, the weight of evidence suggests that Moses probably did not compose the Pentateuch as we now have it (see Aalders, 105-58). This is not to say that the Pentateuch's claims concerning Moses' literary activity should be rejected. On the contrary, such assertions ought to be respected and given serious consideration, which unfortunately all too rarely happens.

As we have noted, two conflicting factors complicate the task of trying to identify the author of the Pentateuch. As a literary work, the Pentateuch displays evidence of both unity and disunity. Unity of overall composition, involving a narrative plot that binds disparate materials together, has to be balanced against the fact that the pentateuchal writings lack homogeneity, with different styles and types of writing having been placed side by side. These factors suggest that the Pentateuch was composed through a process of editing that involved the bringing together of already extant documents.

The task of determining when this editorial task was undertaken is far from straightforward. As we have noted, early traditions may be brought together at a much later date, leaving open the possibility that many centuries could pass between the original composition of traditions found within the Pentateuch and their incorporation into a single work. Acknowledging that any conclusion reached must be based on

very limited evidence, it seems best to conclude that the Pentateuch as a literary whole, which was linked to the books of Joshua to Kings, eventually took shape in the exilic period. While the traditions contained within the Pentateuch clearly existed prior to this time and were obviously viewed as both ancient and authoritative by the final editor of the Pentateuch, it is exceptionally difficult to demonstrate that the Pentateuch itself existed in its entirety as a literary unity prior to the sixth century B.C. As we have suggested, it may have been the dramatic events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem that prompted the bringing together of the traditions that are now embedded not just in the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy but in Genesis to Kings.

Whether substantial parts of the Pentateuch already existed as literary works prior to this final editing is open to debate. Evidence from Kings and the prophetic writings indicates that much of Deuteronomy already existed. Whether the same is true, for example, of Genesis is difficult to determine; Wenham (2000) has recently argued that the rhetorical features of Genesis point to a date of composition in the early monarchy. Certainly the editor of Genesis appears to have been aware of the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, associated with the line of Perez, and the rejection of the line of Ephraim (see Ps 78:59-72; Alexander 2002). However, the complex relationship between the royal lines descended from Joseph and Judah, anticipated in Genesis 37—50, would hardly have led to Joseph being given prominence at the very time when David and Solomon were seeking to establish their claim to the throne of Israel. A later date of editing, well beyond the division of the Solomonic empire, and possibly after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, would seem to offer the best time for composing a work that gives greater prominence to Joseph/Ephraim over against Judah/Perez. That this should happen at such a later period, when there was little to be gained by advancing the cause of Joseph/Ephraim, suggests that the editor of these traditions was committed to preserving them accurately.

To suggest, even tentatively, that the Pentateuch reached its present form long after the time of Moses may appear to some readers to undermine its authority and challenge the concept of divine inspiration. Such, however, is not the case. A late date of editing does not automatically deny the authenticity of the traditions contained in the Pentateuch, especially when, as we have noted, earlier written documents have been used in its composition. Moreover, as with many biblical books (e.g., the Gospels) that provide a description of selected events, the Pentateuch offers a prophetic interpretation of a history that spans many centuries. Indeed, by linking together the books of Genesis to Kings, the final editor of this material produced an important metanarrative that provides a unique perspective on God's dealing with humanity. This ancient metanarrative not only recounts events that have taken place, but significantly offers an authoritative explanation of them. Furthermore, as M. Sternberg has noted, the narrator of these events comes across as omniscient, knowing, for example, not only what various characters in the story are thinking but more importantly what God is thinking. For Sternberg (23-25) such knowledge displayed by the narrator points towards divine inspiration.

See also FORM CRITICISM; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM; WRITING.

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T. D. Alexander

AZAZEL. *See* ATONEMENT, DAY OF.

B

BABEL

Babel is the name given to the city that, according to the story in Genesis 11:1-9, was constructed in a plain in the land of Shinar and whose construction led God to confuse the builders' language and to scatter them.

1. The Context
2. The Story: Structure and Meaning

1. The Context.

1.1. Textual. The Babel narrative in Genesis 11:1-9 is the last in a series of accounts that precede the Genesis 12 record of *Abraham's migration from *Haran and his *covenant with God. D. J. A. Clines has drawn attention to the way in which these accounts all conform to the same general pattern yet progress toward a climax in the Babel story. Elements of this pattern include a sin, mitigation and punishment, but the sin and punishment become more serious as the accounts proceed, and the grace involved in the mitigation, which, according to the pattern, precedes the punishment, becomes more expansive. Clines believes that this literary arrangement may explain why the spread of *Noah's offspring and the diversification of languages recorded in Genesis 10 appears before the dispersion of humans and the confusion of their language in the Babel account in Genesis 11. Babel already appears in Genesis 10:10 as an important city connected with the powerful Nimrod. The enormity of what happened at Babel in Genesis 11 leads God to initiate a new strategy in dealing with the human race: the choice of Abraham and God's *promises to him.

1.2. Historical. Precise chronological indictors are absent from the Babel account, and this has led to a range of proposals for connecting the incident with specific events or, more broadly, with certain eras in Mesopotamian history. In formulating these proposals, the artifacts and written materials presently available from *archaeological excavations play an important part.

Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar I's failed attempts (1123-1101 B.C.) to realize his plans for massive building works or the hugely impressive city of Babylon built by the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 B.C.) may be the background to this story of outstanding building activity followed by a disastrous reversal of fortune. J. H. Walton sees the story about the "tower" *(migdāl)* as a reference to the ziggurat, a feature that, he argues, developed in association with the early period of urbanization in Mesopotamia during the latter part of the fourth millennium B.C. The narrative mentions "thoroughly burned bricks," but the use of such kiln-fired bricks was not at all common until about 3000 B.C. Walton also allows that the author's reference to Babylon in the Genesis 11 story may simply indicate the use of the city as a contemporary example of the initial process of urbanization and the theological distortion it could represent. P. H. Seely reaches a similar conclusion about the dating implied by the story but argues that we should not seek to harmonize the story with the archaeological data; instead, we should see it as an example of "gracious divine accommodation to limited scientific knowledge." The principle of divine accommodation Seely appeals to is important in interpreting Scripture, but his proposal for implementing it here seems almost like a counsel of despair. The intent of the narrative is, of course, primarily theological, but there is no reason to suppose that when the narrator crafted the story he did not have a specific incident or a phase in human history in mind. It is important, therefore, despite the obvious difficulties involved and the lack of consensus among scholars, to continue to

try to understand what the underlying historical tradition is and how the present narrative has been formulated to reflect its significance.

1.3. Cultural. The location for the story is the plain of Shinar. The OT use of this term does not indicate the exact extent of the area intended, but it clearly refers to the southern part of Mesopotamia. Since the narrative is given such a specific setting, it is not unreasonable to ask if the story provides allusions to the material culture, religion and historical traditions associated with that region.

The Sumerian epic of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta tells of a time when all human beings spoke Sumerian, but that story has quite a different setting from Genesis 11, and it offers no convincing parallels to the biblical account.

Many scholars are convinced that the biblical author intends the term "tower" *(migdāl),* used of the structure at Babel, to refer to a Mesopotamian "temple tower" (ziggurat). Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation story, records a tradition about how the minor gods (Anunnaki) took a whole year to make the bricks for Esagila, Marduk's temple in Babylon, a building of which it could be said: "They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu [heaven]. / Having built a stage tower *as high as* Apsu, / They set up *in it* an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea" (*ANET,* 69). The text stresses that building the structure involved stupendous effort, expense and the application of considerable technical expertise. Baby-lon was always justly proud of its achievements represented by the construction of the city and its major religious buildings (cf. Dan 4:30). Scholars are not entirely agreed on the precise religious function of the ziggurat, but it seems to have been a means by which the god whose temple stood atop the structure could descend to another temple situated at ground level and so be accessible to the people.

2. The Story: Structure and Meaning.

2.1. Rhetorical Structure. The story is carefully structured in the form of an introversion (Kikawada) or palistrophe (Wenham). According to Genesis 11:5, Yahweh "came down" to see the city and the tower that the builders had begun to construct. This is the point at which the preceding account of human motivation and action gives way to a description of divine response and action. The settlement of humans in one place and their vigorous efforts to maintain that self-contained unity through impressive building projects led to divine intervention that brought about a disruption of their unity, cessation of their building activity and their dispersion over the earth. A complex use of a range of parallel terms and skillful paronomasias in each half of the narrative reinforces these ideas. Among the most important of these terms and wordplays is the final link between the name of the city *(bābel)* and God's action in confusing *(bālal)* the language of the builders (Gen 11:9). This carries forward the contrast already established between the builders' statements—"let us make bricks" (*nilbĕnâ lĕbēnîm,* Gen 11:3) and "let us build" (*nibneh lānû,* Gen 11:4)—and God's "let us confuse" (*nabĕlâ,* Gen 11:7). Wenham claims, with some justification, that this ultimately points to the narrator's underlying claim that the massive human effort in building the city and the tower was simply "folly" *(nĕbalâ).*

The use of the term *name* is another important element in the story, and it also represents an important link with earlier narratives in Genesis 1—11, an issue to which we shall return later.

2.2. The Offense and the Punishment. Traditionally the *sin that God punished in the Babel story has been seen as an act of hubris in which human beings attempted to build a tower that would, in their view, enable them to assault heaven itself. In this understanding the sin repeats *Adam and *Eve's transgression: an attempt to be "like god." Brown and Carroll refer to the Babel enterprise as "attempting to build the tree of life with brick and mortar" (Brown and Carroll, 5). It was, however, a more calculated and outrageous act than the *Eden transgression, which indicates the progressive, disintegrating effect of sin in human experience. Divine judgment intensified to match the spread of sin. Thus God's dispersion of the builders led to the dreadful loss of human unity: the "one people" *(ʿam)* became the "nations" *(gôyîm),* so God chose, in Abraham, a new *ʿam* through which to *bless the whole world.

God's dispersion of the builders throughout the earth may, however, be seen as a means of realizing the original blessing given at creation: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28). Some have therefore argued that the builders' disobedience at Babel was simply their determination to resist the divine command to spread out and "fill the earth," a stance that God had to overcome so that the intended blessing could proceed.

The language of Genesis 11:6 clearly indicates God's concern about the actions of the builders in terms that suggest an act of hubris: an attempt to challenge divine prerogatives. Wenham demonstrates that the Hebrew verbs used there of the builders' actions are used elsewhere in the OT of actions reserved for God. Divine intervention was designed to limit the devastating impact of human hubris on the ordered world and on humanity itself. The divine action was both an act of judgment and an act of grace. But this twofold facet of divine action was, as Clines and others have demonstrated, characteristic of the narratives of Genesis 1—11.

The nature of the sin involved needs also to be interpreted in the context of this series of narratives. It was *Cain who, after his expulsion east of Eden, built the first city as a place where his "name" *(šēm)* might be immortalized (he called the city after his son, Enoch [Gen 4:17]). Hidden from God's face (Gen 4:14), Cain would create a society that boasted of its power and its technological developments (Lamech [Gen 4:19-24] was the end product of this society). But this city and this society had no room for the God of *creation and the garden, who demanded that humans exercise their power as God's vice regents within the limitations of what it means to be human. The sons of God (Gen 6:1-4) were at one with Cain's society and its worldview; they also make a "name" *(šēm)* for themselves by setting aside divinely imposed limits. The Babel builders also set out to make a name (*šēm,* Gen 11:4) for themselves in that place (*šām,* Gen 11:2), but they were scattered from that place (*miššām,* Gen 11:8). Sin is closely related to this urge to make a "name" for oneself apart from God, but God demands that humans recognize their true nature and their need to be accountable to him. The builders' power and technology were not inherently evil, but their use of these assets to create a stronghold for a worthwhile life (one of *šēm*) apart from God inevitably posed a threat to the ordered world. It would, therefore, ultimately invite divine intervention, both in judgment and with offers of grace.

See also NATIONS, TABLE OF.

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BALAAM

According to the narratives in Numbers 22—24, Balaam was a seer commissioned by Balak, king of Moab, to pronounce curses on the nation of Israel prior to their entry into Canaan. However, as an apparently obedient prophet of Yahweh, Balaam refused to comply. Balak then sent to Balaam more important emissaries with the promise of more money. Balaam inquired of Yahweh and was told to go with them but not to curse Israel. On the way, Yahweh became inexplicably angry with his prophet and blocked his way with an angel. Balaam, however, could not see the divine emissary and had to be verbally enlightened by his donkey about the angel's existence. Balaam then continued on his way and, contrary to Balak's orders, proceeded to bless Israel in four oracles before returning home. In their present state, the texts in Numbers explain Yahweh's ability to confound Balak's desires to curse Israel by means of a questionable source (i.e., Balaam).

1. Balaam Sources
2. Balaam's Origins
3. Balaam's Vocation

1. Balaam Sources.

1.1. Old Testament Sources. Because of apparent contradictions in the texts, scholars have long argued that the sources concerning Balaam

in Numbers show evidence of separate traditions that have been woven together, although there has been no scholarly consensus about the origin and character of these traditions (Gross, 13-64; Mowinckel; Coppens). It is difficult to conclude whether this is because of divergent late oral traditions or the combination of different streams of tradition stemming from the same source (i.e., the OT; Albright 1944, 207). Some have theorized that there were two different strands of tradition concerning the story (Hackett 1986, 218). In fact, scholars have postulated that the theoretical J and E sources (*see* Source Criticism) were responsible for the divergent traditions, even though the divine names found therein do not correspond with the normal pattern attributed to the sources. Because of this, there has been no consensus as to which portions of the story correspond to which source. Still others have argued for a northern and a southern tradition concerning Balaam. W. Gross has offered an alternative idea, believing that there were at least three independent stories woven together to create the Balaam tradition (a separate source concerning the donkey episode, one about Balaam the obedient prophet, and one concerning Balak, the foreign king). Moreover, the oracles in Numbers 23—24 appear independent of the narratives. The third and fourth oracles can be read without any reference to the Balaam stories and thus may have stemmed from a separate tradition.

There are at least two evaluations of Balaam in the OT. Not only is he described as a somewhat reluctant *prophet who is nonetheless obedient to God's commands (Num 22:8, 18, 35, 38; 23:12, 26; 24:2, 13, 15-16), he is also a somewhat incompetent prophet who is unable to see Yahweh's angel (Num 22:22-30). The latter is explained as a literary device that exhibits irony, satire and parody throughout the story, most likely in an attempt to downgrade the prophet (Marcus, 31-41). Furthermore, his function regarding Israel is varied in the sources (Deut 23:5-6; Josh 13:22; 24:9-10; Judg 11:25; Neh 13:2; Mic 6:5). He was also remembered as one who practiced *divination (Josh 13:22, based on the fact that the Moabite chiefs came with fees for divination) and was ultimately killed fighting against Israel (Num 31:8-16). In sum, Balaam is a very complex figure who exercises a plurality of roles. Albright unconvincingly tried to harmonize the situation by concluding that Balaam was a convert to Yahwism and later abandoned it to join the Midianites against the Israelites (Albright 1944, 233).

1.2. Tell Deir ʿAlla Sources. The texts from Tell Deir ʿAlla in Jordan, equidistant between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee near the Jabbok River, a tributary of the Jordan, were discovered in 1967(Hoftizer and van der Kooij). The texts show that Balaam was well known outside of the biblical traditions. The context of the material is subject to question, as some have argued that the bits of plaster found on the text may have been on a stela or on some form of display area (Hackett 1986, 216). The texts are very fragmentary and have been pieced together in fifteen different groups or combinations, the first two of which contain most of the textual information. It is not even certain whether or not the fragments all came from the same text. The texts are not only fragmentary but linguistically confusing, as scholars have argued over the meaning as well as the date and even the language of the fragments (Hoftizer and van der Kooij; McCarter; Hackett 1986). The fragments have been widely dated between the eighth century B.C. and the Persian period (Hackett 1986; McCarter). The language of the texts shows evidence of syntax and vocabulary similar to biblical Hebrew and south Canaanite dialects, rather than Aramaic, which was originally supposed (Hackett 1984, 109-24). The script is considered to be a strange form of Old Aramaic with an influence from Ammonite sources (Hackett 1984, 9).

The first of these combinations describes Balaam (presumably the same as the biblical Balaam) as a seer of the gods who was visited at night by the gods and saw a disturbing vision concerning punishment, resulting in the loss of fertility and life on the earth (Sasson). In fact, the name Balaam is found only on lines 3-4 of the first combination and in one of the small fragments and nowhere else. The relationship of the second combination to the first is unclear. It contains a ritual meant to appease the gods, who are described with the epithet *šdy,* similar to Shaddai in the OT.

If one views the combinations in a composite manner, the Deir ʿAlla texts describe Balaam as a person contracted to perform various roles as diviner/seer and exorcist. Since his client is under a curse from demonic powers, Balaam transfers the curse away from his client onto a homeopathic image, which is destroyed as part of the rit-

ual (Moore, 96). J. A. Hackett (1986, 220) argues that Balaam, son of Beor, was tied to Moab, worship of *šdy* gods and various ritual practices. She believes that he was recast as an obedient prophet to entertain the Israelites (Hackett 1986, 220) and to make known another account of the Balaam tradition (Hackett 1984, 72). P. K. McCarter argues from Combination 1 that Balaam was considered a foreigner by the Deir ʿAlla people (McCarter, 57). The oneiromantic role of Balaam in the Deir ʿAlla texts corresponds to ancient Near Eastern forms and to divine council messengers in the Bible (Job 15:8; Jer 23:18).

How do the Deir ʿAlla texts compare with the biblical accounts? Although many readings in the former are still conjectural, they both appear to refer to the same character (Balaam). It also appears that Balaam has the same vocation in both traditions (seer), received communications at night and gave a prophecy that was contrary to what his readers expected. Moreover, some of the divine names in both sources are similar (*ʾlhn/ ʾĕlōhîm* and *šadday*). In sum, the writer(s) of the Deir ʿAlla combinations were no doubt well acquainted with the Numbers 22—24 tradition.

1.3. Late Traditions. Because the later traditions concerning Balaam are dependent upon the OT, they contain the same mixture of good and bad judgments about him, although most of it is in a more negative light. In postbiblical writings Balaam is described either as God's servant or as Balaam the wicked (see Moore, 1). In trying to harmonize the traditions, Josephus (*Ant.* 4.6.13 §158) saw Balaam as a diviner who desired to curse Israel but could not because of God's command. However, Josephus also argued that Balaam advised Balak to cause the women of Midian to lure the Israelites from the worship of Yahweh. Philo's description of Balaam as a diviner (*Vit. Mos.* 1.264) is supported by the Deir ʿAlla texts. He also concluded that Balaam was a false prophet. Pseudo-Philo put Balaam in a somewhat more positive light, since the prophet knew it was wrong for Balak to desire to curse Israel. Balaam, however, also gave Balak counsel that led to the Baal Peor incident. Rabbinic writers for the most part also viewed Balaam in a bad light, as one who was greedy and a sorcerer.

Balaam is mentioned three times in the NT (2 Pet 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14), each time with a negative judgment. Jude and 2 Peter chastise Balaam for taking money for wrong reasons (which is implied by Num 24:11, where Balaam was presumably to be paid to curse Israel). The NT writers most likely interpreted this from Balaam asking God a second time for permission to travel back with Balak's messengers (in order to be paid). Furthermore, these passages and Revelation probably refer to the apostasy at Peor and sexual immorality (Num 25:6-8).

2. Balaam's Origins.

Balaam's homeland is described as Pethor, which is "near the river" (Num 22:5). Pethor has been identified with Pedru listed in the topographical lists of the Egyptian king Thutmose III (fifteenth century B.C.) and with Pitru, a city listed in the military itinerary of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (857 B.C.) (Albright 1915). The city has been traditionally identified with Tell el-Ahmar, located on the west bank of the Euphrates River, twelve miles south of Carchemish. However, based upon a textual emendation and the location of Tell Deir ʿAlla in Ammonite territory, many commentators have argued for a location in Ammon. Nevertheless, since there is no Pethor in this area, it appears best to accept the traditional identification with the Euphrates Pithor.

3. Balaam's Vocation.

One of the more difficult issues concerning the Balaam tradition is the exact nature of his vocation. Although Balaam is commonly regarded as a prophet (though the Bible never calls him such), his prophecies (both in Numbers and in the Deir ʿAlla texts) were opposite to what his hearers had expected (see the discussion in Kaiser, 98-99). However, he was clearly in the function of a seer in his second oracle, where he promised to tell Balak God's word (Num 23:3). Balaam credited his ability as a seer to Yahweh, even when his eyes were closed (Num 22:31). In fact, the account of Balaam's donkey and the angel confirms the idea that the seer was not inspired but was only able to speak that which Yahweh had commanded.

Balaam was also an oracle reciter, since he gave four major oracles and two directives. He may have also functioned as a priest, since altars were set up for him by Balak. Furthermore, Balaam had previously been an exorcist or sorcerer, as stated in Numbers 24:1: "He did not resort to sorcery as other times."

The Deir ʿAlla texts imply that Balaam was either an ornithomantic (a diviner by bird extispicy) or a rhabdomantic (a diviner by means

of a rod or wand), and possibly an exorcist (Moore, 69-86, 93), although these practices are not explicit in the biblical texts.

When attempting to create a composite view of Balaam's vocation, comparisons with ancient Near East types become evident. In Joshua 13:22 Balaam is described as a soothsayer, possibly similar to traditions found at Mari and elsewhere in Mesopotamia (see Daiches; Largement). In fact, the delegation of Moabite and Midianite chiefs asked for Balaam's services with "fees for divination" (Num 22:7). Moreover, the Balaam traditions are remarkably consistent with Anatolian and Syro-Palestinian characters who had a series of complementary and overlapping roles as diviner/seer and exorcist (Moore, 111). This may explain why Balaam was described as both a seer/prophet and an exorcist and also why there was classic conflict in role expectations between the Moabite chieftain Balak and Balaam the magico-religious specialist. Balaam did not want to subordinate his "oracle-reciter" role to that of sorcerer, but this is precisely what Balak wanted him to do. Balaam set out to ascertain the nature of his client's problem and then set about to remedy it, similar to diviner/seers and exorcists. Furthermore, the biblical source may be attempting to explain a role change in Balaam as he moved from Moab to Midian (Kaiser, 101).

In regard to the ancient Near Eastern context for Balaam, S. Daiches concludes that Balaam was a *bārû* priest, based upon a comparative analysis between Neo-Assyrian ritual and incantation texts and Balaam's deeds in Numbers 22—24 (Daiches, 60-70). R. Largement (37-50) argues that Balaam was not only a sorcerer but had a plurality of roles. Moreover, the cosmic metaphors described by the diviner/seer in the Deir ʿAlla texts (I:6-7) are similar to the ones in the Babylonian Maqlû texts (7:1-22).

See also DIVINATION, MAGIC; PROPHETS, PROPHECY.

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BALAK. *See* BALAAM.

BAN. *See HĒREM.*

BARLEY. *See* AGRICULTURE.

BASIN, BRONZE. *See* TABERNACLE.

BATTLE. *See* WARFARE.

BEASTS OF BURDEN. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION; ZOOLOGY.

BELIEVING. *See* FAITH.

BENJAMIN

The name *Benjamin* (literally "son of the right hand" or "son of the south") applies first to the son of *Jacob and secondly to the tribe that bore his name.

1. Benjamin, Son of Jacob
2. Benjamin, Tribe of Israel
3. Benjamin at Mari

1. Benjamin, Son of Jacob.
Benjamin was the twelfth son of Jacob, the youngest (second) son of Jacob and Rachel, and the full brother of *Joseph. Benjamin and Joseph were the two favorite sons of Jacob's favorite wife, a partiality learned from Jacob's father *Isaac (and, before him, his father *Abraham) that echoed throughout the history of Israel until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death and beyond. Benjamin's mother died shortly after she bore him on the trip from Paddan-aram to the home of Isaac at Mamre in Canaan (Gen 35:18). She named him Ben-oni, "son of my pain" or "son of my sorrow," but Jacob immediately renamed him Benjamin, "son of the right" or "son of fortune," apparently wanting his son to be identified throughout his life with good fortune (the right side, as one faced east, hence the south side, was thought of as the fortunate side, cf. Deut 27:12-13, Mt 25:33) instead of a moment of pain and anguish.

Later, during a time of Middle Eastern famine, Jacob would not send Benjamin to Egypt with his other sons (Gen 42:2-4), lest, having already lost Joseph, he lose the remaining son of Rachel. Only the desperate situation of the family and the willingness of Judah to watch over Benjamin convinced Jacob to allow Benjamin to go on their second trip (Gen 43:1-14). The subsequent reunion of Joseph and Benjamin as well as all of the rest of the family is well known.

2. Benjamin, Tribe of Israel.
The tribe of Benjamin appears on the horizon as the book of Genesis ends (Gen 46:20-21) and blossoms into full bloom as the book of Exodus begins and the extended family of Jacob becomes the nation of Israel. During the wilderness wandering the tribe of Benjamin camped on the west side of the *tabernacle with Ephraim and Manasseh (Num 2:18-24). The tribe is mentioned briefly when leaders of the tribes are named (Num 2:22; 7:60), when Israel leaves Mount Sinai (Num 10:24) and when the spies explore Canaan (Num 13:9). Two key texts in the Pentateuch provide some additional information about the tribe (Gen 49:27; Deut 33:12), but scholars disagree about the nature of these references. These two passages come from the mouths of Jacob and *Moses, words of blessing from these two leaders just prior to their deaths.

2.1. Benjamin in the Last Testament of Jacob. In Genesis 49:27, where Benjamin is compared to a "ravenous wolf," the wolf is spoken of positively. A short look at the various animal comparisons of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33 will show that the great majority of animal comparisons are positive (see, e.g., the oracles on Judah, Issachar, Dan and Naphtali in Gen 49 as well as those on Joseph, Gad and Dan in Deut 33). C. Westermann writes, "Nowhere else in the OT is the wolf spoken of so positively.... The metaphor praises Benjamin's prowess in war and/or lust for booty" (Westermann, 241; so Davidson, 310; Zobel, 25 n. 132). Skinner writes, "Benjamin is praised for its predatory instincts, and its unflagging zest for war" (Skinner, 534). The praise, therefore, is for Benjamin's aggressiveness in defending himself against enemies. Later in the OT, the wolf is never spoken of in a positive manner. The wolf is a dangerous and feared animal in the OT. Greedy princes (Ezek 22:27), avaricious judges (Zeph 3:3) and Chaldean riders feared because of their swiftness (Hab 1:8) are all compared to the wolf in the prophetic announcements of judgments. A clearly negative tone is found in these comparisons, contrary to the tone of Genesis 49:27.

Since the verse is a word of praise, scholars have pointed in various directions in order to explain the negative view of the wolf everywhere else in the OT. H.-J. Zobel writes that in Arabic literature the wolf expressed the proud boldness and insatiable rapacity of a king waging a successful battle in war. It is simplest to invoke the analogy of antecedent Scripture, since this is the first of seven occurrences of the noun "wolf." The poetic nature of the verse and the distinctiveness of the chapter in the OT are additional reasons for taking the word in a positive sense.

The application of the verse to Benjamin is usually made in the context of the courage and fierce vitality of the tribe in battle. The verse conjures up a picture of constant aggressiveness from morning until evening. Benjamin will not need to fear his enemies, so skillful and aggressive will he be. The incessant and untiring efforts of Benjamin against his foes is depicted in the second and third clauses.

The "spoil" or "plunder" would refer to the spoils of war. H.-J. Zobel comments that "spoil" consistently indicates the booty won during a successful martial event. Genesis 49:27 is the only place in Scripture where the term is used in the sense of "prey."

2.2. Benjamin in the Last Testament of Moses. The

last reference to Benjamin in the Pentateuch (Deut 33:12) uses a picture for Benjamin's position with Yahweh like that of a shepherd carrying a lamb over his shoulders. This picture of security describes the protection that the tribal territory will enjoy as a result of God's favor. This security is important in view of the fact that the conquest lay only a short period of time in the future. A small tribe (especially according to Num 1:37 [35,400], though less so according to Num 26:41 [45,600]), it will need the protection of God during times of warfare and conquest.

The later prowess of the tribe of Benjamin, hinted at in the reference to a ravenous wolf in Genesis 49:27 and in Deuteronomy 33:12, is reflected during the period represented by the Pentateuch. Genesis 49:27 describes the ability of Benjamin to devour the prey and divide the plunder (a word usually used of the spoils of war in the OT), while Deuteronomy 33:12 describes the protection of Benjamin during that work and warfare. Benjamin became a tribe impressive for its athletic expertise and military skill (its ability with the sling, the bow and arrow, and its running ability). Numerous passages in later portions of the Old Testament reflect that skill (Judg 20:14-16; 2 Sam 2:18; 18:27; 1 Chron 8:40; 12:1-2; 2 Chron 14:8 [MT 14:7]).

3. Benjamin at Mari.

The name *Benjamin* appears in the Mari texts (eighteenth century B.C., North Syria), but it appears to refer there to a confederation of tribes (Bright, 77). There is no certain connection between the Benjamin of Mari and the Benjamin of the Pentateuch, but the Mari texts show the antiquity of the name. For this Benjaminite confederation, the meaning "sons of the south" is most appropriate, since the Benjaminites of the Mari texts are known to have been nomadic people.

See also ASHER; DAN; GAD; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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BESTIALITY. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

BETROTHAL. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

BEZALEL. *See* TABERNACLE.

BIRDS. *See* ZOOLOGY.

BLASPHEMY

Within the pentateuchal and OT world, blasphemy was one of the most serious sins a person could commit. Thus anyone who spoke contemptuously of the deity, especially by uttering God's name in a curse, was to bear the full responsibility for his or her sin and suffer the same fate as a murderer, namely, execution.

1. Terms for Blasphemy
2. Definition of Blasphemy
3. Blasphemy in Leviticus 24
4. Blasphemy in Later Judaism
5. The New Testament and Blasphemy

1. Terms for Blasphemy.

Four different Hebrew words carry the connotation of "blasphemy" in the OT. The verb most frequently associated with "blasphemy" is the Hebrew root *gdp* ("to revile, hurl insults, or slander"), used only in the Piel and occurring with the cognate noun *giddûp*. While the verb appears seven times in the Hebrew Scriptures (Num 15:30; 2 Kings 19:6, 22 = Is 37:6, 23; Ezek 20:27; Ps 44:16 [MT 44:17]), the noun appears only three times (Is 43:28; 51:7; Zeph 2:8). An-

other cognate noun, *gĕdûpâ*, occurs only once in the OT (Ezek 5:15) describing the negative effect of God's judgment on the people of Israel. Most often, however, it is God who is the object of such slander (Num 15:30; 2 Kings 19; Is 37; Ezek 20:27). In Ezekiel 20:27 the use of the root occurs in connection with Israel's idolatrous sacrifice on high places.

The next most common term is *n'ṣ*, "to despise, show disrespect toward." This word has a broader connotation than *gdp*, occurring twenty-six times as a verb and five times as a noun. Two substantival uses of the root occur in the parallel passages of 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 regarding the insulting of Israel's God by the Assyrian messenger Rabshakeh. Sometimes it is Israel that is despised (e.g., Is 60:14), but in the majority of references, as with *gdp*, the action speaks of malicious acts against God (the nation's rebellion in the desert: Num 14:11, 23; Deut 31:20; the Korahite rebellion: Num 16:30; Eli's sons' sacrifices: 1 Sam 2:17; David killing Uriah: 2 Sam 12:14; Israel's unfaithfulness: Is 1:4; 5:24; the actions of God's enemies: Ps 10:3, 13; 74:10, 18).

The third key term that includes the idea of "blasphemy" in its semantic range is the term *qll*. In the Piel stem this root means "to make small, light of" and often with the extended meaning "to curse." This root occurs frequently in the OT and is often viewed as the antonym to the root *kbd*, "to make heavy, be of significance." The Piel of the verb is used forty times in the OT, while the noun appears thirty-three times. The object of the verb is often humanity (Gen 12:3; Josh 24:9; 2 Sam 16:5, 10), although the ground is the recipient of the curse in Genesis 8:21. In Leviticus 24:15 the term is used in a narrative context in one of the few cases where one is said to "curse God." The legal prohibition against cursing God that also employs this term occurs in Exodus 22:28 (MT 22:27).

The fourth major Hebrew verb that connotes the idea of blasphemy is the root *nqb*, which literally means to "pierce, bore" but has an extended meaning of "blaspheme." On seven occasions the verb occurs in the Qal when it refers to piercing or boring through material (2 Kings 12:9 [MT 12:10]; 18:21 = Is 36:6; Hab 3:14; Hag 1:6; Job 40:24; 41:2 [MT 40:26]). An illustration of this usage occurs when the priest Jehoiada bores a hole in the lid of a chest for contributions. On five occasions the term clearly means curse or blaspheme (Job 3:8; Prov 11:26; Lev 24:11, 16 [2x]; BDB takes this verb from the root *qbb*, "to utter a curse against someone").

2. Definition of Blasphemy.

In the broadest (and least precise) sense, blasphemy could be defined as any act contrary to the will of God or derogatory to his power, though this is too generalized to be able to distinguish it from *sin. In the narrower and more precise sense, the word is used to refer to speaking contemptuously of the deity. The classic instance of the latter notion in the Bible occurs in Leviticus 24:10-23, where the pronouncement *(nqb)* of the name of God appears in conjunction with the verb *qll*, two of the four major Hebrew words indicating blasphemy. To curse the deity meant to repudiate him, to violate his norms. Blasphemy is one of the most serious of all spiritual iniquities in the OT because it denies and makes sport of the overwhelming concept of all the OT history and law, namely, the sovereignty of the Creator. According to Jewish tradition, Gentiles, too, were obliged to refrain from blasphemy, since the prohibition of blasphemy is one of the seven Noahic laws (*b. Sanh.* 56a; 60a).

3. Blasphemy in Leviticus 24.

3.1. The Context of Leviticus 24:10-23. The importance of Leviticus 24 in the discussion of blasphemy is evident from the fact that it contains two of the key verbal terms for blasphemy, *nqb* and *qll*, as well as the fact that it became the key text on the subject in later Judaism.

In the previous sections of Leviticus, concern for the name of the Lord is emphasized several times, particularly in Leviticus 18—22. This concern reaches its culmination in 24:10-23 (cf. 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:2, 32). The narrative of 24:10-23 drives home the point that the Lord was present not only in the *tabernacle but also in the community at large by virtue of the fact that the tabernacle was in their midst. The account of the blasphemer occurs here (Lev 24:10-23) because it took place soon after Moses had given instructions about the lampstand and bread of the Presence (Lev 24:2-9). This episode thus illustrates how some of the case laws in the Pentateuch may have originated out of specific situations that were brought to court for a legal judgment. The penalty in a given case is recorded as a guide for fu-

ture *judges should similar cases occur.

3.2. Blaspheming the Name of God. The narrative of Leviticus 24:10-23 describes how the son of an Egyptian father and Israelite woman engaged in a fight with another man, presumably of Israelite parents. In the midst of the struggle the individual of mixed parentage blasphemed *(nqb)* the name of God with a curse *(qll;* Lev 24:10-11). This single verse thus contains these two major terms for blasphemy (Lev 24:11). Verse 11 indicates that it was the Lord's name uttered in a curse that constituted blasphemy and merited the death penalty. Jewish tradition preserves an understanding of this verse that, first of all, instead of considering *nqb* and *qll* as describing two separate acts, implies that they are rather two aspects of one act (*m. Sanh.* 7:5). The text indicates how seriously speech against God was viewed and forms the basis of the mishnaic instruction in that blasphemy does not occur unless one specifically pronounces the Tetragrammaton (Yhwh; *see* God, Names of). This verbal aspect of naming the Name became so strong in some later traditions that blasphemy and naming the Name were equated or combined into a single act. *Targum Onqelos* on Leviticus 24:11 combines the two key verbs in this Leviticus text to render the key phrase as "pronounced the Name in provocation." To avoid the possibility of taking the Lord's name in vain, it became commonplace to get around pronouncing the name of God, the Tetragrammaton (YHWH), and to read in its place the generic name, Adonai. The Jews who took warning from the story presented in Leviticus 24:10-16 sought to render the transgression of the commandment in Exodus 20:7 impossible by avoiding the pronouncement of this name. Thus the Jewish avoidance of uttering God's name is based on this passage.

3.3. Punishment for Blasphemy. Blasphemy also brought guilt on those who heard the blasphemous statement as well as on the blasphemer himself. To rid themselves of this guilt the hearers had to lay their hands on the blasphemer's head (Lev 24:14). The contamination is literally transferred back to the blasphemer by the ritual of laying on the hands. The subsequent death of the blasphemer *atoned not only for his own sin but for the hearers' sin as well. At this point we find the recitation of the *lex talionis* formula, which states the principle that the punishment for an offense should be commensurate to the crime (Lev 24:17-21). Similar laws involving precise retaliation for murder and bodily injury occur in Exodus 21:23-25 and Deuteronomy 19:21. While a consistent punishment for blasphemy does not clearly emerge from the study of ancient Near Eastern law, capital punishment was to be the punishment for one who cursed the god Ashur, according to one Middle Assyrian Law (Roth, 201-2).

Leviticus 24:10-23 is one of the four episodes in the Torah where Moses has to make a special inquiry of God about what to do prior to his rendering a legal decision. The other accounts are found in Numbers (see Num 9:6-14; 15:32-36; 27:1-11).

4. Blasphemy in Later Judaism.

4.1. Jewish Interpretation of Leviticus 24. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is largely a paraphrase translation and thus valuable in the history of interpretation. At Leviticus 24:15-16 the targum makes a distinction in the offense of blasphemy: "Any young man or any old man who reviles and blasphemes a substitute name of his God shall incur his guilt. But any one who pronounces and blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death; the whole congregation shall pelt him with stones." The targums focus on blasphemy involving the divine Name as worthy of death. It is the consistent and official rabbinical view of Leviticus 24 to distinguish the crime of verse 15 from verse 16. What "bearing the sin for blasphemy" in verse 15 requires is never specified in any of these translations. However, to misuse the Name means automatic death.

In later Judaism, grievous sin that was known as "high-handed sin" comprised three categories: (1) impudent speech against Torah and so against God, where Manasseh is the example in *Sipre* 112 on Numbers 15:30-31; (2) idolatry, especially the *golden calf incident, as noted in the same *Sipre* text or in Philo's *De vita Mosis* 2.159-166; or (3) the blaspheming of God's Name, which also leads to death by hanging (*m. Sanh.* 6:4).

4.2. The Rending of Clothes. The custom of tearing one's clothes upon hearing blasphemy is attested in 2 Kings 18:37, where it is told that Eliakim and his associates tore their garments upon hearing the blasphemous words of the Assyrian warlord Rabshakeh (*b. Sanh.* 60a). In Numbers 14:11, 23, the indication that blasphemy is present comes in the response by

*Joshua and *Caleb, who tear their clothes upon hearing the people's unbelief and complaint. This response indicates that God has been insulted and that they are grieving as a result (Num 14:6; cf. Gen 37:29; Judg 11:35; 2 Sam 1:11). It is codified in *Shulhian Aruk* (*Yoreh De'ah* 340:37) that whoever hears a blasphemy, whether with the Tetragrammaton or with attributes, in any language and from a Jew, even from the mouth of a witness, must rend his garment.

4.3. Summation of Blasphemy in Judaism. To use the divine Name in an inappropriate way is certainly blasphemy and is punishable by death (Lev 24:10-16; *m. Sanh.* 6:4; 7:5; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.203-6). At the base of these ideas about blasphemy lies the command of Exodus 22:28 (MT 22:27) not to revile God nor the leaders he appointed for the nation.

5. The New Testament and Blasphemy.
In the NT it is not only possible for God to be blasphemed (Rev 16:11) but also the Messiah, Christ (Jas 2:7), the Spirit of God (Mk 3:29), the name of God (Rom 2:24) and the messengers of God (2 Pet 2:10). The redemptive acts and possessions that God bestows on his people may also be the object of blasphemy (Rom 14:16).

Jesus was accused of blasphemy because he presumed to forgive sins (Mt 9:3; Mk 2:7; Lk 5:21) and claimed to be Christ the Son of God (Mt 26:63-65; Mk 14:61-64; Jn 10:33, 36; *see DJG,* "Blasphemy"). On the other hand, the NT considers the reviling of Christ to be blasphemy (Mt 27:39; Mk 15:29; Lk 22:65; 23:39). Blasphemy against Christ is equivalent to blasphemy against God (Acts 13:45; 18:6; 2 Pet 2:10-12; Jude 8-10). In addition, those who oppose the gospel (1 Tim 1:13; cf. Acts 26:11) and bring discredit to Christianity (Rom 2:24; 1 Tim 6:1; Tit 2:5; Jas 2:7; 2 Pet 2:2) are guilty of blaspheming God by their actions. The "unforgivable sin," blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:31-32; Mk 3:28-30; Lk 12:10), must be understood as the deliberate and perverse repudiation of God's saving work, whereby an individual consciously hardens himself or herself against repentance and the possibility of forgiveness (cf. 1 Tim 1:20).

See also SIN, GUILT.

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M. F. Rooker

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Hebrew concepts of blessing and cursing should not be confused with the modern English usage, where the terms may refer merely to wishing someone good or ill. Biblical benedictions and imprecations are powerful and effect real change in the circumstances of the recipients. The content and the end result of the blessing or cursing vary from one situation to another, but generally blessing was the power to succeed and cursing was a harmful power that prevented or hindered success.

1. Terminology and Meaning
2. The Context of Cursing and Blessing
3. The Effect of Blessing
4. Conclusions

1. Terminology and Meaning.
The Hebrew root related to the concept of blessing is *brk.* It occurs frequently in the Pentateuch (over 160 times), especially in Genesis and Deuteronomy, where it is found approximately 130 times, representing over 25 percent of the occurrences of the root in the OT. One of the reasons for this large number of occurrences is the idiomatic practice of repeating a root to highlight its importance. Thus in the call of *Abraham the root *brk* is repeated five times (Gen 12:1-3). Repetition also occurs in the use of the infinitive and a finite form of the verb together in the Piel to give emphasis (Gen 22:17; Num 23:11; 24:10; Deut 15:4). Frequently the verb appears as a Qal passive participle to acknowledge a person's sta-

tus as one who is "blessed" (Gen 9:26; 14:19-20; 24:27-31; Ex 18:10) or to declare that someone will be "blessed" (Gen 27:29; Deut 28:3; 33:20). Other forms of the verb are also found (Niphal and Hithpael), but they are infrequent.

The noun *bĕrākâ* is found over thirty times in the Pentateuch. It may refer to what a person possesses when he or she has been blessed (Gen 27:12, 35-41; Deut 33:23), to what God promises those who obey (Lev 25:21; Deut 11:26-29; 28:8) and to what human beings long for (Gen 27:36).

The verbal form of the root *brk* also denotes the act of kneeling (Gen 24:11, Hiphil), and its nominal form *(berek)* refers to the "knee" of a person or animal (Gen 30:3; 48:12; 50:23; Deut 28:35). It is tempting to see a link between bestowing a blessing and kneeling to receive a blessing, but this etymological connection has never been proved, and it is possible that two distinct roots share the same consonants.

Three Hebrew roots are associated with cursing. The root *ʾrr* occurs over thirty times in the Pentateuch. It frequently occurs in a participial phrase (Qal passive) declaring something or someone as "cursed." Thus, the *serpent, the ground and *Cain are all pronounced "cursed" (Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11).

A second root, *qll*, means "to be light or slight" and thus "to treat someone with disdain," "to despise" or "to deprecate." In the Pentateuch, the root *qll* occurs in the Qal, Piel and Hiphil. In the Qal it denotes the waters of the *flood abating (Gen 8:8) or one person despising another (Gen 16:4). In the Hiphil it refers to making a burden lighter (Ex 18:22). However, in the Piel, *qll* means to revile or curse and, for example, is used of *Balaam cursing Israel (Deut 23:4 [MT 23:5]). In most of its nominal occurrences in the Pentateuch, the noun *qĕlālâ* is used in juxtaposition with the concept of blessing (Gen 27:12; Deut 11:26; 23:5 [MT 23:6]; 30:1, 19).

The third root is found only as a noun in the Pentateuch—*ʿālâ*—denoting an oath (Gen 24:41; 26:28; Deut 29:12 [MT 29:11]). However, it has the extended meaning of "curse" to refer to the seriousness of breaking oaths (Num 5:21; Deut 30:7).

2. The Context of Cursing and Blessing.

The precise meaning of blessing and cursing is often contingent on the context in which they occur. They are bestowed and received in the context of the interrelationship between two people or parties, and the depth and quality of the benediction or of the imprecation reflect the nature of the relationship between those involved. Specifically, God bestows blessing on those who are in harmony with him. For example, *Noah's obedience (Gen 6:22) and *sacrifice (Gen 8:20) provided the context in which the Creator blessed the postflood world (Gen 8:21—9:17). Relationships are also prominent when human beings bless someone. In *Isaac's patriarchal blessing, *Esau was the firstborn, and in normal circumstances this would have placed him in a relationship with his father that provided the basis for blessing. To that end, Esau prepared the sort of meal that Isaac would appreciate as a prelude to the blessing so that the benediction would be bestowed in the context of approval (Gen 27:1-4).

In contrast to blessing, curses reflect a breakdown in relationships. The curses announced in the primeval narratives on the serpent (Gen 3:14-15) and on the ground (Gen 3:17-19) are symptomatic of the alienation that has occurred between God and his created order. Further alienation led to more cursing (Gen 4:11-12), culminating in the flood, which is portrayed as a curse on the earth by the Creator to destroy the rebellious created order (Gen 8:21). The first curse uttered by a human being was the cursing of Canaan by Noah, where the intention was clearly to show disapproval (Gen 9:25). Similarly, when *Jacob was encouraged to deceive Isaac, he was reluctant because the consequences of discovery would be strong disapproval leading to the pronouncement of a curse (Gen 27:11-12).

Relationships vary in depth and quality, and this is reflected in the makeup and intensity of the benediction or imprecation concerned. This is illustrated in the blessings bestowed by the Creator on the fish and birds and the blessing of the human beings (Gen 1:22, 28). These blessings are pronounced in a way that indicates two different levels of relationship. The blessing on the human beings was communicated "to them," whereas the blessing on the fish and birds was simply pronounced and the words "to them" are missing. Although God blessed other creatures, it was the blessing on the humans that reflected the more intimate relations. Conversely, the fratricide committed by Cain represents a retrograde step in the relationship between human

beings and their Creator. Consequently, the imprecation was more personal and direct than the curses pronounced in *Eden: Cain's parents were not cursed themselves, but Cain was cursed personally (Gen 4:11).

The most profound and significant relationship in the Pentateuch is the one established between God and Abraham. Blessing provides both the context and the framework for this relationship. The programmatic passage in Genesis 12:1-3, in which the root *brk* occurs five times, is all the more salient and noteworthy because of the dark canvas of the primeval narratives against which the new divine-human relationship is portrayed (Gen 1—11). The blessing of Abraham is strategically positioned between the primeval narrative and the patriarchal narratives so that it marks a turning point in the book of Genesis, a turning point from an agenda dominated by cursing to one that is dominated by blessing. It represents a new phase in God's relationship with his world, since through Abraham all nations will be blessed. God initiated a *covenant relationship with Abraham, making him both the recipient of blessing and its channel to others (Gen 15:18-20; 17:1-14). The promises of blessing were contingent upon Abraham's obedience and were finally confirmed by an oath after the great test of loyalty, which showed that Abraham was willing even to sacrifice his son in order to obey God (Gen 22:15-18).

God's covenant relationship with the patriarchs is manifest not only in Abraham's life but also in the lives of Isaac (Gen 26:2-5) and Jacob (Gen 28:14-21). *Ishmael was also blessed, but a distinction was made between his blessing and the blessing of Isaac within the covenant relationship (Gen 17:20-21). A similar distinction existed with Jacob, who received blessing not because of his deception but as a result of his closer relationship with Yahweh (Gen 25:23; 28:13-15).

In Deuteronomy the implications of the covenant relationship are explicated and developed in more detail. God related to Israel through a covenant of love. That was completely unmerited by the nation (Deut 7:7-8). To continue to enjoy the blessings of this deep relationship, the people had to live in obedience to the covenant stipulations (Deut 7:11-15; 11:8-15; 28:1-14). Disobedience, on the other hand, caused the covenant relationship to break up, and the blessings were replaced by curses (Deut 28:15-68).

The importance of the concept of blessing and cursing was highlighted in the symbolism of the two mountains: Mount Ebal symbolized the curses and Mount Gerizim the blessings (Deut 11:26-32; 27:1-10). This area was probably chosen because of its traditional connection with the life of Abraham (Gen 12:6-7). The ceremony on the mountains demonstrated the imperative incumbent on the heirs of the covenant to emulate Abraham's obedience and, like him, to live in a close relationship with each other and with God (Deut 27:9-10; cf. Gen 12:1-3). Six tribes stood on each mountain as the *Levites pronounced twelve curses. The theme that runs through these curses is *relationships* (contra Craigie, 331, who tentatively suggests secrecy). The curses were directed against those who broke their relationships with others: with God through worshiping *idols (Deut 27:15); with their parents by dishonoring them (Deut 27:16); with their neighbors by encroaching on their land (Deut 27:17); with the vulnerable in society by deceiving and leading astray a blind person or by denying justice to the foreigner, the *orphan or the *widow (Deut 27:18-19); with others in society through *sexual impropriety or murder (Deut 27:20-26). Thus any act that disrupted relationships was incompatible with divine blessing and must attract cursing.

Through the cult Israel had the opportunity to live in harmony with God and to enjoy his blessing. One way that this was mediated to them was through the priestly blessing (Num 6:22-27). This pericope relates to blessing not in terms of particular benefits such as fertility or prosperity, but to a continuing harmonious relationship with the Lord in which he protected them, was gracious to them, endowed them with his presence and favor, and granted them peace. By pronouncing this blessing the *priests placed the Lord's name upon the Israelites with the assurance of continued divine blessing (Num 6:27).

3. The Effect of Blessing.

Pronouncements of blessing and cursing in the Pentateuch were powerful and efficacious. Such pronouncements were actions rather than simply speeches. They had the power to change situations and to alter circumstances. Their meaning and their effect varied from one situation to another, though generally blessing led to success and cursing brought disaster. The

effects of blessing included fertility, prosperity, authority and security. A second and less frequent use of blessing occurred in which one person acknowledged the status of another. This could include an expression of gratitude or praise. Greetings belong to the same category.

3.1. Fertility. In the creation narrative the bestowal of fertility is prominent in the three commands addressed to the fish and birds and also to the human beings: be fruitful *(prh)*, multiply *(rbh)* and fill *(ml')* the earth (Gen 1:22, 28). Each of these verbs may be used on its own to express fertility and numerical increase. In this context they are used together to give maximum prominence to the concept that the Creator's blessing leads to a world teeming with life. Blessing in terms of fertility is prominent throughout the Pentateuch: Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars or grains of sand (Gen 15:5; 22:16-18); *Sarah would be the mother of nations (Gen 17:16); Ishmael would be the father of twelve rulers (Gen 17:20); Jacob's descendants would be "a community of peoples" (Gen 48:4); *Joseph was described as "a fruitful vine" and received blessings of "the breast and womb" (Gen 49:22-26); and Israel's children, animals and crops would be fertile and numerous (Deut 7:13-14).

When land was blessed, it was fertile and productive (Gen 26:12; *see* Land, Fertility, Famine). Cursing, on the other hand, led to infertility. When the ground was cursed (Gen 3:17-19), thorns and thistles made it more difficult to cultivate and less productive (cf. Gen 5:29). Humans still had to work the soil, but the benefits they received were greatly reduced (Gen 3:19, 23). Famines in the Pentateuch are not explicitly described as punishment from God, but they clearly imply the absence of blessing and suggest that the lands so afflicted were not blessed with divine favor (Gen 12:10; 26:1). Fertile soil and secure boundaries, however, were evidence of divine favor and blessing (Gen 26:12-33). The loss of fertility brought about by cursing affected not just the crops but also the people themselves and their animals (Deut 28:16-18).

3.2. Authority and Dominance. The *creation blessing bestowed on the human beings also gave them authority over the rest of creation. They were commanded to subdue *(kbš)* the earth and to rule *(rdh)* over its creatures. The word translated "subdue" usually refers to hostile action and may connote "rape" (Esther 7:8) or the conquest of enemies (Num 32:22). The majority of the OT occurrences of *rdh* ("to rule") are in the context of ruling over reluctant subjects. For example, it is used in the sense of being ruled by one's enemies (Lev 26:17); Ezekiel used the same verb when he reprimanded those who ruled over Israel harshly and brutally (Ezek 34:4). B. Vawter argues that the combined force of these two words is "absolute subjugation" (Vawter, 60). According to Lohfink, however, these words *(rdh* and *kbš)* may be understood without the connotation of harshness and brutality. He argues that *kbš* connotes "to place one's feet on something" in the sense of "take possession of" (Lohfink, 177). In a similar vein, he argues that *rdh* indicates "a shepherding and guiding function of man in respect of animals" (Lohfink, 179). Whichever view we take concerning the terminology used, creation is clearly subservient to those whom God has blessed, but there is no suggestion that they should feel free to abuse and mistreat creation, which would be clearly inappropriate in light of their creation in the *image of God.

A relationship in which the dominant person exploited others was always associated with cursing rather than with blessing. As a result of the curse, the man was to "rule over" the woman, which probably meant that their previous harmonious relationship had been lost, leaving the woman vulnerable to exploitation (Gen 3:16). On a national level, if Israel's relationship with God broke down, the curses resulted in subjugation by their enemies (Deut 28:36-37, 43). This was symbolized by the saying that they would be the tail and not the head in their relationships with others (Deut 28:44). If, on the other hand, Israel was given dominance over other nations, this was evidence of blessing, and Israel could be described as the "head and not the tail" (Deut 28:7, 13).

Authority was also present in the blessing of Jacob, where the struggle between the brothers was a struggle for dominance. Through the intervention of Yahweh it was Jacob who emerged dominant. His encounter with the angel taught Jacob that the ultimate struggle for blessing must be with God and not humans (Gen 32:22-32). Dominance is also an important theme in the patriarchal blessings bestowed by Jacob on his sons (Gen 49:1-28). *Reuben lost the usual prominence given to the firstborn, and *Judah was given dominance so that his "hand [would]

be on the neck" of his enemies while his brothers would bow down to him. This authority had royal implications, since "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet" (Gen 49:8-9 NRSV).

Blessing and cursing are also prominent in international relations. Before Israel's entrance into Canaan, the king of Moab, in an attempt to subdue Israel, summoned a prophet to curse them (Num 22:5-6). Yahweh, because of his covenant relationship with Israel, thwarted all attempts to curse them and turned the cursing into blessing (Num 24:10). This reflects the promise to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse" (Gen 12:3 NRSV).

3.3. Peace and Rest. Blessing is also associated with *rest (Ex 33:14; Deut 3:20; 12:9-10; 25:19). *Eden represented a place of blessing where the inhabitants had work to do, but it was meaningful work and Eden was a place of rest and protection. The expulsion from Eden exposed the human beings to hard labor and to work without fulfillment (Gen 3:17-19). This theme is reflected in the naming of *Noah; although the etymology of the name is uncertain, it may be linked to a word meaning "to rest" (Gen 5:29). As the narrative direction in the Pentateuch moves toward the Promised Land, there are several indications that this is a return to the ideal conditions of the garden of Eden. While possession of the Promised Land is not explicitly described as a return to Eden, the most significant aspects of Eden were to be replicated in the blessings promised to those entering Canaan. It was to be a place of fertility, where God's laws were respected and his presence was manifest. The priestly blessing promised "peace" (Num 6:26). Expulsion from the land, on the other hand, would lead to "no ease, no resting place for the sole of your foot ... a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a languishing spirit" (Deut 28:65 NRSV).

3.4. Blessings That Acknowledge Merit in Others. The second category of blessing is an acknowledgement of one party's blessedness by another. Usually this appears in the context of human beings blessing God (Gen 14:20) or showing respect for each other (Gen 14:19). In these contexts blessing was not being bestowed, but the person addressed was honored and praised as one characterized by blessing. Thus the common phrase "blessed be God" means that he is worthy of praise.

This raises the question about the relationship between God and the seventh day (*sabbath). To say that God blessed the day is confusing, because it is not clear how a day can be blessed (Gen 2:3). However, if we classify the blessing as belonging to this second category, the meaning becomes clear. God acknowledged the benefits received from the seventh day and honored it. He then sanctified it and set it apart so that others might receive benefits from it.

4. Conclusions.

Blessings and curses are usually powerful pronouncements in the Pentateuch. Primarily they should be understood in terms of the relationships involved. The contents are secondary and may vary depending on the context. The concepts of fertility and prosperity are often uppermost. However, another category of blessing occurs where someone or something is acknowledged as "blessed." Blessing characterized the covenant relationship established with Abraham. However, any breakdown in this relationship led to cursing instead of blessing.

See also ABRAHAM; COVENANT; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH; REST, PEACE.

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BLOOD

The concept of blood is central both to the sacrificial practice of the priesthood and to the *theology of the OT at large. The word *dām* itself, linguistically connected with the color red (*'ādōm*), occurs approximately 360 times, with its

most frequent occurrences in the books of Leviticus (88 times), Ezekiel (55 times), Exodus (29 times), Deuteronomy (23 times), and Psalms (21 times). This article will attempt to categorize some of the uses of blood in the Hebrew Bible, focusing primarily on the pentateuchal books.

1. Life Blood
2. Leviticus
3. Exodus
4. Deuteronomy

1. Life Blood.

The OT clearly asserts that the *life of an organism exists within its blood. Blood is used synonymously with life in Leviticus 19:16, where a prohibition against doing anything that might endanger the life of one's neighbor is to be read literally: "the blood of your neighbor." It is the blood of the slain *Abel that cried out to Yahweh from the ground in the Hebrew Bible's first use of this noun (Gen 4:10), and blood and life are equated clearly in the postflood prescription, "You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen 9:4; cf. Lev 3:17; 7:26-27; 19:26). This proscription applied not only to native *Israelites but also to any sojourner who lived in their midst (Lev 17:10-12). It also constitutes one of the key levitical requirements for NT Christians as decided by the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25). Those who ended someone's life by spilling that person's blood had to pay by losing their own blood in the vendetta killing described in Genesis 9:5-6, because humans are made in God's *image and their lives are not to be taken lightly or taken *away* lightly. This judicial outlook is formalized in the retributive principle of the *lex talionis*, found in the legal sections of the Pentateuch (Ex 21:23-25; Lev 24:19-20; Deut 19:21). It is interesting also to note that the phrase "spilling" or "pouring out" one's blood, used ubiquitously in the Hebrew Bible, became an expression for killing.

2. Leviticus.

Blood is also used in the OT as a divinely prescribed means of atonement through animal *sacrifice. The book of Leviticus, particularly in its first seven chapters, outlines meticulous steps toward individual and collective reconciliation with God and neighbor via blood sacrifice. In the burnt offering (Lev 1:3-17; 6:8-13), the blood of an animal either from the herd or the flock or some type of fowl was to be shed by the offerer and then sprinkled on the *altar by the *priest, after which the sacrifice was entirely consumed upon the altar as a sacred offering to God. The fellowship offering was similar in its ritualistic use of blood (Lev 3:1-17; 7:11-21), although it did not involve a complete consumption of the sacrificed animal and usually was accompanied by a shared meal, intended to foster friendship and peaceful relations with God. The sin or guilt offering (Lev 4:1—5:13; 6:24-30) involved the shedding of animal blood as a provision for unintentional *sin—either on the part of the priest (Lev 4:3-12), the entire Israelite community (Lev 4:13-21), a leader in the community (Lev 4:22-26) or a member of the community (Lev 4:27-35)—and involved the most elaborate use of blood in all of the levitical sacrifices (although note the unique role of blood in the ritual accompanying the ordination of *Aaron and his sons to the priestly office in 8:22-30). Not only did the priest smear the blood of the sacrificed animal onto the horns of the altar, as with the burnt and fellowship offerings, but he also was to pour out the remainder of the bull's, goat's or lamb's blood at the base of the altar (Lev 4:7, 18, 30, 34). In the case of the unintentional sin of the anointed priest or whole Israelite community, the entire procedure was preceded by the anointed priest dipping his finger into the blood and sprinkling it seven times before Yahweh in front of the curtain of the sanctuary (Lev 4:6, 17). Furthermore, if any of the blood from this sacrifice became spattered onto a *priestly garment, the garment was then to be washed in a *holy place (Lev 6:27).

One of the rare situations in the OT where blood is said to have a contaminating function is with blood lost through childbirth or a woman's monthly menstruation. Leviticus outlines stipulations for purifying a woman after giving birth (Lev 12:1-8), addresses uncleanness due to menstrual blood (Lev 15:19-23) and deals with sanguineous discharge other than that flowing from a woman's monthly period (Lev 15:25-30). Leviticus clearly pronounces as unclean the act of sexual intercourse during menstruation (Lev 15:24; 20:18).

The second most frequent occurrences of blood are found in the book of Ezekiel, which is understandable considering the priestly nature of this prophetic book and commonly observed parallels between Ezekiel and Leviticus.

3. Exodus.

Of the OT books, Exodus contains the third

most uses of the word *blood.* From a narrative-critical perspective, these uses are more stylized and serve much more complexly developed literary-theological purposes within the rhetoric of this central OT book. For example, the unusual episode that describes Yahweh meeting *Moses on his way back down to *Egypt from Midian and seeking to kill him, although enigmatic, employs the literary feature of foreshadowing with the motif of blood (Ex 4:24-26). However the particulars of this episode are understood, the "bridegroom of blood" became fully and ritually prepared for Passover through *circumcision (per the prescriptions in Ex 12:43-49; cf. Josh 5:2-10) and was now prepared to bring about the deliverance from Egypt that Yahweh had ordained. The blood of the circumcision also connects with the protective blood of the lamb that was to be placed on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses when the actual Passover took place after the deliverance out of the land (Ex 12:7, 22-23). So the blood of the circumcision that prepared Moses the deliverer for Passover also anticipated the blood of the Passover lamb that would save the Israelites from the destroyer, thus functioning for them as a sign of life rather than of death (Ex 12:13, 23). Not just foreshadowing but the literary feature of irony is present as well in the interweaving of characterization within the plot of the *exodus story: *Pharaoh was bloodthirsty and intent on killing Yahweh's firstborn (Ex 4:21-23) but eventually lost his own firstborn, whose blood was shed by the destroyer (Ex 11:1-10).

This is not the only time in Exodus where blood functions as a *sign. After Moses' encounter with Yahweh at the burning bush (Ex 3) and the various objections that he raised in order to get out of his prophetic commission of leading the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses suggested that the people would not believe him when he described the *theophany that he had encountered. In response, Yahweh gave him three signs for the people, the third of which was to scoop up some water from the Nile and pour it onto the dry ground, which would then turn to blood (Ex 4:9). When Moses and Aaron performed this sign before the people and the elders of Israel, they became convinced that Yahweh had met with Moses and responded with humble worship (Ex 4:29-31).

Blood also functioned as a sign in the plagues cycle (Ex 7—11). The account of the first plague depicts Moses and Aaron striking the waters of the Nile River, which is changed into blood (Ex 7:14-24; cf. Ps 78:44; 105:29), much like the sign given for the elders (Ex 4). This begins the *creation-theological theme in Exodus of nature gone berserk: the unethical conduct of Pharaoh and the Egyptians toward the Israelites results in the spiralling vortex of the undoing of creation and the eventual return to a precreation state of darkness (Ex 10:21-23). The plague cycle thus develops the larger theme of Yahweh the Creator becoming known (i.e., recognized) in his great power and majesty both in Egypt and throughout the earth (Ex 5:2; 6:7; 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4, 18; 16:6, 12).

Blood is also referenced in Exodus in legal contexts, particularly in the *book of the covenant. The blood of sacrifices to Yahweh was not to contain any yeast (Ex 23:18; 34:25). In addition, if a thief broke into a house and the inhabitant of the house struck and killed the thief, the defender was not to be found guilty of bloodshed—unless it occurred after the sun had risen, because the defender, it is assumed, would have had enough light to merely incapacitate the thief without actually killing him (Ex 22:2-3 [MT 22:1-2]). The *covenant ceremony itself was sealed with a ritual sprinkling of the blood of the covenant upon the people (Ex 24:6, 8).

4. Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy, the OT book that contains the fourth most frequent references to blood, introduces the idea of the *gō'ēl haddām,* the avenger of blood (Deut 19:6, 12; cf. Num 35:19-28; Josh 20:2-9; 2 Sam 14:11). Deuteronomy 19, reiterating Numbers 35, describes the *cities of refuge that were set apart to provide sanctuary to those who had killed another person unintentionally. These cities were to be accessible from anywhere in the land (which is why there were three of them at central locations), so that a person seeking to avenge the blood of the person killed unintentionally would not be successful (Deut 19:4-6). If, however, the murder was not unintentional but premeditated and the murderer fled to one of the cities of refuge, provisions for justice were enacted: the elders of his town were to send for him, then hand him over for the avenger of blood to kill so that the guilt of shedding innocent blood in Israel was purged (Deut 19:11-13).

Similar concerns for justice and the removal of all bloodguilt can be seen in the ceremonial ritual regarding the shed blood of an innocent person (Deut 21). If someone was found lying dead in a field and no one knew who had killed him, the elders and judges were to measure the distance from the body to the closest neighboring town, and then the elders of that town were to engage in the following ritual: a heifer that had never been worked nor worn a yoke was to be led down to a valley that had not been plowed or planted and that had a flowing stream in it; the heifer's neck was to be broken; the priests were to step forward; and the elders of the town were to wash their hands over the heifer, declaring, "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor were we witnesses to it. Absolve, O LORD, your people Israel, whom you redeemed; do not let the guilt of innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel" (Deut 21:7b-8b). This procedure ensured that innocent bloodshed was atoned for.

Metaphorical uses of blood are also found in Deuteronomy. For example, wine is referred to as the foaming blood of the grape (Deut 32:14; similar to Gen 49:11 and found in Ugaritic poetry as well), and personification is evident in the reference to God the warrior's arrows becoming drunk with blood (Deut 32:42).

See also FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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P. E. Hughes

BLOOD KINSHIP. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER

The biblical prohibition of killing is rooted in the *laws of the Pentateuch and the theology of *Genesis. Humans are created in the *image of God, and this has repercussions that resound throughout the Bible. This article begins with the most serious situation: the murder of another human being. The Pentateuch recognizes that all killing is not morally equivalent and distinguishes murder from manslaughter. The characteristics of each will be described, along with their differing consequences. The particular cases of war and the killings of Cain and Moses will then be examined.

The Pentateuch also delineates various consequences for inflicting bodily injuries. *Slaves are singled out for particular attention, representing an important development in preventing cruelty toward slaves. The *lex talionis* is a means of ensuring that everyone obtained compensation appropriate to the injury. The application of these laws to abortion is then discussed. Through its laws on bodily injuries, murder and manslaughter, the Pentateuch calls for the protection of all humans, recognizing that all are made in the image of God.

1. Murder
2. Manslaughter
3. Bodily Injuries
4. Conclusion

1. Murder.

The sixth commandment is clear in its prohibition of killing (Ex 20:13; 21:12; Lev 24:17; Deut 27:24). Taking the life of another person is more than an affront against that person, his or her family, or society. Murder is an affront to God in whose image the victim was created. Murderers paid the highest penalty by forfeiting their lives. While people sentenced to death for some crimes could ransom their lives by substituting an appropriate payment, no ransom was acceptable for the life of those convicted of murder (Num 35:31). So serious was this crime that a murderer was to be taken even from the altar of God for execution (Ex 21:14).

The seriousness of murder, and why it was viewed so negatively, can be traced back to Genesis 9:6. Controversy surrounds exactly what is meant by describing humans as being made in the image *(ṣelem)* and likeness *(dĕmût)* of God (Gen 1:26-27; 5:3). What is clear is that God has left his images on earth as his representatives. Ancient Near Eastern kings left statues in conquered lands to remind the people of the king's sovereignty and presence. Just as killing the king's representative was a crime against the king, murdering God's image is a crime against God. The shedding of blood pollutes the land

and can be atoned for only by the blood of the murderer (Num 35:33).

While murder is proscribed, it is distinguished from other ways of killing humans. Those carrying out the death penalty are not regarded as murderers. The Hebrew term used in the sixth commandment is *rṣḥ* (Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17), but six other Hebrew words are used in reference to killing. Our term, *rṣḥ*, is less commonly used in the OT, with *hrg* or *hmwt* being used four to five times more frequently. However, the term *rṣḥ* can refer to morally different types of killing, even within the same passage. In Numbers 35 *rṣḥ* refers to manslaughter (Num 35:6, 11, 12, 25, 26, 27, 28; cf. Deut 4:32; 19:3, 4, 6), murder (Num 35:16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 30, 31; cf. Deut 22:26) and the act of execution (Num 35:27, 30).

Murder and manslaughter cannot be distinguished by the particular Hebrew word used, requiring further examination of a passage's context. Murder's distinguishing feature is the perpetrator's intention, captured by the term *ṣĕdiyyâ* (Num 35:20, 22; cf. Ex 21:13). This word can be translated as "lying in wait," referring to an action, or as "hatred" or "enmity," referring to the actor's state of mind (Ex 21:12-14). The root of the word refers to hunting and is compatible with either the idea of lying in wait intending to do destruction or of having malicious intent. In contrast, manslaughter is characterized as without design, inadvertent, unwitting or an act of God. So long as the victim was not viewed as an enemy and not approached with malicious intent to cause injury, the death was judged as manslaughter, not murder, and was not punished by death (Num 35:22-24; Deut 19:11-13).

Practically, the community made the determination between murder and manslaughter (Num 35:24-25). The death penalty was not to be enforced on the testimony of one witness, but only when a number of witnesses were available (Num 35:30). So precious is the life of every human being, even killing a thief caught breaking in during daylight was viewed as murder (Ex 22:3 [MT 22:2]; *see* Theft and Deprivation of Property). The value of each person as an image of God is not restricted to external action and restraint of violence. Foreshadowing the message of Jesus, the Pentateuch calls on the people of God not to hate their fellow citizens in their hearts but to love their neighbors as themselves (Lev 19:16-18).

2. Manslaughter.

If the attack was not premeditated and the death accidental, the death penalty was not applied (Ex 21:13; Num 35:11). Six cities of refuge provided safe havens for those who committed manslaughter (Num 35:11-34; Deut 19:4-10). The blood avenger, the victim's nearest male relative designated to avenge his dead relative, could not enter a city of refuge. Someone who had committed manslaughter was required to remain within that city until the death of the high priest (Num 35:25). Only then could the manslayer return home. If he left the city before the high priest's death, the blood avenger could kill the manslayer with impunity (Num 35:26-28).

Cases related to an ox killing someone reveal a third level of seriousness in causing death (Ex 21:28-29). This and similar passages make no specific distinction between the death of a man or woman, boy or girl, demonstrating the inherent equality of each. The owner of the ox would go unpunished unless the ox was known to have gored others. If the owner knew of previous incidences and did nothing to restrain the ox, he was guilty of the person's death and sentenced to death. However, this crime was less serious than murder, since the ox's owner could ransom himself from execution, although he had to pay whatever was demanded of him (Ex 21:30). The value of human life places a responsibility on people to protect the lives of their neighbors, not just to avoid injuring them.

The Pentateuch describes another situation where killing was not accidental, but neither was it viewed as murder, namely, war. God himself is called a man of war (Ex 15:3), and an early Hebrew history is called the "Book of the Wars of the LORD" (Num 21:14). The wars commissioned by God were, in part, a way of bringing divine judgment upon sinful nations (Gen 15:16) and the unrighteous within Israel (Deut 13:12-18 [MT 13:13-19]). After a period of unrighteous behavior, God told Moses to send some Hebrews into their own camp to kill the unrighteous (Ex 32:25-29). This text has been central to debates over what constitutes a "just" war. However, this incident involved a direct command from God for a specific situation, making its application to modern situations questionable.

God also used war to fulfill his covenant with the patriarchs to give the Israelites their promised *land (Deut 20:16-18). War was never given

blanket approval, and often the conquered people and their possessions were put under a "ban," meaning they should be used as God willed (Deut 20:10-14; *see Ḥērem*). Killing in war was thus similar to capital punishment. War was a way God used humans to cleanse the land of its defilement by people's sins. War was not to be arbitrarily undertaken to further human goals or avarice.

Two other killings in the Pentateuch are of particular interest. *Cain committed the first murder (Gen 4:8). The killing occurred once Cain got his brother *Abel out in a field, suggesting premeditation. Cain was angry, possibly jealous of God for accepting Abel's sacrifice, and he remained unrepentant immediately afterward. Yet God did not take his life as punishment. In fact, God took steps to ensure that Cain would not be killed (Gen 4:15). Commentators have wondered why Cain's blood was not required of him. The answer may be that Cain had no other relatives at the time to avenge Abel's death. Yet we also see progression in the consequences of sin. *Adam and *Eve were expelled from the garden, and Cain was driven further away. To be driven from the land (Gen 4:14) often included being expelled from one's family. Cain was also hidden from the presence of God. The phrase where Cain states that his punishment was too great to bear can also be translated as his sin was too grave to forgive. Some take this to mean that Cain sincerely repented, which led to God's response of mercy and protection. With Cain's act of murder, the alienation between God and humanity sank to a deeper level, and the burdens of sin became even greater.

*Moses also killed a man, but these circumstances were different. Moses came across an Egyptian hitting a Hebrew man (Ex 2:11). Moses looked around, then killed the Egyptian. However, the same verb *(nākâ)* is used for how the Egyptian and Moses struck their adversaries as well as of two Hebrews Moses found fighting the next day. As Durham concludes, "there is in the text no suggestion that Moses meant to kill the Egyptian" (Durham, 19). Neither is Moses portrayed as completely innocent, since he looked around before striking the Egyptian and later buried the body. Moses then fled to seek refuge in Midian, foreshadowing how the law would later set up *cities of refuge for those who killed others without premeditation. The manslayer stayed in the city of refuge until the high priest died; similarly, God told Moses that he could leave Midian when his enemies were dead (Ex 4:19).

3. Bodily Injuries.

3.1. General. Laws concerning bodily injuries reflect the same concern for the inherent value of all human life. However, the intentions of the one inflicting bodily injury are not considered when determining punishment. The focus here becomes appropriate restitution for damages caused. If men are fighting and one injures the other with a stone or tool, the more aggressive one is not to be punished *(nāqam)* but must take responsibility for the injured man's recovery and his loss of time (Ex 21:18-19). Presumably, the aggressor took an unfair advantage by using the stone or tool in the fight and must compensate the injured man for his resulting inability to work.

A case addressing injuries to a slave follows and has caused much controversy. If a master strikes and kills his slave (male or female) with a rod, he is to be punished *(nāqam)*. Earlier, killing another person called for the death penalty, unless the blow was not premeditated (Ex 21:12-14). Some have used this passage to support slavery by interpreting it to mean that slaves are less valuable than free persons; otherwise, killing a slave would have been included among the earlier provisions for murder and manslaughter. However, it is just as feasible that slaves are singled out because of their societal role, not personal value. The controversy is further fueled by verse 21, which spares a master from punishment for injuring a slave because the slave "is his property" or, literally, money.

Another interpretation fits the context better and shows that the Bible affirms the personhood of slaves. In this view, slaves were singled out because of the importance of addressing their treatment. In Exodus 21, if the slave dies, the master is punished *(nāqam)*. This verb could take a human subject, but it most usually described God avenging people's sin. As such, it frequently included the death penalty (Lev 26:25; cf. Num 31:2). Hence, the death penalty is included as a possible punishment for the master. After the incident, investigation would reveal whether the slave's death was murder or manslaughter, since the rod may have been used as an instrument of discipline (Prov 13:24; 23:14; *see* Rod, Staff §1). If the rod was used to

cause premeditated death, the slave's personhood was affirmed by avenging his death by the death of the master.

On the other hand, if the blow resulted in injury to the slave, no punishment was enacted, just as none was called for between the two men in Exodus 21:18-19. Instead, as before, monetary compensation was required. In this case the price was the slave's freedom, which came even if the injury was to the slave's eye or just knocking out a tooth (Ex 21:26-27). The "property" phrase of verse 21 was to remind the master that aggressive behavior could be costly; the slave's freedom was like an investment. Rather than allowing masters to treat their slaves as property, this passage would remind the master of the high cost of mistreating slaves. Other ANE cultures placed less value on their slaves. The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1868-1728 B.C.) punished people differently depending on whether slaves and free-born people were injured. If a poorly constructed building fell and killed the owner or his son, the builder was punished by his own death or that of his son, respectively. If the building killed a slave, the builder was fined the value of the slave (Code of Hammurabi §§ 229-31). If an ox gored a Babylonian free-person, the owner was fined one-half mina, but only one-third mina if the victim was a slave (Code of Hammurabi §§ 251-52). Slaves were often treated cruelly in the ANE, but in contrast the Pentateuch calls on masters to treat their slaves with respect and upholds the value of all human life.

3.2. **Lex Talionis.** The appropriate consequences for injuring another person were based upon what has become known as the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation): "But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise" (Ex 21:23-25 NIV; cf. Lev 24:17-22; Deut 19:16-21). Some have looked upon biblical justice with disdain, assuming that this law was applied literally. However, the case immediately following the law in Exodus 21 does not apply it literally, and no biblical narratives describe its literal application. The Talmud views it as requiring appropriate monetary compensation for injuries (*b. B. Qam.* 83b-84a). The immediate context is the declaration that bodily injuries should be compensated for, not avenged (Ex 21:19). As such, the *lex talionis* would restrain those seeking vengeance upon others and ensure that the punishment fit the crime. As B. Childs comments, "Thus the principle of *lex talionis* marked an important advance in the history of law and was far from being a vestige from a primitive age" (Childs, 472).

Although Exodus provides the most complete *lex talionis* passage, two others provide important clarifications. In Leviticus 24, the death penalty for murder is reaffirmed, and "life for life" is applied to the compensation due for the death of an animal. This compensation was financial (Ex 21:33-36), supporting the monetary interpretation of the law. In Deuteronomy 19:16-21, the *lex talionis* is applied to a man found guilty of bearing false witness. Since the lying witness did not literally injure the eye or tooth of the victim, his punishment cannot be seen as literal. Instead, the phrase is best interpreted as a call for appropriate monetary compensation.

The lex talionis was applied as a single standard for all people, whether stranger or native (Lev 24:22). Unlike other cultures, the rich in Israel were not to have one standard of justice and the poor or less fortunate another.

3.3. ***Abortion.*** Application of the bodily injury laws to abortion has been controversial, even among ancient Jewish scholars. The most relevant passage states that if two men struggle and hit a pregnant woman resulting in *yāṣā' yeled,* the man who struck her is fined if there is no injury. If there is injury, punishment is to be according to the *lex talionis* (Ex 21:22-25).

Many translations render *yāṣā' yeled* as "miscarriage." Some conclude that since the death of the unborn is punished by only a fine and is even described as "no injury," the unborn do not have the same value or rights as those born. This interpretation is used to support modern liberal positions on abortion, something that ancient Jewish authors did not uphold. Even though certain scholars throughout the centuries have accepted this translation, Cottrell concludes, " 'the weight of scholarly opinion' . . . is outweighed by the text itself" (Cottrell, 9).

The verb *yāṣā'* means "to go out" or "come out" and refers to the ordinary birth of children coming forth from their mother's womb (Gen 25:25-26; 38:27-30) or from their father's loins (Gen 15:4; 46:26). Only in Numbers 12:12 does it describe a stillbirth, and there the subject is not *yeled,* but *mwt,* something dead. The only biblical passage translating *yeled* as anything other

than children (or non-human offspring in a few instances) is the Exodus 21 passage. When the Pentateuch elsewhere describes a miscarriage, *šākal* is used (Gen 31:38; Ex 23:26). Thus, the literal reading "her children came out" or "were born" is preferable, with the topic therefore being premature expulsion of the unborn, resulting in different possible injuries depending on the age of the fetus and impact of the blow.

The term for injury (*'āsôn*) is seldom used and always refers to an unforeseen disaster (Gen 42:4, 38; 44:29). Modern translations add the English word "further," having assumed the miscarriage warrants being described as some sort of injury. If this term is not added, it becomes clear why the author chose a word other than *mwt,* used throughout the rest of this passage where a death occurs. The passage then literally reads: "And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that her children come out, but there is no injury, he shall surely be fined.... But if there is injury, then you shall appoint life for life, eye for eye."

The passage contrasts two situations. In the first, a blow causes the premature birth of a viable child, but no one is injured. In the second, the pregnant woman goes into labor resulting in some injury. The term *'āsôn* is used because of the unforeseen harm to the fetus, which has a profound impact on another party, namely, the parents. In the first case, the man is fined, presumably because of his reckless endangerment of mother and child and the distress caused the parents. In the second case, punishment for injuries, either to mother or child, are to be determined by the *lex talionis,* as would occur with any other accidental injury. These injuries could include the death of the fetus, whether viable or not, thus invoking the call for a life to be paid for by a life. Kline holds that therefore this passage is "perhaps the most decisive positive evidence in Scripture that the fetus is to be re-garded as a living person" (Kline, 193). Even if one does not go this far, this passage describes an accidental injury to the fetus and cannot be used to imply support for the intentional destruction of human life in elective abortion.

4. Conclusion.

The Pentateuch holds the lives of men and women, slave and free, Israelite and foreigner, born and unborn, to be of utmost value. Each is an image of God, to be respected, protected and actively loved. But when someone is injured or killed, punishment is to be meted out regardless of the transgressor's status. The punishment should fit the crime and take the transgressor's intention into account. As such, these laws point to important features in the nature of the Lawgiver's justice.

See also CITIES OF REFUGE; DECALOGUE; ETHICS; IMAGE OF GOD; LAW; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; WARFARE.

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D. P. O'Mathúna

BOOK OF THE COVENANT

The titles "book of the covenant" and "covenant code" are frequently used of Exodus 20:22—23:33, although with some variation. Whereas the former is derived from the text of Exodus itself (Ex 24:7) and is generally understood to refer to all the material in Exodus 20:22—23:33, the latter is a modern designation based on the idea that some of Exodus 20:22—23:33 originally formed an independent *law code that was incorporated into the biblical narrative.

1. Extent of the Unit
2. Structure
3. Form-Critical Approaches
4. Contents
5. Relationship to the Sinai Narrative
6. Date of Composition

1. Extent of the Unit.
From Exodus 24 alone it is difficult to determine the precise contents of the "book of the covenant" mentioned in verse 3. Based on the reference to "words and judgments" (NRSV "ordinances"), some scholars suggest that the book of the *covenant consisted of the "ten words," or *Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17), and the divine speech in Exodus 20:22—23:33 that focuses on "judgments" (cf. Ex 21:1; e.g., Sprinkle, 28-29; cf. Cassuto [312], who also includes Ex 19:5-6). Others, however, exclude the Decalogue, viewing the book of the covenant as extending from Exodus 20:22—23:33 (e.g., Childs, 451). The issue is further complicated by the fact that the majority of scholars envisage Exodus 19—24 as having undergone a long and complex process of composition, with the contents of the book of the covenant changing over time. While absolute certainty is impossible, for reasons that will be developed below, the designation "book of the covenant" is taken to denote the material in Exodus 20:22—23:33. (Unless otherwise indicated, verse references are to English translations rather than to the Masoretic Text [MT].)

2. Structure.
According to J. Halbe (413-23; cf. Sprinkle, 199 n. 1), the book of the covenant is a carefully constructed literary unit, having an elaborate concentric structure:

A cultic laws (Ex 20:22-26)
  B law of release (seventh year) (Ex 21:1-11)
    C slaves, property (Ex 21:12—22:19)
      D the LORD alone (Ex 22:20)
    C aliens, social justice (Ex 22:21—23:9)
  B sabbath (seventh day) (Ex 23:10-12)
A cultic laws (Ex 23:13-19)

While this proposal highlights some of the main units within the book of the covenant, it fails to incorporate Exodus 23:20-33 and requires that 23:10-19 be unnecessarily divided into two sections. A more straightforward analysis of Exodus 20:22—23:33 is possible (cf. Patrick, 63-96):

20:22-26	instructions concerning the making of cultic objects
21:1—22:20	regulatory principles (or *mišpāṭîm*)
22:21—23:9	exhortations
23:10-19	instructions concerning the sabbath and religious festivals
23:20-33	promises and warning concerning the land of Canaan

3. Form-Critical Approaches.
Apart from Exodus 23:20-33, which due to its paraenetic nature is considered to be a distinctive part of the book of the covenant, the remaining material is often viewed as consisting of detailed legislation. Numerous studies have drawn attention to the different forms of "laws" in Exodus 20:22—23:19, offering slightly different perspectives on the nature of these laws. J. Morgenstern (1930, 20-34, 56-63; 1931-1932, 1-150, esp. 140-50; cf. Johnstone, 53-59) proposed four types: *dibrê* (words), *mišpāṭîm* (judgments), *ḥuqqîm* (statutes) and *miṣwôt* (commandments). A. Alt (91-103, 125-32) uncovered two main kinds of law: casuistic and apodictic. E. Gerstenberger (23-30, 42-54) classifies his two main types as casuistic and prohibitive. D. Patrick (24) distinguishes between primary (those that establish the rights of certain groups of people) and remedial (those that provide compensation when the primary rights are violated) casuistic law. H. W. Gilmer (25-26, 113-15) has commands, prohibitions and "if-you formulations," whereas R. Sonsino favors the designations *conditional* and *nonconditional.*

While there has been much discussion of the classification of the legislation in the book of the covenant, the general trend, following Alt, has been to isolate two main blocks of legislation: (1) casuistic laws (Ex 21:1—22:20) and (b) apodictic laws (Ex 20:22-26; 22:21—23:19). Whereas the casuistic laws are constructed using an "If . . . , then . . ." formula, the apodictic laws generally employ a second-person imperative form: "You shall/shall not . . ." After isolating and identifying two distinctive types of material within the book of the covenant, the next stage in the form-critical approach is to determine the separate origins of these two forms and the process by which they came to be incorporated into the Sinai narrative. Not surprisingly, various scenarios have been suggested.

B. S. Childs (455-58), finding in Exodus 20:22-26; 22:18—23:19 evidence of cultic use relating to a covenant context and going back possibly to the period of the settlement, suggests that from the outset this material was probably part of the earliest version of the Sinai narrative. On the other hand, the casuistic laws, or *mišpāṭîm,* while also dating from the early settlement period,

originally had no covenant connection. Only at a later stage, sometime before the composition of Deuteronomy, were the *mišpāṭîm* incorporated into the book of the covenant.

An altogether different process of composition is suggested by F. Crüsemann, who takes over the proposal of J. Halbe (450-82) that the book of the covenant is based on two sources: Exodus 34:11-26 and Exodus 21:1—22:17. The former of these was composed in the northern kingdom by a religious movement opposed to Baal worship. Evidence for this "Yahweh-alone" movement comes in the story of Elijah (1 Kings 17) and the prophecy of Hosea. The latter source, Exodus 21:1—22:17 with modifications, was a law code of the Judean upper class, probably composed in the eighth century B.C., which in its original form contained legislation that offered little protection to *slaves but favored their wealthy owners. Following the downfall of the northern kingdom in 721 B.C., refugees brought to Jerusalem a copy of Exodus 34:11-26. This in turn was combined, along with other material (in particular the laws concerning the treatment of *aliens), with a modified version of Exodus 21:1—22:17 to form the book of the covenant, a document expressing the outlook of the Yahweh-alone movement and the moral concerns of the eighth-century prophets. While this is a detailed reconstruction of how the book of the covenant may have been composed, it fails to explain why the *mišpāṭîm,* if they were created by the upper class in Judea, do not address more issues relating specifically to merchants. As we shall observe below, the absence of such materials points to a much earlier date of composition.

Although they present very different descriptions of the process by which the book of the covenant was composed, Childs and Crüsemann share the same basic assumption regarding the application of the form-critical method: different forms of material must have different origins (*see* Form Criticism). While this may sometimes be the case, the possibility of very different types of material being placed side by side in a single document should also be acknowledged. For example, in ancient Near Eastern treaties we find various kinds of material in adjacent sections, all of which have their own distinctive form (e.g., historical prologue, stipulations, a list of witnesses, blessings and curses). In light of this we should consider the possibility that the juxtaposition of different forms of material within the book of the covenant is not necessarily inconsistent with a single origin for the whole document.

4. Contents.

As we have noted above, the book of the covenant falls into a number of distinct sections. In terms of content and form, the boundaries between these sections are generally clearly marked. Exodus 21:1 introduces the material in Exodus 21:2—22:20 [MT 22:19], setting Exodus 20:22-26 apart as the very first unit in the divine speech. A distinctive section of material occurs in Exodus 22:21 [MT 22:20]—23:9, framed by Exodus 22:21 and 23:9, which together form an *inclusio.* The cultic and paraenetic materials in Exodus 23:10-19 and 23:20-33 respectively suggest the presence of two more units. Unfortunately, the existence of these distinctive sections is rarely recognized, with most of the material in Exodus 20:22—23:19 being categorized and discussed as either casuistic or apodictic laws (an exception is D. Patrick). In reality, the material commonly designated "apodictic" is neither homogeneous nor strictly speaking "law." Moreover, in spite of frequent claims that the book of the covenant lacks unity of construction (cf., e.g., Boecker, 137; Durham, 315) it displays signs of careful organization.

4.1. Exodus 20:22-26. One feature often cited as an indication of the disorganized nature of the book of the covenant is the manner in which the so-called "altar laws" (Ex 20:22-26) have been separated from Exodus 22:18 [MT 22:17]—23:19 by the later insertion of the casuistic laws, or *mišpāṭîm* (Ex 21:1—22:17, excluding Ex 21:12-17, which is itself usually taken to be a short series of participial apodictic laws inserted into the *mišpāṭîm*). However, Exodus 20:22-26 is best understood as a series of divine instructions; the absence of penalties strongly suggests that they are not laws. These instructions were given at the start of the divine speech for three important reasons.

First, the prohibition against making *idols and the instructions for building *altars together focus on the important subject of how the divine presence is to be experienced by the people in the future. God's blessing will come to the Israelites when they worship him through the offering of *sacrifices on altars, but not through the construction of golden or silver images. Since the whole thrust of the Sinai covenant is

the establishment of a special relationship between God and the Israelites, through which the people will continue to know and experience the divine presence, these instructions form an appropriate introduction to the covenant document.

Second, the directions concerning the building of altars relate in a very immediate way to the ratification of the covenant in Exodus 24:4-5. The narrative in Exodus 24 describes the construction of an altar and the making of burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, the two types of sacrifices specifically mentioned in Exodus 20:24.

Third, the prohibition against having gods of either gold or silver takes on a special significance in the light of the *golden calf incident recorded later in Exodus 32:1-6. Remarkable parallels exist between the account of the ratification of the covenant in Exodus 24 and the undoing of this very covenant in Exodus 32: both passages describe the making of an altar, the sacrificing of burnt and fellowship offerings, and the people eating and drinking in God's presence. Moreover, in Exodus gods of gold are mentioned only in 20:23; 32:4, 31. All these factors suggest that the opening section of the divine speech in Exodus 20:22—24:2 is an important and essential element in the received Sinai narrative.

4.2. Exodus 21:1—22:20 [MT 22:19]. A new section in Yahweh's speech is introduced by the instruction in 21:1 that *Moses is to set before the people "these regulatory principles" (Heb *mišpāṭîm;* the singular is *mišpāṭ*). While Exodus 21:1 clearly marks the start of a new section, scholars disagree regarding its conclusion. The general trend is to view Exodus 22:18 [MT 22:17] as the start of the next section. However, although the form of the material in Exodus 22:18-20 [MT 22:17-19] does not conform to the "if-then" style that dominates most of Exodus 21:2—22:17 [MT 22:16], the inclusion of specific penalties suggests that these verses should be viewed as *mišpāṭîm;* this is supported by the occurrence of similar material (i.e., Ex 21:12-17) in the middle of Exodus 21.

Exodus 21:1—22:20 consists mainly of material that in its most basic form has two elements: a description of a situation or event (the protasis) followed by an authoritative pronouncement concerning what action should be taken next (the apodosis). This basic pattern is used to construct two levels of regulatory principles: primary and secondary. In Exodus 21:2—22:20 primary regulatory principles, containing both protasis and apodosis, are introduced by the Hebrew particle *kî*. Occasionally, but not always, the primary regulation is followed by one or more secondary regulation introduced by the Hebrew particle *'im* (in Ex 21:36 a secondary *mišpāṭ* is introduced not by *'im* but by *'ô*). Thus, the typical structure is as follows:

primary regulation = *kî* + protasis + apodosis
secondary regulation = *'im* + protasis + apodosis

The secondary *mišpāṭîm* address situations closely related to the primary regulation, qualifying the course of action to be taken. Thus, for example, Exodus 21:2 is a primary regulation, with Exodus 21:3-6 containing three secondary regulations that build upon what is said in verse 2. Two exceptions to this form come in Exodus 21:18 and 22:7 [MT 22:6]. In these cases, the protasis begins with *kî*, and the apodosis comes in a clause introduced by *'im*.

Apart from the material that comprises the primary and secondary regulatory principles, introduced by *kî* and *'im* respectively, there are some verses that do not conform to this pattern. Exodus 21:12-17 forms a separate unit consisting largely of four main regulatory principles, each beginning with a protasis and concluding with an apodosis pronouncing that the offender should be put to death. In the light of this, these verses resemble more closely casuistic laws than apodictic (contra Alt, 140-46; cf. Sprinkle, 74). As well as having identical endings, these regulatory principles all begin with the same grammatical construction, a participial verb. A somewhat similar set of *mišpāṭîm* occurs in Exodus 22:18-20 [MT 22:17-19], although it lacks the uniformity of style found in Exodus 21:12-17. Another passage not introduced by *kî* or *'im* is Exodus 22:9 [MT 22:8], which provides an explanatory note relating to the immediately surrounding regulatory principles.

While form-critical considerations might suggest that Exodus 21:12-17 and 22:18-20 ought to be viewed as having an origin different from the rest of the material in Exodus 21:2—22:20, D. Patrick is correct in stating that Exodus 21:2—22:20 is "an internally homogenous, self-contained corpus." Moreover, it should be noted

that collections of legal material from the ancient Near East also display considerable variation in presentation (cf. Wenham, 101; Sprinkle, 74-75).

Taken as a whole, Exodus 21:2—22:20 displays a relatively clear structure. This is most apparent in Exodus 21:12—22:17 [MT 22:16], where there is a "logical progression . . . from offenses of humans against humans, to offenses of property against humans, to offenses of property against property, to offenses of humans against property" (Sprinkle, 105; cf. Paul, 106-11). Exodus 22:18-20 closes this section by forming a frame with Exodus 21:12-17.

Although the location of the regulatory principles concerning the release of slaves in Exodus 21:2-11 is at odds with the logical progression from more serious offenses to lesser, the emphasis given to them is very much in keeping with the wider context, for the whole book of Exodus focuses on the freeing of Hebrew slaves from Egyptian control and their subsequent decision to commit themselves permanently through the covenant at Sinai to a new master, Yahweh.

Source- and form-critical studies have generally concluded that the material in Exodus 21:2—22:17 [MT 22:16], in total or in part, first existed as a collection of case laws used in Canaanite (Noth, 173; Beyerlin, 4-6; Paul, 43; cf. Alt, 79-132) or Israelite (cf. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, 254-56; Otto, 3-22) law courts. This material was then taken over and incorporated into one of the sources used to compose the book of *Exodus. From the contents of the regulatory principles and their structure, it is hardly surprising that scholars have viewed this material as "law"; it certainly has the appearance of legislation that was formulated in a technical way. However, the *mišpāṭîm* preserved in Exodus 21—22 do not represent a comprehensive list of laws. Apart from the fact that various areas are not touched upon, the reference to the "regulatory principle *[mišpāṭ]* of a daughter" in Exodus 21:9 suggests that other regulatory principles existed.

Although many scholars have tended to view Exodus 21:2—22:20 as a short law code, tracing its origins back to the legal system of ancient Israel, with each regulation deriving from a specific case (e.g., Durham, 320), others have questioned this belief. S. Paul (31) has suggested on the basis of their prologues and epilogues that the ancient Near Eastern law codes were literary texts composed to impress the gods or enhance the king's standing; consequently, they were not collections of case laws or precedent decisions. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that ancient Near Eastern law codes were used in a mechanical way to settle legal disputes. As R. Westbrook (77; cf. Greengus 1962, 532-36) observes concerning ancient Babylonian legal practice, the court "looked to the code, not for an exact, mechanical precedent, but for the principle that the code indirectly laid down through its examples."

As regards the regulatory principles in Exodus 21:2—22:20, Patrick views them as "exercises in legal thinking," and this possibility is supported by S. Greengus (1992, 4.247): "The repeated use of these specialized (some scholars say unusual and unlikely) life situations as the setting for illustrating what moderns might call principles of negligence and liability suggest that these laws might in fact be part of a literary or scholastic tradition, created for the purpose of teaching these principles." The possibility that the *mišpāṭîm* do not derive from the law courts is also argued at length by Sprinkle. Rejecting the view of B. Jackson (30-34) that the biblical material deals with actual cases, J. M. Sprinkle concludes, "The unsophisticated nature of the biblical regulatory principles ought rather to be interpreted as evidence that this was not intended as positive law to be inflexibly applied, but as paradigmatic illustrations of the kinds of resolution of grievances that should take place in Israelite society" (Sprinkle, 122).

If, in the light of these observations, we dismiss the idea that Exodus 21:2—22:20 originated in the law court and, alternatively, consider the material to have been created for a didactic purpose, this leaves open the possibility that it was specifically composed as part of a covenant document intended to regulate the behavior of the Israelites.

4.3. Exodus 22:21 [MT 22:20]—23:9. The next main section in the book of the covenant is Exodus 22:21—23:9. A number of features set this material apart from the rest of the book of the covenant: (1) Exodus 22:21 and 23:9 frame this block of material by repeating the instruction not to oppress aliens because the Israelites themselves were aliens in *Egypt; (2) Exodus 22:21—23:9 is dominated by God's concern that compassion should be shown to the more vul-

nerable members of society; (3) penalties are not specified, but various motivation clauses are included; and (4) the issues addressed lie either outside the jurisdiction of the law court or seek to ensure the impartiality of the judicial process. These considerations strongly suggest that Exodus 22:21—23:9 is best understood as a series of moral imperatives that challenges the Israelites to reflect in their behavior the *holy character of God.

4.4. Exodus 23:10-19. Although these verses have a well-defined structure, scholars have not always recognized this. Driver (e.g., 241; cf. Hyatt, 247) suggests that the section may have originally concluded with verse 13, with either verses 14-19 being a later addition or verse 13 having previously come after verse 19. This approach, however, is rightly rejected by Childs (483) and Sprinkle (189). The authenticity of verses 18-19 has also been challenged by some scholars (e.g., Driver, 245; Hyatt, 249; Childs, 483) on the assumption that these cultic regulations are unrelated to the *festivals.

The first two paragraphs in this section (Ex 23:10-11, 12) are both introduced by the number six and deal with the *sabbath year and sabbath day respectively. The fourth and fifth paragraphs (Ex 23:14-16, 17-19) each begin with the number three, and their contents parallel each other, focusing on the three pilgrimage festivals that the Israelites were expected to observe annually. At the center of the symmetrical pattern created by these four paragraphs comes verse 13, which emphasizes the importance of obeying Yahweh and him alone. Throughout this whole section of instructions a unifying theme is the expectation that the Israelites will come to possess *land that will be fruitful.

4.5. Exodus 23:20-33. In terms of both its content and form, Exodus 23:20-33 stands apart from the rest of the book of the covenant. With its emphasis on the future occupation of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, it differs markedly from the regulatory principles (Ex 21:1—22:20 [MT 22:19]), exhortations (Ex 22:21 [MT 22:20]—23:9) and instructions (Ex 23:10-19) that make up the preceding sections. In contrast to what has gone before, Exodus 23:20-33 is not only strongly oriented toward the future but also exhibits the highest concentration of first-person singular verbs (reflected in translation by the pronoun "I") within Exodus 21—23. While these features distinguish this section from the other parts of the book of the covenant, Exodus 23:20-33 functions well as the epilogue to the book of the covenant, highlighting the special relationship that is being established between God and the Israelites.

5. Relationship to the Sinai Narrative.

The preceding brief survey of Exodus 20:22—23:33 reveals that when form and content are carefully analyzed there is no reason to accept the commonly held opinion that the *mišpāṭîm* are a later addition to a collection of homogeneous apodictic laws. Furthermore, the different sections of the book of the covenant complement each other, creating a document that sets out clearly the covenant obligations placed upon the Israelites in order for them to be a holy nation. Although various writers draw attention to the lack of any specific reference to a *covenant in Exodus 21:1—22:20 [MT 22:19], Childs (455) sees evidence of a covenant connection for the whole of the book of the covenant, apart from the *mišpāṭîm*. Yet, even with the *mišpāṭîm*, which undoubtedly were shaped by the norms of contemporary legislation, it is noteworthy that several (i.e., Ex 21:2, 13-14, 23) are formulated in the second person. Moreover, the entire document is remarkable for the variety of ways in which it links into the book of Exodus as a whole.

While scholars have long debated the nature of the relationship of the book of the covenant to the Sinai narrative in Exodus 19—24, as the account now stands there are various indications that the divine speech, which extends from Exodus 20:22—24:2, must be viewed as an integral part of the Sinai narrative. (For a recent discussion of the literary unity of Exodus 19—24, see Alexander; *see* Exodus, Book of §3)

Although the divine speech in Exodus 20:22—24:2 consists of various blocks of material, these may be viewed as reflecting three distinctive phases: (1) instructions concerning the construction of an altar for the sacrificing of burnt and fellowship offerings (Ex 20:24-26); (2) the substantive text of the book of the covenant (Ex 21:1—23:33); (3) God's invitation to Moses, *Aaron, *Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders (*see* Leadership, Elders) of Israel to come up the mountain (Ex 24:1-2). Significantly, this threefold pattern is reflected in the description of the ratification of the covenant: an altar is constructed and sacrifices offered (Ex 24:4-5);

Moses reads to the people the book of the covenant (Ex 24:7); Moses and the elders ascend Mount Sinai (Ex 24:9-11). These features suggest that the author of Exodus 24:3-11 presupposes a knowledge of Exodus 20:22—24:2.

A further indication that the book of the covenant is an integral part of the Sinai narrative concerns its relationship to the Decalogue. While there is no reason to believe that the book of the covenant was composed on the basis of the Decalogue (contra Rothstein), J. M. Sprinkle highlights well the parallels in content or subject matter that exist between the two passages:

> "No other gods" (20.3) finds echo in 22.19; 23.13, 24, 32. The prohibition against images (20.4) is repeated in 20.23. Not taking the name of YHWH in vain (20.7) is backdrop to the YHWH-oath of 22.7, 10. The sabbath command (20.8) is repeated and expanded in 23.10-12. The duty to honor parents (20.12) is assumed in two crimes of children against parents (21.15, 17), the wording of the one (v. 17a) being the exact antithesis of it; this duty is also assumed in giving the father right of approval in his daughter's marriage (22.15-16). The prohibition of homicide (20.13) is implicit in 21.12-14, 20, 23, 29 and 22.2. Although the prohibition against adultery (20.14) is not repeated, the case of the seduction of a maiden (22.15-16) is another aspect of marriage law. Laws concerning theft of animals (21.37; 22.2b-3), attempted theft (22.1-2a), accusation of theft (22.6-8), rustling of an animal (22.9), and stealing a man (21.16) all expand on the command "Do not steal" (20.15). The prohibition of false testimony (20.16) is repeated and expanded (23.1-3, 7). The prohibition of coveting (20.17) is implicit in the regulation concerning the safekeeping of a neighbor's money, goods or livestock (22.6-12). (Sprinkle, 25-26)

Support for the idea that the Decalogue and the book of the covenant are both integral components of the Sinai narrative comes from a consideration of Exodus 20:22. This verse, which parallels closely Exodus 19:3-4, refers to Yahweh speaking "from heaven," an event that is placed on a par with the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. From the context, this obviously refers to the giving of the Decalogue. Furthermore, given that God has spoken to the Israelites "from heaven" (Ex 20:22b), some explanation is required to explain why he now instructs Moses to convey his words to the people. Exodus 20:18-21 provides an explanation by drawing attention to the fear of the people. We may deduce, therefore, that Exodus 20:22 was penned as a sequel to Exodus 20:1-21.

It is sometimes argued that the book of the covenant cannot be an original part of the Sinai narrative because its contents reflect a settled life in Canaan. W. Johnstone (53) writes, "The legislation concerns, indeed presupposes, a settled community living in houses (22.2, 7f. [Heb. 1, 6f.]), frequenting fixed sanctuaries (23.17, 19), possessing cattle as well as sheep (21.28ff.), fields with their crops, vineyards and olive orchards and the necessary installations for pressing the grapes and olives (22.29 Heb. 28]; 23.10f.)." This argument, however, fails to recognize that the entire account is concerned with the creation of a holy nation en route from Egypt to Canaan. Moreover, Exodus 23:20-33, which focuses on how God will enable the Israelites to gain possession of the land of Canaan, only makes sense prior to the taking of the land.

Taken together these arguments provide substantial grounds for viewing the book of the covenant as an integral part of the Sinai narrative.

6. Date of Composition.

While previous studies have generally offered different dates for the various sections of the book of the covenant, there has been a strong tendency to date much of the material, if not all, to the premonarchical period. Several general reasons for doing so are commonly cited: (1) the legal material reflects actual practices and presupposes a settled lifestyle; (2) there is no mention of the monarchy (Patrick, 65; cf. Neufeld, 367-68); and (3) the material predates the composition of the book of Deuteronomy, possibly by several centuries.

J. A. Marshall has provided a detailed investigation of this issue based on anthropological research into the relationship between a society's substantive laws and other factors such as social structures, economic system and environment. Although his approach is partially flawed by a failure to recognize that the material in Exodus 22:20 [MT 22:19]—23:9 is not "substantive law," he demonstrates clearly that the *mišpāṭîm* reflect a dimorphic pastoral and agrarian society of the early Iron I period (1200-1000 B.C.). While the *mišpāṭîm* address issues relating to the period of

Israel's initial settlement in the land of Canaan (cf. Cazelles; Childs, 457), Sprinkle has shown that they do not derive from a law-court setting. In the light of these two factors, it is possible that the *mišpāṭîm* were composed immediately prior to the arrival of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. While this does not constitute proof that the "book of the covenant" was divinely given at Mount Sinai, it supports the essential trustworthiness of the biblical tradition.

See also COVENANT; DECALOGUE; LAW.

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BORDERS

The ancient Israelites were concerned with boundaries. The beginning of Genesis recounts how light was separated from darkness (Gen 1:3-4), land from sea (Gen 1:9-10), upper waters from lower waters (Gen 1:6, 7) and so on. The Israelites also sought to establish cultural and religious boundaries to maintain their uniqueness. *Circumcision, for instance, early on became the distinguishing mark between the covenanted and the noncovenanted (Gen 17:9-11). Likewise, dietary laws, *sabbath laws and the like all worked to build boundaries and borders of various types.

As part of this effort to create borders, the Bible established specific geographical boundaries for different groups: first for all the postdiluvian peoples and later for the Israelites themselves. For example, Genesis 10 records how Noah's sons occupied specific geographic areas of the known world. The Japhethites occupied Asia Minor, Greece and other northern regions (Gen 10:2-5). The Hamites inhabited primarily the area of modern Africa, Arabia and the eastern Mediterranean littoral, including Palestine (Gen 10:6-21), while the Semites (children of *Shem) occupied the region of the Near East (Gen 10:21-31), excluding the coast.

Central to the Pentateuch is the promise of *land to the children of Israel. Surprisingly, the Pentateuch does not contain an account of the

actual possession and distribution of this land, despite the numerous promises and expectations of its eventual occupation. Nor does the Pentateuch describe the region allotted to each tribe. Both tasks have been left to the book of Joshua.

The allocated land is at first only loosely defined. As the biblical story progresses, however, it becomes more delimited, culminating in the border descriptions in the book of Joshua. The descriptions of the borders of the Promised Land fall into three categories: loose geographical definitions, definitions based on ethnic groups occupying it and definitions using the term *Canaan*, both general and specific (*see* Nations of Canaan).

1. Loose Geographical Definitions
2. Definitions Based on Ethnic Groups
3. Definitions of Canaan

1. Loose Geographical Definitions.
Two passages serve as examples of this type of definition. First, Genesis 13:14-15 defines the Promised Land as the territory that *Abraham was able to view with his naked eye while standing at an uncertain location in Palestine. Second, Genesis 15:18, while giving some definition, is somewhat vague about the borders of the Promised Land. Only two boundaries are listed: the "River of Egypt" and the "Great River, the Euphrates." The latter boundary offers no difficulties. The former, however, is somewhat ambiguous, and scholars have suggested two interpretations of the phrase "River of Egypt." First, a few scholars have postulated that the River of Egypt refers to either the Nile or one of its eastern branches, since the Bible here uses the word *nāhār*, "river" (Speiser, 114; Aharoni, 65). Others, arguing that the usual designation for Canaan's southern border is the "Brook/Wadi of Egypt," using *naḥal* rather than *nāhār* (see, e.g., Num 34:5; Josh 15:4), have concluded that the Wadi el-Arish is in view. Recently a few scholars have challenged this conclusion and argued that the Wadi Besor, just north of Gaza, was the Brook of Egypt (e.g., Na'aman 1979). P. K. Hooker has further refined this view by arguing, on the basis of Neo-Assyrian texts, that the Wadi Besor was the Brook of Egypt prior to approximately 700 B.C. (Hooker, 214). After this, the Brook of Egypt referred to the Wadi el-Arish. In any case, the borders of the Promised Land delineated in this passage do not correspond to the known borders of Israel in any historical period. Although the biblical account of Solomon's reign suggests that he held suzerainty over this region, more realistic appraisals of his kingdom suggest that the account is idealized and that his kingdom never really stretched to cover a territory this expansive (Miller and Hayes, 214). Possibly the borders given in Genesis 15 depict those of the satrapy of Abar Nahara during the Persian period. These borders extended from Egypt to the Euphrates (Ahlström, 821).

2. Definitions Based on Ethnic Groups.
Several times the Promised Land is described, not in geographical terms per se, but in ethnic terms, that is, as the land of various groups of peoples all loosely labeled as either Canaanites or Amorites. Genesis 15:19-21, for instance, after giving the boundaries mentioned above, notes that the land was occupied by certain ethnic groups, including the Canaanites, Amorites and Jebusites. According to Genesis 10:15-19, these groups occupied a territory extending from Sidon in the north to roughly Gerar or Gaza in the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the region of Sodom and Gomorrah in the east, roughly the Dead Sea. Although the land is not specifically called *Canaan* here, it is called the land of the Canaanites. This area does not describe quite the same region, then, as Genesis 15. The extension to the north is considerably shortened.

3. Definitions of Canaan.
In other places the Promised Land is defined more concretely as the land of Canaan (Gen 17:8; Ex 6:4; Lev 25:38; Num 34:2 [see below]), although only Numbers 34:1-12 provides any specific boundaries. It is repeated to a great degree in Ezekiel 47:15-20. The relationship between the passages is unclear. Numerous similarities in description and terminology (especially the natural features; see Hutchens, 222) obtain, but notable variants exist as well. For example, Ezekiel's description of the northern border has only Lebo-hamath, his east side is more abbreviated, and the only common feature of the southern border is the mention of the Wadi of Egypt. Overall, the differences are more marked. Ezekiel's list also attempts to clarify the borders. For instance, he notes that the northern boundary runs north of Damascus but south of Hamath (Ezek 47:17). Therefore, neither pas-

sage appears to be dependent on the other, although they probably have a common origin (Auld, 76; Hutchens, 222-24).

Numbers 34:2 explicitly states that the territory to be included in the inheritance was equivalent to the territory of Canaan. In Numbers 34:3-12 the boundaries of Canaan are given in clockwise order beginning with the south. The western (Num 34:6) and southeastern (Num 34:12) boundaries offer no difficulty. They are the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River respectively. The southern (Num 34:3-5), northern and northeastern (Num 34:7-11) borders are problematic, however, because the locations of several of the toponyms are wholly unknown. These are Mount Hor (Num 34:7, not the mountain where *Aaron died), the "ascent of Akrabbim" (Num 34:4, perhaps Naqb es-Safa; see Budd, 366), Ain (Num 34:11), Shepham (Num 34:10), Ziphron (Num 34:9), Hazar-enan (Num 34:9) and Hazar-addar (Num 34:4, Hezron and Addar in Joshua 15:3). Mount Hor most likely is a mountain in the South Lebanon range. Ain may be Ijon (Tell ed-Dibbin) at the sources of the Jordan. Riblah (Num 34:11) may be Arbela (as it is translated in the Septuagint). These identifications are largely conjectural, however. Lebo-hamath is similarly problematic. Some take it as a geographical term (the entrance to Hamath), which would place it at the southern end of the Bika Valley. Others take it as a city and translate it Lebweh, a city in this region (cf. Aharoni, 72). Because of these uncertainties, it is virtually impossible to determine the exact border as envisioned by the writers of the Pentateuch.

The southern border given in Numbers 34 is less problematic, although by no means without difficulty. It follows the southern border of the tribe of Judah as given in Joshua 15:1-4, and many scholars believe that the Numbers text is dependent on the Joshua text. This is not certain. This southern border begins at the southern end of the Dead Sea, proceeds south of the ascent of Akrabbim, crosses to Zin (here a place name of uncertain location), passes to the south of Kadesh-barnea (most likely modern ʿAin el-Qudeirat), then to Hazar-addar, Azmon and the Wadi of Egypt. This area includes most of the Negev but does not extend as far south as the Gulf of Aqabah.

The northern/northeastern boundary is so difficult to determine that scholarly opinion on it can be divided into two camps (Hutchens, 216-22): a minimalist position that sees it as describing a boundary line somewhat just north of *Dan (Tel Dan) and proceeding westward to the Mediterranean (Noth, 248-51); and a maximalist position that holds that it begins with a line somewhat north of Byblos and passes west and just south of ancient Hamath, through the entrance to Hamath (or Lebo-hamath) (Aharoni, 72-73). It continues west past Zedad (probably modern Sadad, about fifty miles north of Damascus and near the modern Damascus-Homs highway). Its northeastern terminus is Hazar-enan. Then it curves south, with several terminal points of unknown location, before finally ending at the southeast corner of the Sea of Galilee. If this is the case, then the land allocated to Israel included not only Damascus but the entire territory within about a forty to fifty mile radius of Damascus. The more defensible position is the maximalist, since the text clearly states that Lebo-hamath was part of the border. Moreover, it is in agreement with Ezekiel's delineation of the borders. Hence, the borders of the Promised Land as given in Numbers 34 match more closely the general boundaries given in Genesis 10:15 than those given in Genesis 15:18.

Interestingly, the land allocated to Israel as described in Numbers 34 does *not* include any of the territory east of the Jordan River or Dead Sea, territory well known to have been inhabited by Israelites and traditionally conquered during the conquest. Indeed, Numbers 21 describes the conquest of Sihon of Heshbon and Og of Bashan, and Numbers 32 reports the subsequent occupation of this land by the tribes of *Reuben, *Gad and Manasseh. This area included the area of the Transjordan north of the Arnon River (present-day Wadi el-Mojib), south of the Yarmuk, the territory of ancient Gilead, and west of the Jabbok. According to the Bible, the territories of Israel's "relatives" Edom, Moab and Ammon were off limits, but the conquered territories were occupied by Canaanites and Amorites and therefore were part of the inheritance.

According to Numbers 32:33-42, Gad occupied the southernmost territory just north of the Arnon, an area surrounding the town of Dibon. Reuben occupied the territory north of this, a region surrounding Heshbon, Sihon's old capital. The Manassehites, specifically the Machirites, a subdivision of Manasseh, occupied the region to the north, ancient Gilead. Joshua 13:15-32 gives

a somewhat different picture. Reuben occupied the territory as far south as the Arnon. Gad's territory is north of this and comprised Gilead as far north as the lower end of the Sea of Galilee. Finally, Manasseh took the area north of this, the region of Bashan.

The origin of the boundaries of Canaan as defined in Numbers 34 is uncertain, since the description of Canaan does not match the known political boundaries of Palestine in any period. Some scholars have argued that these borders were those of the Egyptian province of Canaan during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Egyptian Dynasties (Mazar, 91-102; Aharoni, 67-69; Na'aman 1986, 244; Milgrom, 501-2). This is by no means certain, because those boundaries are never clearly articulated in extant Egyptian literature (Hutchens, 217-22). Moreover, it is uncertain that there ever was a "province of Canaan" with any clearly defined boundaries (Lemche; Redford, 34-35). In another view, S. S. Tuell has argued that the origin of the territory belongs to the Persian period: it was the territory of the satrapy of Abar Nahara (Tuell, 153-73). However, as noted earlier, Abar Nahara extended well beyond the territory defined in Numbers 34 and Ezekiel 47, making this theory untenable. Finally, the origin of the territory could be founded on a cultic/religious ideal, based on the wish of the writers (who were from priestly circles, including Ezekiel) to establish a clear cultic boundary, separating the pure from the impure (Hutchens, 228-29). Thus, just as the writers sought to establish religious and cultural boundaries between Israelites and non-Israelites via circumcision, dietary laws and so forth, so also via an arbitrary border system they sought to draw a boundary between Israelites and non-Israelites.

See also LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE; NATIONS OF CANAAN.

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BOUNDARIES. *See* BORDERS.

BREASTPIECE. *See* PRIESTLY CLOTHING.

BREATH OF LIFE. *See* CREATION.

BURGLARY. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

BURIAL AND MOURNING

Burial and mourning were part of the cycle of life recorded in the Pentateuch, but they were not aspects of great historical, religious or theological interest. The dead apparently joined their kin in the afterlife, but this was not considered a matter of great consequence, either for them or for the living. Some mourning customs were commonly practiced while others were ex-

pressly forbidden, probably because of their non-Yahwistic associations.

1. Accounts of Burial
2. Mourning and Burial Customs
3. Burial, Ancestors and Veneration

1. Accounts of Burial.

The best-known pentateuchal account of burial is Genesis 23, in which *Abraham bought a field with its "cave of Machpelah." Here were buried *Sarah, Abraham, *Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and *Jacob (Gen 49:31; 50:13). This was either a natural cave or a subterranean burial chamber cut from the soft rock, with a vertical shaft entrance and ledges on which to lay corpses. Successive multiple burials in such tombs were typical in the hill country of Palestine throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages (see Gonen; Cooley; Bloch-Smith). However, Genesis 23 focuses primarily on the legal transaction, with the burial itself only briefly mentioned. Abraham's purchase probably reflects respect for the dead rather than his claiming a stake in the Promised Land, since he did not use his considerable wealth to buy other property.

Rebekah's nurse Deborah was buried "under the oak" near Bethel (Gen 35:8), either because trees were associated both with immortality and religious practice generally (Gen 2:9; 21:33), or simply because it was a recognizable landmark. Rachel was buried somewhere between Bethel and Ephrath (i.e., Bethlehem, Gen 35:19), with a pillar erected to mark the spot. Her tomb was later located near Zelzah (1 Sam 10:2, otherwise unknown) and near Ramah (Jer 31:15).

Burial in *Egypt is only mentioned in passing (Ex 14:11; Num 33:4). The Egyptians normally buried the dead singly in the ground. The *wilderness accounts note burials after one plague (Num 11:34) but not others, and the burial of *Miriam and *Moses (Num 20:1; Deut 34:6) but not of *Aaron (Num 20:28). This incomplete attention to burial is typical of the Hebrew Bible generally (cf. the relevant texts for judges, kings, David's sons, etc.).

2. Mourning and Burial Customs.

According to Genesis, Abraham "went in" to where his dead wife lay "to bewail and weep for her" (Gen 23:2-3). No further details are given here, but ancient mourning customs included weeping (Gen 35:8; 37:35; 50:1, 10-11, mentioned regularly), tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, disheveling hair, covering with dust and fasting (Gen 37:34-35; cf. 2 Sam 1:11-12, etc.). Some burial accounts do not mention mourning (e.g., those of Abraham and Isaac), while other texts indicate long-lasting grief (Gen 24:67; 37:35). Official mourning lasted seventy days for Jacob in Egypt (Gen 50:3) and thirty for Aaron and Moses in Israel (Num 20:29; Deut 34:8; cf. a month of mourning allowed to a female captive before enforced marriage, Deut 21:13).

Embalming was common in Egypt and was undertaken for Jacob and *Joseph (Gen 50:2, 26). Elsewhere in the ancient Near East burial normally occurred within twenty-four hours of death, due to the rapid decomposition of corpses. This even prevailed for executed criminals (Deut 21:23). Cremation was not normally practiced in Israel but was reserved for serious *sexual misconduct and other heinous offenses (Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14; 21:9; cf. Josh 7:25). For corpses to be unburied and eaten by animals was a sign of particular opprobrium (Deut 28:26).

Perhaps surprisingly to the modern reader, the pentateuchal burial accounts contain no reference to religious ceremony, except for the Egyptianized mourning for Jacob (Gen 50:11). Similarly, there is no legislation dealing directly with burial, except for the immediate burial of criminals. Burial was not seen as an act of obvious religious significance. The only relevant legislation (1) prohibits trimming one's hair and mutilating one's body in mourning, probably because of their non-Yahwistic associations (Lev 19:27-28; 21:5); (2) prohibits eating part of the tithe in mourning (Deut 26:14, see below); and (3) concerns defilement from contact with corpses and graves. Such contact necessitated exclusion and purification (Num 5:2; 19:11-22) or postponement of Passover celebration (Num 9:6) and was forbidden altogether to the high *priest and to Nazirites (Lev 21:10-11; Num 6:9).

3. Burial, Ancestors and Veneration.

The phrase "gathered to his peoples" (lit. trans.) occurs in the OT only in connection with the deaths of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron (Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33; Num 20:24; 27:13). The fuller patriarchal accounts have the sequence: "breathed his last," "died," "was gathered to his peoples" and "was buried." Hence this "gathering" was distinct from death and burial and is usually interpreted

as joining one's ancestors in the afterlife. This location is never defined—as Sheol or otherwise—and no veneration of the ancestors is recorded.

The plural "peoples" for one's kinship group is confined mostly to the Pentateuch (as in "cut off from his peoples"; cf. Alfrink) and may indicate the antiquity of the material. Variant phrases were used later of *Joshua's generation and of Josiah (Judg 2:10; 2 Kings 22:20), and the verb "be gathered" later became a synonym of "die" (e.g., Hos 4:3), possibly without its earlier connotation.

Israelites bringing a tithe had to vow that they had eaten none of it while in mourning and had offered none "to/for a dead person" (Deut 26:14). According to many scholars, this food would have been offered to the dead so that they would bless the living, a practice that the Deuteronomists tried to limit but could not prohibit. Biblical and archaeological evidence attests the existence of such "cults of the dead" elsewhere, such as among the Moabites (Num 25:2; cf. Ps 106:28: lit. "sacrifices of the dead").

However, the arguments are unconvincing. Deuteronomy roundly prohibits necromancy and other perennial temptations for Israel (e.g., Deut 18:10-11), so it could equally have condemned the veneration of ancestors if necessary. Also there is no evidence that such a practice was acceptable in Israel. T. J. Lewis finds it in certain biblical texts, but his interpretation is often tenuous. E. Bloch-Smith argues for the existence of the practice from the remains of food found in graves, but these have been found mostly in areas of non-Israelite or mixed population; and in the one undoubtedly Judean site she mentions (Aitun), the evidence is interpreted differently by the original excavator. More likely, the food "to/for the dead" refers to part of a funerary meal or food left to accompany the dead on their onward journey. This practice was deemed inappropriate for the tithe (probably because of its priestly association) but otherwise thought harmless (see Johnston, chap. 8).

In the Pentateuch, as much as in the rest of the OT, Yahweh is the God of life (Deut 30:19). As a direct consequence, and despite all their faults, the Israelites were far more concerned with the living than with the dead.

See also LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

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BURNT OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

C

CAIN

Cain was the firstborn son of *Adam and *Eve (Gen 4:1), brother and murderer of *Abel (Gen 4:2, 8), protected by God with a "mark" (Gen 4:15) and the father of Enoch (Gen 4:17). Cain, though at home east of *Eden, in harmony with the first family and fruitful as a farmer, was exiled ever farther from the reaches of Eden, banned from the joy of family, and the land he was to work was cursed even more. We gain a glimpse of life from the eighth day onward, and it is full of pitfalls and danger, even if the *image of God remains and humans are called to worship the Lord for their own good. Cain, as the first murderer, represents in biblical imagery the fallen line of Adam and the prototypical *sinner. Further, we find in the Cain narrative the first example of corrupt religion leading to bloodshed of humans.

Murder is here given its definition: destruction of one made in the image of God as well as others who are in God's original plan, the family. It is a barbaric act by a human who has broken fellowship with God and an attempt to undo the plan of God for humans. That the murder was originally fratricide exacerbates the act of Cain. Cain destroyed a special kinship: brotherhood. In addition, Cain demonstrated the biblical pattern of divine *election based on *grace instead of heritage. The line that will crush the *serpent's head is not from Cain, but from the younger brother *Seth, as will be seen in *Isaac, *Jacob, Ephraim and David.

The narrative itself is full of gaps that cannot be explained satisfactorily: What kind of offerings or *sacrifices did the two brothers bring? When did they offer them? Where did they do such? How did they know to do this? Why Cain's offering was unacceptable to God is only partly visible (von Rad). In addition, one wonders how Cain was able to find a wife, of whom Cain was afraid, and how he was able to find another populated place to live. One recognizes that not all the story is told; instead, the biblical narrative focuses on the sin and curse of Cain, as well as the replacement of Abel by *Seth.

1. Cain as Adam's Sinful Descendant
2. The Naming of Cain
3. Cain and the Murder of Abel
4. The Curse and Mark of Cain
5. The Descendants of Cain

1. Cain as Adam's Sinful Descendant.

The narrative of Cain reveals fundamental parallels to the fall narrative of Genesis 3: (1) sin is graphically described (Gen 3:5-7; 4:6-7); (2) the sinner undergoes divine interrogation (Gen 3:3-13; 4:9-12); (3) the ultimate divine question is one of personal location ("Where are you?") and social location ("Where is your brother?"; Gen 3:9; 4:9); (4) the sinner is cursed (Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11-12); and (5) the clothing of Adam and Eve and the marking of Cain are similar, as is their banishment to the east (Gen 3:21, 24; 4:15-16). Cain, therefore, is a graphic instance of Adam's sin as well as a demonstration of the impact of the *Fall. Inasmuch as Eve has to be talked into sin and Cain initiates the intent on his own, one can argue that sin has taken deep roots in humanity.

2. The Naming of Cain.

In literary assonance, or a pun, "Cain" *(qayin)* is "acquired" *(qānîtî)* from the Lord for Eve (Gen 4:1). The term *acquired* has given rise to two major interpretations, one indicating a boast on the part of Eve and the other a statement of gratitude to God for a son (the term here is "man"; lit., "I have acquired a man"). In the first case, Eve boasts that she, too, has "created" *(qānîtî)*, as did the Lord (Gibson). One could argue that the

variation of expression between Genesis 4:1 ("I have acquired") and 4:25 ("God has provided me with" [NJPS]) indicates a different sense in 4:1 (triumph versus gratitude). In this view, Eve's arrogance emerges from her anger at the Lord for exiling her from the Eden. According to the second interpretation, Eve expresses gratitude that she has gained a "little man" with the Lord's help *(ʾet-yhwh)*. Since the narrator regularly plays word games with the names of significant persons (cf. Gen 4:8; "Abel" *[hbl]* probably means "breath" and suggests brevity]), and since *ʾet* ("with") evokes the regular presence of the Lord with the patriarchs (cf. Gen 21:20; 26:24; 39:2), it is most likely that the narrator intends to depict Eve as expressing gratitude rather than making a triumphal boast that she is on a par with the Lord himself (cf. the jubilant statement of Adam in Gen 2:23).

3. Cain and the Murder of Abel.

3.1. Two Offerings. The Cain-Abel narrative provides us with the first instance of worship, spoiled as it is by Cain's misbehavior. Seth, the replacement of Abel, will be the father of Enosh, and it will be during that time that the line of Adam and Seth will begin to invoke God in true worship (Gen 4:26). Offerings occur only after the Fall, implying that a fallen condition requires renewed fellowship with the Lord.

Scholarship is persuaded that Cain's offering from the land and Abel's from the fold, probably a firstling, represent an "offering" *(minḥâ)* rather than a sacrifice (of whatever sort). It is not prescribed that offerings be a sacrifice of blood, and, therefore, Cain's offering is not disapproved for not being blood. Nor are we to see here a conflict between farmers and nomads. Their offerings are the natural product of their callings and at the normal time. Abel's sacrifice is therefore an animal, Cain's some grain (cf. Lev 2:1). It is more likely that Cain's sin is like that of Eli's sons; that is, he offers or treats his offering with impiety (cf. 1 Sam 2:17). Later rabbinic midrashim speculated that Cain offered what was left over after a meal, while some observed that Cain was mistaken in thinking grain from the ground already cursed by God would somehow be an acceptable sacrifice (see Ginzberg, 1.107-8). Thus, the narrative suggests that the rite itself and the intent of the worshiper are to be distinguished, with the latter carrying the load of what God considers acceptable. There are sufficient indications of Cain's nature and motives to impugn his heart; we should impugn Cain rather than God's arbitrariness (so von Rad, 101; Brueggemann, 56-57). Gibson, on the other hand, understands Cain's response to be a reaction to God's sovereign choice of Abel's sacrifice, an instance of God's unpredictable grace (Gibson, 145-46).

Therefore, the Lord accepts Abel's and rejects Cain's offerings, though it is unclear how each perceives a uniform perspective of God's response. (Some, especially the later rabbinic midrashim, suggested that the Lord consumed the acceptable offering with fire; they often appealed to Lev 9:24; Judg 6:21. Others argue that it was after inspection of the offering that one could discern its acceptability to God [Gunkel].) Unlike the divine response to Abel ("had regard for" *[wayyīšʿa]* or "a lifting up of the divine countenance"), Cain's countenance is a "fall" (*wayyippĕlû* Gen 4:5).

Instead of seeking the reason for God's rejection in nontextual factors (e.g., shepherds are superior to farmers, animal sacrifices are superior to grain offerings or God arbitrarily elects certain persons and certain actions over others), we should seek for clarity in the text. Such is probably provided in the exchange between the Lord and Cain.

3.2. Divine Interrogation. Cain's distress (Gen 4:5, 6) and behavior (Gen 4:6-7) are held up to inspection by the Lord and found wanting. Since the former derives from God's response to the latter, our focus should be given to Genesis 4:7. Here we learn that Cain (1) has not done right; (2) has succumbed to the lure of temptation; and (3) has lost the opportunity to master his "urge" to sin. Since we are aware that heart, motive and disposition are fundamental to ancient Hebrew worship (cf. Heb 11:4 [faith of Abel versus the lack of faith for Cain] and 1 Jn 3:12 [evil actions]), we are to seek Cain's problem in his failing to do right. Cain's heart is full of anger (Gen 4:5, 6), and he is not concerned with God's glory (hence, the fallen countenance). Therefore he strikes back—not at God—but at his brother. The heart of Cain is seen throughout: from the offering to the murder. Cain's offering reflects his heart, and so does Abel's; the latter's offering is acceptable because of the motive of its supplicant.

The Lord's interrogation probes for Cain's motives: "Why?" (Gen 4:6). The assumption is that if Cain had done what was right, he would

have found "uplift" (NJPS) or "forgiveness" (Wenham; Gen 4:7). There is a history of scholarly debate on this question, with suggested emendations and variant interpretations for Genesis 4:7 (Wenham, 104-6). Since the primary focus of the term behind Wenham's "forgiveness" (*nś'*) is general and its core meaning is "to lift up," one should probably find here an allusion to the divine acceptance (Gen 4:4b), the countenance of Cain (Gen 4:5b) and the possibility of his restoration. The personification of sin and how it develops in order to master the human, as well as the insight into human nature, reminds the reader of the serpent and sin of the Fall (Gen 3:1, 4-6). Others note that the "urge" of Genesis 4:7 is similar to the woman's urge for Adam (Gen 3:16). The responsibility remains Cain's, for it was in his power to "master" temptation (Gen 4:7).

3.3. The First Murder. As the serpent's desire was to snap at the seed of Adam to prevent the will of God being done in Eden (Gen 3:15), so now Cain follows in the serpent's line by murdering his brother and so preventing the one favored by God from bringing the divine plan to fruition. But just as God was ready to provide for Abraham a replacement for Isaac (Gen 22), so God will soon replace Abel with Seth (Gen 4:25-26), who will become the official line of Adam (Gen 5:3).

The incompleteness of Genesis 4:8a ("Cain said to his brother Abel . . ."—what he said is not recorded) has led to numerous suggestions or emendations, including that of the Samaritan Pentateuch ("Let us go into the field"). Cain commits a premeditated murder (cf. Deut 22:25-27) because the Lord prefers Abel over himself. The action itself is described with the term *hrg*, which is used for "ruthless, private violence" (Gen 12:12; 20:11; 27:41; 34:25; 49:6). The anger of Cain expressed unacceptably in worship erupts into anger against his very own brother.

4. The Curse and Mark of Cain.

4.1. The Divine Accusation and Curse. Before the Lord provides a replacement for Abel, the Lord must first deal with the serpent's tool who has attacked the image of God (cf. Gen 9:5-6). Cain has somehow learned to lie by evasion ("Am I my brother's keeper?"; Gen 4:9), but the Lord doesn't fall for Cain's politics. Instead, he probes deeper and accuses Cain of murder because his brother's blood (cf. Lev 17:11; or "bloods"; so *m. Sanh.* 4:5, which indicates Abel and his would-have-been descendants) cries out (cf. Gen 41:55; Deut 22:24, 27) and is heard by the Lord (cf. Ps 34:17). Cain remains truculent as fratricide is abominable (Lev 25:48; Num 35:12-28).

Cain's curse, an enlivening of the curse on Adam (Gen 3:17-19), is that he will encounter soil as truculent as is he and experience a wandering even further from Eden (Gen 4:12; cf. 3:23-24). He is banned from fertile places. God's presence, as well as God's favored line from Adam, and Cain cannot occupy the same location (cf. Num 35:9-34; Deut 19:1-13). The later curse of Deuteronomy 28:16-19 finds its precursor here, and Isaiah 26:21 intimates that Abel's blood will find its vindication and paradise will be restored.

4.2. Cain's Complaint. The traditional interpretation of Genesis 4:13 is a complaint: "you have punished me too much!" Some (e.g., later rabbis; Sailhamer) contend that we see here Cain's repentance: "my iniquity is more than I can carry." Consequently, the protection of Cain by the Lord (Gen 4:14-15) becomes an instance of divine forgiveness through a glimpse of the later cities of refuge (Sailhamer, 113-14). However, the expression "to bear sin" (*nś' ʿwn*) normally means to carry the responsibility for and punishment due to sinful behavior (Lev 5:1, 17; Num 5:31; cf. Mt 27:25). Further, the continuation of the thought of punishment leads to Cain's second complaint: that he will be a hunted man (Gen 4:14). The later rabbis thought he was hunted by the beasts (Ginzberg, 1.111). Whether the text implies the existence of others or of the avenging actions of other children of Adam and Eve is unclear.

4.3. The Mark of Cain. Either as a form of "forgiveness" or as a continuation of carrying his own punishment, the Lord promises a sevenfold revenge (cf. Ex 22:18 MT for case law form; Ps 12:6) against any who slays Cain (Gen 4:15). That the expression is in terms of a promise (Gen 4:15, *lākēn*) renders the act of God the law of the land. To prevent anyone from slipping into such a danger, the Lord gives Cain a "mark" (*'ôt;* cf. Gen 9:13; 17:11) to provide instant recognition. A fundamental insight is here given: though a murderer, Cain remains under God's protective, permanent care. Quick, violent, arbitrary revenge is contrary to God's will.

The nature of such a mark has been contested for two millennia, resulting in "endless inconclusive speculation" (Wenham, 109). It could be something on his person (a birthmark; some

thought it was one letter of the divine name inscribed on his forehead), his name, a dog to accompany him (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 22:12), leprosy, the city to which he goes (Nod, which means "wandering") or the city that he founds (cf. Gen 4:16, 17; as an anticipation of cities of refuge?). The expression, however, does not appear to indicate something "on" Cain as much as something "for" him (*lĕbilti;* cf. Gen 21:12). Most important, it is a mark of *protection* (so Gunkel; von Rad), not infamy and degradation. The punishment renders justice; ongoing humiliation is out of the picture. Cain is not fit for society, but, once Cain is punished, God grants him the opportunity to begin anew.

5. The Descendants of Cain.

The narrator provides us with Cain's son, Enoch, and mentions the city he founds, also Enoch (Gen 4:17). Following Enoch are Irad, Mehujael, Methushael and Lamech (Gen 4:18). Lamech, notably, has two wives, and he is the father of three boys with similar names who are also blessed with inventiveness: Jabal, the founder of tent-dwellers and herders; Jubal, the father of those who play the lyre and pipe; and Tubal-cain, who is the father of metal tools (Gen 4:19-22). Lamech tragically follows the line of Cain with another murder and expresses a curse of massive proportions ("seventy-sevenfold"; Gen 4:24). Some scholars connect Cain to the Kenites (e.g., Gen 15:19; Num 10:29-32; Judg 1:16; 1 Chron 2:55) and see here an etiological tale of their origins.

As Solomon was the child of an illicit union and brought forth many good things for Israel, so also Cain's line bears some good fruit. The line of Cain is, however, not the entire story: Adam and Eve have another son, Seth, who replaces Abel and carries on the line of the one who was to stomp on the serpent's head (Gen 4:25-26).

See also ABEL; ADAM; EVE; SETH.

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S. McKnight

CALEB

The name Caleb derives from Hebrew *keleb* ("dog"), thought to designate courage or tenacity. A common name in Ugaritic, Old South Arabic and Akkadian, this name in the Bible designates two or perhaps three individuals. The first was son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite (1 Chron 4:15). A second was son of Hezron and brother of Jerahmeel (1 Chron 2:9, 18-19). The third likewise was brother to Jerahmeel and may therefore be the same as the second. However, the third's list of wife, concubines and sons does not match the second's (1 Chron 2:42, 46, 48-49). To confuse matters further, both the first and third Calebs had daughters named Acsah. Comments below will concentrate on the first Caleb, son of Jephunneh, contemporary of Joshua.

1. Biblical Evidence
2. Development in Interpretation
3. Implications

1. Biblical Evidence.

Caleb is known for his conduct on three occasions. The first occurred during Israel's initial attempt to enter Canaan. The second took place forty-five years later as *Joshua apportioned land in the hill country of Judah. A third incident speaks to his relationship with his children. Ben Sira recalls each of these three as he lauds this courageous member of the *exodus community (Sir 46:7-10).

1.1. Reconnaissance of Canaan (Numbers 13—14). Upon departing from Sinai, Israel completed an eleven-day journey to reach Kadesh-barnea in the region south of Canaan (Deut 1:2). At God's direction *Moses dispatched a reconnaissance team (Num 13). The twelve-member group comprised one individual from each tribe (excepting Levi). As J. A. Beck observes, they were described in terms of their level of influence in the community (*'ănāšim ro'šê,* "leading men" of the children of Israel) rather than their prowess as military scouts (*měraggĕlim,* "scouts"; Beck, 272). Caleb, son of Jephunneh, represented *Judah. He was forty years old at that time (Josh 14:7). After a survey lasting forty

days, they reported to Moses regarding Canaan's military and *agricultural assets.

The report was divided. Ten advised aborting the mission. Evidently a groundswell of dismay arose at this point, and Caleb is recorded as taking the lead, "hushing" the people before presenting a minority report. He urged Israel to press the attack (Num 13:30). The majority voice swayed the people, fomenting another in the series of rebellions assailing Moses (Num 14:4, 10). As the scene unfolds Joshua is named with Caleb, donning garments of mourning and pleading with the people not to lose sight of their decisive asset, God's presence and power to overwhelm their adversaries and lead them into the land.

The people refused still and would have perished at once, but for Moses' intercession (Num 14:13-19). As it was, the ten disparaging spies perished promptly. The balance of the reluctant population (age twenty and above) died gradually during the ensuing forty years. Of that generation, Caleb and Joshua alone survived to enter Canaan (Num 14:30).

1.2. Allocation of Canaan (Joshua 14). A second Caleb episode unfolded forty-five years later (Josh 14:10). At age eighty-five, Caleb now held a position of undisputed honor. He was the first to obtain land-allocation among Israelites west of the Jordan River (Josh 14:6-15). Recalling the rejected reconnaissance report, he affirmed that he was as eager at age eighty-five as before to confront the dreaded Anakites who had so intimidated his spy comrades. Joshua accordingly awarded to Caleb the hill country of Hebron (southwest of future Jerusalem).

1.3. Father's Response to Daughter's Request (Joshua 15:13-19; Judges 1:11-15). As incentive for conquest of Kiriath-sepher in the hill country, Caleb promised the hand of his daughter Acsah to any victorious suitor. Othniel was successful and became Caleb's son-in-law. Thereupon Acsah requested from her father an additional allotment of springs to accompany the Negev land grant. Caleb generously assigned the new couple both upper and lower springs.

2. Development in Interpretation.

J. W. Flanagan studies the references to Caleb in Numbers, Joshua, Judges and 1 Chronicles, and concludes that different biblical authors employed the story of Caleb for varying ends. He infers that what was initially a spy story was later utilized to validate Judah's prominence and David's choice of Hebron as a center of operations. Since Judah, led by descendants of the Davidic monarchy, eventually eclipsed Ephraim and the northern kingdom, such stories may have had the effect of strengthening the southern kingdom's sense of prominence (similarly North, 171).

3. Implications.

Worthy of note is a particular commendation used to describe Caleb's spiritual integrity: "He went after God fully." Of the eight times this expression appears in the Hebrew Bible, six refer to Caleb. Three times none other than God himself is the spokesperson commending Caleb (Num 14:24; 32:12; Deut 1:36). Once Joshua shares the honor with Caleb (Num 32:12). It is this trait that set him apart from faithless compatriots (Num 32:11).

See also JOSHUA.

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CALENDAR. *See* AGRICULTURE; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

CALF, GOLDEN. *See* GOLDEN CALF.

CAMELS. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM; TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION; ZOOLOGY.

CAMP. *See* CITY, TOWN, CAMP.

CANAAN. *See* BORDERS; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE; NATIONS OF CANAAN.

CANAANITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

CASUISTIC LAW. *See* DECALOGUE; FORM CRITICISM; LAW.

CATTLE. *See* AGRICULTURE.

CENSUS. *See* NUMBERS, BOOK OF.

CHAOS. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION.

CHARACTER FORMATION. *See* ETHICS.

CHERUBIM

Cherubim are creatures associated with the presence of God. They guard the way to the tree of life in the garden of *Eden and are part of God's throne when God's presence is stationary, as in the *tabernacle. In the tabernacle cherubim figures were fashioned as part of the lid of the ark of the covenant and woven into the curtains forming the tabernacle's outer walls. While cherubim were most likely depicted as composite creatures having human faces, bodies of quadrupeds and wings, we cannot be certain that this is how cherubim were represented on the ark or in the tabernacle's curtains.

1. Etymology
2. Cherubim in the Pentateuch
3. Cherubim and the Presence of God
4. The Representation of the Cherubim

1. Etymology.

Cherub (plural, *cherubim*) is usually said to derive from the Akkadian *karābu* meaning "bless, praise." It is suggested that the word *cherub* signifies angelic creatures who praise God. However, the cherubim are never depicted as praising God (nor are they explicitly identified as angels), so this proposed etymology is extremely doubtful.

2. Cherubim in the Pentateuch.

Cherubim are mentioned in two contexts in the Pentateuch: as guardians to the entrance to the garden of Eden after *Adam and *Eve are expelled and as figures incorporated into the lid of the ark of the covenant. Both have parallels in passages outside the Pentateuch.

2.1. Cherubim in the Garden of Eden. Cherubim are first mentioned in the garden of Eden when God expelled Adam and Eve (Gen 3:23-24). The cherubim and a "flame of a sword that turned in every direction" are placed east of the garden to guard the way of the tree of life. Little is said of the cherubim here. D. N. Freedman and M. P. O'Connor (311) believe the cherubim were among the garden's original inhabitants, but Genesis does not contain any information that would support this conclusion. However, it appears that two cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:24 specifically states that *the* cherubim guard the way. The definite article probably refers to a specific pair of cherubim, as on the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18-20; 37:7-9) or in the temple's holy place (1 Kings 6:23-38; 8:6-7; note that Ex 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35 mention multiple cherubim figures that were woven into the curtains of the tabernacle but does not use the article).

Ezekiel 28:11-16 also associates a cherub with Eden. Here the king of Tyre is pictured as a cherub who had access to God's presence in the garden. However, because of his sin, the king is banished from God's presence, just as Adam and Eve were. The irony of the guardian to the garden being banished can be seen only by comparison to Genesis.

2.2. Cherubim on the Lid of the Ark of the Covenant. The golden lid of the ark of the covenant was fashioned with two cherubim facing one another as part of the lid on both of its ends (Ex 25:18-20). Their wings were to be stretched out toward the center of the ark, overshadowing it. Their faces turned downward toward the lid itself, probably to avoid facing God, who was present above them (Ex 25:22). In this worshipful pose the cherubim provided a place above which God would be present to speak with Moses (Ex 25:22).

2.2.1. The Ark and Its Lid Distinguished. Critical scholars have often attempted to make a distinction between the ark and its lid, which they attribute to different compositional sources (Haran, 32-33; Clements, 30-31). The ark, they note, is never called God's throne and is depicted as a box in which a sacred object is stored. However, the lid serves as God's throne (as in the phrase "the God who is enthroned above the cherubim," 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1; Is 37:16). In addition, they note that Deuteronomy never mentions the ark's lid or the cherubim, asserting that D knew nothing about the ark as God's throne. Instead, they point to the two cherubim that Solomon made for the temple, which also overshadowed the ark, as a parallel but separate tradition (1 Kings 6:23-28; 8:6-7; 2 Chron 3:10-13; 5:7-8).

2.2.2. The Ark and Its Lid as God's Throne and Footstool. Nevertheless, the ark and its lid should not be separated. Just as the lid is God's throne, the ark is his footstool (1 Chron 28:2; Ps 99:5-6; 132:7-9; Cassuto, 330-31). In the ancient Near East it was customary to place the copy of a god's covenant in the footstool of the throne of his idol (Cassuto, 331). The ark and its lid parallel this in Israel, although there was no image for Israel's God. Moreover, Deuteronomy had no need to mention the lid of the ark. Most of its references

to the ark are to the ark as a whole (including its lid) as it was carried by the Levites (Deut 10:8; 31:9, 25). Twice we are told that Moses placed the tablets of the law in the ark (Deut 10:3, 5). Once we are told that Moses put the scroll of the law beside the ark. In none of these cases was it necessary to mention or describe the ark's lid.

2.3. Cherubim on the Curtains of the Tabernacle. In addition to the cherubim on the lid of the ark, Exodus tells us that figures of cherubim were woven into the design of the curtains made out of (white) linen and blue, purple and scarlet threads (Ex 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35). These curtains would form the outer walls of the tabernacle, making cherubim visible to the priests no matter where in the tabernacle they would be. In a similar way, cherubim were later carved into the walls, doors to the holy place and doors of the temple built by Solomon and the stands used in the temple (1 Kings 6:29, 32, 35; 7:29, 36), and they also adorn the walls and doors of the temple in Ezekiel's vision of a new temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 41:18, 20, 25).

3. Cherubim and the Presence of God.

It would appear that the cherubim were associated with God's presence. They not only formed his throne above the ark but also adorned the tabernacle and temple where he dwelt among the Israelites. This is true also of the presence of God outside the Pentateuch. They are described in detail in Ezekiel's visions of God (Ezek 1) and are mentioned in his vision of the Jerusalem temple (Ezek 9—11). When God traveled, the cherubim formed his chariot (Ps 18:10). Even the cherubim in Solomon's temple are said to be God's chariot (1 Chron 28:18). It would appear, then, that the cherubim indicated the presence of God, especially God as king on his throne or traveling in his chariot. This explains why they were appointed guardians to the tree of life. If humans ate of that tree, they would live forever (Gen 3:22). The cherubim were stationed to prevent sinful humans from eating from the tree and living forever in God's holy presence. Even the entrance to the garden (and God's presence) was on the east side, just as the entrance to God's presence in the tabernacle (and later the temple) was on the east side.

4. The Representation of the Cherubim.

What was the form of the cherubim on the lid of the ark or in the curtains of the temple? It is often assumed that the cherubim were pictured as composite creatures having human faces, bodies of quadrupeds and wings. E. Borowski even argues that a cherub must have had the forepart of the body of a cat and the hindquarters of the body of an ox (Borowski, 38), though he offers no biblical evidence for this. Given the widespread use of composite creatures with wings in the ancient Near East, the most likely form they took on the ark and in the curtains of the tabernacle was some type of composite creature. However, the biblical descriptions are not specific. Exodus only describes them as having faces (presumably human) and wings. (The visions of Ezekiel, with their enigmatic description of cherubim, can hardly be used to reconstruct how cherubim in the tabernacle were depicted.) Whether these were winged humans or winged composite creatures of some sort cannot be determined with certainty.

See also EDEN, GARDEN OF; TABERNACLE.

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CHIEF PRIEST. *See* AARON; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD.

CHIEFDOM. *See* SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

CHILDREN. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; ORPHAN.

CHOSEN PLACE. *See* DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

CHRISTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS; MESSIAH.

CHRONOLOGY

Chronology, in its most fundamental sense, is the science that deals with the measurement of time and that assigns to events their proper

dates. The term *chronology* may refer also to a table or list of events and their dates in the order of their occurrence. The implications of chronology for the study and accurate understanding of history are self-evident, for history moves along a continuum of time that must be measured by and properly interpreted according to the order of events determined by chronological calculations. The Bible, whose narrative is patently historical, not surprisingly addresses the matter of chronology throughout. The Pentateuch in particular, as the fountainhead of that historical flow, is replete with chronological information necessary to the dating of events within its historical setting and to their connections with the larger ancient Near Eastern world. The task of reconstructing the chronology of the OT and thus the order and dates of events dependent upon it is a complicated one, however, because of conflicting internal traditions, imprecise external benchmarks and the various traditio-historical approaches taken to such basic issues as the very reliability of the biblical data.

1. Chronology and History
2. Old Testament Chronological Traditions
3. The Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Chronologies
4. Chronology and the Genealogies
5. The Interpretation of Old Testament Chronological Data
6. A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Pentateuch
7. Conclusion

1. Chronology and History.

Chronology is to history what the skeleton is to the human body. This common analogy—even with its deficiencies—is adequate to clarify the connection between the structure, dates and sequence of past occurrences (chronology) and the narrative that interprets and "fleshes" them out (history). Without chronological benchmarks history would be reduced to a collection of incoherent episodes, the cause-and-effect and true significance of which would, at worst, be irrecoverable and, at best, be in danger of serious misunderstanding. "Facts" of history without proper integration to one another are like archaeological artifacts collected randomly in museum showcases with no attention to provenience or cultural sequence. They may be interesting in themselves, even in isolation from context, but their value in reconstructing the past is minimal at best. Unless one can know, for example, the chronological priority of Abraham to Moses and the temporal distance between them, one can never hope to appreciate fully such matters as the dependence of the Sinaitic covenant on the patriarchal promises and the impact of the hundreds of years of history between them, a span of time that resulted in circumstances and conditions vastly different from those of the patriarchal era. Until a chronological road map is in place, the historical journey will be uncertain, leading perhaps to a quite unforeseen and undesired destination.

2. Old Testament Chronological Traditions.

2.1. The Masoretic Text. The Masoretic tradition provides an unbroken chronological structure from at least the birth date of Abraham to the end of the OT period. Those who maintain that the genealogies of Genesis are, in effect, chronological tables are able also to assert dates for pre-Abrahamic persons and events, even the creation itself (see 4 below). Apart from this possible exception, neither the Masoretic Text (MT) nor any other witnesses contain chronological tables or even lists, so the events of history must be dated according to incidental chronological notations. Fortunately, these are numerous enough and so strategically located as to make possible an unbroken line of datable events that secure a coherent and internally consistent chronological framework. The Masoretic data result in such fixed points in the Pentateuch as the birth of Abraham in 2166 B.C. and the death of Moses in 1406. (The rationale for these dates and others is forthcoming; see 3 below.)

2.2. The Septuagint (LXX) and Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). The Old Greek and Samaritan versions of the OT differ considerably from the MT in the genealogical lists of Genesis 5:3-32 and 11:10-32 (see table 1). Otherwise, the LXX (and SP) is generally in line with the MT, the most notable exception perhaps being the statement as to the length of Israel's Egyptian sojourn (Ex 12:40-41). Both traditions agree that the exodus occurred after a period of 430 years, but the LXX and SP include within this time frame the Egyptian period and the preceding years of the patriarchs in Canaan ("in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt"). The apostle Paul appears to support this understanding (Gal 3:16-17), though it is also possible to read Paul more in line with MT tradition. The reason for this differ-

	Age at the Birth of the First Son			Age at Death		
Name	MT	LXX	SP	MT	LXX	SP
Adam	130	230	130	930	930	930
Seth	105	205	105	912	912	912
Enosh	90	190	90	905	905	905
Kenan	70	170	70	910	910	910
Mahalalel	65	165	65	895	895	895
Jared	162	162	62	962	962	847
Enoch	65	165	65	365	365	365
Methuselah	187	187	67	969	969	720
Lamech	182	188	53	777	753	653
Noah	500	500	500	950	950	950
Totals	1556	2162	1207	—	—	—
Shem	100	100	100	600	600	600
Arpachshad	35	135	135	438	565	438
Kenan	—	(130)	—	—	—	—
Shelah	30	130	130	433	460	433
Eber	34	134	134	464	504	404
Peleg	30	130	130	239	339	239
Reu	32	132	132	239	339	239
Serug	30	130	130	230	330	230
Nahor	29	79	79	148	158	148
Terah	70	70	70	205	205	145
Totals	390	1040 (1170)	1040	—	—	—
Grand Totals	1946	3202 (3332)	2247	—	—	—

Table 1: The Genesis Genealogies: Comparisons of the Versions

ence is quite clear: the LXX translators felt the need to explain how the genealogy of Moses (only three members inclusive) could occupy 430 years. They therefore modified the reading of MT to make this less problematic.

This example provides prima facie evidence for the priority of the MT and the tendency of the LXX (and SP as well) to resolve real or imagined chronological difficulties in the MT. Other instances where such changes occur in the Pentateuch bear out this contention. Genesis 2:2 suggests in the MT that God finished his work of *creation on the seventh day, whereas the LXX, SP and Peshitta read "sixth." This is to avoid the apparent contradiction with the latter half of the verse, which says that "he rested on the seventh day" from his labors. The *flood narrative also attests "adjustment" designed to resolve chronological difficulties. The MT seems to describe a period of about fifty-four days between the time the tops of the mountains were visible (Gen 8:5; cf. 8:6, 10, 12) and the dry land appeared (Gen 8:13), when, in fact, three months had elapsed (Gen 8:5; cf. 8:13). Some early Greek traditions alleviate the problem by having the mountains appear on the first day of the eleventh month

(Gen 8:5). A similar resort occurs with reference to the age of *Shem when his son Arpachshad was born. Genesis 5:32 states that *Noah was five hundred years old when his three sons were born, meaning, of course, when his eldest was born. The flood came exactly one hundred years later (Gen 7:6), and two years after that Shem fathered Arpachshad (Gen 11:10), making Shem 102 years old at the time. Having concluded (erroneously, it seems) that MT intended to denote Shem as Noah's firstborn son, the LXX altered the text of Genesis 10:21 to make it clear that Japheth was the eldest ("Japheth the elder brother" for the MT "the elder brother of Japheth"). This permitted a resolution of the problem of Shem's age at the time of the flood. Once these versional tendencies are understood to be efforts at reconciling perceived chronological difficulties in the MT, their status as independent witnesses to chronological data is greatly diminished if not altogether eliminated.

These comparatively minor deviations aside, one is left with the question as to why the LXX adds hundreds of years to the span of time from creation to Abraham, frequently by lengthening the ages of the patriarchs by exactly one hundred years each. The most satisfying solution is the perceived need by the Hellenistic Jewish community to make a case for its own longevity, one in fact antedating Egypt and the other great nations that boasted of their magnificent and ancient history. By stretching back five thousand years or so the Jews could lay claim to a civilization far in advance of even mighty Egypt!

3. The Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Chronologies.

Attempts to establish direct and specific historical linkages between preconquest Israel and its surrounding world have proved so far to be most elusive. The term *Hebrew* has yet to be identified outside the Bible, and a people called *Israel* are not attested to earlier than the time of King Merneptah of Egypt's Nineteenth Dynasty (c. 1220 B.C.), well after the era covered by the pentateuchal narratives. A chronology of Israel for this early period must be based, then, on internal evidence, which itself is derived from later, extrabiblical sources.

3.1. Mesopotamia. The starting point from the Mesopotamian side is the information gleaned from such texts as Assyrian and Babylonian king lists, eponym and other lists of years, chronicles and related royal inscriptions. The most famous and important because of its bearing on OT chronology is the so-called Assyrian Eponym Canon, a collection covering the period 910-612 B.C. It contains the name of the *limu* (public official) or king after whom each year is named and at least one significant event that occurred that year. As a whole entity the canon can be anchored to a fixed point in time because of the phenomenon of an eclipse of the sun that occurred "in the eponymate of Bur-sagale, of Guzan," specifically in the month Siwan. Astronomical calculation has determined that this took place on June 15/16, 763 B.C. Comparison with events from Babylonian and Greek historical accounts bears out the accuracy of this computation (Thiele, 43-46).

All that remains to be done is to count the years before and after 763 to learn the remaining dates of the canon. Those years, with their brief notes of historical import, can then be compared with Assyrian royal inscriptions that provide full narrative accounts of the events only hinted at in the eponym lists. Two of these years are particularly relevant to OT chronology: the ninetieth year before Bur-sagale (853) and the seventy-eighth (841). In the former, named after a certain Dayan-Assur, King Shalmaneser III undertook a campaign to the west, details of which are recounted in the Monolith Inscription. Among enemies he encountered and claimed to have conquered at a place called Qarqar was King Ahab of Israel. In the year of Adad-rimani, the eighteenth of his regency, Shalmaneser made another foray to the west, this time bringing King Jehu of Israel under his control. This campaign is spelled out in a monumental text called the Black Obelisk (III R 5, 6). The chronological significance of this set of circumstances is that the OT record separates the death of Ahab from the accession of Jehu by exactly twelve years according to the so-called nonaccession year system (1 Kings 22:51; 2 Kings 3:1), exactly the number of years indicated in the Assyrian year list. (By *nonaccession year* it is meant any portion of a year when a king began his reign, calling it his first year. The term *accession year* considers the first full year as the king's inaugural year. The accession year system would always reduce the king's rule by one year compared to the nonaccession year system.) These fixed points in Israel's chronology having been established and other principles such as ante-

dating, postdating and coregency being properly employed, it is possible to fix dates back to the division of the monarchy (931) and even beyond (see 6 below).

3.2. Egypt. The Egyptian priest and historian Manetho searched the ancient records of his nation at the behest of King Ptolemy II (c. 250 B.C.) and on their basis reconstructed the chronology and history of Egypt from about 3000 B.C. to his own time. He most likely made use of such texts as the Palermo Stone; the various tables of rulers found at Karnak, Abydos and Saqqara; and the Turin Papyrus. He would surely have been aware of the works of foreign historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides and Berossus as well, the latter being his Babylonian contemporary. Josephus and Eusebius both show not only an awareness of Manetho but heavy dependence on his work.

The Egyptian chronology alone does little to inform that of early Israel, however, because of the lack of any reference to Israel in preconquest texts. It is only when Egyptian historical events intersect with those of Mesopotamia or other areas that in turn have a bearing on Israel that an Egypt-Israel chronological connection can be made.

4. Chronology and the Genealogies.

Students of the OT have long attempted to construct chronologies on the basis of the genealogies of Genesis (paralleled for the most part in 1 Chron 1:1-33 as well). This began as long ago as pre-Christian times with the work of such Jewish scholars as Demetrius and Eupolemus (*see DNTB,* Jewish Literature: Historians and Poets). Jewish literary works especially devoted to the matter include *Jubilees,* the *Genesis Apocryphon* and, of course, the writings of Josephus, who lived in the first Christian century. Among early Christians who studied the matter of the genealogies as chronology were Julius Africanus, Eusebius and Jerome; much later and better known is Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656).

4.1. Jewish Chronologists. Demetrius (c. 200 B.C.), an Alexandrian historian, was familiar with the LXX and used it as the basis of his biblical chronology. As a result, he placed *Abraham's birth 3,334 years from *Adam's creation. Translated into the modern calendar, his date for the flood was 3043 B.C., Abraham's birth 1973, and the exodus 1468. Eupolemus (c. 160 B.C.), a Palestinian Jew, utilized the Hebrew text as well as the LXX and came to the conclusion that creation occurred in 5307 B.C. (in modern terms again), the flood in 4037, Abraham's birth in 3243, and the exodus in 2738. Demetrius and Eupolemus agree on a creation date, but their later chronologies differ not only because they use different biblical texts but because Demetrius worked from his own time back and not just from creation forward. His conclusions are obviously more in line with modern reconstructions.

The book of *Jubilees* (c. 150 B.C.; *see DNTB,* Jubilees) traces Israel's history from creation to the conquest, dividing this expanse into fifty Jubilee periods of forty-nine years each. According to this scheme Abraham was born in A.M. (*anno mundi,* "in the year of the world [creation]") 1876, descended to Egypt in 1956 and died in 2051. Such a system artificially imposed upon the biblical data was bound to be at variance with the usual ways of interpreting the genealogical tables. The *Genesis Apocryphon* (c. B.C.-A.D. transition; *see DNTB,* Genesis Apocryphon [1QapGen]), a Qumran text, shows dependence on *Jubilees* and like it focuses on the life and years of Abraham. Apart from some incidental references to events of that period, the book has little to add to an overall chronological reconstruction of the history of OT times.

Josephus (A.D. 37/38-c. 100) attempted to date creation by the use of the OT genealogical tables as well as by information gained from Berossus's *Babylonica* and the histories of Egypt by Hecataeus and Manetho. His extant writings yield no more precision than the declaration that "those antiquities contain the history of five thousand years, and are taken out of our sacred books" (*Ag. Ap.* 1.1 §1, referring to his history titled *Jewish Antiquities).*

The final Jewish source is the *Seder ʿOlam Rabbah* (c. A.D. 150), which to the present day provides the basis (along with the later *Seder ʿOlam Zutta)* for the modern Jewish calendar. Taking Adam's creation as year zero, it adds up the years of succeeding patriarchs from that point. Seth, for example, was born in Adam's 130th year and thus 130 years from creation. Noah's date of birth by this method was A.M. 1056. Using data other than genealogical tables, *Seder ʿOlam Rabbah* reaches such dates as 2448 for the exodus, 2928 for the founding of Solomon's temple and 3338 for the destruction of that temple by the Babylonians. The begin-

ning of the Christian era is 3759-3760 by this system. In terms of the modern (Gregorian) calendar, the date of creation is 3761 B.C., the flood 2104, the exodus 1312, the foundation of Solomon's temple 832, the destruction of that temple 422 and the dedication of the Second Temple 352. It is well known, of course, that the dates from the First Temple on down are actually much earlier than those suggested by *Seder ʿOlam Rabbah.*

4.2. Christian Chronologists. The two most important early Christian chronologists were Julius Africanus (A.D. 170-240) and Eusebius (c. 263-339). Africanus followed the model of the *Seder ʿOlam Rabbah* but used the LXX as the basis for the patriarchal era. He therefore dated the flood at A.A. 2262 *(anno Adami),* Abraham's arrival in Canaan at 3277 and Joseph's death at 3563. His exodus date was 3707. For the rest of the OT Africanus depended on dates associated with the Greek Olympiad, which commenced in 776 B.C. Of particular importance was the determination of the year of the accession of Cyrus as king of Persia (560 B.C.). Africanus could then work backward and forward from that date with internal OT data.

Eusebius acknowledged his indebtedness to Africanus in reconstructing a chronology from the first Olympiad back to the time of Abraham. He was aware of the conflicting textual traditions for the early periods, particularly in the Genesis genealogies, so he opted for the LXX as his principal authority. This yielded for him a date of 2016 B.C. for Abraham's birth, 1511 for the exodus and 1032 for the foundation of Solomon's temple. The period between the exodus and the temple construction was 479 years, very close to the 480 years mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1. In fact, Eusebius reaches a total of 480 in various other parts of his chronographies.

James Ussher, the archbishop of Armagh (Ireland), was an erudite classicist and OT scholar who devoted a great deal of effort to the establishment of a biblical chronology. Thoroughly familiar with the major textual versions, Ussher opted almost always for the MT as his standard. At the same time, he was aware of various Jewish and Christian traditions that periodized biblical history in one-thousand year spans and to some extent was influenced by them. He was especially struck by the studies that dated creation four thousand years before Christ, a conclusion he reached independent of these others. His famous date of exactly 4004 B.C. for creation resulted from the fact well known in his day that Jesus was actually born four years prior to the beginning of the Christian era. Though lampooned by many modern scholars for his naiveté in simply "adding up" the figures of the Genesis genealogies, Ussher's work was based on data far broader than that. In many ways his insights have never been improved upon, especially for the divided monarchy period and later.

This brief account of the history of chronography, relative especially to the genealogical tables, makes clear that most of the ancients took the genealogies prima facie as chronological records by intent and function. The variation in their computations came about not so much because they differed in their view of these tables as historical records but because of the particular text they used as a standard, namely, the MT or LXX. Post-Enlightenment scholarship, on the other hand, has largely abandoned any notion that the genealogies (or other pentateuchal chronological data for that matter) bear any authentic witness to real time and dates. This is informed first of all by evolutionary theories requiring millions of years from the initial emergence of *Homo sapiens.* Archaeological research also has reached a virtual consensus that urban life existed in the world of West Asia as early as nine thousand years ago, long before the date of creation itself according to the Genesis genealogy tables. Finally, studies of genealogical texts and traditions from ancient as well as modern cultures have led some scholars to propose that, whatever significance such accounts might have, they have little or no chronological purpose. It is suggested, rather, that they served political and religious purposes. While this may be somewhat overstated in terms of the Genesis genealogies, these biblical records do indeed appear to reflect something other than a strict or "closed" chronological account.

5. The Interpretation of Old Testament Chronological Data.

5.1. The Genealogies: Open or Closed? The apparently stylized form of biblical genealogical tables suggests the possibility of their being somewhat artificial in terms of chronological precision. For example, there are ten generations from Adam through Noah (Gen 5:3-29)

	Born	Died	Notes of Interest
Abraham	2166	1991	
Terah	2296	2091	
Nahor	2325	2177	
Serug	2355	2125	contemporary of Abraham
Reu	2387	2148	contemporary of Abraham
Peleg	2417	2178	
Eber	2451	1987	outlived Abraham
Shelah	2481	2048	contemporary of Abraham
Arpachshad	2516	2078	contemporary of Abraham
Shem	2616	2016	contemporary of Abraham
Noah	3116	2166	died in year of Abraham's birth
			FLOOD (2516)
Lamech	3298	2521	
Methuselah	3485	2516	died in year of flood
Enoch	3550	3185	translated to heaven
Jared	3712	2750	
Mahalalel	3777	2882	
Kenan	3847	2937	
Enosh	3939	3034	
Seth	4044	3132	
Adam	4174	3244	

Table 2: The Dates of the Patriarchs: Gregorian Calendar

and ten more from Shem through Abraham (Gen 11:10-26). This is reminiscent of the three segments of fourteen generations each that make up the genealogy of Jesus as recorded by Matthew (Mt 1:1-17). The fact that the latter omits names known from the OT proves that Matthew's intention is not to provide a full ancestry (Mt 1:8, 11; see commentaries) but only enough names to achieve the symmetry.

The probability is that there are gaps of indeterminate length between some of the names in the Genesis *genealogies. This appears likely for several reasons: (1) The antiquity of humankind—unless one discounts scientific anthropology altogether, even most conservative Bible students are persuaded that humans appeared on the scene thousands of years before the earliest date allowed by a "closed" chronology (c. 5000 B.C.). (2) Archaeological evidence—the emergence of urban civilization as early as 7000 B.C., a view held across nearly the whole spectrum of biblical scholarship, also necessitates something other than a closed chronology. (3) Internal difficulties—even if the two previous views are rejected on ideological, theological or scientific bases, there remain difficulties in the traditional interpretation of the genealogies (see table 2). For example, strict adherence to the data of the postflood genealogy (Gen 11) reveals that Shem was 450 years old at the time of Abraham's birth and 525 when Abraham moved to Canaan and that he died (at 600 years of age) only twenty-five years before Abraham did. Eber, the patronym of the Hebrew people, lived 464 years and would actually have survived Abraham by four years! Why God would have called Abram from paganism when Shem, a survivor of the flood, was living and available is puzzling, as is the fact that

Abraham is considered to be an exceptionally old man at 175 (Gen 25:7-8) when two of his contemporaries died in those days at 600 and 464 years of age respectively! The impression clearly is that both Shem and Eber long antedated Abraham.

5.2. The Genealogies: Strict or Formulaic? Akin to the previous issue but in a much shorter form are examples of genealogies that appear at first blush to pose serious chronological difficulties but that must be understood as reflecting some kind of literary and genealogical convention. This is most apparent in the brief ancestry of *Moses (Ex 6:16-20), which includes only four generations (counting Moses) and spans the period of the Egyptian sojourn, a period of 430 years (or 215 at least, LXX). The figures provided in the passage (Levi, 137 years; Kohath, 133; Amram, 137) add up to 407 years. When the age of Moses at the exodus is added (80) and the age of *Levi when he entered Egypt is subtracted (54), the result is 433 years, very close to the 430 noted in Exodus 12:40. The figures of the genealogy appear, then, to be selective and to comport with the 430-year sojourn time span. Support for something of the kind may be found in the apparently full genealogy of *Joshua, which embraces the same period (1 Chron 7:22-27). While there are difficulties in the text, there appear to be at least ten generations between Ephraim and Joshua, as opposed to only four in the Moses genealogy of Exodus 6. The case for the latter being highly selective (tribe, clan, family, individual?) seems strong.

6. A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Pentateuch.

The effort to provide dates for OT events requires one to go from the known to the unknown, from those dates that are "fixed" to those that are related to and dependent upon them. While some attention has been paid to such benchmark starting points (see 3 above), the focus of this section must be on pentateuchal dates derivative from that information. Moreover, attention will be limited to the text's own data and not to historical-critical challenges to the tradition.

The key datum is the statement in 1 Kings 6:1 that Solomon laid the temple foundation in the 480th year after the exodus. This points to 1447/1446 B.C. as the date of that central event, a date that finds incidental support in Jephthah's reminder to the king of Ammon that Israel had lived in the Transjordan for three hundred years before that present time (c. 1100 B.C.; Judg 11:26). The preceding era—that of Israel's sojourn in Egypt—is also clearly demarcated chronologically. The record takes pains, in fact, to underscore that it lasted exactly 430 years (Ex 12:40-41). The *terminus a quo* was, of course, Jacob's descent to Egypt, to be dated, then, in 1876 B.C. This is in line with the more general promise to Abraham that his descendants would endure suffering in a foreign land for four hundred years (Gen 15:13; cf. Gal 3:17) and then, in the fourth generation, be delivered and returned to Canaan (Gen 15:16). The "four generations" is reminiscent of the four associated with Moses' lineage in Exodus 6.

The same scrupulous attention to detail makes it possible to reconstruct the chronology associated with the patriarchs to at least the birth date of Abraham. In what appears to be merely an off-the-cuff response, Jacob informed Pharaoh upon his arrival in Egypt that he was "only" 130 years old (Gen 47:9). This places his birth date at 2006 B.C. Isaac was sixty when he fathered Jacob (Gen 25:26) and, of course, Abraham was one hundred when Isaac was born (Gen 21:5). Abraham, then, was born in 2166 B.C.

One can, of course, pursue this approach at least one generation earlier—to the birth date of Abraham's father Terah—who, it seems, was 130 years old when Abraham was born (Gen 11:26, 32; 12:4; cf. Acts 7:4). Terah thus goes back to 2296 B.C. However, in light of issues raised above with regard to the pre-Abrahamic genealogical lists, it seems unproductive to cover the ground already thoroughly covered by both ancient and modern chronographers (see table 1). What remains is a reconstruction of the dates of events based on these that are clear in the text but that require a close reading of more subtle chronological hints in the narratives. For convenience and brevity, these appear in table 3.

7. Conclusion.

The lack of clear and unambiguous connections between preconquest Israel and the surrounding ancient Near Eastern world makes it necessary for the chronology of the Pentateuch to rest exclusively on internal evidence, that is, on the data of the OT alone. These data, to be sure, originate in the period of the divided monar-

Date	Event	Reference
2296	Birth of Terah	Gen 11:24
2166	Birth of Abram	Gen 11:27, 32; 12:4
2091	Abram's departure from Haran	Gen 12:4
2081	Abram's marriage to Hagar	Gen 16:3
2080	Birth of Ishmael	Gen 16:16
2067	Reaffirmation of covenant	Gen 17:1
2067-2066	Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	Gen 19:24
2066	Birth of Isaaac	Gen 21:2; cf. 21:5
2029	Death of Sarah	Gen 23:2; cf. 17:17
2026	Marriage of Isaac	Gen 25:20
2006	Birth of Jacob and Esau	Gen 25:26
1991	Death of Abraham	Gen 25:7
1966	Marriage of Esau	Gen 26:34
1943	Death of Ishmael	Gen 25:17
1930	Jacob's journey to Haran	Gen 28:2
1923	Jacob's marriages	Gen 29:23, 28
1918	Birth of Judah	Gen 29:35
1916	End of Jacob's fourteen-year labor for his wives	Gen 29:30
1916	Birth of Joseph	Gen 30:23
1910	End of Jacob's stay with Laban	Gen 31:41
1910	Jacob's arrival at Shechem	Gen 33:18
1902	Rape of Dinah	Gen 34:1-2
1900	Marriage of Judah	Gen 38:1-2
1899	Selling of Joseph	Gen 37:2, 27
1888	Joseph imprisoned	Gen 39:20; cf. 41:1
1886	Joseph released	Gen 41:1, 46
1886	Death of Isaac	Gen 35:28
1879	Beginning of famine	Gen 41:54
1878	Brothers' first visit to Egypt	Gen 42:1-2
1877	Judah's incest with Tamar	Gen 38:18
1877	Brothers' second visit to Egypt	Gen 43:1; 45:6, 11
1876	Jacob's descent to Egypt	Gen 46:6; cf. 47:9
1859	Death of Jacob	Gen 47:28
1806	Death of Joseph	Gen 50:22

Table 3: Patriarchal Chronological Data

chy—and in association with extrabiblical information—but for the early period they depend on incidental or deliberate (genealogical) interconnections in the pentateuchal narratives themselves. One is free, of course, to reject the witness of the narratives, but to do so is to eliminate the only basis upon which a chronology of that distant era can be reconstructed. However the matter is viewed by moderns, the ancient Israelite historians and tradents were concerned to show that their history was factual and could be traced step by step back to creation itself.

See also EXODUS, DATE OF; HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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CIRCUMCISION

Male circumcision, the surgical removal of the prepuce (i.e., foreskin), is a rite of great antiquity, still practiced by several people-groups in the world today. Its function within the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants made it of particular religious significance for ancient Israel as the badge of *covenant identity, since circumcision linked future generations to the *promises Yahweh had made to the patriarchs.

Even in the ancient world, circumcision was not an exclusively Israelite practice. Rather, the rite was common among most of those with whom Israel had direct contact (the Shechemites, Philistines, Babylonians and Greeks are notable exceptions), practiced in one form or another from at least the third millennium B.C. (cf. Sasson, 473-76). In these other ancient Near Eastern cultures, circumcision seems to have been chiefly a marriage or fertility rite, carried out either at puberty or as part of the prenuptial ceremony. To what extent such ideas are reflected in ancient Israelite practice is debatable. While some texts (e.g. Gen 34; Ex 4:25) indicate that such connotations were not altogether foreign, these texts may be explained otherwise (see below).

Within the Pentateuch, the origins, practice and significance of this rite in ancient Israel are delineated. Tracing circumcision's origins back to *Abraham, the nation's progenitor, the compiler links the practice of circumcision from the outset to covenant promises made to the patriarchs and gives it a social and religious significance that distinguishes the Israelite practice from the wider ancient Near Eastern custom.

1. Origins
2. Practice
3. Significance

1. Origins.

According to the final form of the Pentateuch, the Israelite rite of circumcision was established as a covenant "sign" between God and the patriarchs (Gen 17:10-14). This key text (i.e., Gen 17) is assumed by most scholars to be late, reflecting exilic reinterpretation of an ancient custom. It is significant, however, that the existence of the tradition reflected in Genesis 17 is tacitly assumed in the three other texts (Gen 34:13-24; Ex 4:24-26; Josh 5:2-8) to which scholars have looked for the origins of this practice in Israel. Moreover, the use of flint knives in the opera-

tion (Ex 4:25; cf. Josh 5:2-3) suggests that the Israelite custom was very ancient. Since there is no indisputable alternative account of the introduction of the rite in Israel, Genesis 17 is the only passage that plainly presents itself as such. This chapter, while not accounting for the ultimate origins of circumcision, traces the origin of the practice in Israel to Abraham, defining it as the "sign of the covenant" that God made with him and his descendants. Such an explanation commends itself as being entirely plausible and should certainly not be ruled out solely on the basis of its alleged lateness. Therefore, while such a rite was not unknown earlier, its connection with the covenant promises made to Abraham give it a significance entirely distinct from anything reflected among other practitioners of circumcision in either the ancient or the modern world.

2. Practice.

One of the primary features that distinguished Israelite practice from surrounding cultures was the application of the rite to eight-day-old male infants. While circumcision was also applied to adult males (Gen 17:23-27; 34:15-24; cf. Josh 5:3-7), it is clear from Genesis 17:12; 21:4 and Leviticus 12:3 that infant circumcision was intended to be the usual and normative practice in Israelite society.

One of the most striking features is its application to foreigners and resident *aliens (cf. Gen 34:15-24; Ex 12:48). While the motives of *Jacob's sons in relation to the Shechemites were clearly deceptive, the extension of the rite to non-Israelites had been a feature from its inception. Abraham had circumcised not only himself, *Ishmael and subsequently *Isaac but also his entire household, including those "purchased from foreigners" (Gen 17:27). Therefore, the rite of circumcision in Israel was never applied exclusively to Abraham's biological descendants (i.e., it was not a sign of racial purity). Rather, it was a means through which non-Israelites could align themselves with Abraham and his "seed" and obligate themselves to the related covenant (Gen 17:9-14; cf. 18:19).

3. Significance.

Within the Pentateuch, circumcision seems to have had a threefold significance: ritual, ethical and metaphorical. While the first receives the most emphasis (both in the Pentateuch and throughout the OT), this—and the assumption of Deuteronomistic dating for the relevant texts—has unfortunately resulted in viewing the ethical dimension of this OT rite as of secondary importance. However, both aspects are inextricably linked, and the ethical is simply an extension of the metaphorical, as the following discussion will show.

3.1. Ritual. Circumcision, as is clear from Genesis 17, was mandatory for inclusion within the covenant (Gen 17:10, 14) of which this chapter speaks. Its function was apparently threefold: it was the "sign" (*'ôt*) of this particular covenant between God and the family of Abraham (Gen 17:11); it was the instrument through which the covenant was maintained from generation to generation (Gen 17:10-12); and it was the means of assimilating within the covenant those who were not related to Abraham biologically (Gen 17:12-13).

As the "sign of the covenant," circumcision seems to have served a mnemonic function, primarily, although not exclusively, for the human partners of the covenant (contra Fox, whose over-emphasis on the Godward aspect leaves unexplained the humanward ultimatum in Gen 17:14). Circumcision thus served to remind Abraham and his descendants of the covenant promises—especially the promise of "seed"—and the intrinsic obligations (i.e., the ethical requirement of Gen 17:1; cf. 18:19). However, as well as being a mnemonic for the human partners, the covenant sign may also have reminded God of his promise of an Abrahamic "seed" through whom blessing would come to all nations.

Circumcision also served to extend the covenant to future generations. By means of this rite the divine promises and human obligations were transferred to succeeding generations. Although the latter is nowhere stated explicitly in Genesis 17, it is clear from the next chapter (Gen 18:18-19) that the ethical obligations of this covenant were likewise transferred to all who accepted the sign of circumcision. Thus, circumcision was the medium through which covenant privileges and responsibilities were passed on from one generation to the next.

Thirdly, circumcision was the mechanism by which those who were not biological descendants of the patriarchs could be incorporated into the covenant community. It is clear from Genesis 17 that the covenant described there is

not to be understood in an exclusively nationalistic sense. Rather, the multitudinous expansion envisaged in Genesis 17:2 included the "nations" of which the promise spoke (Gen 17:4-6), nations that cannot be explained simply in terms of the Ishmaelites and the sons of Keturah (cf. Gen 17:16). The phenomenal growth promised to Abraham would be realized not simply by the numerical expansion of his biological descendants but, and more significantly, by other nations submitting themselves to the terms of the covenant. It is quite in keeping with this, therefore, that foreigners and resident aliens who wished to keep the Passover were first to be circumcised (Ex 12:44, 48). In other words, they had to identify themselves with the covenant community, with all that this entailed. Thus understood, the deceitful ploy of Jacob's sons in Genesis 34 is all the more repugnant. However the Shechemites understood the rite, Jacob's sons were clearly exploiting the fact that it was a prerequisite for inclusion within the covenant community.

The most extraordinary and enigmatic passage focusing on the ritual aspect of circumcision is Exodus 4:24-26. Here circumcision appears almost to have a magical connotation, akin to its apotropaic significance in some cultures, ancient and modern. The exegetical difficulty arises from the ambiguous use of Hebrew pronouns, making it unclear who does what to whom and why (the only indisputable fact is that Zipporah circumcised her son to avert the implementation of Yahweh's death threat). While some interpretations assume an originally different life-setting, whatever that may have been (and any suggestions are purely speculative), these verses must now be interpreted in their present context. The latter suggests that *Moses was the subject of the death threat and that it was his "feet" (probably a euphemism for genitals) that Zipporah touched with Gershom's foreskin. This action had a vicarious effect, compensating for Moses' deficiency (presumably, either he himself had not been circumcised at all, or else his circumcision was done in the Egyptian manner, in which the prepuce was not totally removed; cf. Josh 5:9). The insertion of this incident at this point in the narrative serves to make the theological point that only the covenant community—identified by the prescribed covenant sign of circumcision—would escape the divine judgment that had just been anticipated for the Egyptians (Ex 4:23). Moses' vicarious circumcision may have been a temporary measure, ensuring that his fulfillment of Yahweh's commission might not be unduly delayed (so Durham). In any case, as the result of Zipporah's action demonstrates (Ex 4:26), the main emphasis of the passage is that submitting to the covenant sign of circumcision (i.e., joining the covenant community) was a prerequisite for escaping divine judgment. (In view of this, it is not surprising that circumcision is also presented as a prerequisite for participating in the Passover celebration of Yahweh's deliverance; cf. Ex 12:44-49.)

The one enigmatic aspect of the Zipporah incident that remains, however, is her verbal response in which she described Moses (?) as a "blood-bridegroom," an archaic phrase (cf. Mitchell, 94-105, 111-12) explicitly linked by the editor to the rite of circumcision. It is this that has prompted some scholars to find vestiges of a prenuptial ritual here. However, while Zipporah may indeed have used the term *(ḥātān)* in the sense of its Arabic cognate (as argued by Propp and others), this may simply reflect her perception of the rite—a misconception drawn from her own non-Israelite culture. This would certainly account for the fact that the editor is strangely compelled to insert a comment linking the expression to the act of circumcision. In any case, however the details are understood, one thing is clear: this incident graphically illustrates the tremendous ritual importance of circumcision.

3.2. Metaphorical. As well as the ritual significance outlined above, circumcision also takes on metaphorical connotations in the Pentateuch and beyond. The term is thus applied to other parts of the human anatomy, such as the heart (Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; cf. Jer 4:4; 9:25-26) and the lips (Ex 6:12, 30; cf. Jer 6:10, where it is applied to the ears), and also to the initial harvests from fruit trees (Lev 19:23). In all these texts the connotation seems to be of something that is unsuitable to fulfill the function for which it is intended. Thus an uncircumcised heart (i.e., mind) is one that is incapable of understanding (and thus fulfilling) God's requirements. Likewise, uncircumcised lips (or ears) are unsuitable channels for divine communication. Similarly, uncircumcised fruit is that which is unsuitable for use (whether by way of divine sacrifice or human consumption). This metaphorical

concept of suitability presumably lay at the heart of physical circumcision also; circumcision connoted the idea of suitability for participation in God's plan and purpose for his covenant people (for a similar conclusion, though reached on different grounds, see Goldingay, 14-15). That purpose began to find fulfillment in Abraham's lifetime only after he had submitted himself to the rite of circumcision. Significantly, it was only after Abraham's circumcision that Isaac, the first in the promised line of special descendants, was born, thus emphasizing that circumcision was a necessity in order to experience Yahweh's blessings.

3.3. Ethical. As suggested above, the ethical significance of circumcision was in some measure an extension of the metaphorical usage. What made Israelites uncircumcised in their hearts was an unwillingness to love and obey God (Deut 10:16-17; Deut 30:6-7) and to submit to his ethical requirements (Lev 26:40-41). Indeed, as underlined later by Jeremiah, to have an uncircumcised heart was in reality to be no different from surrounding peoples who merely practiced physical circumcision (Jer 9:24-26).

In addition to this ethical extension of the metaphorical usage within the Pentateuch, there may well have been a more direct connection between the ritual and ethical connotations. Given the cultic associations of the moral imperative in Genesis 17:1 ("Walk before me and be perfect"), the physical rite of circumcision may well have served not only as an expression of the submission required but also as a symbol of this covenant obligation. Understood thus, there was a direct link between physical and "spiritual" circumcision from its inception, a link that, rather than being a Deuteronomic innovation, was established in Genesis and simply spelled out and applied by later prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Ezek 44:7-9).

It is clear, therefore, that although circumcision was a widespread custom in the ancient world, the richness of its theological meaning in the Pentateuch (and beyond) invested the Israelite practice with a significance that distinguished it entirely from contemporary rites in the ancient world.

See also ABRAHAM; COVENANT.

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CITIES OF REFUGE

The cities of refuge were six cities set aside by *Moses to which those accused of killing someone unintentionally could flee and await trial without fear of being killed by the avenger of blood. If the accused was found to have killed unintentionally, that person had to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high *priest in office at the time of the offense (Num 35:28). Four passages within the Pentateuch discuss the issue of asylum and the associated case law (Ex 21:12-14; Num 35:6-34; Deut 4:41-43; 19:1-13).

1. Locations of the Places of Refuge
2. Purposes of the Cities
3. Rules of Evidence in the Trial of the Accused
4. The Death of the High Priest
5. The Grace of God in the Cities of Refuge

1. Locations of the Places of Refuge.

In the earliest text dealing with the issue of asylum, the accused person could flee to the *altar located at the place designated by Yahweh (Ex 21:12-14). This indicates to P. J. Budd that the place of asylum in the earliest time was one of many local sanctuaries (Budd, 382). The assumption is that altars would be located at each of the various sanctuaries and the accused could

flee to any of these places. Budd's view is not convincing in light of the terminology, "I will designate a place for you to which the killer may flee" (Ex 21:13b). This statement, along with the additional fact that it is Yahweh's altar (Ex 21:14), indicates that not just any altar at any sanctuary would suffice. The indication is that a central altar is intended. In the context of the book of Exodus, this would be the altar at the *tabernacle.

Cities of refuge were mentioned for the first time near the end of Israel's forty years in the *wilderness when Yahweh commanded, through Moses, that six cities be set aside out of the forty-eight levitical cities as places of asylum (Num 35:6-8). Then in Deuteronomy 4:41-43 Moses designated three cities of refuge to be established on the east side of the Jordan. He failed to designate the three cities inside the Promised Land, presumably because he did not go into the land. The three Transjordanian cities of refugee were Bezer, Ramoth and Golan. Bezer was located in the tribal area of *Reuben. Its present-day location is thought to be Tell Umm el-Amad, which is about eight miles northeast of Medeba (Mattingly, 719). Ramoth was a city in Gad's tribal area. The suggestion that Tell Ramith is Ramoth has been widely accepted (Arnold, 621), but this city cannot be located with any certainty due to the absence of specific details in Scripture. Golan was in the tribal area of Manasseh and is identified with Saham el-Joulan on the east side of the river el-Allan (Arav, 1057).

2. Purposes of the Cities.

2.1. Protection of the Accused. A person who accidentally killed another person was allowed to flee to the altar and take hold of the horns of the altar as a means of seeking asylum (Ex 21:12-14). As Israel moved from the wilderness toward Canaan, the majority of the people would no longer be in close proximity to one central sanctuary. Therefore, there was a need to allocate various cities carefully spaced throughout the land so that the person accused of manslaughter might seek protection from the *gō'ēl,* the avenger of blood (Num 35:12, 25). The avenger of blood was a family member who would seek vengeance on behalf of the victim (Hubbard, 1:791). The avenger of blood should not be considered to be an officer of the court (contra Phillips, 105). This is evident from the fact that the assembly had to protect the accused from the avenger of blood (Num 35:25). Deuteronomy 19:6 also speaks of the avenger of blood as someone who would pursue the accused "because of the anger in his heart," which is not the picture of someone who is merely doing a job as an officer of the court. Israel's laws relating to the cities of refuge are thus an advancement over the ancient Near Eastern practice of allowing family members to take the law into their own hands (Greenberg 1959, 125).

2.2. Punishment of the Accused. Since the city of refuge was for the protection of the accused, it has been suggested that such a person was "innocent of any crime" (Vasholz, 116). This is not convincing, since the accused could be put to death by the avenger of blood without becoming guilty of bloodshed (Num 35:27; also see Deut 19:10), if the accused was caught outside of the city of refuge prior to the death of the high priest (Milgrom, 510). Moreover, the accused could not buy his or her way out of confinement (Num 35:32). Even if the family of the victim were appeased, the individual had to stay in the city until the death of the high priest. Therefore, one must conclude that those who sought asylum in the city of refuge had some guilt attached to them even if they were not guilty of premeditated murder. Therefore, the cities of refuge functioned as punishment for the person guilty of unintentional homicide and as protection from the avenger of blood.

3. Rules of Evidence in the Trial of the Accused.

The assembly was charged with determining if one who sought asylum in the city of refuge was guilty of premeditated murder or unintentional homicide or was innocent of any crime at all (Num 35:24). Two types of evidence were permissible in this trial: (1) the type of object used to inflict the wound (Num 35:16-18) and (2) the intent of the accused (Num 35:20-21). In the first case, the object had to be something that would cause death. For instance, an iron object, a large stone or a wooden object large enough to injure a person would be prima facie evidence of the intent to do bodily harm. On that basis, the accused could be convicted of murder and put to death (Num 35:19). The second type of admissible evidence was prior ill will toward the deceased (Num 35:20-21). This is seen in the use of the verb *ṣādâ* (to act with malicious intent) in Exodus 21:13 and the noun *ṣĕdiyyâ* (ambush or

malice) in Numbers 35:20, 22. In no case was the accused to be found guilty upon the testimony of only one witness (Num 35:30).

4. The Death of the High Priest.

Once the accused was found guilty of *inadvertently* killing someone, the accused was not allowed to leave the city of refuge until after the death of the high priest (Num 35:25). The significance of the death of the high priest, in this context, has given rise to two different interpretations. First, the death of the high priest is considered to be the occasion for a general amnesty for fugitives in a manner analogous to the amnesty granted on the accession to the throne of a new king (Budd, 382; Vasholz, 117). This position is not convincing because it is based on a comparison of the priest and the king that Scripture does not make. The fact that amnesty was proclaimed upon the accession of a new ruler to the throne (Ashley, 654) with the purpose of "ingratiating themselves with the populace" (Greenberg 1959, 127) also makes it unlikely that the death of the high priest occasioned amnesty for all fugitives.

The second and more popular view is that the death of the high priest made atonement for the sin of unintentional *(šĕgāgâ)* homicide. Support for this comes from the fact that even unintentional *(šĕgāgâ)* sin required atonement (cf. Lev 4:27-31). In addition, there was no payment that would atone for the death of a human being other than the death of another human being (Gen 9:6; see also Num 35:33). On this basis it is argued that the death of the high priest may have provided expiation or atonement for the death of the innocent person (Greenberg 1962, 1:639; Budd, 384). Nonetheless, this view should be held tentatively, since there is no place in Scripture where the death of the high priest is said to provide atonement or expiation (Vasholz, 116). Thus, within the Pentateuch it is a possible but not necessary inference from the data that the death of a high priest made atonement.

5. The Grace of God in the Cities of Refuge.

5.1. Numbers 35:6-34. This passage is sometimes viewed as part of a collection of miscellaneous laws appended to the end of Numbers (Harrison, 417). A closer analysis of the conclusion of Numbers shows that Numbers 35 is contained within a section that is framed by two pericopes dealing with the request of *Zelophehad's daughters for their inheritance in the land (Num 27:1-11; 36:1-13). D. R. Ulrich argues that these two pericopes demonstrate that Zelophehad's daughters trusted the Lord to keep his promise to give Israel the land (Ulrich, 537). He also correctly notes that the material within the inclusion "pertains in one way or another to the future success of the newly counted tribes" (Ulrich, 537). If Israel failed to keep the land from being polluted, the implication of Numbers 35:34 is that Yahweh would no longer be with his people in the land and that Israel would no longer be successful in the land. The cities of refuge were, therefore, a provision that enabled Israel to keep the land. Without such a place, the avenger of blood would hunt the person down and kill the accused without any determination of guilt or innocence. If the accused was innocent and killed by the avenger of blood, this would pollute the land and lead to the loss of the land. This system was thus part of the Lord's gracious provision that enabled a sinful people to live with a holy God.

5.2. Deuteronomy 4:41-43. This passage seems to many commentators to be out of place in its current context because it does not have the same autobiographical style as the surrounding material (Weinfeld, 232). If it fits anywhere in the context, it is thought to belong after Deuteronomy 3:20 (Weinfeld, 232), which deals with the division of the land east of the Jordan. A look at the flow of the argument in Deuteronomy 1—4 suggests otherwise. Moses begins his summary of Israel's past at Horeb and quickly moves to the failure of Israel to take the land because of their fear of the people in the cities of Canaan who were stronger and taller than they were (Deut 1:26-28). Moses then tells the people how the Lord took land from strong and powerful people and gave it to other people (Deut 2:10-12), and in the same way the Lord took the land of Sihon and Og and gave it to Israel (Deut 2:24—3:20). The point is that Israel had failed, but the Lord had been faithful. After the historical survey, Moses begins to exhort the people to obey the Lord by drawing upon the theological implications of Yahweh's actions at Horeb (Deut 4:15-31) and his power displayed against the Egyptians (Deut 4:32-38). In other words, the Lord is strong enough to give the land to Israel (Thompson, 109) and Israel must obey the Lord (Deut 4:39-40). The cities mentioned in Deuteronomy 4:41-43 then serve as a concrete example

of the faithfulness of God to take the land east of the Jordan and give it to Israel. The cities also assume that Israel will fail, but the cities are a gracious provision for Israel's anticipated failure. The cities of refuge are thus part of the pattern of proof laid out in Deuteronomy 1—4 that the Lord is worthy of trust and obedience, and they are an acknowledgment of Israel's need for grace.

5.3. Deuteronomy 19:1-13. Moses once more picks up on the theme of God's grace by reminding the people that the Lord was giving them the land originally promised to Abram (Gen 12:1-3). As a result of that grace, Israel must obey the Lord and set up cities of refuge in the land so that the people will not be guilty of bloodshed (Deut 19:10). The promise of more cities and land is also held out as an inducement to further obedience (Deut 19:8-10). In other words, the cities of refuge are evidence of God's grace to the nation of Israel, and if Israel will acknowledge the grace of God and obey him, the nation will have even more land and additional cities of refuge.

See also BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

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T. A. Clarke

CITY, TOWN, CAMP

Cities, towns, villages and camps were essential parts of a common settlement hierarchy shared by the ancient Near East and the OT.

1. Terminology
2. Archaeological Evidence
3. Theological Significance

1. Terminology.

A wide variety of terms are used broadly and interchangeably to describe settlement patterns and socio-urban structures in the OT. Those occurring in the Pentateuch are as follows.

1.1. City. The primary Hebrew word for "city" (*ʿîr, pl. ʿārîm*) occurs approximately eleven hundred times in the OT. The Pentateuch contains 172 of these occurrences, or just under 16 percent. The etymology of *ʿîr* is uncertain (Frick, 27-30), but it may be related to the Sumerian word for "city," *uru.*

In the OT *ʿîr* appears to contain the idea of some type of protection or fortification. However, it can be applied to a wide range of settlements, including villages, towns and capital cities, regardless of size or location. For example, Deuteronomy 3:5 speaks of cities (*ʿārîm*) fortified with high walls, gates and bars as well as *ʿārê happĕrāzî* ("rural towns" or "country settlements"; see also 1 Sam 6:18). This expression may parallel the Amarna phrase (EA 137) *ālāni pu-ru-zi* (Na'aman). Leviticus 25:29, 31 make a distinction between an *ʿîr ḥômâ* ("walled city") and a *ḥāṣēr* ("village"). In Numbers 13:19 *Moses charges the spies with the task of determining whether the Canaanite cities are fortified (*mibṣār*) or more like camps (*maḥăneh*). Cities given to the *Levites in Numbers 35:1-8 also included the surrounding pasturelands (*migrāš*) connected with them.

Cities were also given special designations or names. *Cities of refuge (*ʿārê miqlāṭ*) are so designated as to provide protection for individuals who have committed accidental manslaughter (Num 35:11). Jericho is called the city of palms (*ʿîr hattĕmārîm*) in Deuteronomy 34:3. Synecdoche, the use of a part to describe the whole, is also found in the case of *šaʿar* ("gate"), which is used often in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 5:14; 12:12, 15; 14:21, 27-28; 15:7, 22) to designate a city.

1.2. Town. The noun *qiryâ* ("town, city") occurs less frequently in the OT. Its etymology is uncertain, but it may be derived from *qîr,* "wall." In the Pentateuch *qiryâ* refers to towns or cities in general. In Deuteronomy 2:36 and 3:4 *qiryâ* refers to the towns taken by the Israelites in

Transjordan. In both of these verses *qiryâ* is given as a synonym of *ʿîr*. Heshbon is identified in Numbers 21:28 as the *qiryâ* ("town") of Sihon.

In the construct case, *qiryâ* is found in the names of several towns. Hebron is originally called Kiriath-arba (Gen 23:2; 35:27), and Balaam rides to Kiriath-huzoth (Num 22:39). Shaveh-kiriathaim (Gen 14:5) and Kiriathaim (Num 32:37) contain a dual form of *qiryâ*.

1.3. Village. The plural *ḥăṣērîm* of *ḥāṣēr* ("enclosure, court"; Frick, 55-57) is employed to designate a smaller settlement, often translated "village" (Gen 25:16; Lev 25:31; Deut 2:23). This term is also retained in such place names as Hazar-addar (Num 34:4), Hazar-enan (Num 34:9-10) and Hazeroth (Num 11:35; 12:16; 33:17; Deut 1:1).

In addition, the construct *bĕnôt* (lit. "daughters of") is used figuratively to identify smaller villages situated in the jurisdiction of a larger city and dependent upon it (Num 21:25, 32; 32:42). The general word for place, *māqôm*, is also used to refer to the town or village of Shechem (Gen 12:6; 18:24).

1.4. Camp. A *ṭîrâ* was a camp protected by a stone barrier or wall (Gen 25:16; Num 31:10). The most frequent term for camp, however, is *maḥănеh*. It occurs over two hundred times in the OT and is derived from the verbal root *ḥnh*, which means "to set up a camp or encampment."

After leaving Laban, *Jacob meets the angels of God (Gen 32:1 [MT 32:2]). Here he declares the place to be God's camp and names it Mahanaim, "Two Camps" (Gen 32:2 [MT 32:3]). In Genesis 32:21 (MT 32:22) Jacob's camp is probably a traveling entourage composed of tents.

In most cases *maḥănеh* refers to a war camp. After the *exodus and during the *wilderness journeys, the Israelites resided in this type of settlement (Ex 14:19-20, 24; Num 2:9, 16, 24, 31; Deut 2:14-15). Because of the presence of God in their midst, Israel's camp was to be *holy. Any unclean person or thing was to be put outside the encampment (Num 5:1-4; Deut 23:14 [MT 23:15]).

2. Archaeological Evidence.

Since evidence of smaller settlements such as unwalled towns, villages and camps is much more difficult to acquire, archaeological excavations have tended to focus on the structure and plan of the large urban centers of the ancient Near East. Archaeological evidence suggests that two major periods of urbanization in Palestine occurred prior to the beginning of the Iron Age (Fritz, 18-49).

2.1. Early Bronze Age II. Cities in this period include Megiddo, Ai, Gezer, Arad, Jericho and others. These were characterized by fairly large sites protected by a ring of walls with gates and fortifications. Monumental buildings and residential houses are found arranged along streets and thoroughfares inside the city. Such planning presupposes a social hierarchy in the differentiation of work. Farmers, artisans and traders, as well as priests and rulers, lived side by side in the city.

2.2. Middle Bronze Age II. In the second wave of urbanization, the Canaanites refortified older settlements such as Dan, Hazor, Megiddo and Shechem. New settlements such as Bethel and Beth-shemesh were also established. Distinctive walls, fortifications, gates and cultic architecture also characterize this period. City-states ruling numerous villages and settlements within their immediate vicinity arose. A few documents from Egypt, Taanach and Hazor provide a brief glimpse of the social, cultural and political life in the cities of this period (Fritz, 40-42). This wave of urbanization began to decline by the Late Bronze Age.

3. Theological Significance.

The OT is often understood to reject city life and to promote an antiurban bias in favor of a desert or nomadic idealism (*see* Wilderness, Desert). In this view, the city's pursuit of security and power are seen as rebellion against God (Gen 11:1-9), and the sins and decadence of the city are denounced by the prophets (Mic 6:9-16; Hab 2:12). The prophets are seen as seeking to preserve Israel's nomadic traditions by calling Israel to reject the Canaanite cities and embrace the purity of the tribal faith in the desert God, Yahweh (Wilson, 4). While some antiurban bias did exist, this view that the OT rejected urban civilization in favor of a desert idealism cannot be substantiated from a careful reading of the text, either of the Pentateuch (Andreasen) or the prophets (Wilson).

3.1. The Foundation of the City (Genesis 4:17). The first biblical reference to city building is associated with *Cain. Cain's offense is not that he built a city but that he committed fratricide. Cain may have built the city to escape the avenger by

retreating behind protective walls. The judgment of the text is not on the city itself but on its lack of social responsibility and justice (Andreasen, 261-64).

3.2 The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). In this complex account, the builders of *Babel offended God by setting themselves and their skills against God's will. God punished their arrogance by scattering them abroad over the face of the earth. But no mention is made in the text that this scattering is intended to foster a return to the ideal of a pastoral, nomadic lifestyle.

3.3 The Cities in the Plain (Genesis 13—14; 18—19). The strife between *Abraham and *Lot arose over grazing rights and not between urban and rural settlements (*see* Agriculture). The land Lot chose was fertile, but it was near the wicked people of Sodom. The sinful social values found in the city enticed Lot, and he moved progressively closer to Sodom until he was found sitting in its gate (Gen 19:1). The cities themselves were not rejected. The sins of the people of Sodom brought about the city's destruction. For the sake of ten righteous citizens God would have spared the city (Gen 18:23-32).

See also ARCHAEOLOGY; CITIES OF REFUGE.

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S. J. Andrews

CLAN. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

CLASSICAL HEBREW. *See* LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

CLAY. *See* CREATION.

CLEAN. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

CLOTHING PREPARATION. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

CLOUD. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

COMPOSITION CRITICISM. *See* LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

CONTAMINATION. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

COSMOGONY. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION.

COSMOLOGY

Cosmology refers to the understanding of the whole universe as an organized, structured entity. Strictly speaking, it can be distinguished from cosmogony, which is an account of how the structured universe came into being. However, it is difficult to separate these two, since cosmologies are often rooted in cosmogonies. The way a universe *is* is seen to be dependent on the way *it came into being.* For this reason our study of cosmology in the Pentateuch will give considerable attention to what is said about the *creation of the world. Also, since Hebrew culture interacted with the wider culture of the ancient Near East, we will outline briefly some of the ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies and cosmologies. These provide a helpful context within which to understand the biblical material. In particular it highlights the distinctive aspects of the Hebrew understandings of God, humanity, creation and the cosmos, and the relationships between them.

1. Definitions and General Considerations
2. Ancient Near Eastern Cosmologies
3. Cosmology in the Pentateuch

1. Definitions and General Considerations.

1.1. Cosmology and Worldview. Everyone has a worldview, an understanding of the world that guides the way one lives in the world. It shapes one's answers—consciously or subconsciously—to the "big" questions such as "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" For most people, their worldview is something that they have never fully artic-

ulated and made coherent. It is something that is shared with the community to which they belong. In fact, it is one of the things that binds a community together. Cosmology and worldview are clearly related to one another. A worldview is rather broader and vaguer than a cosmology, but it is shaped to some degree by the cosmology held by the person or the community. Very often what is articulated in the Bible is a worldview rather than a cosmology. Failure to recognize this may lead us astray as we fail to do the work necessary to discover the cosmology that lies behind the biblical worldview.

1.2. Cosmologies, Ancient and Modern. In the modern natural sciences, cosmology is the scientific study of the universe considered as a whole. It is one of the aspects of science that receives most media attention. What the media concentrate on are the modern scientific cosmogonies, theories about the origin of the universe. This is because of the age-old belief that cosmogony and cosmology are closely linked. In science the two are very closely linked. In the various versions of the big-bang theory, the physical nature and subsequent history of the universe are determined to a considerable degree in the first few moments of its existence.

The age-old link between cosmology and worldview leads people to expect modern scientific cosmologies to provide answers to the big questions of life. However, they ignore the fact that this is bound to be problematic, because science has a built-in bias. Scientific investigation deliberately restricts itself to the study of matter and energy (which the theory of relativity shows are interchangeable) and the impersonal laws that govern them. Its aim is to obtain factual information about the physical universe. It has no room for personal categories and moral values, the very things that are needed to inform a "livable" worldview. Religious cosmogonies normally involve personal entities—the God or gods—who have aims and purposes and values. Their primary purpose is not to provide factual information about the past history of the physical universe but to ground or explain particular aspects of present reality.

Some people claim that the relative success of scientific cosmogony in explaining the physical structure of the universe as we know it supports an atheistic worldview. However, this claims too much. The universe as we know it contains persons who have self-consciousness, moral values and a religious sense. Faced with this we can either conclude that these aspects of our experience as persons are illusory or that scientific cosmogonies are incomplete accounts of the origin of the universe. Given the built-in bias of science, the latter conclusion seems the far more likely. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, a scientific cosmogony can be seen as describing only the physical aspect of the Creator's activity, the "mechanisms" used. It ignores questions of purpose and meaning. Consequently, religious and scientific cosmogonies are not necessarily opposed to one another. They may be complementary, working at different levels of reality to answer different kinds of questions. The questions asked and answered by science and religion are interrelated (so they are not to be kept totally separate from one another) but they are different (so they are not to be used to replace one another). In particular, the old religious cosmogonies are not to be written off as outmoded scientific explanations, nor are they to be expected to answer modern scientific questions. Either approach fails to take them seriously in their own terms and will miss the insights they do have to give to us.

2. Ancient Near Eastern Cosmologies.

As we have noted above, outside the biblical *creation stories, cosmological ideas are usually expressed only indirectly, as part of the worldview of the biblical writers. Moreover, both within the creation stories and outside of them, they are often expressed using imagery and ideas that were shared with other cultures with which the biblical writers were in contact. As a result, knowing something about the cosmogonies and cosmologies of these cultures can illuminate our understanding of the biblical material, both by providing parallels and contrasts.

2.1. Mesopotamian Cosmogonies and Cosmologies. As part of their training, ancient Mesopotamian scribes had to copy out a prescribed body of texts, which came to form a "canonical" collection. Works from this collection became known well beyond Mesopotamia. Texts have been found at Boghazköy (ancient Hattusas of the Hittites) in Turkey, Meskene (ancient Emar) in eastern Syria, Ugarit on the Syrian coast, and even at Megiddo in Palestine. Although the Sumerians, who established a literate culture in southern Mesopotamia in the third millennium

B.C., were swamped by successive waves of Semitic peoples, the newcomers adopted a good deal of Sumerian culture. As a result, a mixture of continuity and change is evidenced in the texts that survive from the middle of the third millennium to the end of the first millennium B.C. Thus, it is helpful to make a distinction between the third and early-second millennium Sumerian cosmogonies and the mid-second and first millennium Akkadian cosmogonies.

2.1.1. Sumerian Cosmogonies. There is no known Sumerian creation story text, but there are descriptions of creation in a number of Sumerian texts of various genres. These do not provide evidence of one standard account of creation. Instead, they witness to at least two different cosmogonic traditions. One of these stems from Nippur. In it creation takes place through the union of heaven (the god An) and earth (the goddess Antum or Ki). This union fertilizes the earth to produce vegetable, animal and human life. They all sprout from the ground like plants. The other tradition comes from Eridu. In this, Enki (the god of fertility and wisdom) produces the spring water that fertilizes the earth by means of rivers and canals. Life, including human life and cities, arises along their banks. In some texts there is a separate account of the creation of individual humans by Enki, using clay and water, sometimes with the aid of the mother goddesses. In both traditions humans are seen as existing to serve the gods, to save them from having to work. Also in both, a thing or a person is assigned a "destiny" by the gods at the time of creation. Thus the cosmogonies are usually told as a way of explaining the nature or role of something.

Some Sumerian texts refer to a time when heaven and earth were joined before they were separated and "married" to (pro)create living things. In Praise of the Pickaxe, Enlil uses the pickaxe to separate heaven from the earth.

2.1.2. Akkadian Cosmogonies. The best-known Akkadian cosmogonies are contained within two lengthy narratives: the Atrahasis Epic and *Enuma Elish.* Both narratives seem to incorporate earlier material that has been combined, and to some degree transformed, to form the extant story.

The most complete copy of Atrahasis comes from the early seventeenth century B.C. The story begins at a time when only the gods exist. The lesser gods (the Igigi) perform the menial labor for the senior gods (the Anunnaki), but after many years of labor the Igigi rebel. Enki and the mother goddess's creation of humans from clay and the blood and the "spirit" of an Igigi god resolves the ensuing crisis. In the story there seems to be a word play between the words for "spirit" *(eṭemmu)* and "mind/reason" *(ṭēmu).* Humans receive their body from the earth and the immaterial aspect of their being from the gods. They are created "to bear the toil of the gods." However, their numbers increase, and their noise keeps Enlil and the other gods from their sleep. Thus the gods plot to destroy the human race by a series of plagues and finally by a *flood. Only Atrahasis and his family survive the flood, thanks to a warning from Enki and his advice that they build a boat. When deprived of their human servants, the gods realize how much they relied on them. They therefore allow repopulation, though introducing safeguards against over-population. Unfortunately the text is broken at this point, but these measures seem to have included infertility and certain social arrangements.

Enuma Elish is now usually dated to between the fourteenth and eleventh centuries B.C. It became a much-copied text and was recited on the fourth day of the New Year festival in Babylon. At the beginning of the story, nothing exists but the primeval waters, Apsu and Tiamat, who give birth to the older gods. However, the activity of the gods disturbs Apsu, who plans to destroy them. Learning of this, Ea puts Apsu to sleep with a spell and kills him. He then builds a palace on Apsu's corpse, in which he and Damkina give birth to Marduk. Marduk turns out to be greater than any of his predecessors, but his play disturbs Tiamat. As a result, some gods, seemingly provoked by jealousy of Marduk, join her in a plan to destroy the other gods. When they hear of this, the other gods are filled with fear and at a loss what to do, until Marduk appears and offers to do battle on their behalf—provided they agree to give him the power of fixing destinies and make him king. This is agreed to, and Marduk goes out to do battle with Tiamat, the dissident gods and a horde of monsters created by Tiamat. Marduk then kills Tiamat in single combat and splits her body in two. With one half he makes the sky, and with the other the earth. He puts the stars in their places and establishes the movements of the sun and moon. Seeing this, the gods acclaim him and make him their king. Marduk

then orders Ea to make humans out of the blood of Kingu, the leader of the dissident gods, so that they might do the work of the gods. The gods themselves, however, build Babylon and its temple as Marduk's abode and glorify him with fifty names.

2.1.3. Mesopotamian Cosmology. In the opening tablet of Atrahasis, the great gods divide the universe between them, with Anu going up to heaven, Enlil (apparently) residing on earth, and Enki (later called Ea) going down to the Apsu, the lower waters. A threefold division of the universe between the same three gods is found in *Enuma Elish* 4.137-146. Here, after forming the heaven and earth out of Tiamat's body, Marduk settles Anu in heaven with three hundred of the Anunnaki, Enlil in Esharra and Ea in Eshgalla, with another three hundred Anunnaki. The context indicates that Eshgalla is a synonym for the Apsu, on which Ea originally built his abode. The location of Esharra is not obvious. In 5.119-122 Marduk says that he will build his abode "opposite" Esharra, while 6.65-66 seems to say that when Babylon was built and the temple Esagila was complete, Marduk sat in his new home and saw the "horns" (pinnacles?) of Esagila as he looked toward Esharra. Since Babylon is on the earth, this suggests that Esharra was located above the earth but below Anu's heaven. According to 5.11-12 Marduk placed the sun, moon and stars in the *elâtu* ("heights"). This was located in the half of Tiamat's body that formed the sky. It was presumably below the Esharra, giving three levels of the heavens above the earth, with the Apsu below the earth.

When Marduk fashioned the heavens out of part of the body of Tiamat (depicted as both primeval waters and a monster), he placed guards to keep the waters of heaven from escaping. He also fashioned a skin to keep the waters in. With the waters of the Apsu under the earth, the inhabited world was like a bubble in the cosmic waters.

There is no mention of the underworld in *Enuma Elish.* Detail is added in a first-millennium religious-mystical text (KAR 307, see discussion in Horowitz, 3-19). This text divides the heavens into three levels: the upper (where Anu dwells with three hundred Igigi), the middle (where Bel has his cella and there are more Igigi) and the lower (where the stars are located). The earth is also divided into three levels: the upper (where humans dwell), the middle (the Apsu, where Ea dwells) and the lower (the underworld, where Bel/Marduk locks six hundred Anunnaki).

A Late Babylonian tablet BM 92687, the Babylonian Map of the World, gives a unique Babylonian bird's-eye view of the earth's surface (for a copy and discussion of the tablet, see Horowitz, 20-42). The known world is depicted as a circle with various places and topographical features marked in a schematic way. The circle is more or less bisected by what seems to be the River Euphrates, with Babylon marked on it somewhat above the center of the circle. A mountain is marked to the north of Babylon, and there is a swamp in the south. Assyria, Urartu and Susa are among the places marked. A ring of ocean surrounds the "continent," beyond which are several triangular (probably originally eight, the tablet is broken) *nagû*, "regions." The nature of these is unclear, as is the nature of the space between them.

2.2. Canaanite Cosmology. Our main source for Canaanite cosmology is the collection of texts excavated at Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit. They date from about the fourteenth century B.C. Among them is the Baal cycle of texts, stories about the god Baal, but there is no undisputed cosmogony. In these texts the chief of the pantheon, El, is called *bny bnwt*, "creator of creation/creatures," and *ʾb ʾdm*, "father of humanity." His wife Asherah is given the epithet *qnyt ʾlm*, "creator/begetter of the gods." These epithets suggest that for the Canaanites creation was thought of in terms of procreation. There is one ritual text (*KTU* 1.23) that tells of the birth of the gods Shahar and Shalim as a result of El's sexual activities.

The Baal cycle has three sections. In the first, Prince Yam (Sea) sends a demand to the assembly of the gods that they surrender Baal to him. The gods, other than Baal, are terrified and, in the person of El, agree to the demand. However, Baal goes out armed with two clubs fashioned by the artisan-god Kothar-wa-Hasis and fights with Yam, defeating him. In the second section there is an appeal to El that Baal be allowed to build himself a house. When El gives permission, Kothar-wa-Hasis builds Baal a palace. Baal then gives a dedicatory banquet for all the gods. There are some similarities here with battle between Marduk and Tiamat and its outcome in *Enuma Elish.* This has led some scholars to as-

sume that Baal's battle with Yam is somehow associated with the creation of the world. However, there is nothing in the text to suggest that it is anything other than an explanation of how the young storm-god Baal came to dominate the Canaanite pantheon.

The third episode begins with the god Mot (Death) demanding that Baal be surrendered to him. Baal is intimidated and goes down to the underworld, taking the clouds, wind, lightning and rain with him. When El is told of Baal's death, he mourns, as does Baal's sister Anat. Anat meets Mot, who boasts about devouring Baal and the consequent drought. Anat then seizes Mot, splits him with a sword, winnows him, burns him, grinds him and sows him in the fields. This leads to Baal's revival. Having returned to life, he reasserts his power and reclaims his throne from the sons of Asherah. After seven years Mot returns, and he and Baal fight in single combat until Shapshu (Sun) intervenes on Baal's behalf and threatens Mot, who breaks off the combat and leaves Baal to remount his throne. This story is not a cosmogony but has something to do with the seasonal and agricultural cycle.

2.3. Egyptian Cosmogonies and Cosmology. Several cosmogonies are known from ancient *Egypt. Each is connected with a local deity—for example, Re, Atum and Ptah—and supports the claim to the importance of that deity and the city that is the home of his principal temple. There are some themes in common as well as differences in presenting the process of creation.

2.3.1. Common Elements. The state before creation is described in both a negative and a positive way. Negatively it is referred to as "before X existed." Especially significant is the phrase "before there were two things." In contrast to this the creator-god is often called "one who made himself into millions." Creation is the move from undifferentiated "nothingness" to the diversity of the known world. Positively, the pre-creation state is described as one of limitless waters (personified as Nun) and total darkness. Probably as a result of their experience of new life arising as the annual Nile flood receded, the Egyptians developed the idea of the primordial mound from which all life arose. The mound is related to the creator-god in different ways, but it becomes the site of his temple. Different gods play the role of creator in the various cosmogonies, but each cosmogony has only one creator-god. This is the primeval god, who is self-generated.

2.3.2. The Process of Creation. This is envisaged in three main ways. In the Cosmogony of Heliopolis the god Atum appears as the primordial mound. He generates the divine couple Shu (atmosphere) and Tefnut by expelling fluid from himself, either by masturbation or by spitting. Shu and Tefnut then give birth to Geb (earth) and Nut (sky), who are then separated by Shu.

In the Memphite Theology the creator-god is Ptah. At least in later times he is identified with the primordial mound. He creates nine gods (the Ennead), beginning with Shu and Tefnut, through his "heart" ("thought, plan") and "tongue" ("word, command").

Most of the Egyptian cosmogonies are in reality theogonies, concerned with the origin of the gods. These are identified with basic elements of the cosmos: earth, sky, the sun and so forth. However, it is rare to have any account of the creation of plants, animals and humans. An exception is the description of the potter-god, Khnum, fashioning humans and other living creatures on his potter's wheel.

2.3.3. Egyptian Cosmology. The Egyptians visualized the universe as consisting of three "plates" with two spaces between them. In the middle was the plate of the earth (Geb). This was thought to be shaped like a dish with a raised, corrugated rim. The central, flat part of the dish was the Nile Valley, and the raised rim represented the mountains of the countries around Egypt. Above the earth was the plate of the sky (Nut), which was held up by the atmosphere (Shu). Below the earth was the primeval waters (Nun), and below that the plate of the underworld (Naunet).

For the Egyptians, the most important element in their cosmological scheme was the sun (the god Re). They believed that each night the sun journeyed into the underworld, to be reborn each morning out of the waters of Nun, the source of life. The heat and light of the sun were themselves the source of life to the creatures on the earth.

The daily motion of the sun, the annual variation in the path it traced through the sky, which is related to the annual seasons, and the annual flooding of the Nile, were all evidence of a cosmic order. The Egyptians believed that this order, Ma^{c}at, had been established at creation

by the primordial god. However, it needed to be renewed daily by the pharaoh, and this was an important function of the rituals in the temple built on the site of the primordial mound.

3. Cosmology in the Pentateuch.

The early chapters of Genesis are bound to have a prominent place in any discussion of cosmology in the Hebrew Bible, let alone the Pentateuch, both because they contain the only detailed Hebrew account of creation and because of their position at the start of the Pentateuch.

3.1 Genesis 1:1—2:4a. Strictly speaking, this is a cosmogony. Various aspects of it are thrown into particular relief when it is read in the light of other ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies.

3.1.1. The Creator. The Genesis account differs markedly from the other cosmogonies in its assumption of monotheism. There is a single Creator, and no other gods are involved in the creative acts, either as helpers or as opponents. There is no primeval goddess, so the model of procreation for the creative process has no place in the account. It is also notable that there is no theogony as a preface to cosmology. The existence of the Creator is assumed, and there is no attempt to explain it. There are no lesser gods whose coming into being needs explaining. Some scholars think that the plural in Genesis 1:26 ("Let *us* make . . .") is a remnant of an earlier polytheistic account. However, they agree that this is not the significance of the plural in the account as it stands. Most take it as either an address to the heavenly council (Wenham) or as a plural of self-deliberation (Westermann).

3.1.2. Creation by Word. Eight times in this account God speaks and things come into being. The nearest parallel to this is Ptah's creation through thought and word in the Memphite Theology, but this is limited to the creation of the Ennead. The use of speech as a metaphor indicates that the divine creative activity is voluntary, rational and effortless. There is no struggle or conflict, as in some of the other cosmogonies. Ever since the publication of the Babylonian epic of creation some scholars have suggested a link between "the deep" *(tĕhôm)* of Genesis 1:2 and Tiamat. However, it seems that philologically the Hebrew word and the Babylonian name both go back to a common Semitic root rather than the Hebrew being derived from the Babylonian. Also, in the other thirty-four uses of *tĕhôm* in the OT there is no hint of personification (see Westermann, 104-6).

Many commentators take Genesis 1:2 as depicting a dark, storm-tossed sea. This depends on translating *rûaḥ ʾĕlōhîm* as "a mighty wind" and also on assuming a similarity to other cosmogonies that begin with a state of "active chaos." However, it seems unlikely in this chapter, where *ʾĕlōhîm* is used so often to denote God, that it is used simply as a superlative. It is more likely that the reference is to some positive manifestation of divine activity, the "wind/breath of God." This fits with the now generally accepted meaning of the following participle, "hovering, fluttering." We may then argue that Genesis 1:2 depicts, in contrast to the other cosmogonies, a state of "quiescent chaos" (a dark, empty formlessness) with God poised for action.

3.1.3. Creation from Nothing? In the other cosmogonies the physical universe is fashioned out of preexisting material. Whether or not this is the case in Genesis 1 is a much-debated issue. There are basically two ways in which Genesis 1:1-2 has been understood. According to one view, verse 1 describes the creation of matter, the state of which is then described in verse 2. A major objection to this view has been the implication that God created chaos. The force of this, however, is removed if the "chaos" is understood as suggested above. According to the other view, verse 2 describes the state of things at the time when the work of creation began. Against this view it has been objected that when God is the subject of the verb "to create" *(bārāʾ)* in its active form elsewhere in the OT, there is never any mention of material out of which the products of creation are made. However, in a few cases a preexisting entity is implied (Num 16:30; Is 43:1; 54:16; Amos 4:13). Perhaps the most that can be said is that the idea of creation out of nothing is a possible reading of Genesis 1:1-2. C. Westermann (109-10) makes the point that to press the issue on these verses may be inappropriate, since it was not in mind when they were written. Both the idea of "formless matter" (Wis 11:17) and that of "creation out of nothing" (2 Macc 7:28) entered Jewish thought at a late period as a result of interaction with Greek thought.

3.1.4. An Ordered Creation. It has often been noted (e.g., Wenham, 6-7) that the creative acts of the first three days correspond to those of the

second three (see table 1). In the first three days empty "structures" are created by acts of "separation." These are then *filled* with creatures in the second three days.

This structuring emphasizes that the creation is planned and ordered. In this context a brief discussion of the phrase *tōhû wābōhû* (Gen 1:2) is needed. Translations of this phrase in English versions of the Bible are usually similar to the KJV's "without form and void." This can be seen to fit well with what follows, namely, acts of *forming* and *filling*. On the basis of lexical and discourse analysis of the twenty occurrences of *tōhû* in the Hebrew Bible, Tsumura (17-43) has proposed a somewhat different rendering, "unproductive and uninhabited."Although the rendering of *tōhû* as "unproductive" fits well with some of its uses elsewhere, it does not give due weight to the context in the Genesis account, with its particular structure. A different aspect of the word's meaning seems more appropriate here. Westermann (102-3) classifies uses of the word into three groups of meanings: "desert," "a desert or devastation that is threatened" and "nothingness." Tsumura argues that the meaning in the third group is a *lack* of something rather than absolute nothingness. He then proposes that what is lacking before God's creative acts is the productivity of the earth. However, on at least some of the occasions when *tōhû* is used to mean "desert," the emphasis is on the desert as a "trackless waste" (e.g., Job 6:18; 12:24; Ps 107:40), which is closer to the idea of "formless" than to that of "unproductive." The meaning "formless" fits the context of Genesis 1 well. The word *bōhû* occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible, always in conjunction with *tōhû* (Gen 1:2; Is 34:11; Jer 4:23), and is usually translated as "empty."

Day 1: light and dark separated; day and night result.	Day 4: lights created to rule the day and the night.
Day 2: the waters separated; sky and sea result.	Day 5: birds and sea creatures created to live in the sky and sea.
Day 3: the waters gathered; land appears; plants created.	Day 6: living creatures created to live on the land and eat the plants; humans created.
Day 7: the sabbath	

Table 1: Ordered Creation

3.1.5. The Status of Humans. There are five indicators in the account that the creation of humans is the climax of God's acts of creation. These include the fact that they are the last creatures to be created, the divine deliberation before the act in verse 26a, the threefold use of *bārā'* in verse 27, their unique creation in God's "image" and "likeness" and the fact that they are given dominion over the other creatures. It is clear that in the Hebrew understanding humans have a much higher status than they do in the Mesopotamian creation stories, in which they are created to be the slaves of the gods.

3.1.6. A Polemical Account. The contrasts that we have already noted between the Hebrew creation story and other ancient Near Eastern creation stories suggest that there is a conscious polemical intent in the former. At two other points in the story this becomes particularly clear. The first is in the use of the special verb *bārā'*. It is used in three places in the story. It is understandable that it is used in verse 1 to introduce the whole account of creation. As we have seen, the threefold use of it in verse 27 helps to establish the different status given to humans in the Hebrew story as compared with others. But why is it used in verse 21 of the creation of the "great sea monsters" *(tannînîm)*? Sometimes in the Hebrew Bible the singular *tannîn* can refer to an ordinary animal such as a serpent or crocodile. Elsewhere it has a mythological background in the idea of the Creator's struggle with chaos (Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Is 27:1; 51:9). In the Ugaritic texts the *tnn* appear among the primeval enemies of Baal (e.g., *KTU* 1.3.3.37-44). All this suggests that the explicit statement that God created the *tannînîm* is meant as a polemical point against the idea that God had to subdue any primeval foes before creating the world. Whatever "monsters" that exist were created by God and so, by implication, are under God's control.

At first sight there are considerable similarities between Genesis 1:14-19 and *Enuma Elish* 6.1-22, which tells of Marduk establishing the sun, moon and stars and the calendar. However, there are notable differences. Marduk does not create the heavenly lights (they already exist as divine beings); he simply establishes their places in the heavens. It is significant that in Genesis they are created and are described in purely functional terms. They are simply "calendar

markers" functioning for the benefit of other creatures. Even the sun and moon are not given their proper Hebrew names, probably because in the cognate languages these are also the names of gods, but are just called "lights." Here there seems to be a polemic against the worship of the heavenly lights. Deuteronomy 4:19 explicitly forbids the worship of "the sun, the moon, the stars and all the host of heaven" (cf. Deut. 17:3).

3.2 Genesis 2:4b—3:24. This passage is also a cosmogony. Although, as most OT scholars hold, it may in origin be a separate cosmogony derived from a separate source, it functions canonically as an expansion of the account of the creation of humans as "male and female." Its focus on human origins means that there is even less here about cosmology, narrowly understood, than is the case in Genesis 1:1—2:4a. It is worth noting that the cursing of the ground (Gen 3:17b-19) implies that human dominion over the other creatures is not now what it ought to be.

This passage's description of the Lord God's creative activity is strongly anthropomorphic. The verb used of God "forming" the man and the animals, *yāṣar,* is one that is used of the activity of artisans such as potters and metal workers. There is some similarity here to the Egyptian potter-god Khnum fashioning humans and other living creatures.

3.3. Cosmology in the Rest of the Pentateuch. Apart from the relatively systematic account of creation in Genesis 1:1—2:4a, what is said about cosmology in the rest of the Pentateuch appears as part of the worldview that is implicit in the narratives, laws, poems and other forms of literature that it contains.

3.3.1. God's Relationship to the Cosmos. That God is the Creator is affirmed occasionally in the Pentateuch outside of the creation story. In support of keeping the *sabbath, Exodus 20:11 refers back to Genesis 1:1—2:4a. When it says that "the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them," it uses the verb *ʿāśâ,* which is used a number of times in Genesis 1. It is a very general term for making or doing, and its exact meaning has to be determined by its context. In Deuteronomy 32:6b it is used in parallel with the verb *qānâ,* which is used in Genesis 14:19, 22 to describe *ʾēl ʿelyôn* (God Most High, identified with Yahweh in verse 22) as "maker of heaven and earth." The exact sense of the Hebrew verb in these contexts is disputed. It is generally used of "acquiring" things, especially by purchase. As noted above, the Ugaritic texts describe Asherah as "creator/begetter of the gods" using the cognate verb *qny.* Similarly, an inscription from Karatepe has the phrase *ʾl qn ʾrṣ* ("El, creator of the earth"; see Stadelmann, 6). These parallels, plus the contexts of Genesis 14:19, 22 and Deuteronomy 32:6b suggest the meaning "to create." The link between the wider and narrower meaning may be the idea of acquiring by procreation, which is suggested in Genesis 4:1 (on *qānâ* in this verse, see Westermann; Wenham). As Creator, Yahweh owns the whole cosmos and all its creatures (Deut 10:14).

The Israelites did not think of God leaving the world to its own devices once it had been created. God's bringing of the *flood and the *covenant after the flood "with every living creature" (Gen 9:9-16) shows God's interest in, and concern for, the creation and the living creatures. Likewise, God is the guarantor of the stability of the cycle of the seasons (Gen 8:22). Similarly, *blessings and curses such as those found in Deuteronomy 11:13-17 and the covenant blessings and curses (Lev 26; Deut 28) assume God's continuing ability to act through the forces of nature. Yet the appeal to "the heaven and the earth" as witnesses to God against humankind (Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28) assumes that the created order has a measure of independence from God.

3.3.2. The Structure of the Cosmos. The usual Hebrew way of expressing the idea of "the cosmos" is the expression "the heavens and the earth" or its reverse (Gen 2:4). Occasionally a fuller phrase is used, such as "the heavens and the earth . . . and all their multitude" (Gen 2:1), or "heaven and the heaven of heavens . . . the earth with all that is in it" (Deut 10:14). These phrases suggest a structured reality with parts that are separated from, but related to, each other. This would be in accord with the wider ancient Near Eastern worldview that envisaged the cosmos as a series of "layers," the basic ones being the heavens, the earth and the lower waters. Such a threefold "layering" of the cosmos is found in the commandment against idolatry: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex 20:4 NRSV; cf. Deut 5:8). In Deuteronomy 33:13 there

is the unique reference to "his [Yahweh's] land" with the heaven above it and the deep *(tĕhôm)* beneath it (cf. Gen 49:25). This picture of a three-level structure no doubt has its roots in common human observation and experience of the world. In Akkadian and Egyptian cosmogonies the origin of this structure is explained in obviously mythological terms involving the relationships between gods (see above). The account in Genesis 1:6-8 is more "technological." God makes a *rāqîʿa* to produce a separation within the waters, so creating upper and lower waters with the atmosphere between them. Both the etymology and use of the noun and its associated verb suggest a metal plate or dome. The verb is used in Job 37:18 when God inquires whether Job, like God, can "spread out *[tarqîaʿ]* the skies, hard as a molten mirror" (the mirror envisaged would have been made of polished metal). No doubt this way of describing the origin of the sky is related to the idiomatic expressions that describe the sky in a time of drought being "like iron" (Lev 26:19) or "like bronze" (Deut 28:23).

In Mesopotamian cosmology, as we have seen, heaven itself is structured into three layers. Deuteronomy 10:14 may hint at something like this in the Hebrew worldview, but nothing else in the Pentateuch provides further detail of this. What is clear is that heaven is thought of in two different contexts. First, it is where God dwells. This is stated explicitly in Deuteronomy 26:15, where the word used for "dwelling place," *mĕʿôn*, emphasizes its remoteness. The phrase "The LORD, the God of heaven" (Gen 24:7) implies that heaven is God's abode. The "ladder/staircase" of Jacob's dream stretches from earth to heaven so that God's angels can move between the two (Gen 28:12). In Genesis 21:17 and 22:11 the angel of God/the Lord calls to Hagar/Abraham from heaven. In the vision in Exodus 24:10, God seems to appear seated or standing above the solid dome of the sky (cf. Ezek 1:26). Second, heaven contains the waters above the *rāqîʿa*, which descend as rain when "the windows of heaven" are opened (Gen 7:11; 8:2). This is why the absence of rain is said to be due to God having "shut up the heavens" (Deut 11:17), which are God's "rich storehouse" of the rain (Deut 28:12). Scholars differ over whether the word *mabbûl*, which occurs only of the flood in Genesis 6—11 and in Psalm 29:10, is a Hebrew term for the "heavenly ocean" or simply refers to waters on earth (see Grisanti).

Outside of the phrase "the heavens and the earth," the word *ʾereṣ* has a wide range of meanings, from the whole earth (e.g., Gen 1:2) to a particular country or territory (e.g., Gen. 10:10; 19:28) to simply "the ground" (e.g., Ex 4:3). Although it most often refers to the cultivable ground, *ʾădāmâ* also has a wide range of meanings. When it refers to the whole earth, it usually refers to it as an inhabited place (e.g., Gen 12:3).

Under the earth are the waters of "the deep" (*tĕhôm*, Gen 49:25; Deut 8:7; 33:13). Normally these are thought of as feeding the springs and wells (Deut 8:7), but in the flood story they "burst forth" to add to the rain (Gen 7:11; 8:2). Also under the earth is Sheol *(šĕʾôl)*. People "go down" to Sheol when they die (Gen 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31). This is expressed graphically in the story of Korah's rebellion when the ground "opens its mouth and swallows" the rebels so that they "go down alive to Sheol" (Num: 16:30-33). In Deuteronomy 32:22 Sheol is mentioned in parallel with "the foundations of the mountains." Although some scholars have argued that Sheol denotes no more than "the grave," the place where the body is buried, the fact that it never takes the article in its sixty-five occurrences in the Hebrew Bible does suggest that it is a proper name for the underworld, as does the context of some of its uses, such as Deuteronomy 32:22 (see the discussion by Merrill; *see* Life, Disease and Death).

3.3.3. Conclusion. The cosmology implicit in the worldview expressed in the pentateuchal narratives has a great deal in common with that found in the literature of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. However, in the canonical form of these books these narratives are to be read in the light of the monotheistic and demythologized account of creation in Genesis 1:1—2:4a that introduces them.

See also CREATION; GENESIS, BOOK OF; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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COVENANT

Covenant is undeniably a major theological motif in the Pentateuch as a whole. The term itself *(bĕrît)* is found some eighty-two times in the Pentateuch alone and is used to describe both interpersonal (Gen 14:13; 21:27, 32; 26:28; 31:44; Ex 23:32; 34:12; Deut 7:2) and divine-human "covenants." The former obviously throw considerable light on the meaning of the term, namely, that it is a solemn commitment guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both covenanting parties (for a detailed discussion of its definition, see Hugenberger, 168-215). However, the predominant usage—describing divinely established covenants or the stipulations incorporated within them—is more significant theologically. These divine-human covenants not only occupy a pivotal place within the Pentateuch itself but are also clearly foundational for the revelation that unfolds in the rest of the Bible.

1. The Universal Covenant
2. The Ancestral Covenants
3. The National Covenants

1. The Universal Covenant.

Whereas historical-critical reconstructions generally view the idea of a divine-human covenant as a relatively late innovation that has been retrojected into Israel's earlier traditions (McKenzie, 11-39; for a comprehensive survey see Nicholson, 3-117), the canonical text clearly suggests that the concept extended back into the prepatriarchal era. It is first explicitly introduced in Genesis 6:18, where it anticipates the solemn oath God made to *Noah (as the representative of creation) in the immediate aftermath of the *flood (Gen 9:1-17; cf. Is 54:9). Although some have distinguished between the covenant mentioned in Genesis 6:18 and the postdiluvian covenant established between God and all living creatures (Gen 9), a close reading confirms that the mention of "covenant" at Genesis 6:18 is proleptic. God's initial speech to Noah (Gen 6:13-21) lacks even the most basic covenantal element (i.e., a promissory oath). The mention of covenant at this point simply anticipates the covenant that is ratified in Genesis 9 and discloses God's purpose in the selection and preservation of Noah and his family.

1.1. Covenant and Creation. It is important to understand the Noahic covenant against its literary and theological setting, that is, the catastrophic judgment of the flood. The latter, in turn, must be read against the backdrop of *creation and the *Fall, for as D. J. A. Clines has underlined, "the Flood is represented not just as a punishment for the *sin of the generation of the Flood, but as a reversal of creation" (Clines, 80). Whereas Genesis 1 depicts creation in terms of separation and distinction, in Genesis 6—7 such distinctions are eradicated. In Genesis 1:6-8 God establishes a firmament to keep the heavenly waters at bay, but the opening of the "windows of heaven" in Genesis 7:11 tears this protective canopy apart (*see* Cosmology). Likewise, the distinction between subterranean waters and the earth established in Genesis 1:9 is obliterated by the "fountains of the deep" bursting out in Genesis 7:11. In the flood, the creative process (bringing order out of a watery chaos) is reversed. As Clines aptly concludes, "The flood is only the final stage in a process of cosmic disintegration that began in Eden" (Clines, 81).

It logically follows from this that the climax of the flood narrative is best understood in terms of a re-creation—a restoration of the divine order that had been established at creation. As a comparison with the Genesis creation narratives again illustrates, such is indeed the case. The earth is made inhabitable by the separation of the land from the water (Gen 8:1-3; cf. Gen 1:9-10). Living creatures are brought out to repopulate the earth (Gen 8:17-19; cf. Gen 1:20-22, 24-25). Days and seasons are reestablished (Gen 8:22; cf. Gen 1:14-18). Humanity is blessed by God (Gen 9:1; cf. Gen 1:28a), commanded to "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1b, 7; cf. Gen 1:28b) and given dominion over the ani-

mal kingdom (Gen 9:2; cf. Gen 1:28c). Finally, God provides humans—made in his *image (Gen 9:6; cf. Gen 1:26-27)—with food (Gen 9:3; cf. Gen 1:29-30).

For all this parallelism, however, there is one very significant difference between the re-created world of the postflood era and the original creation. As noted in Genesis 8:21, the world has not been restored to its pristine, pre-Fall condition. Rather, it is still marred by human sinfulness, significantly described in the same terms that previously provided the rationale for the deluge (Gen 6:5); what earlier explained the necessity of the flood now highlights the necessity of the covenant that God is about to establish. Thus understood, this postdiluvian covenant (Gen 8:20—9:17) reaffirms God's original creational intent, which the flood had placed in abeyance and which humanity's inherent sinfulness would otherwise continue to place in jeopardy.

While the formal declaration of the covenant oath (cf. Is 54:9) is admittedly restricted to Genesis 9:8-17, the actual ratification of the Noahic covenant begins with the offering of *sacrifices in the previous chapter (Gen 8:20). The immediate context connects this sacrificial ritual with God's deliberation to preserve the creative order without future disruption by flood (Gen 8:20-22); consequently, these sacrifices serve to explain the basis of the covenant promises that follow. Moreover, such a sacrificial ritual was apparently anticipated by God himself (cf. Gen 7:2-3). Thus Noah's action here is more than a spontaneous expression of thanksgiving; it is apparently something that God himself had intended. Furthermore, the Noahic covenant is not alone in mentioning sacrificial ritual in the context of covenant ratification (cf. Gen 15:9-10; Ex 24:5-6), which may indicate that such a sacrificial ritual was a common precursor to a covenantal oath. The sacrifices of Genesis 8 are thus best understood as an intrinsic element in the establishment of the Noahic covenant. In any case, it is difficult to deny that it was these sacrifices that prompted the subsequent divine *promise (Gen 8:21-22)—a divine self-deliberation that forms the basis of the oath reflected in Genesis 9:9-11: never again will God's plans be interrupted by a suspension of the natural order. Hence humanity's creational mandate (cf. Gen 1:26-30) is renewed (Gen 9:1-7) and a solemn guarantee of the preservation, without further divine interruption, of life on earth is given (Gen 9:8-17).

The juxtaposition of Genesis 9:1-7 and 9:8-17 highlights the fact that the Noahic covenant incorporates bilateral obligations. Admittedly, this covenant is unconditional in the sense that God's promises here are not contingent upon human response or behavior. Even so, the introduction of divine commands indicates that the obligations enshrined in this covenant are not unilateral.

The opening pericope in Genesis 9 clearly focuses on the human obligations, as is underlined by the bracketing of these verses with divine imperatives (Gen 9:1, 7) that echo the creation mandate in Genesis 1. Thus, the primary obligation imposed on humanity is that of fulfilling the role appointed by God in the beginning (Gen 1:28). Once again, however, attention is drawn to the fact that the circumstances (possibly since the time of the Fall) have undergone significant change (Gen 9:2-3). A degree of enmity now exists between humans and animals, humanity's nonvegetarian diet—now divinely sanctioned (cf. Gen 1:29)—undoubtedly contributing no small part. With these new circumstances in view, further responsibilities are imposed (Gen 9:4-6). Animal life in general, and human life in particular, must be treated with the dignity it deserves. As a token of such respect, the consumption of *blood (representative of the animal's life force; cf. Lev 17:11) is strictly prohibited. Moreover, while animal slaughter is permissible, the killing of humans (whether by other people or by animals) is a capital offense (Gen 9:5). Significantly, the reason given for such severe punishment is the fact that humans, even in the post-Fall, postflood world, retain their unique status as divine image-bearers (Gen 9:6). Thus, in this new, postdiluvian era, Noah and his sons are commanded to carry out humanity's creation mandate, while at the same time treating animal life generally and human life especially with due respect.

The formal declaration of the divine covenant in Genesis 9:8-17 is made up of two distinct parts: the first (Gen 9:8-11) articulates the divine oath, whereas the second (Gen 9:12-17) announces the covenant sign (*see* Rainbow). As L. A. Turner plausibly suggests, the latter element, God's "bow in the clouds" (Gen 9:12-17), probably signifies the domelike barrier (*rāqîʿa*, "firmament") restraining the "waters above" (Gen 1:6-8). While this visible symbol in the sky would un-

doubtedly reassure humankind, its express intent is to remind God himself to keep his covenantal promise. Thus, unlike subsequent examples (i.e., *circumcision and *sabbath), this first covenant sign chiefly serves to remind God of his covenant obligation.

In keeping with the divine deliberation of Genesis 8:21-22, the covenant is universal in scope—encompassing Noah, his sons, their descendants and "every living creature" (Gen 9:9-10, 12, 15-17)—and "everlasting" in endurance (Gen 9:16). In the present context the latter appears to signify "as long as the earth endures" (Gen 8:22). In any case, the covenant emphatically guarantees that a cataclysmic flood will never again be repeated (Gen 9:11-12, 15; cf. Gen 8:21).

Given that the Noahic covenant provides the biblical-theological framework within which all subsequent divine-human covenants operate, its universal scope is undoubtedly significant. As suggested by the allusions to Genesis 1 noted above, the universal scope of this covenant implies that the *blessing for which humanity was created and the creation that had been preserved through the flood will ultimately encompass not just one people or nation, but rather the whole earth. Accordingly, this universal emphasis of Genesis 1—11 is not lost entirely in the subsequent chapters of Genesis and beyond, despite their narrowing focus.

1.2. Covenant with Creation? While the above analysis acknowledges clear links between the Noahic covenant and creation, some scholars go further, suggesting that the Noahic covenant is in fact a renewal of an already-existing covenant—one that God had previously made in the context of creation itself. Traditionally, such scholars have posited a pre-Fall "covenant of works" and a post-Fall "covenant of *grace," but several recent advocates of an antediluvian covenant prefer to speak in terms of an all-embracing covenant established between God and his creation. An exegetical case for such a "covenant with creation," allegedly implicit in Genesis 1—3, is mounted by W. J. Dumbrell (1984, 11-43), for whom this hypothetical covenant was established with creation generally rather than with humans in particular. Dumbrell's argument leans heavily on his exegesis of Genesis 6:18, from which he infers that the covenant there announced is simply the confirmation of the covenant God had previously "brought into existence by the act of creation itself" (Dumbrell 1984, 43). This conclusion is based on how the Noahic covenant is introduced and its ratification described. Genesis 6:18 (cf. Gen 9:8-17) introduces the Noahic covenant using a possessive pronoun, "*my* covenant" *(bĕrîtî)*. For Dumbrell, "the most natural interpretation . . . is that an existing arrangement to be preserved is referred to, to which no more specific appeal is required than the denomination of it as 'my covenant' " (Dumbrell 1984, 24).

However, prior to this there is not even a hint of any covenant being established—at least between God and humans. (Hugenberger [216-79] presents a compelling case for identifying a marriage covenant in Gen 2:23-24.) Explicit covenant terminology is conspicuously absent in the creation narrative. Admittedly, the absence of such covenant language does not preclude the possibility that God established a covenant in the context of creation (cf. the absence of explicit covenantal terminology in 2 Sam 7). However, unlike the Davidic covenant—for which there is ample explicit support elsewhere (e.g., 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:3, 28, 34; 132:12)—the corroborative evidence for an antediluvian covenant between God and creation is rather tenuous.

While some scholars have pointed to Jeremiah 33:20-26, the references here to a covenant with inanimate created things seem to allude more to dimensions of the Noahic covenant reflected in Genesis 8:22—9:13 (esp. Gen 8:22) than to an implicit "covenant with creation" in Genesis 1—3. A somewhat similar analogy in Jeremiah 31:35-37 may indeed allude to the fixed order established at creation. Significantly, however, nothing is said in this context of a divine covenant with creation. Neither here nor elsewhere is it suggested that the cycle of day and night and the other cosmic ordinances established at creation were ratified by divine covenant prior to that established with Noah.

The only explicit textual support for the existence of an antediluvian covenant is a text whose interpretation is notoriously difficult. While some Reformed theologians have pointed to Hosea 6:7 as corroborating an "Adamic covenant" of some sort, the translation (and hence, the interpretation) of the key phrase, *wĕhēmmâ kĕ'ādām ʿābĕrû bĕrît* (lit. "and they like *Adam have transgressed a covenant"), is hotly disputed. Although several translations and commentators interpret *kĕ'ādām* in a personal sense,

meaning "like Adam," most interpreters emend the key word to read, *bĕʾādām* ("in/at Adam"), taking the proper noun in its geographical sense—referring to the first town Israel reached after crossing into the Promised Land (Josh 3:16). Further support for this geographical understanding is found in the reference to Gilead and Shechem (Hos 6:8-9) in the same context and in the deployment of the locative *šām* ("there") immediately after *bĕrît* in Hosea 6:7. Indeed, even with no adjustments to the Masoretic Text (MT), the text may be translated in several ways that clearly militate against using it as a proof text for a hypothetical Adamic covenant, still less the "covenant with creation" postulated by Dumbrell. The significance of this must not be overlooked, for without Hosea 6:7 there is no explicit textual support for a covenant established between God and humanity prior to the flood.

Undaunted by this fact, several scholars have sought to find exegetical support for such a covenant in the Genesis creation texts themselves. J. J. Niehaus (143-59) attempts to shore up Dumbrell's case by recourse to *form criticism. His case is undermined, however, by the rather forced and tenuous nature of some of his suggested analogies between Genesis 1:1—2:3 and a typical second-millennium suzerain-vassal treaty pattern. A better case is offered by C. G. Bartholomew (28-30), who clearly recognizes the deficiencies in the traditional defense of a covenant within the context of creation. Nevertheless, while the allusions to Genesis 1—2 that he detects in subsequent covenant texts validate the claim that these covenants are "anchored in" and "involve the fulfilling of God's creative purposes," this does not necessarily indicate "a covenantal understanding of creation in Genesis 1 and 2" (Bartholomew, 29). Moreover, Bartholomew's attempt to explain the absence of key covenantal elements (e.g., an oath or covenant rite) in Genesis 1 and 2 is unconvincing; he maintains that "the normal assurance and legalizing element of covenant" is unnecessary prior to the fall (Bartholomew, 30), but this surely begs the question whether *covenant* is a necessary constitutive element at this stage either (cf. Stek).

As well as the glaring absence of corroborative evidence for his postulated creation covenant, Dumbrell's exegesis of Genesis 6:18 may itself be challenged. Exodus 19:5 analogously heralds the formal inauguration of the Sinaitic covenant (cf. Ex 24:8), referring to the latter (as yet, unestablished) as "my covenant." In keeping with his earlier suggestion, Dumbrell again suggests that an element of continuity is reflected here by the pronominal suffix: "The phrase 'my covenant' contains the same unilateral implications as are suggested by references such as Gen. 6:18; 9:9ff, hinting thus that the Sinai revelation may in fact be further specification only of an already existing relationship" (Dumbrell 1984, 80-81). This, however, is clearly a circular argument; Dumbrell assumes that the Noahic covenant *must* be understood as an expansion of his postulated covenant with creation. Without the latter premise, Dumbrell's conclusion with respect to the Sinaitic covenant is not immediately obvious. Indeed, it is seriously undermined by the fact that the Sinai covenant is presented as a new development in the pentateuchal narrative. Moreover, this is supported by the use of the verb *kārat* ("cut") in Exodus 24:8, which according to Dumbrell is deployed only in the context of the initiation of a new covenant (see below).

A major factor affecting the force of this latter argument is the precise connotation of the verb *hēqîm* ("establish") used in Genesis 6:18 and 9:9. As in Genesis 17 (in which the covenant concept reappears in the *Abraham narrative after its initial introduction in Gen 15:18), the verbs *nātan* ("give") and *hēqîm* are used with reference to the Noahic covenant rather than the more idiomatic *kārat* ("cut")—the verb most commonly associated with the initiation of a divine-human covenant in the OT (cf. the Abrahamic covenant, Gen 15:18; the Sinaitic covenant, Ex 24:8; the Davidic covenant, Ps 89:3; the new covenant, Jer 31:31). Dumbrell maintains that the ratification of secular covenants in the OT is likewise described using this same verb and that none of the analogous verbs used in association with a *bĕrît* is strictly synonymous with *kārat*. Such verbs, he avers, are not deployed with reference to a covenant's actual initiation (i.e., the point of entry) but are consistently used in relation to covenants that have been established formerly. From this Dumbrell concludes that it is "more than likely that in contexts where *hēqîm berît* stands (Gen. 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17; 17:7, 19, 21; Ex. 6:4; Lev. 26:9; Deut. 8:18; 2 Kgs. 23:3) the institution of a covenant is not being referred to but rather its perpetuation" (Dumbrell 1984, 26).

If, as Dumbrell insists, this verb is used exclusively for perpetuating a preexisting relationship, one must concede that Genesis 6:18 refers to an already-existing covenant.

However, a careful reading of the relevant texts amply demonstrates the fallacy of Dumbrell's premise. M. Weinfeld (260) offers a more comprehensive list of such texts and therefore provides a better basis on which to evaluate Dumbrell's assertion. In several of the texts cited by Weinfeld, the key verbs do indeed refer back to established covenants rather than to the initiation of new covenants (e.g., 2 Sam 23:5). Nevertheless, this is difficult to maintain for some texts (e.g., Num 25:12; Deut 29:12 [MT 11]; 2 Chron 15:12; Ezek 16:8; 17:13), arguably including the relevant covenantal texts in Genesis also (i.e., Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11; 17:2, 7, 19). Moreover, while the causative verb *hēqîm* may be understood as "to confirm" or "to maintain" (e.g., Lev 26:9; Deut 8:18), it has a wide range of nuances in the OT (see Williamson, 197-98). A close examination of the relevant texts demonstrates that Dumbrell's conclusion is seriously flawed. For example, as R. T. Beckwith (99 n. 23) observes, the deployment of *hēqîm* in Exodus 6:4 illustrates that this verb does not necessarily suggest the confirmation or perpetuation of a previously existing covenant. Similarly, in Jeremiah 34:18 a strong case can be made in support of a covenant being instituted and not just renewed (cf. Jer 34:10). Since the context alone must determine the meaning attached to *hēqîm* in any given text, Dumbrell is mistaken simply to infer from the use of this verb that an already existing covenant is being maintained. Rather, as Weinfeld (260) acknowledges, several verbs may be used to reflect the institution or ratification of a *bĕrît*, one of which is *hēqîm*. This being so, there is no compelling argument for interpreting Genesis 6:18 as alluding to the reiteration of a previously existing covenant. As a straightforward reading suggests, here the covenant concept is being introduced for the first time.

Rather than indicating that this is an already-existing covenant, the description of the Noahic covenant (like the subsequent Mosaic covenant, Ex 19:5) as "my covenant" simply underlines its *unilateral* character. God describes the covenant as "my covenant" because he initiates it and he alone determines its constituent elements. Even Dumbrell recognizes such a connotation for the pronominal suffix in both texts (i.e., Gen 6:18; Ex 19:5), and it is quite unnecessary to extrapolate further. Thus the use of *bĕrîtî* ("my covenant") in Genesis 6 cannot be said to prove per se that the covenant spoken of in this chapter is simply a reiteration or an expansion of a covenant already recounted (implicitly) in the opening chapters of Genesis. Rather, the pronoun may simply emphasize the divine prerogative in every aspect of the covenant in view. Thus understood, Genesis 6:18 heralds the formal inauguration of the Noahic covenant set out in Genesis 8:20—9:17.

While Dumbrell's conclusion—that Genesis 1—3 must portray an antediluvian covenantal relationship—is a *non sequitur*, he is obviously correct to recognize several clear echoes of the creation narrative in the Noahic covenant. But these echoes suggest merely that God intended, through Noah, to fulfill his original creative intent; they do not necessarily presuppose the existence of a covenant between God and inanimate creation or indicate that the material in Genesis 1—2 must be understood covenantally. As R. Rendtorff concludes, "Creation can only be called a *bĕrît* from the point of view of its restoration after the flood" (Rendtorff, 392).

2. The Ancestral Covenants.

Since the Noahic covenant has never been abrogated (attested to by the ongoing validity of its sign—the rainbow), subsequent divine-human covenants must be viewed within the context of its all-encompassing framework. Thus, rather than superseding the covenant established between God and Noah, the ancestral covenants, despite their narrower primary focus, have the same ultimate objectives in view, as is clear from the programmatic agenda announced to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

2.1. The Programmatic Agenda. Genesis 12:1-3 is clearly a pivotal text insofar as the book of Genesis is concerned. Heralding yet another new stage in God's dealings with humanity, it is set against the backdrop of the primeval prologue (the *Babel incident in particular) and fixes the agenda not only for the patriarchal narratives, but also for the rest of the Pentateuch and beyond. Bracketed by the narrator's comments (Gen 12:1, 4a), this divine speech announces a series of promises that are linked to Abraham's willingness to obey Yahweh's instructions. The first part of the divine speech is reasonably straightforward: God gives Abraham the

command to "Go!" and promises nationhood ("a great nation, blessing and a great name"). However, the interpretation of the latter part of the speech is complicated by the imperative form of *hyh* ("to be") at the end of verse 2 and the use of the Niphal form of *brk* ("to bless") at the end of verse 3.

2.1.1. The Imperative Form of the Verb hyh. While some have suggested emending vowels of the MT to read "and it [i.e., "your name," v. 2b] shall be a blessing," this is unnecessary; the MT may be taken either as an emphatic consequence clause—"so that you will effect blessing" (so most English versions) or as a second command, namely, "Be a blessing!" (so many recent studies). In support of the latter interpretation, a similar construction (an imperative verb string involving *hyh* + a noun) is repeated in Genesis 17:1b, where the verb undoubtedly retains its imperative force ("*be* blameless"). Further support for retaining the imperative reading can be adduced from the fact that both imperatives in Genesis 12:1-3 are directly followed by cohortatives, a construction normally expressing purpose or result. Since the first of these imperative-cohortative clauses expresses a conditional promise, it is reasonable to conclude that an identical construction in the same pericope should be similarly understood (i.e., as a second conditional promise). Thus understood, Abraham's divine commission was twofold: "Go . . . be a blessing!"

2.1.2. The Significance of the Niphal Form of brk. Here also there are two main lines of interpretation: *nibrĕkû* has generally been understood either in a passive sense (i.e., "all the families of the earth shall *be blessed* through you") or in a reflexive sense (i.e., "by you all the families of the earth shall *bless themselves*"). This interpretative crux is compounded by the fact that two different verb forms are used in relation to this particular promise within the patriarchal narratives: the Niphal (generally passive) in Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 28:14; and the Hithpael (generally reflexive) in Genesis 22:18 and 26:4.

The antiquity of the passive interpretation in Genesis 12:3 is reflected by both the Septuagint and the NT (cf. Acts 3:25; Gal 3:8). Moreover, it can plausibly be argued that were a reflexive voice intended, this could have been communicated unambiguously through a consistent use of the primarily reflexive Hithpael. Advocates of a reflexive translation, on the other hand, contend that a passive connotation could have been conveyed unambiguously by the Qal passive participle or the Pual and that the meaning of the reflexive expression (to evoke blessing upon oneself using Abraham's name) is illustrated by several instances of this type of formula elsewhere (cf. Gen 48:20; Ruth 4:11; Zech 8:13).

However, the fact that the promises are explicitly related to the person of Abraham rather than to his name constitutes a serious problem for those who wish to interpret the verb reflexively. A further difficulty is that the context anticipates that the nations will participate in Israel's blessing (in Gen 12:3a, what is expected to be the norm is expressed by the plural); thus merely *wishing* for such blessing would be "decidedly anti-climactic" (Dumbrell 1984, 70). Moreover, an exclusively reflexive interpretation of this text would appear to be ruled out also by the related texts in which the Niphal is employed. This is most transparent in Genesis 18:18, where a statement concerning a mere wish expressed by other nations would hardly explain Abraham's significance. It seems unlikely, therefore, that these occurrences of the Niphal form of *brk* should be interpreted reflexively, despite the presence of the Hithpael in Genesis 22:18 and 26:4.

One plausible way to account for the latter is by giving the Niphal a "middle" sense (i.e., "win or find blessing"). This translation has the advantage of incorporating both a passive and reflexive meaning, thus explaining why the compiler of Genesis allowed both forms of the verb to stand unaltered in the final text. If a middle rather than a passive sense were intended, this would also explain why the more common Qal passive participle or Pual of *brk* was not employed. Moreover, as Dumbrell correctly points out, "Such a sense would also be more congruent with the general Old Testament position on mission, whereby the nations are consistently presented as seekers, coming in to a reconstituted Israel" (Dumbrell 1984, 71).

However, this still leaves unexplained the distribution of the two forms of *brk* in the relevant texts. Why is the Niphal used in Genesis 12:3; 18:18; and 28:14 but the Hithpael in Genesis 22:18 and 26:4? A close comparison of these texts suggests that, rather than being used synonymously, each verb form has a distinct nuance (Williamson, 227-28). Where the Niphal is deployed, a less direct situation is implied: the

one through whom the nations will acquire blessing is Abraham (or, in the case of Gen 28:14, primarily Jacob). In contrast, in contexts where the Hithpael is found, the channel of blessing is the promised "seed" through whom the anticipated blessing will be communicated directly (cf. Ps 72:17; Jer 4:2). Thus the Hithpael form of the promise may be understood as a "benefactive reflexive" (Waltke and O'Connor, §26.2e) and translated as: "in your seed all the nations of the earth will acquire blessing for themselves." The Niphal, on the other hand, may be understood as a middle: "through you all the families of the earth may/will experience blessing."

2.1.3. The Twofold Agenda of Genesis 12:1-3. As noted above, the narrator's comments provide a structural framework for these verses. Between his comments are two sets of conditional promises related by the theme of blessing. The demarcation of these conditional promises is indicated not only by the Hebrew syntax (the repeated imperative-cohortative structure) but also by their respective emphases. In the first segment (Gen 12:1-2a) Abraham is to be the recipient of blessing, whereas in the second (Gen 12:2b-3) he is to be the mediator of blessing. Whereas the first part of the divine speech focuses exclusively on the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham, the second half introduces the relationship between Abraham and others (those whom Yahweh will bless or curse accordingly). The promissory focus in these two sections of Genesis 12:1-3 is therefore not identical, and it is important that each is clearly defined and carefully distinguished. Unfortunately, D. J. A. Clines fails to distinguish carefully between the promises relating to nationhood and those relating to international blessing. Consequently, he misleadingly collapses both dimensions into his promissory category of "divine-human relationship" (Clines, 30). While divine-human relationship is certainly the glue that binds the national and international dimensions of the promise together, it is important not to blur the distinction between the promise of a "great nation" and the promise of international blessing.

Related to the first imperative ("Go!") is the prospect of national status, conveyed in the threefold promise of "a great nation, blessing and a great name" (Gen 12:2)—the "great nation" and the "great name" defining more precisely the nature of the anticipated "blessing." The use of the noun *gôy* ("nation") signifies that a geopolitical entity is in view, as is further supported by the fact that the existence of Abraham's descendants as a *gôy* is intrinsically related to the territorial aspect of the divine promise (Gen 12:7; 17:8; 18:18). Abraham's landless descendants constitute a people (*ʿam*), but in order to be a nation (*gôy*), they must have territory of their own.

The prospect of a "great name" likewise relates to the overarching promise of nationhood. This is suggested not only by the implicit contrast with the failed aspirations of the tower-builders of Babel (Gen 11:4), whose attempts at civil organization (nationhood) had been thwarted by divine judgment, but also by the fact that this same language is used in relation to David (2 Sam 7:9) in the context of national security and international prestige.

Thus the first half of Genesis 12:1-3 relates primarily to Abraham, holding out to him the prospect of nationhood. There is, however, a subtle shift in promissory focus in the second part of this divine speech. No longer is the emphasis on a national entity that will stem from Abraham but on an international community to whom Abraham will mediate blessing. Indeed, the fact that God no longer speaks in terms of a "nation" (or "nations"), but rather of "all the families of the ground" is perhaps significant. While the term *mišpāḥâ* ("clan, extended family") can parallel *gôy* (cf. Jer 10:25; Ezek 20:32; Nahum 3:4), its deployment in the present context may hint at the nonpolitical nature of the blessing enshrined in this universal promise. This may also be alluded to by the use of the term *ʾădāmâ* ("ground"), which Yahweh had earlier cursed (Gen 3:17-19).

In any case, it is clear from Genesis 12:3a that such blessing will not come automatically to "all the families of the ground." Rather, it is contingent upon their attitude to Abraham. As C. W. Mitchell underlines, "The promise of blessing is conditional. Only those on good terms with Abraham will acquire blessing, while those hostile to him will be the object of God's devastating curse" (Mitchell, 30). Potential recipients of such blessing must "bless" Abraham, which, like its antonym in Genesis 12:3 (i.e., "disdain") denotes deeds rather than mere words (see Mitchell, 126-31). How such blessing or disdain translates into action is not specified, only that one's rela-

tionship with Abraham is what determines whether blessing or curse is experienced.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we may conclude that Yahweh's speech in Genesis 12:1-3 anticipates two quite distinct prospects linked by a logical progression: the first section focuses on national blessing promised to Abraham; the second section focuses on international blessing promised through Abraham. While clearly distinct, these two promissory goals are nevertheless related by the fact that the blessing promised in the second part of the divine speech is in some way dependent upon the promise related in the first; that is, Abraham's role as a mediator of blessing is contingent upon his being a recipient of blessing. Moreover, its climactic position at the end of the speech indicates that "the primary motive behind the call of Abraham is God's desire to bring blessing, rather than cursing, upon the families of the earth. The promise that Abraham will become a great nation ... must be understood as being subservient to God's principal desire to bless all the families of the earth" (Alexander 1997a, 51). Thus, while Yahweh's purposes primarily interest Abraham and the nation that will derive from him, ultimately they have a much wider concern: "all the families of the earth" who, through Abraham, will also experience blessing. This twofold agenda of Genesis 12:1-3 is clearly significant, as it prepares the reader for an otherwise anomalous feature of the ensuing narrative: the inclusion of two starkly different reports of covenants being made between God and Abraham.

2.2. The Abrahamic Covenants. Most exegetes take it as axiomatic that God's covenant with Abraham is a single entity instituted in several stages (between two and four). Scholars operating from a diachronic perspective generally consider these "stages" to be a literary construct, arising from the amalgamation of different sources or traditions allegedly underlying the final form of the Abraham narrative. Thus understood, Genesis 15 and 17 are simply variant accounts, from different periods, of what is essentially a single event. The idea of distinct stages in the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant has been introduced artificially by the subsequent redaction that took place during the compilation of the Abraham cycle. However, as well as involving several unwarranted presuppositions with respect to the literary and theological differences between Genesis 15 and 17 (see Williamson, 81-95), such diachronic analyses fail to explain the inclusion of these two covenant pericopes in the final form of the Abraham narrative. The latter must be addressed, for—unless one uncritically assumes a somewhat piecemeal and incoherent process of final redaction—each of these chapters makes its own distinct theological contribution to the narrative as a whole.

From a synchronic perspective, those who hold to a single Abrahamic covenant typically understand its staged revelation in terms of Abraham's developing relationship with Yahweh. Opinion is divided over when the covenant is initially established (i.e., whether in Gen 12 or Gen 15), but it is agreed that subsequent chapters focusing on God's promises to Abraham simply confirm and amplify the same covenant. Thus understood, Genesis 17 is not an alternative account of the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant, but is either a renewal of the previously established covenant or the next phase of its development, in which its promissory aspects are supplemented with important, but previously undisclosed, obligatory dimensions. However, the problem with these suggestions is that they fail to explain the long time lapse between these two "stages" of covenant making or to account adequately for the significant differences between Genesis 15 and 17—both in terms of their covenantal framework and their promissory emphases.

2.2.1. The Covenant of Genesis 15. Like the Noahic covenant (cf. Gen 8:20), the establishment of the covenant in Genesis 15 is introduced by a sacrificial ritual (Gen 15:9). This strange ritual has generally been interpreted as a self-maledictory curse akin to Jeremiah 34:18, although such an interpretation has not gone unchallenged (cf. Wenham). But whatever the precise symbolism, the important point to note is that God alone (represented by the theophanic imagery of fire and smoke) passes between the dissected animals, indicating the unilateral nature of this particular covenant. The fact that there is no "sign" associated with this particular covenant is probably explained by the complete absence of human obligations. Thus, the covenant established in Genesis 15 is unilateral, more akin to the royal grant (so Weinfeld, 2.270; however, cf. Haran, 207 n. 8) than to the suzerain-vassal treaty, with obliga-

tions being undertaken by God alone.

These obligations—the promises solemnly guaranteed in Genesis 15—relate to Abraham's posterity and territory (i.e., nationhood). Significantly, there is no mention in Genesis 15 of any international dimensions or indeed of royal descendants or a perpetual divine-human relationship (cf. Gen 17). Rather, the promises relate solely to the establishment of a "great nation" (cf. Gen 12:2) in a carefully defined geographical region (Gen 15:18-21). Moreover, the chronology for the fulfillment of this covenant is stated quite explicitly (Gen 15:13-16). Nothing is revealed (at least in Gen 15) in relation to events subsequent to the establishment of nationhood. The covenant in Genesis 15 is not described as "everlasting" (cf. Gen 17:7, 13, 19), nor is the land said to be an "everlasting possession" (Gen 17:8).

2.2.2. The Covenant of Genesis 17. In contrast to the unilateral framework of Genesis 15, the "eternal" covenant of Genesis 17 is plainly bilateral. Such is clear not only from how it is introduced ("Walk before me and be blameless so that I may establish my covenant with both you and your descendants"), but also from the way it is more fully set out in the following verses ("As for me . . . As for you . . ." [Gen 17:4, 9]). The human obligations are twofold, ethical and ritual. Irreproachable behavior (Gen 17:1) is a prerequisite for the establishment of this covenant (the verbal inflections in Gen 17:2, 7 imply that this covenant had not yet been established with Abraham), and the rite of male circumcision is necessary in order "keep" the covenant and enjoy its benefits (Gen 17:9-14). Circumcision also functions as the "sign of the covenant" (Gen 17:11), a feature that seems to be in keeping with a covenant that is not just promissory in nature. Thus, unlike the earlier "covenant between the pieces," the covenant of Genesis 17 incorporates human obligations as well as those undertaken by Yahweh.

The promissory emphasis in Genesis 17 is also markedly different. Although the promises of Genesis 15 are not altogether absent (cf. Gen 17:8), the stress in Genesis 17 is on Abraham's international significance. His numerical proliferation (Gen 17:2) is elaborated chiefly in terms of his becoming "the father of multitudinous nations" (Gen 17:4-6; cf. 17:16), a prospect further encapsulated in the new name he receives at this point in the narrative. While most interpreters have understood this promise of multinational fatherhood in a physical sense (i.e., Abraham will be the progenitor of nations), the fact that only the *Israelites and Edomites can actually trace their lineage to Abraham and Sarah suggests that the focus is wider than mere biological ancestry. This is further suggested by the fact that the covenant community is extended in Genesis 17 to include nonbiological members of Abraham's household. Moreover, in every other place where the inseparable preposition *lĕ* ("to, for") is joined to the noun *ʾāb* ("father") in a resultative sense (GKC §119t), a nonphysical concept of fatherhood is undeniably in view (Williamson, 158-59). Hence this promise of multinational fatherhood is best interpreted in a metaphorical sense (i.e., Abraham will be their benefactor; cf. Gen 45:8). Thus understood, Abraham will be "the father of multitudinous nations" not in terms of biological ancestry but in terms of mediating divine blessing to them.

How the latter will materialize is elucidated in Genesis 17:6b-8. This covenant will be established (i.e., perpetuated) through a particular line of Abraham's descendants, who alone will inherit the blessings promised to Abraham (the promise of becoming "a great nation" through which blessing will be mediated to the nations). This special line of Abrahamic descent will begin with *Isaac (cf. Gen 17:19-21), and from it will come a royal line of "seed" (the "kings" of Gen 17:6, 16; cf. 35:11). Admittedly, it is not explicitly stated in Genesis that God will perpetuate this covenant through these royal descendants of Abraham. Nevertheless, such an inference may be drawn from the fact that the context of each of the three texts in Genesis that mention these kings is the transfer of covenant promises from one generation to the next (cf. Gen 17:7-8, 17-21; 35:12). Moreover, the association of international blessing with the ideal Davidic king in Psalm 72:17 further suggests that the patriarchal promise will ultimately be fulfilled through a royal descendant of Abraham, arguably (see Alexander 1997b) the subject in Genesis 22:17b-18 also. It would appear, therefore, that Abraham will become the "father [i.e., the spiritual benefactor] of multitudinous nations" through this royal "seed."

2.2.3. One Covenant or Two? It is clear from the above analysis that the covenants mentioned in Genesis 15 and 17 are manifestly dif-

ferent in both nature (temporal/eternal; unilateral/bilateral) and primary emphases (national/international). The suggestion that they are simply two stages of the one covenant is seriously undermined by the inexplicable gap of some thirteen years between them and by the consistent projection of the covenant in Genesis 17 into the future (lit. "I will give my covenant" [Gen 17:2]; "I will establish my covenant" [Gen 17:7]). Both these anomalies, as well as the significant differences between the two covenant chapters, suggest a more plausible synchronic explanation: these chapters focus on two distinct but related covenants (Williamson, 212-14).

Such a conclusion is further suggested by the fact that the different emphases in Genesis 15 and 17 mirror the two separate strands set out in the programmatic agenda of Genesis 12:1-3. Genesis 15 concentrates on the divine promise to make Abraham a "great nation" (Gen 12:2), whereas Genesis 17 focuses more on the divine promise that through Abraham "all the families of the ground will experience blessing" (Gen 12:3). Thus understood, two distinct covenants were established between God and Abraham. The first (established in Gen 15) solemnly guaranteed God's promise to make Abraham into a "great nation." The second covenant (anticipated in Gen 17, but not yet established) similarly guaranteed God's promise to bless the nations through Abraham and his "seed."

The fact that Genesis 17 anticipates a further covenant ratification in the Abraham narrative also explains several anomalous aspects of its climactic chapter (Gen 22), not least the rationale behind this extraordinary test of Abraham's faith. If, as suggested above, Abraham's compliance with the divine command in Genesis 17:1 was a prerequisite for the establishment of the second covenant, his submissive obedience in Genesis 22 clearly fulfills such a requirement. The covenantal significance of this incident would also account for the necessity of a sacrifice (even after Isaac's life had been spared), the timing of the second divine speech (Gen 22:15-18) and the emphasis on Abraham's obedience (Gen 22:16b, 18b; cf. 26:5). Most important, it would explain why the international aspect of the divine promise—the aspect of the programmatic agenda that had not yet been ratified by divine covenant—was reiterated at this point (Gen 22:18). Admittedly, the term *covenant* is not expressly used in the immediate context. Nevertheless, the sacrificing of the ram and God's swearing of an oath (cf. Gen 21:22-31) indicate that this is indeed a covenant-making occasion.

Therefore, through his obedience to God's most difficult command (Gen 22:2), Abraham supremely demonstrates his irreproachable behavior and so fulfills the stated prerequisite for the establishment of this particular covenant (Gen 17:1). In so doing, Abraham typifies the kind of righteous behavior expected of his covenant heirs (Gen 18:18-19) and later demanded of his national descendants (Gen 26:5; cf. Neh 9:13).

2.3. The Covenant Heirs. Within the rest of the book of Genesis, as in the Abraham narrative itself, attention focuses primarily on the promise relating to Abraham's "seed." This does not lessen the significance of the other promissory aspects, but simply highlights that the promise of seed was in some sense foundational. Such an inference is clearly a logical one to draw, given that without descendants there would be no one to inherit the land, nor would there be anyone through whom blessing could be mediated to other people(s).

As noted above, Genesis 17 suggests that the patriarchal covenant(s) will be perpetuated, not with Abraham's descendants generally, but with a particular line of descendants that will commence with Isaac (Gen 17:16-21). Confirmation of this is found in Genesis 21:12 ("it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you"). This verse is especially interesting because of the contrast implied in the context (cf. Gen 21:13) between Abraham's biological descendants generally and a special line of descendants traced exclusively through Isaac. While both, because of their Abrahamic ancestry, will expand to national proportions, only Isaac's descendants will perpetuate the line of descent in and through which all God's covenant promises will eventually be realized.

Given Isaac's special promissory status, the introduction of *Nahor's family tree in Genesis 22:20-24 is not nearly so abrupt or unexpected as it might otherwise appear. The only obvious literary function of this short genealogy is to introduce the reader to Rebecca, through whom the special line of "seed" will be continued. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the remainder of the Abraham narrative should focus primarily on the coming together of Isaac and Rebecca as

well as Isaac's unique position as Abraham's covenant heir (Gen 25:1-11).

In the patriarchal stories that follow, the special line of Abrahamic descent is further refined. The fulfillment of the promises concerning *Ishmael is dealt with first (Gen 25:12-18), after which attention shifts to Isaac, to whom the covenant promises are confirmed (Gen 26:2-5). The nation descended from *Esau is gradually ruled out of the reckoning, and the reader's attention is skillfully directed to the family line of *Jacob. (See the words of the blessing conferred on Jacob in Gen 27:28-29; 28:3-4; in both texts, especially the latter, there are strong allusions to the promises made to Abraham. By contrast, the blessing conferred on Esau is analogous to the promises made to Ishmael; compare Gen 27:39-40 with Gen 16:12.) Jacob's role as covenant heir is confirmed in Genesis 28:13-16, in which divine promises (land, seed and international blessing) are reiterated. In the subsequent revelation at Bethel (Gen 35:9-15) the promise of royal progeny is added, further verifying that the special line of Abrahamic descent will be traced exclusively through Jacob. While the promise of international blessing is not stated explicitly in Genesis 35, a distinction is drawn between a "nation" and a "company of nations" that will come from Jacob (Gen 35:11). Admittedly, several commentators interpret the second clause as qualifying the first (i.e., "a nation, that is, a company of tribes"). Even so, it is still acknowledged that there is some allusion here to the multitudinous nations of Genesis 17. This may suggest, therefore, that like the multitudinous nations of Abraham, this company of nations will not be related to Jacob in a biological sense (see Williamson, 156-62). Thus understood, two different prospects are again anticipated: a national entity and an international community.

Before presenting the family history of Jacob (Gen 37:2—50:26), the narrative deals with the elder son to whom the covenant promises did not apply (Gen 36). The purpose of this genealogy seems to be similar to that relating to Ishmael in Genesis 25:12-18. Just as the latter alludes to the fulfillment of God's promises made in relation to (nonelect) Ishmael, so Genesis 36 alludes to the fulfillment of God's promises made in relation to (nonelect) Esau (cf. Gen 27:39-40).

The remainder of the patriarchal narrative focuses exclusively on the family history of Jacob's sons, four of whom are singled out for special attention: *Joseph, *Reuben, *Judah and *Benjamin. Of these four, Judah is possibly the most significant, in that the Joseph story is abruptly interrupted by an episode in which Judah's "seed" occupies center stage. While the full significance of the brief liaison between Judah and his daughter-in-law *Tamar is only later disclosed (cf. Ruth 4:18-22; Mt 1:3), the striking similarities with the birth story of Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:24-26), together with the emphasis on Judah's "seed," strongly suggests a special role in the promissory agenda for Judah. Genesis 38 thus provides yet another illustration of God's providence operating in the establishment of the special line of Abrahamic descent.

While the subsequent Joseph narrative is concerned primarily with how Jacob's extended family came to settle in *Egypt, at least some attention is focused on their numerical growth (Gen 47:27; 48:4, 16), thus continuing the major focus of the patriarchal narratives on Abraham's "seed" through whom the covenant promises will eventually be realized.

3. The National Covenants.

While the Pentateuch devotes a disproportionate amount of space to the covenant(s) established between Yahweh and Abraham's national progeny, the *Israelites, it is important to realize that these national covenants do not supersede the ancestral covenants. Rather, the latter are the theological backbone supporting the national covenants and against which they must be understood.

3.1. The Sinaitic Covenant and the Patriarchal Promises. The hermeneutical key to the *exodus event and its sequel (the Sinaitic covenant) is found in Exodus 2:23-25. From this text it is clear that God's intervention on behalf of the Israelites in Egypt was prompted by the covenant promises he had made to the patriarchs. Thus the deliverance from Egypt and God's revelation at Sinai must be interpreted in the light of the programmatic agenda set out in Genesis (cf. the allusions to the patriarchal promises in Ex 3:7-8, 16-22; 6:4-6; 13:5, 11).

The book of Exodus begins by emphasizing the initial fulfillment of the promise relating to phenomenal expansion of Abraham's biological descendants (cf. Gen 15:5). The extended family that went down to Egypt (Gen 46:27) has grown

into a multitude in the interim period (Ex 1:6-10) and continues to do so despite the genocidal policy of ethnic cleansing instituted by a new regime in Egypt (cf. Ex 1:11-12, 20; 5:5). Evidently the divine promise concerning the proliferation of Abraham's physical descendants has begun to materialize.

Moreover, by the end of Genesis the first prerequisite for the inheritance of the Promised Land has been met: Abraham's descendants have become "migrants in someone else's land" (Gen 15:13a). The opening chapters of Exodus recount how the second requirement (the slavery and oppression of Abraham's descendants; cf. Gen 15:13b) unfolded when a new dynasty established itself over Egypt (cf. Ex 1:11-14; 2:23-25; 3:7-10). Moreover, as the story progresses the stage is further set for the promised deliverance of Genesis 15:14 (Ex 3:16-22; 6:2-8; 7:1-5; 11:1-3). Thus the exodus event constitutes the fulfillment of the preliminary stage of the prospect held out in the covenant of Genesis 15, the prospect of nationhood. The "great nation" promised by God to Abraham (Gen 12:2) is about to emerge onto the world stage. Indeed, this is the very purpose of the exodus event: to bring to birth the nation with whom God will establish a special relationship (Ex 6:7; cf. Gen 17:7-8).

Therefore, as B. A. Anderson correctly concludes, "In the final form of the Pentateuch (Torah), the Mosaic covenant is subordinate to the Abrahamic. In this canonical context the Abrahamic covenant, which guarantees the promise of land and posterity, is the overarching theme within which the Mosaic covenant of law is embraced" (Anderson, 137).

3.2. The Revelatory Purpose of the Covenant at Sinai. In essence, the Sinaitic covenant spells out the type of nation that Yahweh intends Israel to be. It is clear from the obligations imposed upon Israel that being in special relationship with Yahweh involves more than privilege; it entails responsibility. Israel, the patriarch's promised descendants, could continue to enjoy the divine-human relationship anticipated in Genesis 17:7-8 only by maintaining the ethical distinctiveness enshrined in God's instructions to Abraham ("Walk before me and be blameless," Gen 17:1). Like their ancestor, Israel must "keep the way of Yahweh by doing what is right and just" (Gen 18:19). Like Abraham, Israel must "obey [Yahweh's] voice and keep his requirements, commandments, statutes and laws" (Gen 26:5; cf. Ex 19:8; 24:3, 7). Having Yahweh as their God entails conformity to his *holy character (cf. Lev 19:2). Thus the primary concern of the Sinaitic covenant is on how the promised divine-human relationship between Yahweh and the "great nation" descended from Abraham (Gen 17:7-8) should be expressed and maintained.

The bilateral nature of the covenant is reflected in the conditional framework (i.e., "If you obey ... then ..."; NIV) of Exodus 19:5-6. For his part, God will make Israel unique among the nations: they will be his "special treasure" (*sĕgullâ* implies a special value as well as a special relationship), a "priestly kingdom" and a "holy nation." As Dumbrell (1984, 87) suggests, the use of the term "nation" *(gôy)* rather than the more customary "people" *(ʿam)* may well indicate an allusion here to the promise of nationhood in Genesis 12:2. In any case, this text clearly indicates what kind of nation God intends Israel to be: a holy nation, set apart to God from all others. As such, Israel is clearly to function as "a light to the nations." While ultimately this is the mission of Abraham's individual "seed" (cf. Is 42:6; 49:6; 60:3), such a role is at least implicit in Israel's description here as a "priestly kingdom." The latter phrase (found only here in the OT, but cf. Is 61:6 for a similar idea) has given rise to various interpretations, but its most straightforward sense (i.e., "kingdom of priests") suggests that it is a statement of Israel's distinct status as "a servant nation." The whole nation thus inherits the responsibility, formerly conferred on Abraham, of mediating God's blessing to the nations of the earth. Such a mission is also suggested by the causal statement, "because *[kî]* all the earth is mine" (Ex 19:5). As Dumbrell maintains, "the *kî* clause functions not as the assertion of the right to choose but as the *reasons* or *goal* for choice" (Dumbrell 1988, 146). Israel's election as Yahweh's "special treasure" is not an end in itself, but a means to a much greater end. Thus understood, the goal of the Sinaitic covenant is the establishment of a special nation through whom Yahweh can make himself known to all the families of the earth.

To be such a nation, however, Israel must "keep God's covenant" (Ex 19:5) by fulfilling her obligations. The principal obligations ("words") are set out in the *Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17); the more detailed obligations are contained in the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:33). While

various attempts have been made to discern structural parallels with ancient treaty patterns, there is little consensus as to the extent and significance of the suggested parallels. It would seem, however, that these laws and instructions—like the rest of the Sinaitic obligations (i.e., as disclosed in Leviticus)—have a revelatory purpose. Just as ancient *law codes generally made a statement about the king who promulgated them, so the covenant obligations revealed at Sinai disclose something of the nature and character of Yahweh. Therefore the law makes a statement not only about Israel (as a "great nation") but also—and more importantly—about Israel's God. J. H. Walton (24-46) rather overstates the case by actually defining "covenant" as "God's program of revelation." Nevertheless, this revelatory function is a crucial element in the Sinaitic covenant and constitutes the thematic link between the two main parts of the book of Exodus: the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the revelation of Yahweh at Sinai. Just as Yahweh revealed himself to Pharaoh and the Egyptians (as well as to Israel and the surrounding nations) through the deliverance of the exodus, so he will further reveal himself to Israel and the nations through the covenant relationship established at Sinai. Therefore, by fulfilling these covenant obligations, Israel will "reveal" Yahweh to the surrounding nations.

3.3. The Ratification of the Covenant at Sinai. The formal ratification of the Sinaitic covenant takes place in Exodus 24. Like earlier divine covenants (cf. Gen 8:20-21; 15:9-10; 22:13-14), a sacrificial ritual is involved (Ex 24:3-8). No explanation is offered with regard to the ritual described here. While there is some correspondence with later sacrificial rites (cf. Ex 29:16, 20; Lev 1:5, 11, in which blood is sprinkled upon the *altar), the rite described in Exodus 24:6 is nowhere repeated in the OT, making its precise meaning difficult to ascertain. One plausible suggestion is that the symbolism is analogous with the more primitive covenant-making ritual reflected in Genesis 15 (apparently revived in the early sixth century; cf. Jer 34:18-20). Thus understood, the splattered blood (Ex 24:6, 8) chillingly symbolizes the fate of the covenant breaker. Alternatively, the blood ritual may serve to consecrate the human agent, as in the case of priesthood (so Nicholson, 172-74), whose consecration (cf. Ex 29; Lev 8) may also be understood as part of a covenantal arrangement (so Dumbrell 1984, 94). In any case, while the precise significance of the symbolism remains unclear, the twofold application of the blood to the altar and the people appears to underline the bilateral nature of the covenant so ratified.

Following the sacrificial ritual, the inauguration of the Sinaitic covenant apparently continues (contra Nicholson, 121-33) with another ceremony associated with the ratification of covenants elsewhere: a covenant meal (Ex 24:9-11; cf. Gen 26:26-31; 31:43-54). Admittedly, the consumption of food in the presence of God "cannot be understood as *ipso facto* the making of a covenant with God" (Nicholson, 126; cf. Ex 18:1-12). However, as Nicholson (127) acknowledges, here in Exodus 24 the context is clearly covenantal, and his prima facie case for rejecting the covenantal significance of this rite is not as obvious as he suggests. Although Nicholson views the meal as an alternative to the ritual described in Exodus 24:5-8, it should be understood as supplementary (cf. Gen 31:54).

The Sinaitic covenant conforms to the biblical pattern for covenants involving bilateral obligations; namely, it has a "sign": sabbath rests (Ex 31:13-17; cf. Is 56:4; Ezek 20:12, 20). More surprising, however, is the fact that the stipulated covenant sign is only identified as such after Moses receives the instructions concerning the *tabernacle and the priesthood (Ex 25:1—31:11). This strongly suggests that the latter elements are also intrinsically related to the Mosaic covenant (cf. Ex 24:12; 31:18). The latter inference is further suggested by the fact that the primary concern of the Mosaic covenant is to maintain the unique divine-human relationship between Yahweh and Israel, and thus some means of sustaining communion between a holy God and a sinful people is essential.

3.4. The Covenantal Significance of the Tabernacle. Located in the middle of this section (Ex 19—34) dealing with the inauguration of the Mosaic covenant, the instructions to erect the tabernacle must clearly be understood in terms of the covenant itself. As Dumbrell observes, this is further indicated by the fact that both here (Ex 31) and subsequently (Ex 35) the erection of the tabernacle and the covenant sign (sabbath) are juxtaposed, lending support to his conclusion that "in some sense the building of the tabernacle and the observance of the sabbath are simply two sides of the same reality" (Dumbrell 1984, 104). Thus interpreted, the tabernacle (sig-

nifying Yahweh's kingly presence in the midst of his people; cf. Alexander 1997a, 98-109) vouchsafes Israel's enjoyment of "rest" in the Promised Land—itself a foretaste of the ultimate restoration of God's creation intention for humankind. Therefore the tabernacle not only gives expression to (and facilitates the maintenance of) the divine-human relationship that is at the center of the Mosaic covenant but also anticipates its ultimate goal.

3.5. The Covenantal Status of the Levitical Priesthood. Although the consecration of *Aaron and his sons as *priests (Ex 28—29; Lev 8) is not expressly related in covenantal terminology, a number of passages elsewhere apply covenantal language to the levitical priesthood (Neh 13:29; Jer 33:21-22; Mal 2:1-9). Admittedly, it is difficult to determine whether the latter passages allude to the "covenant of peace" (Num 25:12)—further defined as a "covenant of perpetual priesthood" (Num 25:13)—awarded to Phinehas for his loyalty to Yahweh or to a covenant made with the levitical priests more generally. Certainly some kind of covenantal relationship had been established with the latter prior to the incident recorded in Numbers 25, as illustrated by the description of the priestly gratuities as "a covenant of salt forever" (Num 18:19)—apparently suggesting the permanence of this arrangement (cf. 2 Chron 13:5). It is thus possible that a covenant between Yahweh and the priests had been in operation from the inception of the levitical priesthood.

In any case, these priestly covenants serve the same general purpose as the Mosaic covenant with which they are so closely related. That is, the priests are to facilitate the maintenance of the divine-human relationship between Yahweh and Abraham's descendants. Significantly, when they fail to do their part in this latter respect, they are accused by Malachi of having "corrupted the covenant of *Levi" (Mal 2:8). Thus the priestly and Mosaic covenants, while remaining distinct, run in parallel with one another and are closely related in purpose, namely, maintaining the relationship between God and Israel.

3.6. The Breaking of the Covenant and Its "Reestablishment." The fragility of the divine-human relationship between Yahweh and Israel (at least on Israel's part) is illustrated by the crisis of the *golden calf episode (Ex 32—33). Even as Moses is receiving the covenant stipulations, the Israelites are breaking them—graphically depicted by Moses shattering the inscribed tablets when confronted with the people's apostasy (Ex 32:19). The seriousness of this breach of the covenant is highlighted in a number of ways: (1) the suggestion that Moses could supersede Israel as covenant heir (Ex 32:9-10); (2) the inadequacy of the executions carried out immediately by the Levites to make atonement for the people's "great sin" (Ex 32:27-32); (3) the prospect of further divine judgment (Ex 32:33-34), which materializes (at least in part) when the people are struck with plague (Ex 32:35); and (4) Yahweh's refusal to accompany the Israelites any longer (Ex 33:3). It is thus clear that Israel deserves to forfeit their privileged status as the people of God.

God, however, desists from annihilating the Israelites when Moses appeals to the promise of nationhood, that which was unconditionally guaranteed in Genesis 15 (Ex 32:7-14). Moreover, an allusion to the wider purposes of God elicits Yahweh's promise to accompany his people after all (Ex 33:12-17). It is clear, however, that this change of heart is due solely to Yahweh's own gracious character (Ex 33:19; cf. 33:3, 5; 34:9), and it is on this basis that the covenant is "reestablished" or brought to completion with the reinscription of the Decalogue (Ex 34).

3.7. The Covenant at Moab. If covenant is a key theological concept in the Pentateuch as a whole, this is especially so in the book of Deuteronomy. To some extent this is reflected in the book's formal structure, as suggested by the structural parallels (however inexact) drawn by various scholars between Deuteronomy and ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties. However, this is equally clear from the book's content and vocabulary. The Hebrew term *bĕrît* occurs some twenty-seven times in Deuteronomy—more than any other book in the OT except Genesis (twenty-seven times) and Chronicles (thirty times). Moreover, the book is essentially an invitation to the next generation to renew the covenant that Yahweh formerly established at Sinai: the new generation has to obligate themselves to the Mosaic covenant before taking possession of the Promised Land.

3.7.1. The Relationship Between the Covenants at Sinai and Moab. Although in one sense Deuteronomy records a remaking of the Mosaic covenant with a new generation, there are some significant differences in emphasis, which may

suggest that this covenant qualifies the conditional nature of Israel's unique relationship with Yahweh—especially in relation to its future tenure in the Promised Land. Yahweh earlier guaranteed the staged removal of the Canaanites (Ex 23:30; 34:11). He also indicated that Israel would likewise be expelled if the people failed to meet their covenant obligations (Lev 18:24-30). This is reiterated even more emphatically in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 4:25-26; 8:18-20; 28:21-24, 63; 29:21-28; 30:17-18).

Given the book's negative prognosis, it is clear that such *exile from the land is anticipated in Deuteronomy as inevitable. As J. G. McConville (133-35) observes, Israel's inability to be a faithful covenant partner is highlighted in various ways. (1) The prominent position of Israel's failure in the past (Deut 1:26-46) at least hints at such a recurring phenomenon. (2) Calling attention to Israel's unimpressive track record (Deut 9—10) before the long series of laws that they are required to keep further hints at the likelihood of future failure. (3) Finally, the inevitability of such future failure is reflected in the way that both Moses' third address (Deut 29:22-28) and song (Deut 32:15-25; cf. 31:16-22) assume that the people will indeed fail to fulfill the covenant requirements and so will experience the covenant curses. Indeed, rather than alternative possibilities, in Deuteronomy 30:1 the blessings and curses are presented as successive realities in Israel's life. Thus "the alternatives placed before the people both at 11:26-32 and in ch. 28 seem to be mocked by a theology that claims Israel is constitutionally incapable of choosing the way of life" (McConville, 134).

Fortunately, however, the book does not end on such a negative note. While Israel's incorrigibility makes exile inevitable, even exile to the most remote parts of the earth (Deut 30:4) will not thwart God's ultimate purpose; rather, the promises made to Abraham will find further fulfillment (Deut 30:5); the divine-human relationship will be sustained by an inner change (Deut 30:6).

Thus the covenant in Deuteronomy is not simply a remaking of the Sinaitic covenant with a new generation. It is a reaffirmation of obligations laid out in the covenant of circumcision (Gen 17; cf. Deut 30:6-10) for all future generations (Deut 29:14-15) and an anticipation of the "new covenant" that will guarantee that a divine-human relationship between Yahweh and Abraham's "seed" will be maintained forever (cf. Jer 31:31-34) by facilitating the important ethical obligations.

3.7.2. The Terms of the Covenant in Deuteronomy. The terms of the national covenant ratified at Moab are stated most succinctly in Deuteronomy 26:16-19. While this passage does not use the term *covenant,* the concept is clearly implicit. Indeed, the unusual causative form of the verb (these are the sole OT occurrences [two times] of the Hiphil of *ʾāmar*) possibly reflects covenant or treaty vocabulary.

There is some uncertainty over the best way to translate the opening clauses in both verse 17 and verse 18 (cf. NRSV and NIV). While the Hiphil (causative) form of the verb would suggest, "you have caused the Lord to say that . . . ," it may be better to understand it here in the sense of accepting or consenting to what someone says; thus, "you have agreed to Yahweh's declaration that . . ." Whatever translation is adopted, it is clear that each declaration incorporates obligations undertaken by both parties to the covenant. There may even be some symmetry in the twin declarations (so Mayes, 339). Thus understood, Deuteronomy 26:17 refers to one obligation undertaken by Yahweh (that he will be Israel's God) and three obligations undertaken by Israel (that they will walk in Yahweh's ways; keep his statutes, commandments and ordinances; and obey his voice). Deuteronomy 26:18-19, on the other hand, refers to one obligation undertaken by Israel (that they will keep Yahweh's commandments) and three obligations undertaken by Yahweh (that Israel will be his special possession, that he will set her above the nations and that she will be his holy people).

When, precisely, this reciprocal commitment was formally ratified between Yahweh and the Israelites addressed at Moab is not spelled out in Deuteronomy. There are several allusions to the fact (cf. Deut 27:9; 29:1, 10-15), but the ratification ceremony is nowhere actually described. Thus the reference to "this day" in Deuteronomy 26:16 (also "today" in Deut 26:17, 18) is somewhat enigmatic. The most straightforward explanation is that, by the very act of assembling and listening to the covenant stipulations through Moses—the mediator of the covenant—the present generation of Israelites was identifying itself with the commitment that had formerly been made at Sinai and thus was tacitly giving its consent to the terms of the covenant. It

is possible, however, that the record in Deuteronomy is quite selective; that is, an actual ceremony took place at the conclusion of Moses' speech, something that the compiler or the final editor has simply taken as read. In any case, however we understand the allusion to covenant ratification here, it is clear that by means of the reciprocal agreement drawn up between Yahweh and the Israelites on the plains of Moab, the special status of Israel in the purpose of God was confirmed (cf. Deut 29:13).

Again, it is important to remember that Israel's special status as the people of God is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end, namely, the fulfillment of God's universal purpose. By shaping her national life by the laws and institutions of the Mosaic covenant, Israel bears eloquent testimony to the nations surrounding her (cf. Deut 4:6-8; 28:9-10). Thus the "fame, praise and glory" (Deut 26:19), whether heaped upon Israel in the first instance or not (cf. the REB translation: "to bring him praise and fame and glory"), ultimately belong to Yahweh himself (cf. Jer 13:11; 33:9).

The essential obligation to which Yahweh commits himself is to be Israel's God. Such an obligation was not new. Rather, this was something promised as far back as the patriarchal era (cf. Gen 17:8). Indeed, it is this prospect, and all that it entails (Deut 26:18-19; cf. Ex 19:5-6), that serves to tie the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants together (Deut 29:12-13).

Yahweh's commitment to be Israel's God evidently assumes the fulfillment of the promise of nationhood (i.e., the fulfillment of the promises concerning both descendants and land). While the former has seen at least a preliminary fulfillment (Deut 1:10-11; 10:22; 26:5; cf. 6:3; 13:17), the promise of land remains unfulfilled. Accordingly, Yahweh's fulfillment of the territorial promise is one of the major emphases in Deuteronomy. In fact, with some justification J. G. Millar claims that "in Deuteronomy, to speak of the fulfillment of promise is, in essence, to speak of the land" (Millar, 55). While this is something of an overstatement, one should note the number of references linking the occupation of the land to the fulfillment of the patriarchal promise (cf. Deut 1:20-21, 25, 35; 3:18, 20; 4:1, 40; 6:1, 10, 18; 7:1, 8, 12; 8:1, 18; 9:5; 10:11; 11:9, 21; 12:1; 19:8; 26:3, 15; 27:3; 30:20; 31:7, 21, 23; 34:4). Significantly, the boundaries delimited in Deuteronomy 1:7-8 are substantially those of Genesis 15:18-21. Thus Deuteronomy anticipates the imminent fulfillment of the covenant that God established with Abraham in Genesis 15, a covenant guaranteeing the first aspect of God's programmatic agenda: nationhood (Gen 12:2).

Israel, for its part, commits itself to do everything that Yahweh desires: essentially, by keeping Yahweh's commandments (i.e., the statutes and the ordinances as delineated in Deut 5—26). As T. D. Alexander underlines, the obligations to which Israel commits itself are essentially an expression of love and loyalty (1997a, 162-73). Love is never mere sentiment or feeling in Deuteronomy; rather, love expresses itself in obedience (cf. Deut 5:10; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:16.). By contrast, disobedience is indicative of a lack of love (Deut 13:3). Not surprisingly, therefore, "the central core of Deuteronomy consists of a long list of obligations which the Israelites were expected to keep" (Alexander 1997a, 167).

As Yahweh demands exclusive allegiance, this love must be expressed also in absolute loyalty. The Israelites must love only Yahweh, which explains the strong emphasis in Deuteronomy against any idolatrous behavior (cf. Deut 4:15-16; 5:7; 6:14; 7:4, 16; 8:19; 11:16, 28; 13:2, 6, 13; 17:3; 28:14, 36, 64; 29:18; 30:17-18). Complete loyalty is essential for the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel to be maintained. Israel's continued tenure in the Promised Land depends on it, for this is Israel's raison d'être as the people of God.

The ensuing biblical narrative (Joshua—Kings) traces the fulfillment of God's covenant promises in the establishment of the Israelite nation and the royal line through whom God's universal purpose would be realized, as well as the abject failure of both the people and their kings to fulfill their covenant obligations. Despite repeated warnings from the prophets, both kings and people persisted in their suicidal behavior, eventually bringing down upon themselves the covenant curses so graphically depicted in Deuteronomy. Thus an important chapter of covenant history was concluded with Israel's exile into Babylon. However, as is emphasized in the prophetic oracles of hope, this history was "to be continued." The ancient covenant promises would yet be fulfilled, for God would establish a "new covenant" with his people through which his universal purpose would ultimately be realized. For the establishment of

this new covenant, we must look to the NT, where it finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the royal "seed" of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

See also ABRAHAM; BLESSINGS AND CURSES; BOOK OF THE COVENANT; DECALOGUE; ELECTION.

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COVENANT AT MOAB. *See* COVENANT.

COVENANT CODE. *See* BOOK OF THE COVENANT.

COVENANT OF WORKS. *See* COVENANT.

COVENANT RENEWAL. *See* COVENANT; DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

CRAFTS. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

CREATIO EX NIHILO. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION.

CREATION

Comparisons between the biblical and ancient Near Eastern views of creation can be made on several different levels. First, one could compare individual features such as creation by spoken word or the materials used to create people. Second, one might examine the conceptual worldview concerning the cosmos and its origins. Third, comparisons could be made regarding the nature of the literary preservation of creation traditions and the relationships between those traditions. After summarizing the source material available, the following article will attempt comparison on each of these three levels between the cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Israel. While it must be recognized that none of these three cultures is represented by a monolithic creation tradition, one can attempt to identify elements that were or were not present in

the traditions available from each culture without implying that such elements were acknowledged or affirmed throughout the culture. The importance for students of the Bible of engaging in such comparative study is that it provides the basis for understanding the cultural background of the Israelites. The theological message of the Bible was communicated to people who lived in the ancient Near Eastern world. If we desire to understand the theological message of the text, we will benefit by positioning it within the worldview of the ancient world rather than simply applying our own cultural perspectives.

1. Sources
2. Individual Features
3. Conceptual Worldview of the Cosmos
4. Literary Features

1. Sources.

1.1. Creation Reports. A number of documents from the ancient Near East contain extensive treatments of creation. It is questionable whether any of them can be labeled as creation accounts, since the ancient thinkers did not typically think of creation as an end in itself. Instead, these reports are often embedded in other types of literature.

1.1.1. Egypt. Principal cosmogonic texts relate to three important cult centers and their gods: at Memphis (Ptah), Heliopolis (Atum) and Hermopolis (Amun). The latter two are preserved in texts such as the Papyrus Leiden I 350 (Hermopolis, thirteenth century, *COS* 1.16:23-26) and in a number of places in the Pyramid Texts (mid-third millennium, cf. *COS* 1.4:7-8), the Coffin Texts (late third millennium, cf. Heliopolis version in spells 75-81, *COS* 1.5:8-14) and the Book of the Dead (second millennium). The first is represented in the Memphite Theology. The single known copy (on the Shabaka stone, *COS* 1.15:21-23) dates to about 700 B.C., though the original is usually dated to the thirteenth century (with some still favoring an Old Kingdom date).

1.1.2. Mesopotamia. Though the Atrahasis Epic (seventeenth century) contains an account of the creation of humanity (*COS* 1.30:451), *Enuma Elish,* sometimes referred to as the Babylonian Epic of Creation (twelfth century at the latest, *COS* 1.111:390-402), remains the principal text from Mesopotamia regarding the cosmological aspects of creation.

1.1.3. Other. Creation traditions are preserved in the Hittite Kumarbi Cycle and perhaps even in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, but space limitations will not allow inclusion of these in the discussion.

1.2. Allusions to Creation. Old Testament passages from Job, Psalms and Proverbs refer to in passing, or even take as a theme, the subject of creation. Such allusions also occur throughout the literatures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan. Whether dealing with cosmology or cosmogony, they can at times offer small bits of data that can contribute to the larger picture.

1.2.1. Egypt. Allusions to cosmology and thus, at least indirectly, to creation are frequent in Egypt in the many inscriptions and paintings that are found on the walls of pyramids, coffins and temples. Allusions also occur in wisdom pieces such as the Instruction of Merikare (*COS* 1.35:65-66). Cosmological depictions such as that found on the Cenotaph of Seti I (thirteenth century, *COS* 1.1:5-6) can also be instructive.

1.2.2. Mesopotamia. Numerous Sumerian texts contain cosmogonic or cosmological statements. Myths make statements in passing, and rituals at times contain mythological sections that are cosmogonic. Even genealogical lists of the gods are thought to give hints to the extent that cosmogony can be inferred from theogony. Narrative texts from Nippur place Enlil in a prominent role, while texts from Eridu favor Enki. Prominent also are the disputation texts (e.g., Tree and Reed), which often have cosmogonic introductions. Akkadian cosmological information is also found in incantation texts as well as in introductions to dedicatory inscriptions.

2. Individual Features.

2.1. Chaotic Beginning. Ancient traditions do not typically begin with nothing. Instead, they start with a condition devoid of order, function or purpose. Creation then takes place by giving things order, function and purpose, which is synonymous with giving them existence. In Egypt, "on the first occasion" the god Amun is by himself, the first of the gods (Hermopolis, Papyrus Leiden I 350 80.13; 100.2). Despite the fact that Amun is said to exist before everything, he emerged from the waters. Egypt starts with the "nonexistent," which describes a state where everything is still a unified whole. Creation takes place through diversification. "Nonexistence" is made up of water and darkness, and in it noth-

ing is named or distinct (Hornung, 176-77). In *Enuma Elish* the emphasis is on the absence of names and gods and the lack of differentiation. In neither of these cases is the chaos element virulent, aggressive, combative or evil. In Genesis 1:2 the description used is *tōhû wābōhû* ("formless and empty"). With a moment of thought it becomes obvious that this expression does not concern matter. No one suggests that this verse indicates that matter had not been shaped or that the cosmos described here is empty of matter. By logic alone the words can be seen to concern functionality, and analysis of the Hebrew confirms the conclusion that these terms indicate that the cosmos was empty of purpose, meaning and function, a place that had no order or intelligibility. Tsumura concludes that *tōhû* "seems to refer to a situation which lacks something abstract that should be there, such as worth, purpose, truth, profit and integrity" (Tsumura, 31).

2.2. Primal condition. Ancient sources are unanimous that the primal chaotic condition included two characteristics: water and darkness. Egyptian creation texts feature the first hillock emerging from the primeval waters (Allen 10, 14) and generally portray Nun as representing unbounded primeval waters in every direction: "On the day that Atum developed out of the Flood, out of the Waters, out of the Darkness, out of the Chaos" (Coffin Texts 76.27-29; Allen, 18). "In the Egyptian view, all that now exists began as a unity, a primordial Monad—Atum—floating in the dark, lifeless infinity of pre-creation. Atum describes this pre-creation state as 'when I was alone with the waters' " (Coffin Texts 80.47; Allen, 24). "In this primordial universe, the Monad exists in a lifeless state, 'in inertness,' with the life-forms that are to develop from it in a similar state of inertness.... Creation is the enlivening of this inert potentiality" (Allen, 24). Sumerian texts describe lack of functions, undifferentiated heaven and earth, darkness and water (Clifford, 28). *Enuma Elish* begins with Apsu and Tiamat, together representing the primeval waters.

In Israel, the precreation condition also is characterized by darkness on the face of the deep. In addition, the text describes the "spirit of God hovering over the waters." There has long been discussion concerning whether the text speaks of a supernatural wind or the spirit of God. To some extent, it could be said that this problem exists because Hebrew uses the same word *(rûaḥ)* for the meteorological phenomena (wind) and for the metaphysical entity (spirit). Technically, however, it is not that Hebrew uses the same word for both a spirit and a wind but rather that *rûaḥ* is sufficiently broad to cover the whole category from spirit to wind. We cannot ask whether the author intended "spirit" or "wind"—the author intended *rûaḥ*. Westermann, representing those who translate "wind," has pointed out that the three phrases of Genesis 1:2 should all be considered descriptions of the chaotic state. This would be supported by the close parallelism of the second and third clauses.

On the other hand, it is rightly pointed out that all of the other OT uses of *rûaḥ ʾĕlōhîm* are most naturally translated "spirit of God" rather than "supernatural wind." The motif of the wind in chaos scenes is well-recognized both in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. In *Enuma Elish*, the sky god Anu creates the four winds that stir up the deep and its goddess, Tiamat (1.105-110). There it is a disruptive wind bringing unrest (*COS* 1.111.392). The same phenomena can be seen in Daniel's vision of the four beasts, where "the four winds of heaven were churning up the great sea" (Dan 7:2), a situation that disturbs the beasts there. The motif of the wind used as an instrument of God to master the waters can be found in the exodus narrative (Ex 14:21; 15:8). In these cases the wind is closely connected with deity and can be seen as something that is disturbing the pattern by creating chaos in the realm of chaos. Thus *rûaḥ ʾĕlōhîm* can retain a provocative ambivalence in meaning. It can at the same time be a wind of supernatural proportion and character that contributes to the chaotic landscape as well as a representative of the power of God that embodies the potential that is about to be realized.

This would share some similarity with the Egyptian concept of "nonexistence" (not yet differentiated or assigned function), which carries with it the idea of potentiality and a quality of being absolute. The difference is that in Egyptian thought the potentiality was inherent in the primal waters, whereas in Genesis the potentiality is provided by God from outside. Here the *rûaḥ* may be seen as disrupting the power of chaos by bringing chaos into the realm of chaos. No citizen of the ancient Near East would miss the reference to the chaos motif, and no Israelite would fail to understand the potential for ac-

tion inherent in the divine spirit. An additional close study of the Israelite conception of the Spirit of the Lord and the meaning of the word translated "hover" leads us to summarize the Genesis description of the primal condition in the following paraphrase: "The earth was nonfunctional; chaos reigned in primordial, watery darkness, and a supernatural wind that was endowed with the power of God circulated about the surface of the waters."

2.3. Sea. In Babylonian, Canaanite and Egyptian literature, the sea represents an element of chaos. The Mesopotamian sea is personified in the Akkadian deity Tiamat (though the god determinative is not used with her name in the theogony of *Enuma Elish).* The Egyptian chaos-ocean is personified in Nun, who has neither cult nor temple, and the Canaanite sea is personified in Yam, the enemy of Baal. In the creation account in Genesis, the sea *(tĕhôm)* is a primordial element but is neither deified nor personified. The *tĕhôm* represents chaos only as disorder, not as a threatening, combative enemy (as Tiamat becomes in *Enuma Elish*), nor as the source from which creation emerges, as in Egypt.

2.4. Light. Light as providing a remedy to the darkness occurs in Papyrus Leiden I 350 90.16: "Light was his development on the first occasion" (Allen, 51). In the Sumerian Praise of the Pickaxe, the separation of heaven and earth is followed by making light shine in the cosmos (Clifford, 31). In Genesis, the light also relieves the darkness, but it serves its purpose in the context of time, which is seen as the alternation between periods of light and periods of darkness.

2.5. Creation by Speech. This element is missing altogether from Mesopotamian traditions but has often been identified as an important factor in Egyptian understanding. It is particularly evident in the Memphite Theology. More recent studies have observed that while the Memphite Theology gives close attention to divine speech in creation, it goes well beyond the concept of fiat to something more like the *logos* idea of John 1 (Allen, 46). The divine word is almost magical in Egyptian thinking as it activates something that is already inherent in the precreation unity-of-all. In contrast, the creative spoken word of God in Genesis is not just activating a potentiality. It is an act of "making into" rather than of "bringing out of."

2.6. Naming. Generally in the ancient world the assignment of functions is connected to the giving of names. Egyptian literature identified the creator god as the one who pronounced the name of everything (Memphite Theology, line 55). In this way of thinking, things did not exist unless they were named. "It was believed that the name of a living being or an object was not just a simple or practical designation to facilitate the exchange of ideas between persons but that it was the very essence of what was defined, and that the actual pronouncing of a name was to create what was spoken" (Plumley, 38). Likewise, *Enuma Elish* begins with the heavens and the earth not yet named and when the gods had not yet been given names. Then Lahmu and Lahamu emerge, and their names are pronounced (*COS* 1.111:391). In Genesis, God initiates the creative act with a spoken word and finalizes the act with the giving of a name. In this way the members of creation are brought into functional existence.

2.7. Separation of Waters. Egyptians thought of the universe as a limitless ocean (Nun) above the sky paralleled by waters under the earth (Allen, 4). These had been separated when the god of the air, Shu, came into being as the space between them. In one of the most familiar scenes of *Enuma Elish,* the victorious Marduk splits the corpse of the vanquished Tiamat, dividing her waters in half (above and below; 4.135-138). Israel had no need to divide a god or to interject a god but saw the waters as simply divided by an act of God. Nonetheless, it should be noticed that even as Genesis distances itself from the theology, it confirms the ancient perspective of the cosmology by retaining the view of waters above and below.

2.8. Firmament. Egyptian texts have the concept of a vault that prevents the waters from flooding the earth. This vault is less solid than in the Mesopotamian view (Allen, 4-5). If it is not the sky god Shu who is portrayed as holding up the sky, staves that resemble tent poles are depicted (Hoffmeier, 7). In Mesopotamia, *Enuma Elish* 4.139 reports a "skin/hide" (Akk. *mašku*) that is established to hold back the waters of Tiamat, who has just been divided to be set up as the waters above and below. We also learn from Babylonian texts that they believed in three levels of heaven. Each one had a different type of stone for its pavement (Horowitz, 4-11), though these pavements were not understood as holding back the primal waters. In the Bible this

pavement concept is represented in Exodus 24:10, where the elders have a vision of God in which he is walking on a sapphire (= lapis lazuli) pavement. The Babylonian texts say the middle heavens are paved with *saggilmud*-stone, which has the appearance of lapis lazuli. This was believed to give the sky its blue color. The lower heavens are said to have a platform of jasper, usually associated with a glassy, translucent or opaque appearance. This is paralleled in Ezekiel's vision in which the platform of the mobile chariot-throne is identified as being of the same quality (Ezek 1:22).

The platform in Ezekiel is called a *rāqîaʿ*, the same word used in Genesis 1:6-8 (NIV: "expanse"). Despite the NIV's attempt to mitigate the meaning of this word in Genesis 1 through an ambiguous translation such as "expanse" and the attempt of others to make it scientifically precise through the translation "atmosphere," Seely has amply demonstrated that, structurally speaking, the *rāqîaʿ* was perceived by the Israelite audience, as by nearly everyone else until modern times, as a solid dome (Seely 1991, 1992). This conclusion is not based on false etymologizing that extrapolates the meaning of the noun from its verbal forms (which have to do with beating something out) but on the comparison of the lexical data from OT usage of the noun with the cultural context of the ancient Near East. In Genesis 1:17 the heavenly bodies are set in the *rāqîaʿ*. In Mesopotamian understanding, the stars were engraved on the jasper surface of the heavens, and the entire surface moved. In astronomical texts (Mul-Apin series) the thirty-six principal stars were divided into three segments known as the paths of Anu, Enlil and Ea. These fixed stellar paths occupied the northern, southern and equatorial bands of the sky (Horowitz, 170). In the omen series known as *Enuma Anu Enlil,* the gods Anu, Enlil and Ea established the positions, locations and paths of the stars (Horowitz, 146-47). In *Enuma Elish* Marduk sets up the stations of the stars (Horowitz, 114-15). Thus the idea of setting the heavenly bodies in a solid background is the common perception. Additionally, it must be observed that since the Israelites located the realm of both the birds and the stars in relation to the *rāqîaʿ*, there is no scientifically identifiable structure with which the *rāqîaʿ* can be identified. The text is using ancient conventional thinking about structure to communicate other, more important issues. Nevertheless, it is not accurate to say there is no such thing as a *rāqîaʿ*—there is a *rāqîaʿ*, and it is blue. But it is an observed reality with a function connected to it, not a structural reality.

2.9. Seasons/Calendar. A Sumerian-Akkadian bilingual astrological treatise provides the most detailed description of the creation of the heavenly bodies and their functions. The decrees are set up for the heavens, and the celestial bodies are brought forth for determination of days, months, omens and calendar (Clifford, 67-68). The Hebrew word used for "sign" has a cognate in Akkadian that is used for omens. The Hebrew word, however, has a more neutral sense, and again the author has emptied the elements of the cosmos of their more personal traits. Signs function theologically in the OT as indicators used by God to convey knowledge and through which he reveals himself. They can be used for warning, motivation and authentication. Eclipses would be one of the examples of the heavenly bodies being used for signs. This is not a mechanical function, but a theological one.

The second function in Genesis indicates that the celestial bodies serve for identifying *môʿădîm,* which NIV, along with many others, translates "seasons." Vogels has demonstrated, however, that throughout the Pentateuch as well as in most other contexts, the *môʿădîm* are not seasons such as summer and winter but the festivals and religious feast days of the liturgical calendar (Vogels, 163-66). Again, this is not a mechanical function but a socioreligious one. The third and last function in the list indicates that the celestial bodies are "for days and years." This is one function, not two, because the preposition is not repeated. The positions of the sun, moon and stars served as the foundation for calendrical calculations in the ancient world. The idea is not that they simply marked the passage of time but that the calendar was established through celestial observations. The cycle of the moon was used to establish when months began and ended. The stars were used to help calculate the solar year and make periodic adjustments to the calendar to synchronize the lunar calendar with the solar calendar. This was essential because a strictly lunar calendar would eventually skew the agricultural seasons. The functional approach to the celestial bodies is therefore mirrored both in biblical and in Mesopotamian literature.

2.10. Sea Creatures. In the Instruction of Merikare 134-135, monsters of the waters are subdued prior to making heavens and earth. In *Enuma Elish,* Tiamat fashions eleven monsters to wreak havoc among the gods (1.133-146). Besides these ominous foes, Marduk must take on the ultimate sea monster, Tiamat. A cylinder seal that is thought to represent a scene from the Babylonian Epic of Creation may depict Tiamat in sea-serpent form (Collon, 180, no. 850). In the Bible the word translated "sea creatures" in Genesis 1:21 *(tannîn)* is used in parallel to names of chaos monsters such as Rahab and Leviathan (Ps 74:13; Is 27:1; 51:9). Even if it is taken in Genesis 1 as having mythological overtones, there is no hint of aggression or combat that would associate the Genesis account with its mythological cousins. In fact, the *tannîn* is simply another of the creatures that God created (note the use of *bārā'*). Hasel saw this as an inescapable indication that the author of Genesis was devising a conscious polemic against the mythological background of the day.

2.11. Animals. In an Akkadian disputation text Two Insects, the classes of animals are created by the gods. They are categorized by size (large and small) and as wild or domesticated (Clifford, 65). Otherwise animals do not figure prominently in the extant creation narratives.

2.12. Dust/Clay. Khnum forms people out of clay on the potter's wheel (Pyramid Texts 445, 522). In the Sumerian Enki and Ninmah (*COS* 1.159:516-19), people are formed out of clay. In the Atrahasis Epic clay is mixed with the blood of the slain leader of the rebel gods. This concoction is believed to approximate the appearance of the placenta, which Babylonians would have considered the leftover raw materials after a baby was made in the womb (Kilmer, 211-13). The Hebrew word *'āpār* is most frequently used to refer to that which is of a loose, granular consistency, thus "dust" or "soil." Hebrew has other words for clay or mud, and *'āpār* occasionally overlaps with them (Job 10:9). Even when it refers to plaster or mortar, it is most likely referring to the dry, powdery form that it takes on after it sets (Lev 14:41-45). In Genesis 2 the significance of dust is not that it represents the raw materials found in the womb or because of any usefulness it has for sculpting but because it is what people return to when they die. This connection with the soil is even represented lexically in that humankind *('ādām)* returns to the ground (*'ădāmâ,* Gen 3:19).

2.13. Breath of Life. The most extensive statement regarding the nature of humankind is found in the Akkadian Atrahasis Epic. Deities Enki and Nintu mix pure clay with the blood and flesh of the slain deity but also include the spirit of the slain god in the final product. Egyptian texts, however, come much closer to the mark. The Coffin Texts' deity claims, "My life is in their nostrils, I guide their breath into their throats" (Coffin Texts 2.43). In the Instruction of Merikare, the god Re "made the breath of life for their nostrils." The next line in Merikare associates this with humans being in the divine image. As a result, the breathing into Adam of the breath of life may be the text's description of the mechanism by which people were created in God's image, though animals also have the breath of life. The term translated "breath" is used in the OT a total of twenty-four times, though the combination with life is not found elsewhere. Usually the term refers to all those who breathe. The usage makes it clear that all people have the breath of life, so God breathes it into every person who is born. It was not just a one-time thing with Adam. The point that people have been animated by the divine breath finds some parallel in the way that images of the deity in the ancient world were believed to be animated by the deity. This concept is represented in the "opening of the mouth" ritual that was performed on the newly carved idol to give it vitality (Dick).

2.14. Image of God. In the Memphite Theology all of creation is in the image of the creator (Allen, 45). In the ancient world an image was believed in some ways to carry the essence of that which it represented. An idol image of deity would be used in the worship of that deity because it contained the essence of the deity. This would not suggest that the image could do what the deity could do nor that it looked the same as the deity (even though the idol was a physical object). Rather, the deity's work was thought to be accomplished through the idol. Generally, Egyptian usage refers to the king as being in the image of deity, not as a physical likeness but related to power and prerogative. In Mesopotamia one significance of the image can be seen in the practice of kings setting up images of themselves in places where they wanted to establish their authority. Other than that, it is only other gods who were made in the image of gods. So Meso-

potamian traditions speak of sons being in the image of their fathers (*Enuma Elish* 1.15-16) but not of humans created in the *image of God. The Hebrew word *ṣelem* is a representative in physical form, not a representation of the physical appearance. The image is a physical manifestation of divine (or royal) essence that bears the function of that which it represents; this gives the image-bearer the capacity to reflect the attributes and act on behalf of the one represented.

2.15. Rest. In the ancient Near East one of the major objectives of the gods as they become involved in creative activity is to create a resting place for themselves. Whether this is a rest achieved when the monstrous forces of chaos are defeated or when a sanctuary is completed, the gods constantly seek the repose that comes from achieving equilibrium in the world. In *Enuma Elish* the absence of rest leads to the confrontation between the gods. So Apsu complains to Tiamat concerning the disruptive behavior of the lower gods (1:35-40). Having successfully defeated Tiamat, Marduk reorganizes the gods and the cosmos under his control and concludes by building Babylon, the sacred city. He names the shrine "Chamber That Shall Be Our Stopping Place" and anticipates finding rest there (6:51-58). In the ancient Near East, as in the Bible, temples are for divine "rest," and divine rest is found in sanctuaries or sacred space. Just as Baal is portrayed as building a palace for himself to find rest in, so God is creating a resting place for himself both in the cosmos in Genesis as well as in the temple (Ps 132:13-14; cf. Levenson, 288). Consequently, the functional cosmos in Genesis is not set up with only people in mind. The cosmos is also intended to carry out a function related to God. On the seventh day we finally discover that God has been working to achieve a rest. This seventh day is not a theological appendix to the creation account, just to bring closure now that the main event of creating people has been reported. Rather, it intimates the purpose of creation and of the cosmos. God does not set up the cosmos so that only people will have a place. He also sets up the cosmos to serve as his temple in which he will find rest in the order and equilibrium that he has established.

3. Conceptual Worldview of the Cosmos.

The preceding survey of individual characteristics demonstrates that the creation account in Genesis parallels the framework of creation accounts in the ancient world, even while differing from them literarily. At the same time, Israel's account often distances itself theologically even while using similar constructs. Hasel, seeking to reveal the polemical nature of the Genesis account, speaks of the biblical narrative not as reflecting the contemporary worldview but of overcoming it (Hasel, 88). There are admittedly many points in the narrative where such an antimythical, polemical perspective can be plausibly supported. In the process, however, the numerous points of worldview continuity should not be ignored or neglected. The following analysis of worldview elements will demonstrate that even given a degree of polemic, the Israelites still thought about creation in terms much more similar to the ancient world than to our own post-Enlightenment perspective. Their departure from the traditional ancient worldview was theological, not cosmological.

3.1. Order out of Chaos. Nowhere in the ancient Near East did people think of creation primarily in terms of *making* things. It is only our post-Enlightenment, Western way of thinking that focuses so steadfastly and exclusively on physical structure and formational history. As can be seen from the analysis of individual elements above, creation in the ancient world constituted bringing order to the cosmos from an originally chaotic or nonfunctional condition. Israel shared this view. The Hebrew verb *bārāʾ* ("created") makes precisely that point, though it has not generally been recognized. The verb occurs fifty times in the OT and has some curious features worth noting. First, it takes only God as its subject or implied actor and therefore must be identified as a characteristically divine activity. Second, its objects are widely varied. Objects of the verb include people groups (Ps 102:18 [MT 102:19]; Ezek 21:30 [MT 21:35]); Jerusalem (Is 65:18); nonmaterial phenomena such as wind, fire, cloud, destruction, calamity or darkness (Ex 34:10; Num 16:30; Is 45:7; Amos 4:13); and abstractions such as righteousness, purity or praise (Ps 51:10 [MT 51:12]; Is 57:19). Even when the object is something more tangible (sea creatures in Gen 1:21), the point is not necessarily physical manufacturing as much as assigning roles. This direction is picked up nicely in Genesis 5:2, where God creates people male and female, that is, with established roles.

In all of these cases, something is brought into existence functionally, not materially; rarely would the statement concern the issue of matter. Indeed, the text never uses *bārā'* in a context in which materials are mentioned. Instead of suggesting manufacture of matter out of nothing (as many have inferred in the past), this suggests that manufacture is not the issue. The lexical analysis suggests, instead, that the essence of the word that the text has chosen, *bārā'*, concerns bringing heaven and earth into existence by focusing on operation through organization and assignment of roles and functions.

Even in English we use the verb *create* within a broad range of contexts but rarely apply it to material things (i.e., parallel in concept to "manufacture"). One can create a piece of art, but that expression does not suggest manufacture of the canvas or paint. Even more abstractly, one can create a situation (e.g., havoc) or a condition (an atmosphere). In these cases, the verb indicates a role or function. When someone creates a department, a committee, a curriculum or an advertising campaign, it is an organizational task. A person puts it together and makes it work. In this category, Hebrew use of *bārā'* is very similar. Perhaps an English verb that captures this idea less ambiguously is "to design" (though *bārā'* would include both planning and implementing the design). The interpretation that the above analysis suggests is that the text asserts that in the seven-day initial period God brought the cosmos into operation (a condition that defines existence) by assigning roles and functions. Though theological belief based on all of Scripture would appropriately affirm that God made all of the matter of which the cosmos is composed (and that he made it out of nothing), lexical analysis does not lead to the conclusion that Genesis 1 is making such a statement by the use of *bārā'*. The origin of matter is what our society has taught us is important (indeed that matter is all there is), but we cannot afford to be so distracted by our cultural ideas. Matter was not the concern of the author of Genesis.

The author's concerns were much like those in the rest of the ancient Near East. There the greatest exercise of the power of the gods was not demonstrated in the manufacture of matter but in the fixing of destinies. In *Enuma Elish*, when Tiamat and Kingu rebelled against the gods, Tiamat procured the tablet of destinies and turned them over to Kingu. This element takes on even more significance in the older Myth of Anzu (Dalley, 203-27), from which *Enuma Elish* derived some of its material. In this tale the monster Anzu, impressed with the power wielded by Enlil using the tablet of destinies, steals it so that he can lord it over the gods. Each year at the all-important *akītu*, Babylon's New Year's enthronement festival, the gods fixed the destinies for the coming year, thus reasserting their power. Here in Genesis, Israel's God also demonstrates his power by the assigning of roles and functions. Genesis distances itself from the ancient Near East in portraying God's power as so much greater than the gods of Mesopotamia. But it conforms by evaluating his power in the categories typically addressed in the ancient Near Eastern worldview. This would be comparable to theologians today interpreting Genesis in light of something like the big-bang theory. The scientific framework would conform to views of today, but the theology would be distinct by virtue of its biblical foundations.

3.2. Theogony/Cosmogony. "Egyptians lived in a universe composed not of *things*, but of *beings*" (Allen, 8). In the beginning of the process, the creator god created by means of his own bodily emissions (sperm, saliva or mucous; Allen 13-14). Then procreation proceeded to fill in the first rank of deities that represented the principal elements of the universe. This concept is represented not just in creation, but also in daily reenactment (e.g., the sky goddess Nut giving birth to the sun each day; Allen, 5). In Akkadian literature, the first twenty lines of the first tablet of *Enuma Elish* contain a theogony that brings the gods connected to the primal elements into existence. In the Late Babylonian manuscript known as the Dunnu Theogony (*COS* 1.112:402-3), a very different approach is found. Rather than featuring primal elements of nature in the theogony, individuals such as Plough, Furrows, Pasture, Poplar, Flocks and Cattle god are main characters. This is one area of worldview where the biblical text stands firmly against the common ancient worldview. Israelites had no other gods to bring into existence, and they did not identify deity with the primal elements or the natural phenomena. Their God was not self-developing, nor did he emerge from a primal element. There was therefore no place for a theogony and no theogonic element in Israelite cosmogony.

3.3. Theomachy. While the primal elements

were generally brought into being through theogony, it was often a battle between the gods (theomachy) that eventuated in the full organization and setting of destinies for the cosmos. In Akkadian literature *Enuma Elish* provides the most familiar account of this in the battle between Marduk and Tiamat in tablets 4-6. These battles are often seen as driving back the forces of chaos in order to impose order on the cosmos. This combat myth motif is not always associated with creation. It can be observed in Ugaritic literature in Baal's conflict with Yam (though some continue to suggest that the Baal cycle does have cosmogonic elements) and in the Babylonian Myth of Anzu, one of the precursors to *Enuma Elish.* Egyptian literature features the battle of Re against the serpent Apophis (*COS* 1.21:32). In the Genesis creation narrative, the serenity and effortlessness of the creation process stand in stark contrast to the uproar and confusion that often characterizes the ancient Near Eastern myths. One has only to read the Psalms (e.g., Ps 65; 74; 89; 93), however, to discover a combat motif in the Israelite worldview—both in the original creation and in sustaining creation. Even so, these scenarios pose no threat to Yahweh but only suggest that he has been and continues to be the force that holds chaos at bay. Unlike the other gods, he never had his authority taken from him, nor did he have to gain or regain a particular status.

3.4. Role and Status of the Gods. Egyptian creator gods are most often portrayed as self-developing and preexistent (Allen, 48). Most texts consider the creator as immanent in the forces of nature and initially as having all of creation inherent in him. Exceptions occur on both counts. Amun is portrayed in the Pyramid Texts in more transcendent terms, and Ptah is portrayed not so much as having all creation inherent in him but as having all the plans for creation in his thoughts (Allen, 48). Amun is said to have "created himself by himself" (Hermopolis tradition, Papyrus Leiden I 350 40.4; Allen, 49). In the history of Akkadian theology, the kingship of the gods is passed from one deity to another. Anu, then his son Enlil, then Marduk or Ashur, serve as king of the gods. Kingship is evidenced by reorganizing and by decreeing the destinies. All of the available mythological material illuminates the concept of deity that existed across the ancient Near East, and it differs considerably from the view attested in the Bible. Clifford synthesizes several important elements as he observes, "The sovereign freedom of the gods is limited by their need for the human race. Creation of humankind was necessary for peace in the divine world, and its restoration was necessary for the gods to live in the idleness that befits them" (Clifford, 81). In contrast, the creation narratives in Genesis are quite clear about God's autonomy. He has no need of humans, nor is he under any compulsion to create them. In avoiding both theogony and theomachy, the text offers a view of God that enhances the concept of purposeful, sovereign control of the process of creation. Like its contemporary counterparts, however, the Bible insists (against some modern views) that there was no cause and effect process independent of deity.

3.5. Function and Structure. Egyptians were more interested in that which was metaphysical than in that which was physical. "They are concerned primarily with what lies beyond physical reality" (Allen, 56). As the sky goddess, Nut is portrayed arching her body over the disk-shaped earth. She is often supported by the hands of the god of the air while the earth god, Geb, lies prone at her feet. This is not a structural representation. The Egyptians did not believe that one could step on Nut's toes or throw a rock and hit her knees. Instead, the portrayal communicates important truths concerning what the Egyptians believed about authority and jurisdiction in the cosmos. These are functional truths, not structural truths. And though they may not represent structural truths, they represent what to them was reality. The cosmos functioned by means of the gods playing out their roles. Whatever the physical structure of the heavens, it was of little concern to them. To describe creation was to describe the establishment of the functioning cosmos, not the origins of the material structure of the cosmos. Structure was irrelevant.

In Akkadian literature the assigning of functions (fixing of destinies) was of central importance in the original creation as well as in the continual renewal of creation. In Genesis 1:3-5 it becomes clear that for the Israelites also, function, not structure, was the focus of creation. In Genesis 1:5a, the NIV translates, "God called the light *[ʾôr]* 'day' *[yôm]*, and the darkness he called 'night.' " If God called the light *yôm,* why does the text continue throughout the OT to call light *ʾôr*? It is a question anyone could answer

with a little thought: It was not the element of light itself that God called *yôm* but the *period* of light. There is a term for the semantic phenomenon that is observed here, namely, metonymy. In metonymy the meaning of a word is extended to include things closely related to it. When the White House makes a statement, it is understood that the building is not talking. And so it is not the physicist's light that is being named *yôm* but rather the period of light—obvious enough because that is what *yôm* is often used to refer to in the rest of Scripture. But if the word *ʾôr* refers to a period of light in Genesis 1:5, what about in 1:4? There God separates the light from the darkness. Again I find "period of light" much more plausible here. The physicist's light cannot be separated from darkness, but alternating periods of light and darkness can be set up. Still, we cannot stop there. If the text means for us to understand "period of light" in both Genesis 1:4 and 5, what about 1:3? Hermeneutical consistency, I think, would lead us to believe that when God said "Let there be *ʾôr*," we must then understand it as, "Let there be a period of light." We could only conclude, then, that day one does not concern itself with the creation of the physicist's light, that is, light as a physical element with physical properties. Day one concerns something much more significant, something much more elemental to the functioning of the cosmos and to our experience of the cosmos. On day one, God created *time.* This is the first of the functions that God is going to use to bring order to the chaos of the cosmos: the orderly and regular sequence of time.

As the functional approach continues, day two in Genesis demonstrates God's setting up of weather. The *rāqîaʿ* is what regulates the weather. The third day, in its two parts, sets up agriculture. This is accomplished by providing for water sources, soil and the biological principle that seeds will continue to propagate each species. *Enuma Elish,* in a fragmentary section of tablet 5, contains a similar sequence of functions. Lines 39-40 make reference to the day and the year and are followed up in line 46 by a reference to the watches of the night. In lines 47-52 Marduk creates precipitation accompanied by clouds, winds and fog. Then in lines 53-58 water sources on earth are set up and dirt is piled up (Horowitz, 117-18). Thus we could see time, weather and agriculture addressed in order and in functional terms. This demonstrates the radical contrast between the terms in which the Israelites thought about cosmic origins and the terms in which we think about them. When *we* ask the question, "How does the cosmos work?" we seek an answer that discusses physical laws and structures. In our worldview, function is a consequence of structure, and a discussion of creation therefore must, *of course,* direct itself to the making of things. In contrast, when Israelites asked, "How does the cosmos work?" they were on a totally different wavelength, because in the ancient worldview *function was a consequence of purpose.* Thus the Israelites can be seen to have had the same functional approach to creation as is evident in the ancient Near East.

3.6. Cosmos as Temple. The visualizing of the cosmos as a temple can be seen across the ancient Near East. Egyptian temple texts often portray the temple as related to the cosmic mountain or the first primeval hillock to emerge from the waters of chaos. The temple is portrayed as being in the center of the cosmos, with waters flowing forth from its midst (Lundquist, 208). In Ugaritic mythology the house Baal seeks for himself is a cosmic temple. A prayer to dedicate the foundation brick of a temple shows the close connection between cosmos and temple in Akkadian thinking:

> When Anu, Enlil and Ea had a (first) idea of heaven and earth, they found a wise means of providing for the support of the gods: They prepared, in the land, a pleasant dwelling, and the gods were installed in this dwelling: their principal temple. Then they entrusted to the king the responsibility of assuring them regular choice offerings. And for the feast of the gods, they established the required food offering! The gods loved this dwelling! Thus did they institute their hold over what became the principal land of humans. (Clifford, 61-62)

Mesopotamian cosmological texts such as *Enuma Elish* (where Marduk organizes the universe and then has a shrine constructed), Mesopotamian temple building texts (Hurowitz) and especially the account of Gudea's temple project all contribute to this association.

In the extensive Sumerian texts recounting Gudea's construction of a temple for Ningirsu (*COS* 2.155:417-33), there are several items worthy of note. First is the statement that the sanctuary is being constructed in order to provide a resting place for Ningirsu and his consort, Bau.

Second, the dedication ceremonies last seven days. A third item of significance is that the text touches on many of the pertinent elements that we recognize from Genesis 1, including the proclamation of functions and the installation of functionaries (cyl. B.6-12). Additionally, Hurowitz has noticed that the description of the temple construction is not architectural in nature. Despite the detail, the accounts "do not enable the reader to visualize the shape of the temple, even partially or schematically" (40 n. 5). This is in accord with what was discussed above about the Genesis creation account being functional rather than structural. Just as Gudea's account established functions for the temple and then supplied functionaries to operate in it, the Genesis account set up functions (days one to three) and functionaries (days four to six) for the cosmic temple. Genesis 2:1 indicates this as it refers to the creation of heaven and earth (the cosmos with its functions) and *all their hosts* (the functionaries in the various realms of the cosmos). In a temple-construction project, the structure would be built, and the furniture and trappings would be made in preparation for the moment when all was ready for the dedication of the temple. On this occasion, normally a seven-day celebration, the functions of the temple would be declared, the furniture and hangings would be put in place, the priests would be installed, and the appropriate sacrifices would be made to initiate the temple's operation. Somewhere in the process the image of the deity would be brought into the temple to take up his repose in his new residence.

Isaiah 66:1 expresses clearly the temple-cosmos function in biblical theology as it identifies heaven as God's throne and earth as his footstool, providing a resting place for him. God likewise achieves rest on the seventh day of creation, just as he takes up rest in his temple. The sabbath element helps us to recognize the temple-cosmos equation in Genesis and to realize the contextual significance of the functions and functionaries in the creation narrative. As noted earlier, "rest" does not imply relaxation but more like achieving equilibrium and stability. The environment God creates is not intended to provide rest for the people he has created (though that becomes a significant piece of theology as time goes on). Rather, God is making a rest for himself, a rest provided for by the completed cosmos. Inhabiting his resting place is the equivalent to being enthroned; it is connected to taking control in his role as sovereign ruler of the cosmos. The temple in turn simply provides a symbolic reality for this concept. Psalm 104:2-4 captures this as the elements of the cosmos serve as functionaries for Yahweh's rule.

The connections that underline the temple-cosmos relationship in Genesis 1—2 are numerous. The celestial bodies are referred to using the unusual term "lights," which throughout the rest of the Pentateuch refers to the lights of the lampstand that functions to give light in the tabernacle. It should also be noted that the idea of rivers flowing from the holy place is found both in Genesis 2 (which portrays Eden as the holy of holies) and in Ezekiel's temple (Ezek 47:1). A third element is that when people are assigned their function in Genesis 2:15, the priestly terms *ʿābad* and *šāmar* are used. The main connection, however, is the rest motif, for rest is the principal function of a temple, and a temple is always where deity finds rest. Further contributing to this important concept is the fact that, just as the cosmos is portrayed in temple terms, the temple is configured as a microcosmos. Yahweh is said to find repose in the temple (e.g., Ps 132:13-14).

3.7. Role and Status of People. The idea that people were created to do the work that the gods had tired of is found in the Sumerian account Enki and Ninmah and in the Akkadian Atrahasis Epic. In the ancient worldview people were slaves to the gods with no dignity other than that which came from the knowledge that the gods could not get along without humans to meet their needs. Whereas the Mesopotamian literature is concerned about the jurisdiction of the various gods in the cosmos, with humankind at the bottom of the heap, the Genesis account is interested in the jurisdiction of humankind over the rest of creation as a result of the *image of God in which people were created. The concept of being in the image of God provides for human dignity and the sanctity of human life in the biblical view. It could be said, then, that human dignity derived in Mesopotamia from being needed by the gods, in Israel from being entrusted by God. Humans in divine service in Mesopotamia were viewed as laborers, in Israel as priests. Despite these important differences, both cultures saw people as having been created to serve deity.

3.8. Depiction of Structural Cosmos. When the

philosophers of the ancient world did try to depict something of the structure of the cosmos, they usually divided it into three levels. In Mesopotamian models the cosmos in its most basic form was divided into heaven, earth and Apsu (under the earth; this information is thoroughly and conveniently gathered and discussed in Horowitz). Several documents divide the three levels still further. Some Sumerian documents speak of seven heavens and seven earths, while Akkadian texts favor three of each. In this model, the upper heavens belong to Anu. Here is where Tiamat's waters are contained. The middle heavens are occupied by the Igigi gods and Marduk, and the lower heavens by the stars. In the three levels of earth, the upper level is that occupied by people; the middle level, where the underground waters are, by Ea; and the lower region, the netherworld, is the dwelling of the Anunnaki gods. These levels (both of heaven and earth) are considered to be disk-shaped and are either held up at the edges by pillars/mountains or bound together with ropes. The sky has gates through which the heavenly bodies, as well as the clouds and winds, pass. The dry land is surrounded by a boundless ocean of primordial waters. The Egyptian depictions portray the gods in the various roles. The sky god Shu stands or kneels on the earth god Geb (in prone position) and holds up Nut, who represents the heavens. Stars are depicted as covering Nut, and the boat of the sun god sails over the top of her arched body. Though the artistic representation differs, there is little that differentiates the cosmological models of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, when we compare this general cosmological model to Israelite texts, we find striking similarities. Since Israel had no revelation that would alter their cosmological model, it is not surprising to find that they conformed to the consensus of the day. God did not use a revised cosmology to communicate all of the important differences in cosmogony.

3.9. Worldview Conclusions. Summarizing the data introduced above, it is evident that the Israelite worldview had a number of elements in common with the broader culture of the day. Continuity with the ancient Near East is evident in issues concerning the cosmos; discontinuity is evident in issues concerning deity. Thus, the Israelites shared with their neighbors the belief that creation concerns functions, not structures, and that it involved bringing order out of chaos. These are not perspectives that our modern culture typically holds. Israel also had no reason to deny the depiction of the cosmos common to the ancient world and believed that the cosmos should be perceived as a temple. Israel and her neighbors all believed that people had been created to serve God, though there is a significant variation in the understanding of how people served God. The discontinuity then widens as the role and status of deity becomes involved and theogony and theomachy are rejected as theologically deficient views. These latter are areas where Israel enjoyed revelation that helped them rise above the common philosophies of the day.

4. Literary Features.

B. F. Batto's summary of the situation probably well represents critical conclusions concerning the creation account in Genesis:

> In its present form the Israelite primeval myth (Genesis 1—9) is a combination of an original Yahwistic primeval myth and later Priestly supplementation. J and P both drew heavily upon Mesopotamian cosmogonic tradition, even while creating a new and distinctively Israelite myth based on Yahwistic beliefs. J, being the first and lacking prior Israelite models, patterned his myth to large extent upon the Akkadian cosmogonic myth Atrahasis, both with regard to structure and themes. P, attempting to maintain continuity with the tradition established by J even while reforming it, was more subtle in the manner in which he drew upon Mesopotamian myth, principally the Babylonian myth Enuma Elish. (quoted in Clifford and Collins, 36-37).

This sort of maximalist position would see the biblical authors as working directly from Mesopotamian exemplars as they carried out theological transformations. Though this sort of conclusion is common, the summary of comparative literary studies of Genesis 1—11 offered by R. S. Hess in the introduction to *"I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood"* demonstrates that Batto's conclusions are far from universally held. D. Tsumura's introduction in the same volume details the rejection of dependence on the Babylonian materials by such well-known Assyriologists as W. G. Lambert and A. Sjöberg.

At the other end of the spectrum, a minimalist position, typical of traditional evangelical interpretation, would deny any possibility of

literary borrowing. For confessional scholars who consider it important to maintain the integrity of biblical inspiration, the idea that the author of Genesis made use of material from the ancient Near East need occasion no more concern than the idea that Solomon incorporated into the book of Proverbs some of the wisdom material that he had encountered in the wisdom of his world. Inspiration can operate through editors, redactors and tradents as effectively as it operates through authors. Nevertheless, given the complexity of the transmission of tradition and culture in the ancient world, literary dependence is extremely difficult to prove. In the end, A. R. Millard's assessment several decades ago of the prospects of literary borrowing in the flood narratives is appropriate for the creation narratives as well: "All who suspect or suggest borrowing by the Hebrews are compelled to admit large-scale revision, alteration, and reinterpretation in a fashion that cannot be substantiated for any other composition from the ancient Near East or in any other Hebrew writing" (quoted in Hess and Tsumura, 127).

See also ADAM; COSMOLOGY; GENESIS, BOOK OF; IMAGE OF GOD; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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CREATOR. *See* THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

CROPS. *See* AGRICULTURE.

CURSES. *See* BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

D

D. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

DAILY OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

DAN

In the Pentateuch Dan is the fifth son of *Jacob, the ancestor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel and the name of a city in northern Palestine.

1. One of the Twelve Sons of Jacob
2. The Name of the Clan Associated with His Family
3. The City
4. Historical Questions

1. One of the Twelve Sons of Jacob.

1.1. The Meaning of the Name. Many Hebrew names are translatable sentences or phrases, often expressing faith in God or a prayer to him. It has been suggested that the name Dan is probably an abbreviation of Danilu or Daniel, "The god El has judged/is my judge." In the rivalry between Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives, Rachel was unable to bear children so she gave her husband her slave Bilhah, and from their union came a son. In the custom of the time Rachel was able to adopt the boy as her own son and named him Dan because she felt vindicated by God (Gen 30:1-6).

1.2. Dan's family. Dan was the fifth son of Jacob following four sons of Leah. No details of the history of Dan are given in the patriarchal narratives, but his household is listed with those of his brothers who went down into Egypt (Ex 1:4). Only one son is mentioned in connection with Dan. His name is Hushim (Gen 46:23) or Shuham (Num 26:42). T. R. Ashley accounts for the different renderings by "a simple metathesis of consonants" (528 n.33).

2. The Name of the Clan Associated with His Family.

The descendants of Jacob are usually called "the tribes of Israel," but A. O. Mojola has argued that all Israel *(bĕnê yiśrā'ēl)* constituted a tribe and that "clan" is a better translation of *šēbet/maṭṭeh* than "tribe." For this reason reference is made to the clan of Dan.

2.1. The Clan's History from Egypt to Canaan. Some evidence suggests that the clan of Dan was small (six hundred fighting men according to Judg 18:11). It is somewhat surprising, then, to see the figures given in the two censuses in Numbers (62,700 in Num 1:39; 64,400 in Num 26:43). Recent attempts to explain these large numbers include E. W. Davies's conjecture that they are a literary convention for the theological purpose of showing that God's promise to the patriarchs of countless descendants was being fulfilled. Humphreys has revived and refined the argument that can be traced from F. Petrie to J. Wenham that the word *'elep* has a range of meanings, including a military unit ("troop"), and that this should replace the translation "thousand." This gives for Dan sixty-two troops adding up to seven hundred fighting men in Numbers 1 and sixty-four troops with four hundred men in Numbers 26. The number of men per troop could vary and be quite small. Humphreys also replies to criticisms of this approach.

2.1.1. The Construction of the Tabernacle. According to the book of Exodus, God gave *Moses instructions about the construction and furnishing of the *tabernacle during the *wilderness journey. One of the skilled craftsmen who worked on the furnishings was Oholiab from the tribe of Dan (Ex 31:6; 35:34; 38:23). He assisted his more famous partner Bezalel. They are both referred

to as capable teachers, engravers, designers and embroiderers. Oholiab is also called a weaver of fine materials. After the completion of the tabernacle when the tribes brought their offerings, Ahiezer from the tribe of Dan brought one silver dish and one silver bowl both full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, together with one gold pan full of incense, three animals for burnt offerings, one for a sin offering and seventeen for peace offerings (Num 7:66-71), a pattern repeated for each of the tribes on consecutive days. G. J. Wenham comments that placing the gifts of the tribes at this point in the narrative represents the response of the people to God's prevenient grace (Wenham 1981, 92). It also demonstrates that "every tribe had an equal stake in the worship of God and that each was fully committed to the support of the tabernacle and its priesthood" (Wenham 1981, 93).

2.1.2. After Sinai. The place of Dan varies in the lists in Numbers, which themselves vary according to the purpose of the list. Where the subject is leaders, the list is based on genealogy; where camping or marching, it is based on the formation of the clans in relation to the tabernacle (Ashley, 51-53). When the Israelites marched from Sinai, Dan brought up the rear, accompanied by Asher and Naphtali (Num 10:25). When the Israelites camped, Dan was on the north side alongside those same two tribes. On the first spying expedition, Ammiel represented Dan (Num 13:12), and when it came to apportioning the land the leader chosen from Dan to help with this task was Bukki the son of Jogli (Num 34:22). On the borders of the Promised Land Moses gave instructions for the pronouncement of blessings and curses on Mount Ebal in the covenant-renewal ceremony. Dan lined up with Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali to respond to the twelve curses with a loud "Amen" (Deut 27:13-26, if the ceremony went as the Mishnah suggests; see Craigie, 331).

2.2. The Clan's Prospects. In Jacob's final blessing, Dan is said to live up to his name as judge of his people. G. J. Wenham suggests that this means his victories will benefit the whole nation of Israel rather than just his particular clan (Wenham 1994, 481). He is also described as a snake that bites the horse's heels (Gen 49:16-17). O. T. Allis takes this to be a reference to the cerastes, a small, venomous snake that hides in hollows from which it darts to make surprising attacks on passers by (Allis, 24). It may well refer to Samson's exploits, as Jewish interpreters have held (e.g., *Tg. Neof.*), and possibly also to the sacking of Laish when the Danites moved north (Judg 17—18). In the final blessing of Moses, the clan of Dan is said to be "a lion's whelp" (Deut 33:22), which implies, according to P. C. Craigie, the fear and weakness of youth but with the promise of powerful strength in the future. The final line of verse 22 suggests that Dan will launch attacks from Bashan, but there are no other references to Bashan as a base for the Danites. F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman argue that the word *bāšān* should not be understood as a proper name but as cognate to the Ugaritic *bṯn* ("viper"), and they translate the phrase, "Who shies away [or leaps forth] from a viper" (Cross and Freedman, 195, 208). This suggests a play on the words of Genesis 49:17. Although in Jacob's blessing Dan is the viper, here he is afraid of it, and the word for "snake" in Genesis 49:17 is different *(nāḥāš)*. It might therefore be better to see both blessings as predictions that the attacks of the Danites will be sudden and unexpected.

3. The City.

Dan is the only clan to have a city named after it. The Danites so renamed Laish after capturing it (Judg 18:7-29). The reference to *Abraham pursuing the kings who had captured *Lot as far as Dan (Gen 14:14) probably reflects the time of the later writer or editor. The same can be said for the description of Moses' view (Deut 34:1).

4. Historical Questions.

It is not unusual to find the sons of Jacob described as "eponymous ancestors" (Gottwald, 80, 854; for Dan, see Hadley, 497). This is often taken to mean that Dan is a fictional character (e.g., McCarter, 28-29) or at least not existing as the biblical text represents (e.g., Spina, 62). But much depends on the character of the narratives. They are stories about family life rather than tribal groups. G. J. Wenham argues that stories about human beings in other ancient Near Eastern literature fall into three categories: autobiographies or biographies that follow the events they describe quite closely, historical legends full of fantastic deeds, and purely fictional stories. He accepts K. A. Kitchen's judgment that the patriarchal narratives fall between the first two categories. In re-

alistic content they are close to the first category, and they lack the elements of fantasy in the second. Wenham concludes, "we are dealing with real historical figures" (1994, xxi-xxii). In the absence of corroboration of the biblical texts on details about Dan, scholars either manufacture their own diverse accounts or try to establish the plausibility of the biblical narrative (Hoffmeier; Kitchen).

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; GAD; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI, LEVITES; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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A. J. Rowe

DATE OF EXODUS. *See* EXODUS, DATE OF.

DAUGHTERS OF MAN. *See* SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN.

DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD. *See* ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF.

DAY OF ATONEMENT. *See* ATONEMENT, DAY OF.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

DEATH. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

DEBT, REMISSION OF. *See* SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

DECALOGUE

The Decalogue, from the Greek translation meaning "ten words" or, in Hebrew, the *ʿăśeret haddĕbārîm* (Ex 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4), is more commonly known as the Ten Commandments. This material is first encountered in Exodus 20, but the number ten and the familiar two-tablet description initially occur in Exodus 34. The Decalogue sits at the center of the *covenant between God and Israel, as mediated through *Moses. Its stipulations provide the foundational definition of an appropriate relationship between the Israelites and God and among individual Israelites under the terms of the covenant. In its OT context, the Decalogue is directed exclusively toward members of the Israelite community. As part of the Christian canon, more universal interpretations have been attached to it. One easily sees a significant influence on Christian thinking, as some informal definitions of Christian morality and piety are built upon the Decalogue. Its impact can also be observed on legal systems and business practices. Some contemporary discussions contend that the value of the Decalogue transcends any particular religious tradition and could therefore represent appropriate social values outside the domain of a religious setting.

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1. Date and Origin of the Decalogue.

According to the text, Moses received these com-

mandments directly from God after he ascended the holy mountain. This would place the date shortly after the Israelites' escape from *Egypt, which is frequently assigned to either the fifteenth or thirteenth century B.C. (*see* Exodus, Date of). Many critical scholars reject Mosaic *authorship of the Decalogue based on historical-critical analysis of the text. From a literary perspective, it is argued by some that the Exodus version of the Decalogue has been introduced into an earlier narrative. Comparisons of the Exodus version with that of Deuteronomy demonstrate that paraenetic expansions occurred as this material was used in different settings. Many historical-critical scholars assign dates of origin for this material ranging from the twelfth through the ninth centuries B.C. However, from social, political and legal perspectives, there is nothing in the short, succinct "ten words" themselves that could not date to the time of Moses. Neither are there verifiable historical anchors in the text. Thus, one's position on date and origin of the material hinges on larger questions of biblical authority and canon formation.

2. Numeration of the Decalogue.
Different numbering systems are assigned to the Decalogue. The divergence stems from the treatment of the commandments to worship no other gods, to have no idols and not to covet. Jewish, Roman Catholic and Lutheran interpreters treat the laws prohibiting worship of other gods and the use of idols as one commandment. The Jewish tradition retains the number ten by treating "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" as the first commandment. The Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions divide the commandment that prohibits coveting into two distinct parts, separating coveting the neighbor's house from coveting the neighbor's wife, servants and livestock. In doing so, they too retain ten as the number of commandments. Orthodox and Reformed traditions view the prohibitions against the worship of other gods and the use of idols as two separate items, while treating the commandment against coveting as a single prohibition.

3. Locations of the Decalogue Within the Text.
The Decalogue occurs in more than one location in the Pentateuch. In Exodus 20, where God gives the law at Sinai, the Decalogue is situated at the beginning of the *book of the covenant. Source and redaction critics have argued that the Decalogue interrupts the flow of material between Exodus 19 and 20:18. With the Decalogue removed, the remaining material describes a theophany in which God instructs Moses to set limits around the holy mountain, with only Moses and *Aaron allowed to ascend the mountain. The people, frightened by the thunderous theophany, request that Moses be their intermediary so that they will not die from standing in God's overwhelming presence. In the current structure of Exodus 19—20, God gives the Decalogue in the midst of that theophany. The commandments precede a larger body of legal and other material known as the *book of the covenant (or covenant code), contained in Exodus 21—24.

The Decalogue in Exodus appears to be given a second time in chapter 34. When Moses discovers that the Israelites began worshiping the *golden calf in his absence, he angrily breaks the tablets containing the laws. Moses then ascends Sinai yet again, where God gives a set of replacement tablets. Though Exodus 34:28 says that God "wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments," the commands given in Exodus 34 are clearly different from the ones recorded in Exodus 20. The prohibition against *idols and the call to *sabbath rest do appear in Exodus 34, but the remaining stipulations pertain to religious *festivals and *sacrifices.

The Decalogue occurs yet another time in Deuteronomy 5, where its form and content are comparable to the material in Exodus 20. A book of speeches, Deuteronomy has a sermonic, exhortative quality. Here the Decalogue is incorporated into hortatory material by Moses that reminds Israel of its covenantal identity and responsibility in preparation for entering Canaan.

Deuteronomy recalls the giving of these laws at Mount Horeb, a more general name for the locale, rather than Mount Sinai, the more specific name for the mountain. Apart from that difference of name for the holy mountain, distinct differences between the Exodus version and the Deuteronomy version of the Decalogue are minimal. The commandment to observe a sabbath rest in Exodus is based on God's divine *rest on the seventh day. In Deuteronomy, the motivation for a sabbath rest is Israel's memory of its enslavement in Egypt.

4. The Decalogue as Covenant.

4.1. Definition. The Decalogue constitutes a covenant between God and Israel. The Hebrew term *bĕrît* is generally translated as "covenant," though it is sometimes rendered "promise, pledge, obligation, agreement, contract or treaty." Its etymology is uncertain. The most widely accepted suggestions include: (1) from the root verb *brh,* meaning "to see or decide"; (2) from the preposition *birīt,* unknown in Hebrew but found in Akkadian, meaning "between"; or (3) from a noun *birītu,* found in Akkadian and also in the Talmud, meaning "clasp, fetter."

Whatever its exact etymological origin, in general a covenant is a solemn promise between two parties, made binding by an oath. Both parties recognize this promise as the formal act that binds them to fulfill the promises made in the covenant. Ancient covenants could take place between different sociopolitical groups, thus creating or regulating the relationship between them. Covenants could also be made between groups within one particular legal community, in which case obligations were assumed that were not otherwise provided for by the laws and norms of that community. In this ancient Near Eastern context, these covenants usually had the sanction of a god or gods, and thus the idea of covenant was closely related to religion.

4.2. Forms. Two primary forms of covenant rooted in ancient Near Eastern culture are represented in the OT materials. The *royal grant* covenant known from Assyrian, Babylonian and Hittite sources has been used to identify the form and interpretation of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The function of the royal grant was to bestow land or a house to a loyal vassal for past loyalties and extremely faithful service. As such, the royal grant was a reward.

The second type of covenant found in the OT closely models the *suzerainty* covenants. First known from Hittite treaties dating as early as the Late Bronze Age (1400-1200 B.C.), this covenant type is present in several later periods as well. This wide range of usage means that while the form is helpful for understanding the function of the biblical material, it is not useful for dating covenants of this type. The suzerainty covenant is closely associated with the Mosaic covenant and, thus, the Decalogue.

The suzerainty covenant was one between a superior and subordinate political powers. Treaties of this type have been found to contain many elements similar to those of the Mosaic covenant. (1) The treaty typically begins with a *preamble,* which gives the identity and title of the triumphant king, sometimes in detail and often opening with the phrase, "These are the words of..." (2) A *historical prologue* provides the foundation for the remainder of the covenant. It recounts the accomplishments of the king, especially those on behalf of the vassal. It may describe the past relationship between the two parties, likely emphasizing acts of benevolence by the suzerain for the vassal. It often reveals that the suzerain is responsible for placing the vassal power on the throne. (3) The *stipulations* spell out the obligations of the vassal to the suzerain. The content of these stipulations varies widely but is frequently meticulous in terms of military obligations. For instance, the vassal may not enter alliances with other independent kings and must be a friend to the suzerain's friends and an enemy to his enemies. The vassal must answer any summons by the suzerain for military forces. The stipulations also define the treatment of refugees and war booty. Some of the more humorous prohibitions include "murmuring unfriendly words" against the suzerain. Last but not least, a stipulated tribute is imposed. (4) After the stipulations, provision is made for the *deposit* of the covenant agreement in a "sacred" place. Periodic public reading of the covenant is required. The covenant is usually placed in the sanctuary of the vassal's temple and is read from once to four times yearly in a covenant-renewal ceremony. (5) *Witnesses* are then called to verify the implementation of the treaty. These are usually the respective gods of the groups involved. At times they include the features of the natural world, such as rivers or springs. (6) This is followed by *blessings and curses* that signify the good and the bad things that are to happen, according to the loyalty or lack of loyalty by the vassal to the suzerain. (7) Sometimes an oath or description of a ratification ceremony is included in the covenant, as is a binding symbol, such as a slaughtered animal. The latter represents what will happen to the vassal if the oath is broken.

Against this background, certain similarities with the Decalogue have been proposed. (1) The preamble finds a parallel in God's statement, "I am Yahweh your God." (2) The historical prologue, recounting the suzerain's deeds on behalf of the vassal, is contained in the phrase "who brought you out of Egypt." (3) The stipulations, or the terms of the covenant, are the prin-

ciples contained within the Decalogue.

Certain elements of the suzerain form are not part of the Decalogue itself but are described in other parts of the OT where keeping the covenant is the subject. For instance, the elements of depositing the law in a sacred place and of public reading are evident in Joshua 24. Deuteronomy 10:5 describes the ark of the covenant as a depository for the Decalogue. Public reading of the Torah, which includes the law, is mentioned in Deuteronomy 31:10-11. Witnesses are summoned in Joshua 24 (people and stones) and in Deuteronomy 32 (heaven and earth). Finally, *blessings and curses are attached to the book of Deuteronomy, which itself has been favorably compared to the suzerainty form.

Despite the shortcomings of the formal parallels with the Decalogue exclusively, the suzerainty treaty provides insight into reading and interpreting the exodus experience and the resulting covenant. Interpreted in that manner, the Decalogue represents an agreement between a superior party (God) and a subordinate party (Israel). In return for past deliverance and future provision, undivided loyalty in all matters is expected of Israel. Like the suzerainty covenants of the political realm, this covenant also hinged on a condition: Israel's observance of the stipulations. Whether one understands the response as one of obligation or gratitude is irrelevant at this point. Failure to keep the stipulations would lead to a breach of the covenant. Breach of the covenant would invoke the curses and thus ensure the demise of the vassal party.

5. The Decalogue as Law.

5.1. Casuistic Law. *Form-critical studies of OT law reveal two distinct types of law, along with a hybrid form that combines these two forms. The first type of law is *casuistic law*. Casuistic laws are conditional and are noted for their "if-then" structure: "If X does this, then Y will happen." This form of law establishes a hypothetical situation and prescribes the proper course of action should such a situation occur. Its *Sitz im Leben* ("setting in life") is thought to be the realm of the courts, because casuistic laws are concerned with typical problems that emerge in societies, and laws of this type are easily found in other secular legal codes.

5.2. Apodictic Law. The second form of law is *apodictic law*. These laws are absolute prohibitions of the "thou shalt not" variety, often concerned with religious or moral issues. Unlike casuistic laws, apodictic laws offer no condition. They simply say, "Whoever does X will surely die" or "You shall not . . ." with the understood penalty being death. Even if death is not prescribed, death is the understood penalty for breaking apodictic laws. Some scholars initially argued that the apodictic laws were uniquely Israelite, with the *Sitz im Leben* being Israelite religion. Thus, these laws reflected Israel's attempt to live completely under the guidance of their God. This argument is no longer credible because apodictic laws have been found in other ancient Near Eastern materials as well. Instead, apodictic law seems to operate in settings that rely upon persuasion for urging compliance with the law rather than upon physical force or structures.

The negative prohibitions contained in the Decalogue resemble the apodictic laws, though the threatened punishment of death is lacking. Some scholars maintain that punishment by death is implied, though this cannot be conclusively demonstrated. Many of the Decalogue stipulations remain in the simplest of apodictic form, though expansions have been added to some, supplying justifying motives for the laws. For instance, one keeps the sabbath because God rested. One honors parents so that long life will follow. As the Decalogue operates within the suzerainty form of covenant given by God and mediated by Moses, their similarity with the apodictic form conveys the seriousness of keeping the covenantal stipulations.

5.3. The Decalogue as Principles or Law? Ultimately, is the Decalogue to be considered "law" in the strict sense? The Decalogue is contained within the Torah, a term frequently used synonymously with *law. Its location in Exodus, where it precedes the book of the covenant, and in Deuteronomy contributes to the perception that the commandments are laws. Similarities of form with apodictic law further encourage the conclusion that the Decalogue is legal material. The term *dĕbārîm*, used to describe these commandments, is understood by some scholars of biblical law as a legitimate category or subcategory of legal material.

There are, however, some considerations that suggest that a wider understanding of the Decalogue is appropriate. First, the context for the giving of the Decalogue is a religious one, as God provides a covenant and in some sense a founding charter for the people delivered out of

Egypt. Second, penalties need to be stated and enforced when laws are broken if those laws are to be functionally effective. The stipulations of the Decalogue lack any prescribed punishment for those who break these laws, relying on fear of the Lord to promote allegiance to the terms of the covenant. Finally, the Decalogue addresses subject matter that is not "culture specific" but that instead has universal relevance and appeals to principles broadly held. For these reasons, the stipulations that form the Decalogue may be legitimately understood as "ordinances" or "principles" rather than as "laws" in the strictest sense (*see* Law).

6. Decalogue Content.

The suzerain-treaty form and the apodictic-law form should guide interpretation of the Decalogue. As an act of self-disclosure, this covenant indicates that God desires to be known by the Israelites. In typical suzerain fashion, the emerging relationship is based upon what God has already done on Israel's behalf. This is a covenant of choice, of *election. God has already chosen the Israelites to be a holy nation, and he has already been active on their behalf. Thus, the Decalogue is not a collection of commandments kept in order *to be* chosen by God. They are stipulations to be kept in response to *being chosen* by God. The deposit of these tablets, their public reading, the covenant-renewal ceremonies described in other locations and the Israelites' willingness to excommunicate, even kill, community members who violate the covenant affirm the central role of the covenant in Israel's identity.

Commentators have long recognized the Decalogue's personal appeal with its use of the singular pronoun "you." Equally obvious is the clear progression of focus within the Decalogue material, though different categorizations and descriptions of this progression have been offered. Many have understood the first four laws as defining humanity's proper relationship with God. The fourth, regarding sabbath rest, expands beyond the divine-human relationship and begins to address life in community. The final six stipulations regulate relationships between members of the faith community. An alternative interpretation describes the first five, which each contain the divine name, as applying specifically to Israel; the second five commandments, which do not contain the divine name, address moral issues and are intended for a more universal audience.

The *first commandment*—"you shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3)—demands absolute loyalty to Yahweh, the God of Israel. As a first response to God's election of Israel, this principle calls for an allegiance appropriate to the elect status. As a people created by God and set apart for holy purposes, commitment to Yahweh is to be fundamental to Israel's identity. Of course, Israel was frequently tempted toward, and guilty of, choosing gods other than Yahweh. Baal, Marduk, Asherah and a host of ancient Near Eastern deities, each of whom was believed to rule a particular domain such as fertility or rain, competed with Yahweh for Israel's devotion. It is probable that ancient Israel was not always a monotheistic society. Even if one argues to the contrary, OT literature is emphatic that Israel frequently worshiped other false gods, real or imagined.

With the first commandment prohibiting external threats to Israel's relationship with God, the second and third commandments are designed to prevent internal erosion of the community's perception of God's power and of their relationship to God. In doing so, the stipulations prohibit two practices common among Israel's peers.

The *second commandment* prohibits the use of a *pesel* ("image") in worship. The reference to things in heaven, on earth or under the earth covers all possible material forms. This prohibition of *idol worship served two primary functions. First, it distinguished Israelites from their ancient Near Eastern neighbors, many of whom used idols in their religious practices. The OT contains numerous references to such practices (cf. 2 Kings 17:7-18); archaeology confirms this testimony. Idols are physical representations of the deity, and herein lies one reason Israelites were not allowed to make such representations: few people were allowed to see the face of God and live. How, then, could one make an accurate representation of a God whose image had not been seen? Thus, integrity and the accuracy of the image representing God is an issue. Furthermore, idols are static, nonfeeling and nonresponsive, not at all like the God of Israel (cf. Isaiah's parody of idols; e.g., Is 40:18-20; 41:5-7, 21-29; 44:6-20; 46:1-7). The OT presents Yahweh as a God who is dynamic, who rejoices and suffers with the chosen people and who sees the actions and hears the cries of the covenant people. God is known through actions on behalf of the people, as God acts to fulfill the covenant

within Israel's historical experience.

Second, idols are never *only* a visual representation. In ancient Near Eastern religions, idols were sometimes bathed, clothed and fed as though they themselves were gods. Thus, idols could become objects of allegiance and ultimately be hallowed as *holy objects. At that point, the representation itself threatens to cause violation of the first commandment as the idol assumes a place of priority in the devotion of the worshiper. Equally important is the issue of using the idol as a means of containing and manipulating God. The idol, and supposedly God, could be used whenever desired and was to some degree at the mercy and disposal of its owner. To fashion an idol is to attempt to reduce God to manageable proportions and to assume that God is susceptible to the control of the worshiper. Such a theology is at odds with the OT, which describes Yahweh as transcendent and beyond human control.

Whereas the second commandment regulates visual and physical representations of the deity, the *third commandment* focuses upon verbal representations of God. The linguistic range of meaning for *šāw'* ("misuse") includes false swearing, false speech, and that which brings disaster. Thus, the misuse described in this commandment pertains to associating the name of Yahweh with false or disastrous purposes. This prohibition was deeply connected with the significance attached to personal names in ancient Near Eastern culture. Names revealed the character and identity of the individual. A close relationship existed between one's name and one's reputation. Equally important when considering this commandment is the ancient Near Eastern belief in the power of the spoken word. At some level, a causal connection was assumed between words and events (e.g., the concept of *blessings and curses). Thus, to know the name of God was to understand something of the divine identity. To invoke the divine name was to associate the power and purposes of Yahweh with the thing being spoken and the purposes being represented. Using Yahweh's name in vain involves associating God with purposes and powers that are inconsistent with God's identity and will. The end result is a misrepresentation of God, a false claim to divine power and endorsement, and a miscommunication of truth.

The *fourth commandment* is best understood by considering the meaning of the root word for *sabbath *(šabbāt)*, which simply means "rest." The commandment could thus be read, "Remember the rest day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a rest day to the Lord your God." The Exodus version of the Decalogue anchors this commandment in God's rest as described in the *creation story. That act of divine rest is the theological framework for this regulation in which the sabbath becomes a special day set aside to remind the Israelites that the cycle of life should include a period of rest, refreshment and remembering their Creator. When Israel remembers their Creator, they remember that the same God delivered them from bondage. When they remember that newly acquired freedom, they remember the covenant. So it is no surprise that in the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue, the reason given for observing the sabbath is not because God rested, but because God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian captivity. Thus, sabbath rest is about more than relaxation from toil and labor and the rejuvenation of tired muscles and aching backs. This "rest," contextualized by the words "remembrance" and "holy," is a weekly reminder for the Israelites of what God has done to create this covenant community and of the holy, separate identity it bears as the covenant people. In effect, the sabbath is a sign of the covenant.

Like the fourth commandment, the *fifth commandment* is expressed positively, calling for the Israelites to honor their fathers and mothers. This command is not the only regulation of the treatment of parents (cf. Ex 21:15, 17). *"Honor" is a translation of *kābôd*, which also means "glory" and, interestingly enough, "weighty." To honor someone in this Israelite context was to regard that one as a person of worth and value. Though the fourth commandment has traditionally been a parent's refuge when children misbehave, this verse was not originally a catechism for that purpose. It was directed to the Israelite community as a whole, shaping the way they treated their aging parents. It functioned as a guideline within a covenant community composed of family units united in a tribal federation.

According to the exodus story, these were families in the process of moving from Egyptian slavery through a *wilderness wandering to the Promised Land. They were going from a setting where their Egyptian owners determined what they received, and who consequently had some responsibility for their care, to a wilderness set-

ting where God provided for them. From there, the Israelites eventually entered Canaan, the Promised Land. Once settled there, each family received a *land inheritance and from that point onward had the primary responsibility of caring for their own.

Meeting basic subsistence needs would have been a challenge for many of the Israelite families. Archaeological discoveries indicate that Israelites initially settled in the rough, undeveloped terrain of the hill country. Land needed to be cleared and terraced. Homes had to be built. Agrarian economies were developed. Rainfall was limited. Struggles for survival were common, with debt slavery always a lingering possibility. In a situation where resources were at a premium and sacrifices had to be made, the uncomfortable question became: Who is expendable? In such cases, it would have been tempting to spend resources on those who had most of their lives before them and whose young, energetic, virile bodies would soon help relieve the nearly insurmountable work load. To combat that possibility, this commandment insists that families honor the elderly, who are sometimes weaker and needier than their adult children. This stipulation, designed to protect those who may be regarded as unimportant, unproductive or burdensome, insists that human value and meaningful life are not equated with productivity.

The social structure of the Israelite tribal system, normally described as a tripartite structure of tribes, clans and families or *bêt ʾāb* ("house of the father"), gives this law an additional significance. The *bêt ʾāb* created an extended family setting in which the patriarch and matriarch of the family wielded much power over the lives of the individual family members of the younger generations. This structure had economic and political ramifications (cf. the *Jacob and Laban stories). Younger generations could easily tire of the lack of control they had over their own lives and over family decisions, leading to animosity toward the father and mother of the house. In a situation primed for tense situations, this commandment reaffirms the place of honor given to the head of the *bêt ʾāb*.

The *sixth commandment* prohibits killing, which is ironic given the amount of violence contained in the OT. Indeed, interpretation of this commandment is difficult, given its context. The usual word for "kill" in biblical Hebrew is *hārag*, but that is not the word used here. This commandment prohibits *rāṣaḥ*, an interesting choice because this word has a wider range of possible meanings than *hārag*. Normally *rāṣaḥ* refers to "murder," the willful, premeditated killing of an individual, often as an act of *blood vengeance. This would suggest that this commandment intended to limit acts of revenge to protect the life of innocent community members. However, *rāṣaḥ* can also refer to unintentional homicide, as in the laws of asylum (cf. Deut 4:41-42). This usage means that intentionality can no longer be the dividing line by which one keeps or breaks this command. The word also describes the execution of a convicted killer (cf. Num 35:30). Such usage demonstrates that the implications of this commandment reach far beyond simplistic or legalistic interpretations. This is a commandment that values life and relationships, leaving decisions to end life in the hands of God. Where taking the life of another had divine sanction, the OT generally associates those deaths with certain sins for which the prescribed punishment was execution. Punishment by death was limited to capital offenses (e.g., Ex 21:12-17) and to actions that threatened the holiness of the community and the integrity of Israel's covenant with God (e.g., Josh 7). Where the Israelite community was given authority to take the lives of individuals, those decisions were not to be made lightly.

Adultery is prohibited in the *seventh commandment* (*see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics). Such a stipulation presupposes an understanding of marriage, because without the latter, the former is pointless. To some degree polygamy was practiced by some Israelites, although it is impossible to know how widespread it actually was. The economic realities of polygamy may have curtailed its popularity. In certain circumstances, a marriage could be dissolved, and Israelite law contained guidelines describing when divorce was appropriate. However, so long as the marriage was intact, certain standards were to be respected. Abstaining from adultery was one of those guidelines, although a double standard existed in Israel's patriarchal society. The law prohibited wives from having sexual relations with anyone other than their husbands. In contrast, men were not to have relations with the wives of other men. Elsewhere, death is clearly stated as the penalty for adultery (cf. Deut 22:22). In contrast, the penalty for the violation of a virgin was marriage or payment (cf. Ex 22:16-17;

Deut 22:28-29). In the clan-based, tribal-affiliated Israelite community, stable home lives were essential if the community itself was to remain functional. Without such stability, intratribal and intertribal conflicts arising from these acts would threaten the survival of the group (*see* Family Relationships).

The *eighth commandment* prohibits *theft. The choice of *gānab* as the verb suggests the element of "secrecy." Questions have arisen about the relationship between this stipulation and the tenth commandment, given the apparent overlap. Drawing support from other laws (cf. Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7), some have suggested that this commandment refers to kidnapping. If one presumes that theft is a capital offense, such an argument has some logic, but there is no compelling evidence to support such a claim.

The mere possibility of stealing requires, first of all, a concept of ownership. If ownership grants access to certain people while denying access to others, that means that ownership establishes boundaries accompanied by restricted entry or access. To some degree property is understood to be an extension of the self of the owner. Consequently, the theft of property is a violation or injury of the person, not just loss of wealth. The loss may well deprive a person of the ability to survive. Elsewhere in Israel's law, prohibitions of theft generally are related to the provision of basic subsistence needs. Along with personal violation and threat to survival, theft also contributes to the loss of privilege. The loss of those things reduces the possibility of a satisfying or abundant life.

Lying is prohibited in the *ninth commandment.* The Hebrew literally reads, "you shall not respond against your neighbor falsely," and uses language that suggests a court context. Two immediate observations deserve comment. The first is only obvious in the Hebrew text. The verb used is *ʿānâ,* which is usually translated as "respond." It can, however, also mean "oppress, afflict or put down." Thus this verse could read, "You shall not oppress your neighbor by lying." Lying is more than deceit and dishonesty; it oppresses the person to whom or about whom the lie is told. The second observation is the commandment's reference to the neighbor. Thus the stipulation emphasizes that lying is a social, not a private, evil. The worst victim is the neighbor, which is to say, the one to whom or about whom the lie is told.

There is no lie that does not, in some way, affect others. At the very least, false information limits the hearer's ability to make an informed decision because he or she does not have accurate information. In the Israelite community, lying was prohibited because of what it did to the recipients of the lie. The ninth commandment protected the neighbor as well as the neighbor's reputation. It ensured the neighbor's freedom to make an informed choice and thus helped the neighbor to decide and act with integrity. Ancient Israel had no place for such a casual approach to truth and lying, especially in their law courts. Elsewhere the laws stipulate that a person who gave worthless testimony about another was to receive the penalty that the one about whom the lie was told would have been subject to, if the testimony had been true (Deut 19:18-21). In some cases that meant death; in others it meant three- or fourfold restitution. Such strenuous penalties illustrate the seriousness of false testimony in the context of the faith community.

With the *tenth commandment,* questions frequently arise about the relationship between stealing and coveting, since their territory seems to overlap. There is one primary difference. Stealing is linked completely to the act itself, in which someone takes that which belongs to another. Coveting *(ḥāmad),* however, has to do with an attitude deep within. It involves desires that are so strong one is willing to reach out and take, or commit other unacceptable acts, to satisfy those desires.

After nine commands that either focus on God or outer behavior, the tenth command enters the realm of the heart and mind. This prohibition does not focus on outward, visible actions. It concentrates instead on a person's thoughts, motives and attitudes. Covetous thoughts motivate and inspire, frequently producing action that will violate one of the previous nine commandments.

Laws legislate actions, not thoughts or attitudes, precisely because the former can be monitored whereas the latter cannot. The act of coveting cannot be witnessed, only becoming visible when that internal craving is acted upon. This tenth commandment's shift to the interior dimension of the human life lessens the probability that the Decalogue functioned as an actual set of laws in ancient Israel. It does, however, demonstrate that God's covenant never depends

solely upon adherence to external details. The Decalogue begins with a command that insists there be no God before Yahweh. Like coveting, one's loyalty to God also begins as an internal posture that only secondarily becomes evident in external practice. Thus two commandments that are essentially rooted in the heart and mind of the covenant people encircle a set of principles that properly order worship and community relationships.

7. Interpretation of the Decalogue.

7.1. Old Testament. When one studies the history of interpretation of these laws, or any biblical passage, one will notice development and change in the meaning assigned to these passages. Biblical passages take on new meaning, partially shaped by the context of the community or individual reading them. For that reason, understanding the history of interpretation is useful to readers who search the text for meaning.

Interpreters of the Decalogue should begin by remembering that in its original context, these stipulations were not universal truths revealed to the entire world. They were given for and directed to a specific group of people, Israel, that was chosen by God. These commandments helped define the nation of Israel in its relationship with God and to each other. Israel was rooted in and defined by the concept of "covenant."

Many Biblical scholars maintain that covenant is the key idea for understanding the OT. Israel repeatedly used the concept of covenant to understand their history, from the call of *Abraham through the people's return from Babylonian exile. It even influenced their understanding of God and their conception of proper social organization. Indeed, it is difficult to find a more foundational or relational term than *covenant,* especially in regard to the Israelite understanding of community.

Israel's covenant was foundational for its community in the sense that it specified the reason for entering into the agreement with God. God delivered them from bondage, which provided the motivation for entering the covenant, and the foundation for Israel's continuing trust in God. Furthermore, the ensuing commands in Exodus 20, and again in Deuteronomy 5, provided a framework that delineated the essential characteristics and values of the community. God and Israel both expected these commandments to be accepted and shared by those who participated in the covenant.

The covenant defined by the Decalogue was relational in the sense that it formally established the faith relationship with God. Other contexts demonstrate that the primary relational characteristic that God brought into the covenant was *ḥesed,* usually translated as "steadfast love." Besides the accompanying responsibilities and privileges it created, this covenant was characterized by the assurance of God's steadfast love.

As the covenant described God's actions and intentions in this *ḥesed*-oriented relationship with the Israelites, it also delineated the basic expectations for the participants regarding their relationship with God and with other Israelites. In short, it outlined acceptable standards for relationships shaped by faith in the God of Israel.

The Decalogue's central location within the Mosaic covenant and the revelation at Sinai demonstrates its importance in the OT's theological understanding of Israel's identity. Other lists of "ten," and prophetic admonitions that loosely parallel the Decalogue without specifically naming it, confirm its significance. However, one must balance this testimony with the claim of 2 Kings 23, where during Josiah's reign a book of the law was found in the temple, the contents of which seemed unknown to the people. This raises the question of whether the law had as central a place in the lives of the people as the theology of the OT desired it to have. In fact, the Deuteronomistic History highlights disobedience as the reason for Israel's fall and subsequent exile, confirming that though the law was central to Israel's identity as a nation, the laws were not sufficiently observed to maintain the terms of the covenant.

7.2. New Testament. The NT contains various references to the Decalogue or portions of its stipulations (cf. Rom 13:9; Col 3:5-11; Heb 4:4, 10; Jas 2:11). Reference is made to them in the conversation between the rich young ruler and Jesus (Lk 18:18-23). Some view the Beatitudes as a reinterpretation of the Decalogue. Moving beyond these literal citings, larger interpretive questions hinge on the continuing validity of these commandments, given the new covenant through Christ. At the very least, interpreters should recognize that laws once meant for a specific group of people, Israel, are now being

redirected at another faith group that, while rooted in its Jewish heritage, has a different understanding of law and covenant.

Jesus occasionally challenged Jewish traditions regarding the law and offered new interpretations of it. He also understood his work as fulfilling the law. Jesus as interpreter of the law, or as the fulfillment of the law, is different from Jesus as the negation of the law, a description one hears all too often within the church. Jesus declared he was the fulfillment of the law, suggesting that the spiritual truths represented by the various laws were to be internalized. The transfiguration (Mt 17; Mk 9; Lk 9) depicts Jesus in conversation with Moses and Elijah, representatives of the Law and Prophets. John 1:16-17, directed at early Christians, describes how they received "one blessing upon another." First the law was given through Moses; then grace and truth came through Christ. So Christians should not be quick to dismiss totally the OT material as worthless (*see DJG,* Law).

Equally important to a NT discussion of the Decalogue's continuing validity is Paul's perspective on the law, which is a more critical one than that of Jesus. Paul insisted that grace, not law, had the power to bring salvation and that "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom 10:4). However, he also insisted that all Scripture, which would have certainly included the OT law, is "inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17; *see DPL,* Law).

The heart of the discussion may be described as "law as source of salvation" versus "law as valuable for instruction." Christ has done what the law could not do. Consequently, Christians do not seek salvation through the observance of the law. However, with Christ as the fulfillment of the law and its correct interpreter, OT law can continue to be a source of inspiration and a resource for wisdom. The new covenant through Christ, not the Decalogue, occupies the center of the Christian community. The spiritual truths represented by the Decalogue's stipulations should be internalized as useful instruction for faithful living within the new covenant.

7.3. Later Judaism. One finds two themes in the rabbinic treatment of the Decalogue. One strand of tradition accords the Decalogue a central place in Jewish prayer and liturgy. Its commandments were included among the material contained in phylacteries at Qumran. The Jerusalem Talmud (*y. Ber.* 1:5A) describes a direct correspondence between each word of the Shema and one of the Ten Commandments. A second strand of tradition, contained in the same document, downplays the centrality of the Decalogue in Jewish prayer, allowing the full revelation of God through Moses to be emphasized. Rabbinic literature is content to let this apparent contradiction stand.

7.4. Christian History. The Christian church's interpretation of the Decalogue has varied greatly over the course of its history, again demonstrating the influence of culture and context upon interpretation. Early catechetical material, such as the *Didache,* demonstrates a legalistic use as a means of influencing morality. Others, such as Irenaeus, used the concept of natural law as a means of embracing the value of the Decalogue while still maintaining that the Jewish law was no longer valid. Augustine promoted a Pauline argument that the law itself was good but that its goodness had been obscured by sin. The value of the Decalogue within the new covenant was its contribution to shaping the new life in Christ. The influence of these movements continued in the thinking of Reformers in a manner that elevated these formerly community-oriented stipulations to the level of eternal, divine law applicable to all times and all peoples. As a result, in the post-Reformation, precritical period, the exposition of the Decalogue was a usual feature of theological works. As critical scholarship emerged in the academy, eighteenth-century treatment of the Decalogue, and indeed the entire Bible, analyzed the text with a variety of historical-critical methods. These analyses raised questions regarding the authorship, date and origin of the Decalogue. Meanwhile, within the confessional community, the treatment of the Decalogue as a set of eternal laws to be applied universally has generally continued unscathed. Unfortunately, this has encouraged many within Christianity to use the Decalogue as a gauge for measuring righteousness, substituting legalistic prohibitions for covenant faith. A number of recent books of an interpretive nature are available, each seeking to connect the truth or spirit of the Decalogue with contemporary issues, thus demonstrating its continued relevance (Marshall, Moriarty, Timmerman).

8. Hermeneutical Issues and Contemporary Relevance.

Given the specific Israelite origin of the Decalogue and the range of meaning assigned to it by readers throughout history, modern interpreters do well to resist merely insisting upon the universal relevance of these commandments. As universal morals imposed from without, independent of a relationship with the God who gave the Decalogue, these commandments lack spiritual value. Indeed, as apodictic law without a formal structure to enforce adherence to them, there is little motivation for keeping these commandments apart from the covenant. When they are applied beyond the bounds of the faith community, a different motivation is necessary. The statements given here distance interpretation of the Decalogue from the common Christian assumption that they are universal laws. There may indeed be eternal truths within them that are worthy of wide application, but these commandments depend upon the covenant for their authority.

A first step toward discovering the contemporary relevance of the Decalogue, therefore, requires a recovery of *covenant* and *community* as central concepts within the church. The covenant established the context in which these commandments were heard. It established God's prior action on behalf of the people, God's choice of these people and God's desire to communicate with them. The commandments of the Decalogue expressed the divine will for the covenant people. As such, they provided a gift of opportunity and a warning of potential destruction. They provided the foundational principles for thinking about God and about religious living, creating a distinct group of people by defining their relationship to God differently from that of other religious groups. The commandments pertaining to social relationships framed life between members of the group. Faithful living, and indeed a faith community, results from living by the terms of the covenant.

Covenant and community remain as emphases of the Decalogue when viewed through a NT lens even though the NT redefines the faith community. Theological and conceptual parallels exist in God's prior action on the behalf of a people whom God desired to choose and in the revelation of the divine will through Jesus, who is the new covenant. The Decalogue remains useful within the new covenant, though some important shifts must be recognized. Rather than Israel, the faith community comprises followers of Jesus. Jesus' new command points to love of God and neighbor as the summation of the law. Christians do not keep the commandments as a means of keeping the covenant. Rather, they keep them as a way of expressing their love for God. The catechetical use of the Decalogue is not inappropriate so long as the distinction is maintained between law as "resource for instruction" and law as "measurement of piety" or worse, "source of salvation." With the Decalogue as a relevant resource for instruction, the challenge for the contemporary church is to utilize the positive principles contained in these apodictic formulations in ways that emphasize the spirit of God that undergirds the letter of the law.

See also BLASPHEMY; BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; ETHICS; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; LAW; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

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DESERT. *See* WILDERNESS, DESERT.

DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT. *See* COVENANT; DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

DEUTERONOMIST. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF

This article discusses the contents, theological themes and setting of the book of Deuteronomy. It shows how Deuteronomy relates to the OT books that precede and follow it. It describes the contents of the book as a series of speeches of *Moses on the plains of Moab, which re-present in a distinctive manner themes developed in the first four books of the Pentateuch. It goes on to review the interpretation of Deuteronomy in the modern period, explaining why it has been closely associated with the reform of King Josiah in the late seventh century B.C. and identifying the implications of this setting for its theological interpretation. Then, in critical dialogue with the thesis that Deuteronomy is the document of a Judean promonarchical program, it is argued that the book presents a vision of a thoroughly distinctive constitution for Israel in which Yahweh's authority is mediated through the *tôrâ* (or *law) taught by Moses, with the people having final responsibility for managing Israel's affairs. The principal themes of the book are then reviewed in the light of this overarching view and in relation to other parts of the Bible.

1. Deuteronomy in the Canon of the Old Testament
2. An Outline of the Book
3. Deuteronomy in Modern Interpretation
4. Deuteronomy as a Constitution for Israel
5. Establishing a Setting for Deuteronomy
6. Deuteronomy in the Canon

1. Deuteronomy in the Canon of the Old Testament.

1.1. The Name of the Book. The name "Deuteronomy" comes from the Greek translation (LXX) of Deuteronomy 17:18, which misunderstands the phrase "a copy of this law" as "this second law" *(to deuteronomium touto).* The title in Hebrew is "These are the words," taken from the opening words of the book. Deuteronomy is not a mere addition of new material to that which was already known, but a re-presentation and inculcation of the requirements of the *covenant between Yahweh and Israel. The former title makes an observation about the relation of the book to the remainder of the Pentateuch, while the latter focuses on its content.

1.2. Its Place in the Canon. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of Moses, the last book in the Pentateuch. While the word *Pentateuch* is based on the Greek for "five scrolls," the Hebrew term *tôrâ* also came to designate the same five books. The association with Moses was a key factor in marking out these books as primary. In this context, Deuteronomy brings to a conclusion the story of the formative events of Israel's history with Yahweh. Its narrative of the death of Moses (Deut 34) marks the end of the primary era in Israel's life and the transition to the next phase.

Modern interpretation has aligned Deuteronomy not only with the books that precede it canonically but also with those that follow it (in the Hebrew canonical order): Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings—the Former Prophets in Jewish tradition or more generally the Historical Books. Deuteronomy occupies a position between Genesis—Numbers and Joshua—Kings. It is a kind of pause in the narrative, since the

story of the progression from the *wilderness of Sinai via the plains of Moab into the land itself is essentially told in Numbers and Joshua. This position outside the main line of the narrative has led to different placements of the book. Some scholars think of a *Hexateuch* in which Deuteronomy is aligned mainly with the preceding books, but the story unfolded there is perceived as having a true conclusion in Joshua, with its account of the taking of the land of Canaan, promised as early as Genesis 12:1-3 (von Rad 1966a). Others have marked off the first four books, Genesis—Numbers, as a *Tetrateuch* and made Deuteronomy the first book in the series that follows, the whole being known as the Deuteronomistic History, in which Deuteronomy provides the theological basis for the interpretation of history that follows (Noth). It is best to think of Deuteronomy as having both a concluding function and an orientation toward the ensuing history, given its nature as an exhortation to the people to keep the covenant once they have entered the land (so Clines).

2. An Outline of the Book.

Whereas Genesis through Numbers consists predominantly of narratives interspersed with laws and instructions, Deuteronomy is largely in the form of speeches of Moses. These are essentially four (Deut 1:6—4:40; 5:1—26:19; 27:1—28:68; 29:1—30:20), the last four chapters being a mixture of narrative and final sayings. The speeches are set in the plains of Moab, the position that the people of Israel have reached after their *exodus from *Egypt, the covenant made at Sinai (Ex 19—24) and the forty-year period of wandering in the Sinai wilderness, following their failure to enter the Promised Land at the first attempt due to their lack of faith in Yahweh (Num 13—14; note 14:34). The speeches are, therefore, both retrospective and prospective. The opening verses of the book place it in relation to the past events, in the form of brief allusion and on the assumption that the story is known. They include a reference to the defeats of the Transjordanian kings Sihon and Og (Deut 1:4; see also Num 21:21-35), which were a kind of beginning of the taking of the Promised *Land, though the decisive crossing of the Jordan would be left to *Joshua rather than Moses. Moses' initiation of the conquest is recalled in Deuteronomy 1—3, which tells again how Israel came to spend a long time in the wilderness (Deut 1) and gives its own account of its progress to its present station, including the campaigns against Sihon and Og (Deut 2—3). After an exhortation (Deut 4), this part is framed by a report of *cities of refuge being set up in Transjordan (Deut 4:41-43), a mark of Israel's legitimate occupancy and jurisdiction there, which would be matched by similar appointments in due course in the land proper (Deut 19; see also Josh 20).

The exhortation in Deuteronomy 4 is centered on the covenant making at Horeb (Deuteronomy's regular name for Sinai; Deut 4:10-14), and this is elaborated in the first major set of instructions in the book (Deut 5—11). The book continues to revisit ground covered in the preceding narratives by giving a version of the Ten Commandments (or *Decalogue; Deut 5:6-21; see also Ex 20:1-17), followed by exhortations to keep the covenant of which these commands formed the fundamental requirements. These exhortations focus particularly on the first commandment in the sense that they warn Israel not to turn to the worship of other gods (Deut 7:1-5, 17-26). The apostasy at Sinai/Horeb is recalled in order to show that the people have already failed in this regard (Deut 9:4—10:11; see also Ex 32) and as a spur to greater faithfulness in the future. The reason for this uncompromising position lies in the *holiness of Israel to Yahweh, which is almost the same as the idea that he has chosen them as his special possession (Deut 7:6, see also Ex 19:5-6; *see* Election). The orientation of the exhortations is consistently toward the future life of Israel in the Promised Land, not only in the present generation but in those to come (the point is illustrated by Deut 6:1-3).

The larger part of Moses' second speech (Deut 12—26) takes the form of a law code augmented by motivations and exhortations. This code corresponds to the law code in Exodus known as the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:19) in the sense that it represents extensions of the Decalogue into specific cases. Resemblances between the Deuteronomic code and the book of the covenant have long been observed (see Driver, iii-x). Each is prefaced by a law governing worship at a place or places appointed by Yahweh (Ex 20:24-25; Deut 12) and proceeds to aspects of both religious and civil *law. The laws in Deuteronomy often differ in detail. For example, in the law concerning slave-release, Deuteronomy considers the female

slave on a par with the male, unlike Exodus (Ex 21:1-11; Deut 15:12-18).

The law governing worship is also distinctive in Deuteronomy (see further below) and dominant in the law code. Its formula recurs, with variations, a number of times, namely: "you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there" (Deut 12:5; see also Deut 12:11, 14, 21; 14:23; 15:20; 16:6, etc.). This command corresponds to the holiness of Israel and the obligation to keep distinct from the other peoples of the land and their worship practices (Deut 12:2-4). Laws concerning religious ceremonies are to the fore in Deuteronomy 12—16, while laws on civil matters occupy Deuteronomy 19—25. A central section, not paralleled in the other pentateuchal law codes, addresses the political structure of the nation (Deut 16:18—18:22). Finally, the code is completed by a final command concerning worship (Deut 26). The bracketing of the code with religious requirements effectively signals that adherence to Yahweh and his covenant brings all of life under his sway.

Deuteronomy is not merely concerned with the covenant between Israel and Yahweh as a topic but is itself a covenant-making document. The chapters following the law code make this clear. Moses' words in Deuteronomy 26:17-19 declare that the parties to the covenant are "today" (on the plains of Moab) taking its obligations on themselves. The next chapter prescribes a covenant confirmation to be performed after the occupation of the land at Shechem, involving the invocation of curses for breaching it (Deut 27). A further extensive section of *blessings and curses ensues (Deut 28). The covenant at Moab is then shown to correspond to the fundamental one at Horeb (Deut 29—30). The document of the covenant, called "the book of this law *[tôrâ]*" (Deut 28:61; see also 28:58), and apparently referring to a form of Deuteronomy itself (Sonnet, 235-62), is to be deposited by the ark of the covenant, kept in perpetuity by the levitical priests and formally read aloud at the Feast of Tabernacles every seven years (Deut 31:9-13; *see* Festivals and Feasts). The book then offers a final exhortation by Moses in the form of a song (Deut 32) and his farewell "blessing" (Deut 33), in an act that resembles a father's final blessing on his children. Then, in accordance with the decree of Yahweh that Moses would see the land but not enter it, the book closes with the account of his death on Mount Nebo (Deut 34).

This survey shows that Deuteronomy both fits into the story that stretches from Genesis to Joshua and has its own unique characteristics. Its reprise of history, law and covenant from the former books is not mere repetition but offers a complete and individual view of the foundations of Israel's life. The scene has moved on from Sinai to Moab, and this shift has brought with it an entirely new covenant, which gives a basis for thinking about Israel's responsibilities in the land in the light of their history with Yahweh to that point.

3. Deuteronomy in Modern Interpretation.

3.1. Deuteronomy as a Unique Document. Deuteronomy's distinctive characteristics have dominated its interpretation in the modern period. The special style of Deuteronomy's speeches of Moses was first noted in 1805 by W. M. L. de Wette, but the classic description of it came from S. R. Driver nearly a century later (Driver, lxxvii-lxxxviii; see also Weinfeld 1972, 320-65). Driver's analysis laid the foundation for the belief that the kind of language found in the book, which was recognizable in other places in the OT, provided evidence for a whole class of literature, indeed a movement, that could be described as Deuteronomic. This language had a repetitive, sermonic style, with stereotyped phrases, especially on the topics of the imminent entry to the Promised Land and the need to keep the commands of the covenant and to worship Yahweh at the place that he would choose.

We have seen that the book falls into a series of speeches by Moses. However, as a covenant-making document, it also has structural similarities with ancient Near Eastern treaties. These similarities, especially to second-millennium B.C. Hittite vassal treaties, were first noticed by M. G. Kline and K. A. Kitchen (90-102; see also Craigie, 22-23). The main elements in the form can be given as follows, along with the corresponding sections of Deuteronomy (this division of the material only partly corresponds to its division according to the speeches of Moses): (1) a preamble announcing the treaty and those who are party to it (Deut 1:1-5); (2) a historical prologue rehearsing the previous relations between the parties (Deut 1:6—4:49); (3) general stipulations (Deut 5—11); (4) specific stipulations (Deut

12—26); (5) a deposition of the document for the purpose of public reading (Deut 27:1-10; 31:9-29); (6) witnesses (Deut 32); and (7) blessings and curses (Deut 27:12-26; 28:1-68). The match between the form of Deuteronomy and that of the treaties is not exact. For example, the last six chapters are not included in the analysis just offered, the "stipulations" are closer to ancient law codes than to treaty stipulations, and the curses section is much longer than in the known Hittite treaties. There is, in addition, a question whether the form is closer to Assyrian treaties of the first millennium (so Weinfeld) than to the Hittite treaties. However, the treaty analogy helps identify Deuteronomy as a book with its own independent standing and rationale. It is also a suitable vehicle for Deuteronomy's highly developed covenant theology.

3.2. Deuteronomy as a Document of Reform. In modern times critical scholarship has regarded Deuteronomy as deriving from a later time in Israel's history than that of Moses. How far it was thought to rest on Mosaic tradition has varied depending on the attitudes of different scholars. Its dating and interpretation, following Julius Wellhausen in the late nineteenth century, have been based on the assumption of its origin in King Josiah's reform in the late seventh century B.C., that is, a century after the fall of the northern kingdom and only a generation before the exile of the people of Judah to Babylon (Clements, 69-83). The connection arose from the account in 2 Kings 22:8 of the discovery of "the book of the law" in the temple during renovations being carried out there in the year 621 B.C. This and similar terms were applied to a form of Deuteronomy both in the book itself and in Joshua (Deut 28:58, 61; 31:26; Josh 1:8). The chronology of the reform is given slightly differently in 2 Chronicles 34—35, which suggests that it had already begun in 628 B.C. and that the discovery of the "book of the law" merely gave it fresh impetus (see Nicholson 1967, 8-11).

On this view, the reform movement and the composition of Deuteronomy are inseparable. Deuteronomy was widely seen as the document that justified the measures taken by Josiah. The formula governing worship was thought to have been conceived to legitimate Josiah's centralization of worship in Jerusalem by destroying the other sanctuaries of Judah. A plurality of worship places had been the norm in the earlier period, as evidenced by the stories of Samuel (1 Sam 9:14; 10:3) and Elijah (1 Kings 18). The law of the *altar in Exodus 20:24, furthermore, did not seem as exclusive as that of Deuteronomy 12:5. The unnamed "place" of the Deuteronomic formula was taken to refer to Jerusalem, and certain texts appeared to support this view (1 Kings 8:29; 2 Kings 21:4). The formal anonymity of the "place" in Deuteronomy was attributed to the need to be consistent with the Mosaic setting.

Deuteronomy thus became a midpoint, not only in the development of the OT religion, but also in that of the pentateuchal documents (JEDP) and law codes (*see* Source Criticism). The book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:19) represented the older traditions, while the Priestly writings contained the Holiness Code (Lev 17—26), sometimes regarded as a separate source but usually dated after Deuteronomy in any case. The progression from the book of the covenant through Deuteronomy to the Priestly writings/Holiness Code could be seen as tightening the regulation of worship. Where the book of the covenant allowed worship in a number of places, Deuteronomy restricted it to one, albeit with dispensations (see next paragraph), and the Priestly writings/Holiness Code restricted this requirement further (Lev 17:2-9).

Deuteronomy therefore came to be seen as the document of Josiah's "centralization" of worship. Josiah's destruction of local sanctuaries (2 Kings 23:4-14) brought about a major change in the life of Judah, for the people had been worshiping at the "high places" (as they are called in Kings), where they had honored deities other than Yahweh. Interpreting Deuteronomy against this background appeared to explain a number of the book's features. Distance from the main sanctuary became a ground for permission to slaughter meat nonsacrificially (Deut 12:15-25) as well as to convert tithe-produce into money at home in order to repurchase produce for the offering at the sanctuary (Deut 14:22-27). In other instances an opposition is set up between the towns of Judah (or "gates," as they are metonymically called in Deuteronomy) and the central sanctuary. For example, the Passover is to be celebrated at that place, not in the towns (Deut 16:5-6), and while legal proceedings were normally to be pursued in the localities, difficult cases had to be taken to a sort of high court at the sanctuary (Deut 17:2-7, 8-9). Regarding priestly service, Deuteronomy 18:6-8 permits

*Levites from the countryside to come to the main sanctuary to participate as priests in the worship there. This has frequently been regarded as one Deuteronomic ideal that Josiah refused to enact, since he took severe measures against the "priests of the high places" (2 Kings 23:5, 9).

The theory of centralization required an understanding of the nature of the reform movement that culminated in it. If Josiah was reasserting ancient Israelite religion in the face of Assyrian religious influences, why would that require centralization, if that had not formerly been essential to Yahweh worship (see Lohfink 1987)? It is now thought that the reform may have intended to oppose an upsurge of popular devotion to the goddess Asherah, on the grounds that the archaeological record attests a sudden increase in goddess figurines in the seventh century (Holladay). The reform may have faced two directions: on the one hand against this groundswell of popular piety throughout Judah, and on the other against the Assyrianization of the official worship that had taken hold under Manasseh (Levinson, 63).

In any case, the reform is still widely understood as emphasizing the spiritual and ethical side of religion, as against its external or ritual expressions. For example, Deuteronomy has the clearest concern in the law codes for the poor and disadvantaged (*see* Wealth and Poverty). It makes a number of provisions for the stranger, the *orphan and the *widow (e.g., Deut 14:28-29; 16:14). Such provisions can be seen as making a deliberate contrast with a more ritual concept of religion; in the case of the tithe, the "priestly" law presents it as a perquisite of the Levite (Num 18:21-24) rather than Deuteronomy's concept of an offering put to charitable use.

In the development of the scholarly view of Deuteronomy, therefore, a certain paradox emerges. A document thought to concentrate ritual and sacrificial worship in one place, thus maintaining the privileges of the Jerusalem temple and its clergy, is also held to promote a more spiritual and ethical kind of religion. The paradox is often explained as a kind of compromise. The spirit of the reform was covenantal and prophetic, as shown by Deuteronomy's affinities with northern traditions typified by the prophet Hosea, who also preached about the covenant and criticized Israel's apostasy to the worship of Baal (Hos 2; 8:1). These traditions were brought south by Yahwists fleeing the Assyrian ravages that led to the northern kingdom's fall in 722 B.C. and fed into the reform movement in Judah. Covenant theology in Judah itself had taken a different route because of the continuity there of the Jerusalem temple and the memory of the promise to David (2 Sam 7). The Deuteronomic reform was, therefore, a compromise between the radical theology of the north and the temple-oriented theology of Judah (see Nicholson 1967).

Concentration of worship in Jerusalem could be seen as curtailing ritual worship generally (Weinfeld 1972, 190; see also Tigay, xvii), while controlling it in the capital, and therefore compatible with the prophetic themes of Deuteronomy. Its emphases on the preaching of the covenant, faithfulness to Yahweh as a matter of the "heart" (Deut 6:5) and care for the weak in society could thus be located in a royal reform of religion, inspired by a prophetic call to return to Israel's covenantal roots. In Tigay's words: "Deuteronomy's aim is to spiritualize religion by freeing it from excessive dependence on sacrifice and priesthood" (Tigay, xvii).

In the dominant modern form of this analysis, M. Weinfeld situates Deuteronomy in the royal scribal schools of the late Judean monarchy. These schools were the counterpart of the scribal schools in Assyria that produced political treaties. The Judean scribes were influenced by wisdom thinking, which lay close to the spiritual and ethical form of religion found in Deuteronomy. For them political and religious ideals were inseparable. Weinfeld sees their reform as both "secularizing" and "demythologizing" (1972, 190-209). That is, religion itself has become more rational than older ritualized forms, and at the same time the life of Israel is largely freed from priestly control. Even the worship in Jerusalem, therefore, was radically altered by Deuteronomy's program. The essence of this revolution in religious concepts was in the concept of *God himself. Weinfeld understands Deuteronomy's idea of the placing of the divine name at the sanctuary (Deut 12:5) by reference to the (Deuteronomic) prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. In that place the idea of the name's presence at the temple is closely associated with the proclamation that Yahweh dwells in heaven. This is thought to imply that he does not dwell on earth (1 Kings 8:27, 29),

and Weinfeld concludes that Deuteronomy systematically develops a theology of divine transcendence, in contrast to the older, more naïve idea that God was actually present in the temple.

More radical than Weinfeld is the recent thesis of B. M. Levinson, who has argued that Deuteronomy is so innovative that it repudiates all older religious traditions. In particular it aims to replace the book of the covenant. This is one attempt to explain the differences between the book of the covenant and Deuteronomy. We shall return to this point below.

3.3. Deuteronomy in Old Testament Religion. In the usual critical discourse about Deuteronomy it is assumed that the book reached its present form over a period of time. What we have said thus far, therefore, refers properly to a core of the book. Scholars see the development of Deuteronomy as a development toward an ever more elaborate covenantal theology. Since the work of L. Perlitt (followed in its main aspects by, e.g., Nicholson 1986), it has been supposed that Deuteronomy was largely responsible for creating the OT's covenant theology. Further work attempted to discern levels of this development in the book by *literary-critical means, and it is widely thought that a progression toward greater conditionality can be found. This view of Deuteronomy as an initiator of covenantal thought may be aligned with the idea that court scribes turned to Assyrian treaty models in order to express their own theological and political ideas.

4. Deuteronomy as a Constitution for Israel.

In the section that follows we outline an alternative analysis to that described above, which will in turn lead us back to the question of setting in Israel's history.

4.1. The Laws of Officials. We saw earlier (see 2 above) that Deuteronomy presents a vision of Yahweh as the sovereign agent in all of Israel's life. This appears in the form of the law code, in which civil laws are framed by the fundamental command to adhere to Yahweh. It is implied also in the borrowing of the treaty form itself, mixed with the law-code form, to express the idea of Yahweh as Israel's overlord. So far these ideas could be embraced within the account offered above, in which the book promotes the royal reform of Josiah. However, Deuteronomy's program for the government of Israel in Deuteronomy 16:18—18:22, a part of its law code that has no counterpart in the other codes, suggests a different setting.

At the heart of this section is the Deuteronomic law of the king (Deut 17:14-20), the only law concerning the king in the OT. In it Israel is permitted to appoint a king, with certain important conditions attached. A king of Israel must be a "brother" Israelite (Deut 17:15; this key term is lost in some translations, including NRSV, because of their inclusive-language policy). He must not make himself powerful by amassing a cavalry and especially not by entering an alliance with Egypt for the purpose (Deut 17:16). He must not surround himself with a harem, in the manner of other oriental kings, nor acquire a fortune for his own use (Deut 17:17). On the contrary, he must keep his own copy of the "this law," namely, Deuteronomy (Deut 17:18; this was the text on which the name of Deuteronomy was based, see 1 above). He must be a student of the law and not aspire to rise above his "brothers" in status (Deut 17:19-20).

This remarkable portrait looks like a direct repudiation of the style of kingship adopted by Solomon, in some ways the most successful king of Israel (1 Kings 10:26—11:3). Moreover, it runs counter to basic expectations regarding kingship throughout the ancient Near East, for in general the king was chief executive in both religious and political administration (Ahlström, 1-25). It may be an idealized portrait, for it was hardly matched by any king of Israel or Judah. What is important, however, is that its context among the other laws of officials (Deut 16:18—18:22) appears to sideline the king altogether. First, it is not the king but Yahweh who has power to give land (a royal prerogative in the ancient Near East; Deut 16:18; 17:14). Second, only the king is an unessential part of the picture in this section: *judges must be appointed (Deut 16:18); priests are chosen by Yahweh (Deut 18:5); and likewise the *prophet will be raised up by Yahweh to succeed Moses (Deut 18:15; this must be understood as a succession of prophets). Nor is this king a "son of God," as David is (Ps 2:7); that title is applied to Israel as a whole (Deut 1:31; 14:1; for fuller analysis along these lines, see B. Halpern).

4.2. Sovereignty of the People Under Torah. Israel, therefore, should be quite distinct from other ancient Near Eastern societies. It had, after all, escaped from a tyranny in Egypt, and Yahweh's intention in delivering his people

from that slavery was to liberate them into service to himself (Ex 5:1; Deut 26:8-11). In Israel power would not be concentrated in an individual but diversified in the other major offices (see Lohfink 1993). Moreover, the final political responsibility lay with the whole people. The people as such are addressed in many instances of the second-person singular in Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 16:18 the people are responsible for appointing judges. It is the people too who *may* appoint a king (Deut 17:15). This sovereignty of the people in principle is effected in practice by representatives. However, these take their authority from the "assembly" of Israel. Israel as an assembly is encountered by Yahweh at Horeb, and the day of that meeting comes to be designated "the day of the assembly" (Deut 9:10). Future meetings of the people at the great annual worship events are then seen as realizations of that first encounter. These are typified by the gathering for the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh year, at which the "book of the law" is formally read (Deut 31:10-13). The authority of the assembly is therefore derivative. Real authority lies with Yahweh's *tôrâ* itself.

The primacy of *tôrâ* ("law") explains the role of Moses in the book, for it is he who mediates it by his preaching in the covenant renewal at Moab. His teaching responsibility is established in Deuteronomy 4:14, where it appears to entail an interpretive activity in relation to the Decalogue. The teaching of the *tôrâ* is carried on in Israel in a number of ways, not least by parents who teach their children (Deut 6:7-9), but it is symbolized especially by the prophet. Of the offices prescribed in Deuteronomy 16:18—18:22, only the prophet is expressly said to be Moses' successor (Deut 18:15). The point of this is to ensure that the primacy of *tôrâ* is guarded in all of Israel's subsequent life.

In Samuel's time the elders of Israel take up the permission given in Deuteronomy 17:15 and demand that Samuel give them a king (1 Sam 8:4-9). The people are represented by "the elders of Israel," and the authority of Yahweh and his *tôrâ* reposes in Samuel the prophet, who in that office functions as the successor of Moses.

4.3. Deuteronomy's Main Features in this Framework. We can now return to some of the main features of Deuteronomy in light of the view of the book outlined above.

4.3.1. Tôrâ. Deuteronomy's strong emphasis on the *tôrâ* itself, or the "words" of Yahweh, indeed the whole vocabulary of law ("the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances," Deut 5:31), derives from this supremacy of *tôrâ* in Israel's life. This recognition should govern our understanding of **law* in Deuteronomy. Too often in interpretation law has been cast in a negative role, as something opposed to *grace. In Deuteronomy, however, it is a function of Yahweh's gift of *life to Israel. The law imposes an obligation to maintain a society in which justice reigns. The basis of the laws in a love of justice is asserted in hortatory tones in Deuteronomy 16:20, and the pursuit of it is seen as the way to life. The administration of justice in Israel as an obligation of the people places it in the context of Deuteronomy's radical vision for freedom in service to Yahweh and a society that protects the individual from the tyranny of powerful hierarchies.

4.3.2. Election, Brotherhood and Spiritual Religion. Israel as the chosen, holy people of Yahweh (Deut 7:6) may be read in terms of both its external and internal relations. Externally, it means that Israel is chosen, not other nations. The rejection of other nations is grounded in their wickedness (Deut 9:5b). However, the choice of Israel is dependent solely on Yahweh's love for them, rather than either their great size (Deut 7:7) or their righteousness, for they too were wicked (Deut 9:4, 6-7). The theology of *election both explains Israel's favored position with Yahweh and secures that it is due to his grace only.

In terms of Israel's internal relations, the whole people of Israel are elect, "children of the LORD" (Deut 14:1), not just the king. In this sense election is consonant with the Deuteronomic theme of the brotherhood of all Israelites. This is one of the most powerful expressions of the unity of the people before Yahweh and their freedom from tyranny. Deuteronomy consistently minimizes distinctions of rank between members of the community. It even downplays tribal distinctions (introduced in the context of the conquest of Transjordan [Deut 2—3], in the ceremony on Mounts Gerizim and Ebal [Deut 27] and in the blessing of Moses [Deut 33]). Strikingly, the term "brother" is often used in unexpected places. It is used of debtors and slaves (Deut 15:3, 7, 12) to assert their full membership in Israel and their fundamental right to the benefits of the Promised Land. It also emphatically includes women

within the designation "brother," in a bold extension of this metaphor of equality (Deut 15:12). The purpose of these laws of release of debts and slaves is to restore those who have become disadvantaged to their position of full rights in the Promised Land, especially so that they can participate in the feasts. (It is no accident that the laws providing provisions for release come almost directly before the laws about the feasts.)

The concept of brotherhood is truer to the concerns of Deuteronomy than the general notion of ethical sophistication or enlightenment, which is sometimes attributed to an upward evolution in Israel's religion. The vision here is, on the one hand, not so inclusive, since it distinguishes between Israelites and others in its provisions (e.g., Deut 15:3; 23:19-20) but, on the other hand, it goes much deeper, for it envisages a society that is quite distinct from every other known society in its world: based on the absolute respect for all its members, all equally enjoy the protection of the law of God.

It is in this context too that one must understand the religion of the "heart" in the book. It used to be held that Israel's religion was in its early stages corporate and ritualistic and that it gradually progressed to a higher level, characterized by individualism in ethical responsibility and spirituality. It was thought to be the classical prophets, as well as Deuteronomy, who provided evidence of this development. The point rests on a fallacy. In Deuteronomy Israel is indeed called to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut 6:5). This, however, is in the context of the speeches of Moses' address to the people as a whole. The call to love Yahweh has analogies in the treaty language of the ancient world. In Deuteronomy it is one way of expressing the command that the people as a whole should be faithful to Yahweh rather than defect to other gods. It is the people in all the dimensions of life—in their pursuit of justice, rigor in implementing the laws and worship together—who are commanded to love Yahweh with all their heart, mind and soul.

4.3.3. Land. Deuteronomy's setting on the border of the Promised Land, together with repeated allusions to "the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess," makes *land one of the dominant themes in the book. Deuteronomy contains delightful images of a plentiful land (Deut 8:7-10; 11:9-11). This emphasis is often attributed to the increasingly precarious hold that the people had on their land in the late seventh century B.C. A conditional theology of land was developed as part of an explanation of its loss. However, Deuteronomy's theology of land goes well beyond the simple idea that it is possessed as a reward for keeping the covenant. The insistence that Yahweh (not the king) is the giver of land is crucial, as is the fact that he gives it to the people as a whole. The theme of land cannot be separated from the idea of the unity and brotherhood of the people nor from their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. (C. J. H. Wright [1990] explores the relationship between these themes of brotherhood and land.)

We saw this connection between brotherhood and land in the preceding section (see 4.3.2 above) when we observed that the laws of release secured the participation of all Israelites in the annual feasts. Indeed, the land theme finds its highest expressions in the images of Israel gathered at the place of worship. Deuteronomy, more than other books, portrays worship as celebratory, involving all the people, with scant attention to priestly mediation or to the range of *sacrifices. The people are seen feasting and rejoicing together (Deut 12:6-7, 12; 14:22-27; 16:14-15). The poor are included, and the offerings have an explicit connection with provision for them (Deut 14:28-29). These are pictures of a people enjoying the land they have been given, returning grateful worship to God for it and at the same time expressing their unity, compassion and justice (Lohfink 1995). Their eschatological vision is at the very heart of Deuteronomy.

4.3.4. Covenant. Descriptions of Deuteronomy's *covenant theology have often focused on different perceptions of the relation between law and grace in successive redactional layers. There are indeed complementary aspects of covenant in the book. The word *bĕrît* ("covenant") is closely associated in some texts with the Decalogue (Deut 4:13; 5:2-3); in another it is in a hendiadys with *ḥesed* ("steadfast love," Deut 7:9); the same context recalls the "oath" that Yahweh made to the patriarchs. These passages illustrate the richness of the idea in the book, embracing promise, command and the loyalty that gives covenant its qualitative content. Covenant in Deuteronomy cannot be reduced to a kind of tense dialogue between polar opposites

of law and grace (pace von Rad, who thought he could discern in the book "a declension from grace into law" [1996b, 91]). Such a concept is foreign to the book's own discourse. Covenant consists instead in the vision of a full and vital relationship between Yahweh and Israel, in which his blessing is received with grateful rejoicing and issues in their commitment to a just society.

The most interesting aspect of Deuteronomy's covenant theology lies in the structural relationship between the covenants of Horeb and Moab, which is a key to understanding the book. The succession of Horeb and Moab is a kind of fusing of horizons between generations. This in turn is part of Deuteronomy's establishment of a solidarity of Israel. The classic case is Deuteronomy 5:2-3, in which the Moab generation are addressed rhetorically as if they were the Horeb generation. The concept of the Moab covenant, with its repeated use of the hortatory "today," is to make the Horeb covenant perpetually alive in each generation of the people. In doing so it is no mere repetition of previously existing laws and commands. Rather, the teaching of Moses represents a continual updating and reapplication. The death of Moses outside the land has a positive function for interpretation in this connection (Olson). The people, in the land without Moses, will be responsible themselves for maintaining their life with Yahweh. The Moab covenant both establishes covenant renewal as an essential dimension of covenant itself and imposes an obligation of reinterpretation.

4.3.5. The Chosen Place and the Divine Name. Finally, Deuteronomy's command to "seek the place that the LORD your God will choose" (Deut 12:5, etc.) should be related to this notion of perpetual covenant renewal. The refusal to name a particular place, far from being a mere device in keeping with the Mosaic setting, is consistent with a vision that includes the changing scenes of Israel's life in all its generations. In this vision, no particular place is paramount or signals the end of Israel's journey. Not only Jerusalem but also Shiloh in its time corresponds to the formula (Jer 7:12), as does even Gibeon (Josh 9:27). The "chosen place" is a counterpart in the ongoing life of Israel to the encounter at Horeb. As Israel once stood "before Yahweh" at that mountain (Deut 4:10), so it comes "before Yahweh" at his chosen place forevermore (Deut 12:7). The "chosen place," therefore, in common with Moab, represents fresh Horeb-like encounters, now projected indefinitely into Israel's future.

Indeed, Israel's story in Deuteronomy is constructed as a journey. The journey proceeds from Egypt through wilderness (note the locations along the way [Deut 1:1]) to Moab, Shechem (Deut 27), the "chosen place," exile and back again to land (Deut 30:1-10). Deuteronomy's view of covenant is that at every stage of its life and at every place Israel should reenter the covenant afresh ("today") as if for the first time (see further McConville and Millar).

The theology of the divine name is in close connection with that of place. It has nothing directly to do with the mode of the divine presence (pace Weinfeld, whose thesis about transcendence does not account for the repeated "before the LORD" in the "name" passages; see further Wilson). Rather, it is part of Deuteronomy's insistence on the people's dealing always with Yahweh rather than with other gods. (The command to seek the place that Yahweh will choose and put his name there is in express contrast to the command to destroy the "places" at which the other peoples worship their gods and to blot out their names from those places [Deut 12:2-4]). Since the "name theology" is not, after all, about the nature of Yahweh's presence, it is mistaken to find in it a dispute about presence with the priestly literature. Deuteronomy does not describe the tent of meeting and its geography of holiness, because it has a different mission from the texts that explore that topic (Ex 25—31, primarily), namely, to demonstrate Yahweh's sovereignty in every aspect of Israel's life and to recall the people to their commitments on the broadest canvas.

5. Establishing a Setting for Deuteronomy.

In my view, the vision of Deuteronomy is for a society quite different from that which Josiah tried to create, mainly because it does not promote the idea of king as chief executive. Indeed, it proposes a structure of authority in Israel that is thoroughly at odds with the monarchic idea. This leads to the question: What is the best situation for the book? Deuteronomy could come from an early period, before the establishment of the monarchy at all; it could be a counterprogram to a monarchic reform, whether Josiah's, Hezekiah's or some other king's; or it could be a postexilic reflection on the failure of the monar-

chy and an attempt to construct a better alternative. In favor of the last possibility, it is argued that the king law (Deut 17:14-20) is utopian and that it could never have been really implemented (Lohfink 1993). Others have believed, however, that the king law is ancient and that the laws governing the officials belonged to a premonarchic constitution of Israel (Halpern; see again 4.2 above on the king law in relation to 1 Sam 8). A decision on this cannot be made with certainty, and then only in the context of decisions on a whole range of issues. In my view, the affinities between Deuteronomy and the prophetic books play an important part here. The book's similarities to Hosea, for example, are well known (Weinfeld 1972, 366-70), especially their sharing of the themes of covenant, opposition to other gods and coolness about kings. The theological sequence of punishment and restoration by means of repentance (Deut 30:1-10) is shared with a number of prophetic books, as is the importance of the religion of the "heart" (the Deuteronomic text just quoted is close in substance to Jeremiah's new covenant [Jer 31:31-34]). These correspondences are often explained on the premise of Deuteronomic influence on the prophetic books as a scholarly activity in late Judah and the exile. But the ideas shared by Deuteronomy and the prophets can equally well be traced to an earlier time, when the basic issues of Israel's existence were being thrashed out.

6. Deuteronomy in the Canon.

We can now make some further observations about the location of Deuteronomy in the OT and the Bible. In relation to the Pentateuch, we raised the question earlier (see 3.2 above) about how it relates to other law codes, especially the book of the covenant. The resemblances yet differences between Deuteronomy and the book of the covenant raise the question whether the relationship between them is one of displacement or development. B. M. Levinson took the former view, believing that Deuteronomy deliberately reuses elements of phraseology and vocabulary from the book of the covenant in completely new ways. However, this seems to underestimate the fact that both codes, together with the Holiness Code, stand in the canonical Pentateuch. What is interesting theologically is that codes that cannot easily be harmonized have been brought together into an entity that has an overarching rationale. We have referred to Deuteronomy as a kind of hermeneutic, and this juxtaposition of the different codes shows one function of the canon, namely, to invite further theological interpretation.

In relation to the Historical Books, the intriguing comparison lies in the presentation of kingship. Deuteronomy's preference for a decentralized administration of Israel sits in tension with the divine favor enjoyed by David and his dynasty in the narrative that follows. Here again there is an invitation to careful interpretation. The path to the dynastic promise to David involves contingencies in which the choices made by Israel are scrutinized critically (1 Sam 8—12). The story of David is a tribute to God's mercy and accommodation to the sinfulness of Israel. It is one possible story among other possible stories. The confrontation between Deuteronomy and the Historical Books sets the reality of human life, with its mix of good and bad choices, alongside the call to uncompromising faithfulness and perpetual renewal.

Deuteronomy has interfaces with other parts of the OT as well. In common with the wisdom literature, especially Proverbs, Deuteronomy knows of an order in life, both moral and natural. Yet both books know also that truth cannot be reduced to simple equations. Deuteronomy's theology of mercy for a people it knows to be already rebellious is a case in point. Yet people are still called to be trained in what is right because a joyful human experience depends on acknowledging that life is a gift from God.

We have already noticed affinities between Deuteronomy and prophecy. Superficially the difference between these blocks may be expressed as Deuteronomy setting out an agenda in advance, while the prophets recall a people who have strayed. Yet we have seen that Deuteronomy too already addresses the people as those who need to be rebuked and brought into a true path. The loudest echoes of prophecy come in Deuteronomy 32, which gives poetic expression to the Deuteronomic themes of fidelity to Yahweh (and the dangers of infidelity), of judgment and of the mercy of God coming through in the end. There are particular echoes of Isaiah 40—55.

Deuteronomy contributes to the Bible's theology of the salvation of the world. This is so despite the absence of an explicit theology of salvation for the nations, and indeed its com-

mand to show no mercy to the people of the Promised Land (Deut 7:1-5). The picture is relieved by Deuteronomy 2, in which Yahweh is the giver of land not only to Israel but to other nations as well (see also Amos 9:7). Furthermore, Israel's obedience to *tôrâ* is presented as a witness to the nations (Deut 4:6-8). Indeed, the eschatological pictures of Israel functioning as a covenant society may be seen as a paradigm of a nation living before God (see Millar, 147-60).

It remains to indicate some specific ways in which Deuteronomy relates to the NT. The central question is how its vision of a people under *tôrâ* might help to understand the nature of the people of God in Christ. First, it seems that Deuteronomy's idea of the people has informed the writings of Luke. In Luke 1—2, the church is conceived as "Israel," the people *(laos)* of God to whom Jesus has come. Acts 2—5 shows the apostles gathering the true "Israel" out of the Jews and only then beginning the Gentile mission. These two stages belong together: Israel is only complete when the Gentiles are brought in. In this context, Acts 15:14 alludes to Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18-19, as well as Exodus 19:5. Similarly, Acts 3:22-23 cites Moses' saying that Yahweh would raise up a prophet like him (Deut 18:15, 18-19). There are further Deuteronomic echoes in the same passage (Acts 3:26).

Second, Paul, in Romans 10:1-5, expressly draws the reflection on *tôrâ* in Deuteronomy 30:11-14 into his christology. It seems that Paul's understanding of faith in Christ subsumes the keeping of the *tôrâ*, this having been accomplished by Christ. It follows that Paul's concept of salvation in this place is filled with content drawn from Deuteronomy. The keeping of *tôrâ* and faith in Christ are not opposites. On the contrary, Christ's fulfillment of the *tôrâ* confers validity on it.

Finally, the *tôrâ* in Deuteronomy as a vision for society in the midst of a godless world may be aligned with Jesus' prophetic opposition to social and political oppressions of his time. In announcing the kingdom of God, Jesus turned a searchlight on society as it was, not only Roman but also Jewish. He did so by exposing the failures of people to live by the covenantal standards of justice and righteousness. The Deuteronomic resonances in Jesus' teaching consist in the refusal of both to identify their understanding of the kingdom of God with one particular institution, whether political or religious. This is the point of Deuteronomy's demand that the people constantly reinterpret *tôrâ* and eschew reposing absolute authority in any human agency. In doing so, it precludes the use of religious authority to justify any status quo. This is the lasting contribution of the book. It is capable of informing practical thinking about the organization of societies while maintaining a vision of the kingdom of God.

See also COVENANT; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF.

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DEVOTIONAL INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

DISEASE. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

DIVINATION, MAGIC

Divination and magic were widely practiced in the ancient Near East and are vigorously condemned in the Pentateuch and throughout the Bible. The practices overlap in many important ways and have similarities with *prophecy and religion, which makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between them. All involve interactions with supernatural beings or powers. While the Bible prohibits divination and magic, some permitted practices share common features. On the other hand, approved practices such as prophecy, prayer or the laying on of hands are denounced when practiced with a magical mindset. For these reasons, descriptions of the methods involved are not enough; one must also consider the beliefs motivating the practices and the practitioners' worldview.

1. Background
2. Torah's Prohibition
3. The Methods of Divination and Magic
4. Theological Perspectives

1. Background.

Even while risking oversimplification, concise definitions of the practices of divination and magic are useful. Divination attempts to gain supernatural knowledge, usually either to understand why something has occurred or to predict the future. Magic attempts to use supernatural powers to influence people, events or other supernatural beings. Biblically approved practices emphasize divine initiative and divine prerogative. Magic and divination are human efforts to understand, control or manipulate the divine realm by methods believed to practically guarantee the desired results. These tend to be the satisfaction of immediate human needs, such as healing, protection, sustenance or knowledge.

The religions of the ancient Near East were infused with magic and divination. Illness, famine and military defeats were frequently believed to have spiritual origins. In both Mesopotamia and Egypt, skilled practitioners of magic were highly regarded. *Moses and *Aaron confronted these magicians when they sought to release the Hebrews from Egypt (Ex 7:11). *Balaam was an esteemed diviner whom Balak, king of Moab, attempted to use to curse Israel (Num 22:4-7). These cultures approved certain forms of magic by designated practitioners but outlawed other practices, often labeled witchcraft or sorcery. For example, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1868-1728 B.C.) punished sorcery with the death penalty. Witches were viewed as being in league with demons and causing bad things to happen. The approved magicians would use magic to counteract these influences and act as diviners of useful information.

God placed Israel in the midst of cultures saturated with divination, magic and witchcraft. He desired that the Israelites come to him for revelation and insight. In the midst of uncertainty, they were to rely on his trustworthiness and provisions, not attempt to manipulate their circumstances. Divination and magic were strongly

denounced because they drew people away from God and dependence on him.

2. Torah's Prohibition.

The Pentateuch contains the most extensive biblical prohibition of divination and magic:

> Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. (Deut 18:10-14 NIV).

Elsewhere the Israelites were prohibited from pursuing divination and sorcery (Lev 19:26) or consulting mediums and spiritists (Lev 19:31). A sorceress was to be put to death (Ex 22:18), as were mediums and spiritists (Lev 20:27). In contrast, instances of divination and magic are recorded in the Pentateuch without condemnation. Laban is said to have used divination to discover that God had blessed him through his nephew Jacob (Gen 30:27). Jacob used what some view as a magical practice to influence his flock's breeding (Gen 30:37-43). *Joseph gave his brothers the impression that he used his silver cup for divination (Gen 44:5, 15).

Each of these passages, however, raises difficulties in translation. Laban's statement traditionally translated "I have divined" can also be rendered "I have grown rich." G. J. Wenham prefers this translation, noting it unlikely that Laban would use divination while prospering. Rather than practicing magic, Jacob may have used his years of shepherding experience cunningly to outwit Laban by manipulating normal breeding patterns to produce stronger animals for himself. Joseph did not state that he used his silver cup for divination, which is part of the ruse to determine if his brothers had repented of their crime against him. Regardless of these problems, the lack of explicit condemnations does not necessarily mean the texts support these practices, nor does it in any way contradict the clear prohibitions against divination and magic.

3. The Methods of Divination and Magic.

3.1. Divination. Divination and magic involve a number of practices described by various names. The supernatural information obtained by divinatory (or mantic) methods can come from natural phenomena or altered states of consciousness. The supernatural signs are called omens or portents and are "read" to determine their meaning. The ancient Near Eastern cultures prodigiously recorded omens and their interpretations. The omen interpreters were called seers or soothsayers.

Numerous natural phenomena were interpreted as omens. Underlying these practices was the belief that the universe was interconnected and that the parts reflected the whole. For example, in astrology the positions of the stars and planets are believed to reflect the divine will. Understanding how the parts relate to the whole thereby gives insight into the divine will and the future. Magical methods then allow humans to influence those events.

Astrology was practiced throughout the ancient Near East but was prohibited in Israel (Is 47:13). It never became popular, like other forms of divination, perhaps because of Israel's belief in God's sovereignty over the stars (Gen 1) and the prohibition of sun, moon or star worship (Deut 4:19). Just as the stars were used to discern the divine will, so too were many smaller objects. Livers and entrails were believed to reflect divine dispositions when an animal was sacrificed and were examined in a practice called hepatoscopy (Ezek 21:21). Clay models of livers with inscriptions have been found in the regions occupied by ancient Israel. Augury finds omens in the movements of animals, especially the flight paths of birds. This was usually practiced on high ground and may have been why Balaam divined from a barren height (Num 23:3). Hydromancy used the movement of oil drops on water in a cup to give omens. This may have been the method referred to by Joseph (Gen 44:5, 15). A Mesopotamian handbook for reading these omens dates from the nineteenth to seventeenth centuries B.C., around the time of Joseph. Rhabdomancy (or belomancy) involved throwing sticks or arrows into the air and reading omens from their patterns when they landed (Ezek 21:21). Throughout the ancient Near East trees were believed to represent life, which then endowed wood with special powers leading to rhabdomancy and divining rods (Hos 4:12).

Many other objects were also used for divination.

Casting lots (or cleromancy) was another divinatory practice common in the ancient Near East. This method was sanctioned in Israel with the Urim and Thummim (Ex 28:30; Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; Deut 33:8). Their precise nature is not known, but they were small objects held in a pocket on the high priest's breastplate (*see* Priestly Clothing). The priest threw them to receive guidance from God. Although similar to rhabdomancy and other lot-casting methods, the Urim and Thummim were viewed differently because they were given by God and used to determine his will (Prov 16:33).

Divination by ordeal was another method approved for particular situations. People suspected of crimes would undergo some process that would normally injure them. Their innocence would be divinely revealed if they survived unharmed. The Pentateuch called for this practice when a woman was suspected of adultery (Num 5:11-28). Other ancient Near Eastern cultures used similar practices, but the similarities are procedural. The other cultures believed guilt magically weakened people, which the ordeal would reveal mechanistically. Israel, it seems, believed that God used the procedure (harmless in and of itself) to reveal whether the woman was guilty or innocent. Thus, similar practices are viewed completely differently depending on the mindset and beliefs of the practitioners.

The prohibition of infant sacrifice that begins the Deuteronomic condemnation of divination may refer to another form of ordeal divination (Deut 18:10). Why infant sacrifice is listed with divination is unclear, unless they are similarly detestable to God (Deut 12:31). The Hebrew terms used literally mean to make a child pass through fire. This may have been another method of divination by ordeal whereby the effects on the child would be taken as omens. However, little is known about this ritual, except that as part of worshiping the god Molech it was a capital offense in Israel (Lev 20:1-5).

A second category of divination involves divine revelations during certain experiences, including visions, trances and dreams. The distinction between these methods and accepted means of prophecy and revelation had more to do with the message's source than the practice's methodology. Thus, visions and dreams were used by God to communicate with his people (Num 12:6). God sometimes gave the interpretation of symbolic dreams, as with Joseph (Gen 40—41). In contrast, a dream leading people away from God was to be rejected and the dreamer put to death (Deut 13:1-5). Prophets from other ancient Near Eastern cultures used many methods to induce altered states of consciousness for divination. In contrast the biblical record shows God revealing his messages to prophets and others in various ways, sometimes when the recipients least expected revelation. The appropriate locus of control remains with God, not humans.

Mediums, also called spiritists, soothsayers or oracles, communicate directly with spiritual beings. Communication with the spirits of the dead is a particular form of mediumship called necromancy. Saul's use of the medium of Endor to contact Samuel's deceased spirit affirms that necromancy can bring contact with spiritual beings, even while it reinforces the illegitimacy of this practice (1 Sam 28:7-19).

3.2. Magic. Magic cannot be completely distinguished from divination, but the emphasis shifts from understanding supernatural phenomena to using supernatural powers. Magic is often difficult to distinguish from religion, with magic usually characterized as deviant, antisocial and sometimes illegal. Such is the view of the Pentateuch (Ex 22:18; Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10). Magic is often synonymous with sorcery and witchcraft. If a distinction is made, sorcery is magic learned from master practitioners, while witchcraft deals with innate supernatural powers.

As with divination, magic includes both materialistic methods using the alleged interconnectedness of the universe and direct contact with spiritual beings. Within the first approach, sympathetic magic uses the similarity of objects to cause desired effects. Some herbs look similar to parts of the human body and thereby gain magical reputations for healing those body parts. Thus, mandrakes have fleshy, forked roots that resemble the lower parts of the human body and were used to promote fertility (Gen 30:14-17), though the text shows their ineffectiveness (Wenham, 247). However, this passage counters the magical use of herbs, since Leah gives up the mandrakes and becomes pregnant, while Rachel uses the mandrakes and remains barren

for the time being.

In contagious magic, objects that have been connected or in close proximity are believed to influence one another, such as how psychics claim to locate missing persons once they obtain something belonging to the person. Malevolent magicians cast spells on people via a piece of their hair or clothing. To counteract this type of magic, special protective objects can be worn (charms or amulets), incantations cited or rituals performed. The third commandment against taking the name of the Lord in vain may partly involve a reaction against its use as a magical incantation (Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11). These practices are believed to work once correctly performed, unlike prayer, where the response depends on God's will.

Other magic involved direct contact with spiritual beings, enlisting their help in achieving certain goals. Hence magic is frequently connected with evil spirits and demons. These practices easily degenerated into idolatry and sacrificing to demons, which is strongly condemned (Deut 32:17). The teraphim were household idols sometimes worshiped in the cultures surrounding Israel (Gen 31:19) and were also used in magic and divination (Judg 17:5; Zech 10:2; *see* Idols, Idolatry, Teraphim, Household Gods).

4. Theological Perspectives.

Numerous reasons are given for these many prohibitions. Divination and magic were integral to the religions of the nations surrounding Israel (Deut 18:9). They are wrong in and of themselves, thus leading to God's punishment of these nations (Deut 18:12). If Israel adopted these practices, they would become like those nations instead of remaining blameless before God (Deut 18:13). These practices entail rebellion against God (1 Sam 15:23), so God will turn his face from those who practice them and cut them off from the community (Lev 20:6). Divination and magic wreak havoc with one's relationship with God because at their root they are rival religions.

God acknowledged the human desire for spiritual knowledge and foresight. Immediately after prohibiting divination and magic, God promised to provide revelation, but at his initiative through his *prophets (Deut 18:15-20). These prophets were to be tested by examining the accuracy of their predictions (Deut 18:21-22). They were to be trusted by the reliability of their message compared to God's previous revelation, not because they worked wonders (Deut 13:1-5).

Uncritical acceptance of messages because they were received in a supernormal experience is unwise. Problems also occur when people demand special knowledge or answers from God. There are "secret things" that belong to God (Deut 29:29). Divination and magic are attempts to gain knowledge and control that God declares are not needed. When things do not make sense or the future looks anxiously uncertain, divination and magic are tempting rivals to trusting God. Even the means God gives people to legitimately communicate with and worship him can be used in magical ways (Ps 51:16-17; Acts 8:18-24). The distinction between illegitimate magic and true worship does not arise solely from the external manifestations of the practices. The state of a person's heart, and who or what is being pursued, are vitally important.

Divination and magic are dangerous because they bring people into contact with evil spiritual beings and forces. The Pentateuch demonstrates that these powers can be harnessed. But the power of God is always superior. Joseph interpreted *Pharaoh's dreams when the Egyptian magicians could not (Gen 41; cf. Dan 2; 4). The Egyptian magicians and sorcerers changed staffs into snakes and brought plagues of blood and frogs (Ex 7:10—8:15), but they could not bring about (or counteract) the later signs and wonders that God brought through Moses. Balaam the diviner could not curse those whom God had not cursed (Num 23:8). These false gods and magical powers offer short-term benefits, but their abilities fade in comparison to God's power and provision (Deut 32:37-39). Israel's later history shows the tragedy of people turning to divination and magic and being led away from God into falsehood and evil (Is 47:13-15; Jer 14:14; Ezek 22:28-29). The choice is between deepening one's dependence on God or using impersonal, instrumental approaches in attempting to gain control of one's life.

See also BALAAM; BLESSINGS AND CURSES; DREAMS; IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS; PROPHETS, PROPHECY; RELIGION.

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DIVINE NAMES. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

DIVINE PROMISES. *See* PROMISES, DIVINE.

DIVORCE. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

DOCTRINAL INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

DOMINION. *See* BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

DONKEYS. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION; ZOOLOGY.

DOUBLETS. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

DREAMS

The astute reader of the Pentateuch notices that relevant passages seem to vary on the subject of dreams as a legitimate means of divine revelation. One also notes that this approval and disapproval of dreams runs along genre lines. Narrative passages set in foreign contexts cautiously present dreams as valid revelatory experiences. Legal texts that promote the superiority of Mosaic *prophets as the means of divine revelation forbid trusting dreams as revelatory. People in Mesopotamia, the putative patriarchal patrimony, left evidence of their struggles to understand the import of nocturnal visions. In its treatment of dreams the Bible fits within this broader ancient context.

1. Dreams and Their Interpretation in Mesopotamia
2. Dreams and Their Interpretation in the Pentateuch

1. Dreams and Their Interpretation in Mesopotamia.

According to Mesopotamian texts, deities communicated with humans by direct means, such as dreams, or by indirect means, such as omens. Ample cuneiform sources document both types of revelation.

For almost fifty years, scholars investigating dreams and visions in the Bible have looked to A. L. Oppenheim's seminal 1956 volume *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book.* Oppenheim noted three types of dreams: (1) auditory message dreams; (2) symbolic message dreams needing the services of a professional interpreter; and (3) psychological status dreams requiring use of a dream book. He believed that divination by dreams was a marginal component of Mesopotamian society.

With the aging of Oppenheim's manual and the publication of numerous texts in the interim, students of oneiromancy have desired an updated study on this subject. S. A. L. Butler's recent *Mesopotamian Conceptions of Dreams and Dream Rituals* provides such a reexamination of Mesopotamian oneirology. In it she considers how the Mesopotamians regarded dreams and their rituals. Noting the enduring human fascination with dreams, Butler asserts,

> For centuries Man has been convinced that his dreams (however weird) contain a message, which often requires interpretation; hence the existence of Dream-Books and, in recent times, psychoanalysts. People are reluctant to accept that anything so personal and vivid as a dream might be insignificant. Ancient and "primitive" peoples believed that dreams were divine communications, while psychoanalysts claim that our subconscious is trying to express itself while the conscious censor is dormant. Even if one derides the idea that dreams are applicable to reality, these subjective experiences affect one's mood, and nightmares are impossible to ignore. (Butler, 2)

This presumption of meaning underlies both ancient and modern attempts to grapple with these nocturnal illusions.

Nearly all genres of the vast array of Mesopotamian texts refer to dreams and their illumination. Within these texts, one recognizes "a fundamental separation between the significant/true dreams originating from the gods, presenting a message concerning the future (prognostic dreams); and the irrational/false dreams, either nightmares sent by hostile deities or evil powers, or merely pleasant dreams, neither having any mantic import (symptomatic dreams)" (Butler, 6). In actual human experience, however, the practice of oneiromancy would be limited naturally, since a person would no doubt see more symptomatic than prognostic dreams over the course of a lifetime (Butler, 6).

2. Dreams and Their Interpretation in the Pentateuch.

Dreams structure accounts by threading together disparate narrative elements. J. M. Husser writes:

> The Joseph story is the best biblical example of a story in which dreams have this narrative function: the short story runs from a crisis towards its resolution, even though the latter is announced from the start in Joseph's dreams (Gen. 37), which also play a part in the origin of the crisis. As regards the epic genre, Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. 28), set as it is against his struggle by night at the ford across the Jabbok (Gen. 32), has a similar structuring function in the Jacob cycle. These two events parallel each other symmetrically at two significant points in the cycle, and make the patriarch's coming and going into a veritable initiatory journey, extending from a promise to its realization, from the initial conflict between the twins to the exchange of a blessing, hard won. (Husser, 103)

2.1. Positive Assessment.

2.1.1. Abimelech's Acquisition. According to Genesis 20, when *Abraham journeyed toward the Negev, King *Abimelech of Gerar acquired *Sarah for his harem. In a curt dream God scolded Abimelech for this careless action. God declared, "You are about to die because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a married woman." Before reporting Abimelech's assertion of Abraham's complicity in this event, the writer emphasizes that Abimelech had not approached Sarah (Gen 20:4). In fact, Genesis 20:6 notes that God himself had prevented Abimelech from touching Sarah. This pair of sentences reveals the importance of the dream for the Abraham and Sarah story. God had announced that Sarah and Abraham would have a son within the year (Gen 18:10), but they chortled at the chance of this happening. Genesis 21 records that Sarah bore a son. Abimelech's acquisition of Sarah stands between these two reports. The dream significantly results in Sarah's salvation, but the notices about Sarah's stay in the harem are the key to this narrative. Though Sarah was available, Abimelech did not avail himself of her. The only man who approached Sarah in the interim between God's *promise and God's provision of the heir was Abraham. In contrast, after Abraham received the initial promise of family, fame and favor, he went to *Egypt. In circumstances almost identical to the Abimelech events, *Pharaoh acquired and then freed Sarah. Significantly, however, the author says nothing about Pharaoh foregoing his right to have Sarah (Gen 12:10-20). The general promise had been given, but the particular moment for the arrival of the son was delayed. By the time of the sojourn in Gerar, *Isaac was on the way. In this way the author establishes that Isaac's paternity was legitimate.

2.1.2. Jacob's Ladder. Genesis 28:10-17 reports *Jacob's dream after he left Beer-sheba to go to *Haran. Along the way, he camped in Luz/Bethel, where he dreamed of a ladder extending to heaven, with messengers of God ascending and descending on it. This "ladder," a term unique to this biblical passage, may relate to a Mesopotamian word *(simmiltu)* for steps, ladders or siege ladders. Given the link between heaven and earth and the frequent associations between the Bible and *Babel, Jacob's "ladder" may connect to the stepped towers, or ziggurats, of Mesopotamia.

Additionally, within this broader ancient Near Eastern context, some have supposed that Jacob's dream represents an incubation type of dream experience, since he slept and offered a sacrifice, suggesting that he helped to hatch this vision by magical means. This supposition is misguided, however, because it appears that the vision came without encouragement by Jacob.

Some provocative parts of the dream are superfluous to the point of this event for the Jacob story. This seems to subvert the idea that dreams

alone were revelatory events. The angels on the steps were not directly involved in the announcement, and Jacob did not need to seek out an oneiromancer. The dream was an auditory message dream with significant visual appeal. Yahweh, without resorting to any expert, identified himself as the God of Jacob's ancestors and promised that Jacob's offspring would eventually inherit the foreign *land where this dream was occurring. God also promised that Jacob's offspring would become both numerous and a *blessing to others. Finally, God vowed to be present with Jacob, protecting him wherever he might go and returning him to this land of promise. The prognostic dream message was sealed, not with an image or an act but with the solemn phrase "I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Gen 28:15).

2.1.3. Jacob's Leaving. Genesis 31:10-13 reports a chimerical conversation between Jacob and a divine messenger. The messenger provided a means by which Jacob, whom Laban had cheated, could recoup some of his losses. This dream connects Jacob's return to Palestine and the staircase dream he had at Luz/Bethel. The same God contacted him in each instance.

2.1.4. Joseph's Story. Six visual-symbolic, prognostic dreams occur in the *Joseph cycle. Symbolic dreams (such as Gen 37—41) "remain the closest to our common experience of dreams, and illustrate best the positive attitude of biblical authors towards them. In Gen. 41.25, the divine origin of this kind of dream is clearly affirmed, but if these authors allow for the possibility that such dreams are sent by God, they also underline the essential role of the interpreter, without whom the divine message would remain enigmatic" (Husser, 91). Two dreams (Gen 37) depicted Joseph's promotion over his brothers. Also, Pharaoh's butler and baker each dreamed (Gen 40) about how Pharaoh would lift their heads. Finally, Pharaoh had two dreams regarding the future of Egypt. Thus, these symbolic dreams occur in three pairs. This doubling of messages may have enabled the mantic to decode the message more easily (Gnuse, 34).

All six dreams accurately portray the future and are set in a foreign venue. The last four dreams happened in Egypt. The first two occurred in Palestine, the land that was almost, but not quite, Israel's home. The particular events portended seem secondary to the larger narrative intent, which is to outline the eventual rise of Joseph, the quintessential dream analyst, to a position from which he would preserve his family. Joseph's emerging facility in unscrambling dreams demonstrated his acumen to rule Egypt by divine wisdom and by Yahweh's blessing.

2.1.4.1. Joseph's Dreams. A triad of notices regarding Jacob's family situation introduces Joseph's dreams. First, teenaged Joseph returned from the flock with a bad report about his brothers (Gen 37:2). Second, Jacob favored Joseph over his brothers and made his preference public with a special garment (Gen 37:3). Finally, the family fractured. In light of these slights, the brothers hated Joseph (Gen 37:4).

In the context of this disheartening background, the naive and perhaps wily Joseph detailed his dreams. First, Joseph summoned his brothers to describe how a group of sheaves representing the family members bowed down to a sheaf representing him (Gen 37:5-8). With Joseph's disclosure, predictably his brothers' hatred for him was sealed. In the second case (Gen 37:9-11), Joseph envisioned celestial bodies bowing down to him, a dream that caused even Jacob to rebuke him. Understandably, Joseph's relationship with his brothers deteriorated further.

According to both stories, Joseph would better his brothers. The denouement of these prognostic dreams occurred when Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to obtain food and fell down before their brother in confusion and contrition (Gen 42:6; 43:26, 28).

We note that these first two dreams lack a precise interpretation, contrasting with the structure of the remaining four dreams in the Joseph story. Husser explains:

> The absence of an interpretative phase in the economy of the dream account fulfils a precise narrative function here: to underline the naivety of the youngest brother as he confronts his kin. Scandalized, they understand only too well what his dreams announce. Similarly and inversely, the emphasis placed on the interpretative phase in the narratives of Genesis 40—41 has an equally precise function: to highlight the fact that dream interpretation is a special charism, a prophetic act inspired by God, by contrast with the methods of diviners. The presence or absence of interpretation, therefore, is not just a question of literary form, a form that may be more or less complete, but

relates directly, in these precise cases, to the significance and function of the dream narratives. (Husser, 113)

2.1.4.2. Butler and Baker. The prognostic dreams of the cupbearer and baker demonstrated that Joseph's gift of oneiromancy was not limited by geography. The God who gave him interpretations was able to reveal meanings to him in prison in a completely foreign land. In fact, Joseph was able to interpret the dreams even though the dreamers had been unable to find a native interpreter (Gen 40:8). The cupbearer's dream of the vine, grape clusters and cup was a sign that Pharaoh would lift the cupbearer's head in honor within three days (Gen 40:9-15).

Seeing the good news his cellmate had received, the baker shared his vision of bread and birds. Joseph relayed that Pharaoh would lift the baker's head in horror (Gen 40:16-19). These two dreams and their interpretations brought Joseph near to Pharaoh's household, the place where he would demonstrate one last time his ability to understand what God was saying through nocturnal messages. This prison story demonstrates Joseph to be superior to those in close contact with the Egyptian throne.

2.1.4.3. Pharaoh Frets. After Joseph languished in prison for two years, Pharaoh saw a pair of symbolic, prognostic dreams. Both dreams are reported without any intervening interpretation. First, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile and witnessed seven thin cows devour seven fat cows (Gen 41:1-4). Second, Pharaoh dreamed that seven thin ears of grain swallowed up seven plump ears of grain (Gen 41:5-8). The narrative delays the interpretation of the dreams until Joseph is recalled from prison. The fulfillment of the dream's intent is seen in the need for Joseph's care of the land during the years of famine. Genesis 41:15 is the key verse in the narrative. Pharaoh related to Joseph that he had had dreams that no one could interpret. Joseph, however, had gained a reputation as a dream interpreter and was presented as superior even to Pharaoh. But though Joseph had knowledge superior to Pharaoh, he could not supplant Pharaoh. Becoming Pharaoh-like, second in command, a virtual king, still he could not replace the Egyptian king (Gen 44:18).

2.2. Negative Assessment: Deuteronomy. Not surprisingly, given its anti-other perspective, the book of Deuteronomy denigrates dreams, something the other nations might use, in favor of Mosaic prophecy. After establishing that the worship of the nations should be destroyed to prevent apostasy (Deut 12), Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (MT 13:2-6) demands that the people should be ever vigilant against the reestablishment of these spiritual enticements in the future. A prophet or dream-diviner who suggested that Israel follow a god other than Yahweh, even if this person was skilled in his or her craft, was to be ignored. Because Yahweh might be testing the loyalty of his people, the instigator was to be killed for urging disloyalty to Yahweh. Though it is not clear from the context whether the dreamer and the false prophet were legitimate functionaries in the past who had become corrupt or were new arrivals on the religious landscape, they are certainly rejected by Deuteronomy. Their crime was inciting disloyalty against Yahweh. The writer does not hint that the techniques of these persons could not work but rather that they had the wrong message for the people.

Deuteronomy also describes the proper kind of messenger for Israel, prophets in the Mosaic mold (Deut 18:9-22). The book, however, does remain silent regarding dream-diviners. Perhaps the very personal nature of dreams renders them suspect in a society in which prophecy *for the community* took precedence. By means of a process of desacralization, dreams were finally reduced to "natural phenomena belonging to the realm of deceptive illusion" (Husser, 95). By virtually ignoring them, it appears that Deuteronomy considered dreams as symptomatic and personal but not as the prognostic and public channels of divine conversation recorded in Genesis. Since the dream carried no real message from the outside, by definition the dream could not be revelatory. According to Deuteronomy, when God wanted to speak to his people, he used not dreams but prophets.

See also DIVINATION, MAGIC; PROPHETS, PROPHECY; THEOPHANY.

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DUST. *See* CREATION.

DWELLING, DIVINE. *See* TABERNACLE.

E

E. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

EARTH. *See* LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

EDEN, GARDEN OF

The issues to be analyzed in connection to the garden of Eden are diverse and complex. Elements of significance include geography, cosmography and etymology (comparative Semitics) and require investigation of ancient Near Eastern practices as well as theological and textual contexts.

1. The Name *Eden*
2. Gardens in the Ancient Near East
3. Paradise in the Ancient Near East
4. The Location of the Garden
5. The Theology of Eden
6. The Role of Eden in the Narrative
7. The Human Role in the Garden

1. The Name *Eden.*

Early comparative Semitic studies suggested that the Hebrew word should be considered a cognate to the Sumerian *EDIN*, "steppe country," but more recent data attest a link to an Aramaic cognate that means "to enrich, make abundant" (Millard; Tsumura, 123-37; Semitic evidence is presented in detailed summary in Wallace 1992, 2.281-83). This semantic range is confirmed in Ugaritic occurrences and yields the idea of "garden of abundance." Tsumura's study concludes that it refers specifically to an abundance of water supply (Tsumura, 137; cf. Gen. 13:10).

In ancient Near Eastern literature, it is not unusual to find creator gods with a watery abode. Mesopotamian Enki/Ea and Canaanite El are notable in this regard (Tsumura, 148-53). El particularly is said to reside at the source of the rivers (Tsumura, 153). The OT reflects the same kind of concept: "In the pride of your heart you say 'I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas' " (Ezek 28:2 NIV). Because the garden was planted in a well-watered place (Eden), it took Eden as its name. In the first mention of the garden, the Lord plants the garden *in* Eden, suggesting to some that the garden itself is not Eden but within or in proximity to Eden. Thereafter, however, the text speaks of the garden *of* Eden and never uses a definite article, suggesting it is treating the word as a proper noun. But technically speaking, Genesis 2:10 indicates that the garden should be understood as adjoining Eden because the water flows *from* Eden and waters the garden. The picture is of a mighty spring that gushes out from Eden and is channeled through the garden for irrigation purposes. All of these channels then serve as headwaters for the four rivers flowing out in various directions as the waters exit the garden. This type of waterworks was known in the ancient world. For instance, Sennacherib had created an elaborate network of canals and sluice gates to control the waters of the Khosr River and to provide irrigation channels to the city of Nineveh and its surrounding farmland. A. K. Grayson (114-15) notes:

> Sennacherib devoted a great deal of time and expense to artificial irrigation. Early in his reign he had a canal dug to bring water from the River Khosr through Nineveh, but as his park and gardens were expanded, some time between 700 and 694, greater irrigation works were necessary. The requisite water was found in mountain springs to the north east of Nineveh, and sixteen new canals were excavated to conduct this supply to the city and its suburbs. To carry off the excess water during the flood season Sennacherib formed

a large marsh, which was stocked with the flora and fauna of the Babylonian marshes.

The point is that the text describes a situation that was well known in the ancient world: a sacred spot featuring a spring with an adjoining, well-watered park, stocked with specimens of trees and animals.

2. Gardens in the Ancient Near East.

Next we need to understand the designation "garden." The word generally refers to a parklike setting featuring trees and what we would call landscaping. This is in contrast to the American usage of garden, which, more often than not, refers to a small rectangular plot of ground with rows of vegetables or flowers. We should rather think of what we would call a "country garden" or of something like the Botanical Gardens or Busch Gardens. In the same way that a garden of the palace would be adjoining the palace, Eden would then be the source of the waters and the residence of God, and the garden would adjoin God's residence. Gardens of this variety were a common feature in palace complexes in the ancient world, as indicated, for instance, in Nebuchadnezzar's famous hanging gardens. They were planted with fruit trees and shade trees and generally contained watercourses, pools and paths. Their arboretums contained many exotic trees and plants, and sometimes included animals. K. Gleason (383; also see Stager) writes:

> Kings boast of large parts of cities devoted to these parks, of the great irrigation works that feed them, and of the distant lands from which the plants and animals are gathered. Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) created a combined zoological park and arboretum of exotic animals and trees. Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE) created a garden/park at Nimrud (Kalhu) by diverting water from the Upper Zab River through a rock-cut channel for his impressive collection of foreign plants and animals. Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) makes a similar claim for Nineveh. Parks are beautifully represented on the reliefs from Sargon II's (721-705 BCE) palace at Khorsabad, in which a variety of trees and a small pavilion with proto-Doric columns are depicted. Other reliefs depict lion hunts and falconry in the parks. A clay tablet from Babylon names and locates vegetables and herbs in the garden of Merodach-Baladan II (721-710 BCE). In the palace reliefs of Ashurbanipal, the garden symbolizes the abundance and pleasures of peace after bravery in battle.

Such gardens have also been excavated at Pasargadae, Cyrus the Great's capital city. Temple complexes also sometimes featured gardens that symbolized the fertility provided for by the deity (Cornelius, 1.875-78). The produce of these temple gardens was used in offerings to the deity, just as the temple flocks and herds were used for *sacrificial purposes.

3. Paradise in the Ancient Near East.

The paradise motif in the ancient Near East is nearly nonexistent. Recent studies have shown that even those texts that have at times been considered paradisiacal are simply describing "an initially inchoate world" (Jacobsen, 182) rather than an idyllic existence (Batto). For instance, one Sumerian myth states that the high plain was not yet tilled, canals were not opened, no dredging was done, no one was planting in furrows, humans walked about naked, and there were no predators bringing terror to people (Batto, 45-46). This tale leads to the institution of civilization, especially kingship. The description offered in Genesis 2:5-6 has some similarity to that found in these types of "not yet" statements of Sumerian literature, but the subsequent idyllic existence of the garden finds no parallel.

4. The Location of the Garden.

The location of the garden, if the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates are located near it, would immediately evoke in our minds the mountains of Armenia between the Black Sea and Lake Van, where the sources of those rivers are located. But before we jump to that conclusion, a couple of caveats must be considered. This is not a modern geographical text any more than Genesis 1 is a modern scientific text. It is true that the sources of the rivers were known in the ancient world. Shalmaneser III writes: "At the headwaters [*rēš;* the Hebrew term the NIV translates "headwaters" and the NRSV "branches" is simply the word *rō'šîm*, "heads"; the Akkadian cognate is regularly used to describe the sources of the rivers] of the Tigris, on a cliff where its spring comes out, I fashioned a relief" (*CAD* N/1.109). Interestingly, Naram-sin at the end of the third millennium reports reaching the spring (*nagbu*, singular) of the Tigris and Euphrates.

But we have to be careful about the extent to which we read our scientific knowledge into the

text. In the ancient world, they had words that we translate "sources," "springs" and "headwaters," but they believed that the true source of all fresh water was the *apsu*, the subterranean waters on which they believed the earth floated. The Israelites were not ignorant of these ideas, nor had they been disabused of them (cf. Ps 24:2). Yet we must be clear: the *apsu* waters have some basis in reality. They are not entirely a mythical construct, though there is a mythic dimension connected to them. At the same time, it should be realized that the geography used here is not a topographical geography, but a cosmic geography. (Concepts such as the tropic of Capricorn are parts of our cosmic geography. It is real, but not in the same topographical category as the Thames.) Though the four rivers were real bodies of water, their description here concerns their cosmic role. The river of Eden was the place of God's abode and was the source of life-giving water that flowed through the rivers, benefiting all the earth.

The idea of four streams flowing from the temple or palace to water the four corners of the earth is represented graphically in a couple of places. In the eighteenth-century B.C. palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari, there is an investiture-scene fresco on the walls. In one of the panels two goddesses hold jars, and out of each flows four streams of water going off in different directions. Similarly, an ivory inlay from thirteenth-century Ashur features a god in the middle from whom four streams of water flow. He is flanked by two sacred trees, which in turn are flanked by winged bulls (for photographs, see Stager, 38, 41).

Turning our attention to the names of the rivers, we know the Tigris and Euphrates, but not the Pishon and Gihon. Some have attempted to identify them with canals, with other rivers of Mesopotamia (Balikh, Diyala, Zab, etc.), with other rivers outside of Mesopotamia (e.g., Nile, Indus, Ganges) or with larger bodies such as the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. It is not impossible that the Pishon and Gihon are major rivers that dried up in antiquity. Analysis of sand patterns in Saudi Arabia and satellite photography have helped identify an old riverbed running northeast through Saudi Arabia from the Hijaz Mountains near Medina to the Persian Gulf in Kuwait near the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates. This would correlate with the information given for the Pishon River (Sauer). The river is believed to have dried up between 3500 and 2000 B.C. Today the dried riverbed is called Wadi al-Batin. The ancient river has been dubbed the Kuwait River. The Hijaz Mountains area is also home to the famous "Cradle of Gold" (Mahd edh-Dhahab), one of the richest gold mines in the region of Medina. This area along the Red Sea produces spices and precious stones as well. Perhaps because of the mention of gold in relation to Havilah, it is mentioned in several other passages (Gen 10:7; 25:18; 1 Sam 15:7; 1 Chron 1:9). Genesis 10:29 describes Havilah as the "brother" of Ophir, a region also known for its wealth in gold. A final alternative for the identification of the Pishon and Gihon is that they are cosmic waters (Neiman). But until more information is discovered, they must remain mysterious.

In English we can use the word "location" in several ways. One way would be in the sentence, "What is your location?" which carries the implication that directions can be given. But a second way would be in a sentence such as, "The most important quality of a house is its location." Here the issue is not getting directions. We might say that it rather concerns how strategically the house is situated. It is this element that the text is concerned with when it describes the location of the garden of Eden. It was said that "All roads lead to Rome." That was not describing what one would find out from a map (though many roads *did* lead to Rome). It was an affirmation about its cultural and political centrality. Locating Eden in reference to the Tigris and Euphrates is the same kind of statement. Its location is not given so that it can be found but so that its strategic role can be appreciated. All fertility emanates from the presence of God. All of this does not imply that Eden is not an actual physical location—only that the geographical details are not necessarily supposed to offer a roadmap. It would be like the understanding in the Gilgamesh Epic of the location of Utnapishtim's dwelling: real and describable as beyond Mashu's mountains, but not readily accessible.

5. The Theology of Eden.

We must first recognize that the garden of Eden was not, strictly speaking, a garden for humans but was the garden of *God* (Is 51:3; Ezek 28:13). Wenham (19) explains:

> The garden of Eden is not viewed by the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland, but as an archetypal sanctuary, that is a place where God dwells and where man should worship him. Many

of the features of the garden may also be found in later sanctuaries particularly the tabernacle or Jerusalem temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary.

The presence of God was the key to the garden and was understood by author and audience as a given from the ancient worldview. His presence is seen as the fertile source of all life-giving waters. "It is not only the dwelling place of God. It is also the source of all the creative forces that flow forth from the Divine Presence, that energize and give life to the creation in a constant, unceasing outflow of vivifying power" (Neiman, 324).

This concept is well known in the Bible. Ezekiel 47:1-12 shows the life-giving waters flowing from the temple (see also Ps 46:4; Zech 14:8). Perhaps the most familiar picture, however, comes in Revelation 22:1-2, where the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God. This association between ancient Near Eastern temples and spring waters is well attested. In fact, some temples in Mesopotamia, Egypt and in the Ugaritic myth of Baal were considered to have been founded upon springs (likened to the primeval waters), which sometimes flowed from the building itself. Thus, the symbolic cosmic mountain (i.e., temple) stood upon the symbolic primeval waters (i.e., spring; Lundquist, 208). On this point, then, the ancient world and the biblical picture agree. When we see that creation as a whole was understood in terms of a cosmic temple complex (*see* Cosmology; Creation), it would be logical to understand the garden as the antechamber to the holy of holies. Eden proper would be the Holy of Holies, and the garden adjoins it as the antechamber. In this regard it is of importance to note that the objects that were kept in the antechamber of the sanctuary are images intended to evoke the garden. The menorah is a symbol of the tree of life (Meyers, 142), and the table for the bread of the Presence provided food for the priests. In conclusion, then, the garden is understood to be the antechamber of the Holy of Holies (Eden) in the cosmic temple complex. With this understanding, it can be appreciated that in the aftermath of the *Fall, the greatest loss was not access to paradise; it was access to God's presence. The temple provided for a partial return of that presence, and the antechamber of the temple was reminiscent of the proximity to God's presence that had once been enjoyed.

6. The Role of Eden in the Narrative.

Despite the significance of this theological backdrop to the garden of Eden, we must recognize that it is no more than a backdrop. Genesis 2 is not trying to develop the idea that Eden is the place of God's presence or the Holy of Holies of the cosmic temple. Those are givens that are simply assumed by author and audience. The text is most interested in the garden as the means by which God provided *food for people (Gen 2:9). Trees of the garden provided food, not for the deity (as in the parks that sometimes adjoined temples) but for the people who served the deity. By providing food the garden actualized the benefits that had been granted in the *blessing in Genesis 1:29-30. In the sequence established in Genesis 1—3, it is interesting that Genesis 1 deals mainly with sacred time (the focus of days one, four and seven), Genesis 2 with sacred space and Genesis 3 with status in sacred space. These are the three major categories of ritual concern in the ancient world and the Bible.

7. The Human Role in the Garden.

In Genesis 2:15, the role of Adam is identified as the text says God put him in the garden "to till it and keep it." The verbs and the grammatical forms are intriguing here. The grammatical problem is that the pronominal suffix connected to each of the verbs is feminine, though the word for garden is masculine. The alternative is to view the forms as infinitive long forms (Jouon §49d). None of the choices is easy to accept, and the suggestions of alternate antecedents have not been persuasive. At this stage it is probably still preferable to accept that the object of these two verbs is the garden, but there may be more information yet to be unearthed.

More useful information can be derived from semantic study of these words. The verbs *ʿābad* and *šāmar* (NRSV "till" and "keep") are terms most frequently encountered in discussions of human service to God rather than descriptions of agricultural tasks. The verb *ʿābad* certainly can refer to farming activity (e.g., Gen 2:5; 3:23), but in those contexts the nuance of the verb is conditioned by its direct object (the ground). When the verb does not take a direct object, it often refers to the work connected with one's vocation (e.g., Ex 20:9). The broader sense of the word is often connected to religious service deemed as worship (e.g., Ex 3:12) or of priestly functionaries serving in the sanctuary

precinct (e.g., Num 3:7-10). In these cases, the object of the verb usually refers to what or whom is being worshiped (e.g., Ex 4:23; 23:33).

Here, then, is a succinct statement of the problem when we try to decide whether *ʿābad* is referring to agricultural tasks or sacred service. *If* the object of the verb is the garden (and we cannot be certain that it is), we have a bit of an anomaly. The verb will usually take dirt/soil/ground objects when it refers to agricultural work and will usually take personal objects (God, Baal, Egypt) when sacred service or servitude is the point. "Garden" could be in either category, depending on whether it is understood as a place where things grow or a place where God dwells. There is one pertinent exception in each category. Numbers 8:15 has the tent of meeting, a sacred place, as the object of the verb *ʿābad* to refer to sacred service, while Deuteronomy 28:39 has vineyards as the object of the verb to refer to cultivation as an agricultural activity. This means that neither direction enjoys strong support in the semantic range, but each could be set forth as a possibility. We will thus have to look to its contextual partner, *šāmar*, to take us one direction or another.

The verb *šāmar* is used in the contexts of the levitical responsibility of guarding sacred space as well as in the sense of observing religious commands and responsibilities. This verb is used in agricultural contexts only when crops are being guarded from people or animals who would destroy or steal. In Eden we presume that there is no one to guard against. When the verb applies to levitical activity, it could involve control of access to the sacred precinct, but it is often used more generally to performing duties on the grounds.

To conclude, then, (1) since there are several contexts in which *šāmar* is used for levitical service along with *ʿābad* (e.g., Num 3:8-9), (2) since the contextual use of *šāmar* here favors sacred service, (3) since *ʿābad* is as likely to refer to sacred service as to agricultural tasks and (4) since there are other indications that the garden is being portrayed as sacred space, it is likely that the tasks given to Adam are of a priestly nature: caring for sacred space. In ancient thinking, caring for sacred space was a way of upholding creation. By preserving order, chaos was held at bay.

If the priestly vocabulary in Genesis 2:15 indicates the same kind of thinking here, the point of caring for sacred space should be seen as much more than landscaping or even priestly duties. Maintaining order made one a participant with God in the ongoing task of sustaining the equilibrium God had established in the cosmos. (For an understanding of Israelite rituals in this light, see Gorman, 28-29.) Egyptian thinking attached this to the role of priests as they maintained the sacred space in the temples but also to the king, whose task was "to complete what was unfinished, and to preserve the existent, not as a status quo but in a continuing, dynamic, even revolutionary process of remodeling and improvement" (Hornung, 183). This combines the subduing and ruling of Genesis 1 with the *ʿābad* and *šāmar* of Genesis 2.

See also ADAM; COSMOLOGY; CREATION; EVE; TABERNACLE.

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EDOMITES. *See* ESAU, EDOMITES.

EGYPT, EGYPTIANS

At about 650 miles from north to south and roughly 550 to 650 miles from east to west, Egypt today (including Sinai) is a large desert rectangle that occupies the northeast corner of Africa, where it links onto Western Asia. The only habitable areas, watered by the Nile, are the narrow Nile Valley and the broad alluvial Egyptian (or Nile) Delta through which the Nile reaches the Mediterranean Sea—barely five percent of the total land surface of modern Egypt. Along with a few desert oases west of the Nile Valley (fed by artesian wells), this five percent is the real Egypt, both in antiquity and even now. The Egyptians were and are the inhabitants of the Nile Valley and Delta from remote times and are basically a blend of north-African and Mediterranean stock, with slight additions from the Levant; they are not Arabs except in language and by medieval and modern culture. Traceable in writing from its invention around 3000 B.C., the original Egyptian language was the outcome of the mutual impact of early Hamitic (north-African) and early Semitic, showing elements of both, being truly "Afro-Asiatic." It went through some six historical phases: Archaic, Old, Middle, Late Egyptian, Demotic (named from the script) and Coptic, the last-named being written in a modified Greek alphabet in Roman/Byzantine times and used until the coming of the Arab invasion and imposition of Arabic from the seventh century A.D. The ancient Egypt that we meet from time to time in the pages of the Bible is that of a rich and complex civilization whose history runs from approximately 3000 B.C. to Roman times. This article divides into four broad parts: Egypt in earliest Hebrew "ethnography" (Gen 10); the Egypt of the patriarchs (early second millennium B.C.); the Egypt of the exodus (late second millennium B.C.); and Egyptian impact on the early Hebrews, having left Egypt behind them.

1. Egypt Among the Nations (Genesis 10)
2. Abraham and Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20)
3. Joseph and Jacob in Egypt
4. Oppression in and Exodus from Egypt
5. Egypt's Impact on the Early Hebrew Community and Culture

1. Egypt Among the Nations (Genesis 10).

1.1. Egypt as Mizraim. In biblical Hebrew, the usual word for Egypt takes what appears to be a masculine dual form, *miṣrayim*, "the two Miṣrs." In Akkadian (Assyro-Babylonian), the term *miṣru* can be used for "border(line)," "(state) frontier," "the marches" and land or terrain. In all likelihood, the dual *miṣrayim* meant originally "the two lands" or "the two borderlands/marches." From earliest historical times, Egypt's kings claimed a dual kingship (e.g., "Lord of the Two Lands," "King of South and North Egypt"), since a ruler of the south had overcome and become king also of the north, out of which political union the pharaonic monarchy was born. Early Semitic-speaking travelers going southwest into Egypt would find themselves first skirting along the borderland between desert on their left (east) and watered, green cultivation on their right (west). Then, passing the apex of the Nile Delta, they would find themselves at a different border: the River Nile emerging from its long, narrow valley, bounded westward (as far south as one might journey) by seemingly endless desert. This no doubt created an end-of-the-world experience for someone coming from out of the adjacent Near East. *Mizraim* came to serve also as the current Hebrew term for the people, the Egyptians.

1.2. Egypt's Zones and Neighbors. In Genesis 10:6, 13-14, Mizraim (Egypt) occurs in two separate and complementary contexts. In the first verse (Gen 10:6) Egypt is ranked among her immediate neighbors: Cush to the south, Put to the west and Canaan on the northeast. Cush is Nubia, known as Kash or Kush in many ancient Egyptian documents, and it extends along the narrow Nile Valley between mineral-bearing deserts from (modern) south Egypt into the northern Sudan. Put can now be set in part of Libya; it appears in Egyptian texts in that context as Pudu or Pyudu during at least the eleventh to ninth centuries B.C. In cuneiform (sixth century B.C.), *Putu-iaman* is "Greek Libya" and may well be Cyrenaica at that period. *Canaan,* of course, is well known as a term for basically western Palestine from near Gaza to south of Tyre, and between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean Sea. The second passage (Gen 10:13-14) includes two sets of names. One set designates parts of

Egypt herself. Pathros (NRSV Pathrusim; Heb *patrūsîm*) in verse 14 transcribes Egyptian **p3-t3-rs(y)*, "the Southland" (i.e., Upper Egypt, the Nile Valley from the first Cataract at Aswan north to the Delta apex). Naphtuhim represents the Delta (Lower Egypt) and is most likely based on a possible Egyptian **n3(yw)-p3-(i)dh(w)*, "those of the (Delta) marshes." A second set of names designates people further out. Lehabim is most likely a variant of Lubim ("Libyans"), perhaps closer to Egypt than Put. Caphtor is certainly cuneiform Kaptara and Egyptian Keftiu *(kftyw)*, to be located in Crete and the Aegean isles; the Keftiu-folk in Egyptian tomb-paintings are the same people as those to be seen in the famous Minoan frescoes in the palace of Knossos in Crete. Lud is often linked with Lydia; the Casluhim remain obscure. The Philistines certainly came from the Aegean, as their material culture clearly shows. So, Egypt finds closer definition and external contexts and connections in these verses.

2. Abraham and Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20).
Here we have the first Hebrew involvement with Egypt: going there under stress of famine, which they did twice. Inadequate rains and crop failure in Canaan intermittently brought its inhabitants to seek relief in Egypt, where the Nile seemed always to guarantee plenty. In fact, Egypt too suffered famines, when the great river failed to flood the land or did so to massive excess (see 3.1 and 4.2, below). The earliest example of Egypt's role in famine relief dates to approximately 2400 B.C., namely, a fragmentary scene from the pyramid-complex of King Unis of the Sixth Dynasty. This shows a group of foreigners (desert-dwellers or Semites?) emaciated by starvation. Later, the kings Merikare of the Tenth Dynasty (c. 2100 B.C.) and Amenemhat I, founder of the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1970 B.C.), each built fortifications on Egypt's East Delta borders to restrain or control entry from Canaan for that and other reasons. Thus, an *Abraham seeking entry perhaps up to a century later would have been in good company, and Genesis 12:15, 20 reflects the presence of Egyptian border-officialdom. His visit could probably have been sometime during the later Twelfth to early Thirteenth Dynasties (roughly 1870-1750 B.C.). The famous tomb-painting at Beni-Hasan (c. 1870 B.C.) shows a group of Semitic traders ("thirty-seven Asiatics") visiting Egypt and being admitted by two officers: a chief of hunters (a desert-ranger, in modern terms), and an appropriate bureaucrat, "scribe of royal records." The Semitic leader Ab-sharru ("the Father is ruler") bore a name of the same type as Abram ("the Father is exalted"). In brightly colored garments, the men are accompanied by their womenfolk, children and donkeys.

The Genesis narrative would appear to imply that while Abram dwelt in the pastures of the eastern Delta he was close to the *pharaoh's residence, where he was peremptorily summoned, then dismissed (Gen 12:18-20). During the Twelfth to Fifteenth Dynasties (c. 1970-1550 B.C.), Egypt's main capital was at Memphis and its adjoining suburb of Ithet-tawy, some one hundred miles south of the main entry point into the East Delta from Canaan. But during that time, the pharaohs had established an East Delta residence at Ro-waty, later called Hatwaret (Greek, Avaris), now the ruin-fields of Tell ed-Dabʿa (or Tell el-Dabʿa). This was close to the route of entry from Canaan and would have been the appropriate venue for the meetings of Egyptian kings with such as Abraham, *Joseph and *Jacob. This was no longer the case after the Hyksos Fifteenth Dynasty (ejected by 1540 B.C.), until about 1300 B.C. and the time of *Moses—too late for the patriarchs.

Pharaohs were never loath to add ladies to their harems, foreign as well as Egyptian. Mentuhotep II (c. 2000 B.C.) had swarthy Nubian belles among his harem members buried at Thebes, while Syrian girls are known under Thutmose III (c. 1460 B.C.). People of importance to the king were given escort in or out of Egypt in Middle Kingdom times. Just as Abraham was given a posse to escort him out of Egypt (disgraced), so a century or so before the fugitive Egyptian courtier Sinuhe was given a special escort to bring him back to court (in honor) when he returned from Canaan, around 1930 B.C. (cf. *ANET*, 21; *COS* 1.38:81).

3. Joseph and Jacob in Egypt.
3.1. Joseph's Early Career in Egypt. Sold into Egypt as a young male *slave, Joseph made his mark in the household of his master, ended up unjustly in prison because of his master's wife, then finally at court became a chief minister of the king, well-placed to rescue his own family when famine again haunted Canaan. Joseph's Egypt found the pharaoh still with an East Delta residence (Gen 40—41) and a set of high offi-

cials (Gen 39—41). It was a land into which Levantines could be sold as slaves (Gen 37:1; 39:1) and in which they might serve both in large households (Gen 39) and at the king's court in high office (Gen 41). Unfaithful wives were not unknown (Gen 39); foreigners might be given Egyptian names (Gen 41). *Dreams were considered significant (Gen 40—41) as well as *divination practice in cups (Gen 44). The East Delta was good for pasture (Gen 46—47); grain was stored in local centers (Gen 41:48); the nobler dead were mummified and encoffined (Gen 50; *see* Burial and Mourning).

These details and more find their counterparts in the ancient Egypt of the monuments and documents (for detailed treatments, see Kitchen 1994; 2003). The price paid for Joseph, twenty shekels, is the correct average price current in the early second millennium B.C., as in the Code of Hammurabi (§§116, 214, 252, expressed as one-third of a mina) and other contemporary cuneiform documents. Other Semites were sold into Egypt; a trading expedition to Lebanon under Amenemhat II (c. 1900 B.C.) brought back sixty-five "Asiatics" among its acquisitions, while others came as slaves in tribute (1,002) or as prisoners of war (1,554) at that time. In Egypt, from approximately 1730 B.C., we have the list of seventy-seven servants in an official's large household, forty-eight of whom were "Asiatics" (i.e., Levantines like Joseph). For Semites in high office, we have a man like the chancellor Hur (Thirteenth or Hyksos Dynasties); and already in the Thirteenth Dynasty, Semitic kings reached the throne, such as Khendjer (name from Semitic *ḥanzir*, "boar"). Excavations at Avaris show the considerable Canaanite population there during the Hyksos period and before it (Bietak 1996). Thus it is little wonder that it was necessary to specify that Potiphar (even with an Egyptian name) was "an Egyptian" (Gen 39:1). Actual unfaithful wives in real life in ancient Egypt are not (so far) revealed to us, but they gave rise to such incidents in popular stories, such as the unfaithful wife of Webaoner in the Tales of the Magicians (Papyrus Westcar) of the sixteenth century B.C. (Simpson, 16-19), and another in the Tale of Two Brothers (Papyrus D'Orbiney, thirteenth century B.C.; *ANET,* 24; *COS,* 2.40:85-86). Storing grain in local cities stemmed from the nature of Egyptian administration and geography. The long valley of Upper Egypt and scattered distribution of Delta settlements alike militated against storing all grain-tax in one central granary at the capital (especially if needed to pay for state disbursements locally); thus, it was normal for the grain from each province to be stored in that province, other than a limited direct tax levied by the state and the temple revenues, shipped to the capital and to the temples' stores respectively.

The name given to Joseph (Gen 41:45), as those cited for his Egyptian wife, former master and father-in-law (Gen 39:1; 41:45), are all genuinely Egyptian but need care in their elucidation. Zaphenath-paneah was often thought to stand for *ḏd-p3-nṯr-iw.f-ʿnḫ,* "the God speaks and he lives." But, apart from the late date of this type of name (tenth to sixth centuries B.C.), this class of name never uses the noun *God* in place of a specific deity, such as Amun or Ptah or Montu. Moreover, the name itself was suitable only as a birth name, and appointment to high office was not a rebirth! However, an equally good equivalent linguistically is to understand Zathenaph for Zaphenath (Egyptian *ḏd-n.f,* "who is called"), plus the name *ip-ʿnḫ* for Paaneah. This latter name is very common in the early second millennium B.C., but not so later on. Joseph's full name would then have been "Joseph who is called (I)piankh." Precisely this sort of formula, "X [Semitic name] who is called *[ḏd-n.f]* Y [Egyptian name]" is found over and over again for both men and women in the list of forty-eight foreigners in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 (c. 1730 B.C.), besides other sources, and with continuation into the late second millennium B.C. also. Asenath is from **iw.s-n.t,* pronounced *as-en-at,* for which we possess the masculine equivalent *af-en-at [iw.f-n.t],* as before a common name format for the early second millennium B.C. Potiphar/Potiphera may be variants of the one name; they represent Egyptian *p3-di-p3-rʿ* current from the thirteenth century B.C. onward, but descended from the type *didi-* (deity), via *p3-didi-* (deity), attested in the feminine so far.

Dreams were held to be so important that manuals of interpretation were compiled for "deciphering" them. A splendid specimen in the British Museum (Papyrus Chester Beatty III) dates to the thirteenth century B.C., but by its classical language is most likely a recopy of a manual first composed in the early second millennium. After a column stating the situation—"If a man sees himself in a dream"—there follows a series of lines describing the person's actions in the dream, then the note "good" or "bad" and its in-

terpretation. As for cup-divination (of movements of oil on water), from Egypt comes a pair of small figures, each depicting a figure kneeling with its chin on a cup, gazing into it, seemingly performing this rite; they appear to be of Middle Kingdom date (twentieth to sixteenth centuries B.C.). Certainly of that date are two Old Babylonian tablets of this time, dealing with this technique.

3.2. Jacob's Time in Egypt. When Jacob and his family eventually arrived to settle in Egypt (Gen 46—47), they were given part of Goshen to stay in, with its pastures, in the East Delta. Goshen is once equated (Gen 47:11) with the "land of Rameses," an equivalent term from the thirteenth century B.C., which was the region adjoining Avaris, directly north of which (at Qantir) Ramesses II built his city Pi-Ramesses (or Piramesse), the Egyptian original of the Hebrew term. By the sixteenth century B.C., there was already a tradition of sending cattle and the like from as far away as Thebes to pasture seasonally in the Delta (First Kamose Stela, *ANET*, 232), since its pastures were much valued within Egypt.

Eventually, old Jacob died, having given instructions that he was to be buried back in Canaan (Gen 49:29). That presented a practical problem, so Joseph adopted the Egyptian solution of having Jacob mummified and mourned for the requisite seventy days (Gen 50:2-3) to be able to take him there. In turn, when Joseph died at the age of 110 years, he too was embalmed and "put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen 50:26). That was the ideal age, often wished for in Egyptian texts, especially in the late thirteenth century B.C., so perhaps that was a detail that Moses found desirable to retain. In Joseph's own time (perhaps about the seventeenth/sixteenth centuries B.C.), other Semites resident in Egypt took the same path to the afterlife. One named Abdu was buried in a wooden coffin at Saqqara (cemetery of Memphis), and that coffin contained the dagger of another Semite named Nahman, dated to the Hyksos period by the royal name Apopi on the dagger handle. Thus, it is interesting to see others besides Joseph taking to Egyptian ways in this sphere. Attempts to set a late date for the Joseph narrative (e.g., Redford 1970) are based on the misinterpretation of linguistic data and a failure to distinguish between early, original indicators and later retouches (Kitchen 1973; 2003).

4. Oppression in and Exodus from Egypt.

4.1. Situation in the Oppression. Times change, and thus in early Hebrew history a new Egyptian king arose who knew nothing of Joseph (Ex 1:8), evidently long dead. This growing foreign group needed to be curbed, so why not exploit their labor potential in new building projects (Ex 1:8-14)? In addition, a ban on growth was attempted (Ex 1:15-22). In this situation, a certain child was born, then by his mother's arrangement found by a princess and nurtured at court (Ex 2). He there grew up, but his hasty deed in killing one of his people's oppressors meant he had to flee for his life into Sinai, until a new king arose, and his God commissioned him to return and challenge the pharaoh and lead his people out of Egypt and back to Canaan. Such was the early life of Moses. From the rich but unevenly preserved resources of information from ancient Egypt, pertinent information bears on various details of the narrative in Exodus 1—6.

Raamses and Pithom (Ex 1:11), along with Succoth later (Ex 12:37; 13:20), belong together and can be closely located on the map. Beyond any serious doubt, Raamses is Pi-Ramesses, the once vast Delta residence-city built by Ramesses II (1279-1213 B.C.), marked by ruin-fields that extend for almost four miles north to south and nearly two miles west to east, centered on Qantir (Tell el-Dab^{c}a), a dozen miles or so south of Tanis (Zoan). A first palace was founded by Seti I (1294-1279 B.C.) and was much extended by Ramesses II, who erected also great temples of stone and vast areas of mud-brick housing, stores, chariotry/horse stabling and the like. The heyday of Pi-Ramesses/Rameses was during the thirteenth and early twelfth centuries B.C. From about 1130 B.C. onward, it swiftly declined; the king stayed in Memphis, and shifts in the eastern Nile courses ended Pi-Ramesses' role as a major port, in favor of Tanis.

Everything of Pi-Ramesses has been leveled to the ground long since. The temple stonework was removed and recycled to build big new temples at Tanis (Zoan) and other places from the Twenty-First Dynasty onward (c. 1070 B.C. and following). The disused mud-brick structures crumbled back into the Nile mud whence they had been drawn. The former cults of the gods of Pi-Ramesses were transferred to Tanis and Bubastis as merely minor benefices, of religious "archaeological" interest; record of them was hidden away (fourth century B.C.) deep inside

the Bubastis sanctuaries and in obscure inscriptions on private statues in the Tanis temple—in no way accessible to outsiders (Jews or others) in the fourth century B.C. Thus, the biblical tradition of Rameses in particular has to go back to the thirteenth/twelfth centuries B.C.; the minuscule fourth-century mentions were not available to biblical writers or editors.

Mentioned only once, Pithom (Ex 1:11) and then Succoth (on the *exodus route, Ex 12:37; 13:20) have to be considered together. The Hebrews were *not* to go northeast by the Mediterranean coast route (Ex 13:17; see 4.2 below) but in fact went east-southeast from Rameses via Succoth, but not Pithom. As they then continued east via the Re(e)d Sea to Sinai, Pithom was evidently behind them, and thus south of Rameses and west from Succoth. Two ancient sites fit these conditions quite closely. Near the west end of Wadi Tumilat is Tell er-Retabe; some nine miles or so east of it is Tell el-Maskhuta, whence the route runs to the Bitter Lakes and then over toward the deserts to Sinai. Contrary to repeated and mistaken claims (e.g., Holladay; Redford 1982) that Tell el-Maskhuta in particular dates only from the seventh/sixth centuries B.C., both sites are solidly attested for the thirteenth century B.C. by Ramesside remains *and* thirteenth-century textual mentions. At Tell er-Retabe, Ramesses II built a military compound and a temple with stone-faced facade for the sun god Atum lord of Succoth. At Tell el-Maskhuta, archaeologists long ago found statue-groups, a falcon and the like of Ramesses II linked with the sun god Re, plus later a statue of Prince Ramesses-Merneptah; the texts associated with these finds demonstrate that they were local, *not* reused from Pi-Ramesses. Texts of various dates give Tjeku (or Tjuku = Succoth) as the name of Tell el-Maskhuta, especially on the stela of Ptolemy II. Furthermore, the locations of Pithom (= Pi-[A]tum) at Tell er-Retabe and of Succoth at Tell el-Maskhuta are also clearly indicated (Gardiner, 268-69) by a Roman milestone found at Tell el-Maskhuta that states, "From Ero [= Heroonpolis/Pithom] to(ward) Clysma [= Suez]: 9 (Roman) miles." It is, in fact, nine Roman miles, on the way to Suez, from Pithom/Heroonpolis/Tell er-Retabe to Tell el-Maskhuta (where this stone was found), "within a few hundred yards" as Gardiner expressed it. In addition, soon after Ramesses II, Pithom became known as "Pithom-of-Merneptah." Consequently, it all fits (cf. further, Kitchen 1998, 66-85). Being Tjeku/Succoth throughout, Tell el-Maskhuta was never Pithom; Tell er-Retabe was. For textual evidence that, in Ramesside times, there existed a *place* Tjeku (Succoth), not only a district, see ODM 1076 and Papyrus Anastasi V (cited in translation in Kitchen 1998, 73-75). Failure to find Ramesside remains at Tell el-Maskhuta by the Canadian expedition (so successful in other matters) proves very little, given that the site had in parts been massively disturbed from the mid-nineteenth century onward, a factor they failed to allow for.

Captive foreign labor was exploited by the pharaohs of the Empire or New Kingdom period in particular, not least under Ramesses II. Already around 1460 B.C. under Thutmose III, we have the famous scene of foreigners (Semites, Libyans) slaving away at brick making for the temple of Amun in Thebes. A later leather roll, housed in the Louvre, itemizes forty young stablemasters who had to act as taskmasters for a target of two thousand bricks in a day. Absence of straw for brick making (cf. Ex 5:7, 18) is cause for concern in a contemporary papyrus, as is also the production of set quotas of bricks (Ex 5:8, 13-14, 18). Moreover, much like the Hebrews (Ex 5:14), in the papyri others were beaten up by taskmasters. They were not alone in these labors; we read also of "Apiru-folk who drag stone for the great pylon-gateway" of Ramesses II at Memphis. While in Nubia, that king's viceroy Setau was royally commissioned to raid the southern oases and to seize Libyans to build a temple there (at Wadi es-Sebua). The work records from the Valley of the Kings at Thebes and its satellite village (Deir el-Medina) show that workmen sometimes gained numerous days off for all manner of reasons, including going "to worship their god." Thus it is little wonder that up north (and with foreign slaves asking leave) the pharaoh reacted angrily (Ex 5:1-5) to yet another request (by Moses) for simply "time off" (as he saw it), without of course any inkling of the consequences that were to follow in that case.

4.2. Conditions and Background of the Exodus (Exodus 7—15). The pharaoh was determined not to let go of his Hebrew labor force; it took ten plagues to break his will and his grasp (Ex 7—11). The plagues fall into three groups of threes, both by nature and by literary format, and culminate in a distinct tenth (cf. Hoffmeier, 145-47). The first trio (plagues 1-3) arose in and

from the river: red waters, dying fish and frogs coming onto land, then mosquitoes ("gnats"). The second trio (plagues 4-6) took place on land, set off by the first three: flies (on the dead matter) breeding, the dead creatures and the flies carrying infections that led to cattle plague, then boils on humans and beasts alike. The third trio (plagues 7-9) hit the early and later crops (hail, then locusts) and ended with a "thick darkness."

Careful studies (especially by Hort 1957, 1958; Hoffmeier, 146-49) of the reported phenomena suggest that they formed part of a clear sequence of interlocking episodes, originating with an especially high flood of the Nile. This brought down masses of *Roterde* (fine-grained "red earth") and *flagellates* from the upper Niles and Atbara (plague 1), which asphyxiated the fish (taking their oxygen). Decomposing fish infected the frogs, who came ashore (plague 2), infecting green vegetation. The numerous pools bred mosquitoes (plague 3). Particular types of flies (plague 4) spread disease. The cattle plague (plague 5) was an anthrax ingested from infected pasture (from plague 2), while the boils on people and beasts (plague 6) came from infectious bites from the types of fly in plague 4. Then, as winter passed into spring, massive hail (plague 7) ruined early crops (flax, barley; Ex 9:31), followed by locusts (plague 8) that stripped the rest. By March, we are in the *khamsin* season, of strong dust-laden winds, which were worsened (plague 9) by ground dust from earlier conditions. Going through a nine-month sequence from July/August (Nile flood) to March/April (crops and *khamsins*), the narrative and phenomena alike form a single, unitary sequence, as is illustrated by the literary format of three stylistically repeating series, before the culminating tenth plague is reached. This one has no clear link with the main series; it remains in the realm of the supernatural, as often observed. But the main series could not have been arbitrarily dreamt up by some writer in far-distant Babylon (or even tucked away in upland Jerusalem) having no close knowledge or experience of Egyptian conditions. Nor could so closely patterned a narrative have been jigsaw-fitted together from disparate source documents.

Coming to times and places, the tradition of 430 years from the exodus back to Jacob's arrival in Egypt agrees well with a late second-millennium exodus (*see* Exodus, Date of). A bottom date of around 1260/1250 B.C., for example, would bring Jacob to Egypt about 1700 B.C. and set the lives of his predecessors broadly in the nineteenth/eighteenth centuries B.C., which fits very well with other data on the patriarchs (for Jacob and Joseph, see 3 above). Regarding places (see 4.1 above for Rameses, Pithom and Succoth), the series of Bitter Lakes (with Balah and Timsah) gave Egypt a north-south water defense-line, along the line of the modern Suez Canal. That line was made continuous by linking the lakes by canals. The phrase "Red Sea" is a persistent mistranslation based on the Greek version. The Hebrew *yam sûp* stands for "Sea of Reeds," applicable to the whole line of the lakes and watercourses just mentioned and in which salt-tolerant reeds grow (halophytes; see further Hoffmeier, 209, with figs, 27-28). Hebrew *sûp* and Egyptian *ṯwf(y)* are clear cognates (Ward), ruling out other recent suggestions (e.g., "the end"; cf. more fully Hoffmeier, 199-222).

In theory, the crossing of the Sea of Reeds could have occurred within a broad north-to-south sweep between Qantara and Suez. But some limits can be set to this. The Hebrews were not allowed to take the shortest route to Canaan, lest they see war and then recoil back into Egypt (Ex 13:17). Not without reason. Under Seti I and Ramesses II in particular, the Mediterranean coast road to Canaan was guarded by a series of Egyptian fortresses and depots, partly shown in the Karnak temple war scenes of Seti I, partly listed in an almost-contemporary papyrus and in some cases actually found through ground survey and by excavation (cf. Oren). For the Israelites to have gone that way would have been suicidal, humanly speaking. Also, with its long sand ridge between lake and sea invoked by some as a possible scenario for the crossing of the waters, the Lake Bardawil simply did not exist in antiquity, thus ruling that theory out. As the Hebrews emerged from Wadi Tumilat toward the general district of Ismailia, their crossing may rather have occurred somewhere between Lake Timsah and (at the extreme) Suez, more likely in the northern half of this southern segment (for further review of differing views and additional background to the exodus, see Hoffmeier; Kitchen 2003, both with full references).

5. Egypt's Impact on Early Hebrew Community and Culture.

The Egyptian impact on the early Hebrews did

not suddenly disappear the moment the latter marched off over the desert plains east of the Reed Sea. Several features in the present-day Pentateuch exhibit a longer-lasting influence, which deserve brief review.

Most tangible is the portable tent-shrine, the *tabernacle, built at Sinai of local acacia wood. Affording an outer room and an inner sanctum, this socket-jointed and gilded frame supported canopies of colored, decorated cloth under protective skins. It stood in a rectangular court of cloth-draped wood frames. From long ago, it has been dismissed as a figment of the imagination of Jewish priests exiled in Babylon (c. 550 B.C. rather than 1250 B.C.). But the archaeology and texts of Egypt and her neighbors demonstrate otherwise. The gilded-wood, socket-joint technology is Egyptian, attested for religious use from the First Dynasty (c. 3000 B.C.) onward, most spectacularly in the secular bedroom-suite "tabernacle" of Queen Hetep-heres (c. 2600 B.C.), with its gold-plated, interlocking timber frames, besides tomb-scenes of such tabernacles in use for rituals of, for example, mummification. Tablets published from Mari (early second millennium) mention such tabernacles in religious use, with coverings upon frames (called *qeršu;* cf. Heb *qĕrāšîm,* for the tabernacle frames). Also in the Semitic world, the god El at Ugarit is described as living in a tabernacle (also of *qršm*) in the thirteenth century B.C. Back in Egypt, each New Kingdom pharaoh (during at least 1460-1140 B.C.) had a nest of gold-plated, solid-walled tabernacles over his coffin in the Valley of the Kings, as the intact set from Tutankhamun's tomb vividly exemplifies. In the thirteenth century, probably contemporary with Moses and his artisans Bezalel and Oholiab, Ramesses II had a war-tent of a type identical with the Hebrew tabernacle: two rooms, outer and innermost, and set within a rectangular precinct (in his case, of shields). In the first millennium, Assyrian royal tents were of a different design, within oval or round enclosures, not rectangular—quite different from the Hebrew tabernacle, which is of late second-millennium type. A real tabernacle of the twelfth century B.C. was set up at Timna (at the northeast edge of Sinai), of wooden poles set in stone walling, with woolen-cloth covering (parts of it being found), probably by the Midianites. So any idea of the tabernacle of Exodus being a fiction can be dismissed; it was an ancient Semitic concept, here executed with Egyptian technology. Likewise, furnishings such as the ark of the covenant on its removable poles through rings and the special long trumpets of Numbers 11 show an Egyptian stamp; again, items from Tutankhamun's tomb (c. 1330 B.C.) illustrate these (for details, see Kitchen 1993, 2000; Homan).

The Sinai *covenant itself, embedded in Exodus to Leviticus and renewed in Moab and occupying most of Deuteronomy, has a format and content that is datable and not the product of mere chance. The changing forms of treaties, law-collections and covenants can now be followed through almost two thousand years, from approximately 2500 B.C. to about 650 B.C., through six phases. The covenant contained in Exodus to Leviticus and Deuteronomy belongs in phase 5 (with thirty or so other documents), about 1400 to 1200 B.C.—and *neither earlier nor later.* Before and after that two-century span, the formats were wholly different. Thus the essentials of those parts of the Pentateuch must originate then (format) or in part earlier (laws that are already old). But how could Hebrew brick-slaves in the East Delta know about such matters? Not at all—unless someone of theirs had been at the court of Pi-Ramesses, where such things were not just known but were enacted, such as the treaty between Ramesses II and the Hittites in 1259 B.C. Had there been a Moses at that East Delta court in those days, there is no problem; if not, the problem is insoluble. Given that much in the patriarchal narratives (despite unfounded denials) goes back to the early second millennium (including details concerning Joseph as well as the framework of Gen 1—11, which is of a kind also peculiar to that time in its literary arrangement and subject matter), it becomes evident that a great deal in the Pentateuch came down to, or originated in, the late second millennium B.C., whenever it reached its final form in "classical" Hebrew of the tenth century B.C. onward. In these matters, the Egyptian contribution has its limits, but it is part of the positive evidence that can be quite clearly quantified (cf. Kitchen 2003).

Other more modest contributions come from Egypt. These include loanwords from Egyptian that appear in the narratives about Egypt in Genesis and Exodus, such as the words for "magician," "basket" (Ex 2:3), "river" (Nile), "reed/papyrus," "pitch," "(river's) edge," and so forth (cf. Hoffmeier, 88-89, 138-40, with notes). In lit-

erary matters, the New Kingdom warrior-pharaohs during at least 1450 to 1180 B.C. commissioned a series of triumph-hymns to celebrate their victories over other nations and peoples. The Hebrew counterparts to these appear in Exodus 15 and Judges 5, the former being especially appropriate as a Hebrew triumph-hymn over a pharaoh—turning the tables, so to speak. Discerning scholars have long since ascribed these two Hebrew triumph-hymns to the thirteenth/twelfth centuries B.C. in view of their linguistic and literary features (cf. Hoffmeier, 201-3, with references). This class of composition goes very far back in Egypt, to the third and early second millennia B.C., well before the New Kingdom, even (for examples, cf. Kitchen 1999).

See also ABRAHAM; EXODUS, DATE OF; EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; JOSEPH; MOSES; NATIONS, TABLE OF; NATIONS OF CANAAN; PHARAOH.

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K. A. Kitchen

EGYPTIANS. *See* EGYPT, EGYPTIANS.

EL ELYON. *See* GOD, NAMES OF; MELCHIZEDEK.

ELDERS. *See* LEADERSHIP, ELDERS.

ELEAZAR

Of the eleven people in the Bible who bear the name Eleazar (*ʾelʿāzār*), meaning "God has helped," one is significant to the Pentateuch. The third son of *Aaron and Elisheba (Ex 6:23; Num 3:2), Eleazar, together with his father and three brothers, Nadab, Abihu and Ithamar, was consecrated as priest (Ex 28:1).

1. Priest
2. Successor to Aaron

1. Priest.

The listings of Aaron's sons suggest two pairs—Nadab and Abihu; Eleazar and Ithamar (Num 3:2; 1 Chron 24:1-5)—the first characterized by failure and the second by blessing. The census of the tribe of *Levi in Numbers 3 names Eleazar as the chief of the tribe and superintendent of the Kohathites, who were to care for the sanctuary and its furnishings (Num 3:32). In addition to Eleazar's general oversight of the entire *tabernacle and its contents, Numbers lists his specific responsibilities as including the oil for the light in the sanctuary, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering and the anointing oil (Num 4:16). By this point in the pentateuchal text we have already encountered the bracing and cautionary account of Nadab and Abihu's fiery destruction as a result of their presenting

"alien fire" before the Lord (Lev 10:1-2; *see* Nadab and Abihu).

In addition to the Nadab and Abihu story, Eleazar's name is also associated with another frightening account of fiery judgment. Following the rebellion instigated by the Korah (of the Kohathite branch of the Levites), fire "came out from the LORD" and consumed the 250 followers of Korah (Num 16:1-35). The Lord then commanded Moses to tell Aaron to retrieve the holy censers from the smoldering remains of the rebels and scatter the coals some distance away (Num 16:37). Eleazar then was commanded to hammer the censers into sheets to overlay the altar; the censers were holy because they were presented to the Lord and became a sign to the Israelites that "no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the LORD" (Num 16:38-39).

2. Successor to Aaron.

The status of Eleazar is reinforced by the story of Aaron's death. At God's command, Aaron, Moses and Eleazar climbed Mount Hor. After Moses removes Aaron's garments and puts them on Eleazar at the Lord's command, Aaron dies. The two survivors descend Mount Hor, and the community of Israel mourns Aaron for thirty days (Num 20:28-29; Deut 10:6). Thus Eleazar succeeds his father Aaron as high priest (Num 20:26). Eleazar then assists Moses with the second census, which takes place on the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho (Num 26:63). It is Eleazar who, along with Moses and the other elders of Israel, hears the inheritance plea of the daughters of *Zelophehad (Num 27:2). After entering the land of Canaan, Eleazar and Joshua will give the daughters of Zelophehad an inheritance in the territory of Manasseh (Josh 17:4). When the Israelites fight against Midian, they bring the captives, spoils and plunder to Moses and Eleazar. Eleazar then commands that the gold, silver, bronze, tin, iron and lead and all that could withstand fire be put through the fire and then purified with water (Num 31:13-24).

With Moses' death, Joshua assumes command of the tribes, but apparently under Eleazar's supervision (Num 27:18-23). Eleazar assists Joshua in partitioning Canaan (Num 34:17; Josh 14:1; 19:51; 21:1), though the fact that his name precedes Joshua's may indicate that Eleazar has the more prominent role in the allotment of the land. The book of Joshua ends with a record of Eleazar's death and burial at Gibeh, the land allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim (Josh 24:33).

Eleazar's son Phinehas is the hero of a memorable story in Numbers 25. At the incident of "Baal of Peor," Phinehas demonstrates his zeal by slaying Zimri the Simeonite and Cozbi, a Midianite woman, presumably as they were locked in sexual embrace. Thus Phinehas "turned away" Yahweh's anger from Israel (Num 25:1-15) because Phinehas was "zealous for the honor of God and made atonement for the Israelites" (Num 25:13 NIV). As a consequence the Lord made a "covenant of peace" with him and his descendants, "a covenant of a lasting priesthood" (Num 25:12-13 NIV). The Chronicler traces the ancestry of the high priesthood from Aaron through Eleazar and then Phinehas on down through Zadok and finally Jehozadak, who was deported into exile in Babylon (1 Chron 6:3-15). Thus the high priestly line of Aaron through Eleazar and Phinehas was significantly maintained. For David's day, the Chronicler numbers sixteen leaders among Eleazar's descendants, and eight from among Ithamar's descendants (1 Chron 24:4). The descendants of Ithamar appear to have remained in favor until Solomon, who banished Abiathar for having sided with Adonijah in the succession struggle (1 Kings 2:26, 27). He then appointed Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, to fill the high priestly position (1 Kings 2:26-35). Significantly, Ezra was in the line of Zadok and Eleazar (Ezra 7:1), and the high priest's office remained in the family of Zadok until the time of the Maccabees.

It is common in contemporary criticism to find the view that the pentateuchal stories of priestly selection reflect later struggles for ascendancy within the priesthood and the ultimate triumph of the Aaronic priesthood. In other words, the pentateuchal stories of the ascendancy of Aaron's line are largely the priestly (P) contribution of the exilic or postexilic era, with Phinehas's "covenant of a lasting priesthood" being a polemical case in point. We should not easily dismiss the possibility of an exilic or postexilic shaping of the narrative in order to reinforce rhetorically the pedigree and validity of the Zadokite priesthood. Such a theme would surely have spoken to the setting, and the Chronicler and Ezra-Nehemiah demonstrate a heightened interest in establishing the creden-

tials of the priesthood. However, behind much of contemporary critical thought on this topic lies J. Wellhausen's hypothesis of the evolution of the priesthood. Briefly stated, Wellhausen maintained that in earliest Israel there was no hereditary priesthood (such is the view of Wellhausen's J source), and it was not until the time of the kings that a levitical priesthood emerged in Jerusalem. In the postexilic period the Aaronic priesthood gained ascendancy, and the Levites became their assistants. On this account of the matter, historically speaking, Zadok was not of the line of Aaron but came, as it were, from nowhere.

Wellhausen's theory is in its details quite complex and interlocks with his documentary hypothesis, which itself has undergone substantial revision over the years. There is no doubt (as Wellhausen pointed out) that the history of the priesthood in Israel is a complex one, particularly given the evidence from the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. And much work remains to be done in refining our understanding of the history of the priesthood (*see* Priests, Priesthood). But ultimately one is left to consider whether the pentateuchal account gives us credible historical traditions regarding the rise of the priesthood or whether those traditions were fabricated in whole or in part to support later priestly political interests. As for Eleazar, he is a transitional figure in the pentateuchal account of the priesthood, and it is worth pondering why (if Eleazar is fictitious) a later Aaronic priesthood would not have carried forward the life and priestly influence of Aaron to the very verge of Jordan—unless perhaps stubborn historical tradition stood in the way.

See also AARON; LEVI, LEVITES; NADAB AND ABIHU; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD.

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ELECTION

After the word **creation,* there is a sense that the term *election* captures the entirety of the Pentateuch in one concept. Surprisingly, the precise Hebrew root *bḥr* ("to choose, to elect") appears relatively infrequently in the Pentateuch, especially before the book of *Deuteronomy. Yet we need to be cautious about drawing too quick a conclusion about this fact. As Preuss argues, one cannot "proceed by noting the appearance or absence of the world 'election' and then choosing to draw or not draw certain conclusions" (Preuss, 1.27). Careful attention to the narrative context where *bḥr* appears explains why this is so. In the Pentateuch itself, election is the central concept used to recapitulate the story of God's *promise to the people of God, *Israel. The term also points forward to the story of God's establishment of Israel in the *land with a temple and a king.

1. Election in Genesis Through Numbers
2. Election in Deuteronomy
3. Conclusion

1. Election in Genesis Through Numbers. The most remarkable aspect of election in Genesis through Numbers is its relative absence and unimportance. As the narrative of the Pentateuch unfolds, related conceptuality and narrative themes appear—one must think how the divine promise given to Abram in Genesis 12:1-9 determines the whole theme of the Pentateuch (Clines). But the precise conceptuality and vocabulary remains presupposed, not expressed.

In the few cases that the term arises, however, it refers to the human choice of land (Gen 13:11; 23:6) or people (Ex 18:25) or describes "choice" objects, such as particular chariots and officers (Ex 14:7; 15:4). Only in the long story of the "rebellion" of Korah in Numbers 16:1—17:13 does the narrator attribute a "choice" to Yahweh before Deuteronomy. God "elects" *Aaron among the house of *Levi to be *holy, that is, set apart to approach God as *priests (Num 16:5, 7; 17:5 [MT 17:20]). Only as a result of a debacle in the desert does Yahweh specifically "choose" the sons of Aaron to serve as priests among Israel.

The use of *bḥr* in Genesis through Numbers shows an interesting fact. In its first telling, the narrative proceeds without divine election. Never does Yahweh explicitly elect *Abraham or the other ancestors. Election never directly enters the rationale of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from slavery in *Egypt. Israel never receives the *law at Sinai because they are God's "chosen." Divine election might be everywhere in

the story of Israel before arriving at the edge of the Promised Land, but it is nowhere as well.

2. Election in Deuteronomy.

The book of Deuteronomy has a particular narrative setting: it takes place as *Moses' final testimony to Israel before Israel crosses the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Even as it anticipates Israel's occupation of the land, it recapitulates the narrative previously given. It is a second telling of Genesis 12—Numbers, especially the regiving of the law at Sinai. Now, however, most of the book's speech is placed directly in the mouth of the character Moses rather than an anonymous narrator. In this retelling, election plays a significant role to summarize the previous narrative.

In Moses' speech, *bḥr* summarizes God's faithfulness to the promise to Abraham, *Isaac and *Jacob in giving offspring to inherit the land. It is not the "fathers" themselves who are spoken of as the "elect." God "loved" *('hb)* "your fathers." Election encompasses the generation hearing Moses' speech. God "chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples" (lit., "chose in their seed *[zr^{c}]* after them in you from all the nations"; Deut 10:15; cf. 4:37). Election rhetorically incorporates the audience of Moses' speech into the same story as Genesis 12, where God promises to Abraham that his "descendants" (seed, *zr^{c}*) will inherit the land (Gen 12:7). God's love of the ancestors is found in the election of the present generation.

Election similarly is used to tie the audience of Moses' speech to the *covenant given to Israel at Sinai, a covenant given to make Israel "my treasured possession *[sĕgullâ]* . . . a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex 19:5b-6). In Deuteronomy 7, when Moses reviews the story of Israel, he uses *bḥr* to refer to the covenant at Sinai. He interprets Yahweh's words there in terms of election and again ties his audience to a previous point in the story through his use of the second-person plural pronoun:

> The LORD your God has chosen *[bḥr]* you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession *[sĕgullâ]*. It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all people. It was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut 7:6-8; see also 14:2)

Moses' interpretation of the earlier narrative grounds Yahweh's election of Israel at the edge of the Promised Land in Yahweh's love for Israel, a love also seen in Yahweh's faithfulness to the promise given to the ancestors.

The concept of the "election of Israel" emerges first in the speech of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy. As Moses reviews the pentateuchal story, he uses election to tie the present generation at the edge of the land to the previous crucial events in the narrative: the election of the ancestors, the deliverance from Egypt, and the giving of the law at Sinai. The concept does not function to describe directly the previously narrated events in a positivistic manner. The term functions more subtly and powerfully; it provides an interpretive summary of the previous narrative that the character Moses uses to incorporate "you," both Israel at the edge of the Promised Land and the contemporary reader, into the story summarized in Moses' speeches and thus the story told in the first place from Genesis 12 onward. Moses' narrative recapitulation uses *bḥr* to highlight the significant events of the story and thereby to reinterpret it all as a story of Yahweh's election of Israel.

In the book of Deuteronomy, however, Moses does not only speak his own words to Israel—he also speaks the words of Yahweh in the commandments given to him: "These are the statutes and ordinances that you must diligently observe in the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you to occupy" (Deut 12:1). Moses' voice here merges with Yahweh's throughout Deuteronomy 12—26.

As in the speeches of Moses, *bḥr* refers to a previous section of the Pentateuch in Moses' repetition of Yahweh's command. In this situation, however, the term justifies the commandment to financially support the *priests from the *sacrificial system: "[The priests] may eat the sacrifices that are the LORD's portion . . . for the LORD your God has chosen *[bḥr]* Levi out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for all time" (Deut 18:1b, 5). The verse summarizes the narrative of Numbers 16:1—17:13. The term *bḥr* ties the narrative and the legislation together to provide a rationale for the legislation. Yahweh's election

of the priests eventually places upon the Israelites the necessity of providing for their material well-being.

Yahweh's election does not merely extend to groups of people and the past. Within Moses' rendition of Yahweh's commandments, *bḥr* also anticipates a place in the future for the center of the worship and sacrifice to Yahweh. Even as the concept of election summarizes and interprets previous narrative events, it also foreshadows a narrative event in 1 Kings—the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. Various formulas express the same concept: "the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name" (Deut 12:11; see also Deut 12:5, 14, 18, 21; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15; 17:8, 10; 26:2; 31:11). The temple is not an arbitrary location. When it is built at an unspecified future time and place, it will represent the specific location for the fulfillment of the commands for the sole place for the sacrificial system in the worship of Yahweh. Its divine election will make it, when it appears, the only legitimate temple to Yahweh. The elect people will gather at the elect temple under the guidance of the elect priests.

One final significant occurrence of the term arises in the commandments of Deuteronomy 12—26: the election of a king as indicated within "the law of the king" (Deut 17:15). Again, the term *bḥr* points forward to a future narrative: "When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, . . . you may indeed set over you a king whom the LORD your God will choose *[bḥr]*" (Deut. 17:14a, 15a). The text anticipates a future event of a final divine election: a king to reign over Israel in the land. While the king is not involved in as many laws as the future temple, the king is no less elected than the temple. The verse anticipates again an unspecified event of the divine election of a king over Israel after the Israelites enter the land. Election in the Pentateuch looks beyond the chronology of the Pentateuch to anticipate future events in the story of Israel. The king rounds out the list of the elect: an elect nation arising from the key events of the calling of the ancestors, the deliverance from Egypt and the giving of the covenant at Sinai that will live in the Promised Land around an elect temple with elect priests, all under the jurisdiction of an elect king. Divine election, therefore, summarizes significant events and institutions within the story of Israel, from its inception to its full establishment in the Promised Land, especially as reviewed in the words of Moses.

Therefore, it is Deuteronomy that emphasizes Yahweh's election of Israel through the Pentateuch narrative. Yet such an election does not nullify the necessity of Israel's election of Yahweh. Yahweh's election of Israel is what permits Israel's election of Yahweh through keeping the covenant. In the confirmation of the covenant given in Deuteronomy, Moses concludes: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose *[bḥr]* life . . . for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors" (Deut 30:19-20). Election runs both ways between God and God's people, though God's election of Israel has a narrative, theological and logical priority over Israel's election of Yahweh.

3. Conclusion.

Election arises as a significant concept in Moses' speech to Israel that recapitulates and marks the events in the divine calling of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy. It also arises in Moses' repetition of divine speech in the future establishment of a temple and king in Israel. In this retrospective and prospective function of the concept, the word gathers significance. The concept calls for a particular people, Israel, to live faithfully in covenant with Yahweh as God's treasured possession and thus as a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. It is a communal, not individualistic, concept about the life of the people of God in the world. In Israel's distinct identity and communal formation in the world, living by the covenant around the elect temple under the elect king, election provides a narrative summary of the main storyline of the Torah that points to the vocation of Israel. Through their contemporary election, God calls Israel in fulfillment of God's promise to Abram: they become the people through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3). Election thereby serves as an interpretative concept of the plot of the Pentateuch and beyond.

See also DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF; GRACE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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ELOHIM. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

ELOHIST. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

ENDOGAMY. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

EPHOD. *See* PRIESTLY CLOTHING.

EPHRAIM. *See* JOSEPH.

ESAU, EDOMITES

Esau first appears in Genesis as the name of the older twin brother of *Jacob (Israel), son of *Isaac and Rebekah. He is associated with the lifestyle of the hunter, in juxtaposition to his brother's preference for the more settled life of the herding tent-dweller. He is also attributed with being the ancestor of the Edomites, who are therefore considered to be "brothers" of the Israelites (Deut 23:7). No etymology is offered for the name Esau itself, but Edom ("red" in Hebrew, possibly relating to the red sandstone characteristic of Edomite territory) is associated with Esau in his birth story (Gen 25:21-26), where he came out "red" (*'admônî*) and "hairy" (*śē'ār* = Seir, the territory of the Edomites), as well as in the later account of when he sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of "red [stew]" (Gen 25:30). The Edomites later came to be known as Idumeans (Greek *Idoumaia*).

1. Esau
2. Edomites

1. Esau.

1.1. Esau and Jacob: A Dramatic Story of Sibling Rivalry. The sibling rivalry encountered between Jacob and Esau, closely paralleled by that of *Cain and *Abel as well as *Joseph and his brothers, makes for some of the most dramatic reading in the Bible. The birth story in Genesis 25:21-26 is quite remarkable, complete with miraculous conception, prophetic announcement, reversal of birth order and etymological explanation of names. It also forms a striking parallel to the birth story of the twins Perez and Zerah in Genesis 38:27-30, including reversal of birth order, conspicuous presence of the color red/scarlet and significant verbal parallels (e.g., between Gen 25:24 and 38:27, as noted by Sarna [270]). The text of Jacob's impersonation of Esau (Gen 27:18-27) builds to a climax of suspense (Gen 27:21-22) that is anticipated in the previous scene of Jacob's plotting with Rebekah (Gen 27:5-17), and followed by Esau's anguished but futile pleading (Gen 27:30-38). The result was a threat of death by Esau, provoked by Jacob's deceit to the point of murderous intent, from which Jacob was forced to flee in fear for his life (Gen 27:41-45). The immediate consequence of the deceit was a forced exile for Jacob from the Promised *Land; the longer-term consequence was the establishment of a pattern of deceit in Jacob's life that was repaid sevenfold. The reunion of the twins in Genesis 32—33 is then equally dramatic and suspenseful. The text intentionally builds up the tension with expectations of well-deserved retribution from the wronged and potentially murderous "unchosen" twin, clearly anticipating renewed conflict (Gen 32:6-11). The surprise ending of reconciliation (Gen 33:4) is anticipated by Jacob's "wrestling" in Genesis 32:24-32, when Jacob's name is changed by God to signal a transition from a relationship of deceit to one that God had restored (*see* Israelites). The reconciliation is sealed by Esau's unexpected generosity of forgiveness (Gen 33:4, 9), which, like Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers (Gen 50:15-21), is treated with some suspicion by Jacob (Gen 33:10-17). In contrast to Esau's earlier plan of killing Jacob upon Isaac's death (Gen 27:41), Jacob and Esau then bury Isaac together as reconciled brothers (Gen 35:29), just as Isaac and *Ishmael had together buried their father *Abraham (Gen 25:9). The amicable separation of Jacob and Esau due to the overabundance of God's blessings upon both (Gen 36:6-8), remarkably reminiscent of the earlier separation of Abraham and *Lot (Gen 13:5-12), leaves them firmly as brothers with no hint of the earlier sibling rivalry and struggle to explain the later animosity. The artistic literary structure of the whole, arranged chiastically and bracketed by

the *genealogies of the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, is well documented by M. Fishbane (1975), C. Westermann and S. Walters. B. Dicou also provides a useful study of Edom as "Israel's brother and antagonist."

From a wider perspective, the power struggle between Jacob and Esau, arising out of jealousy, had potentially disastrous consequences (as witnessed by the Cain and Abel conflict in Gen 4), but ultimately points to God's plan of salvation. The total pattern is consistent with other such stories: jealousy sparked by parental favoritism, provoking *sin that threatens God's harmony, punished by *exile but followed by reconciliation. This pattern of sibling rivalry develops a major theme in Genesis, asking: *Who will inherit the covenantal *promise to Abraham?* On a more fundamental level lies a deeper question that then continues through Exodus and Numbers: Is God *able* to fulfill the promise to Abraham in the face of barrenness and rivalry and sin that continue to threaten the chosen people? The tension is set up deliberately, with barrier after barrier presented and overcome by God. In the *wilderness complaining stories, this question takes on more profound implications as God continues to prove his *ability* (miraculously defeating armies, providing food and water in the desert), while his *willingness* is brought into question by the people's incessant complaining, stubborn disobedience, sinfulness and even blatant idolatry. That he does, in fact, fulfill the promise despite all of this is good news indeed for the perpetually imperfect people of God. The familiar pattern of jealousy and sin with which any family will readily identify is thus used to illustrate an important theological lesson about God's continued love and care for the sinner—even for the "unchosen" like Esau, as well as showing the ultimate fulfillment of God's plans in the triumph of reconciliation.

1.2. The Birth Prophecy. Rebekah's role of inciting her favorite son to deceit against her husband is often condemned as typical of female treachery. However, one finds a common theme in biblical stories of *women exhibiting heroic female "trickiness" that is undoubtedly admired by the biblical author (and even explicitly vindicated on occasion, as with Judah's daughter-in-law *Tamar in Gen 38:26). In this case it would seem that Rebekah took it upon herself to act on God's behalf to fulfill God's prophecy regarding her sons, while her husband was obliviously planning to circumvent God's intentions. It is highly interesting in this regard that it was to Rebekah, rather than to Isaac himself, that God had revealed his plans for succession of the promise, as it had been Rebekah who had taken the initiative to inquire of God in the first place (Gen 25:22). Perhaps Isaac, after his experience on Mount Moriah (Gen 22), overly feared Yahweh (who is even named "the Fear of Isaac" in Gen 31:42, 53) and was thus slow to seek his plans. This might explain the necessity for Abraham to send a servant to *Haran to acquire a wife for Isaac from his own family, so the wife could support his faith after his mother Sarah had died (thus "Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" in Gen 24:67). Isaac's plan to bless Esau may well have gone directly contrary to God's plans, not to mention the legalities of Esau having already sold his birthright to Jacob with a sworn oath (Gen 25:33). Or perhaps Isaac either remained unaware of this transaction or considered it invalid, since he still sought to bless Esau as firstborn. In either case, Rebekah's intervention may have been necessary to uphold the integrity of the *covenant.

Within the prophecy itself (Gen 25:23), written in exquisite poetic form, an interesting wordplay unfolds.

Yahweh said to her:
Two nations are in your womb,
And two peoples from within you will be separated.
And one people more than the other people will be stronger,
And the older *[rab]* will serve *[yaʿăbod]* the younger *[ṣāʿîr]*.

The birth oracle seems to lend justification to Rebekah's actions and the final outcome that results, yet the specific wording strikes an odd chord. Specifically, the "younger" is called *ṣāʿîr*, provocatively mimicking the word for "hairy" *(śēʿār)*, which is associated with Esau two lines later in the birth narrative (Gen 25:25). The birth etymology is then illuminated by the later association of Edom with the territory of Seir (Gen 32:3; 36:8-9). The word for "will serve" *(yaʿăbod)*, meanwhile, sounds a bit like "Jacob" *(yaʿăqob)*, who "grasps the heel" of his brother. Thus the roles seem to be reversed, even within the wording of the prophecy itself, as it predicts the reversal of the inheritance. This theme of reversal then continues with the blessing intended for the elder bestowed instead upon the

younger, while its fulfillment (at least in the immediate sense) seems itself to be reversed again (see below).

It is directly following the Jacob-Esau birth narrative that we find the story of Jacob buying Esau's birthright for a pot of red stew (*'ādōm*), accompanied by an explanatory note about Esau also being called Edom. In light of this, combined with the birth oracle, Isaac's intention of blessing Esau seems strange, and Rebekah's deception necessary, though not entirely satisfactory as a solution.

1.3. Esau Rejected as the Unchosen Despiser of His Birthright. God's rejection of Esau, passing over the firstborn for the younger brother Jacob, is dealt with in various ways. The view of Esau found in Malachi 1:2-3, followed in the NT by Romans 9:10-16 ("Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"), seeks to illustrate God's sovereign choice of Jacob over Esau as inscrutable (determined before their birth and thus before either had done anything either good or bad). Other texts (such as Heb 12:16-17) seek to condemn Esau as a way of justifying God's rejection. His choice of wives is certainly noted as a "source of grief to his parents" (Gen 26:35; 27:46; 28:8), with rabbinic interpretation attributing this to their pagan religious influences. A majority of later biblical references emphasize Genesis 25:34 in presenting Esau as a "godless" man who sold his inheritance as eldest son for a single meal, thus showing how he despised his birthright. In this instance even the pleading of tears could not alter the rejection.

H. C. Brichto's theory regarding the active observance of an ancestor cult in ancient Israel, with the firstborn bearing the responsibility of acting as priest of that cult and providing ritual meals for the ancestors (in addition to receiving a double portion of the inheritance), may shed further light on the extent of Esau's wickedness in "despising his birthright." If the "red [stew]" were in fact being prepared as a ritual blood-offering (*dām*) for the ancestors, then Esau's insistence on eating it would rightly cost him the birthright of family priesthood. Pentateuchal laws prohibiting the eating of *blood may be related to this, as may the "gorging and guzzling" law of Deuteronomy 21:18-21, which assigns the death penalty for "gluttony" as demonstrating filial disrespect. Considerable archaeological evidence for such a cult does exist, and prophetic denouncement would seem to confirm its continuance into monarchic times. Thus, while in purely economic terms one would think that Esau would realize the value of the birthright and not despise it, if the birthright in question involved family priesthood for an ancestor cult, it becomes much more understandable that Esau the hunter might despise such religious duties.

1.4. Isaac's Prophetic Blessings and Their Fulfillment. The theme of reversal introduced in the birth narrative is continued with the blessing intended for the elder being bestowed instead on the younger. Isaac's prophetic blessing of Esau in Genesis 27:39-40 is surprising in a number of ways. First, in view of God's blessings on both Isaac and Ishmael, as well as Jacob's blessings of all of his sons together in Genesis 49, the implication of the exchange between Isaac and Esau in Genesis 27:33-38, that Isaac had only one blessing to give, seems odd. Esau had pleaded for his father to bless both of them (Gen 27:34, 36, 38), which Isaac implied was impossible (Gen 27:37). But this is, in fact, exactly what God then proceeded to do: he blessed them both, just as he had also blessed both Isaac and Ishmael, though the covenant itself was not extended.

The blessing to Jacob (intended for Esau) in Genesis 27:27-29 was one of material prosperity and abundance of food, plus hegemony over his brothers and other nations (that they would "serve" *['bd]* him and "bow down" to him, and he would be "lord" over them), in addition to a repetition of the blessing given to Abraham that those who blessed him would be blessed and those who cursed him would be cursed. Esau's blessing mirrors Jacob's in significant ways but then seems to go on to contradict it.

Esau's position relative to the abundance of the earth as asserted in Genesis 27:39 is debated. The Hebrew preposition *min* could be interpreted positively in the partitive sense as providing "a portion from," in which case the first part of Esau's blessing is a duplication of Jacob's. Alternatively, the preposition could be interpreted negatively in a separative sense as "far from" or "away from," in which case Esau's blessing represents the opposite of Jacob's. While rabbinic interpretation has long favored the first of these options, the second is the one most commonly chosen by modern commentators. The implication is that since agricultural abundance has already been given to Jacob, Esau's provision must come from the spoils of the sword instead

(Sarna). It is the reverse of Jacob's blessing, not a repetition of it. This also better fits the contrast of lifestyle noted between them earlier, that Esau was a hunter whereas Jacob was a farmer/herder, suggestive of a parallel with the lifestyle contrast between Cain as a farmer and Abel as a herder. However, as we see Esau's prosperity lived out in Genesis 33:9 and 36:6-7, it becomes evident that Esau was, in fact, blessed by God with abundance.

The more important part of Esau's blessing in Genesis 27:40 predicts a life of hostility similar to that predicted in Genesis 16:12 for Esau's uncle and father-in-law Ishmael (the unchosen older brother of Isaac). The following line then confirms Jacob's hegemony over Esau: Esau was destined to "serve" (*ʿbd*) his brother Jacob. The next lines, however, seem to effect a revocation of that dominion after all with the addition of a promise that Esau would eventually throw Jacob's yoke off his neck.

As the story continues, then, it would seem that the reverse is what actually happens, since Esau remains prosperous in the Promised Land while Jacob must flee to Haran under threat of death from a murderous Esau (Gen 27:41-42). Jacob then suffers servitude (*ʿbd*) in a sort of voluntary "exile" from the Promised Land—a foreshadowing, perhaps, of the Israelite slavery in Egypt. Such exile is found frequently in the biblical text as a traditional punishment for sin (compare Adam and Eve, Cain, various levitical laws that use exclusion from the community as the ultimate punishment and the covenant curses in Lev 26:33, 38-44; Deut 28:64-65). Then, when they are finally reunited in Genesis 33:1-15, it is Jacob who "bows down" seven times to Esau upon his return, in dire fear of reprisal for his past sins. He is followed by all of his wives and children, who likewise bow down to Esau. In addition, we find that Jacob repeatedly calls Esau his "lord" and himself Esau's "servant" (*ʿbd*). All of this constitutes a highly ironic reversal of Isaac's blessing, right down to the specific vocabulary used.

The blessing was clearly fulfilled in the Iron Age relations of Israel and Edom, however. Similar to Isaac's prediction of enmity between Esau and his brother in Genesis 27, Balaam's oracle in Numbers 24:18 counts Edom as an enemy that would be conquered. In Exodus 15:14-16 (the "Song of the Sea"), Edom is listed along with the nations of Philistia, Moab and Canaan toward whom the exodus miracles were directed in order to create fear and thus ease the establishment of the Israelites in the Promised Land. Edomites are listed among the enemies of Israel in the time of Saul (1 Sam 14:47), and Edom was subjugated to Israel from the time of David (2 Sam 8:11-14; 1 Kings 11:14-22; 22:47; 2 Kings 3:8-10, 26). They then rebelled successfully in the time of Jehoram and won their independence for a while (as seen in 2 Kings 8:20-22; 16:6; 2 Chron 20:1-26; 21:8-10; 28:16-18). This subjugation and subsequent successful rebellion during the Iron Age fulfilled Isaac's prophetic blessing of Genesis 27:40. Fighting continued, however, with Israel again gaining the upper hand for a time and regaining control of trade routes through Edomite territory (2 Kings 14:7, 22; 2 Chron 25:14-20; 26:2). This Iron Age historical context of conflict, subjugation and rebellion has long been presumed to be the best context for understanding the pentateuchal account of this eponymous ancestor of Edom.

1.5. Sympathetic Treatment of Esau in Character and Full Genealogy. From a literary standpoint, it is most interesting to note that while Edom would be counted as a foreign enemy in the often presumed Iron Age context of the author(s) of these texts, the text itself is much more sympathetic to the position of Esau than one would expect. In the major part of the text in Genesis, and also in Deuteronomy, Esau (and Edom) is presented in a surprisingly positive and sympathetic light as one favored by Isaac and wronged by his brother, toward whom he later acted in Godlike generosity of forgiveness. He is also presented, with full genealogy, as one to whom God did grant a secure inheritance.

Jacob is granted the primary inheritance, but only by deceit, suffering slavery in exile (albeit voluntary) as the expected punishment for such a sin, as well as the reprisal of suffering repeated deceit himself as a pattern through the rest of his life. Esau is treated generally as the more honorable, the favorite of his father Isaac (Gen 25:28) who was wronged by his brother (Gen 27:35-36) but prospered in the land of promise during his brother's exile (Gen 33:9). In Genesis 36:7 it becomes apparent that God had chosen to bless them both after all, while Deuteronomy 2:5, 22 makes it clear that God had granted an inheritance to Esau that would not be taken away.

Esau also is shown to exhibit the graciousness

of God by forgiving his brother upon his return (Gen 33:4, 9-10), just as Joseph graciously forgave his deceitful brothers in Egypt (Gen 45:1-15) and again at the climax of the narrative (Gen 50:15-21). Within this climactic reconciliation scene, then, it would seem that Isaac's prophetic blessing of Jacob in Genesis 27:29 is ironically reversed as Jacob and all his family bow down to Esau and call him "lord" (Gen 33:3-8).

The presence of full genealogical records for Esau's descendants (Gen 36; 1 Chron 1:35-54; parallel to those of Jacob, as Ishmael's stand parallel to those of Isaac), given with the same care and importance as those for Israel's own descendants, indicates more than academic interest in nearby foreigners. In addition, Yahweh is said to dwell in Seir/Edom (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4; cf Teman [in Edom] in Hab 3:3) as a seat of his power, while Jeremiah 49:7 associates Teman with wisdom. All of this is hardly the expected perspective for an "enemy."

The reader is drawn to see Esau as a tragic figure, the firstborn and rightful heir, and Jacob almost as a villain who deceitfully usurped his place and hence was punished. We see Esau, like Ishmael (and also, in some respects like Lot), as the unchosen descendant of Abraham who nevertheless still received a special blessing and inheritance from God (cf. Gen 17:18-21; 21:13, 18, 20). This sympathetic treatment of Esau seems inexplicable in the later Iron Age setting of the independent Edom apparently anticipated in Isaac's prophecy.

1.6. Esau's Wives. Esau married two Hittite women (Gen 26:34; 27:46; included among "Canaanites" in Gen 28:1, 6, 8): Judith daughter of Beeri and Basemath daughter of Elon (Gen 26:34). These foreign wives are noted to be a "source of grief" to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:35; 27:46; 28:8), who therefore urged Jacob to avoid this mistake by marrying among their own family in Haran (though this may also have been an excuse to put him out of harm's way). So Esau then also married Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael (Isaac's brother) and sister of Nebaioth (Gen 28:9). The genealogy in Genesis 36:2-3 lists two Canaanite women—one Hittite and one Hivite—as his wives: Adah daughter of Elon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah daughter of Zibeon, along with Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. Esau then settled in the hill country of Seir, establishing the nation of Edom (Gen 36:8). His wives are thus

Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite (Gen 26:34)
Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite (Gen 26:34)
Mahalath daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebaioth (Gen 28:9)

Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite (Gen 36:2)
Oholibamah daughter of Anah daughter of Zibeon the Hivite (Gen 36:2)
Basemath daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebaioth (Gen 36:3)

It is possible here that among these two lists of three wives the same three women are meant, with just a little bit of confusion in the lists, possibly arising from the use of alternative names (as with Jacob/Israel, Esau/Edom, etc.). Or it is possible that he had more than three wives. Despite the claims of close kinship ties, the ethnic diversity of Esau's wives suggests an Edomite population that was a composite of diverse ethnic elements, including at least Horite, Hittite, Hivite and Ishmaelite/Egyptian.

2. Edom.

2.1. Geography and Archaeology of Edom. Geographically the Edomites settled to the south of the Dead Sea, bordering on the southern Judean desert in the hill country of Seir (Gen 36:8-9), a mountainous region along the Wadi Arabah characterized by red-colored sandstone. Edom also bordered Moab to its north, in modern Jordan. It included Teman, Zoar and Bozrah (Buseirah), extending from the Dead Sea down to the Gulf of Aqabah (at Elath and Ezion-geber), where it controlled important Arabian trade networks. Through it ran an important north-south trade route later known as the "King's Highway" (Num 20:17).

N. Glueck's excavations in Transjordan, especially at Tell el-Kheleifeh, reveal much about Edomite culture. J. R. Bartlett documents a number of early Egyptian references to both Edom and Seir, dating back to the fifteenth to twelfth centuries and associated with people called "*Shasu*" (a term used to designate bedouin like wanderers, similar to early usage of "Hebrew," "*Habiru*" and "*gēr*"; *see* Alien, Foreign Resident). Copper mining and smelting was an important industry in the area from early Chalcolithic

times. Bronze Age population was light, increasing somewhat in the Iron Age but always considerably smaller and poorer than their Israelite neighbors. Archaeological finds from Horvat Qitmit, an Edomite sanctuary in Judah, show them to be engaged in active trading relations with Judah and also to be worshipers of the god Qaus in typical Canaanite fashion.

2.2. Prophetic View of Edom as Descendants of Esau. Isaac's prophetic "blessing" of Esau in Genesis 27:39-40, characterizing Esau's descendants as living perpetually in hostility against his brother but eventually breaking free, anticipates the Iron Age nation that came into regular conflict with the nation of Israel at various points, as reflected in the Deuteronomistic History and the Chronicler's History, as well as in the prophecies of Amos and Obadiah (among others). From Genesis we gain insight into the Israelite view of Edom as a nation with significant kinship ties to Israel, whom God himself had exempted from conquest (Deut 2:5) and who were to be accepted into the congregation of Israel in the third generation (Deut 23:7-8). Yet the pattern of hostility between Edom and Israel is also exemplified by the sibling rivalry of their ancestors Esau and Jacob and by Edom's refusal to allow Israel passage on their way to the Promised Land following the exodus.

2.3. Passing Through Edom. The chief account of Israel's passage through (or around) Edom is found in Numbers 20:14-21, where the Israelites pleaded to pass through Edom's territory, promising not to turn aside from the road and even offering to pay for any water their livestock might drink. Edom, however, stubbornly refused them and even came out against them in force. Deuteronomy 2:1-23 supplies further details of the Edomite settlement and God's commands to Moses concerning them, specifying that Horites (possibly Hurrians) had previously inhabited the hill country of Seir (Deut 2:12), but that God had driven the Horites out and given the land to the descendants of Esau as their inheritance (Deut 2:22). Therefore the Israelites were not to provoke them to war because Yahweh would not give them any of this territory (Deut 2:5). Rather, they were to pay in silver for food and water as they passed through this territory (Deut 2:6). This supports the account in Numbers, where this very offer is made but apparently refused by the Edomites. Deuteronomy 2:4, 8, 29, however, imply that Edom did let them pass peacefully, justifying the distinction drawn in Deuteronomy 23:7-8 where Edomites are eligible to enter the assembly of Yahweh in the third generation. Judges 11:14-18 clarifies the matter by asserting that following Edom's refusal, the Israelites turned aside and went peacefully around the Edomite territory instead of passing through it.

See also GENESIS, BOOK OF; ISAAC; JACOB; NATIONS OF CANAAN.

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ETHICAL INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

ETHICS

The Pentateuch primarily focuses on God's creating and saving actions. Its narrative concerns God's *creation, *promises and the formation of Israel at Sinai for the sake of all nations. Classical ethics focuses on ideal human character, the ideal results of human actions and the highest

good. The biblical story of God and humanity is the setting of the study of ethics in the Pentateuch. This narrative uniquely influences contemporary ethical discourse. It contains divine speech and created relationships, a specific view of humanity and laws within a historical narrative context.

Little was written on OT ethics between World War II and 1982, but subsequently a flood of books and articles has engaged the subject in the following classical categories that also provide the outline for this article.

1. An Underlying Principle for Pentateuchal Ethics
2. Character Formation: Developing a Sense of Duty
3. Moral Obligation and Authority
4. Moral Obligation and Laws
5. Conclusion

1. An Underlying Principle for Pentateuchal Ethics.

The ideal goal of human character and actions in classical ethics is called the *summum bonum* ("highest good"). The search for this ideal has led in three directions: happiness, perfectionism (or self-realization) and relationship to someone (God) or something (e.g., the universe). Relationship to God is the focused area of inquiry in the Pentateuch. In OT ethics the highest good has most commonly been called the "underlying principle" (Janzen), "underlying rationale" (Barton) and "central tenet." *Underlying principle* and *highest good* have slightly different referents but are sometimes used synonymously. *Highest good* is a general concept, while *underlying principle* refers specifically to the rationale found in the study of OT texts.

The search for an underlying principle in OT ethics has led to an analysis of God's attributes (justice/righteousness, holiness and love) for the most fundamental quality of ethical action. Imitation of the attribute is thought to result in the highest ethical human action. The dilemma of choosing one over the others has resulted in the proposal that *God* (rather than an attribute of God) is the underlying principle. As a result, the focus has moved to "middle values" that actually can be imitated, such as family (Janzen, 40), the social shape of Israel (Wright, 229) or hope in God (Ellul).

1.1. Justice and Righteousness. Some consider the word pair justice/righteousness to be the unifying underlying principle of OT ethics. Their meaning in the OT, however, is easily misconstrued in English. The Hebrew words *mišpāṭ* ("legal judgment, justice") and *ṣĕdāqâ* ("righteousness") are often used interchangeably and in parallelism (e.g., Gen 18:19, 25). In relation to human action *mišpāṭ* is commonly understood to mean a mode of action that refers to a specific legal judgment rather than an abstract concept. *Ṣĕdāqâ* is not abstract but most often refers to a quality or condition of a person in a specific relation to another person.

Lexicographical information cannot communicate the narrative context of the relationships that give the English words *justice* and *righteousness* their content. The biblical occurrences of all forms of the root *ṣdq* ("righteous") refer less to an individual's ethical norm than to the relationships between people in a community of God. Scholars have described *ṣdq* as the quality of a person, an attribute of power given as a gift by God, an attribute of God's love that brings and maintains social health in communities, and their individuals, God's and humanity's covenant faithfulness within communities, and faithful action within the whole created order (see Mogensen).

The English definition of *mišpāṭ* leans in two directions: (1) "distributive" *(distributiva)* justice, which is neutral, disinterested, punitive and based on merit; and (2) "well-being" *(salutifera)* justice that seeks to restore equity and health, is benevolent, and does not judge strictly on merit but on what may increase the quality of life in relationship (Mogensen, 71). The shift to understanding God's *ṣĕdāqâ* as a "justice of well-being" occurred when God's love *(ʾahăbâ/ḥesed)* was shown to be its biblical context. God's love and righteousness are not antithetical. In the biblical context, righteousness is subsumed under love. God is interested in the *covenant relationship and *ṣĕdāqâ* as a kind of covenant maintenance.

The concept of *ṣdq,* which usually signifies human actions that are acceptable to God, is more abstract within the biblical context of cosmological justice. The drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, the destruction of Sodom by a sulfurous fire fall, plagues that break out during Israel's disobedient wilderness wanderings and warnings not to practice abominations lest the land vomit out its inhabitants (Lev 18:25-28) all imply a common ancient Near Eastern

belief in a cosmic order or cosmic justice (Schmid; Koch). In this concept the covenant community is extended to include the nonhuman creation. Yet this notion is not wholly abstract, for in the biblical context God creates and directs this order.

The relational concepts of righteousness and justice have been a significant proposal for the underlying principle of OT ethics. In ancient Israel, deliberation on legal cases by family groups "at the gate" (Gerstenberger) or by the sages (Perdue) was governed by this underlying unwritten law and sense of justice. The written law of the Bible and the narrative in which it is presented reveal this "unwritten communal sense of justice" (Patrick, 198). This sense, however, is subsidiary to the larger overarching narrative in which the "ethic" is set, and to the God whose love provides the context for ordinances, justice, judgments and righteousness. It serves best as a "middle value" (see 1.4 below) for ethics in the Pentateuch.

1.2. Holiness. A second major proposal for the underlying principle of OT ethics is the holiness of God and the corresponding declaration, "You will be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; Num 15:40; Kaiser 1983, 1994; *see* Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean). The concept of *qōdeš* ("holiness") in the Pentateuch is part of a comprehensive priestly worldview of separation ("dedication" or "consecration" are both translations of *qōdeš*) and purity ("clean" and "unclean". Just as created realms were separated at the beginning (Gen 1), so the world may be ordered by distinctions and separations between places, times, animals and persons. On the hierarchical holiness continuum, cleanness prepares a person for holiness. In its narrative and canonical context, holiness is (1) conferred upon people, not an inherent quality; (2) a public and corporate action of setting aside; and (3) for mission.

1.2.1. Holiness Is Conferred. The OT phrase "be holy" is easily misconstrued as the ontological quality "be perfect." This erroneously shifts the ethical context from a holiness that derives from and is a part of a specific relationship with God to a reflexive holiness that derives from the individual, as in Korah's rebellious attempt to redefine the context and ownership of holiness (Num 16). The positive theological context of conferred holiness is established in Leviticus 19—22, particularly in the phrases "I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Ex 31:13; Lev 20:8; 21:8; 22:32) and "I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (Lev 21:15, 23; 22:9, 16). God's instruction to "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: 'You will be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy' " (Lev 19:2 NRSV) demonstrates that holiness functions to point to a higher good, namely, to a right relationship with God. This relationship entails holiness as one of the forms of moral obligation (Gammie), but it is subsidiary to the holiness of God. "You will be holy" is not an imperative command ("Become holy!") or reflexive ("Make yourselves holy") but a statement of the necessary relationship to God.

1.2.2. Levitical Holiness Is Public and External. Cleanness and uncleanness are the arena of human decision and action. A legally achieved and publicly recognized cleanness was prerequisite to approaching holiness. The whole of Leviticus is dedicated to the restoration of purity (cleanness) from the state of uncleanness (Kaiser 1994, 997-1000). Cleanness denotes an ordered relationship with God, creating a capacity for the levitical holiness that generates from God's holy character. Holiness is often a *temporary* public designation that confers a state of holiness in a special public act by means of God's action. In Israel, although holiness had a behavioral dimension, it was not strictly ethical. Rather, holiness was fundamentally missional and cultic (sacramental), as in Nazirite vows, which set apart people for temporary public tasks (Num 6:1-21). Animal or land tithes (holy because they were God's due) could be made common (redeemed) simply by purchasing them back from God for their value plus one-fifth (Lev 27:9-33). This sacramental sense of holiness was not conveyed ethically or morally. Rather, these temporarily dedicated people and things pointed toward the primarily *missional* (set apart to do God's work) theme of levitical holiness.

1.2.3. Holiness Is Missional. The term *holiness* has no content apart from its missional context in the Pentateuch, as Israel was set apart for God's mission in the world. Their mission as God's people was to be a *blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 28:14; Ex 19:5-6; 22:31; Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). The canonical narrative context of holiness assumes the exodus as part of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise to be a blessing to all cultures of the earth. The refrain

"I am the LORD your God" and its longer form, "I am the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt," repeatedly accompany the laws of holiness (Lev 11:45; 18:1-5; 19:34, 36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 42, 55; 26:11-13). Holiness is not for the purpose of perfection or an individual ethic but in order to be a blessing to the whole world. A *particular ethical sociality* is integral to this mission. In the five main texts in which the people's holiness is specifically commanded ("You will be holy"), very specific kinds of behavior are named as a means to the cleanness that is attendant to holiness. They represent a contrast to the social practices in Egypt and Canaan and include diet (Lev 11; 20), sexual practices (Lev 18), the Ten Commandments (Lev 19), the prohibition of child sacrifice (Lev 18, 20) and wizards (Lev 20), and the keeping of all commands (Lev 19:37; Num 15:38-41).

The subject of holiness is important in the Pentateuch, but several difficulties remain in considering it as the underlying principle for OT ethics. Holiness is too easily abstracted and translated as perfectionism, separated from its specific missional content. Holiness is not a principle but a condition conferred by God from the character of God. Cleanness as a public act of separation for temporary holy service has a limited scope. Levitical holiness as an underlying principle puts too much weight on a single theme and book of the pentateuchal narrative. Holiness is subsidiary to the larger overarching narrative in which it is set (Barton 1998, 35). In the canon, holiness results from a complement of justice and love (Goldingay, 42). It is most useful as a middle value (see 1.4 below) for ethics in the Pentateuch.

1.3. Love of God, Love of Neighbor. Jesus, Hillel and Akiba all agreed that the sum of the Torah is love (Bamberger, 892). Jesus quotes "You will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your life and with all your might" (Deut 6:5) and "You will love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18b) as a summary of the whole law (Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:29-31; Lk 10:27-28). Jesus teaches that the sovereignty and fatherly love of God is the basis by which ethical communities are formed (*see DJG*, Ethics of Jesus, §3.7). Paul makes a similar claim in Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 5:14 (*see DPL*, Ethics, §2). In the Pentateuch, however, the term that is translated "love" (*'ahăbâ*) has a very limited usage. In Leviticus 19:18 and 34 (the only occurrences of the root *'hb* in Leviticus), love is commanded toward neighbors and toward resident aliens as a response to the LORD's deliverance from Egypt.

The root *'hb* ("love") also has a very limited context within its limited uses. In Deuteronomy, *'hb* occurs sixteen times in relation to love for or by God and for the neighbor or stranger. In these texts love is always treated within the same limited sociological themes and word clusters that provide a specific definition. Love means obedience to the commandments (Deut 13:3 [MT 13:4]; 23:5 [MT 23:6]), usually with the motive of prosperity (Deut 6:5; 7:13; 10:12; 11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20) and as a response to deliverance of the ancestors from Egypt (Deut 4:37; 6:5; 10:15, 18-19; 11:1). When God's love is the subject, the limited context is then deliverance of the ancestors from Egypt (Deut 4:37; 10:15; cf. 23:5). Twice love is used as the principle warrant for human behavior: once to encourage love for the stranger and once to encourage the killing of dream diviners (Deut 13:3).

Jesus and Paul are certainly correct in identifying some kind of love as the summary of the law. The problems, however, are that the English word is far too general and the Hebrew word *'ahăbâ* that is translated "love" is sociologically far too specific. The familiar injunction to love one's neighbor (Lev 19:18) was a practiced norm in Israel, not an ethical ideal (Clements). The general term *love* was understood in terms of particular public behaviors in limited biblical contexts. Another Hebrew word and concept *(ḥesed)* may better serve as a context for Jesus' and Paul's reference to love (see 1.5 below).

1.4. Problems with an Underlying Principle. The problems related to finding a unifying underlying principle for ethics in the Pentateuch are shared with the rest of the OT (Birch 1991, 41). The first problem is genre reductionism. The Bible is rich in the genres of narrative, law, wisdom and prophecy. All its genres are necessary to an OT ethic, not just the overtly didactic (e.g., law). All forms of the text provide helpful ways of seeing and acting (Birch and Rasmussen). Because only narrative and law are substantially represented in the Pentateuch, care must be taken not to form conclusions independent of the canon's other resources. The tendency of the search for an underlying principle to focus narrowly on a single genre should be avoided, or the results will be distorted. Pen-

tateuchal law and narrative cannot be understood independently (see 2.1 below).

The second problem with finding an underlying principle is the tendency to reduction by broad abstraction. Ideal abstract standards are fundamentally foreign to the OT approach to ethics (Childs, 648-716). A single abstract principle can distort the interpretation of individual genres. The search for systematic coherence must not diminish the distinctiveness of a text's or genre's individual moral reasoning (Keck). The priestly, sapiential, royal and prophetic traditions each warrant differential treatment (Janzen, 75). The complexities of an individual text's sociohistorical settings, chronologies and traditions present a further challenge. Understanding with certainty what Israel believed and practiced is not possible through the opaque window of an historical text. When the variety of texts is considered, abandoning the search for an underlying principle may be warranted (Barton).

Appeal to middle values and "middle paradigms" (Janzen) preserves the diversity of OT genres, avoids the undue abstraction of a single unifying principle and provides a way between unity and diversity. Values discovered in the Pentateuch (justice, love, obedience, priestly service) may then be considered individually as principles and viewed as middle values. Paradigms (e.g., Israel's relationship to Sinai law) may function to define a specific direction from historical context while providing relevance beyond its specific history (Wright, 225-31). The "familial paradigm," with its values of life, land and hospitality to all (Janzen, 12), originates in Abraham's family kinship and God's promises. Janzen proposes that this paradigm also unites other middle paradigms of the OT under the family rubric, when they are seen as distinct modes of seeking the same God-willed life (Janzen, 178).

The familial paradigm functions best as a development of Genesis narrative values. Middle paradigms resolve the tendency to ignore OT diversity, as long as they do not subordinate that diversity to one unifying paradigm. Recent discussions of paradigms and middle values point to the overarching OT historical narrative that stands in place of an ahistorical underlying principle. The Bible is fundamentally a story of a people's journey with their God. A *biblical ethic* will necessarily be one that portrays life as growth and development (Hauerwas, 24). In place of an underlying principle is a *narrative text* that includes many genres.

1.5. A Narrative About* Ḥesed: *Unrelenting Love. The Pentateuch is unified by an overarching biblical narrative that is difficult to reduce to a principle. Severing agents of the text from their actions in order to establish a principle is contrary to the "moral psychology" of the text (Hauerwas, 23). For the purpose of ethics, it is necessary that the narrative speak for itself. Summary narrative themes that necessarily point to the text have been proposed: God's "creating and redeeming acts"; "hope" that derives from God's creating, calling, promising and delivering actions (Brueggemann; Ellul); and God's faithfulness (Hauerwas; Clements).

The unique Hebrew concept that briefly contains the themes of the narrative and simultaneously necessitates reference to the narrative is *ḥesed.* Imitation of the *ḥesed* of God is considered the central theme of Jewish ethics (Breslauer). Usually translated "steadfast love," "kindness," "lovingkindness" or "covenant loyalty," *ḥesed* is not an abstract ethic but the underlying value of God's character and a high ideal in human virtue. *Ḥesed* is a beneficent action in the context of an enduring commitment between two parties, rendering assistance to one who is unable to help himself or herself (Clark, 267). It is inherently woven into the narrative of creation, rebellion, promise and redemption. Several noteworthy dissertations have dealt with this difficult-to-translate term, as its meaning is broader and deeper than a single English or German word can render (Glueck in 1927; Bowen in 1938; Sakenfeld in 1978; Clark in 1993). In general it may be translated "unrelenting love," which implies an agent (God) behind the term and indicates historical movement (Israel's history).

In the Pentateuch, *ḥesed* (21x) is a virtue in human affairs (Gen 20:13; 21:23; 24:49; 40:14; 47:29). It is declared and expanded by God as the central feature of his name (Yahweh), his promises and his active reputation (Ex 20:5-6; 34:6-7; Num 14:17-19; Deut 5:9-10; 7:9-13). The quality *ḥesed* is repeated to God by the patriarchs and by Israel in praise of that reputation (Gen 19:19; 24:12-14; 32:10 [MT 32:11]; Ex 15:13; Num 14:18) and to each other (Gen 24:27; 39:21; Deut 7:12). The overarching narrative demonstrates the unrelenting love of God to his

people throughout Israel's history. It was the unrelenting love of God that sent the remnant into exile, brought them back to the land and promised a renewed covenant.

Other proposals for major themes of the narrative (grace, *ḥnn;* compassion, *rḥm;* faithfulness, *ʾmt/ʾmn;* love, *ʾahăbâ)* are all elements of *ḥesed* (Clark, 267). Being *qdš* (holy) means "manifesting the unrelenting love" of the God who has brought us out of Egypt (Hauerwas, 67; see Ex 6:7; 16:6; 20:2; 32:4, 8; Lev 11:45; 19:36; 22:32-33; 25:38; 26:13; Num 15:41; Deut 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5, 10; 20:1). The fullest and highest expression of *ṣĕdāqâ* ("righteousness") draws from the content of *ḥesed* (see Hays; Mogensen; Gen 21:23; 38:26; Deut 5:10). *Mišpāṭ* ("justice") is also best understood as a part of *ḥesed* (Heschel, 195-220; Berkovitz; see Gen 39:21; 40:13-14; Ex 20:6; 34:6-7; Num 14:18-19; Deut 7:9-12; 10:17; 32:4). *Ḥesed* serves, in brief form, as a major theme of the Pentateuch and, at the same time, necessitates reference to the narrative itself, requiring the actual telling of the story. *Ḥesed* is a signpost that points to the overarching biblical narrative. It could be developed further in relation to the whole canon as an ethic of the imitation of God (see Heschel, 207-11).

2. Character Formation: Developing a Sense of Duty.

The Pentateuch is a unique resource for the formation of character. When character (identity) is formed, internal motivation for ethical action (a sense of duty) is developed. Ethical inquiry into the Pentateuch properly begins with an awareness of the metanarrative context in which God acts. People are created, fall out of relationship with the Creator, need and receive promises of blessing, are delivered from bondage and move toward the fulfillment of the promises made by God. This subject matter and narrative form influence the formulation of the inquiry. The Pentateuch sets the stage for Christian ethics, providing presuppositions concerning human character before engaging in any ethics of obligation (e.g., Gen 1—3).

The Pentateuch is first about God's actions and secondly about the formation of a people in relation to God. Rather than answering, "What shall we do?" it speaks first to the question, "Who shall we be in response to God's actions?" *Abraham's and *Moses' calls are made in the context of promises that a people will be formed (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-14; 22:15-19; Ex 3:6-10). God's calls to identity as a people precede the giving of laws. The narrative context focuses on being and character formation as the *source* for action and obligation. Indeed, Sinai's obligations are repeatedly punctuated with the reminder of the source of Israel's identity through the refrain "the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 16:6; 20:2; Lev 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 25:38; 26:13; Num 15:41; Deut 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5; 20:1). The Pentateuch forms character by providing a particular view of reality, namely, the view of the narrative text itself.

The narrative contains examples of responses to the Creator that are both positive (*Abel, *Noah, Abraham) and negative (*Cain, Ham, Sodomites). The stories are realistic in their complexity and ambiguity. Reality is not idealized. Noah and Abraham both exhibit weak character in their choices at times (Gen 9:21; 20:2). The people sin, fail, hope, persevere, reconcile and struggle. In the midst of the ambiguity, however, clear reasons for good actions are expressed, both in the realm of the "natural" order of creation and in response to God's acts of redemption: "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" (Gen 4:7a NRSV), and "You must follow exactly the path that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess" (Deut 5:33 RSV). The narrative provides an overall view of reality that influences one's way of life and subliminally shapes character to see the world truthfully (Goldingay; Hauerwas; Birch and Rasmussen).

The Pentateuch's narrative form also functions to establish the authenticity (validity) of this view of reality (Birch 1988, 80). Since human experience is essentially narrative in form (and not abstract), the Pentateuch provides a medium that immediately engages the narrative quality of our lives (Crites). Further, the multivalence of the pentateuchal narrative corresponds to human experience.

2.1. The Narrative Source of Character and Identity. The main pentateuchal source for strong character (including a sense of duty to others and God) is found in the retelling of narrative promises and exodus redemption history. The promises to Abraham are repeated and the story of Sinai is retold in Deuteronomy and Joshua, creating a particular view of reality that shapes identity.

2.1.1. Being Human. The characters of the OT may be exemplary in specific actions, but the hero of one circumstance is often the heel of the next. The "saint" and "sinner" are often the same person. This observation led to the nineteenth-century conclusion that the ethical ambiguity of the biblical patriarchs evolved into the high morality of Israel's prophets (Janzen, 8), leaving the patriarchal narratives in the hinterland of OT ethical discussions. Recently, however, scholars have suggested that the patriarchs contribute to character formation precisely because they are simultaneously saints and sinners. The narrative establishes a reality in which a person is capable of good even while affirming the fundamental canonical confession that human beings are sinners.

For Christian (as well as Jewish) ethics, the view that persons are inclined to both good and evil is a necessary function of the text. It trains us to see ourselves as sinners, as part of God's narrative, and not our own (Hauerwas, 33). The text addresses "the total issue of man" rather than dealing with only the moral problem (Heschel). The Pentateuch presents *law* in the midst of a narrative that describes in detail the sins and troubles of its primary characters. It does not fail to describe Cain's murder of Abel, Abraham and Sarah's trouble in their sojourns, broken relations in Jacob and Joseph's families, slavery in Egypt, struggle toward exodus and Sinai, the *golden calf and other rebellions, long wilderness wanderings and the repeated apprehensions surrounding the promised prosperity in the acquisition of land. The Pentateuch is a unique resource for ethics in that it provides an extensive story of failures as the lens through which intermingled successes should be viewed. Further, the context in which the law is presented forms an honest view of human character and a worldview in which laws, principles and codes can be understood.

The Pentateuch is relentless in presenting a view of people as willfully overreaching their powers in order to live as authors of their own stories *(sui generis)*, deceived about the nature of reality (e.g., *Eve, Cain, Noah's neighbors, Israel in the desert). The Bible addresses the problem by presenting a truthful view of the world, a view that can be gained by reading the narrative (Hauerwas, 31). This truthful view includes acknowledging tendencies to overreach the limits of human freedom to usurp the place of God, as in the case of Eve, and to hide that freedom in Israel's various idolatries, thus losing freedom in what is finite (R. Niebuhr).

The pentateuchal narrative demonstrates that each generation needs to be schooled in the language of sin and to use it about themselves. This task requires a learning community of faith (Hauerwas, 33). Israel is reminded to teach the commandments to their children (Deut 6:7-9) and to repeat the stories of the past ("My father was a wandering Aramean"), especially in times of prosperity, when the temptation to self-deception about one's true identity is greatest (Deut 26:1-11). The story calls the community to choose a life that is faithful to God's story and warns against future temptations to abandon their place in it (Deut 27—30).

The view of reality found in the Pentateuch begins with the acknowledgement of a tendency to sin and a self-deception about sin (Gen 2—4). In response to this situation, God called the Hebrew people to become God's people, to accept a place in God's history and to live according to that calling (Gen 12—Ex 18). The center of that calling was not individual, but corporate. When the Hebrew slaves were called out of Egypt into the wilderness, the stated purpose was the worship of the God of the Hebrews (Ex 3:18). In the wilderness Israel was formed by receiving the instruction of the law and through worshiping the one God. The center of Israel's calling and identity, and thus ethical formation, was the community of study and worship.

2.1.2. Being a Transformed Community. The narrative of the Pentateuch assumes a faith-centered historical community as its social context. Each person is held accountable for his or her actions by a community that finds its identity in the worship of the one living God, responding to the reiterated promise (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-8; 22:15-19; 26:2-5; 28:13-15). The Christian use of the Pentateuch for ethics cannot overemphasize worship and community. A worshiping community is the pentateuchal context of the formation of character and right living. The integral relationship between worship and right action is demonstrated in the difficulty that exegetes have in attempting to divide ceremonial from civil and moral ordinances in the Sinai law. They are bound together as character and right action are bound.

The laws contained in the Pentateuch are set in the context of a community that is being

transformed. This observation recently has played a more prominent role in methodology (Birch; Hauerwas), leading to a closer reading of the sociohistorical settings of OT laws (Barton). Attention also has focused on the voice of the overarching narrative and its influence on the formation of communities today. In every case an important critical aspect has been gained by closer attention to the historical community and narrative contexts of the text, thereby avoiding ahistorical abstractions. With renewed attention to the context of historical community and the witness of the narrative context, the text functions as a self-authenticating call to good character.

The narrative discloses reality and has the power to transform a community in at least three ways (Birch, 1988, 82-84). (1) Its salvation stories transform the reader, the central salvation story of the exodus being especially effective (Ex 1—15). Israel understood deliverance as a gift of life-giving grace (Deut 26:1-11; Josh 24:1-18). Its memory and retelling had the power to transform later generations: "Not with our ancestors . . . but with us, we who are here, all of us, alive this day" (Deut 5:3). (2) Stories of transformation in the text invite the reader to similar transformation, to new life and new understanding in relation to others and to God. When Jacob is at the Jabbok crossing, he struggles with alienation from his brother, is given a new name and is reconciled to his brother (Gen 32:22—33:11). (3) Unexpected results in pentateuchal stories can transform a reader. The verdict in the case of *Tamar and *Judah forces the reader to reconsider assumptions about righteousness (Gen 38:26). They invite readers to think about complex relationships in which God has a stake and to consider that stake in relation to their own complexities of relation. While the first two kinds of transformation create hope within the community of faith, the third has the potential to bring hope to those standing outside the community. In each case transformation is possible when hope is taken from reading the narrative.

Hope is a primary source of good character. Although the word *hope* only occurs once in the Pentateuch, the words of promise and fulfillment to Abraham, *Isaac, *Jacob, Moses and Israel carry hope as a major theme. Significant attention has been given to the hope generated from biblical stories of deliverance and redemption (Ellul; Brueggemann). Hope is a question prior even to faith and love in a time of alienation and abandonment. Christian ethics is categorically an eschatological ethics of hope (*see DJG,* Ethics of Jesus). Communities of faith become and remain ethical in hope that God's promises for an eternal covenant will be fulfilled. The narratives of deliverance and promise in the Pentateuch and their ownership by members of faith communities are the means by which that hope is inculcated and retained. The retelling of the past, shared, biblical story and a present and future hope in its promises are the source of character formation.

2.2. Creation: A Basis for Character Formation. The fundamental fact that we are creations of the Creator is the basis for a sense of duty in the first biblical examples (before Sinai), as well as in later arguments ("motive clauses," after Sinai). The arguments of the texts assume that when one's identity is located in this Creator-created relationship, good character and good decisions will follow.

2.2.1. Being Created. While the giving of the law at Sinai is the dominant biblical context of character formation and obligation, *creation is the first setting of ethical narrative. Eden is the first test of character in relation to the Creator ("Where are you?" Gen 3.9). The contrasts between Abel and Cain, Enoch and Lamech, and Noah and his generation can each be judged in relation to the Creator and good human order. The renewed interest in creation as a context for ethics begins with such pre-Sinai stories. Creation is the proper theological context, since it is first in the canon, the first source of order and the first source of life. In one sense, all of the Pentateuch can be read from a creational perspective. The exodus is nothing less than an act of creation that is completed in *tabernacle worship (Ex 10:22; Lev 26:13; Deut 4:32; 32:6). The priestly legislation of Leviticus has a creational context (Brueggemann). Israel's ritual worship participates in recreating the world. Creation is completed when the created worship the Creator. The human perspective of being a creation in relationship with a Creator is fundamental to identity and character formation.

In the Abraham narrative a character-forming worldview is presented through a web of dramatic sociological consequences for unethical actions (Fretheim). In Genesis 20 *Abimelech's camp suffers extensive consequences

(sickness, closed wombs) because Abraham and Sarah have not disclosed their relationship as husband and wife. All are caught in cosmological consequences resulting from a violation of created orders. While similar dramatic consequences do not result from such actions today, the narrative demonstrates a cosmology in which unethical actions have widespread consequences. A legal reading of the text reinforces this explanation, showing the necessity of this particular cosmology to the interpretation of the consequences (Bruckner). The web of moral physical consequence constitutes a cosmology in which human conformity to the pattern of the Creator's natural order is wisdom (Goldingay, 42).

"Motive clauses" accompany some laws in Exodus—Deuteronomy, providing a reason for keeping them (Uitti, 20) and forming an argument that appeals to common orders of creation rather than their covenant context. The motive clauses of Deuteronomy especially appeal to basic human categories of empathy, common sense, self-preservation and conscience. Some motive clauses appeal to human empathy for the powerless by recalling a similar experience: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt" (Deut 24:18a RSV). Common sense is given as a motive in the release of a slave: "Do not consider it a hardship when you send a slave out as a free person; for at half the cost of a hired servant the slave has served you six years" (Deut 15:18). Self-preservation motivates honest business practices: "You shall have only a full and honest measure, so that your days may be long in the land" (Deut 25:15b NRSV). Conscience is also a basis of appeal: "As for the Levites resident in your towns, do not neglect them, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you" (Deut 14:27 NRSV). These rational motives make their human appeal within the text itself, based on the Creator's intention for the creation to be fruitful (Gen 1:28; Barr, 95-96). They build character by reflecting on the advantages of living with an enlightened self-interest in the Creator's world.

2.2.2. The Character of Creation's Freedom. Modern understanding of created humanity is often based in the fallacy (adapted from Kant) that the idea of God safeguards a person's freedom and thus one's moral character and action. On the surface this argument convinces us that as creations of the Creator, we ought to live responsibly and are free to choose a responsible way of life (Hütter, 32). From the perspective of the Pentateuch, however, especially Genesis 1—11, the Creator has *not* endowed the creation with a self-legislated freedom. The initial problem presented at *Eden is that humanity was not able to self-legislate its freedom/responsibility.

The dominant assumption that we are capable of this self-legislation has caused many readers to misinterpret the instruction given at Sinai. The idea of self-legislated freedom supposes that the law, because it is external to the "free self," is opposed to creation and created freedom. It supposes that law is given to limit creation's freedom. The Pentateuch, however, ends with the claim that the Sinai law is *the means to life* and its freedom: "This is no trifling matter for you, but rather your very life; through it you may live long in the land" (Deut 32:47 RSV; see Deut 30:15-19). The Sinai instruction is given by the Creator as a part of the substantive freedom of creation for a blessing of all creation. Sinai is the necessary way out of the bondage of Egypt. It is the Pentateuch's path to a relationship of freedom between the creation and the Creator.

The Sinai law presented in Exodus—Deuteronomy is not in opposition to the created freedom between Creator and creation, but an agent of that freedom. Good character is built when this essential, dynamic relationship between Creator, creation and law is understood. Without the fundamental concept of freedom and responsibility, right action will be for the wrong reasons. Obedience to the Creator is not a limitation of freedom but the way of freedom, forming the basis for good character (Hütter).

2.3. God and Character Formation: The Unique Context of Biblical Moral Discourse. The covenant-seeking God of Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and the family of Israel is the ultimate source of, and provides validity for, character formation in the Pentateuch. This is the God "who will cause to be what will be" (Ex 3:14-15) and who is transcendent, personal, willing, acting and speaking (Gill, 32). Good human character is derived from a faithful relationship and interaction with a personal God, not simply by study of the text. The dialogues between God and Abraham at Hebron, Jacob at Jabbok, Moses at Horeb and the many discussions in the wilderness wanderings form a pentateuchal model of interactive character formation. A static biblical ethic is not possible, because the

living Word cannot be systematized (Ellul).

The dynamic nature of character formation has its source in God *as compassionately righteous:* "You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry. . . . And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate" (Ex 22:22-23, 27 RSV). Pentateuchal justice and righteousness are not simply values, but rather God's stake in human history (Heschel, 198-200). God does not say to Cain, "You have broken the law." Instead he asks, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground" (Gen 4:10 RSV). God's justice and righteousness are an a priori of biblical faith, not an added attribute. God is the *source* of righteousness (Gen 18:25; Deut 1:17; 32:4).

Care should be taken to avoid moralizing the pentateuchal narrative without reference to God's deeds. The focus of the narrative is on God's actions, and moralizing may miss the point altogether (Westermann, 86). This caution is manifest in the first words of the Decalogue: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You will have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:2-3; Deut 5:6-7). The expression "who brought you" is a regular and substantive identification of "the LORD your God" and a constant reminder that the identity and character of the people of God necessarily begins with the presence and action of God (Gen 15:7; Ex 6:7; 16:6; 20:2; 32:4-8; Lev 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 26:13; Num 15:41; Deut 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5; 20:1).

3. Moral Obligation and Authority.

A Christian perspective on ethics in the Pentateuch walks a line between antinomianism (against the law) and a new nomism (legalism), as OT laws are a central focus of OT ethics. *How* the idea of law is upheld and *for what purpose* it is kept are the critical issues. Intrabiblical development of justification and righteousness concludes that they (and the law) are a matter of faith. If the law has been fulfilled in Christ, "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (Rom 3:31 RSV). The law in general retains authority, but the nature of its authority is debated. Recent scholarship addresses the authority of ancient laws and principles and the current basis for the authority of OT laws. Authority intrinsic to the Pentateuch includes: (1) the authority of the voice of God, most often given in specific commands or prohibitions (positive law); and (2) forms of "natural" or "creational law" that may be implied or assumed by the text.

The continuing practical authority of laws of conduct is not due exclusively to the historical law codes themselves. They continue to be read primarily by people in faith communities who regard the whole book as authoritative, precisely because they view themselves as part of the biblical narrative line. The incorporation of the readers as people of God in the continuing overarching narrative is the primary factor in the present authority of any OT laws. A particular law is authoritative *as practiced law* when the community teaches it as a necessary practice. The laws are authoritative as part of a whole biblical narrative that has been accepted by the community of faith as binding on its conscience. The necessity of particular laws to ethical or moral behavior is the subject matter of OT ethics. Using pentateuchal laws as a source for ethics means establishing *how laws will be used* as authoritative for the person of faith.

3.1. Authority of God's Voice. Moral discourse in the Pentateuch is centered on God. It is directly theological (Nysse, 342). The authority to keep the law is found in God's direct speech to Moses. God's authority *as God* is assumed in the text. Even the so-called Ten Commandments are not *commanded,* but simply spoken by God (Ex 20:1). A text prohibiting deceptive measurement in business adds, "For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are abhorrent to the LORD your God" (Deut 25:16 NRSV; Lev 19:35-36). A reminder that the LORD is one's God accompanies laws concerning sexual taboos (Lev 18:6), the manufacture of idols (Lev 19:4), mockery of the deaf and blind (Lev 19:14), dietary issues (Lev 22:8), harvesting practices (Lev 23:22) and redemption regulations (Lev 25:17). "I am the LORD" occurs with statutes more than forty times in Leviticus 18—26. The unjust often assumed that God was not a factor (Ps 10:13; 94:7; Zeph 1:12), but discourse within pentateuchal law forces the reader to engage the living God, rendered present in the reading of the text (Nysse, 344).

In addition to God's authority *as God,* God's claim on a redeemed people *as a redeemed possession of God* lends authority to law woven into the redemption narratives (Ex 19:4-6). This claim is

the foundation for OT ethics as normative (Childs, 671-72). God has elected, redeemed and established a covenant with a people. A recital of the Bible's covenantal narrative leads to an inherent authority in biblical laws of obligation. Two rhetorical elements express this authority. (1) God directly calls the people of God to respond as a delivered people and offers several motivations for accepting the law's authority. Most prominent are "that you may live long in the land" (Lev 25:18; Deut 5:33; 11:8-9; 22:7; 30:6; 32:47) and "For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (Ex 20:2; Lev 11:45; Num 15:41; Deut 5:6; 13:5). (2) Moses' Deuteronomic sermon on the plains of Moab also demonstrates the present rhetorical authority of OT law. Deuteronomy 5:3 pushes the past Sinai event into the present: "Not with our ancestors did the LORD make this covenant, but us, who are all of us here alive today" (RSV, see also Deut 4:13; 5:5). A later generation accepts this claim as present truth. The traditional practice in historical Israel was to retell the deliverance story as a call to present commitment (Deut 26:17-18; Josh 24). Modern communities of faith continue the practice of reading biblical narratives as directly addressed to them. In this way creation, patriarchal and exodus narratives, and stories of the wilderness wanderings become a kind of personal history, providing a source of authority for keeping OT laws.

3.2. Authority of Biblical "Natural" Law. The recent discussion of "natural" law and its authority is based in the biblical perspective that God's "law" is inherent in the creation ("positioned in the heavens," Ps 119:89-91; see Rom 1:18-32) and therefore has authority, not just for the believer, but also over all creation (Levenson). Generally, *natural* law is binding on all people, supplementing *positive* law (explicitly commanded or forbidden) that has its canonical context in covenants made by God with Israel and humanity (e.g., Gen 9:1-17). Within that covenantal context, however, is a kind of biblical natural law (Barton 1998, 58-76). Although the term *natural* is not used in the Pentateuch, it is common scholarly parlance for problems and proposals concerning biblical natural or creational law in the Pentateuch (Barr, 95-96; Barton 1998, 58-76). In the past, biblical evidence of natural law was dismissed because Israel's revealed writings are historical and not natural. Even so, biblical texts make arguments for laws based on the nature of life, not just on the authority of God's speech (Barton 1998, 61). Genesis—Deuteronomy presents evidence that has led to the conclusions that natural law has "some basis" (Barr), may be used "in quotes" (Barton) and is "not exactly" correct (Wright). *Creational law* may be a better term for describing the biblical evidence.

3.3. Biblical Evidence of Creational Law. The term *creational* is sometimes used in discussions of natural law, in part because it is closer to the concept of the biblical text. *Creational* is used formally in biblical theology to refer to texts that contain cosmological motifs or that use the creation as a warrant in an argument or where the primary relationship is between the Creator and the creation. That relationship itself is a basis of authority for human obligation.

Evidence of creational law in Genesis begins in the first chapter. In Genesis 2 God speaks command and prohibition to Adam and Eve; later he does the same with Noah (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-17; 9:1-6). After Adam and Eve ate from the tree in *Eden, God asked, "What is this you have done?" (Gen 3:13b). The narrative discloses that what they did was not *arbitrarily* wrong, but wrong because it destroyed the Eden relationship of trust, order and life, overturning these for selfish motives. The primary horizon of righteousness in the OT is the creation of the world and the moral order that derives from its created character (Barton 1998, 67). Moral obligation is sometimes a matter of human understanding rather than a God-given command. Cain is asked, "Why are you angry?" (Gen 4:6a). Lot said to the men of Sodom, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly" (Gen 19:7 NRSV). Abimelech said to Abraham, "You have done things to me that ought not to be done" (Gen 20:9b NRSV). These dialogues cannot be described in terms of positive law. The narrative simply assumes what is right and wrong. This creational law has an intrinsic authority based in the *natural* understanding that a specific action is understood to be wrong.

In Genesis God made Abraham the administrator of righteousness and justice and declared that he kept God's commandments, statutes and laws (Gen 18:19, 25; 26:5). In Exodus Moses knew God's statutes and laws and could teach them to others even before he had been to Sinai (Ex 18:20). Able men of Israel could *judge many legal cases without Moses' counsel (Ex

18:26) using "normal human common sense" (Barr, 99). The juxtaposition of Exodus 18 (before Sinai) and Exodus 19—24 (after Sinai) demonstrates that God's creative activity in the daily and transcultural administration of justice has an important place alongside the formation of Israel and the law at Sinai. It functions to establish the primary authority of law in a creational and universal context.

In Leviticus the context of law is Sinai, given by God. The general consensus is that cultural anthropology brings us closer to the internal logic of the texts (Douglas). It is argued that there was something naturally understood about the categories of clean and unclean and that anything crossing "natural" boundaries was defective and even dangerous. Seeds, for example, should not be crossbred, and fabrics should not be mixed (Lev 19:19). Though not what *we* would consider obviously natural or unnatural, the logic of the text (clean and unclean) and comparative anthropological studies indicate that laws concerning food and sexuality in Leviticus imply some kind of creational or natural law. This understanding accepts a creation-based authority in the levitical laws.

In Numbers, created human common sense is used to write legislation that God approves as positive law (Num 27). *Zelophehad died without a son, so his daughters brought their case to Moses, arguing that their father's inheritance ought to come to them, despite standing law. This natural-law argument by women in a patriarchal culture was declared correct by God (Num 27:5-7). The case, argued on the creational basis that their father's name should not be lost, was won by the daughters and established a statute and ordinance for all Israel (Num 27:8-11; 36:2; see Barr, 99-100).

Deuteronomy recommends God's laws as excellent laws: "What other great nation has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this instruction?" (Deut 4:8a). This implies some standard of measurement that must be prior to those laws (Barton 1998, 73). Deuteronomy repeatedly appeals to the common sense of the reader. Obedience to the laws of Deuteronomy is required because God gives them (Deut 30), yet its motive clauses repeat a creational argument: "that you may live long in the land" (Deut 5:33; 11:8-9; 22:7; 30:6; 32:47).

In a formal sense, natural law is not presented in the Pentateuch. All of the examples above are contextualized in Israel's revelation and do not rest on "natural human intuitions about ethics" (Barton 1998, 74). These examples do, however, disclose Israel's belief that all humanity lives within the constraints and blessing of the Creator-created relationship. Israel's experience of *natural* law points to *creational* consequences, motives, arguments and contexts as well as to the Creator. It does not point to universal abstractions founded upon the idea of creation.

4. Moral Obligation and Laws.

In the OT, moral obligations are governed by laws and by values and principles discerned within the laws and the narratives of the Pentateuch. Recent scholarship addresses which OT laws should be kept, how should they be kept and the criteria for such decisions.

The primary authority of OT law for the Christian derives from the overarching narrative of the formation of a people of God in both Testaments. The authority of this narrative and some laws, *by their association with the overarching narrative,* has shaped the character of faith communities. Particular laws have been handled in various ways: *contravened* by the conscience of the church (the practice of slavery laws), *summarized* as values within the community (hospitality to strangers) or *declared fulfilled* by the gospel (laws of sin-atoning sacrifice). Others have been *accepted* as wholly authoritative for conduct (almsgiving, the Ten Commandments).

4.1. Using Old Testament Laws as Moral Obligation. Six hundred thirteen distinct laws (365 prohibitions and 248 positive commands) are found in the Pentateuch, by the count of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) in the twelfth century. His interpretation of these laws has had a lasting influence on the interpretation of biblical law. How any one of the laws is interpreted depends on the history of its interpretation by communities of faith, on its literary context or the character of its law code and on the theological history of the interpreter. The laws are interwoven with narrative, are not ordered by subject and are sometimes viewed as being in tension with each other.

Four major series of legal material have distinct characteristics. (1) The Ten Commandments, "ten words" or *Decalogue is the best-known law series of the Pentateuch, in part because it is the lens through which the law that

follows is viewed (Ex 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21; see Ex 34:11-26; Lev 19:4-16; Deut 27:15-26). (2) The *book of the covenant (Ex 20:23—23:19), considered the oldest written legal material, was received by Moses on Sinai after the Ten Commandments were spoken directly to the people. It was subsequently written and accepted by the people (Ex 24:4-7). (3) The Deuteronomic Code (Deut 12—26) is the reiteration of Sinai law forty years later by Moses on the plains of Moab. It contains many parallels with the Covenant Code in Exodus, demonstrating an intrabiblical development of law. The homiletical introduction of Deuteronomy includes the famous Shema ("Hear, O Israel") that Jesus quotes as the greatest command: "You will love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your life and with all your might" (Deut 6:5). (4) The Holiness Code (Lev 17—26) stands at the center of a larger body of so-called priestly law (Ex 25—31; 35—40; Lev 1—Num 10) that governed the historic sanctuary in Israel. This legal material also contains a wide range of social (including so-called ceremonial law) and civil law, interspersed with sermonlike addresses. It includes at its center the well-known "You will love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18b; cf. Mk 12:31) and "You will be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev 19:2b).

The history of interpretation of OT laws covers a wide spectrum (see Wright). A focus on historical development between the Testaments has retained the primacy of the gospel and important historical distinctions. It has, however, led to views that the laws and their authority have been superseded by the gospel (e.g., Marcion; Noth). The alternate focus on continuity between the Testaments has led to attempts to retain as many of the actual laws as possible by dividing moral law from civil law (Origen) or by advocating different categories (e.g., moral, civil and ceremonial) of law (Calvin). A commitment to continuity has led some to advocate a return to keeping, as much as possible, all 613 laws (see review in Wright, 213-20) and a new legalism.

A newer historical perspective maintains that the actual laws of the OT cannot be applied today as prescriptive or normative, based on their historical complexity and distance (Barton; Wilson; Clements; Birch and Rasmussen). Several warrants are offered. First, the laws may represent an idealized law in Israel rather than actual practice (Barton). Second, they were written down over a long period of time and represent many different sociological contexts, some of which are difficult to identify (Goldingay). Third, the laws in Deuteronomy show modifications of laws in Exodus. Since they are not consistent, they cannot be moral norms, especially not for us (Wilson). Fourth, some laws are offensive, such as stoning for adultery or regulating slavery. These and others are rendered obsolete when subordinated to the law of love expressed in the NT. Recent work has sought to deduce applicable principles for nonbinding historical laws. Barton suggests that fundamental elements may be derived concerning the "general drift" of the laws: obedience to divine will, conformity to a pattern of natural order and imitation of God (Barton 1978).

In spite of the difficulties, OT laws continue to be used by the church as authoritative and as a central source of ethics. The impulse to preserve the primacy of gospel does not require the nullification of OT laws. On the contrary; conviction of sin comes by means of a valid law, and human communities still require ordering (Calvin; Luther). In this regard, recent work on the creational basis of OT law is useful. If based in creation, laws remain valid and useful, although not binding on the new covenant.

Maintaining the continuity of law between the Testaments sometimes has been accomplished by dismissing the ceremonial laws and retaining some civil and all moral laws. This sorting of individual laws into categories is a long-established tradition (Origen; Calvin; Westminster Confession; Kaiser 1983, 44-48). These broad divisions do not exist, however, in the law codes themselves, and the separation of moral law from civil and ceremonial law is foreign to both Testaments (Goldingay; Wright). It is difficult to preserve the social complexity of many individual laws when a single category is chosen.

Another approach analyzes the function of an individual law in its sociohistorical context by answering the following questions: Whose power does it affect? How did it function in the overall system? Is it central or peripheral to the social objective in the rest of the material? Does it reinforce other primary legislation, or is it a modification or a secondary application (Wright)? In this way a "flat equality" of laws is avoided, and the priority of laws may be discerned. When the principle of the contextual meaning is un-

derstood, it may be applied in the present. This view presupposes that the sociological setting of particular laws can be recovered with confidence. Limitations of this method include the tendency to dismiss laws because of difficult analysis and to apply others a bit too simply (Goldingay).

Recent discussion has sought to incorporate continuity between the Testaments while recognizing historical development within the Bible. The difficulty in actually dividing laws into civil and moral categories leads to an individual consideration of each law for ethics. This maintains a high continuity between the Testaments without superimposing categories on the text or arbitrarily picking and choosing individual laws. In order not to render OT law practically obsolete by a focus on intrabiblical development, the creational context of law is being reconsidered. A creational context for law maintains the primacy of the gospel as well as the necessity of the laws for guidance in the created order. Both approaches suggest that principles may be derived from pentateuchal law, either from individual laws or from the general perspectives of certain groups of laws.

4.2. Principles from Old Testament Laws. Many OT laws are historically and culturally bound, but determining the principle behind their meaning may shed light on their present value. The Decalogue, although historically conditioned, is general in scope. Deuteronomy, though full of culturally specific laws, advocates a general attitude of love and gratitude. The Decalogue and the Deuteronomic call to love form a basis for seeking principles from OT laws. Without the attention to principles behind the text, many laws would be abandoned to their historical particularities or flatly applied as timeless laws. On the other hand, derived principles, although helpful in bridging an ancient gap, do not have the authority of the biblical text's actual laws (Goldingay).

The distinct OT law codes are an ancient testimony to the justice and righteousness that God requires and may be studied for their inherent values (Patrick, 254-61). The Decalogue is a set of principles and values in the ancient world that is easily applied in the present, in spite of an erosion of the meaning of sabbath. The *book of the covenant (historically most distant) contains principles of a "whole life scope" for God's law, combining what we call secular, religious, moral and technical laws and demonstrating the value of every human life under the rule of God. The principles of the Deuteronomic Code urge justice in community, the strong enforcement of law against the lawless, compassion for the weak and needy, and exclusive loyalty to God. The Holiness Code expresses a counterbalance to the rationalistic spirituality of Deuteronomy. Its values include holiness as a unique combination of moral and amoral aspects (such as the arrangement of the sanctuary), either of which can pollute the community. The center of the Holiness Code (Lev 19) demonstrates this synthesis in combining laws on citizenship, land, sexuality and love of neighbor as necessary to holiness (Patrick, 261). One recent reading of the purity codes of Leviticus derives ecological principles for the care of the earth (Barton 1998).

Another kind of ethical principle observed in the study of OT laws is the intrabiblical development of law. The so-called second law (Deuteronomy) adapts the book of the covenant. The pattern is generally toward a more complex and more compassionate sociological setting (Deut 17:8-13 sanctions this development of new laws). Several principles have been suggested to explain development in OT law. (1) No law should be interpreted independently of others like it in the biblical canon. By tracing canonical development we can set parameters of the entire canonical witness to a law (Childs). (2) A broader authority for biblical ethics is established in the recognition that reason (a kind of natural law) is at work within biblical revelation (Barr). (3) Development within the canon demonstrates that the changing conditions of historical and sociological context require an adjustment in laws. This development is seen as a biblical principle that may be applied today in a new sociological context (Barton; Fretheim).

4.3. The Ten Commandments as Obligation. The Decalogue has been identified as the primary obligation of God's delivered people, serving as a unique guide for ethical living. The Pentateuch establishes the priority of the Decalogue among all the commandments. The complete Decalogue is presented twice (Ex 20; Deut 5), and Leviticus 19 has all ten commands in some form. In Moses' homilies the Decalogue is presented as a special part of the Sinai covenant (Ex 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4). The presentations of the Decalogue in Exodus and Deuteronomy dis-

tinguish it from the rest of the commands by narrative structure: it is established at the beginning of the Sinai declaration, set apart from other laws, and is the window through which the others are viewed. The Ten Commandments were spoken directly to the people (Ex 20:1) "with a loud voice" (Deut 5.22), written separately and by God. They retain the rhetorical force of an encounter with the direct speech of God and an encompassing scope in a brief form. These features have made the Decalogue the entry point for OT ethics throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The rhetorical force of individual prohibitive commands ("You will not") logically implies counterpart rights. For example, "You will not murder," spoken as a command of God, implies a universal human right not to be murdered. Even though the commandments are spoken to a historically specific people, the principles of the commands reveal God's presuppositions concerning the ordering of all creation. In this way the Decalogue serves as an archetype and mandate for a contemporary articulation of universal human rights (Harrelson).

Recent thought on the Decalogue identifies two tendencies that are avoided by reading in context. On the one hand, commands may be read too abstractly and subsequently understood as arbitrary rules, while on the other hand they may be read historically too specifically and understood simply as Israel's folk law. The first tendency is balanced by attention to the narrative context of relationship to Israel's creating and delivering God. The second tendency finds balance in the context of relationship to the God of all the earth (Ex 9:29; 19:5), who gives the law as a blessing to all nations.

Attention to the Decalogue as a part of the story of God's creating and redeeming work with Israel is focused by the refrain that accompanies both versions of the Ten Commandments: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2 NRSV; see Deut 6:21-25). Separated from this claim, the principles of the Decalogue cannot be justified. If God had not delivered the people, how could they have had no other gods before him? It is argued that obligation cannot be separated from this overarching context and shared experience of deliverance (Hauerwas). Obligation must have as its source an ownership of the narrative of deliverance and renewed creation. As a result, the Decalogue and ethics are only secondarily a matter of obligation and "rules." It is primarily a part of the larger picture of God's project to bring social order to the beloved creation.

The tendency to dismiss the commands as the folk law of Israel has led to a response of increased attention to the law's relationship to the Creator of "all the earth," who gives the law as a blessing to all peoples (Ex 9:29; 19:5). The "ten words," spoken into existence like the creation itself, result in a new, previously unknown reality. At Sinai, by word and action, God creates a new, particular kind of society, with relationships based in faithfulness to God. This "new" people's relation to God is full of creation themes. In the Exodus narrative God commands the forces of nature in the plagues and firstborn deaths. Leaving the chaos of Egypt, the people pass through death-threatening waters to a new life (Ex 15). God's ordered justice has been subverted in Egypt, but the exodus and new law integrate God's created order and social order, bringing victory to God's intentions in creation (Fretheim). Taking into account their historical context, in the Ten Commandments God advances his intent to reorder a chaotic creation, first in Israel and then in all the earth.

5. Conclusion.

The ethical influence of the Pentateuch can be summarized under four points.

5.1. God's Unrelenting Love. The search for underlying principles for ethics can never be separated from the narrative of God's unrelenting, loving pursuit of the creation. The stories of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph and his brothers, Moses, and the rebellious people Israel form the setting for the ethical contributions of the Pentateuch.

5.2. Building Character in the Created. Character formation in the Pentateuch is founded in the Creator-created relationship. This formation includes living with the following convictions: (1) the relationship is broken by human rebellion, resulting in broken human lives that continually need restoration; (2) the created are called to worship the Creator in a community of faith; (3) God's law is established as *created* law, and its keeping or breaking has a web of consequences for human and nonhuman creation; and (4) a personal relationship with the Creator who is present and active in the creation is nec-

essary for biblical character formation.

5.3. The Authority of the Creator and the Redeemer. The life-restoring response of those redeemed by the Creator is to keep the instruction given by God for right living. The Redeemer's direct speech provides authority for the instruction given at Sinai. The law's authority is also presented in the creational consequences, motives and arguments of the narrative.

5.4. Right Living of the Redeemed. The instruction ("law") of the Pentateuch has been handled in the Christian community in various ways: (1) summarized as principles or values; (2) declared fulfilled in Christ; (3) contravened; and (4) accepted as wholly authoritative. In general, the canonical understanding has affirmed the priority of the Ten Commandments, the keeping of the law as a result of faith and the law as a guide (not a means) to life. The 613 commands are not all applicable laws for right living today but provide authoritative instruction for reflective, intelligent and wise living in the presence of God.

See also BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; COVENANT; DECALOGUE; EVIL; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LAW; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; WARFARE.

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ETHNICITY. *See* BORDERS; NATIONS, TABLE OF.

EVE

Eve (*ḥawwâ*), the first woman, is a figure of complexity in the biblical text. She figures prominently in the first four chapters of Genesis, and for centuries she has played a crucial role in theological reflection and debate over gender issues. Eve is the name bestowed on the first woman by her husband, *Adam, the first man. Interestingly, this name is not given until after the *"Fall" (Gen 3:20). The name *ḥawwâ* is related to the Hebrew verb *ḥāyâ*, "to live." The text relates Adam's choice of her name to her role in becoming "the mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20). In addition to being the first woman and Adam's wife, she is also the mother of *Abel, *Cain and *Seth (Gen 4:1, 25).

1. Woman as Divine Image
2. Eve as *ʿĒzer,* "Helper"
3. Eve Tempted
4. Eve Under Judgment
5. Echoes of Eve

1. Woman as Divine Image.

It is significant that the man and woman are not first defined by their sexuality or gender; they are first defined by the fact that together they are created in the *image of God (Gen 1:27; 5:2; De Groot, 3). Humanity, male and female, was formed on the sixth day of *creation, according to the first creation account. Together the man and woman receive the blessing of God and the multifaceted divine command to be fruitful and to multiply; to fill the earth and to subdue it; and to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Gen 1:28). Together they are among his works that he pronounces very good (Gen 1:31).

Genesis 5:2 reaffirms that male and female together are created in the image of God. Together as a unit God calls them "humankind" (*ʾādām*) on the day of creation; together he blesses them. The biblical text thus affirms the equality between the sexes that existed at creation.

God's first command to the couple (Gen 1:28) concerns their work assignment, their responsibility to the earth and its creatures, and their duty to reproduce. Only indirectly does it concern their relationship to their Creator or to each other. God's command to them shows he chooses to use them as his administrators over his creation. From the beginning God delegates a portion of his power to man and woman.

2. Eve as *ʿĒzer,* "Helper."

Genesis 2 gives us an alternative view of the woman's creation. God creates the man and places him in a garden east of *Eden (Gen 2:8). God notices that the man is alone and gives the first negative statement in the biblical text: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable [*ʿēzer kĕnegdô*] to him" (Gen 2:18). The idea is introduced but not developed that God acknowledges that even he is not enough for the man. G. von Rad comments that "solitude is therefore defined here very realistically as helplessness" (von Rad, 80).

Here the biblical text introduces the ideas of aloneness and loneliness. At the start of human existence, the man needed something that he did not have and that was not yet created. Judging from the biblical account so far, one would expect an instant helper. Not so! Instead a delay occurs. God delegates to the man the task of naming, a principle already established in the Genesis 1 account in which God names the day and night, the land and sea (Gen 1:5, 10). An as-

sembly of all the animals God created is paraded before the man God has named Adam. Adam names the animals, but none like Adam is found among the animals.

It is then that God fulfills his commitment to make a helper for the man. The word often translated "helper," *ʿēzer*, is not a comment on the woman's status and lacks overtones of subordination and inferiority. Instead, it describes one who possesses the desire and the ability or capacity to help another, a partner (see Fretheim, 352). The OT later describes God himself as a helper (see Gen 49:25; Ex 18:4; Deut 33:26; Ps 121:1-2; 146:5; Hos 13:9).

God then creates the woman in a way different from the manner in which he created his other works. In Genesis 1 God speaks the heavens and the earth and the animal and plant life into existence. In Genesis 2 he forms the man from the dust of the earth. But in the case of the woman he causes a deep sleep to come upon the man and from the side (or rib; *ṣēlāʿ*) of the man, he fashions woman (Gen 1:3, 20; 2:7, 21; see Ex 25:12-14 for a similar use of the word *side*) and takes her to the man (Gen 2:21-22). As T. E. Fretheim comments, "The relationship of the woman to the 'rib' entails no subordination, any more than man's being created from the ground implies his subordination to it" (Fretheim, 352). J. Calvin, recognizing that man was formed to be a social animal, commented that the woman was created so that human beings might cultivate a mutual society between themselves (Calvin, 128).

The text evokes the man's delight. No longer lonely, Adam expresses joy in his completeness and exclaims that now before him is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!" He calls her *ʾiššâ*, "woman," for she was taken out of the side of the *ʾîš*, "man" (Gen 2:23). This statement recognizes the similarities and differences within humanity as a unit but stresses the equality of male and female before God and with each other.

The text also establishes the basis for sexual intimacy and emphasizes its rightness, its goodness, the longevity of its duration, and the exclusivity of the new relationship between the man and the woman. In terms of equality, the woman was brought to the man by God, but it is the man who leaves his father and mother and joins with his wife (Gen 2:24). Together they become "one flesh" and are recognized as a new entity. The text indicates they approach each other naked and unashamed, equal in their standing before God, equal in their enjoyment of each other and equal in their stewardship over creation.

From the start, however, they remain different in their functions and in how they were made by God. Several points emerge: first, their nakedness carries with it both a physical and psychological openness and vulnerability; second, God treats them as a unit, but he also treats them as individuals; third, there is joy associated with their creation and union.

3. Eve Tempted.

So far, the primary human character has been the man. With Genesis 3, the emphasis shifts, and the woman now becomes the center of attention. While the man played the lead role in the creation, the woman now plays the lead role in the part of the text that has become known as the temptation and *Fall. Here in Genesis 3:2-3 we first hear the voice of Eve (cf. Gen 3:13; 4:1, 25). The narrative allots a balance in textual space to each gender.

The text presents several ideas within these stories as normal, though they have caused interpretive difficulties. Adam and his wife evidently conversed face to face with their Creator on a regular, even daily, basis. And, without fanfare or surprise, the text presents a talking, vertically erect *serpent.

Scholars throughout the centuries have wondered why the serpent approaches the woman and not the man. Various interpretations have emerged, including that she is the more accessible; the more gullible or susceptible; the weaker and more easily deceived; the more curious by nature; or the more theologically centered. The text suggests that she had received God's command about what to eat and what not to eat only secondhand from her husband Adam (Gen 2:16, 17). S. Niditch posits that the woman seeks knowledge and therefore tests the limits of authority (Niditch, 13). M. Luther maintained that the serpent chooses or attacks Eve because she is the weaker (Luther, 151). He argued that Satan presents the woman with a twofold temptation: (1) God did not say this; therefore you may eat of the tree; (2) God has given you everything; therefore, you have everything in your possession; therefore, one single tree is not really forbidden to you (Luther, 153). Calvin agreed with D. Kimchi that the text telescopes an originally longer conversation between the

woman and the serpent (Calvin, 147). He added that the woman was alone and the man was not with her during the conversation but joined her later (Calvin 151; but see Gen 3:6).

By her choice to eat the fruit offered by the serpent, the woman introduces unbelief and sin and, as Augustine noted, pride into the creation. Her action shows she readily listened to a voice other than God's, agreeing with the serpent and implicitly proclaiming God a liar. After eating the fruit, Adam and his wife do not avoid the serpent; instead, they avoid each other, and they hide from God (Luther, 171). When God confronts the couple, he asks how they know they are naked, wanting to hear their version of what happened. Adam blames God for sending him the woman, and the woman blames the serpent for deceiving her (Gen 3:8-13).

4. Eve Under Judgment.

God sentences the serpent first, and the serpent loses its uprightness and is condemned to crawl on its belly, presumably losing its ability to speak and to be understood. Enmity erupts between the serpent and humankind (Gen 3:15), deepening the distinction between man and beast. G. von Rad raises the possibility that from then on humankind has seen the snake as an evil being (von Rad, 89). Where formerly there had been a conversational familiarity between the woman and the serpent, God now places an enmity between the serpent and the woman and her offspring.

Genesis 3:15 is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the Hebrew word for "seed" or "descendant" occurs with the third person feminine pronominal suffix—"her seed" *(zarʿākā)* (Hamilton, 50). A male descendant of Eve will bruise the head of the serpent. This descendant of the woman has been understood traditionally by Christians as the first reference to the *Messiah.

The biblical text recounts God's penalties for the disobedience of the woman and the man in opposite order of their occurrence. While the sentences given by God on the man and woman involve punishment, it is important to note that neither person is cursed. Instead, God curses the serpent and the ground (Gen 3:14, 17). God decrees that the man's physical labor in procuring food will increase, while for the woman he decrees an increase in her pain in bringing forth children, an increase in her sexual desire for her husband, and the result that her husband will rule her (Gen 3:17, 16).

The *sin against God affected all creation. Human action brought alienation into human relationships and between each individual and God. It led immediately to Adam and Eve's self-justification, and their *exile from the garden. In this story lies the biblical explanation for untold human misery and suffering for generations.

M. Henry saw the woman's punishment as containing sorrow and subjection. Both punishments came for a sin in which she had "gratified her pleasure and her pride," he wrote. She passed on pain and sorrow, the consequences of her sin, to the human race (Henry, 1.19).

Another result of her action is that her relationship with the man changes. The sin of disobedience results in punishment, though it is tempered with mercy. Her "desire" will be for her husband, and he will "rule" over her. The meaning of this desire has been a matter of speculation. Is it her desire for mastery, which he in turn will not permit? More likely it is her desire for sexual intimacy despite the pain of childbearing. Her subjection will not be to an enemy or to all men, but only to her husband. But the notion of patriarchy is seen as part of the judgment and not a divine decree of creation (Fretheim, 363; cf. Meyers, 95-121). She will bear children with increased pain, but this will be tempered by the blessing of her fulfilling the command to be fruitful and multiply (note Eve's awareness of God's work in the birth of Cain and Seth [Gen 3:1, 25].) Significantly, the sentences brought on the man and the woman become a template for those later in the biblical text: punishment in the biblical text is designed to bring repentance (see Amos 4:6-11).

5. Echoes of Eve.

Adam's designation of Eve as the "mother of all living" suggests a connection with ancient Near Eastern literature. Although her name is associated with fertility, and fertility is a major topic in other ancient Near Eastern religions, there are notable differences between the biblical text and other literature. For example, ancient Near Eastern literature is replete with mother goddesses. The Akkadian goddess Mami is known as the "mistress of all gods" and creatures. Ugaritic texts call Asherah the creatress of the gods and the nurse of the gods; she fulfills the role of mother goddess. Asherah also is men-

tioned in connection with sacred trees and festivals. But the oneness and exclusivity of God and the fact that he never has a consort are confirmed repeatedly in the biblical text (Deut 6:4).

The Genesis account also differs from other ancient Near Eastern texts in that it contains an unexpected twist: it does not reflect unending life, prosperity, or blessing. The biblical account of humankind's first parents ends in banishment, death, punishment, pain, hardship and loss of children. Genesis 2:4—3:24 in particular counteracts a theology seen elsewhere in the ancient Near East. In the biblical text, the interaction of the woman and the serpent leads to punishment, while in ancient Near Eastern literature their interaction often leads to fertility. Another striking literary difference that further establishes the uniqueness of the biblical text is that ancient Near Eastern literature often seeks to explain the gods' origins; the stories are theogonic (Hamilton, 39). In contrast the biblical text simply states, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).

In the NT, although Paul refers to Eve as the one deceived, he places the blame for humankind's sin on Adam. All humankind receives the legacy of death because of Adam (see Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22). According to Paul, Eve illustrates how humankind is seduced into evil (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13).

Rabbinic teaching common in the Second Temple era of Paul's day took a negative view of Eve and portrayed women as unreliable and as secondary to men. For example, women, both consciously and unconsciously, became the agents of seduction, and the brazen woman in Proverbs lures the simple man to his death (Prov 7).

Eve's position in the text as created second can be used to argue for her superiority as the final created being or, conversely, for her inferiority to man. Historical Judaism traditionally argues for the superiority of the man (see *Gen. Rab.* 18.2), as does Islam (see Al-Baghawi, Mishkat al-Masabili). The Talmud, however, argues for the superiority of the woman (*Sanh.* 39a).

Eve serves as a transitional figure in the text. She comes into a world teeming with life, order, happiness, harmony and the physical presence of God. This world defines no social or sexual roles, knowing no hierarchy within humanity. This somewhat simple world changes because of Eve and Adam's action. Because of the couple's disobedience, they now know the difference between good and evil; death enters the world; the world order now includes much harder work and much more pain. Their choice brings in a new hierarchy and worldview. The woman and her offspring lord it over the snake (although the snake will strike the heel of her offspring), and the man lords it over the woman.

The stories in Genesis 1—4 of creation, temptation and Fall, and the vignettes from the life of the first family—all stories in which Eve figures markedly—show a higher theme than gender superiority. Among other things, they illustrate the need for intimacy between man and woman. They portray the intimacy God desires to have with each person. They show the boundaries of an ordered, happy society, and the consequences of disobedience. The stories also illustrate how often men and women fail each other, become estranged and separate themselves from God. Thus they set the tone for much of the rest of the biblical text.

See also ADAM; FALL; WOMEN.

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EVIL

The primary Hebrew terms rendered "evil" *(raʿ,rāʿâ)* designate the opposite of good or righteousness. In the Pentateuch this is foundationally the sinful condition of the human heart and its outworking that are unacceptable before the Lord. The term also commonly refers to difficult circumstances. Rampant moral evil, which is under God's judgment, may at times seem pervasive, but it is no threat to God's sovereignty. Some 111 of over 750 uses of the relevant forms in the Hebrew Bible are found in the Pentateuch: forty-one in Genesis, thirty-seven in Deuteronomy, only eleven in Exodus, seven in Leviticus and fifteen in Numbers.

1. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
2. The Evil Inclination of the Heart
3. Evil Circumstances
4. Evil Against the Covenant

1. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The initial biblical uses of *evil* in Genesis 2—3, though perennially debated among pentateuchal critics, hold foundational significance for biblical theology. This succinct portrayal of the origin of human nature and humanity's tragic fall into sin provides the desperate backdrop against which the mighty redemptive acts of God throughout Genesis and the Pentateuch, as well as the entire biblical canon, are revealed as even more glorious. The description of the pristine environment of *Eden focuses on two trees at the center of the garden: "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:9).

The fruit of all trees was available to eat, except that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Its prohibition was apparently designed by the Creator as a test of obedience, with a deadly punishment for failure to obey (Gen 2:16-17). Among many diverse proposals as to the meaning of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the three most commonly held general views are: (1) the tree would make possible certain human faculties, such as moral values or self-determination; (2) the tree would introduce the knowledge of sexual relations; and (3) the tree would give access to some kind of universal knowledge (Wallace).

The first and third views have merit, in that the man and woman did exercise self-determination, tragic though it was, and they did acquire the ability to know and to do good and evil through the experiential awakening resulting from their choice. While their newly fallen state of knowledge could hardly be called omniscience (as is the case with God), it could be called godlike (Gen 3:22) in some meaningful sense. Although humankind's likeness to God was already substantial (Gen 1:26-27), the temptation to be even more godlike by gaining the "wisdom" of "knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5-6) apparently held decisive appeal (Sailhamer 1992). The consequences of that capitulation were cosmic in scope, including not just the previously threatened death (Gen 3:19; see Gen 2:17), but the first of the curse sections (Gen 3:14-19) for sinful (i.e., evil) behavior in the Pentateuch (cf. Lev 26; Deut 28). Whatever "godlikeness" was gained, it was hardly worth expulsion from the garden (Gen 3:22), as well as the resulting desperate spiritual condition and distancing from the Lord God.

2. The Evil Inclination of the Heart. While "the knowledge of good and evil" offered the opportunity to choose the good, the prevailing direction for the human race turned out to be the choice for evil. Eventually, humanity's corporate wickedness became so pervasive that "every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5 NRSV). In a reversal of the wording of Genesis 1, where everything that God "saw" was good, the Lord now "saw" (Gen 6:5, 12) humanity's bent for evil saturating the world. As a result, the Lord regretted creating the human race (Gen 6:6).

Such utter moral corruption (Gen 6:11-12),

which worked itself out in chronically violent behavior (Gen 6:11, 13), brought on the Lord's unprecedented judgment in the *flood. A. P. Ross points out the wordplay between "corrupted" and "destroyed," both of which derive from the same Hebrew root *(šāḥat)*. In other words, since humanity was wantonly destroying the good world God had created, God responded by justly destroying them. Only *Noah, who "walked with God" and is described as "righteous" and "blameless" (Gen 6:9), in contrast to the overwhelmingly evil bent attributed to the rest of humanity (Gen 6:5), and his family are said to have been spared by God's *grace (Gen 6:8).

The flood, however, did not cure the evil intent of the human heart. Though God promised there would never again be a reenactment of that judgment on humankind (Gen 8:21-22; 9:11, 15; cf. 2 Pet 3:6-7) he did so in spite of clearly recognizing that "every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood" (Gen 8:21 NIV).

Although evil is never again described as all-encompassing, the remainder of the Pentateuch contains numerous examples of that ongoing evil intent. Whether the blatant wickedness of Sodom (Gen 13:13), *Joseph's evil treatment at the hands of his brothers (Gen 50:15, 17), or Israel's tendency to the evils of idolatry (Ex 32:22; Deut 4:25) or grumbling unbelief (Num 14:27, 35; Deut 1:35), it is still the evil human heart that overflows into wider behavior. That is undoubtedly a major reason why, as *Moses looked ahead, he repeatedly urged the new generation that would enter the Promised Land to "purge the evil from among you" (e.g., Deut 13:5; 17:7).

3. Evil Circumstances.

The Hebrew terms most commonly rendered as moral evil are also frequently used to refer to that which is more generally *bad* in a variety of senses. For example, *Lot feared the disastrous (i.e., evil) judgment coming upon Sodom (Gen 19:19). Joseph delivered a bad (evil) report on his brothers (Gen 37:2), and they, in turn, sold him into slavery, telling *Jacob that Joseph was killed by some ferocious (evil) animal (Gen 37:20, 33; see also Lev 26:6). Upon arriving in Egypt, Jacob said of his life, "My years have been few and difficult [evil]" (Gen 47:9), contrasted with Abraham's death at a "good *[tôb]* old age" (Gen 25:8). The Hebrews making bricks in Egypt found themselves in an increasingly difficult (evil) situation (Ex 5:19). Later, that same exodus generation bitterly complained about how "evil" (i.e., dry and desolate) Kadesh-barnea was (Num 20:5), though they had forfeited their claim to a land flowing with milk and honey (Num 13:27). The next generation was promised that if they were obedient to the Lord as they lived in the land of promise, they would be spared the "evil" diseases of Egypt (Deut 7:15).

4. Evil Against the Covenant.

The final references to *evil* in the Pentateuch (Deut 30—31) seem purposefully to recall the initial uses (Gen 2—3; 6; 8). Moses restates the covenant to the generation about to enter the land, echoing the choice given to *Adam and *Eve: "I set before you today life and prosperity [good], death and destruction [evil]" (Deut 30:15 NIV; cf. Gen 2:17). Tragically, Moses knew in advance that all too soon Israel's choice would be to "do evil in the sight of the Lord" and to "become utterly corrupt," bringing "disaster" (evil) from the Lord (Deut 31:29). Thus, in these two epochal life-and-death choices that the Lord graciously gave to humankind made in his image, which form an inclusio around the Pentateuch, the outcomes are eerily parallel: choosing to know and to do evil, with deadly consequences.

See also BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; ETHICS; HARDNESS OF HEART; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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EXILE

The OT concept of exile, though most often associated with the latter part of Israel's history (the removal of Israel to Assyria, Judah to Babylon), finds its canonical roots in the Pentateuch. In fact, the first recorded exile is *Adam and *Eve's banishment from the garden of *Eden. Throughout the rest of the Pentateuch the details and implications of this central concept are spelled out in terms of exile's cause (violation of covenant standards), effects (defeat, departure from one's homeland, a shattering of various relationships, deprivation) and ultimate outcome (a divinely initiated return and restoration). It is against this primary canonical backdrop that the balance of Israel's history, characterized as it was both by exile and restoration, should be read.

1. Exile in the Text of the Pentateuch
2. Theological Motif of Exile

1. Exile in the Text of the Pentateuch.

A semantic field of words in the Pentateuch can be associated with the idea of exile, among which can be found the important verbal root *glh* ("uncover, remove") with its various derivatives. While *glh* generally denotes the uncovering of an object, in the Pentateuch it usually refers to the uncovering of the human body (Gen 9:21), especially in Leviticus where *glh* regulates behavior with regard to nakedness within the family context (Lev 18:6-19; 20:11-21). The background for nakedness related to exile is the idea of prisoners of *war being led naked into exile as a form of humiliation. This is well known from ancient Near Eastern inscriptions and pictorial depictions from the middle of the second millennium onward (cf. the ivory inlays from Megiddo).

Nakedness associated with exile is also reflected in the use of the adjective *ʿêrōm* ("naked") in Deuteronomy 28:48, where the Israelites are confronted with a vision of exile as one of the curses in case of *covenant breakage. Interestingly, *ʿêrōm* only appears in one other context within the Pentateuch, namely, in the account of the *Fall (Gen 3:7, 10, 11). In this case, the realization of nakedness is depicted as an immediate result of *sin and precedes God's curses on fallen humanity and the expulsion from Eden (Gen 3:24).

The root *šbh* ("take captive") is used in a more technical way to denote captivity or the act of taking captive. Genesis 14:14 describes Lot as having been taken captive by the invading kings, while Laban accuses Jacob of having taken away his daughters like "captives of war" (Gen 31:26). During the wanderings in the desert, the king of Arad takes captive some of the Israelites (Num 21:1), while the Israelites themselves take captives from the Midianites (Num 31:9). In Deuteronomy 20—21 legislation regarding warfare and conquest are presented, and the taking of captives is regulated in a more detailed manner (Deut 21:10-14). The derived noun *šĕbî* ("exile") also appears in the context of the curses and *blessings at the end of Deuteronomy, in relationship with the verb *glh*, demonstrating the close semantic relationship between the two roots. God is prophesying captivity for Israel's descendants if they do not adhere to the stipulations of the covenant (Deut 28:41).

The verb *pûṣ* ("scatter") can be found in important contexts pertaining to the concept of exile in the Pentateuch: three times in the Tower of *Babel narrative (Gen 11:4, 8, 9), where God scatters humankind in response to their endeavor to make themselves a name by building a tower; and two times in the final chapters of Deuteronomy (Deut 28:64; 30:3) within the context of the covenant blessings and curses. The verb denotes a rupture of sociological ties as an important characteristic of the exile motif.

An often-overlooked aspect of the semantic field of "exile" can be found in the root *šûb* ("turn back, return"), referring to the positive connotations of the idea of exile—the return from exile—and as such serving almost as an antonym to *pûṣ*. While *šûb* occurs in a variety of contexts, such as the physical reversal of direction in the movement of objects (Deut 24:13) or persons (Gen 21:32; Ex 13:17), it is also used figuratively in the sense of reestablishing a broken relationship (Gen 41:13; Num 35:28). Especially the moral and theological character of the root has to be noted, namely, expressing the restoration of the relationship between God and an in-

dividual or between God and the people of Israel as a whole (Deut 4:30). As such, it is used almost as a *Leitwort* in the important passage of Deuteronomy 30:1-10, occurring seven times in only ten verses (Deut 30:1, 2, 3 [twice], 8, 9, 10). The subject of *šûb* in this passage alternates between the people of Israel and God; that is, if they return to him, he will return to bless them by gathering them "from all the nations among which he has scattered" them (Deut 30:3), referring to the possibility of exile. One can observe this same usage of *šûb* as a synonym for the return from exile, especially in the exilic prophets, speaking of Israel's return to their own land (Jer 31:16; Ezek 29:14).

In summarizing the textual evidence, it can be demonstrated that the different verbal roots and their derivatives frequently occur in proximity to each other, forming a distinct semantic field connotative of the idea of exile in the Pentateuch.

2. Theological Motif of Exile

While the theology of exile is usually associated with prophetic literature, the Pentateuch presents a rather developed picture of this theological motif. In this section, several important occurrences of the concept of exile in the Pentateuch will be mentioned, reflecting its development in early Israelite history. The initial appearance of exile in the Pentateuch has to be associated with the account of the Fall in Genesis 3. Here the first awareness of nakedness as related to the fall into sin, together with the resulting expulsion from paradise, initiates the recurring theme of exile in the Pentateuch. *Adam and *Eve experience various aspects of exile as a direct result of their disobedience (Gen 3:6): the shame evoked by nakedness (Gen 3:7), the breakage of the harmonious relationship with God (Gen 3:8) and *land (Gen 3:17-19), and the forced leaving of the homeland (Gen 3:24). But they also receive the promise of restoration, in the form of the programmatic prophecy in Genesis 3:15 that traditionally has been understood as pointing to the *Messiah.

In the following generation of humanity the exile motif is presented by the alienation of *Cain from the ground (Gen 4:13-14), which is linguistically connected to the exile from Eden in the preceding chapter (Gen 3:24) by the recurrence of the verbal root *grš* ("to drive out, cast out"). Breaking the harmonious relationship that should exist between humanity and land since creation (Gen 2:15) leads Cain to be a "wanderer" and "fugitive" in the land of Nod, the land of "wanderings" (Gen 4:16), never being able again to establish firm roots.

The Tower of Babel narrative (Gen 11:1-9) uses the introductory geographical notion of migrating "eastward" (Gen 11:2) in order to indicate a movement away from God's blessings, that is, from Eden toward exile, represented by the scattering of humankind through divine intervention (Gen 11:4, 8-9). The call of *Abram out of "*Ur of the Chaldeans" (i.e., from the east; Gen 11:28; 12:1; 15:7) reverses this situation, indicating a movement back from exile toward the Promised Land.

*Jacob has to leave his home and go into exile after he has received the patriarchal blessings from his father in place of *Esau and has to fear his brother's retribution (Gen 27:41-45). However, although Jacob's dishonesty results in years of hardship and exile in the continuation of the narrative, Esau is not portrayed very positively, since he previously "despised his birthright" (Gen 25:34) and was "a source of grief" to his parents (Gen 26:35), indicating that God's blessing rightly rests on Jacob. There is a promise of return from exile included in the story (Gen 28:15), which finds its fulfillment in the return of Jacob to Canaan and his reconciliation with Esau (Gen 32).

After killing an Egyptian in an impulsive act of self-justice (Ex 2:11-15), *Moses, being afraid of the legal consequences, flees into exile to Midian and returns after forty years to *Egypt, in order to lead the people of Israel out of their Egyptian exile back to a place known to them only from family traditions. However, the patriarchs Jacob and *Joseph had made it clear that Egypt was never to be considered their home, merely a place of exile from which the people of Israel were to return one day to Palestine (Gen 49:29-32; 50:24). In the history of Israel, since the time of Abraham, Egypt always played the role of providing temporary exile to *Israelites on an individual basis or as a group (Gen 12:10; 37:28; 46:3-6). It is therefore no wonder that Yahweh threatens Israel with the possibility of bringing them back to Egypt as punishment for their disobedience (Deut 28:68).

An interesting aspect of Israelite legislation is the institution of the *cities of refuge in Numbers 35:9-15 (see also Ex 21:13; Deut 4:41-43;

19:1-13). In the case of the unintentional killing of another person, these cities provided a type of exile for the accidental slayer where he had to stay until the death of the local high *priest, in order to be protected from retribution. Although it is not clear whether the death of the high priest served as expiation for the death or demarcated the end of a judicial era, the elements of exile inherent in the institution of the cities of refuge are clearly discernible. There is a rupture of relationships, the necessity of leaving home and finding refuge or asylum somewhere else for a certain period of time, but there is also the possibility of return, when certain conditions have been met.

Functioning as a key passage for the theological motif of exile in the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 30:1-10 deserves special attention. It occurs within the context of the covenant renewal at the end of the Pentateuch, including the *blessings and curses, with the ultimate curse being exile (Deut 28:41). While the terms and conditions of the covenant are presented to the people (Deut 29), Deuteronomy 30:1-10 depicts the results of covenant adherence and continues with an appeal to choose between *life and death after having laid out the consequences of each choice. As mentioned above, the root *šûb* is central to the passage, strongly indicating the presence of the theological theme of exile and, more precisely, return from exile. This is conditioned by genuine repentance and return to God (Deut 30:1-2) and will result in a restoration of property (Deut 30:3), prosperity (Deut 30:5), homeland (Deut 30:4-5), protection from enemies (Deut 30:7) and, most importantly, a renewal of the relationship between God and the individual or people, characterized by the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6) and obedience to the law (Deut 30:10).

In conclusion, the motif of exile in the Pentateuch must be understood from the perspective of covenant theology. The following elements can be identified as part of the theological theme: the breakage of the covenant relationship as caused by an act of disobedience with regard to the precepts of the law. This leads to exile in the form of a departure from the individual's or people's known environment, their homeland, the shattering of the harmonious relationship between humanity and land, the rupturing of social ties, including humiliation, often violence and always loss of possessions. However, together with the threat of exile, a promise of restoration and return is made based on the *repentance of the individual or people during their experience of exile. Return from exile is always initiated by God and accompanied by promises of complete restoration of former circumstances and often more. The motif of exile, as developed in the Pentateuch, is one of the governing themes of Israelite history, perhaps the *Leitmotiv* with regard to Judaism, and continues to be important for Christianity as there remains an expectation of the final return from history's exile to humanity's homeland, typologically foreshadowed by the land gift to Israel after their Egyptian and Babylonian exiles respectively.

See also BLESSINGS AND CURSES; EDEN, GARDEN OF; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

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EXODUS, BOOK OF

Exodus is the second of the five books of the Pentateuch. The name *Exodus* is derived from the title of the book in the Greek and Latin versions of the Bible (in the Hebrew text, the title is "And these are the names," after the opening words, or "Names"). The word *exodus* means "road out" and refers to the key event in the book, the divine act of deliverance at the sea that enabled the people of God to escape from *Egyptian oppression.

1. The Story Line of Exodus
2. Exodus Within the Context of the Pentateuch
3. The Structure and Genre of Exodus
4. The Origins of Exodus
5. Chronology and Geography
6. Key Themes in Exodus
7. Some Special Issues
8. Exodus in the Old and New Testament

1. The Story Line of Exodus.

The people of Israel, having settled in Egypt because of famine conditions, grew "exceedingly strong" there. But after many years (unspecified) and a change in Egyptian leadership they were enslaved and their future was jeopardized. In response to their cry, God committed himself to their deliverance and commissioned *Moses to take up the task. In the face of *Pharaoh's continued failure to let the people go, God through Moses sent various *signs and wonders; these (ten) plagues culminated in the death of the Egyptian firstborn.

In the wake of this event Pharaoh let the people leave Egypt, but he quickly changed his mind and pursued them. The people were finally delivered when God parted the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to pass through but closed them up again to engulf the pursuing Egyptians. Moses and his sister *Miriam responded to God's salvation by leading the people in songs of thanksgiving. God then guided the Israelites through the wilderness toward the land of promise, sustaining them with food and water and protecting them from marauders.

Upon the Israelites' arrival at Mount Sinai, God, through the mediation of Moses, concluded a *covenant with the people, revealed the *law and gave instructions for constructing a divine dwelling place in their midst. The Israelites, however, violated the covenant by building a *golden calf, and their future was again threatened, this time by the wrath of God. Through Moses' mediation the covenant was renewed and God's relationship with Israel was reestablished, but this time in such a way that God's mercy and forgiveness were lifted up for special attention. The book ends with the construction of the *tabernacle and God's descent to dwell among the people.

2. Exodus Within the Context of the Pentateuch.

Exodus does not stand alone but is an integral "chapter" in the larger Pentateuch (*see* Literary Structure of the Pentateuch). Exodus carries key Genesis themes forward and in turn provides the essential backdrop for what happens in the rest of the Pentateuch. Exodus may be considered the center of the Pentateuch, especially in view of the exodus deliverance, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai and the construction of the tabernacle.

2.1. Exodus and Genesis. Exodus is literarily linked to Genesis. The opening list of names (Ex 1:1-5) harks back to the *genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27 and makes clear that the people whose story Exodus tells are to be identified with the family of *Jacob that had migrated to Egypt (see Gen 47:27-28). The journey of *Abraham and *Sarah to Egypt and their ventures there (Gen 12:10-20) anticipate Israel's later experience (note the confrontation with Pharaoh, the plagues and the people going out with gifts). The oppressive sojourn in Egypt and the exodus are foretold in Genesis 15:13-14. The opening segment of Exodus is also linked to Genesis with its reference to the fulfillment of God's promises to the ancestors (cf. Ex 1:7 with Gen 17:6). These divine promises are the driving force behind God's actions on behalf of the enslaved Israelites, as God remembers the covenant with Abraham, *Isaac and Jacob (Ex 2:24; 6:4-5, 8; cf. Gen 15:18; 17:1-8). This covenant continues to include the promises of a land (Ex 3:16-17; 6:8; 32:13; 33:1-3; cf. Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:18-21; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3-4; 35:11-12; 50:24), many descendants (Ex 32:13; cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5; 17:5-6; 22:17-18; 26:4, 24; 46:3) and a special relationship with

God (Ex 6:7; cf. Gen 17:7).

The close connection between Exodus and Genesis is not simply linked to the ancestral promises. Exodus 1:7 also establishes a connection between the growth of the Israelites in Egypt and the divine word in *creation (see Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7). That is to say, God's activity among the Israelites has a creation-wide purpose. God's redemptive work on behalf of Israel stands in the service of God's intentions for the creation as a whole. Exodus 9:16 is especially to be noted: God acts on Israel's behalf in order to "make my name resound through all the earth." Redemption leads to a new creation.

2.2. Exodus and Leviticus—Deuteronomy. Exodus is closely linked to the books that follow. Exodus closes with God coming to dwell among the Israelites in the tabernacle, built exactly according to the Lord's command. Leviticus begins at that point (Lev 1:1) as God speaks to Moses from the tabernacle regarding the offerings to be brought there (Lev 1—7). These offerings are related primarily to the sinfulness of the people (evident especially in Ex 32:1-6) and the revelation of God as merciful and forgiving (Ex 34:6-7). The texts regarding *sacrifice are thus good news. The God who has chosen to dwell *with* the people (Ex 40:34-38) provides offerings *for* them, for the purpose of the restoration of relationship. Furthermore, God's instructions for the appointment of priests (Ex 29) are fulfilled in Leviticus 8.

All of the laws in Leviticus and the instructions in Numbers 1:1—10:10 are set in the context of Mount Sinai. Numbers 10:11 reports the people leaving Sinai, and the balance of Numbers narrates the second stage of Israel's wilderness wanderings. Still, several of its stories bear a family resemblance to the first stage in Exodus 15:22—18:27 (cf., e.g., Ex 17:1-7 with Num 20:2-13). The last chapters of Numbers record that the Sinai generation of the Israelites died off in the wilderness and the new generation (see Num 26) proceeded to the border of the land of promise. The book of Deuteronomy consists of God's word to this new generation. Deuteronomy especially depends upon Exodus, with its rehearsal of Exodus events (e.g., Deut 11:1-7), almost exact repetition of the Ten Commandments (Deut 5:6-21; *see* Decalogue), recasting of the Exodus laws (cf., e.g., Ex 21:2-11 with Deut 15:12-18) and hortatory appeals to God's Exodus activity as motivation for this redeemed people's trust and obedience (e.g., Deut 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22).

3. The Structure and Genre of Exodus. Exodus is a complex body of literature, and readers are assisted in their understanding of the book by observing its structure(s) and types of literature.

3.1. Structure. Exodus is an integral part of the Pentateuch but also has its own integrity as a book. The book moves from Israel's bondage to Pharaoh to its bonding with its ancestral God, from serving Pharaoh to serving Yahweh (the Hebrew root *'bd* ["to serve"] occurs ninety-seven times in Exodus). The key to this transition in Israel's servitude is the deliverance at the Red Sea. As such, the book of Exodus moves from slavery through salvation to worship; the number of chapters focused on an enslaved Israel approximates the chapters given to matters of worship, and God's redemptive act enables Israel's new standing before God. More particularly, the book moves from the enforced construction of buildings for Pharaoh to the glad and obedient offering for a building for the worship of God (see Fretheim 1991). The journey of God in Exodus is also notable. God is hardly present at the beginning of the book, but at the end God has moved down from his distant abode at the top of the mountain to become an intense presence in the very midst of the community of faith.

In its broadest outlines the book may be structured as follows:

3.1.1. Israel in Egypt, Its Deliverance by God and Its Response (Ex 1:1—15:21). More specifically, this segment may be outlined: Israel's growth and bondage in Egypt (Ex 1:1—2:25); the call of Moses (Ex 3:1—7:7); the plagues (Ex 7:8—11:10); Passover and Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:1—13:16); deliverance at the sea (Ex 13:17—14:31); the songs of Moses and Miriam (Ex 15:1-21). This entire section follows the general pattern of a lament psalm (cf. Ps 13); it moves from the situation of distress and the cry to God (Ex 1—2) to God's response in word and deed (Ex 3—14) and concludes with the people's response of praise and thanksgiving (Ex 15:1-21).

3.1.2. Israel in the Wilderness and God's Providence (Ex 15:22—18:27). In strictest terms, Israel leaves Egypt for the wilderness at Exodus 12:37-42, but the escape from Egypt is not final until the sea has been crossed and Pharaoh's armies have been defeated.

3.1.3. Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:1—40:38). This section may be outlined as follows: God's covenant with Israel and the gift of law (Ex 19:1—24:18); God's instructions regarding the tabernacle and its leadership (Ex 25:1—31:18); Israel's fall and restoration (Ex 32:1—34:35); the obedient construction of the tabernacle and God's descent to dwell therein (Ex 35:1—40:38).

3.2. Genre. Exodus consists of several types of literature, but narrative predominates and provides the framework for the book as a whole (see Mann; Fretheim 1991). Other types of literature are woven into this framework, including poetry (Ex 15:1-21), laws (Ex 20:1-17; 20:22—23:33; 31:12-17; 34:11-26) and instructions for celebrating Passover and Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:1-27; 12:43—13:16) and for building the tabernacle together with related institutional matters (Ex 25:1—31:18). That neither the laws nor the instructions relating to worship stand isolated from the narrative is important for the interpretation of the different genres.

3.2.1. Regarding Worship. Two blocks of Exodus texts attract attention. First, in Exodus 12:1—15:21 the reader moves from Passover and Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:1-27) to narrative (Ex 12:27-42), back to the same religious festivals (Ex 12:43—13:16), then again to narrative (Ex 13:17—14:31) and finally to the liturgical responses of Moses and Miriam (Ex 15:1-21). Genres of worship enclose the narratives of God's saving work and suggest how these texts are to be interpreted. On the one hand, the practices of Israelite worship have shaped the telling of the story—liturgy has shaped literature. On the other hand, the narratives give "body" to the liturgical material. Readers encounter the narrative of the tenth plague (Ex 12:29-42) through the lens provided by the immediately preceding Passover material (Ex 12:1-28). The final plague thereby becomes the first observance of Passover; the historical event is represented as a liturgical event. God is thereby understood to act on behalf of Israel's salvation in both historical deed and liturgical event. As with the first celebration of Passover, so also in all subsequent celebrations, God works salvation on behalf of faithful participants.

The worship materials associated with the instructions regarding the tabernacle, its leadership and the *sabbath (Ex 25:1—31:18), and Israel's obedient response (Ex 35:1—40:33) enclose the narrative regarding the sin of the golden calf (Ex 32:1—34:35); this section concludes with a narrative regarding God's descent to the place of worship. The tabernacle, especially when viewed as a place of sacrifice (see Lev 1—7), is thus seen as a divine provision for the sake of a sinful people. God will be with this people and act on behalf of their redemption. These somewhat tedious texts are thus understood to be crucial, for they constitute God's provision for the ongoing forgiveness of the people of God.

3.2.2. Regarding Law. The law is not drawn up into a code but is integrated into Israel's life journey. The reader moves from the story (Ex 19:1-25) to law (Ex 20:1-17) to story (Ex 20:18-21) to law (Ex 20:22—23:33) and back to story (Ex 24:1-18). As such the law is understood in more personal and relational terms; it is a gift of the God who is always willing the best for Israel. Moreover, the law is thereby seen in dynamic rather than static terms, as God is seen to have new words to speak in view of life's ongoing twists and turns. New occasions teach new duties; that is, God's law is open to new developments (as in Deuteronomy or Acts 10:1-29) rather than forever fixed. Moreover, the giving of the law by God is more closely related to God's action in the narrative; God's purposes in both law and story are seen to be parallel, "for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive" (Deut 6:24). Law is to be obeyed, not just because God says so, but because it serves life and contributes to the well-being of the community.

4. The Origins of Exodus.

The study of Exodus has usually been joined with the study of the Pentateuch as a whole. The traditional understanding of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, though still affirmed by some, has usually been set aside in favor of a more complex understanding of origins (*see* Source Criticism). The Documentary Hypothesis—that the Pentateuch consisted of four major sources (J, E, D, P) and redactors, written over some five hundred years from about 950 to 450 B.C.—emerged in the nineteenth century and has had considerable influence (see Childs). Though this understanding of pentateuchal origins is in disarray these days, and scholars now speak in these terms with less precision (though see Propp), most consider the Pentateuch (including Exodus) to be a composite text that came into being over an extensive period of time. Additionally, most scholars believe that the

major written sources contain much older material (both oral and written) that was handed down through the generations, perhaps even from the time of Moses. Similarities between the laws in Exodus 20—23 and ancient Near Eastern law codes from the second millennium may also speak to the age of some of the material in Exodus.

5. Chronology and Geography.

The narrative of Exodus is usually not considered historical narrative, at least in any modern sense. The book makes no claim to be writing a history of this period; theological and kerygmatic interests and issues dominate its pages. Whatever historical data the texts present have been included and interpreted in view of these overarching interests, which makes the task of the modern interpreter more difficult. The data may often not have been understood in a precise or literal fashion, but at times it may have been.

In the legitimate scholarly effort to discern times and places for the events of which the book speaks, the evidence is meager and ambiguous. For example, the names of the pharaohs are not given, the location of the sea crossing and the wilderness stops are unknown (*see* Exodus Route and Wilderness Itinerary), and the chronological references are vague (e.g., Ex 9:31-32) or, if precise (e.g., Ex 40:17), are of uncertain relationship to a given year. We know, for example, that the stay at Mount Sinai lasted eleven months and nineteen days (see Ex 19:1; Num 1:1; 10:11), but we are not told what year or even what century is involved. The reference to a 430-year sojourn in Egypt (Ex 12:40) is also difficult to assess; compare, for example, the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 as well as the four generations in Genesis 15:16, which in turn matches the genealogy in Exodus 6:14-25 (cf. Gal 3:17). In addition, 1 Kings 6:1 speaks of 480 years from the exodus to the building of the temple (956 B.C. or so), but is the number literal or symbolic (i.e., 12x40)? (*See* Exodus, Date of.)

As a result of these uncertainties, scholars disagree about matters of *chronology and geography (see Bright). In this difficult effort to reconstruct the history of the period, some possibilities have emerged, though no specific evidence has been unearthed. Inasmuch as Semitic foreigners are known to have lived in Egypt during the second millennium, the presence of Israelites there would fit the pattern. Some linguistic influence has been noted (e.g., Moses is an Egyptian name). The involvement of Israelites in building the store-cities of Pithom and Rameses (Ex 1:11; Heb Raamses) fits well with the known use of slaves in the construction activities of certain pharaohs in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.

Most scholars date the exodus in the early part of the reign of Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.). On the basis of 1 Kings 6:1, some consider the exodus to have occurred some two hundred years earlier, during the reign of Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 B.C.). It is possible that both of these hypotheses could be at least partially right if the people of Israel left Egypt at different times over the course of the centuries they were in Egypt (cf. the various journeys in Gen 37—50). This understanding could also help explain the ambiguity of the texts that speak of the route of the wilderness wanderings; people coming out of Egypt may have taken different routes along the several existing trails through the wilderness. The location of Mount Sinai is also uncertain; most locate it in the south-central part of the Sinai Peninsula and identify it with Jebel Musa or a nearby mountain, although a more northern location is also possible.

Also difficult to assess is the number of Israelites who are said to have participated in the exodus from Egypt. Exodus 12:37 speaks of "about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children" (cf. Ex 38:26; Num 1:45-46; 4:48). It is commonly agreed that this would mean more than two million people. The number has been interpreted in several ways: (1) literally; (2) taking *'elep* to refer to "family units" rather than to "thousand," so that the number is six hundred family units (*see* Historical Criticism); and (3) hyperbolically. It seems best to understand the number in terms of the approximate population of Israel at the time of David and Solomon; the number would be a way of confessing that all Israel from this later time came out of Egypt.

6. Key Themes in Exodus.

The book of Exodus is filled with matters of theological interest, not least because God is often the subject of the speaking and acting (see Brueggemann; Dozeman; Fretheim 1991, 1996; Gowan; Janzen).

6.1. A Theology of Creation. *Creation is the most basic theological category with which the

book of Exodus works. It is the Creator God who has enabled Israel to be fruitful and multiply and grow "exceedingly strong" (Ex 1:7, 20; see Gen 1:28); without this creative work of God there would be no people to redeem. Because this creative divine work is endangered by Pharaoh's genocidal policies, seen both in the killing of children and in the negative effects of these policies on the natural order (the plagues), God must act to save creation, both human and nonhuman.

It is this Creator God who accomplishes Israel's redemption, the hymnic celebration of which (Ex 15) is filled with creation vocabulary and themes. Moreover, God's redemption of Israel is not an end in itself but is for the sake of all creation, that it might be restored to what God intended it to be. The effect of God's salvation on the nonhuman may be observed in the wilderness wanderings as the natural order, devastated by the plagues, begins to function again according to God's intentions. This close linkage of creation and salvation can also be observed in several Isaiah texts (e.g., Is 35:1-10). Regarding humans, the issue for God finally is that his name be declared to the entire earth (Ex 9:16) and that God be known by all (see next section). God's calling of Israel is in tune with God's own work and is given a creation-wide scope. Because "all the earth is God's" (Ex 9:29; 19:5), Israel is called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy nation among all others.

6.2. The Knowledge of God. The verb *yāda*ʿ ("to know") is a key word in Exodus (see Propp). In an ironic way, it is Pharaoh who sets the question to be addressed: "Who is Yahweh?" (Ex 5:2). God himself, who "knows" Israel's suffering and sin (Ex 2:25; 3:7; 32:22) and knows them "by name" (Ex 33:17), is caught up in the concern that this knowing be mutual. And so God speaks and acts so that people (Egyptians, Israelites, all) may come to know the answer to Pharaoh's question. Most basically, God speaks and acts so that Israel may know God's name, that it is "the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians" (Ex 6:7 NRSV; cf. Ex 6:37; 16:6, 12; 33:16). Moreover, this knowledge is to be passed on to their children and grandchildren (Ex 10:1-2), and the worship life of Israel is to be ordered in such a way that the people will know that Yahweh is their God who has brought them out of Egypt (Ex 29:46) and sanctifies them (Ex 31:13).

But the divine purposes with respect to the knowledge of God is expanded to embrace others, including Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22 [MT 8:6, 18]; 9:14, 29; 11:7; 14:4, 18) and the Midianites (Jethro comes to know and confess, Ex 18:11; cf. 15:14-16 for still others). God's concern for self-disclosure is thus expanded to include the world (see Ex 9:16). The creation-wide purposes of God in these events (noted above) are once more clearly in view.

The narrative of the call of Moses, drawn out over several chapters (Ex 3:1—7:7), speaks in remarkable ways about how the knowledge of God is gained. While God takes the initiative with Moses, and this connects in turn with existing knowledge of God available in the tradition (Ex 3:6; 6:3), Moses' persistent inquiries draw God out, and consequently more knowledge of God becomes available. Human questions find an openness in God, and God's interaction with a questioning human party leads to Moses' fuller knowledge of God and God's ways. Simple deference on the part of Moses would have closed down the revelatory possibilities.

Knowledge of God is gained, then, not only in and through inferences drawn from divine actions in history, but also through direct conversation. When the events of which God speaks do take place, they enhance the already-existing knowledge of God. God's personal encounter with Moses enables Moses to see the "something more" in the event when it does occur.

6.3. The Portrayal of God. How does the book of Exodus answer Pharaoh's question: Who is Yahweh? Readers must be careful not to jump to easy conclusions. Exodus reveals a complexity in the character of God that defies any simple description. God himself makes several claims regarding the divine identity. Direct statements such as "I am compassionate" (Ex 22:27 [MT 22:26]) prepare readers for the climactic divine self-identification in the narrative (Ex 34:6-7 NRSV): "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Given the status of this claim in Exodus (and in the OT, e.g., Joel 2:13), the God who is the subject of sentences in the narrative

is to be interpreted through this confessional (creedal) lens.

One important aspect of the portrayal of God in Exodus is that God works directly, but always through means. The opening chapters of Exodus set this divine way in place (Ex 1:15-22; 2:1-10): God works through five lowly women, acting in civil disobedience, to accomplish the divine purposes (and God is hardly the subject of a verb!). Thereby God works in unobtrusive, vulnerable and even risky ways, but these women prove to be highly effective against Pharaoh's ruthless power. The divine declaration regarding Israel's liberation in Exodus 3:7-10 furthers the point. God will not act alone in accomplishing the deliverance of Israel. God will work in and through Moses (note that both God and Moses will "bring" Israel out of Egypt; see Ex 14:31; Is 63:12). In some sense God has chosen to be dependent on human (and nonhuman) agents in moving toward the divine objectives.

In the plague narratives divine agency is explicitly associated with only six plagues (nos. 1, 4-5, 7-8, 10), in five of which Moses, Aaron and nonhuman agents are involved (1, 5, 7-8, 10); in four plagues only human agency is cited (2-3, 6, 9). Bracketing the plague narratives, only God is cited as agent in Exodus 7:3 and only Moses and Aaron in Exodus 11:10. In the four cases where a plague is removed (2, 4, 7-8), God acts "according to the word of Moses" (Ex 8:13, 31 [MT 8:9, 27]; 9:33; 10:18). In the sea-crossing narrative, the divine instruments include several nonhuman agents (east wind, sea, cloud, darkness, walls of water, deep, earth); the nonhuman is the savior of the human! God also acts through Moses' hand and rod, which "divide" the sea and close it back up (Ex 14:16, 21, 26-27). Again, while God takes the initiative, God chooses not to act alone.

The Exodus narrative raises the question: Who will be recognized as the sovereign one, Yahweh or Pharaoh? A parallel question is: What kind of sovereignty is being exercised? Pharaoh's and Yahweh's ways of being sovereign are contrasted in the narrative (cf. Ex 3:7-10 with Ex 5:5-18). In Exodus 5:5-18 (and elsewhere) Pharaoh, upon hearing the cries of the people, is unmoved by their suffering, blames them for the problems they face and intensifies the oppression. In his exercise of sovereignty, Pharaoh holds absolute sway and remains unaffected by his subjects; he is an unmoved mover. In contrast (Ex 3:7-10; cf. Ex 2:23-25) Israel's God hears the cries of the oppressed, "knows" their suffering in such a way that their experience becomes his own and moves in powerful ways to remove them from the situation with the help of Moses (who can resist the call of God to do so). Later in Exodus readers will witness a God who is open to reversing directions for the sake of the people upon Moses' intercession (Ex 32:14). Israel's God is a suffering sovereign who does not insist on absolute control; at the same time, God will be persistent and powerful in moving toward his salvific goals and will remain steadfast in love and always faithful to *promises made. At the end of Exodus, God chooses to be intensely present among a persistently disloyal people.

6.4. Oppression and Liberation. As noted above, the liberation of Israelite slaves is a central event in Exodus, but it is not the final objective of God's work; redemption is in the service of a new creation. To this end the Exodus narrative moves beyond liberation to new vistas of life and well-being, embodied especially in the gift of the law "for our good always" (Deut 6:24) and the provision of life-giving worship at the tabernacle for a sinful people. The experience of liberation that propels Israel on its journey from Egypt to the land of promise cannot bypass these Sinai provisions, for God determines that they are necessary for true life. Liberation is not enough.

Salvation is a complex reality in Exodus. Most obviously it refers to God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian oppression (*yĕšûʿâ* ["salvation" in Ex 14:13; 15:2; *nāṣal* ["deliver"] in Ex 3:8; 6:6; 18:4-11; *gāʾal* ["redeem"] in Ex 6:6; 15:13). Salvation here has a sociopolitical dimension, though its effects upon Israel catch up the human spirit as well (see Ex 6:9). In these texts salvation is understood as deliverance from the *sins of other people* (the Egyptians) and their devastating effects. Later in Exodus salvation is understood as deliverance from *their own sins* and their effects. Moses prays that God deliver the people from the effects of their sins (Ex 32:7-14) and forgive the sin of the people (Ex 32:32; 34:9); the identity of God is marked by the forgiveness of iniquity, transgression and sin (Ex 34:7). In the provisions for offerings at the tabernacle, salvation is associated with atonement (see Ex 29:36; 30:10, 12-16; Lev 1—7 develops the language of atonement more fully). Also to be noted are

God's provisions in the wilderness for Israel's health and healing, food and water, and protection from their enemies (Ex 15:22—17:16). The verb *nāṣal* ("deliver," see above) is used in Exodus 18:8 for God's deliverance from "all the hardship that had beset them on the way" through the wilderness. In these varying contexts it is shown that God's salvation has to do with both internal and external dimensions of life, with both sin and hurt (and all their effects), whether self inflicted, imposed by others or due to causes unknown.

The word of God announced to Moses regarding future events has a two-edged character to it. Most basically, it is good news for the Israelites: God will deliver them from oppression and lead them through the wilderness to a land they can call their own. But this word is also a hard word, even an offensive word, especially for Pharaoh and the Egyptians. For God here takes sides: against the oppressor and for the oppressed. How is Israel (or any reader) to interpret this divine will and action? The answer is not obvious, for the oppressed might turn the tables and become the oppressors. It is precisely in view of this possibility (and reality, as it turns out) that the law formulates what it means for God to be compassionate and for Israel to act in a corresponding way toward the needy neighbor (Ex 22:21-27 [MT 22:20-26]; a common theme throughout pentateuchal law). If Israel (the people of God!) becomes the oppressor, then God will respond toward them as God did toward the Egyptians. Remarkably, God binds himself to the law in seeing to the deliverance of the oppressed, whoever the perpetrator might be.

6.5. Covenant and Law. It is important to note that the Israelites are God's people from the beginning of the book of Exodus (see "my people" in Ex 3:7 and often; "my [firstborn] son" in Ex 4:22-23), rooted in the covenant with Abraham (Ex 2:24; 6:4-5). Israel does not become God's people after the sea crossing or in the making of the *covenant at Sinai. Of what import, then, is the latter covenant? The covenant at Sinai is a vocational covenant within the context of the Abrahamic covenant (note that Moses appeals to the latter when the former has been broken, Ex 32:13). The vocational covenant is defined in Exodus 19:5-6: Israel is to be a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. Israel is to function among the nations as a *priest functions at the tabernacle. Israel is set apart not only *from* other peoples but *for* a specific purpose in relation to those nations, for, as God says, "the whole earth is mine" (see Ex 9:29; 1 Pet 2:9 picks up on this understanding).

The covenant at Sinai is made with God's elect people, and the law is a gift to an already-redeemed community. The law is not a means by which the relationship with God is established (or reestablished). Israel's obedience of the law, while certainly in the best interests of its own life as a community, is finally in service of the vocation to which it has been called by God (Ex 19:5-6; cf. Deut 4:6).

7. Some Special Issues.

The book of Exodus presents the reader with several issues that call for focused attention.

7.1. The Name of God (Ex 3:14; 6:2-3). The translation of God's response to Moses' request for the divine name is uncertain. Most common is "I am who I am" (see NRSV or NIV footnotes) or "I will be who I will be" (see Propp). It has been suggested that this response is, in effect, a refusal to give the name. But the fact that the name Yahweh (usually "LORD" in English) is used in apposition to "the God of your ancestors" in Exodus 3:15-16 suggests that God does respond to the request. Indeed, God freely gave this name to the ancestors (e.g., Gen 28:13). This prior use of the name Yahweh has complicated interpretations of Exodus 6:2-3, where it is said that the name Yahweh was not "known" by the ancestors. If one gives "known" its broadest sense, however, then the point may be that God will be *fully* known as Yahweh only in and through the experience of these constitutive events in Israel's life, events that fulfill the ancestral promises associated with the name Yahweh (*see* God, Names of).

The significance of the name is also uncertain, but the context suggests a meaning that goes beyond "God is" or "God is present," however much these senses are implied. This name, associated closely with the ancestral God, is given an active sense with the sending of Moses (Ex 3:14-15) for the purpose of the fulfillment of God's promises of deliverance and land (Ex 3:16-17). This suggests the sense that Yahweh will be faithfully God for Israel; the people can count on God to be faithful to promises made.

7.2. The Plagues. The plague narratives are highly stylized accounts, using the same or similar language and structure again and again.

Even so, the plagues are progressive in the damage they inflict upon the land and people of Egypt. Generally moving from nuisance to death, they increasingly become a threat to Egypt's well-being. Readers can also see progress in the way in which the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is reported under continuing pressure to let the people of Israel go (see 7.3 below). The stylized narrative is also characterized by the use of hyperbolic language; the word *kōl* ("all, every") occurs over fifty times in the plague cycle (see, e.g., Ex 9:25-26), where everything is affected or nothing. These narrative features may reflect a dramatized ritual practiced in Israel (see Ex 10:2) that was not unlike that made explicit for the tenth plague (Ex 12:1-30), where it is clear that liturgy has shaped the nature of the literature, which in turn affects interpretation.

The plagues may be understood as the cosmic effects of Pharaoh's genocidal actions that have violated the integrity of God's intentions for the creation (see Ex 1:7). Commonly in the OT (e.g., Hos 4:1-3), violations of the moral order have an adverse effect upon the cosmic order. In response to Pharaoh's actions, the natural order increasingly reverts to chaos. The plagues are not an arbitrary divine judgment; rather, God, working through various human and nonhuman agents (see above), gives Pharaoh (and his people and land) up to the consequences of his own anticreational behaviors.

The narrative refers to the plagues as *signs and wonders (e.g., Ex 7:3; 8:23 [MT 8:19]; 10:1-2). While having a devastating judgmental effect in their own right (Ex 6:6; 7:4), the plagues may also be viewed as ecological signs of historical disasters to come (the Passover and sea crossing). For example, the word used for the plague of frogs (*nāgap*, "smite") is used again in the Passover narrative (Ex 8:2 [MT 7:27]; 12:23, 27). As such, the plagues may function not unlike ecological events do today: signs that need attention if we would avoid possible devastating effects on people and land.

7.3. The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart. How to understand this theme has long exercised interpreters; the tendency has been to claim that God has determined Pharaoh's behaviors from the beginning or that Pharaoh's freedom of will is intact throughout ("heart" is better translated "will" in the sense of "resolve"). A mediating position, wherein Pharaoh's future becomes inevitable in the course of the story, seems closer to the textual data. Three verbs (meaning "to make heavy, hard, firm, or strong") are used twenty times; in ten cases God is the subject, in ten cases Pharaoh (or his heart).

The changing subjects and the sequencing are important. God recognizes Pharaoh's stubbornness from the outset (Ex 3:19), so that God's decision to harden his resolve (initially stated in Ex 4:21) is in response to an already-existing obduracy. God's strengthening of Pharaoh's will is an intensification of a practiced stubbornness. Note also that once the plagues begin, God clearly acts to harden only after the sixth plague (Ex 9:12), after Pharaoh's obduracy has been specifically exercised (Ex 8:15, 32 [MT 8:11, 28]). Pharaoh's pattern of willfulness in time makes his end inevitable (he is last the subject in Ex 9:34-35), but this was not the case at the beginning of the narrative.

As noted above, the strengthening of Pharaoh's resolve (and that of the Egyptians) was finally for the purpose of God's gaining glory (honor) so that the Egyptians might "know" that Yahweh is God (Ex 14:4, 17-18). It should be noted that these events would not redound much to the glory of God if Pharaoh were only a puppet in the hands of God (*see* Hardness of Heart).

8. Exodus in the Old and New Testament.

The texts speaking of the exodus and related events are certainly the most commonly referenced pentateuchal passages in the rest of the Bible. On the one hand, what God does in these events is understood as paradigmatic for God's activity in the world. On the other hand, what Moses and Israel do is often recalled, both in positive and (mostly) negative terms.

8.1. The Old Testament. The Israelites formulated creeds or confessions of two basic kinds, both of which have their roots deep in the book of Exodus. One type of creedal statement gathers claims about God that focus on divine acts (see Deut 26:5-9; Josh 24:2-13; Neh 9:9-21; cf. Judg 11:15-18; 1 Sam 12:6-18; Jer 32:18-23). Another type of creedal statement articulates claims about God in more abstract ways; the most common formulation is that of Exodus 34:6-7, which has echoes throughout the OT (e.g., Ps 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2). The presence of these types of creedal statements within narratives and other genres suggest that

they represented a center for Israel's reflection about God. Just as the historical recitals determined those events in Israel's history that were constitutive of its present existence and thus separable from all other events as crucial for faith, so also the generalizations about God provided an interpretive clue for the kind of God believed to be active in those events.

Israel's life of worship was grounded deeply in these events (Passover, Unleavened Bread, covenant and covenant renewal). In and through these acts of worship God's salvific actions on behalf of Israel were regularly made available to the faithful worshiper. The Exodus events were also a major resource for Israel's psalmody (e.g., Ps 77:16-20 [MT 77:17-21]; 78:9-16; 80:8 [MT 80:9]; 81:1-16 [MT 81:2-17]; 105:23-45; 106:6-33; 114:1-8; 136:10-16).

More generally, God's activity in the exodus events are appealed to as grounds for God's present action on behalf of the community (Ps 74:2, 12-15; Is 63:10-15). The story of God's Exodus deliverance is viewed in Solomon's prayer as constitutive for the people of Israel (1 Kings 8:15-21) and is appealed to in specific association with the need for continuing forgiveness (1 Kings 8:46-53). Moreover, the theology of the temple is dependent on an understanding of God's dwelling place among the people (see 1 Kings 8:1-13).

From another perspective, the long story of Israel's infidelity often harks back to Exodus and the story of the *golden calf in particular (Ex 32). The presentation and condemnation of Jeroboam's apostasy (1 Kings 12:25-33) is told in similar terms. The fall of the northern kingdom is said to have had its roots in this idolatrous act (2 Kings 17:7-8, 34-40) as with the fall of the southern kingdom (2 Kings 21:14-15; see Judg 6:7-10; 1 Sam 8:8; 1 Kings 9:9).

Reflections about God's judgment of Israel for its idolatry is viewed as a return to slavery in Egypt (Deut 28:68; Hos 8:13; 9:3-6; 11:5), with Israel itself now being subject to the plagues (Deut 28:21-22, 27, 59-61; Amos 4:10; Hag 2:17; cf. Ex 15:26; Deut 7:15).

The wilderness wandering traditions are used in various ways depending on the interests and needs of the situation. Emphasis could be placed on divine action (Ps 136:16; Amos 2:10) or the murmuring (Deut 9:7-29; Ps 78:8-54; 95:9-11; 106:13-23; Ezek 20:6-26), or be understood as a "honeymoon" period (Deut 32:10-14; Jer 2:2; Hos 2:14-15 [MT 2:16-17]; 11:1-2).

In the prophets, Exodus themes become a key resource for the proclamation of a new act of divine deliverance, a new exodus (e.g., Is 11:15-16; 35:1-10; 43:15-21; 51:9-11; Ezek 20:33-38) and for hope more generally (Hag 2:4-5). This divine action will be constitutive of the people of God, so much so that the new exodus will overshadow the old (Jer 23:7-8). God will establish a new covenant with Israel (Jer 31:31-34; 32:40), and all the nations will stream to Zion, conceived in terms of a new Sinai from which the law will be newly proclaimed (Is 2:1-5; Mic 4:1-5).

The exodus and related events continue to play an important role in the Jewish community in the intertestamental period (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon, *Jubilees*, Josephus and Philo).

8.2. The New Testament. The creedal use of Exodus materials in the OT (see above) may provide a pattern for such recitals in the NT, especially the sermon of Stephen (Acts 7:17-44) and in the catalogue of the faithful in Hebrews 11:23-29.

Christological reflection is made especially rich with Exodus themes and images (see Fretheim 1991; Jesus, like Israel, is "called out of Egypt" (Mt 2:15; cf. Hos 11:1) and tempted in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11). The death of the innocents at the hand of Herod (Mt 2:16-18; cf. Jer 31:15) echoes the policies of Pharaoh (Ex 1:15-22). Jesus not only celebrates the Passover meal (Mt 26:17, 26-28; Mk 14:12-25) but, in a remarkable theological extension, is himself identified as the "passover lamb" (1 Cor 5:7; 11:25; cf. Jn 19:36) and the "supernatural rock" who followed Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4; cf. Ex 17:6). He assumes the role of a new Moses (or perhaps the instructing God) as he teaches his disciples from the mountain (Mt 5—7); at the same time, the pyrotechnics of the Sinai revelation bear some discontinuities with Jesus in Hebrews 12:18-24, as do various other dimensions of the old covenant (e.g., Heb 7—10). In what is perhaps the most astounding claim made about Jesus using Exodus themes, Israel's God "tabernacles" in his very person (Jn 1:14). Drawing upon virtually every existing interpretive means available to them, the NT writers used Exodus texts as a vehicle for interpreting and proclaiming God's act in Jesus.

At the same time, Exodus texts are not only applied to Jesus; an important level of continuity

is seen between Israel and the church as the people of God. Exodus texts are among those "written down" for the "instruction" of the Christian community (1 Cor 10:11). As such, they can be used for warning (1 Cor 10:6-11; Heb 3:7-19), apologia (Acts 7:17-44), instruction (Rom 9:15; 1 Cor 9:8-12; 2 Cor 8:14-15), specification of what love requires (Rom 13:8-10; cf. Mt 19:16-22), examples of human faithfulness (Heb 11:23-29), reminders of the identity and missional purpose of the people of God (Tit 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9-10; Rev 1:5-6; 5:10) or as resources for reflections on the sacraments (Mt 26:28; Jn 6:22-59; 1 Cor 10:1-4; 11:25) and eschatology (Rev 8:6—9:21; 15:1-5; 21:3; 22:4).

8.3. Postbiblical Developments. Exodus has proved to be a remarkable resource for liturgical, theological and ethical reflection and practice for both Judaism and Christianity through the centuries. (For a survey of postbiblical Jewish and Christian interpretations of Exodus, see Hahn. For the exodus as paradigm of liberation from oppression, see Pixley; Walzer.)

See also BOOK OF THE COVENANT; DECALOGUE; EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; EXODUS, DATE OF; EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; LAW; LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH; MOSES; TABERNACLE.

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T. E. Fretheim

EXODUS, DATE OF

In this day and age of biblical scholarship the debate no longer rages whether or not there was any exodus of biblical proportions. In fact, the consensus that there was not has become firmly entrenched in critical circles. In such a climate, the question concerning the date of the exodus might be lightly dismissed in some quarters as naive, presumptuous or quaint. Nevertheless, for those who take the biblical record seriously, debate continues concerning the most appropriate historical setting for this pivotal event in Israel's theology and self-understanding. After examining the most common suggestions for the date of the exodus event, this article will explore the contribution of the various lines of investigation and then offer a summary of the current state of the discussion. It will be left to other articles to explore the various theories concerning whether there was an exodus event or not and what its magnitude may have been.

1. Proposals: History of the Discussion
2. Contributing Data
3. Issues and Prospects
4. Presuppositions, Priorities and Questioning the Assured Results
5. Conclusion

	Traditional Divisions		Date of the Exodus	Megiddo	Jericho	Pharaohs
1550	Middle Bronze			X	IV	
	Late Bronze I	A	↓ Proposal #2	IX	Unoccupied	Thutmose III 1479-1425
1500						
1450		B	Proposal #1	VIII		Amenhotep II 1427-1400
1400	Late Bronze II	A (Amarna)		VIII	Small settlement	Thutmose IV 1400-1390 Amenhotep III 1390-1352
1350				VII		Akhenaten 1352-1336
1300		B	Proposal #3			Seti I 1294-1279 Ramesses II 1279-1213
1250						Merneptah 1213-1203
1200	Iron I		Proposal #4	VI		Ramesses III 1184-1153
1150						

Table 1: Four Proposed Dates of the Exodus

1. Proposals: History of the Discussion.

1.1. Fifteenth Century, Late Bronze I (c. 1446 B.C.). This traditional dating of the exodus is acquired by simply adding up numbers in the Bible. The most important passage is 1 Kings 6:1, which indicates that the exodus occurred 480 years before the dedication of Solomon's temple in 966 B.C. The resulting date of 1446 is further supported by Jephthah's comment in Judges 11:26 that the Israelites had arrived in the land three hundred years earlier. In this view, the biblical data are given pride of place while advocates of this view attempt to reconcile the archaeological and historical data as well as they can.

1.2. Fifteenth Century, End of Middle Bronze (revised dates, c. 1470). In the late 1970s J. Bimson advanced the proposal that a better fit of the archaeological data for the conquest with the biblical record could be found at the end of Middle Bronze Age (MB; traditionally 1550). The Late Bronze Age (LB) was characterized by a problematic lack of fortified cities. The MB in Canaan, in sharp contrast, featured the massive and numerous walled cities that the books of Numbers and Joshua seem to suggest, and many of them were destroyed at the end of the period. Furthermore, Bimson contended there was no ready historical explanation for this widespread destruction that brought an end to MB. (Weinstein's list of destroyed cities includes Tell el-ʿAjjul, Tell el-Hesi, Lachish, Tell Beit Mirsim, Jericho, Bethel, Shechem, Hazor, Dan, Tell en-Nagila, Malhata, Ashkelon, Beth-zur, Beth-shemesh, Gibeon, Shiloh, and Taanach.) The consensus in scholarship was that the destruction was the aftermath of the Egyptian expulsion of the Hyksos after the latter had taken refuge in Canaanite cities (Weinstein). The problem is that the Egyptian historical records do not support the destruction of more than a few cities of

Canaan. Bimson's proposal suggested that this putative association of the end of MB with the Hyksos expulsion had led scholars to misdate the demarcation line between MB and LB. He argued that MB could be extended to about 1430, thus making Thutmose III the *pharaoh of the exodus, which he dated to 1470. The exciting excavations of M. Bietak at Tell el-Dab^{c}a (Pi-Ramesse or Piramesse) were invoked in support of this thesis, since the findings at that site had suggested that the transition between MB and LB should be lowered.

The critique of Bimson's proposal came from numerous quarters. Bietak objected that his suggested alteration was only fifty years, therefore still in the sixteenth century, and could not be stretched as far as Bimson needed it to be. B. Halpern objected that the changes suggested by Bimson would leave a reduced time span for LB I that could not possibly accommodate the archaeological data.

1.3. Thirteenth Century, Late Bronze IIB (c. 1250). In this scenario, the Israelites were oppressed by the Nineteenth Dynasty kings and pressed into service by Ramesses II to build his great capital city, Pi-Ramesse (Tell el-Dab^{c}a). In this view Ramesses II is identified as both the pharaoh of the oppression and the pharaoh of the exodus. The exodus cannot be placed in the time of the next pharaoh, Merneptah, without eliminating the wilderness wandering, since Merneptah's Stela from his fifth year (1207) attests Israel as established as one of the inhabitants of Canaan. This position has experienced diminishing support among critical scholars in recent decades, since many who previously held it opt for theories that no longer accept a historical exodus in favor of peasant revolt, peaceful infiltration or other theories (see Hess 1993; Younger).

1.4. Twelfth Century, Iron I (c. 1150). On the basis of the excavation results at a number of sites, notably Lachish, Heshbon and Gibeon, G. Rendsburg suggests a date for the exodus of about 1150. This allows for a better fit with the occupational history of Jericho, Ai and Bethel as well. He points to the biblical statements about the Philistines (Ex 13:17; Josh 13:2, which he does not take as anachronistic) and the ancestral genealogy of David (150 years from Nahshon to David) to suggest that this is also the view offered in the text. He sees Ramesses II as the pharaoh who began the oppression and Ramesses III (1184-1153), a century later, as the pharaoh of the exodus, with the result that the Israelites were arriving by land at the same time that the Philistines were arriving by sea. What reviewers have found most difficult to accept in his proposal is that the reference to Israel in the Merneptah Stela designates the Israelites as a people still living in Egypt in slavery.

2. Contributing Data.

2.1. Contribution of the Biblical Text. Taking the biblical text seriously or at face value comes with certain minimal requirements of details that must be accounted for. Even if the number 480 from 1 Kings 6:1 is schematic in nature (see 4.1 below), the understanding of the text is that there was a punctiliar event that took place about a dozen generations or a few centuries earlier. Prior to the event there was a period of oppressive enslavement during which time cities were being constructed in the eastern Delta region using brick (Ex 1:14), one of the cities notably named Rameses (Ex 1:11; Heb Raamses). The event itself was accompanied by upheaval in Egypt (Ex 7—11) and was led by an Israelite who had been raised in the royal household of Egypt (Ex 2:10-11), fled into exile (Ex 2:15) and returned during the reign of the successor to the throne (Ex 2:23). The event was followed by an extended period in the wilderness, which in turn was climaxed by a successful series of military campaigns against the occupants of the land (Josh 6—12). These campaigns decimated the population of the land but did not necessarily result either in massive destruction of cities or in the occupation of those cities by Israelites. These military campaigns were followed by protracted centuries of conflict with the remaining inhabitants of the land on various levels, but also evidenced a high level of assimilation with the lifestyle and culture of the native inhabitants (Judges). This sketch will give an idea of the most basic elements that comprise the biblical account.

2.2. Contribution of Egyptology. Aside from the specific issues to be dealt with in subsequent paragraphs, of most significance in this section are the known details of the activities of the pharaohs. This study is complicated by the general lack of consensus on the particulars of Egyptian chronology. The low chronology currently appears to be gaining the edge as the consensus shifts (see assessment of the complex issues in Hoffmeier 1989, 182) so that will be used in the remainder of this article. For refer-

	High Chronology (CAH)	Middle Chronology (Kuhrt)	Low Chronology (Kitchen, *ABD*)
Eighteenth Dynasty			
Thutmose I	1525-1512	1507-1494	1504-1491
Thutmose II	1512-1504	1494-1490	1491-1479
Thutmose III	1504-1450	1490-1436	1479-1425
Amenhotep II	1450-1425	1438-1412	1427-1400
Thutmose IV	1425-1417	1412-1403	1400-1390
Amenhotep III	1417-1379	1403-1364	1390-1352
Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten	1379-1362	1364-1347	1352-1336
Nineteenth Dynasty			
Seti I	1318-1304	1305-1290	1294-1279
Ramesses II	1304-1237	1290-1224	1279-1213
Merneptah	1236-1223	1224-1204 (?)	1213-1203
Twentieth Dynasty			
Ramesses III	1184-1152	1184-1152	1184-1153

Table 2: Comparison of Egyptian Chronologies

ence table 2 will detail the differences for the most significant pharaohs.

The earliest pharaoh with major support as connected to the biblical events is Thutmose III (1479-1425), so we will begin with him. He continued his predecessors' active hostility against foreigners, of whom the Hyksos had been the major representatives. This was reflected in his frequent campaigns into Canaan, eighteen in all, the most prominent being the battle of Megiddo in 1456. As a result of his military initiatives, Canaan came under Egyptian control and became a buffer zone between Egypt and the powers to the north, Mitanni and the Hittites. In addition to his military activities, Thutmose III was also an energetic builder, with projects in the Delta region attested in Memphis and Heliopolis (Bimson, 249). He is also now considered the one who began rebuilding a citadel and storage facilities at Tell el-Dab^{c}a, which was eventually named Pi-Ramesse.

The next pharaoh, Amenhotep II (1427-1400), had only a few campaigns into Syro-Palestine, notably in his seventh and ninth years, and these were concentrated in Syria and the northern section of Palestine (Weinstein, 13).

Thutmose IV (1400-1390) was the architect of peace with Mitanni. He campaigned against Gezer, the only town in Palestine mentioned by name (Weinstein, 13-14), and his reign was judged by the kings of Palestine in the Amarna period as representing the peak of Egyptian control in Canaan. They complain that after his time, lands were being lost to the ^{c}*apiru* (EA 85). Egyptian inscriptions are very sketchy about the extent and targets of his military activity.

The reign of Amenhotep III (1390-1352) was characterized by the perception of stability in Egypt's role and stature in Canaan as peacekeeper and overseer. But this was at least partially an illusion, as it became clear as time went on that at this stage control of the region was already slipping away. There was little Egyptian military activity in Syro-Palestine during this time.

Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1352-1336) was by all accounts preoccupied with his religious reforms, resulting in some degree of neglect of the deteriorating condition in Syro-Palestine. There is lack of agreement among modern scholars at the extent of his negligence, ranging from almost total neglect to a measured policy shift that allowed the political interests to work at eliminating their own problems. In the estimation of the kings of the region, the ^{c}*apiru* were running wild and unchecked by the Egyptians, absentee landlords whose representatives were supposed to maintain control but were not given the necessary support and resources to succeed.

The next significant pharaoh in the exodus debate is Seti I (1294-1279), the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaoh who began to reestablish Egyptian control in Canaan. During his reign there were encounters with the Shasu, especially in northern Sinai. North of Gaza, however, he met

little resistance along the major trade route up to Megiddo. In one major military action he had to secure the area of Beth-shean, which had come under attack. Seti built a palace for himself in Avaris/Qantir (Tell el-Dabʿa). His renewed interest in building in the Delta region reflected an attempt to establish lines of continuity between the Nineteenth Dynasty and the Hyksos.

Continuing the focus on the Delta, Ramesses II (1279-1213) established Memphis as his administrative center and established Pi-Ramesse as his residence in the eastern Delta. His military exploits targeted the growing power and influence of the Hittites. Losses in the aftermath of the battle of Qadesh required Ramesses to assert his control over various cities in Canaan that thought they saw opportunities to pull away from Egypt.

Finally, Merneptah's reign (1213-1203) witnessed the earliest conflicts with the Sea Peoples, who were allied with Libyans. In addition, his stela indicates earlier military action against Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoʿam and Israel. This inscription has been the subject of intense debate, which we will now try to summarize.

2.2.1. Merneptah Stela. This victory poem contains the earliest extrabiblical reference to Israel and has been quite controversial. Uncontested is that it is to be dated in Merneptah's fifth year toward the end of the thirteenth century. The significant line reads "Israel is laid waste; its seed is not." The context refers to four entities in the land of Canaan/Kharu. Three of them, Ashkelon, Gezer and Yanoʿam, are marked by the determinative that indicates they were city-states. Israel, in contrast, is marked by the determinative that indicates it was a socioreligious group. This marks a largely immovable end point for discussion about the exodus. Not only was Israel in the land by 1207, but it is likely that they had not just gotten there, and more likely that the initial campaigns of the conquest had been completed and the transition had been made into the judges period. Even if we allow only five years for the initial stages of the conquest and then add a generation in the wilderness, this inscription would push the latest possible date of the exodus at least back to 1240 or 1250, or midway through Ramesses II.

2.2.2. Karnak. In 1978 F. Yurco deduced that reliefs on the western face of the enclosure wall of the Cour de Cachette at Karnak belonged to Merneptah rather than Ramesses II, as previously thought. The relief pictures the siege of three fortified cities and the conquest of a fourth entity not connected to a fortified city. Only one of the cities is identified: Ashkelon, one of the four enemies listed on the Merneptah Stela. Consequently, Yurco surmised that the two other besieged cities pictured on the wall but not named could be Gezer and Yanoʿam, also listed on the stela. If this correlation between the wall and the stela holds, the fourth scene on the wall could well represent the Israelites. A. F. Rainey (2001) rejects this last identification because Egypt's enemy in scene four has chariots, which Rainey considers unlikely for Israel in this period. He suggests that Israel should be associated with the Shasu pastoralists who were being brought as prisoners in the wall reliefs rather than with the enemy of scene four. Most have accepted Yurco's identification, which only reinforces the conclusions drawn from the Merneptah Stela.

2.2.3. Excavations. The only two Egyptian cities named in the biblical text in such a way that archaeology would be expected to find something are Pithom and Rameses (Heb Raamses in Ex 1:11)—the two store cities being built by the Israelites. A consensus has developed identifying Pithom, *p(r) jtm* ("house of the god Atum") as Tell er-Retabe and Rameses, *pr rʿmss* ("house of Ramesses") as Tell el-Dabʿa.

Excavations directed by M. Bietak have uncovered buildings at Tell el-Dabʿa—the ancient Avaris/Pi-Ramesse—dating to the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, probably Thutmose III (1479-1425). This was a brick citadel associated with storage facilities to support military efforts in Canaan (Hoffmeier 1997, 122-23). The major development of the site was by Ramesses II (1279-1213), who established it as his capital city. Since it eventually became the city of Rameses, it could be contended that that more familiar name was used in the biblical text anachronistically. The finds from the Thutmose III era would support the identification of the Israelite building projects as store cities (Ex 1:11).

Pithom, a second store city built by the Israelite slaves, has been identified as Tell er-Retabe along the Wadi Tumilat. Scarabs from Thutmose III and Amenhotep II (1427-1400) have been found there along with New Kingdom architectural remains. Nothing found at this site poses problems for any of the proposed dates, nor has it produced anything to support one date over another.

2.2.4. Hyksos. In order to place Israel within

the history of Egypt, one must decide their relationship to the Hyksos, a West Semitic people who ruled Egypt for several centuries. The first reason that people have been interested in establishing a relationship between the Israelites and the Hyksos is to be able to link the fall of MB cities, connected to the Hyksos, with the Israelite conquest. This has become of diminished significance, since there is increasing skepticism that the expulsion of the Hyksos (c. 1550) included large-scale destruction of Canaanite cities that would account for the fall of so many fortified cities at the end of the MB IIC/III (Kelm, 23). The second reason is simply that both the Hyksos and the Israelites represent substantial groups of West Semitic peoples in Egypt. Rather than identifying the Israelites as Hyksos, it has been more common to understand the enslavement of the Israelites as a result of the Hyksos expulsion. In Exodus 1:10, the fear is that the Israelites will join with Egypt's enemies (i.e., the Hyksos) and fight against them and leave the country.

2.3. Contribution of Sinai Exploration. The surveys conducted by archaeologists in the Sinai over the last several decades have turned up little to advance the discussion concerning the date of the exodus. I. Beit-Arieh's fifteen years of survey work in the Sinai turned up no appreciable evidence of a group matching the description and itinerary of Israel passing through Sinai during LB, this despite the fact that earlier, similarly wandering populations did leave remains (e.g., so erosion cannot be blamed). These data remain problematic, but they withhold their support equally from all of the proposals regarding the date of the exodus.

2.4. Contribution of the Amarna Texts. The 382 letters of the Amarna texts reflect the political situation in the Levant in the middle of the fourteenth century, LB IIA. Important to the question of the date of the exodus, then, is the determination whether or not the presence of the Israelites is reflected in these texts or not. There is no reference to Israel or the Israelites as such in the texts, though some have tried to include them in some of the disruptive or fringe groups that the letters discuss (particularly the *ʿapiru* renegades).

The *ʿapiru* (sometimes *ḫapiru* or *ḫabiru*) are considered to be warlords, brigands and disenfranchised peoples on the outskirts of society. Rainey has demonstrated that the term cannot be etymologically related to "Hebrew," and the range of use of the term makes it clear that the *ʿapiru* cannot be equated with Israelites. Nevertheless, some would contend that it does not entirely rule out the possibility that Israelites, along with other peoples, could have been designated by the term. The *ʿapiru* are consistently viewed as a threat to Egyptian interests in the area, and some of the vassal cities are accused of siding with the *ʿapiru*. The threat of the *ʿapiru* extended into the regions north of the territories that Israel eventually controlled, particularly in the area designated Amurru in the area of the Orontes and the Beqaʿ Valley.

The Amarna period in Syro-Palestine featured fifteen to seventeen major city-states, whether as vassal cities or Egyptian administrative centers (Finkelstein, 254-55; Bunimovitz, 326). Five of those cities also figure prominently in the text of Joshua. Three are among the southern coalition (Jerusalem, Lachish and Gezer; Josh 10), a fourth, Hazor, is the head of the northern coalition (Josh 11), and the fifth, Shechem, is where the Israelites gather for the *covenant-renewal ceremony (Josh 8; 24).

If the exodus took place after the Amarna period, then there would be no difficulties to contend with—the texts would simply be viewed as portraying the preconquest Canaanite population. But for those who favor putting the exodus in the fifteenth century, the Amarna letters require closer evaluation. The four cities from the texts that are opponents of the Israelites in the OT are said to be defeated by *Joshua, but none of them are occupied by the Israelites. Consequently, there would be no problem with those cities having non-Israelite occupants in the Amarna period. In fact, the claim has been made that the profile of Gezer, Jerusalem and Hazor in the Amarna texts corresponds exactly to what would have been expected in the aftermath of Joshua's conquest of the region (Waterhouse, 36-40). Shechem is more difficult.

Shechem was destroyed at the end of MB (mid-sixteenth century), but Temple I on the site appears to have continued to be used, though excavations produced no bichrome ware characteristic of LB I (see Stager 1999). Excavations from the late 1960s suggested that Shechem was reoccupied from 1450 through approximately 1150 (Campbell, 41). The refounding of the city is often connected to the time of Thutmose III, but firm evidence is lacking. Another destruction layer was identified near the end of LB

(Amarna Shechem?), but there was subsequent rebuilding (by a group that used the collar-rimmed jars characteristic of the Iron Age) with no notable occupation break and continuity across the transition from LB to Iron I. Another massive destruction layer is evident in Iron I (commonly attributed to Abimelech, Judg 9). The dating of the beginning of the LB settlement of Shechem would be crucial. Those arguing for the fifteenth-century exodus would have to posit the resettlement of the town in the early fourteenth century and after Joshua or accept that the Israelites were granted access to Shechem and Mount Ebal by a cooperative Labayu (or his predecessor). S. D. Waterhouse contends for the latter on the basis of Amarna letter EA 289, in which Jerusalem's Abdi-heba accuses Labayu (governor of Shechem) of siding with the *ʿapiru*. For those who place the exodus in the thirteenth century, the Israelite activity would have to be squeezed in between the destruction of Amarna Shechem (Stratum XII) at the end of the fourteenth century and its reoccupation. Though there was a general depopulation of Shechem, the excavators indicate that there is no noticeable break in occupation between strata XII and XI (Toombs, 73). There is therefore no break in occupation to correlate to activity by Joshua in the thirteenth century.

Jericho, Ai and Bethel, at the fringes of the territories controlled by Labayu in Shechem and Abdi-heba in Jerusalem, are not mentioned in Amarna. In fact, this section of the land goes largely unmentioned in the Amarna materials. M. Adamthwaite goes so far as to contend that it is not even clear from the Amarna texts that Labayu should be seen as king of Shechem, connecting him instead with Transjordan Pehel. South of Shechem, the next major centers were Jerusalem and Gazru (Gezer), Ayyaluna (Aijalon) to the west, and Yapu (Joppa) on the coast. This silence would be understandable if the cities had already been destroyed by the Israelites but would make little sense if they were the significant cities of the conquest period that had not yet been attacked.

A last site to consider is Gibeon. This town is of interest because it is portrayed as a significant city in the biblical account, is located in the zone that goes unmentioned in the Amarna texts, yet is not destroyed. Whether the conquest was pre-Amarna or post-Amarna, it would be reasonable to expect this city to be mentioned. Unfortunately, seven seasons of excavation at the site from 1956 to 1962 and subsequent surveys in 1983-1984 have failed to turn up any evidence of LB occupation. Again, neither date is favored by the data from this site.

The question that must be addressed by the supporters of the fifteenth-century exodus is: If Israel was in the land during the Amarna period, where are they in the Amarna texts? The answer that would make the most sense is that they had disbursed to their tribal territories and were trying to settle in the land. They were perceived by the Amarna governors and kings as part of the *ʿapiru* who were disrupting the land early in the judges period.

2.5. Contribution of Archaeological Excavation in Israel. The issues here are complex, conclusions often controversial, and attempts hampered by insufficient or partial data. Joshua 12 offers a list of thirty-one kings of cities that were conquered in Cisjordan by Joshua and his armies. Obviously a minimal expectation would be that all of these cities were occupied at the time of Joshua. Three further indications that archaeology could check would be (1) whether there was a change in occupation (reduced population, abandoned or new occupational layer); (2) whether there was evidence of destruction (when the biblical account indicates that the city was destroyed); and (3) whether the details of the site could be confirmed (e.g., city walls or gates).

Of the thirty-one cities, five have not been identified with any certainty (Hormah, Libnah, Lasharon, Madon, Goiim). Of the twenty-six that have been identified, four have not been excavated (Geder, Adullam, Tappuah, Hepher), leaving an archaeological database of twenty-two cities. Of those twenty-two, Joshua only reports burning three of them (Jericho, Ai, Hazor), and four others are individually identified as being attacked and their occupants totally destroyed (Hebron, Lachish, Eglon, Debir). The data for the twenty-two identified and excavated cities are summarized in table 3.

Table 3 is based entirely on archaeological finds at the sites. It must be remembered that some occupational levels unattested or sparsely attested in the archaeological record are nevertheless named as active cities in contemporary literature (e.g., Hebron in Egyptian itineraries; Lachish in Amarna). Additionally, there are occasions where the archaeological remains fail to confirm the historical records. For instance,

			Occupational record				Destruction			
Cities (Josh 2)	**Site**	**Fate**	**MB II/III**	**LB I**	**LB II**	**Iron I**	**MB II/III**	**LB I**	**LB II**	**Iron I**
Jericho	Tell es-Sultan	burned	yes	sparse	sparse	no	yes	no	no	no
Ai	et-Tell	burned	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no
Jerusalem			yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Hebron	Tel Hebron	decimated	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no
Jarmuth	Khirbet Yarmuk		no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Lachish	Tell ed-Duweir	decimated	yes	sparse	sparse	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Eglon	Tell Aitun	decimated	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Gezer	Tell Jezer		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Debir	Khirbet Rabud	decimated	sparse	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Arad	Tell Arad		no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no
Makkedah	Khirbet el-Qom		no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Bethel	Tell Beitin		yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no
Aphek	Tell Ras el-'Ain		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Hazor	Tell el-Qedah	burned	yes	yes	yes	sparse	yes	yes	yes	no
Shimron	Khirbet Sammuniya		no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Achshaph	Tell Keisan or Khirbet el-Harbaj		no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Taanach	Tell Ta'annek		yes	yes	sparse	sparse	no	no	no	yes
Megiddo	Tell el-Mutesellim		yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Kedesh	Tell Abu Qedeis		no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes
Jokneam	Tel Yoqne'am		yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no
Dor	Khirbet el-Burj		no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Tirzah	Tell el-Far'ah		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no

Table 3: Occupational and Destruction Data of Cities

Thutmose III (1479-1425) claims to have laid siege to a city at Megiddo, but no evidence of city walls is found in the LB city (Strata X-VIII; Gonen, 70; Ussishkin, 3.463). Sometimes all of the difficult issues converge. As an example, the site of Achshaph has not been positively identified, though guesses include Tell Keisan and Khirbet el-Harbaj. Neither of these sites has been extensively excavated, but both show indications of settlement in the LB and early Iron Ages. On the literary side, Achshaph is listed in the Egyptian Execration texts (MB), on the Karnak list of Thutmose III's conquests (LB I), in the Amarna letters (LB IIA) and in Papyrus Anastasi I (LB IIB). It should also be noted that at times cities change location. So, for instance, the lack of any pre-Iron Age remains at Tell Arad opens the possibility that Arad at the time of Joshua was located at a nearby site, Tell Malhata. Two caveats about the table should be noted: (1) even when a city was occupied during a certain period, the archaeological data may not fit with the description in the Joshua account; (2) this table does not indicate places where the city in one period may have been occupied by a different group than in the previous period. For example, though the Iron Age column attests widespread settlement, a number of those sites were occupied by Israelites or the Philistines rather than Canaanites (Hebron, Gezer, Bethel, Aphek, Achshaph, Tirzah), so the occupational history is not as positive as it might look in the table. Finally, it should be noted

that the table could easily be extended to include the Transjordan cities that are mentioned and cities such as Gibeon, which allied themselves with the Israelites and are therefore not on the conquest list.

2.5.1. Jericho. Jericho is the most prominent city in the conquest account of the book of Joshua and therefore offers the most textual information describing the city. In contrast, the history of archaeological excavations at the site has produced a long and checkered history of conflicting interpretations. The only find of city walls resembling those described in the text belong to Stratum IV, which is commonly dated to the end of MB (c. 1550). Following the destruction of city IV, the site shows no significant evidence of occupation until well into the Iron Age, with the possible exception of a sparsely populated, unwalled village during parts of the LB II (for further discussion, see 3.2.3 below).

2.5.2. "Altar" on Mount Ebal. In the late 1980s A. Zertal discovered a site on Mount Ebal dated to the thirteenth to twelfth centuries B.C. He identified the complex there as the remains of a large altar surrounded by an enclosure wall creating two courtyards. He suggested that it was the altar used by Joshua in Joshua 8. Both his identification of the structure as an altar and his association of the site with Joshua 8 are disputed. If there is no association with Joshua 8, the structure contributes nothing to the discussion of the date of the exodus. If, on the other hand, Zertal is correct, the structure would offer strong support for a thirteenth-century date, unless it could be demonstrated that it was built later in the place where Joshua's was.

2.5.3. Walled Cities in the Late Bronze Age. Rivkah Gonen's extensive surveys in the region have led her to conclude that in LB, contrary to the implications of the biblical conquest texts, walled cities were notably lacking. One exception is Hazor's MB fortifications, which were rebuilt and used during LB. Other exceptions have been identified at Ashdod, Tell Beit Mirsim and perhaps at Gezer. Gonen's pioneering research has served as the foundation for more extensive settlement studies, such as those by S. Bunimovitz that develop data based on rank size distributions (cf. Bunimovitz, 322-24).

2.6. Kadesh-barnea. This location was the base of operations for much of the period that Israel was in the wilderness, so it might be expected that excavations there could help clarify chronological questions. Unfortunately, there have been no archaeological remains in any of the periods that are under discussion in this article so, like Ai, it must simply be set to the side.

2.7. Transjordan. As the Israelites marched from the *wilderness to the Jordan to cross into the Promised *Land, they encountered resistance from Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan (Deut 2—3). Deuteronomy 3:4-5 indicates that there were sixty cities taken and that they were fortified with walls and gates. The archaeological excavations and surveys in Transjordan have not yet turned up any fortified cities from LB. Most sites do not even show any occupation in this period. For example, a site such as Heshbon, thought to be Tell Hesban, was the center of Sihon's kingdom. Yet there is no sign of LB occupation at Tell Hesban. Recent surveys have suggested that the biblical Heshbon may have been at a nearby site, either Tell el-ʿUmeiri or Tell Jalul, which at least evidence some occupation (Chavalas and Adamthwaite). Once again, this lack of data proves equally frustrating to all of the proposed dates rather than favoring one over another.

3. Issues and Prospects.

3.1. Bronze or Iron? No matter what the date of the exodus, the most likely historical setting for the initial enslavement of the Israelites, as previously mentioned, is in the aftermath of the expulsion of the Hyksos. This indicates that the exodus would be at the earliest in the beginning of LB. If the exodus is considered to be a single, punctiliar event of biblical description, the evidence favors LB over the Iron Age. This is concluded not just because of the time parameters in the Bible but from the Merneptah Stela and the occupational history of sites, particularly Jericho.

3.2. Middle Bronze or Late Bronze? Even if the collapse of MB in Canaan could be placed in the time of Thutmose III (1479-1425) or a little after, the problem would not be solved. If Thutmose III is the earliest possible pharaoh of the oppression (building at Tell el-Dabʿa), then the pharaoh of the exodus would have to be Amenhotep II (1427-1400), and the time of the conquest would be pushed into the time of Thutmose IV (1400-1390). There is no way that a conquest at that late date (c. 1400) could then be connected to the collapse of MB cities. Given the current information from Tell el-Dabʿa, we must consider an exodus and conquest in the LB period as more likely than MB.

3.2.1. Post-Amarna Late Bronze Age IIB. Once we have located the event in LB, we must consider whether a pre-Amarna or post-Amarna date makes more sense. From the biblical standpoint, the most difficult problem with the post-Amarna thirteenth-century exodus is that the pharaoh of the oppression is represented as different from the pharaoh of the exodus (Ex 2:23; 4:19; cf. 2:15). That would mean that Ramesses II (1279-1213) could not fill both roles. The major strength of the thirteenth-century position has been that the city built by the Hebrew slaves was named Rameses (Heb Raamses in Ex 1:11). This would most logically make Ramesses II the pharaoh of the oppression. His successor, Merneptah (1213-1203), however, cannot be the pharaoh of the exodus because in his fifth year Israel is already in the land. If, alternatively, one suggests Ramesses II as the pharaoh of the exodus, the problem again arises of having the city Rameses named for a pharaoh who is not yet pharaoh—the advantage is lost. Certainly Seti I (1294-1279) did some building at Tell el Dab^{c}a, but he would not be naming the city Rameses. If the name *Rameses* is simply going to be judged an anachronistic reference, there is no advantage in positing a thirteenth-century connection rather than a fifteenth-century one. From the archaeological standpoint, it has been suggested that the thirteenth-century position is strengthened by the archaeological data concerning the cities of the conquest. In fact, however, the archaeological profile for post-Amarna LB IIB is no more advantageous than for pre-Amarna LB I. The absence of walled cities continues. The claim that the data on Jericho fit better for the thirteenth century is inadequate. Though there is evidence of occupation at Jericho in the thirteenth century, the evidence does not agree with the picture offered in the biblical text. In conclusion, then, if Ramesses II cannot be both the pharaoh of the oppression and the pharaoh of the exodus, he cannot productively be viewed as either one, and there is no other post-Amarna time slot that comes anywhere close to correlating with the biblical data.

3.2.2. Amarna Late Bronze IIA. The Amarna period itself is not a good candidate for the conquest primarily because of the absence of the cities of Jericho, Bethel, Ai and Gibeon from the Amarna correspondence. These are portrayed as strategic cities in the time of the conquest. In the same way, comparison of the smaller villages mentioned in the biblical text with those mentioned in Amarna shows no overlap.

3.2.3. Pre-Amarna Late Bronze I. This leaves the pre-Amarna LB I period for consideration. If the exodus and the conquest were in the pre-Amarna period, the pharaoh of the oppression would most likely have been Thutmose III (1479-1425), since he was the one who began building at Tell el Dab^{c}a, later known as Pi-Ramesse (or Piramesse). The biggest problem here is reconciling the biblical account with the archaeological data from the cities of the conquest. If the conquest was pre-Amarna, it must be associated with City IV at Jericho, usually identified as having been destroyed at the end of MB. By the archaeological data, Jericho City IV is linked with Megiddo Stratum X (MB), and Thutmose III is linked with the next later Megiddo Stratum IX (LB, see table 4).

Here is the problem succinctly stated. Archaeology places Jericho IV several decades before Thutmose III, while the Bible would want to place Thutmose III (oppression) several decades before Jericho IV (conquest). If Thutmose III is the pharaoh of the oppression, Amenhotep II is the pharaoh of the exodus and much of the wilderness period. For Jericho City IV to fit into this scheme, then, it has to be dated at the time of Thutmose IV, at the end of the fifteenth century or early in the fourteenth century (at the line between LB IB and LB IIA). Since most agree that the entire line between MB and LB cannot be shifted past Thutmose III, the only solutions open to those who support the fifteenth-century date require breaking one of the given equations. That is, if the fall of Jericho IV is to be dated after Thutmose III, either Jericho IV must be dissociated from Megiddo X, or Thutmose III must be dissociated from Megiddo IX. Each of these options will be explored below.

3.2.3.1. Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Line. The demarcation line between MB and LB grows increasingly controversial, and a historical explanation for the collapse of the large urban centers of MB remains elusive. Without an identified historical cause for the collapse of MB, the option remains that the transition from MB to LB may have taken place more gradually over a longer period or that the transition might take place regionally at different times. In such a scenario, even if Jericho IV and Megiddo X remain identified as the final layers of MB culture at their respective sites, there could conceivably be decades separating the end of Jericho IV from Megiddo

Divisions	Jericho	Megiddo	Pharaohs
Middle Bronze	IV ←	→ X	
Late Bronze IA	unoccupied	IX ←	→ Thutmose III (1479-1425)
Late Bronze IB	unoccupied	VIII	Thutmose IV (1400-1390)

Table 4: Jericho, Meggido and Pharaohs

X. Even given the identification of Jericho IV with the end of MB, how long after the end of MB at other sites (such as Megiddo) did the Jericho IV walls stand? This needs to be explored.

3.2.3.2. Jericho IV and Megiddo X. Is the connection between Jericho IV and Megiddo X based on what *is* found at Jericho IV or based on what is *not* found there? The absence of LB I diagnostic bichrome ware at Jericho is always mentioned prominently. But the massive erosion on the site means that even less can be inferred from the absence of evidence than is normally the case. Furthermore, it is difficult to date the fall of Jericho IV on the basis of the absence of bichrome pottery, since bichrome pottery is almost entirely absent from sites in the hill country—its distribution is found primarily along the trade routes. Note that Shiloh, for example, has some attestation of LB I occupation yet no bichrome. Shechem as well was occupied in LB I (as indicated by the continuation of Temple I), yet excavations produced no bichrome ware. Bichrome began to be attested at Tell el-ʿAjjul before the end of MB, yet Jericho is believed to continue through the end of MB (Bienkowski 1986, 128-29). The lack of bichrome at Jericho IV would then be explained just as its absence at the end of the MB period would be explained: Jericho's distance from the trade routes limited the availability of this type of pottery.

3.2.3.3. Thutmose III and Megiddo IX. What about the connection between Thutmose III and Megiddo IX? The connection was originally made because Thutmose's first Asiatic campaign included a seven-month siege of Megiddo and there was a destruction level that brought an end to stratum IX, the stratum attesting LB I diagnostics. Recent researchers have noted, as previously mentioned, that Thutmose III does not claim in his inscriptions to have destroyed the city. If further analysis shows that Jericho IV cannot be separated from Megiddo X and Thutmose III cannot be separated from Megiddo IX, the next question to ask is whether it is possible that the building at Tell el-Dabʿa began under Thutmose I (continued under Thutmose II), making him the pharaoh of the oppression (and Hatshepsut as potentially the daughter who found *Moses, though pharaohs undoubtedly had no shortage of daughters) and making Thutmose III pharaoh of the exodus. This solution might open the way for a shorter period between the destruction of Jericho IV and Megiddo Stratum X.

3.2.4. Other Key Cities. Besides the need to resolve the very difficult issues traced above with regard to Jericho, many other sites remain problematic, not the least of which is Ai. The evidence at et-Tell cannot be reconciled with any proposed date for the exodus, so it has not been factored into the debate concerning the date in this article. Although to date no other candidate for Ai has offered a persuasive alternative, the question remains as to whether et-Tell is Ai, and further identifications must be explored and supported. Shechem also remains highly significant, and continuing work is needed to clarify all aspects of its settlement history.

3.2.5. Character of the Late Bronze Age. Absence of LB walled cities in both Cisjordan and Transjordan poses an ongoing problem. Archaeological work needs to continue to clarify the character of LB in Transjordan, such as that being conducted by Andrews University in the highly significant Madaba Plains project. In addition, lexical, sociological and political research must continue to define what constitutes a "fortified" city in LB. This should involve the ongoing evaluation of settlement patterns (e.g., that being done by Bunimovitz) against the data provided about LB Levantine cities by the Egyptian inscriptions.

4. Presuppositions, Priorities and Questioning the Assured Results.

From the above discussions it is evident that the complexity of this issue derives from the need to juxtapose biblical, historical and archaeological

data to one another. When the data are not easily reconciled, which data hold priority? The answer one gives to this question largely determines the conclusions that will be drawn. It is a mistake, however, to reduce the debate to a question of whether one "believes the Bible" or not. Commitment to the face value of the biblical text may still allow more flexibility at some points than has traditionally been maintained. Care must be exercised to assure that potentially naive interpretations are not given the status of biblical authority.

On the other side of the equation, interpretation also plays a significant role in assembling the historical and archaeological data. It is too simplistic to say that priority is to be given to the Bible or to archaeology; we must be willing to rank the level of certainty we have in particular data. For instance, the reference to Israel in Merneptah's inscription offers far fewer options for alternative possibilities than the question concerning the role of bichrome ware for determining whether or not a site was occupied in LB I. Regarding the biblical data, an example would be that the mathematical precision of 1 Kings 6:1 might be judged less certain than the statement that a pharaoh died while Moses was in exile in Midian. We must be willing to troubleshoot our interpretations.

With such an intention it is important to question some of the statements that various camps have at times accepted as "assured" results, such as the those outlined below.

4.1. Biblical Data.

Assured result: The pharaoh of the oppression must have reigned at least forty years because that is how long Moses was in exile in Midian. **Question:** Are we certain that forty is not schematic? On the biblical side of the equation, when we look at the way the books of Genesis through Judges deal with designating the passage of time, the statistics suggest an inclination toward schematization, especially regarding the use of the number forty. There are thirteen time periods assigned either forty days or forty years (*flood; end of flood; ages of *Isaac, *Esau and Joshua; wilderness wandering; Moses' time on Sinai both times; spies exploring the land; peace after Othniel, Deborah and Gideon; Philistine oppression before Samson). This list could easily be extended by including the ruling periods of Eli, David and Solomon or by adopting the division of Moses' 120 years into three periods of forty (Ex 7:7; Acts 7:23). If we compare this to the time spans anywhere in the twenties through the fifties, we find a remarkable disparity. In the same books, there are only nine occurrences of all of those put together (i.e., 20-59). The number forty does not have near the frequency in Akkadian, Ugaritic or Egyptian texts, so this inclination remains uniquely Israelite.

Assured result: The exodus must be dated 480 years before the dedication of the temple. **Question:** Are we certain that 480 is not schematic? If it is, we cannot simply "do the math" to ascertain the date. Yet the schematic would have little significance if the actual number were not in the same general range.

4.2. Archaeological Data.

Assured result: There is no evidence of a large population passing through Sinai, dying in the Sinai or settling in Canaan in LB. **Question:** What sort of evidence could archaeologists reasonably expect to find of the migratory travels of whatever size group was involved? Is it possible that we have misread the number of Israelites and that it is much smaller (*see* Historical Criticism §4.2.3)? If that is possible, we may not have to find the kind of evidence archaeologists have been looking for.

Assured result: There is almost a total absence of fortified cities in LB, casting doubt on the biblical account of the conquest. **Question:** Do "fortified" cities necessarily have walls? Thutmose III laid siege to Megiddo for seven months, yet there is no evidence of a wall at that time. Fortifications of the LB period might consist of perimeter buildings or earthen ramparts. The biblical text only specifically claims a wall for one city (Jericho; Ai has a gate, but LB cities with gates did not necessarily have walls). Thus the lack of walled cities in LB does not necessarily contradict the biblical account of fortified cities (e.g., Num 13:28; Josh 19:35), though there are perhaps some general references to walls (Deut 1:28, *bĕṣûrōt*).

Assured result: Jericho was not occupied in LB I because the bichrome ware that is characteristic of LB I is absent. **Question:** Is it possible that the distribution of bichrome, as imported ware, is limited to the vicinity of the major trade route through the coastal areas and the northern valleys? If such were the case, would it not be possible that the walls of Jericho City IV identified as MB could have continued in use several decades into LB with no bichrome?

Assured result: There is very limited occupa-

tion of Jericho in LB I and no city wall. **Question:** How much is the impact of the absence of evidence mitigated because of significant erosion at the site?

Assured result: A number of the cities listed in Joshua's conquest account show no signs of occupation in LB. **Question:** How much is the impact of the absence of evidence mitigated in light of the fact that Egyptian itineraries of the period also name cities for which there is no archaeological evidence of occupation (Krahmalkov)? Granted that Egyptian sources can make unrealistic claims, the presence of the name in the lists cannot be anachronistic, and therefore the assumption can reasonably be made that the town existed, whether the Egyptians actually went through it or not.

Assured result: Archaeological data do not support an LB exodus because very few LB cities evidence destruction layers in the excavations. **Question:** The biblical text only claims that three cities were burned (Jericho, Ai, Hazor), so would we expect to find destruction levels anywhere else? Thutmose III conducted eighteen campaigns in Syro-Palestine, yet very few of those cities show related destruction levels.

4.3. Egyptological Data.

Assured result: The destruction of MB urban centers can be dated in relation to the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt in the mid-sixteenth century. **Question:** Is there sufficient evidence that the destruction of the fortified cities of Canaan that brought an end to MB can be associated with the expulsion of the Hyksos (Hoffmeier, 1989)? The identification of a clear line of demarcation between MB and LB has become increasingly controversial, and no solution is in sight (see a summary of problems in Bunimovitz, 330). This makes it quite difficult to reach conclusions regarding the role of the destruction of MB fortified cities in the question of the date of the exodus.

Assured result: The Eighteenth Dynasty and early Nineteenth Dynasty kings were very active in Syro-Palestine, but the biblical book of Judges never mentions them, so Israel must have come into the land after that time. **Question:** If the biblical authors were primarily interested in theological issues, is it not possible that they would ignore even important historical events if those events were not pertinent? For instance, even though Ahab was involved in the crucial battle of Qarqar in 853, the text makes no mention of it.

4.4. Amarna Data.

Assured result: The activities of the *ʿapiru* in the Amarna texts cannot be taken as the activities of Israel because the *ʿapiru* appear in times and locations that preclude identification with the Israelites. **Question:** Do we have to identify all *ʿapiru* as Israelites to have the Israelites counted among the *ʿapiru*?

Assured result: A pre-Amarna exodus cannot be reconciled with the Amarna data concerning Labayu of Shechem. **Question:** Is Shechem as central in the Amarna texts as it has been portrayed? Adamthwaite questions the connection between Shechem and Labayu, since he is never identified as its governor. Finkelstein refutes the logic of redrawing the administrative lines to make Pehel Labayu's center (Finkelstein , 235 n. 8), but the fact remains that Shechem is referred to only once in the letters (EA 289), and there simply as a territory that Labayu gave to the *ʿapiru*. It seems odd that Labayu would give up his center of power to the *ʿapiru*.

As a result of these questions, it may be admitted that neither the biblical nor the archaeological pictures are as clear as they have sometimes been portrayed. At the risk of oversimplifying the issue, table 5 offers a summary of what strength of support is offered each position concerning the date of the exodus by each of the categories of contributing data we have discussed above. Though it would admittedly be easy to contest a number of the judgment calls represented in various categories, a chart such as this demonstrates most importantly how mixed the results are when considering the claims of any position to offer a resolution.

5. Conclusion.

If Jericho city IV is the city conquered by Joshua (and it is the only one that comes close to the biblical description), the exodus must have been in the fifteenth century. But it remains far from clear how the destruction of City IV can be located in the fifteenth century and how it can be integrated with all of the other data that must be pieced together. There is still much to be done before this perennial controversy can begin to find resolution. With all of this potential research to pursue, the sad fact is that many archaeologists would never undertake such studies, for they have already concluded that there was no exodus and that Israel's origins in Canaan are to be found in the Iron Age.

Contributing Date	MB (position 2)	LB I (position 1)	LB IIB (position 3)	Iron (position 4)
Biblical text	strong	strong	none	weak
Pharaohs	weak	strong	weak	strong
Merneptah Stela	strong	strong	weak	none
Tell el-Dab'a	strong	strong	strong	strong
Pithom	strong	strong	strong	strong
Sinai exploration	none	none	none	none
Amarna	weak	strong	weak	strong
Conquest: Jericho	strong	none	weak	weak
Conquest: Ai	none	none	none	weak
Conquest: Bethel	strong	none	weak	none
Conquest: Jerusalem/South	weak	weak	weak	weak
Conquest: Hazor/North	strong	strong	strong	weak
Mount Ebal altar	weak	weak	strong	strong
Fortifications	strong	none	none	strong
Kadesh-barnea	none	none	none	weak
Transjordan	weak	none	none	weak

Table 5: Strength of Support for Four Dates of the Exodus

See also CHRONOLOGY; EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY.

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J. H. Walton

EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY

Israel's departure from *Egypt commences in Exodus 12:37, but it is not until Joshua 3:17 that the *Israelites cross the Jordan, thus bringing their period of *wilderness wandering to a close. In the intervening chapters, Israel's desert trek—from Egypt, through the Red Sea and into the wilderness—is chronicled. This article will provide an overview of the main sites mentioned in the OT and recent scholarly discussions regarding the location of these sites.

On this second point, there is much that remains highly tentative. The precise locations of even some of the more central locations on Israel's journey out of Egypt (e.g., Red Sea and Mount Sinai) elude us and will remain perhaps ultimately unrecoverable. No attempt will be made here to arrive at firm conclusions where others have been rightly cautious. Readers wishing fuller discussions of some matters of detail are invited to consult the works cited in the bibliography. The article will conclude with observations on the theological significance of the Red Sea crossing and wilderness wandering in both the OT and NT. This is appropriate, since Israel's journey was not recorded simply for journalistic purposes but as a means of reminding generations of Israelites who God is and what he has done for his people. This very important aspect of Israel's history is picked up in the NT, both in Jesus' own life and in the church's daily existence.

1. Egypt
2. Red Sea
3. Wilderness Itinerary
4. The Red Sea and Wilderness as Theological Themes

1. Egypt.

Israel's journey to Egypt under *Joseph brought them to Goshen (Gen 46:28), a district on the eastern Nile Delta. In Genesis 47:11 the location is referred to as the "district of Rameses," which should probably not be specifically equated with one of the two cities built by Israelite slave labor, Pithom and Rameses (Ex 1:11; Heb Raamses). The name "Rameses" is fairly well-documented in Egyptian sources, but equating any of these with the biblical Rameses is not a straightforward task. A widely accepted position today is that the Rameses of the exodus is modern-day Qantir, referred to as Pi-Ramesse in Egyptian sources. This city flourished during the reigns of Ramesses II to Ramesses IV (early thirteenth to late twelfth centuries B.C.), which lends support to the later dating of the exodus during the thirteenth century B.C. (*see* Exodus, Date of). Also, Avaris (Tell el-Dabʿa), the Hyksos capital, was located at the same site. The Hyksos were "Asiatic" peoples whose presence in Egypt has been much debated. Precise ethnic identification has not been made, but some have drawn a connection between an Israelite presence in Egypt from Joseph through *Moses and the Hyksos occupation of portions of Lower Egypt during the Fifteenth Dynasty (eighteenth to sixteenth centuries, the Second Intermediate Period).

Pithom is likely the Hebrew transliteration of the Egyptian *p(r)-itm* (house of Atum). Its location is unknown. Also, this site is not mentioned in the wilderness itinerary as a stop between Rameses and Succoth, which may indicate that Pithom and Rameses were not in close proximity to each other.

Succoth is Israel's first recorded stop after leaving Rameses. We are not told how long they stayed there, only that they camped (Num 33:5). Succoth is a name for both an Egyptian city and a city in Transjordan (e.g., Gen 33:17; Josh 13:27). As with Rameses, its precise location is difficult to determine, although it is certainly somewhere in the northeast Nile Delta. Hoffmeier argues that it may be identified with Tjeku (Egyptian *tkw*). At least one factor that has led to difficulties in identifying any of these Egyptian sites is topographical changes due to changing water tables through the millennia. There is also ample evidence that Tjeku was a militarized area, suggesting that Succoth may not have been a stop on Israel's itinerary but merely a region through which they passed, keeping safe distance from any military engagement.

Israel next came to Etham and Pi-hahiroth. Neither of these sites can be confidently identified, nor can their names be traced with certainty to Egyptian names. The former is mentioned only in Exodus 13:20 and Numbers 33:6-8, the latter in Exodus 14:2, 9 and Numbers 33:7-8. What we know from these references is that they were located on the "edge of the desert" on the way to the Red Sea, likely in a southeasterly direction from Rameses. If the location of these sites could be determined with some confidence, it would provide helpful evidence for locating where the crossing of the Red Sea took place. Conversely, knowing the site of the crossing of the sea would aid in determining the locations of the sites just mentioned. Neither anchor is provided, however.

2. Red Sea.

The precise location of the body of water the Israelites crossed when leaving Egypt is not known. Various positions are argued, but at present no conclusion can claim universal support. The present day Red Sea is the large body of water that makes up the northwest arm of the Indian Ocean. This has obviously no bearing on the location of Israel's crossing, since Israel's wilderness wanderings were in the Sinai Peninsula.

It seems self-evident that in the OT different bodies of water are given the name *yam sûp*. For example, according to 1 Kings 9:26 (also Ex 23:31; Num 14:25; 21:4; Deut 1:40; 2:1; Judg 11:16; Jer 49:21), *yam sûp* is the Gulf of Aqabah (Elat), the body of water east of the Sinai Peninsula. According to Numbers 33:10-11 (perhaps also v. 8), *yam sûp* is the body of water reached later in Israel's wanderings, after leaving Elim. Hence, the Gulf of Suez (west of the Sinai Peninsula) is meant (unless one wishes to presume that a rather gross error has been made in reporting Israel's itinerary, but see Hoffmeier's thesis below). Finally, the sea of the exodus is referred to as *yam sûp* in Exodus 15:4, 22 and a number of other passages, including Joshua 2:10; 4:23 and Psalm 106:7, 9, 22. These passages do not specify whether the Gulf of Suez, the Gulf of Aqabah or some other body of water is meant. In any event, the phrase *yam sûp* seems

Exodus—Numbers		Numbers 33	
Ex 12:37	Rameses to Succoth	33:3-5	Rameses to Succoth (fifteenth day of the first month)
13:20	Etham	33:6	Etham
14:1-2	Pi-hahiroth (between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-zephon)	33:7	Pi-hahiroth (east of Baal-zephon, near Migdol)
14:21-22	Red Sea	33:8	Red Sea
15:22	Desert of Shur	33:8	Desert of Etham
15:23	Marah	33:8-9	Marah
15:27	Elim	33:9	Elim
		33:10	camped by Red Sea
16:1	Desert of Sin (fifteenth day of the second month)	33:11	Desert of Sin
		33:12	Dophkah
		33:13	Alush
17:1-7	Rephidim (Massah and Meribah)	33:14	Rephidim (Meribah and Massah)
19:1	Desert of Sinai (third month to the day until the twentieth day of the second month of the second year)	33:15	Desert of Sinai
Num 10:11-12	Desert of Paran		
11:3	Taberah (three days later?)		
11:34-35	Kibroth-hattaavah	33:16	Kibroth-hattaavah
11:35	Hazeroth	33:17	Hazeroth
		33:18	Rithmah
		33:19	Rimmon-perez
		33:20	Libnah
		33:21	Rissah
		33:22	Kehelathah
		33:23	Mount Shepher
		33:24	Haradah
		33:25	Makheloth
		33:26	Tahath
		33:27	Terah
		33:28	Mithkah
		33:29	Hashmonah
		33:30	Moseroth
		33:31	Bene-jaakan
		33:32	Hor-haggidgad
		33:33	Jotbathah
		33:34	Abronah
		33:35	Ezion-geber

Exodus—Numbers (cont.)		Numbers 33 (cont.)	
12:16	Desert of Paran (Kadesh)		
14:44-45	hill country		
20:1	Desert of Zin (Kadesh) (first month)	33:36	Desert of Zin (Kadesh)
20:13	Meribah		
20:22	Mount Hor	33:37-39	Mount Hor
21:4	"along the route to the Red Sea" (around Edom)		
		33:41	Zalmonah
		33:42	Punon
21:10	Oboth	33:43	Oboth
21:11	Iye-abarim	33:44	Iye-abarim (Iyim, v. 45)
		33:45	Dibon-gad
		33:46	Almon-diblathaim
		33:47	Abarim (near Nebo)
21:12	Zered Valley		
21:13	alongside the Arnon River		
21:16	Beer		
21:18	Mattanah		
21:19	Nahaliel		
21:19	Bamoth		
21:20	valley in Moab (by Pisgah)		
21:23	Jahaz (battle with Sihon; Amorite cities, including Heshbon, were captured)		
21:32	Jazer		
21:33	Bashan (via Edrei)		
22:1 (26:3)	plains of Moab (across from Jericho, see also Shittim, 25:1)	33:48	plains of Moab (across from Jericho)

Figure 1: Israel's Wilderness Itinerary

to refer to more than one body of water.

The biblical narratives certainly indicate that Israel left the Nile Delta region, traveled along the edge of the desert and crossed a body of water called *yam sûp*. But which body of water did they cross? Can a precise identification be made? One matter that may help bring more clarity to this issue is the proper translation of *yam sûp*. Although the meaning of *sûp* has been debated, it is extremely unlikely that the word means anything other than "reeds," since it seems to be derived from the Egyptian word for reeds or papyrus, *twfy*. The common English translation "Red Sea" follows the Septuagint (LXX) and Vulgate, both of which translate *yam sûp* as Red Sea. It remains unclear why these ancient versions referred to the sea in this way. In ancient times, however, "Red Sea" included at least the Gulfs of Suez and Aqabah, as well as the Indian Ocean and also the Persian Gulf. The LXX "Red Sea" *(eruthra thalassē)* may not be a translation of the Hebrew *yam sûp* (or some other Hebrew phrase) but the Greek name for the general body of water, one part of which the Israelites crossed. The fact that our English translations adopt the term *Red Sea,* therefore, does not settle the question of which body of water the Israelites crossed when leaving Egypt: the term is too broad.

The widely held view, going back at least to targumic traditions (Hoffmeier), should be accepted: *sûp* means "reeds," either referring to

the reeds or an area so designated. Hence, the marshy region in the vicinity of the Nile Delta is a likely candidate for Israel's departure from Egypt. But if this is the case, it could rightly be asked, as B. F. Batto has done, why bodies of water that are not marshy (i.e., the Gulfs of Suez and Aqabah) would be so designated in the OT. J. K. Hoffmeier has countered that salt-tolerant reeds and rushes could thrive in salt marsh areas such as the Gulf of Suez. Moreover, he argues that the Bitter Lakes, north of the Gulf of Suez, could have extended farther south in the second millennium B.C., perhaps even connecting with the Gulf of Suez. Although this would not provide the precise location of the crossing, the problem of referring to both the Gulf of Suez (Num 33:8-10) and the site of the crossing further north as the *yam sûp* would disappear: they would be one and the same body of water. Hoffmeier's view is well-argued, but it remains to be seen whether it will gain wide acceptance.

Another view is that *sûp* should be understood not as "reed" but as "end" (reading *sôp* instead of *sûp*, perhaps as a pun). Hence, the term *yam sûp* could be understood as the "sea at the end of the world." This approach is not necessarily in contradiction with what has been outlined above but rather may be a theologically motivated idea that capitalizes on the similarity between the two words in Hebrew. This view, popularized most recently by Batto, has sparked some debate and is by no means universally accepted, but it suggests a very helpful way of understanding perhaps not so much the location of the exodus sea as its theological significance.

To refer to the exodus sea as the "sea at the end of the world" introduces associations with *creation and the waters of chaos in Genesis 1 (*see* Cosmology). The "taming" of the waters of chaos at creation is a well-documented motif in the ancient world. Indeed, in Genesis 1:9-10, God collected the waters on the earth, allowing the dry land *(yabbašâ)* to appear. Similar language is used to describe the crossing of the sea in Exodus: the sea (called the "deep" *[tĕhôm]*; Ex 15:5, 8; see also Gen 1:2) is divided and "dry land" (*yabbašâ*, Ex 14:16) appears. Israel's departure from Egypt is a new beginning, a new creation for God's people. The crossing of the sea is represented as a crossing of the waters of chaos, the "sea at the end of the world." Perhaps the symbolic significance of the name is an attempt to drive the reader to ponder its ultimate theological significance in addition to its historical referent.

Although the precise historical identification of the exodus sea still eludes us, Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes region remain the most likely candidates. The former is located southeast of Pi-Ramesse and, hence, would have been in Israel's southeasterly path. It is unclear, however, whether either Lake Timsah or the Bitter Lakes (several miles south of Lake Timsah, closer to the Gulf of Suez) were marshy areas or larger bodies of water at the time of the exodus. It is plausible, even if they were marshy areas, that the Israelites crossed while the area was flooded, which occurred periodically.

3. Wilderness Itinerary.

As difficult as it is to identify the location of the Red Sea, the stops along Israel's wilderness itinerary are more difficult still. Most vexing perhaps is the location of Mount Sinai, an issue that has garnered much scholarly attention for hundreds of years.

The Bible presents us with a fairly lengthy list of sites associated with the wilderness trek, both throughout the narratives of Exodus through Deuteronomy, but also in more compact form in Numbers 33. In general, the two are in agreement, although details differ. The chart in Figure 1: Israel's Wilderness Itinerary compares Israel's complete itinerary from Egypt to the plains of Moab according to Numbers 33 (right column) and the sites mentioned in the narrative of Exodus through Numbers (left column). Here one can see at a glance where the two agree and where they differ.

It has been argued that the wilderness itinerary is really multiple itineraries, each stemming from different sources or traditions (Coats), and this may account for the differences between these lists. It should be seen, however, that these lists differ more in terms of detail than substance. To say so is not to minimize the differences, but when the dust clears, little is gained by posing hypothetical reconstructions of Israel's literary history to explain these differences. It also seems wisest to treat these lists as historical regardless of the fact that the location of these sites cannot be verified archaeologically. Moreover, as G. I. Davies (1974) argues, these are itineraries, meaning they are literary products in the category of a well-documented an-

cient Near Eastern genre. They are not prepared to settle questions of geography. Differences between these lists do not necessarily reflect differing traditions about where the Israelites actually went, but different compositional agenda, one in narrative, the other an itinerary.

What has attracted the most attention on this general topic is the location of Mount Sinai (also referred to as Horeb, mainly in a number of passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy, but see also Ps 106:19 and Mal 4:4). The search for the location of Mount Sinai has even been the subject of a recent popular book (Blum). The desire on the part of Christians and Jews to know the location of Sinai has obvious motivations. First, and perhaps most obvious, is the religious significance of the site. To walk where the Israelites were brought into God's presence and where Moses received the *law would be a moving religious experience. Second, to locate the site would be a powerful apologetic for the historicity of the exodus specifically and Israel's early history in general. It must be admitted, however, that no present-day mountain would be able to yield such definitive information. Third, related to the second, Sinai is the most significant site in Israel's wilderness trek. Hence, knowing its location would provide the major clue to reconstructing the route of the exodus from start to finish.

It is commonly accepted that Mount Sinai is located somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula. Opinions differ, however, when more precision is sought. Perhaps the most common view is to locate the mountain in southern Sinai (most often Jebel Musa or Jebel Serbal). The fact that Deuteronomy 1:2 refers to Kadesh-barnea as an eleven-day journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir may be most amenable to a southern location for Sinai. But other candidates have been suggested, including northern Sinai, central Sinai and somewhere in or near Midian.

Each of these locations affects one's conclusions concerning the route of the exodus (See Figure 2: Possible Routes of the Exodus). Hence, the proposed routes include the following. (1) Some have suggested a northern Sinai route along the "way of the land of the Philistines." This theory has come under increasing criticism and can safely be dismissed as an extremely unlikely option, particularly in light of Exodus 13:17-18, which states explicitly that the Israelites did not go that way. (2) A bit further south is the "way of Shur." It may have been the route the patriarchs took to go to Egypt, suggested by Genesis 16:7 and 25:18. (3) A central route along the way of Seir may be suggested by Deuteronomy 1:2, but by no means is this identification explicit or even implicit. (4) The southern route, with various proposed locations for Mount Sinai, including a turn northward, with Mount Sinai in Midian near the mouth of the Gulf of Aqabah, remains the most likely option. Another option is that of E. Ananti, who identifies Sinai with Har Karkom in the Negev highlands, but this has been strongly refuted by G. I. Davies (1990) and I. Beit-Arieh.

The precise location of Mount Sinai is still a mystery. The tradition that it is located somewhere in the central or southern Sinai Peninsula is a long one, dating back to at least the fourth century A.D. The specific designation of Saint Catherine's monastery, however, is likely not based on any historical evidence. It has been argued that a location near Midian, if not in Midian, is implied in Exodus 3:1, 12. Moses settled in Midian, according to Exodus 2. He led his flock into the desert, the Hebrew expression *ʾaḥar hammidbār* (3:1, lit. "behind the desert") indicating some trek into the wilderness. The Hebrew is not explicit that a significant distance into the Sinai Peninsula is meant, which could allow for a location for Mount Sinai in Midian (Cross; Blum). This view, however, has not gained wide acceptance to date.

What also contributes significantly to the difficulties in locating the route of Israel's wilderness journey is that the biblical names of these sites are not those of sites today, not to mention the fact that some or many of these sites may no longer exist at all. Moreover, similarities between some names then and now have no bearing on whether the sites themselves can be identified, since these identifications may be legendary. It is also the case that some biblical names are anecdotal. For example, Meribah and Massah mean quarreling and testing (see also Kibroth-hattaavah, Num 11:31-35; 33:17). These names seem to reflect the events of Exodus 17 rather than being the original names of the sites. This is not to say that the sites themselves or their events are fictitious, only that the names will not aid in helping us determine their location. (It is worth noting that the LXX explicitly translates these Hebrew place names as "rebellion" and "test" rather than transliterating

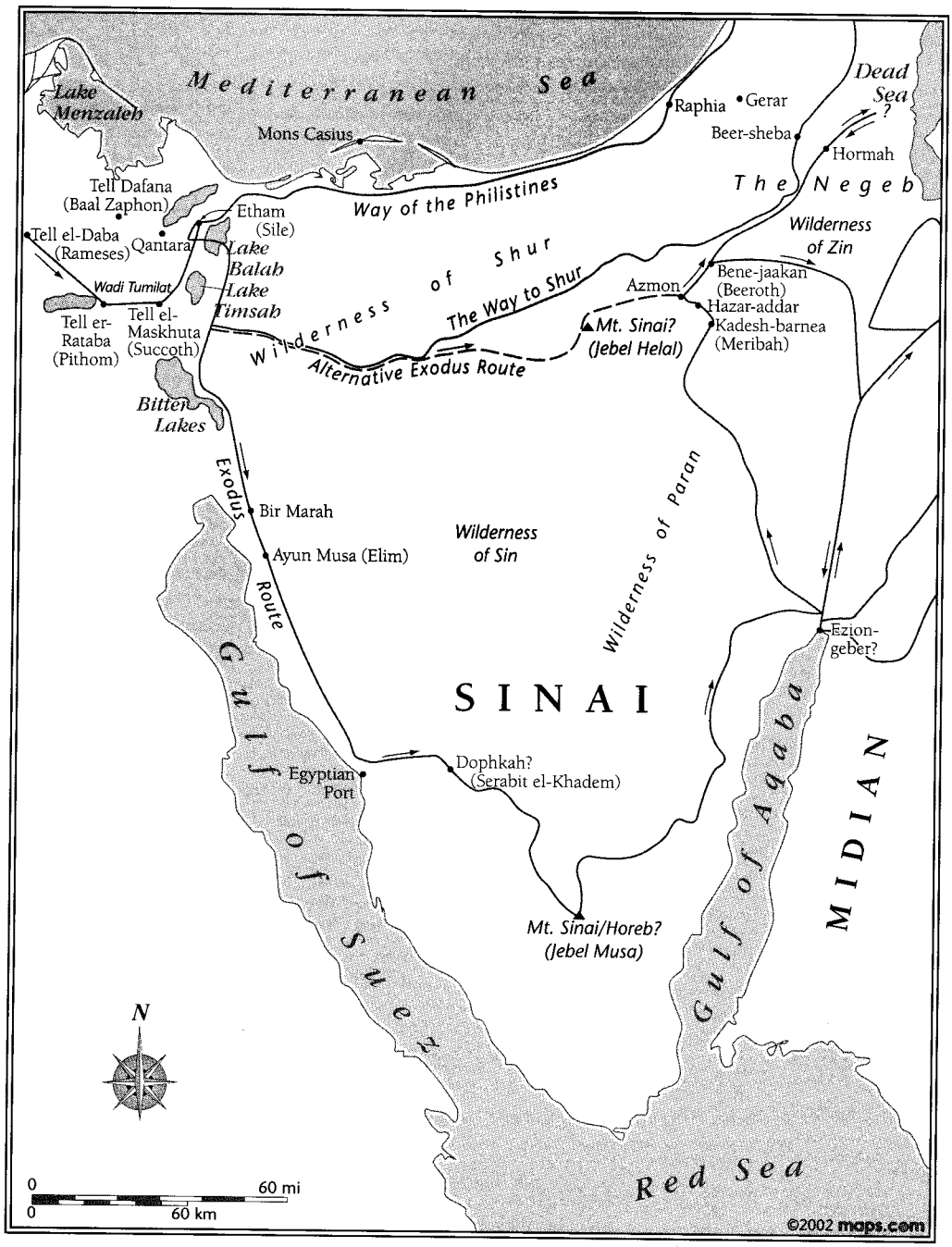

Figure 2: Possible Routes of the Exodus

"Meribah" and "Massah.")

In the final analysis, precise identification of the geographic locations from the point at which the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and wandered throughout the wilderness remains sketchy at best, and in most cases unrecoverable. Suggested locations for individual sites depend in large part on what general route for the wilderness trek is adopted (northern, southern, etc.), which in turn depends on one's view of the location of Sinai. The data are tentative; so, too, the conclusions.

4. The Red Sea and Wilderness as Theological Themes.

4.1. Old Testament Reflexes. The historicity of the crossing of the Red Sea, Mount Sinai and the wilderness wanderings remains a topic of scholarly attention, and for good reason. These are foundational events in Israel's history, and thus, for Christian and Jew alike, the question of their historicity has significant implications. Despite the absence of secure geographical anchors, it is unwarranted to conclude that the biblical account is fictitious. A nation would likely have invented a more appealing national history than one that includes abject slavery and repeated moral and religious shortcomings (Sarna).

It should be kept in mind that the biblical accounts were not written to provide its readers with historical or geographic information, at least not what modern readers have come to expect. The biblical writer's purpose was not only to recount what happened but to provide a means whereby the readers' lives could connect to these past events. In other words, there is a hortatory purpose to these narratives.

That hortatory purpose is seen in the manner in which later biblical writers employed Israel's past to provide a theological framework for understanding the present. The crossing of the sea is actually "revisited" in Joshua 3—4, which recounts the crossing of the Jordan. That this story is meant to be understood in light of the crossing of the Red Sea needs little elaboration. Here, too, the people are encamped by a body of water (Josh 3:1) that they are about to cross. They are led this time, however, not by pillars of cloud and fire but by another concrete manifestation of God's presence, the ark of the *covenant (Josh 3:3). As Moses had done in Exodus 14:13-14, *Joshua promises the people direct divine intervention in their imminent journey (Josh 3:5). The most obvious parallel, of course, is the parting of the water itself (Josh 3:13-17). One might even say that the crossing of the Jordan is a reenactment of the Red Sea crossing, an reenactment that allows those one generation removed from the exodus to participate in that event.

Of the other OT uses of the crossing of the Red Sea, the most explicit is found in Isaiah. A theme that recurs in this book is that the Israelites' rescue from Babylon is to be understood as another exodus event. The God who made a way through the sea (exodus) is the same God now poised to bring his people out of another captivity (Babylon; Is 43:16-17). A similar use of the exodus with respect to God's victory over the Assyrians may be seen in Micah 7:15-17 (cf. Zech 10:8-12).

Isaiah 51:9-10 introduces another factor. There, as in Isaiah 43, the argument concerns Israel's deliverance from Babylon seen in the context of God's past actions. But here the past event referred to is not only the parting of the Red Sea but the cutting of Rahab to pieces. According to ancient Near Eastern creation stories, the world was created out of conflict. Part of that conflict was the subduing of a god associated with water and depicted as a sea monster of some sort. This creature is known as Tiamat in the Babylonian creation story *Enuma Elish* and Yam in Canaanite sources. Rahab and Leviathan (Is 27:1) are thought to be biblical reflexes of these creation stories. Sea was a symbol of chaos, which had to be controlled for the order of the created world to exist. The particular god who won the struggle—that is, the creator of the inhabitable world—was elevated to supreme status in the pantheon. Although these specifics of the ancient Near Eastern story do not seem to come into play in the OT, the story as a whole is certainly called upon by a number of biblical writers such as Isaiah to serve their own theological purposes.

When seen in this light, the case made by B. F. Batto for understanding *yam sûp* as "sea to the end of the world" (see above) commends itself. This is not to say that this is what Red Sea means, but that this is how its theological function was understood. Israel's crossing of the Red Sea, as well as her deliverance from Babylon

centuries later, are portrayed theologically as reflexes of an ancient cosmic battle.

Likewise, Israel's wilderness experience is reflected upon elsewhere in the OT. It is referred to as both a place of death and of life. Both are self-evident. It was in the desert that the exodus generation, those twenty-years old and older, died after the rebellion at Kadesh (Num 14:29; also Ps 106:14, 26). The purpose of the desert period was to kill off a rebellious generation. On the other hand, the desert also represents a place of life or, more accurately, a place of God's protection and provision for the new generation of Israelites living in the desert (Deut 8:15-16; 29:5; 32:10; Ps 136:16; Hos 13:5).

4.2. New Testament Reflexes. Both the crossing of the Red Sea and the wilderness wanderings become important theological themes in the NT. The exodus in particular is so pervasive in the NT that it is difficult to do justice to it (see the lengthy treatment by Plastaras): Christ leaving Egypt as a child is an exodus event (Mt 2:15); his death is referred to as an "exodus" (NRSV "departure") in Luke 9:31; the author of Hebrews provides an extended analogy between Moses' role as OT mediator and Christ as the final and better mediator (Heb 3:1—4:13); Israel's passage through the sea is analogous to Christian baptism (1 Cor 10:1-2).

The wilderness experience is likewise used as a theological theme. The episode of Christ's forty days in the wilderness is clearly meant to invoke images of Israel's forty-year desert tribulation (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13), the difference being that Christ was obedient throughout his wilderness experience whereas the Israelites were not. Furthermore, as Christ lived out the wilderness experience, so does the church. This is the point made in the use of Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3 (Enns). As Moses delivered his people from slavery to the Promised Land via the wilderness, so too has Christ delivered his people from another form of slavery (to sin). He has gone ahead and entered the "new Canaan," the heavenly land that awaits his people if they remain faithful in their present wilderness wanderings. Hence, the warning of Psalm 95 not to "harden your hearts" as Israel did in the wilderness is applied to the church as it stands between its "Egypt and Canaan."

Such a theological rendering of the exodus and wilderness has no bearing on historical matters, which have been discussed above. If anything, it is the theological reality to which the historical events point. The historical and geographic specifics of the Red Sea and wilderness itinerary promise to elude us for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the theology of these events, which is the reason they were recorded in the first place, transcends the quest for archaeological evidence.

See also EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; EXODUS, BOOK OF; EXODUS, DATE OF; WILDERNESS, DESERT.

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P. Enns

F

FAITH

It is impossible to discuss faith in isolation, because it is associated with a cluster of ideas that have a focal point in *covenant. This cluster embraces trust, reliance, obedience and loyalty. These are illustrated in incidents in the story of God's interaction with Israel. Indeed, the OT's articulation of faith is characteristically embedded in stories, supplemented by responsive prayers in the Psalms. Discussions of faith as a theological concept belong in Pauline theology; they are not found in the OT. Missing from the OT too are creedal formulations of faith. The nearest to a faith formulation is a retrospective recital of the story of salvation such as we find in Deuteronomy 26:5-10. This recital accompanies worship, and it may be compared with Psalms 105, 106 and 107.

The story line of faith and its relational dynamics are the reasons that word studies will fail theology as a method for discussing faith in the Pentateuch. The hazards of word studies are well illustrated by the virtual absence of "trust" in the Pentateuch. "Trusting in the Lord" is clearly related to "faith" and is well represented in Psalms and Proverbs (*bāṭaḥ*, "to trust"). The idea of trusting or not trusting God is reflected in many of the pentateuchal stories and exhortations, but it is not reflected in the characteristic vocabulary of the Pentateuch. Hence, we need an approach to faith that is rooted in the life story of patriarchs and nation.

The retrospective of Hebrews 11 confirms this with its focus on faith in the unseen and faith in relation to promises that had not come to final fulfillment, for it manages to list a wide range of exploits and behavior under the rubric "by faith . . ." where the narratives themselves do not mention faith explicitly. With this holistic perspective in mind, we turn to the stories of the patriarchs and of Israel to discover how faith operates in the Pentateuch.

1. Faith in the Abraham Cycle
2. Faith and Vow in the Jacob Stories
3. Faith in Yahweh and Covenant
4. Seeing and Believing
5. Faith and Its Fluctuations
6. Faith and the Rereading of the Old Testament

1. Faith in the Abraham Cycle.

Genesis 15:6, familiar from Paul's discussion of faith (Rom 4; Gal 3), is a good starting point because it highlights the two-way dynamic of the covenant relationship: "And he [Abraham] *believed* the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness" (NRSV; *wĕhe'ĕmin bayhwh*, Hiphil of the verb *'mn*, "to believe, put trust in, rely on," with the preposition *bĕ*, "in"). The episode and immediate context of this exercise of trust and recognition of trust relates to God's specific promise of innumerable descendants, but the incident is embedded within a relationship between God and *Abraham that began back in Genesis 12. There the story started with a command and a promise: Abraham was to leave his homeland and would become a great nation (Gen 12:1-3). The promise in Genesis 15:5 echoes this previous promise of becoming a great nation. So at this point where faith as believing is signaled lexically, the narrator brings the context of promise, and the entire story line, as well as the concept of covenant, into play. The audience is expected to hold the whole story in mind.

In the Abraham cycle, we cannot separate the *promises from the commandments, faith from obedience, inward orientation from behavior or God's initiative from Abraham's response. The inner orientation is expressed in a variety of ways. Taking our cue from the story line, we should not separate attitudes from ac-

tions, the tangible from the intangible, blessings experienced from blessings previewed. In the story line these are all linked together within the relationship between God and Abraham. In Genesis 15 the sand beneath Abraham's feet and the stars in the sky function as symbols and physical reference points for the yet-unborn descendants. This episode is an example of the seen and the unseen, of present reality and future possibility, of visual symbol and divine guarantee, coupled together in the telling of the story. The rest of Genesis 15, with its futuristic perspective on Abraham's descendants in slavery, *exodus and Promised Land, is anchored in God's covenant making: "on that day, the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land' " (Gen 15:18 NRSV). The covenant making is dramatized symbolically in the ritual. If the chapter begins and ends with divine initiative, it also encloses Abraham's responses and Abraham's questions. In other episodes our appreciation of Abraham's "faith" will have to stretch to encompass Abraham's skepticism and Abraham's dubious survival strategies as well.

Abraham's exercise of faith permeates the whole patriarchal cycle, though it may come to a focus at key points. Faith is implicit in the actions recorded in episodes where the narrator chooses to mention a different aspect of the human response. Thus, for Abraham to leave his homeland at the outset of the story was for him to exercise faith, though the narrator highlights his obedience at that point instead: "So Abram went, as the LORD had told him" (Gen 12:4 NRSV). We can attribute faith to the whole Abraham cycle and to the stories about *Isaac, *Jacob and *Joseph in turn because there is a thread of promise that begins with the promises made to Abraham of an heir, descendants, a nation, a land, material prosperity and *blessing to the nations. Faith in the narrower and more explicit sense is a response to these promises, believing that they will come true. Faith in a broader sense, or perhaps we should say in a more fundamental sense, is a response to God himself, especially to his invitation into a bonded relationship in which he would stand by the patriarchs: "I will establish my covenant between me and you . . . an everlasting covenant, to be God to you" (Gen 17:7 NRSV). If Genesis 12:1 is one end of the thread of explicit promise in the patriarchal stories, Joseph's words to his brothers before he dies is the other: "God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Gen 50:24 NRSV). This faith utterance speaks of the specific promise of a land, linking back to Genesis 12:1. It also speaks more fundamentally of a God who stands by, who is committed and who steps in as protector-rescuer.

2. Faith and Vow in the Jacob Stories.
Just as there are composites of faith and obedience in the stories, there are other admixtures. We see composites of faith and survival strategies in none so clearly as Jacob. His moment of faith, removed from his family context, takes the form of a vow: "*If* God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, *then* the LORD *shall be* my God" (Gen 28:20-21 NRSV, italics mine; *'im . . . wĕhāyâ).* This response by Jacob to God's enunciated promises (Gen 28:13-15) is positive but conditional. It is expressive of faith but requires additional evidence and adds a few specifics—food and clothing (Gen 28:20)—to the broad terms of God's promise just announced in the *theophany. Clearly, then, "faith" is not one single thing or of one single hue in the patriarchal stories. Jacob's faith response has the form of a vow: "Jacob vowed a vow" (Gen 28:20a; *neder* and the verb *nādar).* A vow oscillates between a devout promise and an attempt to strike a bargain. We have artifacts deposited in temples, as well as stories outside the Bible, that bear witness to this ancient Near Eastern custom of the votive offering, an offering sometimes made in advance to secure the request and sometimes made afterward acknowledging the request granted. Thus Jacob offered God a ten percent cut of all future profits (Gen 28:22). Jacob also offered allegiance and worship: "then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house" (Gen 28:21-22 NRSV). How much we emphasize Jacob's promise and how much we emphasize his bargain is to some degree determined by reader response.

When we read stories in ancient crosscultural contexts, we cannot pretend to be reading a character's mind, nor can we analyze the complex flow of a character's emotions over time. The narrator and the cultural gap preclude full access. We cannot remove all ambivalence from the text or from our understanding of it. This

will be true about stories of faith and unbelief or of mixed degrees of faith and doubt. Our reading of the story will often be reader-response based for want of access to the character's interior life. This said, the narrator of this Jacob story does seem to highlight for us the awesome quality of God's appearance and the magnitude of God's promises in contrast with Jacob's rather carefully weighted or bargaining response. In any case, we will need the rest of Jacob's story to evaluate whether the faith commitment that Jacob made at this point will further the metanarrative of Yahweh and the Israelites. By the end of Jacob's life story, we know that Jacob retained his faith commitment and even developed it through further encounters with God. Episodes within his life story will read more ambiguously and perhaps be truer to life for that. When we relate this to covenant, it reminds us that a bonded relationship, whether a political alliance or a covenant relationship with God, may undergo fluctuations: cancellation or the updating of the terms of the covenant and important occasions for the renewal of the oath of commitment.

We tend to take monotheism for granted as the only rational faith alternative to no faith at all, to atheism, but covenant with God in the OT has the backdrop of polytheism. The opposite of faith in the Pentateuch is not unbelief but reliance on other deities and powers. From an orthodox Yahwistic perspective, faith as it is expressed in the Pentateuch involves a choice between an exclusive allegiance to the God who reveals himself as Yahweh or trust in other powers instead of, or in addition to, Yahweh. Jacob's words "then Yahweh shall be my god" (Gen 28:21b) point to this choice of available gods, and Genesis 35 offers a sequel. There Jacob demands that his community "Put away the foreign gods that are among you" (Gen 35:2 NRSV) before the return pilgrimage to Bethel. However, we cannot be sure of the significance of Jacob's action on that occasion: "Jacob hid them [the foreign gods and earrings] under the oak that was near Shechem" (Gen 35:4 NRSV). Are they buried for later retrieval or permanently renounced for purification? Whether it is household images, golden earrings or a *golden calf, the symbols and attractions of alternative "faiths" appear within Israel's households and national life throughout the OT (*see* Idols, Idolatry, Teraphim, Household Gods).

3. Faith in Yahweh and Covenant.

3.1. Faith and Its Opposites. By linking faith with a choice of gods and with covenant relationship, and hence with covenant loyalty, we understand faith in terms of faithfulness, that is, of wholeheartedness, of loyalty, of unswerving allegiance, expressed by observing the stipulations of covenant. Faith for Israelites entails fidelity, "keeping faith with" Yahweh in the manner of a vassal remaining true to an overlord and not becoming embroiled in conspiracies. "Keeping faith with" is thus the opposite of double-mindedness, duplicity and deception, divided loyalties, or outright rebellion.

At the covenant-renewal occasion convened at Shechem several generations after Jacob, Joshua issued the challenge to Israel to "put away the foreign gods that your ancestors served" and to become instead the loyal vassals of Yahweh alone: "Serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness" (*bĕtāmîm ûbĕʾemĕt,* Josh 24:14; cf. 24:19-24). This spirit of wholehearted and undivided allegiance is the counterpart to God's fidelity. God's commitment as overlord in the covenant is characterized as God's being "great in steadfast love and faithfulness" *(rabḥesed weʾĕmet),* an utterance God makes in the personal revelation to Moses at the top of Sinai (Ex 34:6). These paired terms in Joshua 24:14 and Exodus 34:6 form a hendiadys. The second word in the hendiadys, *ʾĕmet,* conventionally translated "truth," means "fidelity" or "faithfulness" in this context. It has a semantic equivalent in Akkadian *kittu* (pl. *kināt*u, "steadiness," "reliability," "truth," "loyalty"), which is used in treaty vocabulary: "If you do not always offer them complete reliability *[kittu šalimtu]*. . . if you do not support them with proper loyalty *[ina kināte tarṣāti],* speak to them with a true heart *[ina kitti ša libbikunu]*" (Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon 8.96-99). There is a whole international vocabulary in treaties and covenants of terms for this wholehearted and unswerving allegiance to the partner. Keeping faith with God, Israel's covenant partner, is at the heart of OT faith. The whole ethos of Deuteronomy reflects this "keeping faith with" Yahweh in its exhortations to choose Yahweh, to cling to Yahweh, to love Yahweh, to fear Yahweh, to walk in his ways and to form no alliance with the Canaanites and their gods.

3.2. Faith and Its Correlates. Covenant acts as a theological sponge that sucks up all the droplets of varied human responses so that faith as a

distinct droplet, along with trust, love and obedience, is absorbed within the covenant relationship. Thus it is impossible to squeeze faith out of the sponge without other expressions for covenant allegiance, such as "the fear of the Lord," "walking in the ways of Yahweh" and "loving the Lord" with all one's heart and mind and soul and strength. All this range of human response to God in covenant relationship marks an Israelite spirituality. This faith of Israel also embraces obedience to the specifics of the Torah and participation in the cultic system. For OT theology, it is artificial to divorce the inward individual orientation from its outworkings in communal worship and behavior. In Genesis, the promises are prominent; in Exodus, the stipulations; in Leviticus, cultic maintenance; in Numbers, the community experience in the *wilderness; in Deuteronomy, the challenge to renewal of commitment. Yet the faith and varied responses of the ancestors and Israelites are best grasped in relation to covenant making, covenant breaking and renewals of covenant. The canonical presentation of the books of the Pentateuch expresses this coherence through a variety of genres, from stories to laws to cultic instructions to exhortation to poems.

One relational dimension of faith is trust. Faith as trusting God is intimately related to Israel's response to God's emissaries and representatives. In the Pentateuch, this means acceptance of the angel of the Lord, of *prophets and of *priests, but it especially involves the response to *Moses as covenant mediator. To believe Moses is to trust God, whom he represents. This is epitomized by the story in Exodus 3—4 where the issue turns around why the Israelites should believe Moses. The *signs God gives Moses will kindle faith: "so that they may *believe* that the LORD, the God of their ancestors . . . has appeared to you" (Ex 4:5 NRSV; Hiphil of *'mn*). After Moses' demonstration to the enslaved people, Israel's response is expressed in the words "The people *believed;* and when they heard that the LORD had given heed to the Israelites and that he had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped" (Ex 4:31 NRSV; Hiphil of *'mn*). This is a high point of trust in the story. Unfortunately, that trust breaks down repeatedly in the exodus and desert journey so that we can see that faith and trust fluctuate in the relationship, displaced by accusation and complaint (see Ex 14:11-12; 15:24; 16:3; 17:3; Num 11:1; 14:1-4). After the demonstration of rescue at the Red (Reed) Sea, faith in Yahweh is paired with faith in Moses: "So the people feared the LORD and believed *in* the LORD *and in* his servant Moses" (Ex 14:31 NRSV; Hiphil of *'mn* and *bĕ* preposition with both Yahweh and Moses). The dual trust reappears as a motif at Sinai, where God says that he will manifest himself in his cloud theophany: "in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so *trust you* ever after" (Ex 19:9 NRSV; Hiphil of *'mn* with *bĕ*). After the fear engendered by the theophany and the audible voice of God, the people request Moses to act as their intermediary (Ex 20:19). In this series of episodes and verses, the concepts of believing and trusting are coupled together, and the mediator and the God of covenant are closely associated. To trust God is to trust Moses; to trust Moses is to trust God.

4. Seeing and Believing.

Taking up the idea of faith, trust and demonstration, we need to consider the role of signs and miracles in relation to faith, a role replayed in the Gospel narratives. In Hebrews, faith is spoken of in relation to things unseen—which might skew our reading of the Pentateuch. Throughout the telling of the exodus story there is a powerful emphasis on seeing and believing that supports our contemporary idiom, "Seeing is believing." For instance, at the seashore the Israelites are told: "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and *see* the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you *see* today you shall never *see* again. . . . Israel *saw* the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel *saw* the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people . . . *believed*" (Ex 14:13, 30-31 NRSV; using the verbs *r'h* ["to see"] and the Hiphil of *'mn* ["to believe"]). "Standing firm" is the physical counterpart of faith and trust (Ex 14:13; Hithpael of *yṣb* ["to take up one's position, to stand, stand firm"]). The miracles—such as the parting and returning of the Reed Sea—are demonstrations. They are visual aids to faith. In biblical terminology, these miracles are spectacular "signs" (*'ôt* ["a sign"]; cf. Ex 4:8, 17, 28, 30; 7:3; 8:23 [MT 8:19]; 10:1-2; Num 14:11, 22; Deut 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8; 29:3 [MT 29:2]; 34:11). The "believing" the Israelites did was based on seeing a demonstration, not on propositions and concepts that are invisible or a God who is hidden.

Because of the miraculous demonstrations

and the seeing that should lead to believing, later episodes from the desert experience of the Israelites are presented as tests that are failed through unbelief. This is epitomized in God's comment in Numbers 14:11: "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to *believe in me* [Hiphil of *'mn* with *bĕ*], in spite of all the *signs* that I have done among them?" This comment is evoked by the mistrust and complaint in response to the news about Canaan brought back by the spies. Deuteronomy, dealing with the same episode, condemns the reaction of wanting to return to Egypt as a lack of trust and as a failure to accept the evidence of their own eyes: "the LORD your God . . . will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt *before your very eyes*. . . . But in spite of this, *you have no trust in* the LORD your God. . . . You rebelled against the command of the LORD your God, neither *trusting* him nor obeying him" (Deut 1:30, 32; 9:23 NRSV, using the Hiphil of *'mn;* on the experience "seeing with your eyes," see also Deut 3:21; 4:34, 6:22; 10:21; 11:7). Thus, seeing, believing and trusting are woven together, but this woven cord of Israelite faith frays and snaps under stress.

5. Faith and Its Fluctuations.

We cannot really think of Israel's faith as a progression from an elementary flowering of faith through to a steadfast maturity when the story line speaks otherwise. A "conversion model" of faith or a "victorious life model" do not fit the Hebrew story well. Rather, there are high points and low points of faith as the narrative unfolds. Thus, Exodus 4:31 is a high point of faith that is associated with thankfulness and worship, while Numbers 14:11 is a low point of unbelief. Exodus 19 and 24 represent high points of response in covenant making, while Exodus 32 represents a low point of covenant breaking. Even Moses, as well as *Aaron, has his low points and is eventually excluded from the Promised Land: "Because you did not *trust in me* [Hiphil of *'mn*], to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them" (Num 20:12 NRSV).

6. Faith and the Rereading of the Old Testament.

Since NT writers found it illuminating to reflect on commitment to Christ and on unbelief in the light of the Pentateuch, this is an invitation for us to engage in our own rereading exercises. How we should relate faith as we experience it in our contemporary situations to the stories in Israel's metanarrative is a much wider subject for inquiry, involving *hermeneutics, biblical theology, spirituality and *preaching. The alternatives to faith and loyal discipleship that we might choose only partially parallel Israel's inclinations and strategies. Our worlds, communities and life experience are radically different, though our human nature is much the same. God's faithful commitment and demonstration of supernatural signs that we have noted in the Pentateuch is updated in a new and radically different covenant relationship through Jesus that invites our faith response.

See also ABRAHAM; COVENANT; JACOB; MOSES; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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D. C. T. Sheriffs

FALL

In theology, the term *Fall* is often used to describe the first act of disobedience of *Eve and *Adam. However, the Hebrew root *npl* ("to fall") is not so used in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, *npl* may be used to describe death, disaster or the coming of God's judgment. In a collection of antithetical proverbs contrasting the righteous and the wicked, Proverbs 11:5 uses *npl* to describe the disaster coming upon the wicked: "The righteousness of the blameless keeps their ways straight, but the wicked fall by their own wickedness." The nearest NT approximation to the idea of the Fall of humankind is Romans 5:12-21, where Paul speaks of the universal consequences of Adam's act of disobedience. Hence, it is better to describe the disobedience of Eve and Adam as one of defection, deviation or transgression. Us-

ing "Fall" language may lead to misconstruing the biblical data. We shall examine Genesis 2:4—3:24, since it is the foundation text describing the first act of human disobedience.

1. Structure and Plot
2. Two Trees
3. The Main Participants
4. Concluding Observations

1. Structure and Plot.

Genesis 3 should not be read by itself as a "Fall" story but together with Genesis 2 as an account of the *creation of the human and animal worlds in a state of original harmony, which was then breached by human disobedience. Unlike the creation account of Genesis 1, which ends with the shalom of the divine *sabbath, human disobedience destroys the joyous intimacy described at the end of Genesis 2, resulting in alienation in Genesis 3 and escalating violence in Genesis 4.

The focus of Genesis 1:1—2:3 is on God and his work as Creator, culminating in the creation of humans in the divine *image, whereby they are given authority over the creation. That account is made complete by God's sabbath rest. In Genesis 2:4-25 the focus shifts to the creation of man, who is to be steward of the garden, followed by the creation of woman as an appropriate companion. Abundant provision is made for their needs. This account emphasizes that humans are under divine authority and in a network of relationships. Their intimate relationship with each other and their environment is completed by their relationship with their Creator, whom they are called to obey. The frequent use of the compound name Yahweh Elohim emphasizes that God is not only the Creator but also the covenant God who enters into relationship with his creatures.

Genesis 3:1-24 describes the act of disobedience that leads to a breach with the Creator, alienation between humans and discord with their environment. Nonetheless, God is not content to leave humans to their own devices but makes continuing provision for their well-being and seeks to maintain relationship with humans in salvific ways despite the blighting effects of their disobedience.

In Genesis 4:1-26 we have a hopeful moment in the birth of *Cain and *Abel, but Cain's envy leads to the first fratricide. Lest this be thought to be just an aberration, the story then reports the foundations of civilization amidst escalating violence. Unlike the first creation account, which ends in sabbath rest, human sinfulness leads to increasing unrest and dysfunction in society. Yet as in Genesis 3, so also Genesis 4 ends with a note of hope with the birth of *Seth and the report that people began to invoke the name of Yahweh, which leads on to the establishment of another, more righteous lineage.

The chiastic pattern of Genesis 2—3 noted by J. T. Walsh and followed by many others (e.g., Blocher 1984, Wenham 1987, Mathews, Hartley) makes the eating of the fruit the pivotal feature of the symmetric structure and thus its turning point. Prior to this act there is harmony in the garden, but the offense results in alienation and judgment.

2. Two Trees.

Genesis 2:9 reports that in the midst of the garden of Eden there were two trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and *evil. The first tree offered the possibility of eternal life (Gen 3:22), but the couple were no longer permitted to eat from it after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There is no suggestion at Genesis 2:9 that it was prohibited to the humans prior to this. We shall not concern ourselves here as to whether the trees are to be taken as literal or symbolic (for the suggestion that the trees, while literal, had sacramental significance, see Keil, 84-85; Kidner, 62; contra Blocher 1984, 124; *see* Eden, Garden of).

Scholars have offered various explanations of the expression "knowledge of good and evil" (for discussion, see Blocher 1984, 146-50; Westermann, 211-16; Wenham 1987, 62-64; Walton, 170-72, 213-17). (1) A view of antiquity, still followed by some moderns, is that the phrase refers to sexual knowledge. Yet Genesis 1:27-31 suggests that sexual differentiation was part of God's good creation, and Genesis 2:18-25 reveals that marriage was instituted by God. (2) Some writers suggest that "good and evil" is a merismus for everything (i.e., eating from this tree would give omniscience). However, this is not confirmed by the outcome. While the *serpent possibly wished to suggest such a nuance when he commented that consuming it would make the humans godlike, eating proved a disappointment and resulted only in shame and recognition of their nakedness.

(3) H. Blocher (1984, 121-34) proposes, with some merit, that "the knowledge of good and

evil" refers to moral autonomy. By eating, the human couple acquired the ability to determine good and evil without reference or obligation to God. Yet it is hard to imagine that God would delegate this prerogative to human beings. (4) A closely related view is proposed by G. J. Wenham, who suggests that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil gave wisdom: "The latter was forbidden for human consumption because the wisdom acquired through eating it leads to independence from God, whereas true wisdom begins with the 'fear of the Lord' (Pr. 1:7)" (Wenham 1994, 62).

We should note that in a sense the man and the woman already had knowledge of what was right and wrong before they ate, since it was implicit in the command. On the other hand, Hebrew thought recognized the experiential and relational dimensions of knowledge. To eat from the forbidden tree was an act that gave knowledge based on experience but also established autonomy from God inappropriate for humanity. We know only too well that the very nature of temptation, especially a new form of temptation, begs to be experienced for the knowledge it is thought to offer. Such knowledge inevitably proves disappointing, if not illusory, but it is the attraction that gives temptation its power. The irony is that true wisdom, and the right knowledge of good and evil, lies in rejecting the experience.

Some recent treatments of Genesis 2—3 interpret it as a story about human maturation (see Bechtel), but preferable is the older view of Keil suggesting that the tree was to give the human couple moral discernment by their abstention from it (Keil, 86). The suggestion that experience of evil gives greater discernment is completely fallacious. The doing of evil tends always to corrupt: a thief does not increase in moral discernment by stealing and, conversely, Jesus did not become less discerning for having refused Satan's temptation.

The prohibition relating to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, mentioned first in Genesis 2:9, comes in 2:17. As T. E. Fretheim observes, "The permission establishes an incredible range of freedom for the creatures; hence, the command that follows certainly does not seem repressive. The command may appear surprising, but it indicates the important role law has to play as a creational, pre-sin reality; command inheres as an integral part of the created order. To be truly a creature entails limits; to honor limits becomes necessary if the creation will develop as God intends" (Fretheim, 351).

3. The Main Participants.

Genesis 2 gives special attention to the creation of the man and the woman. Having permitted the man to name the animals, a process through which the man recognized the unsuitability of any to be his partner, God created woman and, like a celestial matchmaker, introduced her to the man. This section describes the man's delighted recognition of the woman as his true companion. The passage ends with the statement that they were naked (*ʿărûmmîm*) but not ashamed. The point is not to idealize nudity but rather to emphasize their innocence. As Sarna (23) puts it, "So long as the harmony with God remains undisturbed, the pristine innocence and dignity of sexuality was not despoiled."

In contrast to the innocent couple, the serpent is described as "crafty" (*ʿārûm*, Gen 3:1), an obvious wordplay. By seeing the serpent described as shrewd—wisdom is normally desirable, but here it is of the wily kind—we are warned to be cautious in accepting anything it says.

Eve's response was inadequate; she magnified God's strictness. Once the serpent had Eve in dialogue, it then directly contradicted God's word concerning the consequences of disobedience and misrepresented God by suggesting that he was keeping something from them. The serpent claimed that if the humans ate the fruit they would not die but become as God, knowing good and evil. This temptation, to be as God, was a direct denial of all that it meant to be in the image of God. The image was not lost but was under major attack because the couple misrepresented the God whose representatives they were on earth. Moreover, the creation order was inverted: humans were given dominion over snakes, but by obeying the serpent's advice they ceded that dominion.

The woman saw that the fruit was desirable—*sin has a false attraction and seems to offer wisdom (cf. 1 Jn 2:16)—so she did the dire deed: "She took . . . and ate: so simple the act, so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before 'take and eat' become verbs of salvation" (Kidner, 68). The man did no better. Sarna rightly notes that the Hebrew plainly says that the man was there with her, showing "he was a full participant in the sin" (Sarna, 25; cf. 1 Tim 2:13-15).

Their eyes were opened, but they discovered that they were nude, not shrewd. The knowledge was not liberating; instead, it produced such shame that they attempted the first "coverup." They now experienced estrangement from the source of all life and goodness. Genesis 3:8 functions as a hinge between verses 6-7 and 9-19. They had already tried to cover up (Gen 3:7). Now the realization of their nakedness and their guilt led them to hide from God.

Although there is no indication in the account of how long the man and woman continued in a state of innocence, the use of the Hithpael participle *mithallēk* ("walking to and fro") suggests a repetitive or habitual type of action. Thus it is likely that the man and the woman were accustomed to experiencing daily the blessed presence of the living God. Their offense now caused them to hide from the One whom they had previously welcomed.

God in his mercy questioned the rebellious couple instead of leaving them to their own devices. God's call to Adam, "Where are you?" is to be understood as a rhetorical question inviting them "to make admission of their faults" (Chrysostom *Hom. Gen.* 17.22, cited in Louth, 85). "God's questions were designed to elicit confessions, not information; he knew perfectly well what they had done" (Wenham 1994, 63). Wenham compares them to children playing hide-and-seek: "Just as a parent who sees where his children are hiding may shout out, 'Where are you?,' in effect inciting them to come out, so does God. And, with Cassuto, we presume that this is what happened here: the couple emerge shame-faced from the trees. Their reply to God's inquiry shows that they understood the question as an invitation to come out and explain their behavior" (Wenham 1987, 77).

When Adam explained that he had hid because of his fear concerning his nakedness, he did not perceive "that his very excuse provides evidence of his misdeed" (Cassuto, 156). Considering the fact that the couple had already taken steps to cover their genitals, the "motif of nakedness . . . obviously stands for more than a lack of covering, in view of the shame and fear that was generated over it. From this point on, all sinners will fear the Lord God when their guilt is uncovered" (Ross, 144). This led to God's next question as to who had told them about their nakedness—was their new awareness the result of a guilty conscience?

When a coverup would no longer do, the guilty couple both shifted the blame (Fewell and Gunn, 22-38). The man answered, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate" (Gen 3:12). There was an irony about the answer: first the man blamed the woman; then he blamed God for giving him the woman. Previously he had delighted in the woman, but now we see that guilt produces alienation. "Here the divisive effects of sin, setting man against his dearest companion (cf. 2:23) and alienating him from his all-caring creator, are splendidly portrayed" (Wenham 1987, 77). When challenged, the woman blamed the serpent. As Dorotheus of Gaza said, noting the failure of the pair to humble themselves and accept their guilt, and particularly Adam's attempt to blame God for giving him the woman, "when a man has not the guts to accuse himself, he does not scruple to accuse God himself" (*Spiritual Instruction* 1, cited in Louth, 87).

Luther observed that the Fall resulted in humanity turning inward. The alienation that resulted affects all our relations: divine to human, man to woman, human to human, human to the environment (see Hauser). Jonathan Edwards described something of this when he said that at "the fall, the mind of man shrank from its primitive greatness and expandedness, to an exceeding smallness and contractedness. . . . Before, his soul was under the government of the noble principle of divine love, whereby it was enlarged to the comprehensiveness of all his fellow creatures and their welfare. . . . [But] sin, like some powerful astringent, contracted his soul to the very small dimensions of selfishness, and God was forsaken, and man retired within himself, and became totally governed by narrow and selfish principles and feelings" (cited in Van Dyke, 164).

Prior to this, God had only blessed his creation, but now the serpent was degraded for its treachery. Just as the serpent was *ʿārûm mikkōlʿ* "more crafty than all") other animals (Gen 3:1), now it was *ʿārûr mikkol* ("cursed above all," Gen 3:14). As V. P. Hamilton observes, talk of crawling and eating dust are "expressions of humiliation and subjugation (as in Ps 72:9; Isa 49:23; Mic 7:17)" (Hamilton, 197). Since serpents do not literally "eat dust," the expression is clearly a metaphor.

Many scholars see God's curse of the serpent as an etiology explaining the hostility between

snakes and humans (Gunkel, 20-21; von Rad, 92-93; Sarna, 24, 27; Westermann, 258-59). This type of interpretation plays down the idea that we have here an etiology of the origin of evil and instead puts emphasis on the description of the serpent merely as one of the animals created by Yahweh God. Others see it as more than an etiology (Cassuto; Hamilton; Wenham 1987). W. Eichrodt notes that the serpent's apparent "superhuman" access to information "about the tree of knowledge and the demonic hostility toward God, which burst out in the serpent's words, are an unmistakable sign that a deliberate anti-God power is here at work" (Eichrodt, 2.405). So although biblical teaching about Satan does not appear until later, the church's identification of the serpent with Satan "was an absolutely correct intuition of its real character" (Eichrodt, 2.405). In veiled and enigmatic fashion, the animal features of the serpent "suggest a power inimical to God which helps to bring about man's apostasy from God and which presents a deadly threat to the life of man in every age" (Fichtner, 574). Wenham says, "Once admitted that the serpent symbolizes sin, death, and the power of evil, it becomes much more likely that the curse envisages a long struggle between good and evil, with mankind eventually triumphing" (Wenham 1987, 80).

Genesis 3:15 has long been understood as the first announcement of the gospel. However, a majority of modern critical scholars fail to see this as a protoevangelium (see Skinner; von Rad; Westermann). Many, including some conservatives, see the seed of the woman as collective, yet as Wenham observes:

> The oldest Jewish interpretation found in the third century B.C. Septuagint, the Palestinian targums *(Ps.-J., Neof., Frg.),* and possibly the Onqelos targum takes the serpent as symbolic of Satan and look for a victory over him in the days of King Messiah. The NT also alludes to this passage, understanding it in a broadly messianic sense (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14; Rev 12). . . . Later Christian commentators, beginning with Justin (*ca.* A.D. 160) and Irenaeus (*ca.* 180), have regarded 3:15 as the Protoevangelium, the first messianic prophecy in the OT. While a messianic interpretation may be justified in the light of subsequent revelation, a *sensus plenior,* it would perhaps be wrong to suggest this was the narrator's own understanding. (Wenham 1987, 80-81)

But in the light of seed imagery in Genesis as a whole, a case can be made for seeing 3:15 as messianic. According to T. D. Alexander, Genesis 3:15 "anticipates the creation of a royal line through which the terrible consequences of the disobedience of the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden will be reversed" (Alexander, 31; cf. Collins).

God's judgment on the woman strikes two important aspects of her being. First, she will experience intense pain in childbearing (Gen 3:16), which should be an area of personal fulfillment. Second, God states, "Your urge will be to your husband, but he will rule over you" (lit. trans.). The term *tĕšûqâ* ("urge, desire") is rare; it is found elsewhere in Genesis 4:7 and Song of Songs 7:11. N. Sarna lists three possible interpretations of this statement: "Rashi understood this, together with the next clause, to refer to the satisfaction of female *sexuality being traditionally dependent on the husband's initiative. Rambam took it to mean that despite the discomforts and pain attendant upon child-bearing, the woman still longs for the sexual act that brings about this condition." Third, it may describe a "social reality" in which "the woman was wholly dependent for her sustenance upon what her husband could eke out of the soil, in striking contrast to the situation in Eden," where food was bountiful (Sarna, 28).

Another view has been argued by S. T. Foh (summarized in Wenham 1987, 81-82), noting the parallel with Genesis 4:7, where sin seeks control over Cain but he must master it. Hence she argues that the urge is not a desire for sexual intimacy but a desire to be independent of or to dominate her husband, but he will rule her. Against this view Walton notes that in each of the three texts where *tĕšûqâ* appears there is no common object desired, so it is better to regard it as referring to a basic or inherent instinct. Whichever view one accepts, the comment of D. Kidner is apt: " 'To love and to cherish' becomes 'To desire and to dominate' " (Kidner, 71). Consequently, it "is hard to see how discussions of 'male headship' as an 'ordinance of creation' can be sustained by an appeal to this chapter. This chapter describes how things should not be; this is the broken world" (Atkinson, 94).

The judgment against the man strikes at the area of greatest significance for him, his work. Work is not the curse, but it is marred and frustrated by the Fall. As G. von Rad comments,

"Work was ordained for man even in Paradise (ch. 2:15). But . . . it is so threatened by failures and wastes of time and often enough comes to nothing" (von Rad, 92). Because the man sinned at the point of eating, now he will be judged by having difficulty in producing food. His work is now turned into back-breaking toil: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen 3:19). Finally death will end man's labor: "Man is the loser in the struggle with the ground, for, as it were, the ground will at last overcome him" (Young, 139).

On the broader implications of God's judgments, Fretheim comments, "The sentences touch every aspect of human life: marriage and sexuality; birth and death; work and food; human and non-human. In all these areas, one could speak of death encroaching on life. Disharmony reigns supreme" (Fretheim, 363)

What sort of death is meant in Genesis 3:19? God's judgment for disobedience was death, but Adam lived 930 years before dying (Gen 5:5). Chrysostom pointed out that God in his mercy delayed punishment so that he might "display his characteristic love in regard to sinners, even despite their fall" (Chrysostom *Hom. Gen.* 17.13). Hamilton suggests that the punishment here was not death but expulsion to the uncertainty of life outside the garden. Wenham's comment is more apt: "The consequences of his actions are both physical—toil, pain, and death—and spiritual—alienation from God. The spiritual consequences follow the act of disobedience immediately, but the physical penalties—pain, suffering, and death—may take longer to become evident" (Wenham 1987, 90).

The man called his wife *ḥawwâ* ("Eve"), which is explained as being due to the fact that she was (or would become) the mother of all living. The giving of the name Eve was a recognition of the importance of the woman's procreative role. Despite the judgment, the command to be fruitful and multiply had not been withdrawn, and hence this act of name-giving may have been an act of faith on the part of Adam: death would be countered by life. The fact that she was to be the mother of all living affirms the unity of the human race.

Sin introduced a gangrenous element into God's good creation. Death and decay only mirror the inner decay and fractured relationships. Shame, fear and self-justification become the norm in our relationships with others and with God. Sin has enslaved humankind. The outworking of the sin principle is seen in Genesis 4—11, in the violence of Cain, Lamech, the preflood culture and the assault on heaven (*see* Babel).

4. Concluding Observations.

Historically, is this story myth or history or something in between? Some critics treat the story simply as etiological myths explaining some of the vagaries of human existence. Various elements do point to a paradigmatic interpretation. For instance, the names Adam and Eve function as both personal names and representations. In addition, one must consider the universal themes in the story such as the foundations of marriage and the alienating effect of sin. Wenham points to the "symbolic dimensions of the story linking the garden with the later sanctuaries" as another support for a symbolic reading (see Wenham 1987, 90-91). Yet there are also elements that suggest a historical dimension. The heading linking this story to the historical narratives of the patriarchs, the geographical features that seem to suggest real places and the genealogies that follow all point in a historical direction.

Hence there are grounds for accepting the moderate proposal put forward by Wenham that takes Genesis 2—3 as

> both paradigmatic and protohistorical. It is paradigmatic in that it offers a clear and simple analysis of the nature of sin and its consequences, albeit in rich and symbolic language. Disobedience to the law of God brings physical pain and suffering and alienation from him. This is indeed the experience of every man. In this sense the story is paradigmatic. But in all societies, and especially the rightly knit family society of ancient Israel, the behavior of parents has great impact on their children for good or ill. It therefore follows that the disobedience of the first couple from whom Genesis traces the descent of the whole human race must have had grave consequences for all humankind. In this sense, then, the story offers a protohistorical account of man's origins and his sin. (Wenham 1987, 91)

Finally, we should ask whether it is appropriate to call this the story of "the Fall." We have noted that the account nowhere uses the term *Fall,* and in fact nowhere in the Bible is the term

used to describe the events of Genesis 2—3. Jesus speaks of the *fall* of Satan from heaven (Lk 10:18) but says nothing of the Fall of humans.

Paul is the first to develop the Adam-Christ typology. Paul shows that through the first Adam "sin came into the world . . . and death came through sin"; by contrast, the second Adam brought grace, justification and resurrection life (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:21-23). Paul does not use Fall language but describes the offense in terms of trespass and disobedience.

The so-called classic view of the Fall did not receive adumbration until the time of Augustine. In view of this, it is better to use terms such as *defection, deviation* or *transgression* to describe the actions of the man and the woman. Genesis 2—3 shows the essential nature of sin as disobedience to God and its consequences leading to suffering and death. Worst of all, sin produces alienation between God and humans, between humans and their environment, between human and human, and even in the depths of their own being, the alienated self.

See also ADAM; EVE; GOD, NAMES OF; IMAGE OF GOD; SERPENT; SIN, GUILT.

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M. D. Gow

FAMILIES. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Blood kinship played an important role in the

determination of personal identity and the distribution of power in the villages of early Israel. No blood relationship was taken for granted. However, despite the fact that members of households, clans, villages and tribes in early Israel may have been physically related, the critical requirement for membership was not kinship but *covenant (Meyers 1988, 127). The Israelites were not just households with the same biological parents but households with the same sociological experience and a shared legal commitment to one another. As a result, their understanding of membership in a covenantal community placed social obligations on them to uphold the honor of their individual households while also providing support to the larger community and sustaining the needs of a set of protected classes (*widows, *orphans, and *aliens or strangers; Fensham).

In ancient Israel there existed a patrilineal, segmentary lineage system in which each of its households *(bêt ʾābôt)* belonged to a lineage *(mišpāḥâ)*. These lineages, in which membership and inheritance were based on the father, made up a clan. The clans formed several phratries, and the phratries made up the tribe. Its lineages were also, once the Israelites entered Canaan, described as localized, having their own designated territories (Josh 13—19). These social groupings are not necessarily evolutionary. They all continued to exist and served as the basis of personal identity even after the monarchy was established.

Social custom and law, as it developed in the village culture and was transmitted and transformed in the urban setting, was defined by the people's sense of *honor and shame. These two concepts revolve around both a sense of self-performance as well as a recognition of proper and improper behavior by others, and they provide the basis for social reward and social control. Those who obeyed the covenant with Yahweh upheld the rights and obligations of their households and set an example of hard work and devotion to family. They were designated as honorable and looked to for advice. Shame resulted from antisocial behavior (Lev 18:6-29; Deut 21:18-21), violations of the religious code (Ex 22:20; Deut 16:21-22) and physical deformity or illness (Lev 14:1-20; Deut 23:1). The threshing floor (Gen 50:10-11), the village-gate court (Deut 22:15) and later the royal court system (2 Sam 15:2-4; Jer 36:21) provided the legal setting for dealing with shameful and antisocial behavior.

1. Clan and Kinship Responsibilities
2. Patriarchy
3. Marriage Customs and Acceptable Behavior
4. Inheritance and Sexual Relations
5. Incest and Antisocial Behavior Practiced Against Blood Kin
6. Conclusion

1. Clan and Kinship Responsibilities.

The *bêt ʾābôt*, the Israelite households, were part of a remarkably sophisticated political system for distributing power. The Bible describes early Israel's political system in terms of kinship ties, as with many traditional societies. One place in which these patterns of kinship in the Bible are preserved is in *genealogies (Edelman; Wilson). Linear genealogies, such as the one that begins with the creation of *Adam, have a clear end point (*Noah and the *flood), and their intent is to bridge a gap between major events in the narrative. Vertical genealogies trace the descendants of a single family (*Esau in Gen 36:1-5, 9-43), and they focus on establishing legitimacy for membership in the family or tribe (Gen 46:8-27). Genealogies describe not only blood relationships but also economic relationships, social status, financial worth and the power that a household can exercise in the community as a whole (Malina, 25-93). To understand a genealogy it is necessary to understand the particular social system it reflects and the language that it uses (Steinberg, 44).

It is generally assumed that the culture of ancient Israel was a traditional society and as such very clan-based and kin-oriented. However, textual evidence on kinship ties, clan or ethnic identity, and loyalties to peoples rather than to a king or city-state is not always consistent. In general it can be said that members of family groups and clans would be expected to come to each other's aid (financial and otherwise; see Abram's rescue of *Lot in Gen 14:1-16), but it is not clear how far this obligation actually went. To be sure, since many extended families lived in close proximity to each other within the villages, one would expect them to work together to cultivate and harvest fields that were owned jointly by the related households. However, despite this need to cooperate to maintain the viability of the community, the individual family

unit, the *bêt ʾāb*, would still quite rigidly identify with its own members so that there was a clear differentiation between "brothers" and "strangers" (van der Toorn 1996, 18-20).

In the light of this social attitude, the legal principle of *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye," also could be seen as an expression of corporate responsibility. A person was responsible in equal measure for his or her actions, both civil and criminal, that might affect others (see Ex 21:18-19, 26-27; cf. CH §§206-207). Thus a person who dug a pit and left it uncovered was liable for the value of a neighbor's ox or donkey that fell into it (Ex 21:33-34). According to this principle, reward for proper behavior (see Noah in Gen 6:9) and the punishment for injurious actions might also affect members of the family as the principle of reciprocity was brought into play (see the stoning of Achan's family in Josh 7:24-26; cf., however, the prohibition against executing children for the sins of their parents in Deut 24:16). In addition, each member of the community had responsibility for the protection of each other's property. It was not permitted to allow animals to stray or lie injured in a ditch or for a neighbor's garment to lay abandoned (Deut 22:1-4). Each person was therefore held accountable for the maintenance of the economy and personal well-being of the extended family of the covenantal community. This more encompassing responsibility also applied to such matters as hospitality with strangers (Gen 18:1-8) and the humane treatment of day laborers (Ex 22:26-27) and those cast into years of debt slavery (Ex 21:1-11; Deut 15:12-18).

2. Patriarchy.

The weight of evidence indicates male dominance was the rule and patriarchal lineage and inheritance systems were the norm in the ancient Near East. One of the clearest indications of this situation is found in the mandated devotion of a woman to worship the personal or household god of her male partner. Thus, initially, a woman would worship the god of her father, and then, once her marriage contract had been arranged and she had officially joined the new household of her husband, she would transfer her allegiance and her worship to the god of her husband (van der Toorn 1995, 1-2). This practice is echoed in the story of Rebekah's betrothal to *Isaac and her quick decision to leave her father's household once the marriage contract was concluded (Gen 24:50-60).

The head of household, or paterfamilias, whether the father (the eldest male) or the eldest son (see Laban in Gen 24:28-33), had complete charge of the household's property, represented the household in court, and was responsible for maintaining its prosperity and credibility within the community (van der Toorn 1996, 21). He determined which children would inherit the household's property, and in this he was not bound by the tradition of primogeniture (Paul, 178). As a result, his dignity had to be upheld, even if it required him to exercise summary judgment over members of his family. No father could tolerate the public humiliation associated with a disrespectful or criminal son.

This may explain the extremely harsh punishments prescribed in ancient Near Eastern law for the child who struck or cursed his parents. In the Code of Hammurabi, the mandated punishment requires that the offending hand be cut off (CH §195; Roth 1995, 120), and the Sumerian Law Code orders a son who "disowns the father or mother of his household" to be sold as a slave (Matthews and Benjamin 1997, 99). There is no evidence that such a harsh punishment was ever actually carried out. However, it does indicate how seriously respect for parental authority was taken in the ancient world.

The biblical legal codes express a similar attitude (Ex 21:15; Deut 27:16). To bear the label of "son of a household" was an honor. While still alive, fathers and mothers turned their land over to grown sons, who accepted responsibility for them. Heirs were not only expected to show deference to the elderly; they were responsible for honoring their fathers and mothers by feeding and clothing and sheltering them. Once fathers and mothers probated their wills, they were totally dependent on their heirs for their physical care. In the story of the "stubborn and rebellious son" in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, the heir is described as eating and drinking while the father and mother of the household are left to starve. The "stubborn and rebellious" label implies a breach of contract, not just childish petulance (Num 20:10; Ps 78:5-8; Hos 9:15).

Since designating an heir was a legal process, it could be reversed in a public, legal ceremony. For this to have legal effect, however, labels of shame such as "stubborn and rebellious" could only be imposed after due process. The son was to be brought before the assembly at the gate

court, where the parents identified him as their son and laid out the charges against him. In so doing, they had to spell out his case history to support their statements and to convince the elders and the entire village of his pattern of deviant behavior (Bellefontaine).

Once these steps had been taken, the responsibility of the community was to officially label the son as "stubborn and rebellious." His actions jeopardized the values that the village considered to be universal and correct. There was no appeal, and the elders did not even cite the law that parents were to be honored by their children (Ex 20:12). In order to purge this evil from their midst, the legal requirement was death by stoning, an appropriate sentence since it required every villager to participate while allowing for the legal fiction that his death was not caused by any one person (Matthews and Benjamin 1993, 149-50).

3. Marriage Customs and Acceptable Behavior. Marriage customs fit under the rubric of "honor and shame" since they also involve "proper" behavior. In ancient Syro-Palestine, as in the modern Mediterranean region, they encompassed an emphasis on exchange between households, the desirability of premarital virginity, the maintenance of female chastity after marriage and the production of an heir for the household. While wives were entrusted with the management of the domestic aspects of the household, they ordinarily did not own property, could not testify in court and were required to uphold the honor of the household through their chaste behavior and social correctness (*see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics).

Marriage is often thought of as an orchestrated event, and in some societies it is a long, drawn-out process with several stages. Certain protocols were to be followed that would establish the alliance between families and spell out the contract in exact terms. Within the structure of a patriarchal household, it would be expected that the father or the eldest brother would negotiate the arrangement of marriages with the bride's parents or "guardians" (Gen 24:52-54; Greengus, 59). There were some exceptions to this rule, in which a socially unattached male arranged his own marriage with the bride's family (see *Jacob in Gen 29 and *Moses in Ex 2:21), but these were rare.

The various factors in a marriage to be weighed in the negotiations involved social parity, economic advantage and expansion of the kinship network. Social parity was always a minimum goal. No family wanted to marry "down" socially, at least when arranging the contract for the first wife. Thus the participants had to be at least of the same social class and have approximately the same economic standing. In this way marriages served not only to produce children and a new generation to inherit property, but they also established social ties, economic connections and a network of association that was designed to benefit both parties. Other considerations included kinship obligations (Gen 24:3-4), political advancement (see David's marriages to Michal in 1 Sam 18:17-28 and to Ahinoam in 1 Sam 25:43) and, occasionally, personal desire (Ex 22:16; Judg 14:3; 2 Sam 11:27).

Within the ancestral narrative in Genesis, the one criterion for selection of a marriage partner that surfaces most often is endogamy, marriage within a tribe or kinship unit. Authority for this position, which establishes a preferential pool of eligible marriage partners, is presented in the ancestral narratives where solemn oaths are taken to ensure this practice (Gen 24:2-6; Abraham and his servant). Family tensions are created when the principle is violated (Gen 26:34-35; Esau's wives). The basis for the maintenance of endogamy in these foundational stories of the Hebrews seems to be preservation of family values and religious practices. The danger of assimilation is too great in the first few generations of immigrants, and thus a policy of "marrying in" provides a measure of cultural insurance.

The contractual arrangement consisted of several parts in addition to the mutual agreement for the couple to wed. These included the giving of a bride-price (in Akkadian, the *terḫatum*, and prenuptial agreements regarding potential divorce by either party. There could also be stipulations on the need for polygamous marriage (usually due to illness or infertility), obligations regarding debts or other obligations during the betrothal period, and, depending on the social status of the bride, the exact inheritance rights of their children.

While several ancient laws mention the condition of the prospective bride (widow or divorcée), Mesopotamian documents, at least prior to the Neo-Babylonian era, do not categorically indicate that the young woman was to be a

virgin prior to the arrangement of her betrothal in marriage (Malul, 73). This is a curious omission considering the importance placed on virginity prior to marriage in biblical law (e.g., Deut 22:13-21). In most traditional societies the honor of the household is bound up in its guarantee that the bride is a virgin at the time of marriage and thus brings a "clean slate" to her husband's bed (Tapper, 391).

The concluding of a marriage contract between families was a sacred compact, comparable to the covenant agreement made with Yahweh (see Ezek 16:8). The "pledge" agreement set a bride-price as well as the amount of the dowry (Ex 22:16-17), guaranteed that the bride would be a virgin at the time of marriage (Deut 22:13-21) and required complete fidelity of the parties. Marriage was such an important economic and social factor in the ancient Near East that it is the basis of a huge amount of legislation. For instance, the Laws of Eshnunna §§28-29 and the Code of Hammurabi §128 explain the importance of having an official marriage contract for both parties.

In these Akkadian texts it is made clear that it was to the advantage of the bridegroom's family immediately to take the next step and to deliver the bride-price *(terḫatum)* to the bride's household. This ensured the bridegroom's right to the marriage and also protected the bride from sexual advance or abuse during the betrothal period (Westbrook, 36). Acceptance of the gift or payment was tantamount to marriage under the law (see Gen 24:48-53, in which Abraham's servant gives gifts to Rebekah and her family to complete the negotiations that will make her Isaac's bride), whether the physical consummation was to occur within days or was to be delayed for months or even years. Thus the laws of adultery in Mesopotamian legal codes were in full force even before the actual ceremony and consummation of the marriage (cf. Deut 22:23-27). The disparity in age between bride and groom in these Mesopotamian texts (possibly ages twelve to fourteen versus ages twenty-five to thirty, respectively) may have governed how soon the bride was actually taken from her father's house (Roth 1987).

The final step in completing the marriage ritual in ancient Mesopotamia was the physical consummation. The groom brought witnesses, his "friends," who would have accompanied him to the house of his father-in-law. At that point a ritual marked the moment when the bride submitted fully to her husband. The phrase used in the text is to "unfasten the pin of her virginity," and it most likely refers to the unpinning of an undergarment *(ṣillūm)* arrayed around the waist that was the preliminary to sexual intercourse (Malul, 70).

Having been physically joined in marriage, the legal status of both parties was also transformed or at least further clarified. Since the moment when her betrothal had been solemnized by her father/guardian and the groom's representative, the bride was referred to as an *aššatu*, "wife." However, her rights to compensation in the event of divorce, her rights to property as a widow and, for that matter, her right to marry the man with whom she had originally been contracted were not officially set until intercourse had taken place (Roth 1991; Nemat-Nejet, 134-35). By consummating the marriage, both parties fulfilled the oral arrangements and legal technicalities that had been set by their representatives. They had therefore changed their legal status and their social standing within the community. In addition, the wife now lived under her husband's name and benefited from his protection and social standing (van der Toorn 1996, 47).

Although this level of detail is not available in the biblical text, Isaiah's description of the new couple's wedding garments (Is 61:10) and the "joy of the groom for his bride" (Is 62:5) indicates that similar celebrations were found in ancient Israel as well.

4. Inheritance and Sexual Relations.

The primary purpose of a marriage in biblical times, aside from the possible monetary gain involved in marrying into a rich or influential family, was to produce an heir. Failure to produce an heir was a major calamity for a family in the ancient Near East because it meant a disruption in the generational inheritance pattern that left no one to care for the couple in their old age. In addition, the concept of inheritance was an integral part of the system of marriage customs, especially with regard to the ability of the male to transmit his goods and property to a son and the ability of the female to produce an heir for her husband. This sometimes required creative legal strategies: adoption (Gen 15:2) or surrogacy (Gen 16:1-4), the law of levirate obligation for a man who died without an heir (Gen 38; Deut

25:5-10) or the compromise involving the daughters of *Zelophehad, in which daughters and their husbands were temporary custodians of the household's property until a grandson could officially inherit their land (Num 36:2-12; Josh 17:3-6).

Given this obligation of one generation to the next, it is not surprising that traditions favoring premarital virginity as well as legislation requiring marital fidelity are common in the ancient Near East (Frymer-Kensky 1998). The purpose of the legislation was to protect the husband's name by assuring him that his children would be his own progeny. The law did not ensure marital fidelity on his part; its focus was paternity, not sexual ethics. The integrity of the family was protected rather than the integrity of the marriage. Promiscuous behavior was not acceptable (Deut 22:21; 23:2) but was not called adultery if the woman was not married. In ancient Israel, the wife was an extension of the husband, and her infidelity damaged his name and weakened the household within the community.

The Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers, echoing the sentiments expressed by Joseph to Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:8-9), calls adultery a "great crime," which is not even to be considered by an honest man or woman (Matthews and Benjamin 1997, 63-64). This was an attack on a man's household, stealing his rights to procreate and endangering the orderly transmission of his estate to his heirs (see Ex 20:14). The act itself defiled both participants (Lev 18:20; Num 5:13). Since it was not only an attack on the sanctity of the household, but also a source of general contamination, adultery served as a reason for God to expel the people from the land (Lev 18:24-25).

Numbers 5:11-31 details a legal situation that illustrates the ways in which even the suspicion of infidelity undermined the balance of proper family relations. In this case a wife was assumed by her husband to have been unfaithful and to have had illicit intercourse, even though there were no witnesses. His right to punish her and to bring her to trial were based on the marriage contract and the obligations that this document laid on her to remain loyal to his household (Phillips, 7). Defilement based on adulterous behavior was considered a breech of faith with God as well as a crime against the household (Frymer-Kensky 1984, 17-18). Therefore a protocol was established for restitution and decontamination, which required (1) confession of sin and (2) full restitution, plus one-fifth more to the person wronged, or to God and the priests, if the person wronged had no next of kin. The actions taken by the husband in this instance were based on his unsubstantiated suspicions, described here as a "spirit of jealousy" (Num 5:14; McKane, 474). It seems unlikely that these suspicions were simply another ploy, as in Deuteronomy 22:13-14, for a man to set aside a wife who did not please him. More likely, there had been accusations made to him privately, and rumor (represented by the statement in Num 5:12-13) was beginning to bring public shame to his household. If a household could not protect its women, then it was declared insolvent or shamed and unable to fulfill its responsibilities to the community as a whole (Giovannini, 68). Thus any hint of infidelity, however unsubstantiated, could have dangerous consequences for the entire household and its ability to survive.

Promiscuity in the world of the Bible was not simply a lack of sexual discretion but a symptom of the risks that a household was taking with its land and children. Husbands and fathers were responsible for the honor of their women, which was associated with sexual purity. Their own honor derived in large measure from the way they discharged this responsibility (Pitt-Rivers, 78). If fathers and husbands protected the women of their household, then they were known to have the ability to protect all its members.

The legal remedy in this case, which centered on a lack of eye-witnesses (Milgrom 1981, 74), was to resort to the use of a third-party mediator, the priest, and a trial by ordeal. The ordeal was a judicial institution designed to resolve conflicts between households that could not be resolved by the elders in a village assembly and to reestablish harmony within the village. Crimes that carried the death penalty, such as adultery, required that the plaintiff's charge be supported by the testimony of two eye-witnesses. Without two eye-witnesses, the plaintiff had no case to present to the village assembly, and the potential threat to the entire community could not be resolved without divine intervention (Num 35:30; Deut 19:15). The village assembly simply could not function when there were no witnesses (Benjamin, 297-98). Since harmony in the village was essential for its economy to pros-

per, the intention of the ordeal was to help break a stalemate and to allow God to make a decision between the households involved.

In the protocol for an ordeal, the defendant was exposed to a strenuous, potentially life-threatening experience, since it involved taking an oath before the deity (Ex 22:10-11; CH §§2, 9, 20, 23; Frymer-Kensky 1977, 11-16). If the woman in this case survived, then the divine assembly had cleared her of the charges made against her, and the honor of her household was reaffirmed. If she did not, then her household was shamed. An ordeal was thus a legally constructed "day of judgment" (Deut 32:34-36; Job 21:30; Ps 18:6; 32:6).

The somewhat peculiar procedure of the ordeal in Numbers 5:16-28 hinged on a potion that invoked God's judgment on the woman (Milgrom 1981, 71). It was not a poison and most likely did not contain any drug that would induce an abortion. It functioned almost as a prop to empower the ritual of execration and was coupled with an oath first spoken by the priest and then repeated by the woman. Certainly, there was an element of shaming involved in having to participate in this ritual and in speaking these words. However, such a public ritual, like a purgative oath, had a positive function as well, to remove all doubt of guilt or suspicion (Frymer-Kensky 1984, 24). The fact that it involved elements of the ordeal rather than just a formal oath "before God" suggests a blending of judicial procedures to satisfy a case that otherwise could not be proven and would continue to damage a household's reputation.

The postordeal fine suggests that even the charge against her still required restitution. The false accuser was obligated, as in the case in Numbers 5:5-10, to make restitution to the wronged party, the woman's husband. The doubt placed against his honor was satisfied by the ordeal, but full payment also had to be made by the false accuser in order to prevent rampant use of slander or malicious speech as a means of injuring a household's reputation (see Deut 19:16-19 for punishment of false accusers; Laws of Ur-Nammu §§10-11).

The sense of guilt and the need to clear away a blot on her husband's reputation may also have been the basis for the actions in Numbers 5:15. Although the required offerings that the husband brought to the priest are said to be for the wife, it appears that it also served to help relieve the husband's anxiety by bringing the shame (iniquity) forward, rather than letting it mentally consume him and undermine the honor and effectiveness of his household.

The statement at the end of the legal passage (Num 5:31), which exonerates the husband from any "iniquity" for having brought his wife to trial, speaks again to the issue of the husband's marital rights. Certainly it would have been better if he had not had to participate in a public demonstration. H. C. Brichto (67) suggests this may even have been the element of protection for the wife in this drama, since it required the husband to "put up or shut up." However, the balancing act between upholding the honor of the household and the public embarrassment occasioned by the trial may have forced the issue in much the same way as it did in the case of the "rebellious son" in Deuteronomy 21:18-21. It also provided some measure of protection for the woman from mob violence or some unsanctioned "kangaroo court" (Milgrom 1981, 74-75). The community was thus restrained from direct action since the woman's punishment would come directly from God (Milgrom 1990, 43).

5. Incest and Antisocial Behavior Practiced Against Blood Kin.

Although kinship ties are designed to provide the basis for personal identity and some assurance of protection as part of a group, there are instances in the biblical text where it appears that kinship/blood ties were not enough. The classic example is the murder of *Abel by his brother *Cain (Gen 4:2-16), but this simply serves as the first of many fratricides that represent power struggles, jealousy and unrestrained emotion (Judg 9:5; 2 Sam 13:23-29). The story of how *Joseph's brothers sold him into *slavery (Gen 37:12-28) and how he eventually gained a strong measure of psychological revenge before reconciling with them (Gen 42:1—45:15) also serves to demonstrate that family dynamics are complex and not determined exclusively by the rules of kinship.

One final instance in which individuals fail to uphold the honor of their households and endanger their survival by violating normal sexual customs is through incestuous relations with close relatives. Every society develops sexual taboos to regulate marriage customs, adultery and unacceptable sexual practices. These restrictions, which are based on the principle of ex-

change and alliance between families, vary from one culture to another, but they are all designed to reflect the economic and moral values of their society (Levi-Strauss, 138). The laws in Leviticus 18 and 20 systematically define consanguineal membership within the individual household using the term *šĕʾēr* ("flesh relations"), while forbidding sexual contact between them (Levine, 117). These statutes, addressed to the male head of the household, who had control and responsibility over sexual relations within his immediate family, were framed as apodictic or command laws, bluntly stating without any comment that these practices defiled the people. This legislation (also found in Deut 27:20-23) views such practices as "antithetical to the maintenance of the orderly kinship structures and genealogies" necessary for the determination of inheritance and social status (Avalos, 629).

In the case of incest (Lev 18:6-18), primary concern was over relations with immediate blood kin (father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter) and affinal relations (wife, husband, uncle, aunt). The only exception was in the case of Levirate obligation (Deut 25:5-10), when a man's brother was required to have sexual relations with his sister-in-law. Incest was equally abhorrent in most other ancient Near Eastern societies (e.g., the prohibitions in the Hittite laws, §§187-200). In fact, in the Code of Hammurabi §154, the father who sexually violated his own daughter was to be banished from his city. The exception was Egypt, where it was a common practice in the royal family (but little attested elsewhere) as a means of strengthening or consolidating royal authority (Pinch, 371-72). This concept was also practiced among Elamite kings (Brentjes, 1029).

In the ancestral narratives, which predate the levitical prohibitions, there are instances in which close kin marriage does occur, but this seems to be based on the concept of endogamy and the maintenance of cultural and property rights. Thus Abram married his half-sister Sarai (Gen 20:2, 12), a match that was "incorrect" and was marked by a long period of barrenness. Jacob married two sisters who were his "cross-cousins" (Gen 29:23-29). Marrying one would have been acceptable, but marrying both sisters infringed on the principle of exchange and was therefore incorrect (Donaldson, 81-84). The result was Rachel's barren condition. The narrative deals with the problem of "too close" marriage through the intervention of God to end the women's barrenness and to give them a child who will be the heir of the covenant. It could be argued, therefore, that no reference is made in the levitical material to the incestuous marriages in the ancestral narratives because of this divine action.

Curiously missing from the list of forbidden sexual liaisons in Leviticus is father-daughter incest, an injunction found even in Egyptian texts. Some suggest that this omission is based on the patriarch's control over the sexuality of his daughter prior to marriage and would simply constitute a misuse of this power (Falk, 164). However, if a father had sexual relations with a daughter, he would be damaging her economic value to the household and could be subject to a charge of fraud if her lack of virginity were discovered (Deut 22:13-21). In fact, there is only one biblical narrative in which father-daughter incest occurs, the story of Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19:30-38. But this is a polemical episode, casting a shameful label on the founders of the nations of Moab and Ammon and is not to be considered a model of acceptable sexual behavior in the ancestral stories (Meacham, 257-58).

6. Conclusion.

Throughout this review of legislation and customary practice dealing with family relations in the pentateuchal materials, it is made clear that the ancestors and the tribal peoples of ancient Israel were concerned over matters of proper behavior and the acquisition of honor and the avoidance of shame for their households. As the primary social unit, the household protected itself by educating its members in proper and improper behavior and speech. It arranged marriages to benefit itself economically, policed itself in cases of antisocial activities by members of the household and defined the roles, privileges and restrictions on its membership. In addition, each household functioned as a part of the larger covenantal community, taking on responsibilities designed to strengthen the overall economy, prevent erosion of social control and protect those members of the group who had lost, either temporarily (debt slavery) or permanently (widows), their ability to cope with social and economic forces.

See also HONOR AND SHAME; ORPHAN; SEXU-

ALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS; SLAVE, SLAVERY; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES; WIDOW; WOMEN.

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FAMINE. *See* LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

FARMING. *See* AGRICULTURE.

FATHERHOOD OF GOD. *See* THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

FAVOR. *See* GRACE.

FEASTS. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

FEMINIST INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

FERTILITY. *See* BLESSINGS AND CURSES; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

FESTIVALS AND FEASTS

Feasting is a feature of life in any society, and Israel was no exception (for a survey of secular feasts, see Pedersen, 2.376-82.). The focus of pentateuchal material about feasts is on the times and ceremonies related to the nation's faith and practice. These included periodic religious observances in homes and at local shrines, but most prominent in the pentateuchal narrative are Israel's three great annual "Pilgrimage Feasts," when the entire nation was called to celebrate before Yahweh in the place the Lord would choose for his name to dwell. In many ways, the regular local fetes (a weekly sabbath, monthly New Moon, etc.) prepared the *covenant community for the great gatherings that defined Israel's cultic life before its covenant God. This article will attempt to explore these celebrations, with a survey of the language used, together with the background, development and meaning of each festival. Where critical questions affect interpretation, the issues will be examined. The focus will be on events and instructions that feature prominently in the so-called books of Moses. A few feasts (e.g., Purim) do not feature directly in the Pentateuch, but where pentateuchal material carries implications for these feasts, this will be briefly noted.

Following the introduction to vocabulary, attention will focus on the three pilgrimage feasts, plus New Moon and Trumpets, with material drawn from the major religious or cultic calendars (Ex 23; 34; Lev 23; Deut 16), together with the rules for sacrifice found in Numbers 28—29. Where historical narrative may shed light, either on the agricultural importance of such feasts or their unfolding in Israel's national life, the pentateuchal information will be incorporated, together with some of the most important narrative from later books of the OT. Finally, the theological meaning of each feast will be considered.

1. Critical Questions
2. General Vocabulary
3. Specific Nomenclature
4. Sources for Feasts and Their Distinctives
5. Theology of the Three Pilgrimage Feasts *(haggîm)*
6. Summary

1. Critical Questions.

1.1. Biblical Sources and Their Dating. The origins of Israel's feasts and their history in pentateuchal and other biblical literature formed one of the foundations of Wellhausenian critical theory; as such, due consideration must be given to the present state of historical-critical scholarship (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of; Source Criticism). Although interest in the Documentary Hypothesis has waned in comparison to other methodologies, there is little doubt that the scheme retains its authority with regard to dating the major sections of the Pentateuch, including the various religious calendars. Although now more than forty years old, the scheme described by R. de Vaux is still assumed by many contemporary scholars, as applied to the specific passages to be dealt with (de Vaux, 470-73). Following the Wellhausenian dating, the earliest calendar is found in Exodus 34:18-23 (the Yahwistic, or J, code of the covenant), generally understood to have arisen in the early monarchy. Exodus 23:14-17, to be dated a bit later in the monarchy, is labeled the Elohistic (E) code of the covenant. Third in the series is Deuteronomy 16 (D), from the late seventh century and associated with Josiah's reformation, while Leviticus 23 represents the Priestly calendar (P), placed in or after the exile, though it is often argued that Leviticus 17—26 form part of a Holiness Code, completed slightly earlier than P. Another important peg on which much higher-critical theory rested was the prophecy of Ezekiel, datable to the early sixth century B.C. and thus predating the P material. Inasmuch as Ezekiel 45 contains an important, but selective, survey of festivals in the projected postexilic temple, it must inevitably be compared with the other codes. Finally, there is a list of sacrifices and rules for their offering in Numbers 28—29, also considered to be from priestly sources.

Traditional conservative Jewish and Christian understanding of the Pentateuch attributes

all of the books to Moses, in either the fifteenth or the thirteenth century B.C. (the two traditional dates given for the exodus; *see* Exodus, Date of). Followers of this scheme will naturally attribute the differences in the various calendars to the purpose and nature of the literary context in which each calendar is embedded. A *via media* may exist, wherein the reader remains agnostic about the actual dating of the documents but acknowledges that there are significant differences in the settings and even style of the various parts of the Pentateuch (for a modified theory which takes all these factors into account, see Armerding). A close reading of individual texts may lead to the discovery of unique features, but the search is for a literary and theological setting and style rather than a date and provenance for ancient documents for which early copies are wanting. Applied to the present study, each calendar would be examined in its literary and theological context, with historical questions introduced as appropriate. Turning to narrative sources, questions of the presence or absence of the feasts in the Hebrews' "story" will also form part of the discussion, as appropriate, as will references to feasts in the prophets and their response to them.

1.2. Ancient Near Eastern Origins. Because some of Israel's feasts are at least partially rooted in agricultural cycles common to Israel and the surrounding cultures, it is appropriate to look for analogies in these cultures and their festive traditions. It will be clear from such cultures, as it is from Israelite religion, that the agricultural cycles and their fruitfulness or failure are commonly seen as tied to the respective religious cult. Inasmuch as many of the cultures surrounding Israel worshiped their gods through various forms of sympathetic magic and ritual, and since this understanding was an integral part of their agricultural practice, potential areas of comparison and contrast must be noted. The extent to which average Israelites shared the mythological understandings of their neighbors remains an open question, but we should not be surprised to discover in an Israelite agricultural society many of the same rites and practices followed by others whose livelihood revolved around seasonal rhythms of nature. The cycle of planting and harvesting determined not only what various months were called, as evidenced by a rude agricultural calendar discovered at Gezer from the tenth century (cf. Talmon, 177-87; *COS* 2.85:222), but also what feasts and rituals accompanied the seasons. Celebrating the "month of harvest" or "the month of planting" is probably universal, but neither the Gezer Calendar nor any other source supplies answers to the larger and more debated questions of Israel's acceptance or rejection of the mythological basis of much Canaanite and, in later times, Babylonian *cosmology and cosmogony.

What answers there are come from studies of the biblical texts themselves, with most theories arising not from pentateuchal festal calendars but from various poetic passages in which nature or the pagan rituals of nature are detected behind the language of the Hebrew bard (e.g., Ps 74:14 or Is 51:9, with their reference to a battle with Leviathan or Rahab). Biblical scholarship has divided sharply on these questions, with some scholars acknowledging that biblical writers use mythological patterns of speech in a context largely devoid of ancient Near Eastern mythological realities (e.g., Childs 1960), while others posit a much greater dependence on mythological mindsets (see esp. the extensive work on the Psalms, particularly Mowinckel's studies relating to the proposed mythical background to the Feast of Tabernacles; creation accounts have also received major attention from the "myth and ritual" school). In the following comments, some attention will be given to the arguments for analogies between Israel's feasts and Canaanite or Babylonian models, but in light of the highly speculative nature of much scholarship in this area, the article will concentrate on the biblical texts themselves.

2. General Vocabulary.

The Hebrew Bible contains a variety of expressions describing feasts of all kinds. The following survey, while comprehensive, will indicate which terms have technical significance for the religious feasts and festivals of Israel.

2.1. Feast (**mišteh**). This word describes the simple, secular drinking-party kind of feast, mentioned forty-three times in the OT. *Abraham, *Isaac, Laban, *Pharaoh, Samson and David all hosted this kind of feast, but pride of place must be given to the Persian court with its week-long revelries dominating virtually every chapter of the book of Esther. Esther 8 and 9 employ the same terminology, but the reference is to Jewish celebrations that were the precursors of Purim, one of the later feasts of Judaism.

2.2. Feast or Festival (**ḥag**). The noun, and its corresponding verb, constitute the most important word group for a study such as this, in light of its close identification with the great pilgrimage feasts. The word's semantic range is clearly a bit wider, though in each case something more than secular eating and drinking is implied. A frequent verbal combination is *ḥag layhwh*, "a festival to Yahweh," sometimes applied with no more specific identity, as in the case of *Moses' projected celebration in the *wilderness (Ex 10:9) or Aaron's feast with the golden calf (Ex 32:5). At other times either specifically or by inference *ḥag layhwh* refers to one of the three pilgrimage feasts or a particular day during the feast period (Ex 12:14; 13:6). Another common combination (thirty-two times) for *ḥag* is in construct with the name of one of the three pilgrimage festivals, especially Tabernacles. Standing by itself (e.g., Lev 23:39, 41; Num 29:12; Judg 21:19; Hos 9:5) the word may refer to any feast but most probably functioned as an elliptical reference to Tabernacles. Etymologically the word is related to Arabic *hagg*, today signifying the pilgrimage to Mecca.

2.3. Sacred Assembly (**miqrā' qōdeš**). This expression is commonly used for the first or last day (see 2.6 below) of a week's period of feasting (Ex 12:16; Lev 23:7, 8, 36; Num 28:18, 25, 26; 29:12) but is also used for any day specially set apart as holy to Yahweh (i.e., the Sabbath [Lev 23:3] or a festival such as Trumpets or *Atonement [Lev 23:24, 27; Num 29:1, 7]).

2.4. Appointed Times or Appointed Places (**mô'ădîm**). This common word points to any appointed place, time or season (e.g., Gen 1:14; 17:21; 18:14; 21:2). Used in connection with feasts, the word takes on religious significance, for Yahweh's specific festivals are also his "appointed times." With regard to feasts, the word is clearly less restricted than *ḥag* and often refers to the time when a *ḥag* will be celebrated (e.g., Ex 13:10; 23:15), but it may be used to describe the feast itself (e.g., sabbath or New Moon), especially when the text might be reticent to use *ḥag* because of its pilgrimage association. In the singular, combined with "tent" (*'ōhel mô'ēd*), the expression "tent of meeting" results.

2.5. Cultic Feast or Funeral Meal (**marzēaḥ**). This word is not employed in the Pentateuch but in later Hebrew (Amos 6:7; cf. Jer 16:5) and in Ugaritic contexts. It is associated with funerary feasts, especially among wealthy mourners and those who observed the cult of the dead (*see* Burial and Mourning).

2.6. Festive Assembly (**'ăṣārâ**). In the Pentateuch and the historical sections of the OT, including the religious calendars, this word generally refers to the final, or closing, day of an extended feast (Lev 23:36: Num 29:35; Deut 16:8; cf. also 2 Chron 7:9; Neh 8:18), though elsewhere it may simply designate a religious assembly, whether approved by Yahweh or not (cf. 2 Kings 10:20; Amos 5:21). Semantically the word ranges from simply a pious assembly of any sort to something approximating the *miqrā' qōdeš* that brought a period of feasting to an end.

2.7. Day of Rest (**šabbātôn**). This expression is used four times (Ex 16:23; 31:15: 35:2; Lev 23:3) almost as a synonym for *šabbāt*. The remaining six are translated by NIV as "sabbath of rest," and, like the sabbath itself (see 3.12 below), the word derives from a verb meaning to "stop, cease," especially from work. In addition to the seventh day, other "sabbath of rest" days include the Day of Atonement, Trumpets, the first and last days of Tabernacles (Lev 16:31; 23:24, 32, 39) and the seventh year (Lev 25:4, 5), when the land was to lie fallow.

3. Specific Nomenclature.

In addition to the general terminology of feasts and feasting, there exist a variety of proper names for specific Israelite feasts. The nomenclature has been at the forefront of critical debate, particularly in light of the fact that the religious calendars appear to know some of Israel's feasts by different names. This has led to various theories, although the real reasons for variant nomenclature remain elusive. The following will be a brief alphabetically ordered survey, in preparation for a more in-depth examination of the three great pilgrimage feasts. Where a particular feast is not covered in a later section, more explanation is given here.

3.1. Ingathering, Feast of Ingathering (**'āsîp, ḥag hā'āsîp**). This noun occurs only three times in the OT, twice (Ex 23:16; 34:22) in religious calendars, both referring to the feast at the close of the agricultural year. That the noun is closely related to the agricultural function of the feast is evidenced by the common occurrence of the same verb meaning "to gather in" in harvest settings, an association reinforced by the Gezer Calendar's "two months of ingathering" (*yrḥw*

ʾsp), which appears to refer to the gathering of summer fruit in the autumn (see *ANET,* 320; Cornelius, Hill and Rogers 1.468). Because "Ingathering" is called a *ḥag* in both places where the name occurs, it must be seen as an alternate name for the Feast of Tabernacles (see 3.1 and 5.3 below).

3.2. Firstfruits **(bikkûrîm).** This noun occurs only in the plural and is never clearly understood as the name of a specific feast, though the small pericope in Leviticus 23:9-14, which sets out a formula for determining the beginning of the Feast of Weeks, is called in the NIV heading *Firstfruits. Specifically, the term refers to the first products of various harvests, the leading portion of which was dedicated to Yahweh (Ex 23:19; 2 Kings 4:42; Neh 10:36). Although never a feast in its own right, "firstfruits" is clearly identified with the major harvest festivals, particularly Weeks, or "Harvest" (*qāṣîr;* cf. Ex 23:16; 34:22), sometimes referring to a particular day in that festival (Num 28:26). The harvesting of the firstfruits of any crop was an occasion for great rejoicing and a time when godly Israelites rededicated their crops and lives to Yahweh. The concept provides a rich metaphor for NT theology as well, variously applied to the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:23), the Jewish root of the tree (Rom 11:16), Christ as the first to be raised from the dead (1 Cor 15:20, 23), Christians as the new creation (Jas 1:18) and the 144,000 remnant in Revelation 14:4.

3.3. Day of Atonement **(yôm kippurîm).** This feast is covered elsewhere (*see* Atonement, Day of), but in any list of pentateuchal feasts it requires mention. Although only appearing, as such, three times (Lev 23:27, 28; 25:9), the name clearly refers to the important rite exercised by the priests on the tenth day of the seventh month (cf. Lev 16:29-34), through which Israel's annual expiation was achieved, undergirding the sacrificial theology of the NT as well.

3.4. Unleavened Bread, Feast of Unleavened Bread **(maṣṣôt, ḥag hammaṣṣôt).** As a feast, Unleavened Bread will be extensively discussed below, but here mention must be made of the nomenclature. Unleavened bread *(maṣṣâ)* was frequently served in the ancient Near East, especially when haste was required (Gen 19:3). It was also common in sacrificial contexts in the OT (Ex 29:2, 23; Lev 2:4-5), but it gains feast status only in connection with the hasty departure from Egypt that marked the Passover event. Called a *ḥag* in all four of the major religious calendars (Ex 23:15; 34:18; Lev 23:6; Deut 16:16), as well as in the five historical references found in the Chronicler (2 Chron 8:13; 30:13, 21; 35:17; Ezra 6:22), *maṣṣôt* frequently stands for the spring feast in its entirety. Its relationship to Passover will be discussed below.

3.5. Tabernacles, Feast of Tabernacles **(sukkôt, ḥag hassukkôt).** This major autumn festival marked the ingathering of the grape and vine harvest. As one of the pilgrimage feasts, it will be treated below. The term *sukkâ* occurs altogether thirty times in the Hebrew Bible, generally referring to a rude shelter or booth: the kind built for livestock (Gen 33:17), a night watchman (Job 27:18), a distraught prophet (Jon 4:5) or soldiers in the field (1 Kings 20:12, 16). In Israel's recollections of the desert wanderings, it is assumed that the people lived in tents or shelters, thus providing the historical rationale for creating these memorial experiences each autumn (Lev 23:42, 43). The term *Feast of Tabernacles* occurs in two of the pentateuchal religious calendars (Lev 23:34; Deut 16:13, 16), apparently interchangeable with Feast of Ingathering (*ʾāsîp,* see above) in the remaining two. Clearly, as time went on, the autumn festival was remembered as Tabernacles (cf. 2 Chron 8:13; Ezra 3:4), and it is by this name that the feast became a symbol of the great eschatological hope of the nations (Zech 14:16, 18, 19).

3.6. Purim **(pûrîm).** Inasmuch as reference to this feast occurs entirely within the book of Esther, only brief mention will be made. The name probably comes from an Akkadian root (de Vaux, 515) and is explained in Esther 9:26-32 as related to the Persian word *pûr* ("lot"), though the story itself says relatively little about the lot. This feast, which is still celebrated on the thirteenth and fourteen of Adar (twelfth month, February-March), is connected to the Pentateuch by themes of deliverance from enemies and also perhaps by virtue of the wicked Haman's status as an Agagite, being traced back to the Amalekites of 1 Samuel 15, thus coming under the curse of Exodus 17:8-16 (cf. also Deut 25:17-19).

3.7. Passover, Feast of Passover **(pesaḥ, ḥag pesaḥ).** The common name of Israel's spring festival was drawn etymologically and historically from the events of the departure from Egypt, specifically called a *ḥag* only in Exodus 34:25 and Ezekiel 45:21. Whether in biblical times this

feast was considered a pilgrimage feast or not, its later identification and even merger with the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not in question. The Hebrew name of the feast, *pesaḥ,* is a noun derived from the verb *pāsaḥ* and can refer to both the feast itself (Ex 12:48) and the lamb sacrificed at the feast (Ex 12:21). The verb, commonly translated "to pass over," probably in the sense of "hovering to protect" rather than "passing by," occurs only four times in the Hebrew Bible, unless one relates it to an equally rare verb of identical spelling meaning "to limp" (2 Sam 4:4; 1 Kings 18:21, 26).

3.8. Harvest, Feast of Harvest **(qāṣîr, ḥag haqqāṣîr).** This alternative name for the Feast of Weeks *(šābuʿôt)* is called a *ḥag* in Exodus 23:16 (but cf. Ex 34:22, where the word "harvest" occurs in explanation of the Feast of Weeks). The Hebrew *qāṣîr* can apply to the entire range of harvests, but in the specific context of Exodus 23:16 it must refer to the wheat harvest, as does its cognate *qṣr* in the Gezer Calendar (*COS* 2.85:222; Cornelius, 3.967).

3.9. New Moon **(rōʾš ḥōdeš).** The Hebrew *ḥōdeš* is the common word for "month," but when combined with "head" or "first," it comes to signify the nonpilgrimage (though called a *ḥag* in Ps 81:3 [MT 81:4]) feast of the New Moon (Num 29:6, etc.). Although the only legislation concerning the New Moon in the OT is in the prescribed burnt offering of Numbers 28:14 (cf. Ezek 46:6), its prominence as a religious festival is not in doubt. Often listed as parallel to the sabbath as one of Israel's "appointed feasts" (*môʿădîm;* 2 Kings 4:23; 1 Chron 23:31; Neh 10:33; Is 66:23; Ezek 46:1; Amos 8:5), New Moon appears in various narrative sections as a time of great rejoicing and special feasting (Num 10:10; 1 Sam 20:5, 18, 24; 2 Kings 4:23; Ps 81:1-3). Like the sabbath, New Moon celebrations are condemned by the prophets as a feature of insincere religion (Is 1:14; Hos 5:7; Amos 8:5), but the eschatological hope for a renewal of the purity and joy of Israel's New Moon is kept alive in two important prophetic passages. Ezekiel 46:1-6 describes the new temple, in which the eastern gate will be opened on both sabbath and New Moon for the people to worship Yahweh, as the prince offers the special burnt offering for the occasion. A yet more exalted setting is found in the closing words of Isaiah's prophecy (Is 66:22-24), with a new heavens and a new earth, where "from one New Moon to another and from one sabbath to another all humanity will come and bow down to me." Finally, the apostle Paul reminds his readers that the New Moon, like the sabbath and other religious festivals, is simply "a shadow of things to come," the reality of which is to be found in Christ (Col 2:16).

3.10. New Year **(rōʾš haššānâ).** The Hebrew term occurs only in Ezekiel 40:1, where it appears to coincide with the Day of Atonement and clearly differs from the later Jewish New Year celebration on the first day of Tishri, for which see the reference to "blowing of trumpets" (Lev 23:24; cf. Num 29:1-6). Although much has been made of a putative New Year's Festival in Israel, this debate concerns not Trumpets but the Feast of Tabernacles. A separate debate surrounds the question of whether Israel celebrated a spring (Nisan) new year, commemorating the Exodus (cf. Ex 12:2), or an autumn new year, a festival perhaps lying behind the references to Trumpets on the first of Tishri. In later times this festival would assume new importance within Judaism, with the blowing of the shofar and emphases on both penitence and remembrance (de Vaux, 502; Bosman, 3.1022-23).

3.11. Weeks, Feast of Weeks **(šābuʿôt, ḥag šābuʿôt).** The name is drawn from the common noun *šēbuʿâ,* meaning "week" or period of seven days. In the three OT passages where the full term "Feast of Weeks" occurs (Ex 34:22; Deut 16:10-16; 2 Chron 8:13), only Deuteronomy 16 (but cf. Lev 23:15-21) indicates the basis for the nomenclature, namely, counting off seven weeks from the opening of the (barley) harvest. "Weeks" (for which also see 3.2 and 3.8, above), was associated with the beginning of the wheat harvest. Later, because of the fifty days specified by Leviticus 23:16 from beginning the count to beginning of the festival, Weeks, under the influence of the Septuagint, came to be known as Pentecost (Gk: *pentēkonta,* "fifty").

3.12. Sabbath **(šabbātôn).** (See 2.7 above) Derived from a verb meaning "to cease, stop," especially from work, the sabbath day was patterned on the divine rest from labor at the termination of creation. It was a day of rejoicing and feasting, related particularly to creation (Ex 20:8-11), but both Exodus 16 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 supply a reminder that God's covenant people, unlike *slaves, were now free to spend one day a week, or one year in seven, enjoying the fruit of their labors.

4. Sources for Feasts and Their Distinctives.

4.1. The Primary Pentateuchal Sources: Israel's Religious Calendars and Regulations for Sacrifice.

4.1.1. Exodus 23:14-17. This small pericope, regarded by some scholars as the Elohist's code of the covenant (see 1.1 above), has been widely understood as part of an independent collection of early laws (Ex 20:22—23:33) called by scholars the *book of the covenant and embedded only later in the E tradition (cf. Noth, 13). The entire section connects the giving of the law (Ex 20:1-21) with the confirmation of the covenant (Ex 24) and consists (Ex 21—22) of case laws and moral imperatives regulating human social behavior, liability in property and personal injury cases, and the like, followed by a succinct resume (Ex 23) of the times and seasons for rest, worship and celebration before Yahweh. The brief calendar section (Ex 23:14-19) is structured as a series of second-person singular commands; it begins and ends with the "three times a year" formula, which, with the expression "to the house of Yahweh your God" (Ex 23:19), reminds the reader that the instructions provide for a scattered agricultural people some minimal observances to recall their communal allegiance to Yahweh and his covenant.

In this context, the feasts have a distinct agricultural feel, although they are hardly devoid of historical ties to the exodus. Unleavened Bread recalls Exodus 12:17-20 with its seven days of eating *maṣṣâ*. The two remaining feasts (Harvest, *qāṣîr;* Ingathering, *ʾāsîp)* are purely agricultural and with *maṣṣôt* (Unleavened Bread) are labeled *ḥaggîm*. The date of each is fixed according to either the monthly calendar (in the month Abib) or the actual time of harvest, in one case the appearance of the firstfruits and the other the ingathering at the end of the year. Scholars, especially those suggesting a New Year's Festival behind Tabernacles, frequently take the Exodus 34:22 reference to the "turning" or "end" of the year *(tĕqûpat haššānâ)* together with the "going out of the year" *(bĕṣēʾt haššānâ)* in Exodus 23:16 as evidence that in earlier times Israel observed an autumn (Tishri) new year, in contrast to Exodus 12:1-2, where the importance given to the Passover event brings about a change to a spring (Nisan) new year (de Vaux, 190-91). The month Abib, corresponding to the later Nisan, or first month, recalls the dating of the exodus itself (Ex 13:4) and is one of only four Canaanite month names known from Scripture. Regulations concerning firstfruits, *blood, yeast and fat round out this simple list of covenant regulations, all designed for a people about to undertake a journey to an unknown but Promised *Land.

4.1.2. Exodus 34:18-23. The second calendar is likewise difficult to separate from its present context (Ex 32—34), a section on which traditional criticism has often foundered. Critics have traditionally found here a mixture of E and J, with redactional elements (see Childs 1974, 604-8). It forms part of a small collection of laws (Ex 34:17-26), often called by some critical scholars Israel's "Ritual Decalogue" in contrast to Exodus 20's "Ethical Decalogue," but that in context functions as a reminder of what is required for Israel to avoid the mistakes of the *golden calf incident. The larger context is the renewal of the *covenant following the broken tablets of Exodus 32, and the chapter is full of covenant language admonishing the nation to faithfulness, with vivid reminders that Yahweh is both glorious and jealous. To covenant with such a God is to forsake compromise with the surrounding nations. In this setting, the so-called Yahwistic calendar (Ex 34:18-24) is not really a calendar at all but a simple restatement of the basic acts of worship and celebration that must be observed by a faithful people, whether still in the desert or later in the land.

Although pride of place may be given to the three pilgrimage *(ḥag)* feasts, the list is broken by regulations for both the dedication of the firstborn and the sabbath, while the commandment to appear before Yahweh "three times in the year" comes only at the end of the section (Ex 34:23-24), where its observance guarantees that Yahweh will drive out the nations and give secure and expanded *borders. As in Exodus 23, the spring feast is called Unleavened Bread *(maṣṣôt)*, though it shows up again at the end of the section (Ex 34:25) as the Passover Feast *(ḥag happāsaḥ)*, a rare instance of Passover labeled a *ḥag*. In other respects the two passages also diverge. Exodus 34 calls the second feast "Weeks" *(šābuʿôt)*, in contrast to Exodus 23 *(qāṣîr)*, though both allude to firstfruits, here specifically tied to the wheat harvest *(qĕṣîr ḥiṭṭîm)*. The section concludes (Ex 34:27-28) with Yahweh's command that Moses write down the words of the (renewed) covenant, words that in addition to the Ten Commandments must surely include faithful observance of Israel's feasts. No refer-

ence to *priests, central sanctuary or even specific offerings is required at this stage. The faithful covenant keeper will "not come before [Yahweh] empty-handed" (Ex 34:20), but the how, when and where is left to subsequent legislation.

4.1.3. Leviticus 23. With Leviticus 23 we come to the first comprehensive calendar in our survey. In addition to the three pilgrimage feasts, mention is made of the weekly sabbath (Lev 23:3), Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25) and the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32). The chapter is marked by special vocabulary (appointed feasts, sacred assemblies, etc.; for detail on these terms, see Wenham 300-301) and sets out an annual cycle based on the major spring and autumn feasts. Only Unleavened Bread (also called Passover) and Tabernacles are actually labeled *ḥag* feasts, and perhaps surprisingly there is no reference to all males appearing "before Yahweh" three times in the year, as in the previous calendars. The vocabulary of sacrifice exceeds anything observed in the previous accounts, with the term "offering made *by* fire" *('iššeh)* serving as something of a recurrent theme (this translation, which assumes a derivation from the Hebrew *'ēš* ["fire"], is itself questionable, and the term may relate more to a general food offering than to how it is consumed; a complete survey may be found in Averbeck, 540-49). Little in the instruction relates to the priest (only Lev 23:10, 11, 20) and nothing to any central sanctuary. A central priesthood and offerings in Jerusalem are undoubtedly anticipated, given the context of levitical law, but the instruction here is consistent with Yahweh's command to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites" (Lev 23:1).

The Passover section (Lev 23:4-8), with its exact dating to the fourteenth day of the first month, appears conscious of the Exodus 12 narrative but makes no explicit reference to the historical events lying behind the Passover. Following reference to Unleavened Bread and Passover comes an extended section (Lev 23:9-14) outlining in some detail the regulations for offerings connected with harvest of the first-fruits of the grain. Although we may assume this to be part of the spring festival noted above, what appears in the passage reminds us that even historical feasts retained a strong agricultural element.

The Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:15-21) likewise depends for its annual inception on the appearance of the first harvest (Lev 23:9-14; cf. Deut 16), from which fifty days (Gk *pentēkonta*) were counted (the reference in Lev 23:15 to "the day after the sabbath" is ambiguous; see the commentaries, e.g., Wenham) to the beginning of the second feast, here neither specifically named Weeks *(šābuʿôt)* nor designated a *ḥag*. The text says merely that the counting must be "seven full weeks" after the sabbath in question. The concern of the chapter is with the exact nature of the sacrifices for what is to be a "sacred assembly." An interesting humanitarian note (Lev 23:22) closes the section on reaping, presumably referring to the end of wheat harvest.

The chapter concludes (Lev 23:33-44) with an extended instruction for Tabernacles (though interrupted by short summary notes in Lev 23:37-38, 44). Set in the context of the two other autumn feasts, Tabernacles is an eight-day *ḥag* that is dated by month and day, the first and last of which are sacred assemblies, with the entire feast tied to the recollection of living in booths during the flight from Egypt (Lev 23:43). Like the desert pilgrimage Moses requested from Pharaoh (Ex 10:9) and the autumn feast at Shiloh (Judg 21:19), Tabernacles is called a *ḥag layhwh,* a "feast to Yahweh" (Lev 23:41; cf. 23:34). Nothing is said about the venue for this feast, and while it is difficult to imagine all Israelites living in tabernacles while on pilgrimage, the offerings by fire, in contrast to the setting up of the family shelter, tie the instruction more closely to the priestly regulations for a central sanctuary.

4.1.4. Numbers 28—29. These two chapters, though not really a calendar, add daily and monthly offerings to the liturgical directions of Leviticus 23 and stipulate the specific sacrifices for each of the same list of feasts, together with instructions for actual preparation of each offering. A comparison with the offerings in Ezekiel 45:18-25 for Passover and Tabernacles will show considerable variety, especially in the numbers and kind of burnt offering animals to be sacrificed. If we may conclude that Ezekiel is describing a different vision from either preexilic or postexilic worship, we are left with only Numbers for a complete list of the sacrifices offered for the major feasts. This of course assumes a more traditional dating of Numbers. For many (e.g., de Vaux, 473) the priestly list in Numbers 28—29 is postexilic. Numbers, then, is best understood as a supplement to Leviticus 23. The

calendar is the same, but the concern in the text is with the choice of sacrifice for each feast, together with its preparation and delivery. For the levitical priesthood, this was the only instruction available.

4.1.5. Deuteronomy 16:1-17. The specific concerns of Deuteronomy—faithfulness to Yahweh's covenant, including worship at a central sanctuary—dominate this chapter as they do the surrounding context. In other ways Deuteronomy 16 is not unique: it records instructions for the three pilgrimage feasts only and concludes (Deut 16:16-17) with a summary in which each feast is called a *ḥag*. In the body of the text (Deut 16:1-15) the feasts are listed as Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles, with the seven days of Unleavened Bread forming part of the instruction for keeping the Passover. By contrast, in the summary Unleavened Bread *(ḥag hammaṣṣôt)* takes the place of Passover as the designated spring feast. Passover (Deut 16:1-8) is firmly tied to the month Abib and the tradition of Israel's departure from Egypt, although no specific day in the month is specified. Passover/Unleavened Bread instructions contain no agricultural elements, though the two remaining feasts are dated to events connected with the harvest. Weeks begins seven weeks after the first sickle is put to the standing grain *(qāmâ)*, with the seven-week interval presumably allowing for the completion of the wheat harvest, while Tabernacles commences immediately after the ingathering of produce for both threshing floor and winepress. Neither is tied to a historical event, though humanitarian notes in Deuteronomy 16:12, 14, which call for sharing the family celebration with *Levites, *aliens, *orphans and *widows, are rooted in the recollection of Israel's own bitter slavery in Egypt, when presumably those who rejoiced in the harvest did not share it with their slaves.

The major difference in Deuteronomy's account, however, is the repeated reminder (Deut 16:2, 6, 11, 15) that these feasts are to be celebrated only in the special place chosen by Yahweh, tying the concept of a *pilgrimage* feast to a specific shrine. Another feature, consistent with the covenant nature of Deuteronomy, is the focus on voluntary sharing with the less fortunate, an act seen as fundamental to the celebration of Yahweh's *blessing (Deut 16:10, 14-15, 17). Feasting, for Deuteronomy, is part of the freedom of all God's covenant people in the land, in stark contrast to their earlier plight as slaves. As in the two Exodus passages, there are no regulations for the offerings themselves and indeed no mention of priests or an elaborate cultic ritual. The emphasis is entirely on the quality of the worship; true covenant celebration is to be done joyfully (Deut 16:14) as a voluntary response to God's abundant blessing (Deut 16:10, 17) and in the company of the covenant people gathered around the sacred Name in the place of Yahweh's choosing. Those who worship are to remember their former bondage (Deut 16:12) and to include those marginalized by contemporary conditions (Deut 16:14). Above all, as we have already observed in Exodus, no one is to appear before Yahweh empty-handed.

4.1.6. Ezekiel 45:18-25. Another short liturgical calendar, though outside the Pentateuch, deserves mention, especially in light of the tendency of traditional higher critics to date the Priestly material sometime after Ezekiel's writing. Ezekiel's concerns expand the liturgy to include the contributions of the eschatological prince, together with the traditional priest and Levites. Only Passover and Tabernacles make it into the prince's new order, the former by name and the latter simply as "the Feast that begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day." Each is understood to be a *ḥag*, which to some explains why Weeks is excluded (e.g., Milgrom, 245). Weeks, which is mentioned in Leviticus 23 but not given *ḥag* status, did not meet the criteria used by Ezekiel. Another reason may pertain to the purpose of Ezekiel, which is to list the prince's required offerings for the seven-day feasts. Since Weeks occupied but a single day, it may not have been worthy of mention.

Much has been made of Ezekiel as a bridge between the J, E and D materials on the one hand and the later Priestly instructions, particularly as found in Numbers, on the other. But Ezekiel 45 is a very different genre from either Leviticus 23 or Numbers 28—29. It looks forward to a future day when the dry bones of Israel will have taken on flesh and been filled with "spirit" (Ezek 37), in a renewed kingdom ruled over by a Davidic prince (Ezek 37:25) under a new, unbreakable covenant of peace. In that day Jacob will be brought back from captivity (Ezek 39:25), and a new and largely symbolic temple will rise in the midst of a redistributed land, ruled by God through his prince, with blessing flowing from the Jerusalem temple to

all the nations (Ezek 47). Only a small pericope is devoted to the feasts (Ezek 45:18-25), the purpose of which is to apportion the responsibilities of people and prince in the gathering of sacrifice (Ezek 45:13-17). The focus is on the spring and autumn pilgrimage feasts, when restored Israel will gather to celebrate the triumph of the rule of God. Attention is devoted to what the prince, not the people, contribute, and the reader feels that the worshipers, as in the great battle of Revelation 19, are swept up in the triumphal activities of the prince upon whom the narrative focuses. Although the feasts themselves stand in some continuity with those in the Pentateuch and the eschatological offerings provide for atonement and fellowship in Yahweh's covenant, there is more that is new than old.

4.1.7. Later Feasts. Later prophets, as well as postbiblical Jewish literature, include references to an expanded calendar marking both feasts and fasts (Zech 7:3-11; 8:18-19). The most important of these, Purim (Esther 9:18-19) on the thirteenth and fourteenth of Adar (twelfth month; February-March), and Hanukkah (1 Macc 4:41-59; 2 Macc 10:1-8) for eight days beginning on the twenty-fifth of Kislev (ninth month; November-December) are still celebrated within Judaism, each one, like Passover, marking a significant milestone in God's preservation of the nation (for a survey of other feasts, e.g., Feast of the Wood and Feast of Nicanor, see de Vaux, 473).

4.2. The Secondary Sources: Narrative References to the Feasts in the Pentateuch and Historical Books. As might be expected, given the heavily legislative agenda of pentateuchal narrative and its role in preparing the people of God for their entry into the land, we discover in the books of Moses themselves few instances where the feasts were actually celebrated. We certainly expect more when we turn to the stories of Israel in the land. That such evidence is both scattered and scant has buttressed an entire reconstruction of Israel's cultic history, held by some but by no means all scholars, arguing from the relative silence of the historical texts to the conclusion that the feasts themselves were, in some form, a later insertion in the Pentateuch.

4.2.1. Passover/Unleavened Bread. While the evidence is certainly not as full as might be wished, the picture does not lack consistency, and in at least two places (2 Kings 23:9; Neh 8:17) the text is quite candid about the absence of celebration in the years when we might most expect Israel to have kept these rituals. Apart from its institution in the exodus itself (Ex 12—13), the only other pentateuchal reference to Passover is to be found in Numbers 9:1-14, in the second year after Israel's departure from Egypt, while the escapees were still camped in the Desert of Sinai. The chronology is not always clear, but the Passover (first month, second year [Num 9:1]) appears to predate the census (first day, second month, second year [Num 1:1]) and the departure to the Desert of Paran (twentieth day, second month, second year [Num 10:11]). The incident is important to Israel's story for two reasons. First, it represents the institution of the memorial feast, following the departure. Second, a significant interpretive point is added when some, through no fault of their own, were ritually unable to celebrate at the appropriate time and thus were allowed to keep the Passover on the same day a month later. One is tempted to wonder whether even this Passover might have been omitted in the legal text were it not for the important point of practice it elucidated.

The so-called Deuteronomistic historical books (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) carry only two somewhat abbreviated notices of Passover or Unleavened Bread observance, together with a third less-specific note (1 Kings 9:25) about Solomon's three unnamed annual celebrations. The first occurs immediately upon Israel's entry into the land during the Gilgal encampment (Josh 5:10-11), when the nation had survived the desert wanderings and finally escaped the "reproach of Egypt" (Josh 5:9). As in Numbers, there is a didactic point in the text's reference: arriving in the land represents the fulfillment of the promise of the exodus itself. Following Gilgal, Passover is not mentioned again until the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 23:21-23), at the very close of Israel's history in the land, providing with Gilgal something of a bookend effect in the story. As in Joshua, the note is brief, at least in comparison with the Chronicler's account. Keeping the Passover is part of Josiah's response to the discovery of the book of the covenant (2 Kings 23:21), and the text seems at pains to note that "not since the days of the judges . . . nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah had any such Passover been observed." Whether

that meant there was no tradition of observance or merely that Josiah's celebration exceeded that of his predecessors is not evident.

The Chronicler agrees generally with the picture drawn in the Deuteronomistic History, though there are interesting points of difference. First, 2 Chronicles 8:12-13 expands 1 Kings 9:25, showing Solomon undertaking burnt offerings on the altar "according to the daily requirement ... commanded by Moses for sabbaths, New Moons and the three annual feasts: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles," but there is no narrative record of king or people having actually kept Passover or Unleavened Bread in the days of Solomon. However, in an event about which 2 Kings is silent, the Chronicler records a magnificent Passover celebration in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Chron 30). Significantly, the text again points out the failure of the earlier kings to keep the Passover (2 Chron 30:26), noting that "since the days of Solomon ... there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem." Then, as in 2 Kings, Josiah's Passover is brought into the story (2 Chron 35:1-19), again with the added note: "the Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel, and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah" (2 Chron 35:18).

A final reference to keeping the Passover and Unleavened Bread is recorded from the postexilic period (Ezra 6:19-22) when, as in the desert (Num 9), at Gilgal (Josh 5) and in the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, there is a time of new beginnings under Zerubbabel and his companions.

4.2.2. Weeks/Tabernacles. A similar paucity of historical reference surrounds the other feasts as well. Weeks is mentioned, along with Passover and Tabernacles, only in 2 Chronicles 8:13 (see 4.2.1 above), while Tabernacles finds no place in the text until the postexilic period, apart from three texts where Tabernacles can only be assumed by inference. First, in Judges 21:19 (cf. 1 Sam 1:3) there is an "annual festival *[ḥag]* of Yahweh in Shiloh," with dancing in the vicinity of the vineyards, which seems to imply an autumn feast. Second, in connection with the dedication of the temple, all Israel gathers in Jerusalem in the seventh month, "at the time of the festival" (*ḥag*, 1 Kings 8:2); comparing that with 1 Kings 8:65-66 we may safely assume that Tabernacles was intended. The third reference again must draw on reasonable inference from Jeroboam's creation of a less-than-orthodox feast in the eighth month (1 Kings 12:32-33), in a narrative that only makes sense if there was a more orthodox expression of the same feast practiced in Jerusalem at another time. All of this points to the fact that Tabernacles, if not Weeks, was at least known and occasionally celebrated in preexilic Israel. After the exile, the situation is equally ambiguous. A Tabernacles celebration was one of the first cultic activities of the returnees (Ezra 3:4), even prior to the rebuilding of the temple. But some years later, even that seems to have been forgotten when, through Ezra's reading of the law (Neh 8:14-18), the people discovered they had been commanded by Moses to live in tabernacles, or booths, during the seventh month, a project they then attacked with joy and abandon. The text in Nehemiah 8 closes with yet another of those "not since" notes, indicating that "from the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this" (Neh 8:17).

We can conclude that (1) during the period, for reasons only hinted at in the text but related to general ignorance and unfaithfulness, the pilgrimage feasts were not much observed, and (2) the notice given to these feasts, both in the Deuteronomistic History and the Chronicler, show keeping the feasts as one of the signs of spiritual renewal. What this reveals about the pentateuchal instructions is not always evident, but it is certainly possible that from the beginning of Israel's history these instructions were extant but generally unobserved, at least in orthodox form, a point repeatedly supported in the text.

5. Theology of the Three Pilgrimage Feasts *(ḥaggîm).*

While other feasts (e.g., sabbath) were highly significant, much of Israel's festive life as a covenant people was defined by the three great feasts that brought the whole people together. These were the times when every male was to appear with full hands before God. These were times when both *creation and redemption were highlighted as fundamental to Israel's life. It was on the basis of the people's keeping faith with God's acts, as symbolized by these feasts, that Yahweh promised long life and prosperity in the land. That the record indicates only sporadic and partial observance of all three feasts

goes a long way toward explaining why the prophetic historians who wrote Israel's history considered the exile inevitable.

5.1. Passover/Unleavened Bread. Passover and Unleavened Bread, like other Israelite institutions, had deep roots in both creation and redemption theology. Although of all Israel's festivals the spring feast was most consistently tied to Israel's salvation history, the covenant context was a constant reminder of Yahweh as Creator and Provider. The command not to appear empty-handed (Ex 23:15; Deut 16:16), that all were to give "as you are able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your God that he has given you" (Deut 16:17), transformed the spring feast from merely a remembrance of salvation to a celebration of the harvest. Yahweh's actions in the exodus and conquest prepared the way for his activity in creation and his providential dispensation of rain and fertility in the land. To the Israelite in the land, the "bread of affliction" had given way to "bread and wine," in the security of one's own home, under one's own vine and fig tree. This was indeed cause for celebration, as every spring harvest would reveal anew. As we have observed, given the communal nature of the people of God, no true celebration of Yahweh's goodness could exist for an individual alone. The goodness of creation reflects the goodness of Yahweh, and that goodness is, from the beginning, intended to benefit the whole people. Celebrations such as Passover and Unleavened Bread, like other feasts, provided such an opportunity.

But among the three feast times in the annual cycle, Passover and Unleavened Bread remained the celebration of Yahweh's redemption par excellence. The modern Seder begins with thanksgiving for daily bread but goes on to recall through bitter herbs and the death of a victim the cost of redemption; in the same way, the people of God in antiquity recalled their origins as slaves in Egypt, oppressed by Pharaoh. The background of abundant prosperity in the land only highlighted the goodness of Yahweh, who not only came down to "bring them out" but who also had "brought them into" the land. The children still ask, Why do we, on this evening, eat unleavened bread? or Why do we, on this evening, eat bitter herbs? The answer comes in the story of God's deliverance from oppression and slavery. The Passover is all about freedom through sacrifice, and as such is the fundamental OT type on which Christian freedom in Christ, our "paschal lamb," is built.

Much speculation has taken place over the significance of unleavened bread. Unleavened bread was eaten in a variety of circumstances that required hasty preparation (e.g., Gen 19:3; cf. Ex 12:39; 13:6-10), while in other contexts the requirement for unleavened bread appears related to a cultic concern, as in the common levitical offering instructions (Lev 2:4-5; 6:16; 7:12, etc.) or in the narrative scene of Gideon's ritual presentation to the visiting angel (Judg 6:19-22). Why bread without leaven seems to be preferred in sacrificial settings is not made clear in the texts, but no such ambiguity survives in the tradition of unleavened bread as part of the spring feast. The reasons are historical, not agricultural. In fact, the point has been made that there is nothing in a typical agricultural harvest festival that demands unleavened bread (see the reference to articles by Halbe and Wambacq and bibliography in Hartley, 1067, 1069). Theories that see leaven as representing evil and create an apotropaic element connected with the prohibition lack any textual support. By contrast, the idea of "eating in haste" is deeply rooted in all the traditions and must remain the favored explanation.

5.2. Weeks/Harvest/Pentecost. Weeks is the most straightforwardly agricultural feast in Israel's calendar and the one about which there is the least controversy. The covenant calendars, though reflecting a variety of nomenclature, all describe Weeks in some fashion as "the firstfruits of (wheat) harvest." The barley harvest had already come in; now with the more important wheat harvest came the culmination of the grain harvest and the full celebration of Yahweh's goodness. Questions of how and when the date of Weeks was established, given that the onset of wheat harvest might have varied considerably from one part of Israel to another, are reflected in the texts. But the basic meaning does not change: When Yahweh gives prosperity, it is time to celebrate.

Questions of the prominence of Weeks have been raised, and while it is true that little is written about its observance, its theological and liturgical significance plus the need for Weeks to round out the "three times in a year" formula confirm that the wheat harvest fete was deeply rooted in Israel's cultic life. Various reasons have been given for its relative obscurity, from

the fact that it occupies only a single day (seven days of celebration in the middle of harvest time is hardly practical in any case), to its lack of a salvation-historical rationale, but all ignore the fact that Israel's covenant life was fundamentally tied to the agricultural cycle. Israel, as a people whose prosperity depended not on fertility rites (as in Canaan) nor the flooding of the Nile (as in Egypt), had every reason to pause and remember who sent the rains and from whose bounty they could reap. All this was expressed by the elevation (waving) of the two loaves of bread symbolizing the firstfruits of harvest (Lev 23:17). Just as the burnt offerings of Passover evoked the sense of divine deliverance through sacrificial death, the fellowship offerings of Weeks evoked the sense of thanksgiving and gratitude for God's activity in creation (cf. Ps 19; 104; etc.). The emphasis throughout on "firstfruits" was a reminder of that glorious moment when the first bud appeared, followed by the first flower or the first ripe ear. The observer knew there was more coming, but nothing that followed would produce the joy of the first new growth. This, the people were reminded in Weeks, had come from God and could be given joyfully back to God in the elevation of the loaves.

Another lovely note is added with humanitarian addenda in Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 16:10-12. According to the levitical law, when the fields were reaped, the edges were to be left for gleaning by the poor and the resident alien. For the well off to rejoice without considering the widow, the orphan and the alien would have been unthinkable and a denial of all that covenant blessing involved. In Deuteronomy 16 (cf. Deut 26:1-15) the emphasis on giving back is even stronger. The worshiper brought a freewill offering (literally, "the sufficiency of what your hand can afford") according to the measure of God's blessing. He rejoiced before Yahweh, together with all his extended family, sons and daughters, male servants and female servants, the Levite (to whom no inheritance of land had been given), the resident alien, the orphan and the widow. Lest they assumed too much, the worshipers were reminded (Deut 16:12), as in the Passover, that they had been slaves in Egypt.

The concept of divine abundance flowing in firstfruits, with the promise of much more to come, is an equally apt symbol for the NT fulfillment of the Pentecost reality. Acts 2:1—"when the Day of Pentecost had fully come"—reminds the reader that OT blessing awaits an even greater fulfillment in Christ. In the sending of the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits (Rom 8:23), there is a reminder of the "not yet" side of Christian hope as believers wait for full adoption. Although the metaphor has shifted, the hope and joy generated by the first ear of grain has its counterpart in the fullness of spiritual life promised when Pentecost came in reality.

5.3. Tabernacles/Ingathering. Because there is evidence that *sukkôt* has both an agricultural and a historical base, the usual questions regarding its provenance and meaning have arisen. As we have seen, both Exodus 23:16 and 34:22 call Tabernacles the Feast of Ingathering (*'āsîp*) and tie its observance to the turn, or end, of the year (see 3.1 above for the Hebrew expressions). Considerable debate has attached to the idea that Tabernacles was not only the end of the old but also the beginning of a new year and thus an appropriate basis for the New Year's Festival (see below). These expressions, however, can equally apply to the end and beginning of the agricultural cycle, with little reference to whether Israel actually observed a Nisan or Tishri year, even less that it was the scene of an established mythical reenactment.

The most obvious "turning" of the year related to the completion of Israel's agricultural cycle, not only pointing to an agricultural basis for the feast but providing a basis for perhaps the most widely debated critical question pertaining to the study of Israel's feasts. Tabernacles, so it has been argued, was far more of an event than the pentateuchal texts reveal. In fact, it developed into a major New Year's Festival, drawing on Babylonian analogies (the *Akitu*), and in its most developed form drew both king and people into the myth of a dying and rising god. The best-known proponent of this view was S. Mowinckel. The strength of this proposal came not from pentateuchal sources but from the Psalms, many of which were interpreted as ritual texts accompanying the myth of a dying and rising god. Elaborate theories incorporated the theme of royal renewal as the ark was brought into the temple and the covenant of kingship was renewed. (A sympathetic summary of the argument is provided by Day, 67-87; see also the summary and bibliography in Bosman, 3.249-51.)

The arguments for an elaborate myth and ritual New Year's Festival continue to be debated, and because there is a strong element of subjectivism, it will probably never be fully resolved. In a study of pentateuchal themes, it must be noted that what evidence exists is from the Psalms, and most of it is subject to other interpretations. Israel's cultic calendars, as we have seen, provide no evidence for an elaborate autumn kingly ritual. Quite the contrary, in both the simple "end/turn of the year" feast of Exodus 23 and 34 and the slightly more formal Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16, the emphasis is on the harvest and the rejoicing that attended it. In both the Exodus passages and Deuteronomy the agricultural element clearly predominates, together with the memories of living in tabernacles (huts) in the desert that take center stage in Leviticus 23:40-44. The ingathering of the autumn harvest gave hope to those who had seen Yahweh's covenant love reward their labors, just as living for seven days in a tabernacle (hut) gave perspective on their humble past and how Yahweh had preserved them through the desert years. The poor and rich together went out to find leafy trees, even as they enjoyed the fruits of the harvest just ended. And because it was the "turn" of the year, they were reminded to look forward as well as back.

Finally, we note the importance of Tabernacles in later times. Under the return with Zerubbabel, Tabernacles was the first ritual celebration of the exiles (Ezra 3:4) and seemed to function as a reinauguration of the sacrificial system in the city. Some years later, though the chronology is confusing, Ezra the priest returned to Jerusalem, and through reading in the book of the law it was discovered that the people of Israel were called upon to dwell in booths, or tabernacles, for a week in the seventh month (Neh 8:14-18). What followed was a remarkable rediscovery of the national dream, as the people went out into the fields and forest, gathered the branches, created the booths and rejoiced in their God. It was clearly a centralized feast, as Jerusalem had now become almost the totality of the little city-state. The law was read daily, and the rejoicing of the exiles was overwhelming. Those who remembered such things decided that there had been no celebration of its equal since the days of Joshua. For many, the spirit of Tabernacles represents nothing less than the rebirth of life in the city of God.

The association of Tabernacles with coming into the abundant new life of God's covenant community may also lie behind the remarkable apocalyptic passage in Zechariah 14:15-19. The setting (Zech 14:1-13) is the final victory of Yahweh over the nations, a battle in which Jerusalem is set apart and protected from the general carnage. When it all ends, Jerusalem reigns supreme, living water flows from its midst, and Yahweh is "king over the whole earth." What follows is nothing less than the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 18:18-19): the blessing of all the nations. Those from all nations who survive the final apocalypse join in an annual pilgrimage, which now becomes the event by which every nation on earth participates in the worship of Israel's God and the celebration of his goodness. Tabernacles has become the feast to end all feasts and represents the full flowering of God's promises, through Israel, to all the nations.

6. Summary.

The idea of feasting is as old as humanity, but for many the subject has become simply "meat and drink" or a means to ease the harsh realities of life. Israel's life of feasting could not have been further removed from this idea. The feasts of Israel were the ritual expression of its life as a community of God's people. Through the feasts, Yahweh's faithfulness in the past became the ritual basis for the hope they held for the future. Communal acts such as shared sacrifices, festive meals, prayers, singing and dancing renewed their sense of belonging. The three times in a year when all males (and most everyone else) went up to Jerusalem were times when God reminded them of the unity and rhythm of their life in his covenant. Because the feasts, or at least two of them, had historical associations, Israel never had reason to drift into what we would today call existentialism. Equally, because each of the feasts also had an agricultural base and Israel was an agricultural people, they never forgot the covenant with Yahweh, through which he blessed them and the land and through which they, in turn, were to bless all peoples and all lands. Joyful solidarity with Yahweh and his people, in tune with the rhythms of creation, combined with concern for the poor and needy and ultimately all the nations of the world.

Each of Israel's feasts told a part of that story. The weekly sabbath, the monthly New Moon, the great Day of Atonement, and even the solemn blowing of trumpets—all of these brought the worshiper into the cycle of God's creative and redemptive love. Add to that the three special occasions when the whole people met together in festive mood with Yahweh as King in their midst, and it becomes possible to see why this people could, with the psalmist, affirm in joy and triumph, "Blessed is that nation whose God is Yahweh" (Ps 33:12).

See also AGRICULTURE; ATONEMENT, DAY OF; RELIGION; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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FIGS. *See* AGRICULTURE.

FIRMAMENT. *See* CREATION.

FIRSTBORN. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

FIRSTFRUITS

The word *firstfruits* is used in two ways in the English Bible. First, it simply describes the first portion of the produce of the land. Second, it refers to specific ceremonies related to the first portion of the harvest. Two Hebrew words are translated "firstfruits" in English Bibles. The first Hebrew term is *bikkûrîm,* which is translated "firstfruits" eight times in the Pentateuch (Ex 23:16, 19; 34:22, 26; Lev 23:17; 23:20; Num 8:13; 28:26). The same term is also translated "early ripened things" (Lev 2:14, twice) and "first ripe" (Num 13:20). It refers to first-ripe *agricultural products, including fruits, grains and grain products such as flour and bread. The second Hebrew term is *rēʾšît,* which is translated "firstfruits" four times in the Pentateuch (Lev 2:12; 23:10; Num 18:12; Deut 18:4). Additionally, it is translated "choice" (Ex 23:19) and "first" (Ex 34:26; Lev 2:12; 23:10; Num 15:20, 21; 18:12; 24:20; Deut 18:4 [twice]; 26:2, 10; 33:21). It refers to grain, wine, oil and even the wool from the first shearing of the sheep (Deut 18:4).

1. Firstfruits as Israel's Responsibility
2. The Wave Offerings
3. Individual First Fruits Offerings
4. The Meaning of First Fruits

1. Firstfruits as Israel's Responsibility.

As the sovereign Creator, God owns all things. In response to this and as a token of stewardship, Israel acknowledged that the first issue of human, beast and soil belonged to Yahweh and as such require redemption. Additionally, the firstborn of human and animals needed to be redeemed for a second reason. In delivering Israel from bondage, God had inflicted great plagues upon the *Egyptians, culminating in the death of the firstborn. Israel's firstborn sons and animals were spared; therefore they became God's special property (Ex 13:2-16). Provision was made for the tribe of *Levi to be substituted for them (Num 3:12-16). To redeem the harvest,

the first-ripe fruits were brought to God. These offerings provided a portion of the stipend of the *priests and Levites (*rē'šît:* Lev 2:12; 23:10; Num 18:12; *bikkûrîm:* Num 18:13). They received all of the firstfruits except for the cereal offering described in Leviticus 2:14-16.

2. The Wave Offerings.

2.1. The Wave Sheaf of Barley. Two distinct wave offerings, offered at different times and in different ways, are associated with firstfruits. One is the wave sheaf of immature barley offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the first Sunday after Passover, which occurs on the fourteenth day of the month of Abib. During Abib, barley continues its development through a germinal phase of growth that begins the final ripening process. The wave sheaf offering begins a lengthy, hazardous time that is relieved only after a period of fifty days of uncertainty and apprehension (Lev 23:9-14 and probably Lev 2:12; Num 18:13).

2.2. The Wave Loaves of Wheat. After these fifty days, on the Day of Pentecost, the second firstfruits wave offering occurs. This uses the wave loaves of the newly ripe wheat (Ex 23:16, 19; 34:22, 26; Lev 23:17, 20; Num 28:26). The occasion of each of these two firstfruits wave offerings is called the Day of the First Fruits. (In Lev 23:10-11 we find "the day" when the firstfruits of the early barley harvest is waved before the LORD during Passover season.)

2.3. Firstfruits and the "Days of Trepidation." In its first division (*Zeraim* or "Seeds"), the Mishnah has an entire section called *Bikkurim.* It specifies that the *bikkûrîm* offerings must come from the "seven varieties" listed in Deuteronomy 8:7-10: wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and (date) honey. All seven of these products are closely related to the two wave offerings of firstfruits. The success of the harvest is determined during the fifty days between Passover and Pentecost. The blossoms of the grape, pomegranate, olive and date open and develop, and the undeveloped figs continue to mature. During that same time period, the kernels of grain—the barley and the wheat—fill with starch. Except during the dry season, Israel's weather is unpredictable at best, but during this particular fifty days it is most unpredictable of all. It is so characterized by contrasts that one cannot anticipate whether the days will be wet or dry, cold or hot, windy or calm. The first part of this period requires northern winds, cold and rain for proper development of barley, wheat and figs. Rain in the latter portion of this period, however, is disastrous (see 1 Sam 12:17-19, where rain is a harbinger of death!). The seven varieties thus typify the unique agricultural challenges of the land of Israel, and they demonstrate the necessity of faith in order to live there. This period of fifty days between the wave sheaf of barley and the wave loaves of wheat is called the "seven weeks of trepidation and prayer." This seems to be the reason that the *bikkûrîm* offerings were to be given only from the seven varieties, as contrasted with the "choice products" listed in Genesis 43:11 (balm, [bee] honey, aromatic gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds). The yield from these products is not threatened by the special agricultural problems of the land of Israel.

3. Individual Firstfruits Offerings.

In addition to the wave sheaf of barley offered at Passover and the wave loaves of new wheat offered at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Pentateuch discusses the individual offerings of the "first of all the produce of the ground." The procedure for such offerings is given in Deuteronomy 26:1-11. The head of each family would place the offering into a basket and go to a designated place and say to the officiating priest: "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." As the priest accepted the basket and placed it before the *altar of Yahweh, the worshiper avowed:

> A wandering Aramean was my father; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into the place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.

The offerer, who had regained possession of the basket, placed it before the altar and wor-

shiped. How appropriate that his gifts (of the seven varieties) demonstrated the hazards of living in the land of Israel and the necessity of trusting Yahweh for subsistence!

4. The Meaning of Firstfruits.
The offerings of firstfruits acknowledged God's sovereignty and ownership of all things. They represented the stewardship of Israel living in the *land. The firstfruits offering at the Day of Pentecost was a celebration indeed.

See also AGRICULTURE; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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FLOCKS. *See* AGRICULTURE.

FLOOD

Comparisons between the biblical and ancient Near Eastern accounts of the flood can be made on several different levels. First, one could compare individual features such as the dimensions of the boat or the length of the flood. Second, one might examine the conceptual worldview concerning the cosmos and its devastation at the hands of deity. Third, comparisons could be made regarding the nature of the literary preservation of flood traditions and the relationships between those traditions. After summarizing the source material available, the following article will attempt comparison on each of these three levels between the cultures of Mesopotamia and Israel. The importance of engaging in such comparative study is that it provides the basis for understanding the cultural background of the Israelites. The theological message of the Bible was communicated to people who lived in the ancient Near Eastern world. If we desire to understand the theological message of the text, we will benefit by positioning it within the worldview of the ancient cultures rather than simply applying our own cultural perspectives.

1. Ancient Near Eastern Sources
2. Individual Features
3. Conceptual Worldview
4. Literary Features
5. Archaeology and the Flood
6. Apologetics and the Flood

1. Ancient Near Eastern Sources.
There are three major documents from Mesopotamia that offer an account of the flood. The earliest, a Sumerian fragment of about seventy lines, was found at Nippur and is generally dated to the seventeenth century B.C. (published by M. Civil in Lambert and Millard). It was combined by Jacobsen with two other fragments into a hypothetical composition he entitled "The Eridu Genesis" (Hess and Tsumura, 129-42; *COS* 1.158.513-15). A roughly contemporary account in Akkadian, the Atrahasis Epic, contains an account of the *creation of humankind as well as the flood (*COS* 1.130.450-52; Lambert and Millard). The third account of the flood is found in tablet 11 of the Gilgamesh Epic. The initial discovery of this epic was in Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh. This copy dates to the seventh century B.C. Subsequent discoveries and analyses have allowed the origins of the Gilgamesh Epic to be traced through the various sources from which it was compiled. Though the epic as a piece did not come together until early in the first millennium, some of the Gilgamesh sources that it incorporates date to the second half of the third millennium (Tigay). The flood segment is generally considered to have been adapted from Atrahasis. Neither Egypt nor Syria preserve independent flood traditions, though a small fragment of the Atrahasis Epic was found at Ugarit (Lambert and Millard, 131-33). A fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic was found at Megiddo, but it is not from the section that contained the flood story.

2. Individual Features.
2.1. Divine Decision. In the Mesopotamian accounts the decision was made in the assembly of the gods to have a flood wash over the land to destroy the human population. The high gods An and Enlil are seen as the driving force behind the decision, with the other gods agreeing, apparently with some reluctance. In all accounts the intention was to wipe out all of humanity, flooding as much of the land as was necessary to

accomplish that purpose. The biblical account likewise has the destruction of the human race in view but differs in that there is no divine assembly in operation, with cross-purposes festering beneath the surface. Consequently, the decision to save the hero in Genesis is part of the divine plan rather than subterfuge against the decision of the council, as in Mesopotamia.

2.2. Hero. Ziusudra ("long life," Sumerian account), Atrahasis ("exceedingly wise") and Utnapishtim ("finder of life," Gilgamesh Epic) are three titles for the king of Shuruppak, who is the hero of the flood story in the ancient Near Eastern traditions. In each of these Mesopotamian accounts his patron god, Enki/Ea, informs the hero covertly. The king is informed of the coming flood and instructed on how to escape by means of a boat. In Genesis, *Noah is given no official position as king or priest, though he is portrayed as a faithful worshiper of God, just as the Shuruppak king is portrayed as a devout worshiper and favorite of Enki/Ea. Noah's name does not indicate a personal quality or something he achieves for himself. Instead, it is given as indicative of his father's hopes for him (Gen 5:29) that were not entirely realized (Gen 8:21-22). Perhaps a subtle theological difference between the traditions is that Noah's ark is seen as the means by which God will deliver him and his family, whereas in Mesopotamian traditions the boat is seen as a means of escape. Thus, instead of one god helping the hero to escape the wrath of the other gods, Yahweh provides safety for Noah from the punishment that Yahweh is bringing on the rest of humankind.

2.3. Dealing with the Population. In Genesis itself there is no reference to Noah's interaction with the population. The preaching of Noah is referred to in passing in 2 Peter 2:5 but finds much more elaborate antecedents in intertestamental and early Christian literature. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.3.1 §72-74) makes similar claims, as do other early Jewish compositions (e.g., *Jub.* 7:20-39, c. 100 B.C.) In the *Sibylline Oracles* Noah makes a long speech (1:175-233) condemning his neighbors and warning them that a flood threatens their lives. Early Christian literature follows this same line of thinking. Though the NT refers to Noah as a proclaimer or herald of righteousness, it offers little detail to support the elaborate speculations of the extrabiblical sources. We could easily imagine that Noah would have been involved all of his life in trying to make an impact on his world for righteousness. Usually the tradition today, however, implies that Noah was trying to persuade them to join him in the ark and gain deliverance. The evidence of the text would argue against that possibility. Noah was told exactly whom to bring in the ark, and space was made for these eight passengers. Even if others had wanted to gain sanctuary in the ark, it is not a given that such an option would have been available.

It is interesting to compare the mentality reflected in Gilgamesh on this issue. There it is assumed that if the general population were told that a flood was coming, they would all readily believe and want to be delivered. In the Mesopotamian versions, since no humans were supposed to be saved at all, widespread alarm would have been disastrous. Consequently, Utnapishtim and his god, Ea, have to devise a half-truth to deceive the population of Shuruppak so that they will not become suspicious of the building activity. They contrive a story that Utnapishtim is out of favor with Enlil, so he must build a boat to go to the great sea to live with Ea, his patron god, lest his presence bring Enlil's wrath on the city. He claims that once he is gone, Enlil "will send you rain of plenty" (Gilg 11.43). Certainly we would not attribute such deception to Noah, but this section illustrates well how different the ancient world was from our modern thinking. Skepticism about the punitive intentions of the gods was far more rare in the ancient world than it is today. People back then would have found it intrinsically credible that deity would send a flood to wipe out life. It is far more likely that people would have clamored to get on board than that they would ridicule Noah for his undertaking.

2.4. Boat. In the Mesopotamian traditions the boat is made from the reeds of the hero's house (e.g., Gilg 11.23-24). In Gilgamesh, the palace is given to the one who sealed up the boat (11.94-95), so that is not what the boat was built from. Ziusudra was a priest as well as a king and presumably received his instructions in the shrine, but the instructions concerning the boat are missing in the broken parts of the tablet. If we put all of the texts together, we might surmise that the shrine where Enki delivered the warning was demolished to make the boat. If so, the result would be a floating shrine. This would coincide with the conjecture that the shape of the boat in the Mesopotamian tradition was similar

to that of a ziggurat (Holloway). Like many ziggurats, there were seven stories, and the breadth, length and height are all the same (120 cubits; Gilg 11.29-30, 57-58). In Genesis, the dimensions were 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits. In both Israelite and Mesopotamian accounts, the completed boat was covered with pitch for waterproofing.

2.5. Occupants. In Genesis the survivors were Noah and his family accompanied by animals by twos (unclean) and sevens (clean). The intention was species survival. The Mesopotamian traditions go much further than that, as there is an attempt made to save not only the race but also civilization. As a result, guild members of various sorts, possessing specialized knowledge of the technology of their trades, are taken on the boat (Gilg 11.85) in addition to all of Utnapishtim's relatives. The texts are less clear about the animals. The Sumerian version mentions small animals. Atrahasis, in a badly broken section, lists several categories of animals (birds, cattle, creatures of the steppe), perhaps including clean animals (Atrahasis 3.2.32-37, though some consider these to be used for sacrifices rather than taken on the boat). In the Gilgamesh Epic the beasts and wild animals of the steppe are loaded into the boat. Genesis has, by far, the most extensive list of animals, enumerating every kind of bird, every kind of animal and every kind of creature that moves along the ground. The text also specifies that these animals will come to Noah. In one recension Atrahasis catches the animals (3.2.34), but in another recension Ea sends him the animals (Lambert and Millard, 129). The other versions do not say how the animals were collected.

2.6. Event. Just as the biblical account generally includes more narrative detail, it also presents a more extensive event. Atrahasis speaks of heavy clouds, thunder, savage winds, darkness and noise. In Gilgamesh the gale and the lightning are so frightening that even the gods are terrified. Interestingly, neither mentions rain specifically. Although certainly rain would be included in a storm, the focus is more on the storm than on the rain or even on the water of the flood. Gilgamesh indicates that the deluge flattened the land, but none of the ancient Near Eastern accounts makes reference to the water rising and covering. Instead it is described as sweeping through (Sumerian account, lines 202-203). In Atrahasis and Gilgamesh the storm lasts seven days. The Genesis account features rain for forty days with little emphasis on the storm elements of wind, thunder, lightning and darkness. Instead, the focus of the narrative is on the floodgates that pour out rain and the surging waters that cover everything. In addition to the forty days of rain, there is a much longer period over which the water is rising as well as a much longer wait for the waters to subside, resulting in the inhabitants occupying the ark for about a year.

The Hebrew word for Noah's flood, used twelve times in Genesis 6—11, is *mabbûl*. Outside of this section it occurs only once (Ps 29:10) in the OT. The word is very similar to the Akkadian word for the cosmic deluge, *abubu*. In Akkadian it refers to a devastating flood of cosmic proportions that is seen as a destructive weapon of the gods. Just as Psalm 29:10 depicts Yahweh as enthroned on the flood, Akkadian texts depict gods such as Nergal as "king of the battle, lord of strength and might, lord of the Deluge" and Ninurta as the "exalted lord who rides upon the Deluge." It is true that Noah's flood is the only *mabbûl* that the Bible acknowledges, but it is likely that the word had broader currency as a cosmic water weapon wielded by deity.

2.7. Sevens. In Atrahasis, the warning comes seven days before the flood (2.2.37). All the building takes place and the arrangements are made, then the storm comes and lasts seven days (3.4.24). There may be more periods of seven, but the text is too broken to know. In Gilgamesh, the boat is built in seven days (11.76, according to Foster, *COS* 1.132.459), the storm lasts seven days (11.129-130), and then they wait seven days before sending out the birds (11.146). In Genesis, there are seven days between entering the ark and the beginning of the rain (Gen 7:4, 10). There are seven more between the first and second sending of the dove, and again between the second and third sending of the dove (Gen 8:10-12).

2.8. Birds. The use of birds for determining whether it is safe to exit the ark does not occur in the Sumerian account, and that part of the story is missing in Atrahasis. In Gilgamesh, Utnapishtim waits seven days after the storm has ended and the boat has lodged against a mountain (Nisir or Nimush in Kurdistan). Then he releases a dove, which returns, and then a swallow, which also returns. Finally, a raven is

sent, and it finds food and does not return. In the biblical account, once the ark has lodged in the mountains of Ararat (Armenia), Noah sends a raven first, which acts similarly to the raven in Gilgamesh. Then Noah sends a dove out three times. The first time it simply returns. The second time it brings back a freshly plucked olive branch (which, by the way, does not grow in Mesopotamia), and the third time it does not return.

2.9. Sacrifice. Noah builds an altar and offers some of the clean animals and birds as a burnt offering. The purpose of Noah's *sacrifice is not stated. Burnt offerings serve a broad function in the sacrificial system. It may be more important to note what the text does not call the sacrifice. It is not a sin offering nor specifically designated a thank offering. The burnt offerings are usually associated with petitions or entreaties set before God. In contrast, the sacrifice offered after the flood in the ancient Near Eastern accounts feature incense offerings (Gilgamesh) and grain offerings as well as meat sacrifices in order to provide a feast for the gods (Sumerian). The general purpose for sacrifice in the ancient world was to appease the anger of the gods by the gifts of food and drink, and it is likely that that is the intention of the flood hero in the Mesopotamian accounts. In both Genesis and Gilgamesh, deity smells the sweet savor of the sacrifice and is pleased (Gen 8:21; Gilg 11.160-161).

2.10. End Result. In the Sumerian version, Ziusudra is given eternal life and settles on the Island of Dilmun. In the unbroken part of Atrahasis there is a censure of Enlil for bringing the flood so thoughtlessly and a sign of remembrance given in the lapis on the neck of Nintu. The most complete description is preserved in Gilgamesh. Belet-ili gives a sign of remembrance in the beads of her lapis necklace, and Enlil is censured as in Atrahasis. When Enlil becomes furious that someone has survived, Ea lectures him on the fine points of justice. As in the Sumerian account, Utnapishtim and his wife are granted immortality and given a place to dwell that is beyond the natural borders of human occupation. In Genesis the *rainbow is given as a sign of remembrance (the Hebrew word for rainbow, *qešet*, sounds similar to the Akkadian word for necklace, *kišadu*), and Yahweh commits himself to maintain the regular routines of order in the cosmos (Gen 8:22). Rather than being granted eternal life, Noah is *blessed and procedures are put in place for humanity to be self-governed (Gen 9:5-6).

3. Conceptual Worldview.

3.1. Role and Status of Deity. The gods are first resolute when the decree is made, then terrified when the storm is raging, then bitter and full of regret at the result, and finally indignant at Enlil, who is blamed as the responsible party and made a scapegoat for the debacle. Enlil is portrayed as a shortsighted bully who is easily outwitted. He blusters so predictably that he is an easy target for the cagey Ea (Enki). The latter is so shrewd and glib that he can talk circles around Enlil, turning what begins as his own trial for circumventing the oath of silence into a challenging denunciation against Enlil for incompetence in one of his principal areas of responsibility. Despite Ea's role as the champion of humanity who engineers the preservation of civilization, none of the gods come out of this episode looking particularly attractive. Their limitations are debilitating and their character flaws evident. They are driven by selfish motives and have little concern for people. These qualities are no different from those that characterize the gods generally in the ancient Near East and offer a consistent contrast to the depiction of the God of the Bible.

Most striking in the flood account is the clarity with which the gods' dependence on humanity is shown. The impact of the loss of sacrifices that nourished the gods had apparently not been anticipated when the decision was made to bring the flood, and the reality of that loss is poignantly portrayed in the desperation of the gods as they swarm about the sacrifice that the flood survivor offers. In contrast, Yahweh's absolute autonomy and consistently elevated character leave little room for the critical assessment that his actions are mindless or rash. The Genesis account abounds in justice, in sovereignty and, perhaps a bit surprisingly, in *grace. The picture of God offered in the Genesis narrative of the flood shows him to be distressed over injustice and violence, and even while he is responding to this situation with dramatic punitive action, his grace and mercy are evident. The human race has always struggled with the question of *why* huge natural disasters take place, and especially what divine purpose there might be in these events that we still refer to as "acts of

God." What is one to think of a God who could do or even allow such mayhem? Extrabiblical accounts have little to offer in response. The best they can do is to suggest that capricious anger motivated the gods to their destructive behavior.

3.2. Reason for the Flood. Among the ancient Near Eastern accounts, only Atrahasis offers an explanation for why the gods sent the flood. There the complaint of Enlil concerns the "noise" *(rigmu)* and "uproar" *(ḫuburu)* of humanity, along with the explanation that the land was "bellowing like a bull" (2.1.3-8). The result of this tumult is that Enlil is deprived of sleep. The nature of this noise has been the subject of much discussion. Some of the options are as follows: (1) the commotion of violence (e.g., battle cries); (2) the screams and cries of victims; (3) the clamor of petitions for justice; (4) the turmoil of rebellion against the gods (e.g., protests); and (5) the cacophony resulting from overpopulation. Any or all of these could conceivably give definition to the "noise" or "uproar," since the two are fairly general terms. Even the "bellowing like a bull" description retains a certain ambiguity. In 3.3.15 the same expression is used for the flood. The verb generally reflects a swelling or fluctuating sound and thus is appropriate for the billowing sounds of a flood as well as the fluctuating pitch of a bull's bellowing. The question that is most important is whether this noise represents an offense of the population (1 or 4 above), a byproduct of the offense (2 or 3 above) or simply an inconvenience to the gods. In the ancient world this would perhaps have been a distinction without a difference, since anything that inconvenienced the gods, however trivial it might be, could potentially be an offense against them. The comparison of the Hebrew reference to the outcry of Sodom (Gen 18:20) may be apropos, but it is difficult to be certain (Moran 1987, 255 n. 45). In the biblical flood account it is humanity's wickedness (Gen 6:5) and violence (Gen 6:13) that provoke God to judgment. In the biblical view, there is no question that the flood is a response to a moral problem. In the ancient Near Eastern accounts it is difficult to prove that the flood was a response to moral degeneration, but it cannot be entirely ruled out either. We can only observe that moral indignation is not a common reflex among the gods of Mesopotamia, whereas they are often inclined to act on a whim. Additionally, since all were to be destroyed, it makes no sense that the gods were simply trying to come to the rescue of innocent victims.

3.3. Purpose of the Flood. In Atrahasis, several remedies to the noise of humankind are attempted prior to resorting to the drastic extremity represented in the flood. From these we can infer that the original intention of the gods was to decimate the numbers of humankind so as to reduce the noise level (whatever the noise represents). When those strategies fail to produce the desired result, the flood is sent to destroy humanity completely. In both the Bible and the ancient Near East it is clear that the flood targets the human population, not specifically the animals or the natural world as a whole. The decision implies that humankind has become more trouble than it is worth. In Ea's speech in the Gilgamesh Epic, however, he implies that the flood was a clumsy effort to carry out justice: "On him who transgresses, inflict his crime! On him who does wrong, inflict his wrongdoing!" (11.184-185). In the Genesis account, God has already assessed who is righteous and who is not. The flood targets the wicked, while the ark preserves the righteous. Nevertheless, there is a level of similarity that exists on this point. Ea's speech advises Enlil that divine justice should target those who have committed offense rather than humanity as a whole. This is comparable to the idea in Genesis that God will no longer wipe out all of humanity. Presumably this does not mean that he will no longer punish sin, only that he will punish sin on a case-by-case basis. The differences, however, are also of great significance. Enlil's act of destruction was, in hindsight, viewed as a foolishly shortsighted act that was unjust because it lacked any attempt to discern whether each individual deserved the punishment or not. Enlil's flood is therefore portrayed as an act of injustice that should not be repeated because there is no justification for such action. Yahweh's flood is portrayed as an act of justice (bringing fully deserved punishment) that will not be repeated because grace will prevail even though there will undoubtedly be future situations that call for such extensive judgment. Enlil is warned to refrain from universal judgment because it does not promote justice. Yahweh determines not to engage in universal judgment because humanity could not survive justice. What for Enlil was intended to be a warning against future rash behavior represents for Yahweh the triumph of grace.

3.4. Extent of the Flood.

3.4.1. Ancient Near East. When the storm subsides in the Gilgamesh Epic there is some land still visible (11.139-140). The text is somewhat ambiguous when it says that land was visible at twelve (variant, fourteen) *beru*. A *beru* can be either a measure of distance or a fraction division of one-twelfth (e.g., the twelfth part of the day or a twelfth part of a circle; *CAD* B.208-11). Interpretations of this passage vary, with A. George following the latter and translating "in fourteen places there rose an island," while B. Foster follows the former and translates "at twelve times sixty leagues a mountain rose up" (*COS* 1.132.459). The word translated "island/mountain" is *nagû*. The Late Babylonian Map of the World diagram depicts five triangular regions labeled as *nagû* that fringe the known world. Some texts describe them as "in the sea," thus suggesting islands. Others have interpreted their triangular shape as representing mountains from a frontal view (Horowitz, 30-33). In a Nebuchadnezzar inscription they are listed parallel to the faraway mountains and described as in the Upper and Lower Sea. In his attempt to relate the *nagû* to other cosmic regions, Horowitz suggests that "a traveler crossing over the sides of the *nagû* beyond the cosmic ocean might fall directly into the Apsu or netherworld" (Horowitz, 32).

In the Mesopotamian worldview, the known world was made up of a single continent fringed with mountains (such as the Zagros Mountains in the east and the mountains of Ararat in the north) and ringed by the cosmic sea. It is this fringe that may be referred to when the Gilgamesh Epic says that Utnapishtim beheld the edges of the world (Foster's translation of 11.139; *COS* 1.132.459). The fringe mountains were believed to hold up the heavens and have roots in the netherworld. In the east, the mountain primarily associated with this role was Mount Mašu. Gilgamesh travels there on his way to find Utnapishtim. In the north is Mount Simirriya. Sargon, king of Akkad, describes this mountain in his eighth campaign to Urartu (Ararat) as the dwelling of Belet-ili and one on whose peak the heavens lean. In a text known as the Sargon Geography, the source of the Euphrates (in the mountains of Ararat) is marked by mountains that are considered part of the Cedar Mountain. These are considered the fringes of the world surrounded in turn by the cosmic ocean (Horowitz, 93).

If we put all of this information together we could postulate that the deluge in Gilgamesh entails a mighty storm that results in the cosmic waters flooding their world to the extent that everything in the inhabited region is covered. The *nagû* could be considered the fringe mountains that Utnapishtim sees rimming the horizon like the sides of a bathtub. It is against one of these, Mount Nimush, that the boat eventually comes to rest. This would be a universal flood, but it would be misleading to call it a global flood since the people of that time knew nothing of a globe and would not see things in those terms. More important, they believed that the only ones who survived the flood were those aboard the boat. As the Gilgamesh Epic assesses the situation, "All mankind had turned to clay" (11.134).

3.4.2. Biblical Flood. How should we assess the extent of the biblical flood? We first must understand that we have to deal with a text, specifically a text that is not only nonscientific but that also communicates within a prescientific worldview. Science is not in a position to make demands on the text, nor are interpreters in a position to import scientific concerns and perspectives into the text to satisfy their own worldviews. We must take the text on its own terms and be willing to accept it at face value. We want neither to dismiss the text nor to create an artificial construct to put in place of the text. Some feel that they are protecting the reputation of the Bible by devising scientific theories that account for the details of the traditional interpretation of the text. Too often, however, these theories prove to be implausible and are easily discredited by the scientific thinkers whom they intend to win over.

The options concerning the extent of the flood are not just "universal" and "local." It is preferable to identify four alternatives as follows:

Global: This position is the most extreme. It represents the belief that the floodwaters covered the entire globe to a height that was higher than the highest mountains.

Known World: This position believes that the flood was universal relative to the world known to the ancient audience. This is a massive flood, but it would not include other continents or areas of the world such as China.

Regional: This position would hold to a very extensive regional flood centered in the Tigris-

Euphrates Valley, the Mediterranean basin or the area of the Black Sea.

Local: In this view the flood was the kind that may have wiped out several towns along the river.

3.4.2.1. Logistical Considerations. The debate in evangelical circles has been framed as a debate between the Bible and science. More precisely, however, it is a debate between a traditional reading of the text and logistics. That is, there are a number of logistical problems that raise questions about the traditional (global flood) reading of the text. For example, raising the sea level 17,000 feet (to cover Mount Ararat) would require by some estimates 630 million cubic miles of additional water weighing three quintillion tons. It has been calculated that this much water vapor would increase the atmospheric pressure 840 times its current levels, which would in turn prevent sunlight from reaching the surface and eradicate life as we know it (Best, 39-40).

In addition, the care of the animals would be a daunting task if every species worldwide were included. Estimates of 21,000 species would mean 42,000 creatures that had to be fed and whose crates and stalls had to be maintained. Simple math shows this to be a mammoth task for only eight people. Likewise, one would need enough fresh water on the ark for all of these animals for almost a year after the rain stopped providing a natural supply. Moreover, it is difficult to explain how there could still be some freshwater lakes and seas if salt water had mixed with all the bodies of water, not to mention how the freshwater fish survived. One must also explain how the animals today found only in Australia could have gotten to that continent. In addition, for the sea level to rise 17,000 feet in 150 days, it would have to average almost five feet per hour. That kind of rise sustained over five months would create such strong currents that survival on the ark would have been unlikely even if the boat itself could survive.

Still even more logistical problems arise. Those searching for the ark in modern times have had to use very sophisticated mountain-climbing equipment to scale the heights of Mount Ararat and at times have had to abandon the effort. How would Noah and his family and animals such as elephants and hippopotami make the trek down the mountain? Finally, if the ark ran aground on the still-submerged summit of Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Gen 8:4) and the tops of the mountains became visible on the first day of the tenth month (Gen 8:5), the water receded only fifteen feet in seventy-five days. Yet it would have had to recede seventeen thousand feet in the next seventy-five days because by the first day of the first month, the earth was dry (Gen 8:13).

We must take logistical problems seriously. At the same time we must be committed to taking the text seriously. In addition, we must also be willing to look beyond our own worldview and traditions to see the text in ways that the original author and audience may have seen it. It is a weak interpretation that has to invent all sorts of miracles that the text says nothing about in order to compensate for the logistical problems. It is necessary, therefore, to revisit the language of the text, to determine what it unequivocally demands of us as interpreters.

3.4.2.2. Text. Four textual issues contribute to the discussion of the extent of the flood and require investigation: (1) the universal scope of the language describing the flood (Gen 7:21-23); (2) the covering of the mountains (Gen 7:19); (3) the reference to the waters being fifteen cubits above (Gen 7:20); and (4) the report of the tops of the mountains becoming visible (Gen 8:5).

With regard to the universal scope of the language, passages such as Genesis 41:57 and Deuteronomy 2:25 make it clear that when the text uses the word "all," it is not always in an absolute sense. Similar relative use can be seen in Akkadian texts. Most instructive is a text called the Sargon Geography, which names the lands of the known world one by one and concludes, "Sargon, King of the Universe, conquered the totality of the land under heaven" (Horowitz, 71). Based on examples such as these, it becomes clear that it was perfectly acceptable, and not at all deceptive, to use the word "all" in reference to a relatively delineated area. Since this relative usage is within the legitimate range of the word "all," we cannot conclude that the use of the word demanded an absolute universal interpretation.

Likewise, when Genesis 7:19 refers to the mountains being covered, it uses the Pual form of the verb *ksh*. The verb is used for a wide variety of "covering" possibilities. When water is the subject, the covering can express submerging (e.g., Ex 14:28; 15:5), but other alternatives also exist. In three passages (Job 38:34; Jer 46:8; Mal

2:13) it appears that the water does not cover by submerging as much as by drenching. If Genesis 7:19 were taken the same way, it would suggest that the mountains were drenched with water or coursing with flash floods but not demand that they were totally submerged under water.

In Genesis 7:20 the phrase "fifteen cubits above" is difficult to decipher, largely due to the word that NRSV renders "deep." The Hebrew text says, "Fifteen cubits *from above [milmaʿlâ]* rose the waters, and the mountains were covered." It is therefore not at all clear that it is suggesting the waters rose fifteen cubits higher than the mountains. When the word under discussion is used as an adverb without a preposition to relate it to another noun, translations such as "upward" (Ezek 1:11, "spread upward") or "upstream" (Josh 3:13, 16) are better choices. It is to this category that Genesis 7:20 belongs. By using *milmaʿlâ* as an adverb modifying the verb "rose," the text may only suggest that the water reached fifteen cubits upward from the plain.

Finally, the report of the tops of the mountains becoming visible is the most difficult statement to explain for those arguing that the text does not require a global flood. The ark stops moving in Genesis 8:4 on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, and the tops of the mountains do not become visible until two and a half months later, the first day of the tenth month. Most interpreters have inferred that the ark became lodged on the tops of one of these mountains that was still under water and that it did not become visible for ten more weeks. If this were a proper inference, the observation in the text would be a matter of experience, not perception. Noah did not just assume that all the mountains were under water; he was *in* the mountains and they *were* under water. If it were not for Genesis 8:3-5, it would be easy to claim that the face value of the text does not demand a geographically global flood. All of the other statements can be compatible with a flood of the known populated world. Given the apparent clarity of Genesis 8:3-5, however, it is difficult to see how the flood could be less than global if the waters reached a height of seventeen thousand feet. So how do we reconcile the apparent clarity of the text with the extremely difficult logistics? We must still consider whether Genesis 8:3-5 strikes us the way it does because we are thinking in terms of our understanding of the world. Would this text mean something different if we could read it with an ancient Near Eastern mindset?

Revelation had not altered the Israelite view of cosmic geography from the typical ancient Near Eastern view. There is no reason to doubt that they too thought of the world as a single continent surrounded by fringe mountains on which the sky rested. Though all the mountains in the inhabitable region of the world may have been covered, the waters of the flood would not necessarily have been thought to include the fringe mountains. As we have seen above, the Ararat Mountains were considered to be part of those fringe mountains. Noah's ark could be understood as having come to rest against (Heb *ʿal*) the mountains of Ararat, and from there Noah would have watched the tops of the mountains in the inhabitable world become visible. The logic of not including the fringe mountains would be that they were believed to support the heavens, and the waters would not be seen as encroaching on or encountering the heavens. Such a hypothesis would yield a geographically limited flood, yet it still could be anthropologically universal if the population had not yet spread beyond this region. One of the advantages of seeking out views such as this is that they allow us to affirm the truth of the text without getting all tied up in complicated logistical and scientific discussions. All agree on the theological teaching and significance of the passage, regardless of the geographical extent of the flood.

3.5. Symbolism of the Flood and Ark. It has already been suggested that the boat in the Mesopotamian accounts may have served as a floating shrine. In its dimensions, the Genesis ark is much more realistic for a boat, though conceptually it may also represent a sanctuary where order is maintained floating on a sea of resurgent chaos. In this sense the Mesopotamian ark appears as a physical representation of a sanctuary, while the Genesis ark appears as a functional representation of a sanctuary. Creation both in the Bible and in the ancient Near East entailed deity bringing order while pushing back chaos (*see* Creation §3.1). The forces of chaos were most consistently represented in the cosmic waters. In this sense, the flood represents a reversal of creation. This is more the case in the biblical account than in the ancient Near Eastern accounts, for in the latter there is no textual representation of re-creation (to be discussed below).

4. Literary Features.

4.1. Function of the Literary Accounts.

4.1.1. Role of the Flood in Atrahasis. The broad structure of Atrahasis has been identified as parallel to Genesis in that it contains accounts of creation, population growth and the flood. In Atrahasis, the flood serves as the finale in the gods' attempt to deal with the "human problem." It is a last resort after several other attempts have been made to solve the problem. As we have seen, it is difficult to determine with confidence whether that problem is overpopulation or moral turpitude. If it is the former, Genesis takes exactly the opposite view, since population growth is considered the result of God's blessing rather than a problem. If it is the latter, Atrahasis could be seen as tracking side by side with Genesis.

Why does the narrator record the Atrahasis Epic? Several possibilities exist, but there is no clear consensus and confidence is undermined by the fragmentary nature of the extant text. There are tales in Sumerian and Akkadian that highlight the craftiness of Enki/Ea. A case could be made that Atrahasis falls into that category as well. A second possibility is that this is a hero tale of the famous sage Atrahasis. A third possibility is derived from the last lines of the composition. There the gods put in place some measures designed to limit population growth, including barrenness, infant mortality and cultic personnel who forego childbearing. In this case the account has been given an etiological function.

4.1.2. Role of the Flood in Gilgamesh. The Gilgamesh Epic confronts the reality of death by exploring various strategies for negating its sting. Considering philosophical rather than narrative issues, it can be seen in some general ways to move in reverse order from Genesis 1—11. Gilgamesh begins with the idea that achievements of various sorts can establish an immortal name for himself. In this he can be equated with the builders of *Babel. He next pursues the possibility of gaining immortality as a gift. His acquaintance with the flood hero eliminates that possibility. His final attempt involves the plant that counteracts aging. This is where the biblical narrative begins with the tree of life. All of these narratives, including the story of the flood, are imbedded in this quest for coping with mortality.

Jacobsen considers the older version of the Gilgamesh Epic (without the flood narrative) as a tragic vision of human despair in the face of the reality of death. He believes that the author of the later version that included the flood narrative has transformed the tragedy into a romantic piece in which the quest for immortality becomes an adventure discovering strange lands and hidden wisdom. As a result, neither the epic nor the flood episode concerns primarily the gods and their behavior. Utnapishtim and Gilgamesh are the focus of the narrative's attention.

4.1.3. Role of the Flood in Genesis. The flood account in Genesis should be understood in terms of its development of the themes that drive the book (Walton 2001). The overall purpose of the book of Genesis is to chronicle the history of the development of the *covenant. Whereas Genesis 12—50 documents the obstacles that were overcome in the early stages of the covenant and the advance of the covenant blessings, Genesis 1—11 offers the reader an understanding of why a covenant was needed. If the covenant is seen as representing God's revelatory program, Genesis 1—11 shows the progress of *sin and the concomitant dwindling and corruption of the knowledge of God. On a parallel track, these chapters also show the continual extension of God's blessing and grace (traced from the blessings of Gen 1:28-30). The flood narrative plays a major role in this sequence as it shows God dealing with the sin of humanity and preserving the blessings promised to them. In this way we can see that the flood story is about God, not about Noah or even about humanity. It is intended to reveal the character of God, which requires it to take a very different course than the ancient Near Eastern accounts.

In addition to this role, the flood narrative serves a more specific role as a parallel account to creation and the Fall. The flood returns the cosmos to the watery chaos that was described in Genesis 1:2. The waters of the flood are acted upon by a wind sent from God (Gen 8:1), as are the initial waters (Gen 1:2). After the waters recede and the dry land appears, God brings out Noah and his family and the animals just as he brought forth living creatures in creation. God uses the waters of chaos to eliminate social chaos. He then overcomes the cosmic chaos of the floodwaters and brings a new creation out of them. The waters return to their boundaries, and cosmic equilibrium is not only restored but is given a new permanence (Gen 8:22). Then

God pronounces the blessing in Genesis 9 just as he did in Genesis 1. Noah's drunkenness stands as a second fall, as he is unaware of his nakedness and pronounces a curse. There is more here, but it takes us beyond the scope of this article.

4.2. Interrelatedness of the Literary Accounts. Many of the narrative elements that the ancient Near Eastern accounts have in common with the biblical account are elements that would be logical to include in such a story. So, for instance, it is no surprise that both feature a boat. Consequently, the fact that these elements are held in common would fail to persuade that the accounts were in some way related. It is the episode of the birds (see 2.8 above) that compels us to believe that the biblical account and the ancient Near Eastern accounts cannot be considered as totally unrelated.

Given the relatively sparse amount of literary information we possess, it is fruitless to discuss which account came first. It is true that Mesopotamian culture preceded Israelite culture and that generally the flow of culture was from the former to the latter. But it is also true that *Abraham came out of Mesopotamia. It is true that the literary documents we have from Mesopotamia are older than the book of Genesis as a work of *Moses. But it is also true that even Moses would likely have used older literary sources when compiling the book (*see* Source Criticism). If the book of Genesis is arguing against some of the points in the ancient Near Eastern material or trying to set the record straight, it would have had to come after them in time. But the possibility cannot be ruled out that the Genesis account is a pristine record of the event as passed down from Noah that suffered corruption when transmitted in the hands of other cultures. Such decisions cannot be made on the basis of current evidence but rather only on the basis of presupposition. There would be value in viewing the narrative as a corrective reaction to the corrupt accounts circulating about the ancient world, rather than as a pristine and unadulterated tradition preserved from antiquity, though the latter cannot be ruled out prima facie.

It is really time, however, to set aside all the discussion about borrowing. First, literary data are insufficient, given the current extant texts, to sustain a case directly from that data. Comparing Atrahasis and Gilgamesh, one can easily see the telltale signs of wholesale borrowing from one literary piece to the next. There are whole lines that are carried over with little alteration. Dependence can be established on purely literary criteria. This is far from the case when comparing the biblical account to the Mesopotamian versions. Second, an important distinction must be drawn between borrowing from literature and reacting to literature. If the biblical account is loaded with polemic, it must have a level of awareness of the Mesopotamian traditions. But the intention of the biblical narrator is not simply to offer a recension or, as is more often suggested, to convert the story to a Yahwistic perspective. Polemic is far more aggressive than simple conversion. While conversion may border on plagiarism, polemic is interactive and critical. Third, as is evident from the brief studies above of the literary setting of each account, the biblical author utilizes the flood story in significantly different ways from his Mesopotamian counterparts. For instance, it would be nonsense to analyze the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as a careless plagiarism of Hamlet. Of course, it incorporates the well-known story of Hamlet, but its purpose is to set that well-known play into a striking existential context and so draw out certain philosophical elements from it. It is not a conversion of Hamlet to an existential perspective; it is a retelling of selected portions of Hamlet to drive home an existential lesson. We need not see the flood accounts in exactly this same relationship, but by now some literary realism and sophistication should allow us to leave the simplistic discussions of borrowing behind us.

5. Archaeology and the Flood.

There is presently no convincing archaeological evidence of the biblical flood. The examination of silt levels at the Sumerian cities of Ur, Kish, Shuruppak, Lagash and Uruk (all of which have occupation levels at least as early as 2800 B.C.) are from different periods and do not reflect a single massive flood that inundated them all at the same time. Similarly, the city of Jericho, which was continuously occupied from 7000 B.C. into the OT period, has no flood deposits whatsoever. Climatological studies have indicated that the period from 4500 to 3500 B.C. was significantly wetter in this region, but that offers little to go on. The search for the remains of Noah's ark has centered on the Turkish peak of Agri Dagh (17,000 feet) near Lake Van. However, no

one mountain within the Ararat range is mentioned in the biblical account, and carbon-14 dating of fragments of wood from this mountain indicate that they come from no earlier than the fifth century A.D. Despite repeated claims and ongoing quests, then, firm evidence of the continued existence of the ark has not yet been forthcoming.

Other suggestions have come from oceanographers who have identified a number of different occasions on which there was massive flooding in the Near East. These include a flooding of the Mediterranean and a flooding of the Black Sea. In a theory proposed by G. Morton, a variety of geological data show that until 5.5 million years ago the Mediterranean was not a sea at all. The water was dammed up at Gibraltar. Morton's evidence suggests a fairly sudden collapse causing a break more than three thousand feet deep and fifteen miles wide, filling the Mediterranean basin in less than nine months. This rapid flow of water would have resulted in the formation of heavy clouds that would result in torrential rains over the region. If the reader finds it difficult to put the flood 5.5 million years ago, the Black Sea theory may be more palatable. In the mid-1990s geologists and oceanographers began investigating a huge, catastrophic flood in the region of the Black Sea. Their findings indicated that in about 5500 B.C. there was a sudden rise in water level in the Mediterranean that brought a thunderous waterfall through the Bosporus and into the Black Sea. Over the course of a year it flooded out sixty thousand square miles of land and raised the water level of the Black Sea approximately five hundred feet. Prior to this time the Black Sea had been a freshwater sea, as the fossils at the original beach level indicate. W. B. F. Ryan and W. C. Pittman speculate that the flow of water would have been four hundred times greater than Niagara Falls and that the water level in the Black Sea would have risen a foot a day for several months.

Both of these theories would fit into the "regional" category. They are examples of theories that attempt to identify some geologically known natural catastrophe with the biblical flood instead of trying to come up with possible scientific explanations of how a global flood could have theoretically occurred (as, e.g., Whitcomb and Morris do). Both approaches typically fall short of offering satisfying reconciliation of the biblical account with the scientific record.

6. Apologetics and the Flood.

Apologetic approaches to the flood by definition seek to demonstrate that the biblical account is true. Apologists are therefore interested in proving: (1) that the flood actually occurred, against those who would consider the account simply another piece of ancient mythology; and (2) that the flood was actually of the magnitude reported by the text, against those who would consider it exaggerated or hyperbolic. The first is approached by arguing against a relationship with the ancient Near Eastern texts, by claiming the support of flood traditions in many unrelated cultures around the world and by seeking scientific evidence for the flood, whether in observations of geological strata or in documentation of catastrophic events. The second approach usually concludes that the flood was global and approaches the apologetic task by offering explanations of things such as where the water came from and where it went, how the animals could have fit on the ark and survived on the ark, and so forth. It is believed that both cases could be strengthened if the ark were found on the upper reaches of Agri Dagh. As we have seen in the above analysis, however, both of these issues are far more complex than they are usually made out to be, and it is therefore possible that in at least some cases we have been defending traditions or presuppositions rather than text. Yet even if it were agreed that Genesis could be shown to be inconclusive about the magnitude of the flood, some would claim that the NT is not at all ambiguous.

The NT refers to the flood a few times in passing but does not offer any unequivocal statements about the extent of the flood. In Luke 17:27 Christ describes the indifferent routine of the people of Noah's times, then notes that the flood came and destroyed them all anyway. To this he likens the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Here the point is that people were unprepared for the disaster that was to strike. It refers only to people who were destroyed, not to land that was covered. Likewise 2 Peter 2:5 indicates that God did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, referring to people rather than land. Finally, 2 Peter 3:5-6 declares that the "earth was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world of that time was deluged with water and destroyed." These passages speak respectively about being prepared, about God's willingness

and ability to rescue the righteous and about God's ability to bring destructive judgment. One can find support here for the anthropological universality of the flood, but little that can be conclusively inferred about the geographical extent of the flood.

See also GENESIS, BOOK OF; NOAH; SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN.

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FOLKTALE. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

FOOD PREPARATION. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

The restrictions governing the diet of the Jews have since ancient times been among the handful of observances most obviously marking them out as different from others and guarding against their assimilation into other cultures. All of the rules originate in the Pentateuch and are understood by observant Jews as divine commands, but the relation between written rule and practical observance varies.

This article describes all the restrictions on diet in the text of the Pentateuch, notes the way each has been interpreted in practice and, where possible, attempts to place it in one or more frameworks of explanation. Each section of this article will first try to understand what the *texts* say, then show how they were observed in practice *(application)* and finally offer one or more *explanations*. The explanation stage begins by trying to understand the motivation of the rule in the text, the religious symbolism that it expresses, though the underlying reasons for the custom expressed in the rule may be different. Dietary restrictions of different kinds are widespread among the peoples of the world. Consequently, some comparative observations about them, as gained by social anthropologists, may help us to understand the meaning and origin of those in the Bible.

1. Background

2. Forbidden Kinds
3. Forbidden Parts
4. Forbidden Conditions
5. A Forbidden Combination: Kid in Mother's Milk
6. General Significance

1. Background.

The food rules in the Pentateuch are concerned only with food derived from animals, mostly with flesh meat, with the exception of other food made unclean by contact (see 4.2 below; the prohibition of leaven during the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not dealt with here). This is true of food rules in most cultures. Meat is eaten relatively rarely in poor agrarian societies. Those who possess flocks have their yearly increase eaten mostly at *festivals and on special occasions; the poor might pick up the odd carcass or bring in the occasional extra supply through hunting. This is generally the only occasion (except in famine) on which any unusual food is likely to appear, so rules about forbidden *kinds* of food are only likely to affect animals. Further, at the Israelite festivals when domestic animals were killed and eaten, they were in early times normally *sacrificed, involving a ritual act that had its own rules (the permission given for secular slaughter in Deut 12 is presented as an innovation; see 6.2 below).

2. Forbidden Kinds.

The law distinguishing between animals that may be eaten and those that are forbidden is the most significant in marking out Israel as distinctive.

2.1. Texts. Leviticus 11 is the most complete treatment in the Pentateuch of the distinction between animals permitted and forbidden for food (Lev 11:2-23, 41-43). These restrictions are partially repeated in a more concise form in Deuteronomy 14:4-20. The relation between the two versions is disputed (see Milgrom 1991, 698-704; Houston, 63-65). Each is placed in an interpretive context (see 2.3, 6.1-2 below; see also Gen 7:2-3; Lev 20:25-26).

The texts are addressed to all Israelites and are applicable at all times. Leviticus 11:2-23 and Deuteronomy 14:4-20 each treat successively "beasts," or larger land animals; creatures of the water; and creatures of the air. Leviticus 11:29-37, 41-43 adds a fourth classification: swarming things of the ground—small land animals that run or crawl close to the ground (Houston, 33-35), such as mice, lizards, insects and the like. Between them, these categories exhaust all animal life. Thus both texts, and the Leviticus text in particular, give a systematic treatment.

2.1.1. Beasts. Those that may be eaten are distinguished by three criteria: they have hooves (translated incorrectly in many versions [Milgrom 1991, 646; Houston, 36 n. 1]); the hooves are cloven in two; and they chew the cud (Lev 11:3; Deut 14:6). This group of criteria defines a zoological suborder, the ruminants, which includes among others all the mammals bred for food by Israelites: cattle, sheep and goats. Deuteronomy 14:5 lists these as permitted along with seven wild species, including deer and gazelle. All other larger mammals are implicitly forbidden; the list that follows (Lev 11:4-8; Deut 14:7-8) removes any ambiguity by specifically forbidding certain animals (including the pig), which are said either to chew the cud or to have cloven hooves, but not both. If the expression "chew the cud" implies that these animals have multiple stomachs, this is inaccurate for the rock badger and the hare (Houston, 37-38; Milgrom 1991, 648-49). Like ruminants, however, these latter animals give the appearance of chewing their food for a long time.

2.1.2. Water Creatures. Those that are permitted (Lev 11:9-12; Deut 14:9-10) are distinguished by the possession of fins and scales. This covers most but not all fish and excludes all mollusks and crustaceans ("shellfish").

2.1.3. Creatures of the Air. Birds (or larger flying creatures, bats included) and insects are treated separately. In contrast to the previous two sections, no criteria are given for birds, but only a list of forbidden kinds (twenty in Lev 11:13-19; twenty-one in Deut 14:12-18, but one is possibly a textual error [see *BHS* on Deut 14:13]). There is uncertainty about the identification of many of these, but it is generally agreed that the majority are birds of prey or carrion-eaters (Driver; Houston, 43-46). All birds not in this list may be presumed to be permitted (but see 2.3 below).

The insects produce the only substantial discrepancy between the two texts (Lev 11:20-23; Deut 14:19). All flying insects are prohibited in Deuteronomy; Leviticus uses the criterion of the possession of hind legs for hopping to permit four sorts of locust (which we cannot precisely identify).

2.1.4. "Swarming Creatures of the Ground." In Leviticus 11:41-43 all swarming creatures are forbidden without exception. Deuteronomy does not mention them, but according to J. Milgrom Deuteronomy 14:21a implicitly includes them. W. J. Houston rejects this and argues that the author did not think it necessary to mention them, since they are "unconsciously tabooed" (Houston, 183; cf. Leach, 32), as reflected in Leviticus 11:41-43.

2.2. Application. The precision of the texts for the most part eliminates dispute about their meaning. The prohibition of the flesh of the pig has since Hellenistic times been a recognized symbol of the distinctness of the Jewish people among their neighbors, and in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes a cause for martyrdom (2 Macc 7). Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16 employs the symbolism of unclean animals in the same way as Leviticus 20:24-26: the distinction of clean and unclean parallels, symbolizes and enforces the separation of Israel from the nations; and the command to Peter to kill and eat unclean animals symbolizes the acceptance of Gentiles as members of God's people.

The only uncertainty in the law concerns the birds, in that it gives no criteria for the identification of permitted species, and already in antiquity the reference of some of the names of forbidden birds was uncertain. The Mishnah gives some criteria for forbidden birds (*m. Ḥul.* 3:6): these, broadly speaking, identify flesh-eating birds. But the later discussion in the Talmud (*b. Ḥul.* 61a-65a) makes it clear that some birds were regarded as unclean although they are not birds of prey and are not mentioned in the pentateuchal lists (e.g., some kinds of swallow and the starling).

2.3. Explanations.

2.3.1. Biblical. On the level of the text, the meaning of the law is clear. The interpretive context of each text relates to the holiness of the people of Israel. According to Leviticus 11:44-45 (cf. 6.1 below), in order to be *holy as Yahweh is holy, Israel should avoid making themselves unclean with "swarming things"; although this is linked with Leviticus 11:41-43, it is probably implied that the aim of holiness is served also by observing the foregoing prohibitions. But how are holiness and purity connected with diet? According to Deuteronomy 14:3, Yahweh's holy people are not to eat disgusting things (see 6.2 below), but this implies some preexisting sense of what is disgusting to eat.

Both texts thus affirm similar religious meanings of the prohibitions and raise similar questions. If the observance of rules of diet leads or conforms to holiness and symbolizes Israel's dedication to their God, what gives the rules that meaning, and why these rules rather than any other?

Houston (68-123) divides existing explanations into two broad categories: "traditional" and "comparative." While the former apply a priori ideas to the biblical rules taken on their own, the latter are based on general understandings of human culture, including the awareness that systems of food avoidance are found in many societies.

2.3.2. Traditional Explanations. There are three primary explanations in this category. *Hygienic* theories go back at least to Maimonides (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3.48). In their modern form they point to the dangers of inadequately cooked pork and shellfish and occasionally attempt to extend the idea systematically to the many other unclean species (Macht). But such theories must come to grief on the fact that *all* animal species may carry parasites that make their flesh dangerous when not properly cooked as well as on the absence of any idea of public health in ancient Israel.

Cult-polemic theories, which maintain that the forbidden species were those prominent in pagan cults (see, e.g., Noth, 92), are as old as Origen (*Cont. Cels.* 4.93). However, in reality the most common animals sacrificed in Canaanite and Egyptian cults were the same as those sacrificed by Israelites. It is, however, probable that pigs were sacrificed in certain rites carried out in honor of underworld deities, which would have been particularly repugnant to Yahwism (de Vaux; Houston, 161-68; Milgrom 1991, 650-52). But such evidence cannot be found for all the dozens of unclean species. Besides, were pigs unclean because they were sacrificed to underworld deities, or were they sacrificed to underworld deities because they were unclean (see 2.3.3.3 below)?

Moral theories find a moral purpose in the rules. For example, Philo (*Spec.* 4.103) held that it was to restrain luxury that pork was forbidden, because it is the most delicious of flesh meats. Milgrom sees the dietary laws in general as teaching respect for life (Milgrom 1991, 704-42), in this case by severely limiting the number of

species permitted (Milgrom 1991, 735). But he does not adequately reply to the criticism (e.g., by Firmage, 195 n. 24) that the law places no restriction on the *quantity* of meat eaten. M. Douglas in her more recent work (Douglas 1993; 1999, 152-75) understands the prohibition of swarming things in Leviticus as teaching justice by protecting the weak.

2.3.3. Comparative Theories. Theories within this category may have a materialist, a structuralist or a contextual basis, or they may include elements of all three (*see* Social-Scientific Approaches; Keesing and Strathern, 302-21).

2.3.3.1. Materialistic Approaches. M. Harris's cultural materialism (Harris 1977; 1985) examines the dietary customs of various cultures in the light of the local ecology and argues that the tabooed species are those that would impose high costs on society as a whole if generally eaten but that might be profitable to individual breeders, who must therefore be religiously restrained. In the case of Israel, the animals permitted to be eaten are those that make most efficient use of dry grassland. The pig, on the other hand, can be raised only by costly investment in grain and water.

It is true that any dietary system must operate under the basic ecological constraints of the environment, but negative constraints have no creative power in human society: they "never produce cultural forms" (Keesing and Strathern, 127). Moreover, since customs are frequently maladaptive rather than adaptive (Keesing and Strathern, 125-26), it cannot be shown that their adaptive character is the reason for their adoption.

2.3.3.2. Structuralist Approaches. Structuralism finds the roots of ritual, myth and symbolism in fundamental structures of the human mind, which tends to set ideas in patterns of opposition (cf. Kunin, 1-11). The leading exponent of structuralist theory as applied to the forbidden animals is M. Douglas (1966; 1973; 1975a; 1975b; 1999). For Douglas, the patterns of opposition, especially of inclusion and exclusion—seen in the social structures of a society, its cult, its view of the body and its classification of animals—may be expected to correspond to and confirm one another. Thus in the Pentateuch there is a close correspondence of hierarchical patterns between the classification of animals, the division of sacred space and the ordering of people. Thus only unblemished, clean domestic animals are acceptable on the *altar and correspond to the *priests who alone may ascend it; all clean animals are acceptable on the table as food for Israel, who in a clean condition may enter the court of the *tabernacle; unclean animals are excluded from Israel's table as Israelites in an unclean state are excluded from the court (Douglas 1975a; cf. Milgrom 1991, 721-25).

But what accounts for the way in which permitted and forbidden animals are distinguished? All classification gives rise to anomalies, and in Douglas's earlier thought (1966; 1973; 1975a; 1975b) the anomalies are the key to understanding the pentateuchal system. For each of the three spheres of life (land, water and air) the system propounds a model that expresses the mode of life (usually of movement) proper to that sphere, while the criteria of cleanness in beasts are derived from the animals that the Israelites actually kept for food and sacrifice (Douglas 1966, 54). Animals that fail to conform to the model are rejected, and the most emphatic rejection applies to the species that threaten the classification system by overlapping its boundaries (the four animals of Lev 11:4-8) or defy the classification altogether (the swarming creatures that are found in each sphere but in no way conform to its mode of life). The strict rejection of anomalous animals contrasts with the honor given by the Lele of the Congo to the pangolin, which is highly anomalous in their system. Douglas suggests (1975b) that this corresponds to the difference in kinship systems. That is, the Lele are organized in exogamous clans, always marrying "strangers," while endogamy is the rule in Israel: the strange son-in-law, the strange animal and the strange god are all rejected.

However, as Douglas later came to recognize, there is nothing to indicate any special degree of abhorrence for the groups she had singled out as anomalous or for the forbidden animals in general. Moreover, to find the source of the concept of unclean or unacceptable animals in the system of classification itself is circular. There is, for example, no reason why water creatures should have scales except that others are defined as unacceptable—but that is just what we are trying to explain (Houston, 101-11). Wherever classifying criteria are given in the law, they serve to identify animals *already* regarded as acceptable. This is shown by the case of birds, where the task of finding criteria is left

to the rabbinic period (see 2.2 above) even though the biblical text is already able to identify unclean birds.

Recently Douglas (1999, 134-75) has offered a new interpretation of the Leviticus text (not applicable to Deuteronomy). The two main principles that it expresses are those of "creation and covenant" (Douglas 1999, 168). Among the land animals the domestic flocks and herds are within the covenant; whenever Israel eats meat, in the priestly system, it is in the Lord's house (Lev 17:3-4; see 6.1 below), and to have touched an animal outside the covenant, which is unclean, is an insult to the Lord's honor. Among air and water animals, which do not convey uncleanness (see 6.1 below), it is the "swarmers" that are "to be shunned," and these represent the principle of fertility, which is to be reverenced and protected but at the same time is opposed to that of the cult. While this view is thought-provoking, it appears to ignore important features of the text: the game animals permitted on the grounds of their physical resemblance to the flocks and herds; the birds to be avoided (not swarmers); and the fact that swarming creatures of the water include both those permitted and those forbidden (Lev 11:10).

2.3.3.3. Contextual Theories. F. J. Simoons shows that the pig tended to be avoided over a wide area of the Near East. Houston (124-80) goes on to examine the archaeological evidence for diet in the area. It can be shown that the overwhelming majority of animal food eaten in Palestine and the surrounding areas in the Bronze and Iron Ages came from creatures regarded as acceptable in the pentateuchal law. A notable exception is the pig, which was eaten in modest but declining quantities. However, it is also clear that throughout this period the pig was not acceptable for sacrifice in normal circumstances (but see 2.3.2 below). E. B. Firmage suggests that the clean beasts in Israel were based on the paradigm of sacrificial animals, the table being an image of the altar. The evidence collected by Houston shows that the peoples of the area all shared, with slight variations, the same set of normal sacrificial animals, with the pig excluded from the altar even if it was eaten. He thus suggests that the source of the distinction among animals, thus shown to be older than the OT, lies in a pattern of association between human and animal life that opposes the tame and peaceful creatures identified with the order and justice of the human community to the bloodthirsty creatures of the wild (Houston, 181-217). Among domestic creatures, however, dogs fell on the wrong side of the line because of their scavenging habits, and pigs either because they were fed on waste food or because they perhaps were kept by women. This would give them a low status compared to the flocks and herds generally kept by men (cf. Campbell, 26-31; Parkes). The donkey, on the other hand, was unacceptable for food for a different reason, because it shared human labors. The three criteria for edible beasts (see 2.1.1 above) successively exclude the dog, the donkey and the pig. Animals such as deer and gazelle were sufficiently like domestic cattle to be accepted for eating (but not sacrifice) as honorary cattle, as it were (cf. the similar rule among the Maasai). The unclean birds, mostly birds of prey and carrion-eaters, were taken as representative of the wild. The rules concerning water creatures and insects were probably based on custom, as was the unacceptability of swarming creatures.

3. Forbidden Parts.

Even of animals permitted to be eaten, certain parts were prohibited, either of all animals or of some.

3.1. Blood. By far the most stringent of all the pentateuchal dietary rules is that prohibiting the consumption of blood (for general treatment of the subject, *see* Blood; here the focus is on dietary regulations).

3.1.1. Texts. In Genesis 9:4 the prohibition against ingesting blood is given to *Noah as the sole restriction on the control of the animal kingdom granted to him and his heirs. It is thus defined as binding on the whole human race, unlike all the other dietary laws, which serve to distinguish Israel from the nations. It is repeated for Israel in the context of the sacrificial rituals (Lev 3:17; 7:26-27) and for Israel and resident *aliens (Lev 17:10-14). This latter passage applies the rule to game as well as domestic animals, including birds (Lev 17:13), and offers explanations (see 3.1.3 below). Leviticus 7:27 and 17:10, 14 ordain a sanction: Yahweh will "cut off anyone who eats blood." Leviticus 19:26 is frequently read as speaking of "eating with the blood," but the literal translation is "on the blood," and a different practice may be in view (cf. 1 Sam 14:31-34; Ezek 33:25; Grintz). The rule

is also found in Deuteronomy 12:16, 23-25; 15:23, where permission is given (as against Lev 17) for the secular slaughter of animals. In sacrificial slaughter the blood would have been poured against the altar as the divine portion; its mention here ensures that in the less-controlled secular environment the animal's blood still does not pass human lips. The texts all speak of *eating* blood, not drinking it; this probably shows that the issue is one of eating blood as part of the meat.

3.1.2. Application. This law applies to all land animals and birds and is the basis of Jewish kosher slaughtering practice (*šĕḥîṭâ*, or "ritual slaughter"). It has never been applied to fish, because fish are not slaughtered. It differs from other dietary rules in that it is held to be binding on Gentiles as well as Israelites; hence in Acts 15:20, 29 it is regarded as the bare minimum for table fellowship between Jews and Christians in the Christian community. The normal ancient method of slaughter, used by Greeks as well as Jews and retained today by Jews and Muslims, was to cut the throat, including the carotid arteries, with a clean stroke so that the blood gushed out as the heart continued to beat for a few seconds. This drains the body of the greater part of its blood; in modern Jewish practice soaking and salting draw out what is left.

3.1.3. Explanations. This central dietary rule arises from the practice of *sacrifice. Most sacrifices were in effect meals shared between the deity and the worshipers (or the priests). The invariable rule was to present the blood and fat to God, burning the fat, while the flesh remained to be cooked for the sacrificial meal. Any consumption of blood or fat in this situation would be sacrilege. But the structures of meaning set up in this way affect all eating of flesh. The blood must be drained not only when animals are sacrificed but in the secular slaughter of game or of domestic animals. Though there is no suggestion that in these cases the blood is being offered to God, it remains forbidden to humans.

What accounts for the special position given to blood? The texts argue consistently that the blood is "the life of the flesh" (or "of the body" or "of all living things": Gen 9:4; Lev 17:11, 14; Deut 12:23). The sense appears to be that the blood represents God's gift of life, which in the appropriate circumstances is to be given back to its giver, who may graciously use it for human benefit (Lev 17:11). However, it is never to be appropriated by human beings (Milgrom 1991, 706).

Milgrom goes on to argue that the rule has an ethical significance, namely, to signify that "life is inviolable. . . . Mankind has a right to nourishment, not to life" (Milgrom 1991, 713; see further 706-13). However, the roots of the practice are likely to lie in ritual rather than morals. To understand this, we need to ask what the danger is that is being guarded against by this law. As we have seen, the offense is eating undrained meat, yet the normal slaughtering procedure would always obviate this. It may be concluded that the offense of eating blood occurs only where there is a deliberate intention to eat blood and therefore a deliberate use of an incorrect slaughtering method. Note how in Deuteronomy 21:4 the calf's neck is broken when it is not to be offered or eaten; in Isaiah 66:3 the same method appears in a series of revolting and idolatrous practices. The use of blood in ritual is widespread, and in the Eastern Mediterranean area, rituals offering blood to the powers of the underworld are common (Grintz, 84-90). Likewise, J. E. Hartley notes "the number of laws against misappropriating sacred objects to the worship of demonic spirits in [Leviticus] chaps. 17—20" (Hartley, 277). He suggests that a major reason for the prohibition is "to prevent any attempt to ingest divine power into one's body." This must remain uncertain, but the possibility is there that "eating blood" was a specific magical rite. The law asserts the absolute rights of Yahweh, as against humans and all rival powers, to the effective symbol of life.

3.2. Fat. The prohibition of fat is closely related to that of blood.

3.2.1. Texts. Leviticus 3:17 and 7:22-26 link with the blood prohibition the command that no fat may be eaten. The more detailed Leviticus 7:23-25 limits this to the fat of cattle, sheep and goats, those animals that may be sacrificed. Unlike the blood prohibition, it is not extended to game animals or birds. The text assumes, in line with Leviticus 17:3-4, that domestic animals will only be slaughtered in sacrifice. The fat of carrion of cattle, sheep and goats may be used for other purposes but not eaten (Lev 7:24). There is no mention of this ban at Deuteronomy 12:16, 23, where it might have been expected, and it appears that Deuteronomy does not see it as necessary in secular slaughter.

3.2.2. Application. Since rabbinic times the rule has been applied to all domestic animals slaughtered for food. The fat to which the ban applies is the fat beneath the skin and the fat enclosing the abdomen and its organs (Milgrom 1991, 205); not the fat entwined in the lean meat (muscle), which cannot be stripped away.

3.2.3. Explanations. This prohibition is even more closely related to sacrifice than that of blood. The abdominal fat or suet of a shared offering is to be burnt upon the altar for God (Lev 3:3-5, 9-11, 14-16), a widespread sacrificial practice in the Eastern Mediterranean area (Milgrom 1991, 205-6). Douglas (1999, 71-86) argues that the animal's body, read from front to rear, is an analogue to the holy mountain and to the tabernacle. The abdomen at the rear of the animal would correspond to the holy place or the top of the mountain, and the suet, which covers the abdominal organs, to the barrier preventing lay access to the holy place or to the higher parts of Sinai.

3.3. The Sciatic Nerve.

3.3.1. Texts. According to Genesis 32:32 it was an Israelite custom not to eat the sciatic nerve (Heb *gîd hannāšeh*). Most versions translate this phrase incorrectly (e.g., NRSV, "the thigh muscle"). The correct meaning is shown by the continuity of Jewish practice as well as by the Arabic cognate of *nāšeh* (*HALOT* 2.729). The Genesis text, which offers an explanation for the practice, is not formulated as a law, unlike all the other food restrictions dealt with in this article, but simply reports a custom that the text explains by Jacob's experience.

3.3.2. Application. Mishnah declares this custom binding on all Israelites under pain of a flogging (*m. Ḥul.* 7; see also Josephus *Ant.* 1.20.2 §334). It applies to all domestic beasts and mammalian game. If their hindquarters were to be eaten, the sciatic nerves had to be excised before eating. Historically, because of the difficulty of excising the nerve, the hindquarters of kosher animals have generally been sold to non-Jews. In Israel today the different conditions have led to a revival of the practice of excision.

3.3.3. Explanation. No satisfactory explanation of the practice has been offered, and it does not appear to be related to other food restrictions. But analogous customs are said to be followed by bedouin Arabs in modern times (Wellhausen, 168 n. 3; Dalman 6.75: excision of the main blood vessels in the thigh).

4. Forbidden Conditions.

4.1. Carrion. Where, on the one hand, ordinary people eat meat only rarely and general levels of nutrition are low and, on the other hand, flocks and herds are subject to frequent fatalities, it would be natural to take advantage of meat from animals that had died of natural causes or been killed by wild beasts to provide a useful supplement to the daily diet. But this is forbidden in some texts.

4.1.1. Texts. Exodus 22:31 (MT 22:30) and Deuteronomy 14:21a forbid the eating of carrion; Leviticus 11:40 and 17:15-16 make it an occasion of personal uncleanness that requires purification but apparently did not forbid it (cf. also Lev 7:24), but Leviticus 22:8 forbids it to priests. On the other hand, while Deuteronomy tells Israelites to make a gift of carrion to resident aliens, Leviticus 17 makes the law apply equally to "citizens or aliens."

The terms used for carrion should also be noted. Exodus 22:31 refers to *ṭĕrēpâ* "something torn by wild beasts." Deuteronomy 14:21a uses *nĕbēlâ*, "a carcass," as does Leviticus 11:40 (along with other verses in that chapter). Leviticus 7:24; 17:15-16 and 22:8 use both together. The Hebrew word *nĕbēlâ* is, taken strictly, what has died of itself but is almost certainly intended to include *ṭĕrēpâ* by the Deuteronomic author to broaden the application of the Exodus text. Leviticus's use of both makes the application clearly inclusive.

4.1.2. Application. Jewish practice defines as *ṭĕrēpâ* not only carrion, but any animal that has suffered injury that is likely to be fatal (the signs are detailed in *m. Ḥul.* 3), since one cannot be certain that it was the slaughterer's knife that killed it. Some such signs may be discovered only after the animal has been slaughtered, but they render the meat impermissible to eat.

4.1.3. Explanations. The texts that forbid carrion link it with the holiness of the people. In every case the implication is that carrion is a contemptible form of nourishment ("abominable" in Deut 14:3) that is unworthy of the status of the people who are set apart as Yahweh's own. This is underlined sharply in Exodus 22:31: it is only fit for dogs. Dogs are unclean animals (see 2.3.3.3 above), and their uncleanness is shown by their readiness to eat carrion. Deuteronomy shows its concern for aliens by recommending the meat should be given to them, though this is at the same time a means of un-

derlining Israel's distinctive position.

It is generally held (e.g., Hartley, 277) that the problem with carrion is that it contains undrained blood, so that eating it is a transgression of the blood prohibition. The position of Leviticus 17:15-16 would suggest this, but it is unclear in that case why it is not in itself an offense in the Leviticus texts. It was suggested above (3.1.3) that the real concern of the blood law is with the deliberate eating of undrained meat as an end in itself. Milgrom (2000, 1487) suggests that the text assumes that blood was drained also from carrion (but how?) and that there is a concern for the poor expressed here, that a useful source of food should not be denied them, while at the same time the fact that this is frowned on is emphasized by making it a purifiable impurity.

4.2. Food Unclean by Contact. What the texts say about carrion is paralleled by their words about food that has been made ritually unclean by what it has come into contact with. Leviticus 11:29-38 identifies eight "swarming creatures" as unclean in the strict sense (contact with their dead bodies is defiling, see 6 below) and declares that they can convey uncleanness not only to people but also to utensils and, at a further remove, to food (Lev 11:33-34). Uncleannesses from other sources are referred to as a threat to utensils at Leviticus 15:12 and Numbers 19:15. While the eating of unclean food is not directly forbidden, it is clearly seen as undesirable on the analogy of Leviticus 11:40. It places on the eaters the responsibility to purify themselves lest they threaten the purity of the sanctuary (Lev 15:31).

5. A Forbidden Combination: Kid in Mother's Milk.

5.1. Texts. The prohibition "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" appears in identical wording in Exodus 23:19b; 34:26b and Deuteronomy 14:2lb. The context is similar in Exodus 23 and 34: the commandment concludes a series of ritual prescriptions (Ex 23:14-19; 34:18-26) relating to the three major festivals of the year. The offering of the firstborn of animals (Ex 22:30; 34:19) would take place at those festivals. Goats were by far the most common domestic animals among the peasants (Haran, 32-33). Thus the commandment restricted the way in which the firstborn offered as a shared offering might be cooked. Meat cooked in soured milk has always been a delicacy among the seminomads of Palestine (Knauf, 163-65). C. J. Labuschagne (14) points out that at the festival the most readily available milk would have been that of the animal's own mother (cf. Ex 22:30; strictly speaking the milk of the mothers of the flock in general, since few worshipers would be offering a single firstborn)—and this is what is prohibited.

In Deuteronomy, on the other hand, the prohibition concludes the series of dietary laws (Deut 14:3-21) that begins with the command not to eat "anything abominable." It seems Deuteronomy has taken over the probably earlier Exodus law and placed it in a new context. The cultic prescription has become a general food law where eating meat outside the ritual situation had become the norm (cf. Deut 12).

5.2. Application. This commandment is of immense significance in the development of kosher cooking. The Mishnah (*m. Ḥul.* 8) teaches that not only the cooking but the consumption of any flesh meat, other than fish and locusts, at the same time as any milk product is forbidden. Even poultry falls under this ban. An Orthodox Jewish kitchen is equipped with two sets of utensils—one for milk and one for meat respectively—to eliminate the possibility of the two coming into contact. We do not know anything about the development of this interpretation or the reasons for it. It may be due to the general rabbinic tendency to "fence the Torah," extending the scope of commandments to guard against the danger of their being broken accidentally or carelessly.

5.3. Explanations. Many explanations have been offered for this commandment, and they tend to parallel those of the forbidden kinds.

5.3.1. Moral. By those who observe the law, it has tended to be understood in a humanitarian sense, as Philo did (*Virt.* 144). For him, all the laws were training in virtue, and this one trained the soul in humanity (for a modem Jewish interpretation of this kind, see Haran, 29).

5.3.2. Cultic-Polemic. Maimonides (*Guide to the Perplexed* 3.48) speculated that the strange custom of cooking a kid in its mother's milk must have been an idolatrous rite of the pagans. This idea has had many supporters in modern times (see, e.g., Mayes) and was thought to have been confirmed by an Ugaritic text (*CTA* 23:14). However, more careful study of this text has shown that it probably does not speak of cooking a kid or any other animal (Craigie; Milgrom 1991,

738). The idea remains speculation.

5.3.3. Contextual. The contextual associations of the relationship between the suckling mother and her offspring are explored by O. Keel, who shows from an array of pictorial evidence from the ancient Near East that the mother animal (cow or goat) with sucking calf or kid is a constant iconographic motif. Its associations suggest that it is the symbol of a goddess who grants fertility. As it is common for such an animal symbol of a deity to be taboo, Keel argues (43-44) that the ultimate origin of the rule lies in the cult of such a mother goddess, at the offering of firstlings (see 5.1 above). Israelites may not have realized the associations of the taboo and may have understood it more generally as "a symbol of divinely granted fertility and divine care and love" (Keel, 44). It evolves into "an expression of respect for a particularly prominent order of creation, the relationship between mother and child" (Keel, 45). From here it is a short step to Philo's interpretation.

Keel's evidence is impressive. However, it is difficult to understand the evolution from a taboo associated with the worship of a Canaanite goddess to a prohibition in texts that require a sharp separation from polytheistic worship (see, e.g., Ex 23:13, 24; Deut 13).

5.3.4. Structuralist. Pentateuchal ritual is full of binary oppositions: blood and flesh; clean and unclean; laws against the mixture of textiles in a garment, seeds in a field or species in mating. The rabbinic application of this commandment falls easily into this pattern. It is less apparent in the biblical formulation, but Milgrom argues that this reflects a very similar structure of thought (1991, 741, following Carmichael). The dead animal is not to be brought into contact with that which sustained it in life. This is not so different from Keel's interpretation of the meaning of the rule in Israelite practice.

6. General Significance.

These rules are not isolated but are interpreted by the text as parts of systems with broad significance (see Houston, 218-58).

6.1. Leviticus. Leviticus relates the food prohibitions to ritual. Leviticus 17:3-4 forbids the slaughter of domestic animals to be carried out except in sacrifice at "the door of the tent of meeting," and no other text in the book suggests the possibility of secular slaughter as explicitly allowed for in Deuteronomy 12. Thus, most meat eating, except for game, is assumed to be ritual: the meat itself is holy, and the eaters must be free of ritual impurity.

In the levitical system there are two main types of ritual offense. What is holy, dedicated to God, may be contaminated by the unclean (Lev 15:31) or may be used improperly by human beings, which is sacrilege (Lev 5:15). Blood and fat belong to Yahweh, so to eat them is sacrilege (Lev 3:16-17). The dead bodies of beasts (unless properly slaughtered) and some swarming land animals may make a person unclean by touch (Lev 11:24-40) and thereby unfit to eat holy things. Consequently, forbidden land animals are described as "unclean" (*ṭāmē'*; Deuteronomy uses the expression more loosely; see Milgrom 1991, 656-59), but forbidden water and air animals, which do not convey uncleanness, are described as "abhorrent" or "to be shunned" (*šeqeṣ*, Douglas 1999, 166-67).

However, in the hortatory conclusion to the chapter on animal kinds (Lev 11:43-45), the ritual language is used more loosely and is extended into the secular sphere with the idea that the Israelites themselves are called to holiness as Yahweh is holy. Israel is thought of as an object holy to Yahweh, and just as unclean things may defile the holiness of the tabernacle, so they may defile Yahweh's holy people. Thus they are to avoid all unclean or forbidden food at all times in order to maintain their own holiness. In Leviticus 20:25-26 it is rather the separation of Israel from the Gentiles that is emphasized.

6.2. Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy separates most meat eating from the ritual context (Deut 12:15, 20-22). Yet in the context where most of its food rules are gathered (Deut 14:3-21), it relates them in a similar way to the holiness of Israel as Yahweh's peculiar people (Deut 14:2, 21), for Deuteronomy's attribution of holiness to Israel goes beyond ritual. What is forbidden is described as "anything abominable" (*kol tô'ēbâ*, Deut 14:3). This expression basically means "disgusting." It has been interpreted as referring to things unacceptable in the worship of Yahweh (Mayes, 239; cf. Deut 7:26; 13:14, etc.). But since not all the "abominable things" can be associated with idolatry, it is best to take it as meaning things disgusting in themselves, things that self-respecting people do not eat (Houston, 60, following Weinfeld, 226). Thus Israel's dedication to Yahweh imposes on them the obliga-

tions of people of quality. The theme is developed by Deuteronomy from the probably older Exodus 22:31 (see 4.1 above).

6.3. The Pentateuch as a Whole. The pentateuchal framework narrative, usually seen as Priestly, begins with God's *creation intention that all creatures should be vegetarian (Gen 1:29-30) and goes on after the *flood to his concession to the "violence of all flesh" (Gen 6:11-12). Later, human beings are allowed to eat any kind of animal flesh (Gen 9:3), with the restriction that they must not eat the blood. At Sinai, this prohibition is repeated to Israel, and to it is added the law of forbidden kinds. Houston (253-58) argues that this story presents in narrative form the solution to a theological dilemma: the ideal of a totally peaceful creation over against the creaturely reality of greed and violence. The dilemma is resolved first, inadequately, by the covenant with Noah, in which the use of blood is banned, but finally and more adequately by the mediating solution of the law of forbidden kinds, which channels human violence much more strictly. At the level of the Pentateuch as a whole, then, Milgrom's perception of an ethical purpose to the dietary laws is justified (Milgrom, 1991, 704-41).

6.4. Toward a Christian Understanding. Earliest Jewish Christianity must have taken the dietary laws for granted. Mark 7:19b is an authorial comment on Jesus' words interpreted in light of later Christian experience. In the Gentile mission, under Paul's influence, the dietary laws were abandoned except for the blood prohibition, which was seen as applying to Gentiles and was in any case no hardship (Acts 15:20, 29; see 3.1.2 above). In this way the "middle wall of partition" (Eph 2:14-15) represented especially by the law of forbidden kinds (Lev 20:24-26), was symbolically overthrown (Acts 10:9-16), and the church could be a body binding in one both Jews and Gentiles. However, the church after A.D. 70 rapidly came to see itself as set over against Judaism and the ritual laws as distinctive of Jews as against Christians (except in Ethiopia, where an already semi-Judaized population continued to observe them [Ullendorff, 100-103]). Christians came to believe that they had a positive duty not to obey them as the Jews did. However, as Scripture, the laws must have been intended to have some meaning. The *Epistle of Barnabas* (second century) therefore interprets them as giving moral teaching allegorically. The blood prohibition lingered but was eventually lost sight of.

See also BLOOD; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; ZOOLOGY.

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FOREIGNER. *See* ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT.

FORGIVENESS. *See* REPENTANCE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

FORM CRITICISM

Form criticism is an approach to the study of biblical literature that seeks to identify the various genres of that literature and their function in ancient religious life. By isolating and analyzing the particular forms found in biblical literature, form criticism seeks to discover their preliterary history, life setting and function, thereby shedding light on the meaning of the biblical texts in which these forms are found.

This essay will discuss the following areas related to form criticism of the Pentateuch: historical background; major forms in the Pentateuch; the practice of form criticism and evaluation of the method.

1. Historical Background
2. Major Forms in the Pentateuch
3. The Practice of Form Criticism
4. Evaluation of the Method

1. Historical Background.

The discipline of form criticism is inseparably linked to the name of the German scholar Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932), one of the most influential biblical scholars of the past century. L. A. Schökel goes so far as to say that "Gunkel quite possibly was the most revolutionary moment for biblical exegesis in this century" (Schökel, 7). Although earlier students of the Bible certainly gave some attention to the forms of biblical literature, form criticism in the proper sense had its beginnings in the late nineteenth century. It was Gunkel who blazed the trail in the discipline of form criticism for biblical studies. Admittedly there were other bright lights as well, such as Gunkel's friend Hugo Gressmann (1877-1927). But none of these outshone Gunkel in terms of insight and lasting innovation, although it must be admitted that Gunkel's views were sometimes expressed in a frustratingly imprecise fashion (on this point see esp. Rogerson, 57-65).

Gunkel produced influential works in both NT and OT studies. His early career shift from NT to OT studies was due in part to strong opposition raised against his sometimes-novel views. It was his dissatisfaction with the results of Wellhausian *source criticism of the Pentateuch that led him to seek new avenues for addressing issues concerning the preliterary transmission of biblical materials. His approach spawned an entirely new discipline, one that utilized source-critical methods but moved beyond them in important ways. That discipline is now known as form criticism, after the German term *Formgeschichte.* The word was actually first used in this technical sense by Martin Dibelius (1919), although the plural term *Formengeschichte* had been used in a similar way by earlier scholars such as Franz Overbeck (1882) and Eduard Norden (1913). Other related labels sometimes used

in connection with this approach to biblical studies are *Gattungsgeschichte, Formkritik* and *Gattungskritik.*

Form-critical research has been characterized by slightly different emphases that are indicative of the evolving nature of this approach. M. J. Buss has distinguished four phases within form-critical research as it developed over the first half or so of the twentieth century (Buss 1999, 357-406). First, there is "form history," which attempts to recover a literature's history by the examination of its forms. In Buss's view this attempt is flawed in principle, since it is based on certain assumptions for which there is insufficient corroborating evidence. Second, there is "history of form(s)," which attempts a sequential examination of literary forms once their temporal and spatial locations have been determined by objectively verifiable means. Third, there is "analysis of form," which attempts the identification and recognition of form so as to clarify various linguistic or literary patterns. Fourth, there is "theory of form," which attempts a transtemporal articulation of those factors that influence texts. Especially important in this regard is the *Sitz im Leben*, or life situation, that has played a role in the creation and use of texts.

2. Major Forms in the Pentateuch.

Due to limitations of space we can summarize here only some of the major forms that scholars have isolated in the narratives of the Pentateuch. In addition to those mentioned here are many other important but perhaps less prominent forms. In his treatment of Exodus 1—18, G. W. Coats isolates some eighty-nine different genres found in narrative, including: accusation (e.g., Ex 18:14-23); appeal (e.g., Ex 32:12-13); commission (e.g., Ex 3:1–4:18); complaint (e.g., Ex 5:22-23); death report (e.g., Ex 1:6); disputation (e.g., Ex 1:15-21); genealogy (e.g., Ex 6:14-25); list (e.g., Ex 1:1-6); oracle (e.g., Ex 11:4b-8a); and theophany report (e.g., Ex 3:1-6). In the present discussion we will discuss only the following: myth, folktale, saga, legend, novella, historical credo, law and covenant. Furthermore, the forms are not necessarily pure or unmixed; often in one form we find elements of other forms as well.

2.1. Myth. Myths are stories that purport to describe the activities of the gods, who are perceived in a polytheistic setting. The purpose of myths is to offer an explanation for human curiosity about such things as the origin of the world. Since the OT is a monotheistic document, it does not really contain myth except in a very muted sense. However, many form critics see mythological elements preserved especially in Genesis 1—11 in such accounts as the *creation story of Genesis 1 and the actions of "the sons of the gods" in Genesis 6:1-4 (*see* Sons of God, Daughters of Man). However, the myths supposed to underlie these accounts are usually understood to originate not in Israel but in neighboring cultures (especially Canaan and Mesopotamia), from which the Israelites borrowed them. Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos,* for example, attempts to trace the myth of a creator god slaying a chaos god from its origins in Babylon to its use in Genesis 1 and Revelation 12. Early on Gunkel agreed with the brothers Grimm in supposing that in all cultures the oldest narratives were those that described the activities of the gods, but later (partly through the influence of Wilhelm Wundt) he came to think that folktale often preceded myth in developmental history. More recent discussions of the nature of myth have sometimes focused less on its topic, somewhat narrowly conceived as activities of the gods, and more on its broader emphasis on things beyond the boundaries of normal history or time and space (so, e.g., Otzen, 7-8).

***2.2. Folktale* (Märchen).** Folktales are creative accounts of fictional characters who appear in settings that are imagined and not real. Gunkel used as a modern example of folktale the story of Hansel and Gretel. While he admitted that the Bible does not really contain folktale as such, Gunkel believed that the folktale played an important role in the preliterary stages of biblical literature and that folktale-like motifs do persist in biblical literature. The folktale is characterized by an element of fantasy; it bestows upon animals such human qualities as speech and rational behavior. The motif of the tree of life (Gen 2:9) and in fact the concept of paradise itself (i.e., the garden of *Eden) derive from folktale, according to Gunkel. *Balaam's talking donkey (Num 22:21-33) and the notion of a land flowing with milk and honey are also for him folktale motifs. In his view, *Jacob's struggle with the angel at Penuel (Gen 32:23-32) contains "the after-effect of an ancient goblin tale on Israelite tradition" (Gunkel, 1987, 83), and Yahweh's attack on Moses (Ex 4:24-26) is based on a

folktale concerning a demon's attack on a newlywed couple. Gunkel also concluded that some of the theophanies in Genesis were previously folktales describing various deities.

2.3. Saga. Unlike myth, which focuses on alleged activities of the gods, saga reports the activities of important human beings. With this distinction in mind, a large portion of Genesis may be said to consist of sagas describing the lives of famous figures. Although such reports resemble historical accounts, Gunkel maintained that saga differs from history in at least five areas: *origin* (saga originates in oral tradition, while history originates in written records); *topic* (saga is occupied with personal details of the lives of individuals, whereas history is concerned with events attracting public attention); *attestation* (saga contains reports of extraordinary happenings that lack eyewitnesses, such as the events of creation, whereas history is characterized by believable and verifiable accounts); *credibility* (saga reports things that are incredible because they seem impossible, whereas history deals with things believable); and *style* (saga is more poetic in its manner of presentation, whereas history is prose). The patriarchal sagas of Genesis vary in type, according to Gunkel. Some are *historical*, describing such things as tribal migrations, while others are *ethnographic*, describing tribes under the aegis of certain individuals. Still others are *etiological*, explaining the origin of certain names, conditions, ceremonies, localities and the like. Since the term *saga* was first used in connection with medieval Icelandic and Nordic literary traditions, the propriety of its use in biblical studies has been questioned by some scholars.

2.4. Legend. Legend is similar to saga, except that in legend there is a more decidedly religious quality to the account. Legends deal with holy people (e.g., priests, prophets), holy places (e.g., sanctuaries) or holy events (e.g., religious festivals). Their purpose is to edify the listener or reader. Legends are centered on things that are alleged to transpire within the experience of human beings, and it is that quality that sets them apart from myths, which focus on what transpires within the realm of the gods. The bronze serpent of Numbers 21:4-9 is thus considered to be legend, as is the explanation of *circumcision (Gen 17). Gunkel likened biblical legend to the stories told of Roman Catholic saints, where one finds an emphasis on spirituality. However, the distinction between saga and legend is often not clear in some later discussions of this topic, and terminological confusion can be found in the secondary literature. In fact, Gunkel's own discussion of saga appeared in English translation with the rather confusing title *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History.*

2.5. Novella. Sometimes a number of sagas are brought together in a connected string of episodes concerning a particular person, in which case the result may be thought of as a novella, or short story. Such novellas often incorporate elements of the folktale, as may be seen in the *Joseph story found in Genesis 37—49. The novella may have a timeless quality, depicting events that are known to occur repeatedly in human life.

2.6. Historical Credo. Gerhard von Rad explained the overarching structure of the Hexateuch as consisting of the elaboration of a historical credo, or creed, that summarized the core elements of Yahweh's redemptive acts on behalf of his people. This historical creed is most clearly presented in brief form in Deuteronomy 26:5-9, which recalls Israel's sojourn in *Egypt, the *exodus and the subsequent settlement in Canaan. The rest of the Hexateuch, according to von Rad, is to a large degree a theological exposition of this redemptive activity on Yahweh's part. Although von Rad's articulation of historical credo was influential, his views also met with opposition in some scholarly circles.

2.7. Law. There are in the Pentateuch five major collections of legal material: the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:19); the *Decalogue (Ex 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21); the Deuteronomic Code (Deut 12—26); the Holiness Code (Lev 17—26); and the Priestly Code (Ex 25—31; 34:29—Lev 16; parts of Numbers). While source criticism focused on the isolation and identification of these literary units, form criticism has sought to explain the nature of the legal material itself, not only in its collected, written form but in its earlier preliterary history as well.

Form-critical analysis of OT legal literature received significant impetus from the research of Albrecht Alt (1883-1956), who articulated two distinct forms of Israelite law having very distinct origins. These forms of OT legal material are now known as casuistic law and apodictic law. Although their earliest histories were quite distinct, according to Alt, in the present shape of

the Pentateuch these two types of laws are often juxtaposed and sometimes even intermingled (*see* Law).

2.7.1. Casuistic Law. Casuistic (or case) law deals with specific matters such as would have been handled in the secular courts of the day: slavery, murder, bodily injury claims, personal property losses and marriage. According to Alt these laws were not distinct to Israel but were commonplace in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, from which Israel in fact borrowed many of the laws of the Pentateuch. A statement of casuistic law typically begins with a conditional clause in its protasis to set out a potential situation ("If [such and such happens]"). The following apodosis then presents a penalty to be exacted in that case ("he shall [be required to do such and such]."). The parties are normally described in the third (not second) person. Such laws usually deal with repeated offenses of human behavior that may arise in a society and that therefore require acceptable guidelines for adjudication. About half of the book of the covenant consists of casuistic laws. An example of casuistic law is found in Exodus 21:18-19: "If men quarrel and one hits the other . . . and he does not die, . . . the one who struck the blow will not be held responsible; . . . however, he must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and see that he is completely healed" (NIV).

As a result of form-critical research, the older view that such laws originated within Israel in response to the need for legal decisions regarding particular cases has been largely replaced by the conclusion that such laws were actually already in place in non-Israelite neighboring cultures. In that case the Israelites simply borrowed and adapted existing laws to suit their own needs starting with their settlement in the land of Canaan. This conclusion is supported, Alt maintained, not only by the common characteristics shared by Israelite and non-Israelite casuistic law, but also by the relative absence of religious elements in Israelite casuistic laws and their generally secular orientation.

2.7.2. Apodictic Law. In contrast to casuistic law, apodictic law deals with categorical and unconditional matters of Israelite religion that were perceived as an expression of Yahweh's will. Apodictic law differs from casuistic law in important ways: its subject matter is religious rather than secular; its wording utilizes short and simple clauses that are expressed in emphatic language; and it is by nature more categorical than casuistic law. Alt situated apodictic law in a *covenant-renewal festival that, he claimed, was celebrated every seven years at Shechem, although the evidence on which he based this conclusion is slight. In its expression in the Hebrew Bible, apodictic law is characterized by several forms: it sometimes begins with a negated second-person verb ("you shall not [do such and such]"); it sometimes begins with a participial construction ("whoever does [such and such]"); it sometimes contains a curse ("cursed be the one who [does such and such]"). Exodus 21:12, for example, is apodictic in nature: "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death" (NIV). Examples of apodictic law may also be found in the curses of Deuteronomy 27:15-26 and in the original form of the commands and prohibitions of the Decalogue (Ex 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21).

The distinction between casuistic and apodictic law is not always clear in the OT. The reason for this, Alt believed, is that as Israelite culture came up against neighboring cultures there sometimes occurred an integration of the two types of law that affected their forms (see, e.g., Ex 21:23-25). As a result, some mixture of forms has occurred in the text of the Pentateuch that has come down to us. Alt's view that these laws were not derivative from Israel's neighboring cultures but originated within Israel has been called into question by many subsequent scholars. Furthermore, certain refinements to Alt's categories have been suggested. E. Gerstenberger, for example, divides apodictic law into two categories: addressed commandments and capital crimes. In a similar manner, D. Patrick divides casuistic law into two categories: casuistic primary law, which emphasizes the privileges and responsibilities of the participants in a legal relationship, and casuistic remedial law, which sets forth the stipulated legal penalty for violation (Patrick, 23-24). Still other scholars have adopted approaches very different from that of Alt both in terms of the number of categories suggested and the terminology utilized (Sonsino 1992, 4:252-53).

2.8. Covenant. The *covenant form expresses a mutual relationship between two parties who enter into an agreement based upon faithful and loyal discharge of specified responsibilities. In OT idiom to make a covenant is to "cut" a covenant *(kārat bĕrît)*, an expression that calls to

mind acts of animal sacrifice that were normally a part of such solemn occasions. The covenant is also characterized by, and in fact in biblical idiom can even be called, an "oath" (*'ālâ*). In biblical literature covenants take place between human parties, such as Isaac and Abimelech (Gen 26:28-30), and also between Yahweh and human beings (e.g., Gen 22:16; Deut 29:13). According to Weinfeld, OT covenants may be of two types: the *obligatory* (e.g., the Sinai covenant) and the *promissory* (e.g., the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants) (1970, 184-203; cf. Tucker 1965, 491-92).

The promissory covenant has much in common with ancient Near Eastern land-grant treaties in which a master rewarded the faithful service of a subordinate by bestowing upon him a gift of land and dynasty, thereby rewarding the subordinate's proven loyalty. Yahweh's promise to give the land to *Abraham and his descendants fits this pattern in terms of both its phraseology and its structure (Gen 15:1-9; 22:15-18; 26:1-6). The obligatory covenant, on the other hand, can be compared to the ancient Near Eastern suzerain treaty, which appears to be the organizing principle for a large portion of the Pentateuch. G. E. Mendenhall maintained that the book of Deuteronomy in its organizational structure and form is very similar to certain suzerain-vassal treaties common in the ancient Near East. In its arrangement Deuteronomy may thus be viewed as reflecting the same core sections, appearing in roughly the same order, as are found in ancient Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties. These sections are as follows: preamble (Deut 1:1-5); historical prologue (Deut 1:6—4:40); general stipulations (Deut 5:1—11:32); specific stipulations (Deut 12:1—26:15); blessings and curses (Deut 27:1—28:68); witnesses (Deut 30:19; 31:19; 32:1-43). When viewed in this light, the structure of Deuteronomy is a mirror reflection of a treaty form borrowed from a neighboring Near Eastern culture. This understanding of Deuteronomy, however, has not met with universal acceptance among scholars.

3. The Practice of Form Criticism.

Tucker conveniently arranges the steps of form-critical analysis of biblical texts under four headings: (1) analysis of structure; (2) description of genre; (3) definition of setting(s); and (4) statement of intention (Tucker 1971, 11-17). These steps call to mind the major goals of form-critical research with regard to specific texts. The same four steps appropriately comprise the backbone of form-critical discussions of biblical texts in the various volumes of the series entitled "The Forms of the Old Testament Literature" (FOTL). Even though the process of form-critical research is not nearly as mechanical as these compartmentalized steps might seem at first to suggest, they are nonetheless a helpful way of thinking about the manner in which the method proceeds.

3.1. Structure. The determination of structure may operate at a macro level, by considering a sizable portion of material (as, for example, von Rad's overall analysis of the Hexateuch), or it may operate at a micro level, by dealing with smaller units of material embedded within a larger composition. It is usually these smaller units that are the focus of form-critical endeavor. The analysis begins by establishing both the beginning and the end of the discrete unit that is under study. Often particular genres are characterized by certain formulaic introductions or conclusions that help to demarcate the unit, and when such formulas are present the form critic will take them into consideration in defining the parameters of a passage. Such formulas include the following: the accusation formula ("Why have you done this thing?"); the blessing formula ("may Yahweh keep you"); and the introduction formula ("it came about in those days"). In the absence of such physical features the critic will rely upon other things such as stylistic features or grammatical characteristics in the passage that set it off from the surrounding context. Sometimes, due to the way in which forms have been incorporated into the larger corpus of biblical literature, the original limits of a particular unit are difficult to discern. But once the unit is identified, the critic then carefully outlines the passage. In doing so the form critic identifies the subunits of the passage and their logical interrelationships, noting how the particular structure under consideration compares with stereotypical structural features previously determined from comparative analysis of other examples of the genre under consideration.

3.2. Genre. Defining genre is often difficult, partly because of mixture that may occur in some passages and partly because scholars sometimes differ in how a certain genre should be defined. Differences between narrative and

law, for example, will tend to be rather obvious. But separating legend from saga and profiling the precise nature of each are areas of disagreement among some scholars, as is the issue of how precisely to define myth (cf. Barr). Normally the process of defining the genre for a particular passage will involve not only relating that passage to other biblical examples of the same genre but also relating the biblical examples of its genre to examples of that genre found in ancient extrabiblical literature. Identification of genre has major implications for the interpretation of a particular passage, since different genres will imply different assumptions and expectations on the part of the reader.

3.3. Setting. Since one of the goals of form criticism is to reconstruct the preliterary history of biblical literature, it is important to ascertain the life setting of each of the genres. Gunkel coined a term for this setting, namely, *Sitz im Leben*, or "situation in life." Use of this German term, which lacks an entirely adequate English equivalent, has since become a standard way of referring to the particular social or religious setting that prompted the rise and use of the various genres that we find in biblical literature. As Gunkel used this expression, it refers to the life setting not so much of a specific text as of a particular genre. Form criticism seeks to discover this setting in order to understand how specific forms of literature originally functioned in the life of their communities. The recovery of this life setting in turn often sheds light on the interpretation of the passage in question.

3.4. Intention. The forms of biblical literature originally served a very specific purpose. By asking what the intention of a particular form might have been, the form critic seeks to relate the content of biblical literature to the purposes of those who first used that material in the preliterary stage, the purposes of those who later collected that material and the purposes of those who subsequently utilized these writings in various personal or liturgical contexts. Biblical materials were intended to serve a particular need and to fulfill a particular function. It is this intention that form criticism seeks to elucidate.

4. Evaluation of the Method.

As a tool for prying into the preliterary stages of the transmission of the biblical text, form criticism has made major contributions to biblical scholarship in the twentieth century. But a problem that has sometimes been present in form-critical work is its tendency to focus on small units of material at the expense of broader issues of literary cohesiveness and theology. By emphasizing the forms and their preliterary history, form criticism runs the risk of becoming myopic and atomistic in its outlook with regard to the final shape of the text. It is clear that the biblical writers were not clumsy editors who merely patched together previously existing material in a somewhat mechanical fashion. Rather, they were by and large skilled creators of literary products that have for their underpinning carefully conceived theological purposes. The biblical scholar must therefore take care to avoid missing the larger picture while looking at the constituent parts. Furthermore, the recovery of data concerning the preliterary history of biblical material is beset with problems arising from limitations in our ability to ascertain such information. Form criticism is unable fully to overcome these limitations.

Form criticism is not by itself a comprehensive tool nor one that can be used exclusively without recourse to other equally important methods. Modern critical biblical research is actually an amalgam of many critical methods rather than an exclusive use of a single method, no matter how helpful that single method might be (see, e.g., Steck, esp. 95-119). Form criticism should therefore be supplemented by other critical tools that address concerns that lie outside its self-defined domain—tools such as *text criticism, *source criticism, redaction criticism, rhetorical criticism, *literary criticism, and the like. But in spite of certain inherent limitations in the method itself and in spite of certain excesses on the part of some of its advocates, form-critical research has provided many fresh insights into the early history of OT literature.

See also AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES; SOURCE CRITICISM; TEXTUAL CRITICISM; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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FORMGESCHICHTE. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

FRAUD. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

FULFILLMENT. *See* PROMISES, DIVINE.

G

GAD

In the Pentateuch the Hebrew word *gād* (Gad) refers to one of the twelve sons of *Jacob, to the Transjordanian Israelite tribe that descended from him and to a West Semitic deity whose name forms the part of a number of OT personal and place names.

1. Birth and Name
2. Gad's Role in the Pentateuch
3. Tribal Boundaries
4. Subsequent History

1. Birth and Name.

Gad was the seventh son of Jacob and the ancestor of the Israelite tribe of the same name. He was Jacob's first son by Zilpah, the maid Leah had given to Jacob as a concubine (Gen 30:9-11). According to Genesis 30:11, the name Gad *(gād)* means "good fortune" and reflects Leah's exclamation, "What good fortune!" (*bĕgād,* Gen 30:11 NIV, following the Kethib; the Qere reads *bā' gād,* "fortune has come") at his birth. Gad's only full brother was *Asher, whose own name, which means "happy," complements Gad's (Gen 30:12-13).

Gad (or "Fortune"), also the name of a West Semitic deity, is usually considered to be a theophoric element in geographical names (Baal-gad, Josh 11:17; Migdal-gad, Josh 15:37) and personal names (Gaddi, Num 13:11; Gadi, 2 Kings 15:14, 17; Gaddiel, Num 13:10; Azgad, Ezra 2:12). Attempts to connect the tribe of Gad with this deity are unconvincing inasmuch as the deity is attested only in late texts (Punic and Nabatean, as well as texts from Palmyra and Hatra, but cf. Is 65:11 NASB).

A personal name Gadu ("male goat kid") appears in late Babylonian texts and may suggest a second possible etymology for the name Gad (note the tribe's connections with pastoralism in Num 32:1-5).

2. Gad's Role in the Pentateuch.

Gad plays no real role in the Pentateuch either as a son of Jacob or as a tribe until Israel's final approach to Canaan via Transjordan.

2.1. Standard Formulas. Typically Gad appears in the Pentateuch only in standard genealogical or census-related formulas common to each of the sons of Jacob or tribes. When listed as a son of Jacob, Gad is closely associated with his full brother Asher, as would be expected (Gen 35:26; 46:16-17; 49:19-20; Ex 1:4). Gad also appears with Asher in the lists of men chosen by *Moses to number the people of Israel (Num 1:13-14) and to spy out the land (Num 13:13-15). As a tribe, however, Gad is usually associated with *Reuben and either *Simeon (Num 1:20-25; 2:10-16; 7:30-47; 10:18-21; 26:5-18) or the half-tribe Manasseh (Num 32:1-42; 34:14; Deut 3:12-17; 4:43; 29:8), tribes that, like Gad, settled on the periphery of Canaan. Gad was one of the smaller tribes of Israel, listed as eighth and tenth in size, respectively, in the two censuses taken by Moses (Num 1:24-25; 26:15-18).

2.2. Settlement in the Land. After Moses conquered the Amorite kingdom of Sihon and the kingdom of Og in Bashan (Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:24—3:17), he allowed the tribes of Reuben and Gad and a portion of Manasseh to settle in areas in Transjordan not already considered part of the homelands of Ammon, Moab or Edom (Num 32:1-42; 34:13-14; Deut 3:12-17; 29:7-8). According to Numbers 32:1-5, Moses did so because these lands were particularly suitable for raising cattle and flocks of sheep and goats, the primary economic basis of these tribes (cf. Num 32:34-36; 1 Chron 5:9).

3. Tribal Boundaries.

The exact borders of the land allotted by Moses to the tribe of Gad are difficult to determine, in part because the territorial descriptions differ at

key areas (Num 32:2-3, 34-36; Deut 3:16-17; Josh 13:24-28) and in part because the identification of certain towns assigned to the tribe is in doubt. Among the latter are Jazer (possibly Khirbet es-Sar), Atroth-shophan (possibly Rujm ʿAtarus), and Ramath-mizpeh (possibly ʿIraq el-Emir). The area settled by Gad was north of that given to Reuben and south of the inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, essentially the same as the geographical region of Gilead between the city of Heshbon (Tell Hesban) and the Jabbok River (Wadi Zerqa).

Some of the cities given to Reuben, namely Dibon (Dhiban) and Aroer (Khirbet Araʿir) on the Arnon River (Wadi el-Mojib) and Ataroth (Khirbet ʿAttarus) just to the north, were claimed by Gad (Num 32:34; cf. Num 33:45-46; Josh 13:15-23). This is consistent with the assertion of Mesha, king of Moab, that "the man [i.e., tribe] of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old and the king of Israel [i.e., Omri or Ahab] built Ataroth for him [i.e., the Gadites]" (Moabite Stone, lines 10-11). There is no textual or geographical justification for locating the actual border of Gad on the Arnon, as some have argued. To the northeast the territory of Gad pushed along the Jordan Valley (the biblical Arabah) past the Jabbok as far as the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Deut 3:16-17; Josh 13:27), a region of Canaanite city states such as Succoth and Zaphon.

4. Subsequent History.

Gad, like Reuben, was wedged between hostile powers that proved a threat to its existence as a distinct tribal entity. Israel typically had trouble occupying the valleys that were home to Canaanite city-states (cf. Judg 1:19, 27-34), and it can be assumed that Gad faced similar difficulties in the Jordan Valley. The biblical record, however, shows that unlike Reuben the tribe of Gad was eventually able to expand throughout its allotted territory and thrive. This situation was anticipated by the blessings of Jacob and Moses. Jacob foresaw that, "As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, but he shall raid at their heels" (Gen 49:19), and Moses compared Gad to a lion that tears its prey to enlarge its territory (Deut 33:20-21; cf. 1 Chron 12:8-15).

Gad's position in the Jordan Valley actually aided this process, for control of the east bank of the Jordan by Israel was critical for later Israelite expansion into Transjordan (e.g., Judg 7:22-23; 1 Kings 4:19; 12:25; cf. Obad 19). Moreover, the rugged hills of Gilead provided a natural and friendly area of refuge for Israelites who had to flee their homeland west of the Jordan (e.g., 1 Sam 13:6-7; 2 Sam 2:8-10; 17:24). Together, these factors ensured that Gad's fortunes were closely tied to the tribes west of the Jordan River. Gad's position in the Transjordan, however, remained under the threat of Syrian and Ammonite incursions. In the late ninth century B.C. the Syrian king Hazael overran Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh (2 Kings 10:32-33). While it can be assumed that these regions were restored to Israelite control by Jeroboam II in the mid-eighth century B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 14:25), they were finally lost to Israel in 733 B.C. when Tiglath-pileser III deported the Transjordanian tribes to Assyria (1 Chron 5:26). In the wake of this defeat, the Ammonites, Gad's hostile neighbor to the east, evidently occupied their land (Jer 49:1).

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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GARDEN OF EDEN. *See* EDEN, GARDEN OF.

GATTUNGSGESCHICHTE. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

GENDER OF GOD. *See* THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

GENEALOGIES

Contemporary readers often skim over the genealogical passages of the Pentateuch as uninteresting or insignificant. Western liberal-demo-cratic societies understand genealogies as

possessing private, not public, significance. Yet genealogical records in traditional societies, oral and written, possess extreme importance in defining everyday social interactions. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that genealogies are significant within the Pentateuch. Following general and background considerations, this article will focus particularly on the *tôlĕdôt* (generation) structure that literarily unifies the book of Genesis and functions differently in the rest of the Pentateuch.

1. General Considerations
2. Social and Historical Background
3. Genealogies and Torah
4. Conclusion

1. General Considerations.

Genealogies are oral or written lists of kinship relationships between persons or groups. A genealogy must possess certain characteristics. Genealogies must have breadth: How many members/siblings does the genealogy list within a particular generation? They also must possess depth: How many generations back into the family's history does the genealogy reach? While biblical scholars usually consider only lists to be "genealogies," genealogies can take narrative form, and narrative-like expansions do appear within the biblical genealogies. Variations within these characteristics have led biblical scholars to demarcate different types of genealogies.

1.1. Linear Versus Segmented Genealogies. Biblical scholars regularly differentiate between linear and segmented genealogies. Linear genealogies list names that connect an individual to one specific kin in a previous generation. While the depth of linear genealogies may vary, their breadth remains limited to one person per generation. A segmented genealogy has both generational breadth—more than one person per generation—and depth. A segmented genealogy depicts relationships both within a specific generation (i.e., brother to brother, sister and even cousins) as well as from one generation to another (i.e., mother to daughter). Segmented genealogies compose what Western culture commonly knows as the "family tree." The Pentateuch contains both linear (Gen 5:3-31) and segmented (Gen 10:1-32) genealogies. The distinction between a linear and segmented genealogy should not be pushed too far—both can and do appear within an extended genealogical list. When this happens, the transition from a linear to segmented genealogy (and vice versa) marks the relative significance (or insignificance) of a particular generation. As a general rule, linear genealogies in the Pentateuch *tend* to connect characters at the center of the unfolding of the plot; segmented genealogies tend to fill out the families of characters who no longer will play a central role in the pentateuchal story.

1.2. Patrilinear Versus Matrilinear Genealogies. Another helpful distinction is whether a genealogy is patrilinear or matrilinear. Patrilinear genealogies trace descent through the father, matrilinear through the mother. Again, this distinction should not be pushed too far, since men can appear in matrilinear genealogies and vice versa. In the Pentateuch genealogies are fundamentally patrilinear, though women occasionally—and significantly—appear within them (e.g., Gen 11:29-31; Ex 6:23, 25).

2. Social and Historical Background.

Even today genealogies play significant roles in some non-European cultures. In antiquity genealogies bore tremendous importance. In the Roman era, one would often find a family's genealogy on the wall of the entryway into a home of someone from the senatorial class. A whole group of "genealogists" in the Hellenistic world developed the genre into a type of Greek historiography. Simply stated, genealogies provided a means of social identification. As G. N. Knoppers summarizes, "Genealogies, whether from Israel, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, or Greece, are not simply compilations of traditional material, but are assertions about identity, territory, and relationships. The names of ancestors, towns, and groups were of special relevance to ancient writers, because their genealogical connections defined the ancestor's, town's, or group's position in relation to others" (Knoppers, 18). Genealogies "located" a person, family, city or wider group in relationship to others within their world. Genealogies mapped out the political, economic and social allegiances that individuals and groups possessed to each other and other groups.

2.1. Genealogies in the Ancient Near East. Extensive genealogies were not a prominent feature of the ancient Near Eastern literary culture (Wilson 1977, 72). Unlike the Pentateuch, ancient Near Eastern genealogies generally appear within broader literary contexts as brief insertions rather than as an integral part of a larger

narrative. Mesopotamian king lists, however, parallel in several respects features of some genealogies found in Genesis 1—11: their fundamental linear structure, listing seven generations and a standardization of the lists at ten (Malamat). Particularly interesting in this regard is Enoch's seventh position following *Adam, a position paralleled by Enmerduranki, who usually appears seventh in Mesopotamian antediluvian king lists (VanderKam, 33-52). Nonetheless, despite some indications of relationship, Mesopotamian genealogies are more unlike than like the genealogies in the Pentateuch (Hess).

2.2. Genealogies in Oral Cultures. Scholarship has turned to comparative material found in contemporary oral cultures for background material on biblical genealogies (Wilson 1977). Such anthropological approaches have discovered that oral genealogies are characterized by fluidity and have limits on their length and depth. Oral genealogies are preserved and transmitted largely for their contemporary social function rather than their antiquarian or historical reasons.

2.3. Genealogies Within the History of Israel. Perhaps the most significant background for the genealogies of the Pentateuch is found within ancient and postexilic Israel/Judah. Current archaeological evidence suggests that ancient Israel, especially Judah, was not heavily urbanized but highly agrarian. Oral genealogies would have been significant in relating the concentric circles of kinship of the nuclear family, the clan and the tribe to each other and to neighboring families and villages. In royal circles, claimants for legitimacy would have had obvious reasons for preserving genealogies. In the postexilic period, genealogies helped reconstruct and maintain the Judean social order in the repatriation of exiles back to their homeland from Babylon (see Ezra 2; 8). Given the importance of genealogies, oral and written, throughout the history of Israel and Judah, it is not surprising to find their presence—and structural significance—within the Pentateuch.

3. Genealogies and Torah.

Brief genealogical notices commonly identify figures throughout the Torah, much as last names are used in Western cultures. In the Torah, genealogies themselves can have a fundamentally linear structure (Gen 5:1—6:8) or be strictly segmented (Ex 1:1-6). Extended genealogies occur in the books of Genesis and Numbers, with only two others occurring in Exodus (Ex 1:1-6; 6:14-26) and none in Leviticus or Deuteronomy. In Exodus and Numbers genealogies have a vastly different function than in Genesis.

3.1. Genealogies in Genesis. Genealogies play an important role in structuring *Genesis. Most significant are sections that begin with the Hebrew phrase, *ʾēlleh tôlĕdôt* ("These are the generations"). This formula (or a close variant) occurs eleven times in ten different genealogies in Genesis: five times in five "genealogies" in the primeval history of Genesis 1:1—11:26 and six times in five different genealogies in the Israelite ancestral history of Genesis 11:27—50:26 (the phrase occurs twice in the genealogy of Esau [Gen 36:1, 9]). While the Hebrew phrase clearly and consistently structurally marks the beginning of new sections, the word *tôlĕdôt* becomes difficult to translate into English consistently. The term *tôlĕdôt* comes from the Hebrew root *yld,* which means "to bear a child." Yet its usage also has wider connotations. Its use can branch out from its strict "generation" denotation to describe an "account" or "history" that goes beyond what Western cultures generally think of strict genealogical forms.

As a result of the difficulty of translating from Hebrew into English, the manner in which *ʾēlleh tôlĕdôt* provides structure to Genesis can become obscured in English translations. In the primeval history, *ʾēlleh tôlĕdôt* occurs in Genesis 2:4 ("These are the generations of the heavens and the earth"); 5:1 (the formula varies here: "This is the book of the generations of Adam"); 6:9 ("These are the generations of Noah"); 10:1 ("These are the generations of the sons of Noah"); and 11:10 ("These are the generations of Shem"). The narrative progresses linearly according to its genealogical structure: from heaven and earth to Adam to *Noah to the sons of Noah to *Shem. The narratives that occur in between the genealogical formula "fill out" the genealogies. The book begins with narrative expansions within its fundamental genealogical structure.

Yet the structure does not merely progress linearly. The formulas emphasize the first, third and fifth *tôlĕdôt*: the "descendants" of the heavens and earth, Noah and Shem; the second and fourth "lines," Adam and the sons of Noah, present storylines that lead to judgment. The direct plot line of the "descendants of heaven and earth" goes through Noah and Shem. The genealogy of "Adam" leads to the debacle of the

*flood. That of the "sons of Noah" leads to the division of humanity "in the earth after the flood" (Gen 10:32), a separation by God's judgment depicted immediately in the story of the tower of *Babel (Gen 11:1-9). In contrast, the "heavens and earth" continues through Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen 6:8), and moves on through the descendants of Shem, through whom *Abraham ultimately comes.

One final important implication arises out of this genealogical structure provided by the *'ēlleh tôlĕdôt* formula in Genesis 1—11: how Genesis 2:4 structures the creation narrative(s). Modern interpreters, influenced by the Documentary Hypothesis (see Source Criticism), have tended to interpret Genesis 2:4a with Genesis 1—almost as a misplaced introduction/conclusion to creation after the fact. Yet if the *tôlĕdôt* formula structures the narrative progression of Genesis 1:1—11:26, Genesis 2:4 serves to introduce the narrative that follows: the story of the creation of the human *('ādām)* from the soil *('ădāmâ)* and the subsequent disobedience in the garden of *Eden. Rather than being part of the narrative progression per se or an alternative *creation story to Genesis 2—3, Genesis 1:1—2:3 stands as a theological prologue to the whole Torah. As K. Barth aptly noticed, Genesis 1:1—2:3 represents "The External Presupposition of the Covenant," while Genesis 2:4—3:24 represents the "The Internal Presupposition of Creation" (Barth). There is a narrative order and development in the two stories. Genesis 1:1—2:3 presents a created, harmonious world in which God can assign humanity a special role as made in God's image; the passage provides the setting, a creation other than God, necessary for God to make a covenant with something "not-God." Genesis 2:4—3:24, however, tells why the covenant is necessary. God must restore creation to its primeval harmony and sinlessness following its concrete story of human disobedience to the divine command. Understanding Genesis 1:1—2:3 as a prologue corresponds well with recent discourse analysis of Genesis 2:4-7 that argues that 2:4 introduces the narrative that follows it rather than concludes that which precedes it (Collins).

As the fivefold *tôlĕdôt* formula structures the presentation of Genesis 1:1—11:26, a similar "pentad" structures Genesis 11:27—50:26. Here we find the *tôlĕdôt* of *Terah (Gen 11:27), *Ishmael (Gen 25:12), *Isaac (Gen 25:19), *Esau (Gen 36:1, 9) and *Jacob (Gen 37:2). These genealogies provide a linear progression of the narrative: Ishmael is the older brother of Isaac, as is Esau that of Jacob. The *tôlĕdôt* structure, however, also shows that the biblical narrative does not progress in a simple linear direction. As in Genesis 1:1—11:26, the formula forms a literary structure that emphasizes the first, third and fifth *tôlĕdôt*: the "descendants" of Terah (which leads to Abram/Abraham), of Isaac (which leads to Jacob) and of Jacob (which leads to Joseph and the sons of Israel surviving famine and dwelling in Egypt). The second and fourth "lines," Ishmael and Esau, only take the narrative so far—with the establishment of specific groups of people who live in a distant kinship to Israel. The direct plot line of the Pentateuch will not flow through them but bypass them to feed into the lines of the younger brothers Isaac and Jacob. The story of the people of God amidst the nations of all creation will progress through the first, third and fifth *tôlĕdôt.*

The narrative signals such genealogical replacements by inserting a new *tôlĕdôt* immediately following the previous genealogy. The *tôlĕdôt* of Isaac (Gen 25:19) immediately follows Ishmael (Gen 25:12-18), and Jacob (Gen 37:2) immediately follows Esau (Gen 36:1—37:1). In these cases, literally no narrative space remains to develop the previous genealogies into extending the narrative. The storyline must switch to the succeeding genealogy. The plot of the book moves forward in a "hopscotch" fashion, noting Ishmael and Esau, as it bypasses them into the stories of the families of Isaac and Jacob.

The genealogical structure of the *tôlĕdôt* formula gives Genesis its distinct nature as the story of a particular family amidst all the families of the world. Even as the narrative develops linearly, the genealogical structure brings the readers' attention back to this particular family, the family of Jacob/Israel, as it heads into the future. Yet this family stands in particular relationships with other families, indeed, all other families of the earth, and thus continues the "*tôlĕdôt* of the heavens and earth" with which the story began.

The *tôlĕdôt* formula does not exhaust all the genealogies in Genesis. Other genealogies are preserved outside the *tôlĕdôt* lists (see Gen 4:17-26; 9:18-19; 22:20-24; 25:1-6; 35:22b-29; 46:8-27). In these cases, the genealogies provide either a means to develop the narrative further or narrative summaries or pauses within the broader units.

The book of Genesis is unique in the Torah for both the number of genealogies within it and their structural significance within the book. They reveal that Genesis is unique among the books of the Pentateuch in its nature as the story of God's calling of a particular family amidst God's good creation, now gone bad.

3.2. Genealogies in Exodus and Numbers. The function of genealogies in the books of Exodus and Numbers differ vastly from their role in Genesis. The *tôlĕdôt* formula only occurs once (Num 3:1-4). In these books, however, the chronology and locality of Israel in relationship to the escape from *Egypt, not the *tôlĕdôt* formula, structures the narrative (Ex 16:1; 19:1; Num 10:11; Deut 1:3). Genealogies place Israel amidst the nations in Genesis; Exodus through Deuteronomy tell the particular story as this family moves toward the *promise that God had granted their ancestors and, thereby, themselves.

Yet the function of the genealogies is evident from their placement in the wider narrative of the Torah. Genealogies serve in these contexts to "gather" the people of Israel along their way as new stages of their journey unfold before them. Exodus begins with a brief segmented genealogy to place the Israelites in Egypt (Ex 1:1-7). A partial genealogy of Israel places the lineage of *Moses and *Aaron within Israel (Ex 6:14-27). The genealogy divides the renewal of the call of Moses (Ex 6:1-13) from God's instruction for Aaron to function as Moses' spokesperson (Ex 6:28—7:7).

In Numbers, genealogies take the form of census lists in preparation for Israel to depart for the Promised *Land (Num 1:5-16; 4:34-49), in their setting out (Num 13:1-16), in their approach to the land following their various misadventures (Num 26:1-63) and, finally, in the distribution of land for the various families once they enter the land (Num 34:16-29). Genealogies also place the *priests (Num 3:1-4) and the *Levites (Num 3:14-39) within this large people in their distinct roles in preparation for their journey. Rather than defining the trajectory of divine activity amidst God's good, though fallen, creation and Israel (Gen 1:1—11:26) and Israel's place amidst the nations (Gen 11:27—50:26), genealogies in Exodus and Numbers define inner-Israelite relationships at crucial transition points in the narrative as they move to the next stage of their divinely ordered journey. The journey itself, rather than the gathering of a people amidst the nations, moves to center stage within the narrative.

4. Conclusion.

Genealogies, both in the background material and in the particular narrative of the Torah, map relationships: relationships within familial groups, relationships between familial groups, relationships of familial groups to all humanity. Genealogies fundamentally structure the narrative development of Genesis as God gathers specific lines of descendants amidst a particular family as a response to the debacle of God's good creation gone bad. One could almost say that Genesis is a narrative that is written out of one large genealogy that, even in its particularity, encompasses all humanity. In Exodus and Numbers, however, genealogies play a much less significant narrative role. God has already chosen God's people; now genealogies mark relationships within Israel as they prepare to move to the next stage in their journey within God's promise.

See also FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; GENESIS, BOOK OF; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES.

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GENESIS, BOOK OF

As the first book of the OT, Genesis provides the foundation for the Pentateuch and for the rest of Scripture. Its significance for Judaism and Christianity is reflected in the enormous amount of scholarly endeavor expended on it. This article surveys the essential nature of the book under three headings.

1. Structure
2. Plot
3. Theology

1. Structure.

It is generally agreed that Genesis is composed of two distinct blocks of unequal size, though opinions differ as to where exactly the dividing line should be drawn. The majority position (e.g., Westermann, Wenham) is that the first section, the primeval history, which begins with *creation (Gen 1:1—2:4a), concludes with the *genealogy of *Shem (Gen 11:10-26). Others have suggested that it terminates with the story of *Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 (e.g., Coats), the genealogy of *Terah in Genesis 11:27-32 (e.g., Whybray) or *Abraham's departure in Genesis 12:4-9 (e.g., von Rad). Such disagreements do not fundamentally affect assessments of the overall emphasis of the first section. It deals with issues concerning the world and humanity in general, transcending national particularism and inhabiting a world beyond the experience of the reader. The rest of the book comprises the ancestral history, which begins by introducing Terah and his family (Gen 11:27-32) and announcing God's call of Abraham in *Haran (Gen 12:1-3). It concludes with the deaths of *Jacob (Gen 49:29-33) and *Joseph in *Egypt (Gen 50:24-26). Compared to the primeval history, this section has greater geographical and historical definition, and while the storyline traverses the ancient Near East, it is concerned primarily with the ancestors of Israel. Its main sections are the Abraham story (Gen 11:27—25:18), the Jacob story (Gen 25:19—37:1) and the story of Jacob's family (Gen 37:2—50:26). Although Genesis falls into various sections, they are clearly interrelated.

1.1. The Role of Tôlĕdôt. The division between the book's two main sections is marked by genealogies *(tôlĕdôt)*, with Shem's concluding the first (Gen 11:10-26) and Terah's introducing the second (Gen 11:27-32). Each section is in turn punctuated by *tôlĕdôt* formulas. With the exception of Genesis 5:1, which reads, "This is the book of the descendants of. . ." *(zeh sēper tôlĕdōt)*, all *tôlĕdôt* formulas follow the pattern, "[now] these are the descendants of . . ." *([wĕ]'ēlleh tôlĕdôt)* (NRSV). The *tôlĕdôt* pattern occurs five times each in the primeval history (Gen 2:4a; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10) and the ancestral history (Gen 11:27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2) and provide each with its basic structure (though see, e.g., Whybray). Additional uses of the formula or equivalent occur, which summarize (Gen 10:32) or reiterate (Gen 25:13; 36:9) a *tôlĕdôt* already introduced, but these do not have a structuring function. Those that do operate as structural markers either conclude (Gen 2:4a, see below) or introduce an extensive genealogy (Gen 5:1; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12; 36:1) or introduce a narrative with an initial summary genealogy of at least two generations (Gen 6:9; 11:27; 25:19). The exception is Genesis 37:2, which introduces a narrative with no proper genealogy. Even here, however, the relationship between Jacob and all of his sons is summarized at the outset (Gen 37:2-4). The overall function of *tôlĕdôt* formulas, therefore, is to juxtapose narrative and genealogical blocks, a feature that has a significant impact on the theology of the book as a whole (see 3 below).

The first *tôlĕdôt* formula (Gen 2:4a) deserves a brief additional note. It has produced an enormous bibliography on whether it is retrospective, summarizing the preceding creation account (Gen 1:1—2:3) and referring to how the heavens and earth came into existence (e.g., Westermann, Whybray), or prospective, introducing what the heavens and earth generated in the following creation account (Gen 2:4b-25), a position given classical expression by J. Skinner (see also, e.g., Hamilton, Stordalen). While this issue is widely debated, the present article sides with those who argue that contextually, Genesis 2:4a concludes the preceding section (Gen 1:1—2:3), summing up its nature as a *tôlĕdôt* (see Turner 2000 for a fuller discussion).

In sum, therefore, the *tôlĕdôt* formulas have different functions, acting as a conclusion in Genesis 2:4a and as introductions elsewhere,

initiating genealogical lists (e.g., Gen 5:1; 11:10) or narratives (e.g., Gen 37:2), and governing larger (e.g., Gen 25:19—35:29) or smaller sections (e.g., Gen 25:12-18) of the book. Their function and content is flexible, but essentially they serve to divide the text into blocks, while providing reminders of the genealogical succession essential to the continuation of the plot of the book as a whole.

1.2. Formal Structures for the Book. There have been few attempts to go beyond this rudimentary structure and to suggest an integrated formal design for the entire book (though see Garrett, Prewitt). However, partly as a reaction to the fragmentation of the text inherent to traditional historical-critical methodologies, recent scholarship has seen a number of attempts to demonstrate the structural coherence of large sections. Many proposals suggest parallel or chiastic structures, some of bewildering complexity and many mutually exclusive.

1.2.1. Primeval History (Gen 1:1—11:26). In Genesis 1—11 there has been more success in showing the shaping of individual episodes, such as the parallel correspondences within Genesis 1:1—2:4a (Wenham; Turner 2000) or the palistrophic structure of the flood narrative, Genesis 6:9—9:19 (e.g., Anderson), than in demonstrating an overall structure for the primeval history as a whole. I. M. Kikawada and A. Quinn postulate six narrative elements arranged in the simple pattern A-B-C-C'-D-E, each followed by a genealogical section. G. A. Rendsburg suggests a more complex structure of five repeated elements A-B-C-D-E-A'-B'-C'-E'-D', with the inversion of the last two elements in the second sequence preventing absolute symmetry. T. E. Fretheim too sees the narratives structured in five "parallel panels," but these differ from Rendsburg's suggestions, his midpoint concluding at Genesis 8:19 and Rendsburg's at Genesis 6:8, to give just one example. J. Blenkinsopp and D. A. Garrett also suggest a fivefold pattern, but Blenkinsopp's is a unitary structure, not paralleled within the primeval history but by a fivefold patterning of the ancestral history. His structural midpoint concludes in Genesis 9:29. Garrett's suggestion is inspired by supposed structural links with ancient Near Eastern texts. Building on the work of Kikawada and Quinn, he argues that Genesis 1—11 reflects the structure of the Atrahasis Epic, with an introduction (Gen 2:1-3; cf. Atrahasis Epic 1.1-351), three threats (Gen 2:4—3:24; 4:23-24; 6:11—9:29; cf. Atrahasis Epic 1.352-415; 2.1.1—5.21; 2.5.22—3.6.4) and a conclusion (Gen 11:1-32; cf. Atrahasis Epic 3.6.5—8.18), a sequence that he calls the "ancestor epic pattern." The fact that so many incompatible structures, predominantly fivefold, can be made for something as basic as the design of a block of text suggests that while these chapters might have an internal coherence they do not necessarily have a symmetrical, balanced or repetitive structure.

1.2.2. Abraham Story (Gen 11:27—25:18). Much the same can be said about the Abraham story. Here a large number of concentric structures have been suggested. Their central element is usually deemed to be of great importance, providing the central point of the narrative or at least the fulcrum around which the first and second halves match each other as mirrored pairs. Once again no consensus emerges, as the following examples illustrate. G. A. Rendsburg's influential work has the structural center as two paired passages emphasizing God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:1—16:16; 17:1—18:15), as does G. W. Coats's in his more convoluted suggestion. J. Rosenberg's palistrophe centers on the dismissal and return of *Hagar (Gen 16:1-16). J. P. Fokkelman utilizes references to time, in particular the precise ages given to characters in a structure focusing on Genesis 17:17, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can *Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (NRSV). Once again, the fact that concentric structures can be suggested that center on different passages and posit different matching pairs does not inspire confidence, especially when parts of the narrative have to be omitted, either at the end (e.g., Rendsburg) or, more critically, within (e.g., Rosenberg), in order to achieve the suggested symmetry. The "doubling" of many episodes, such as the wife-sister stories (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18) and major sections on covenant (Gen 15; 17), might well be important (see section 2 below) but do not form part of a consistent structuring device of matching pairs.

1.2.3. Jacob Story (Gen 25:19—37:1). Since M. Fishbane's landmark study, however, it has been generally accepted that the Jacob story is one narrative block of Genesis that does have a clearly defined concentric structure.

A Oracle sought; Rebekah struggles in childbirth; birthright; birth; strife, deception and fertility (Gen 25:19-34)
B Interlude; strife; deception; blessing; covenant with foreigner (Gen 26)
C Deception; blessing stolen; fear of Esau; flight from land (Gen 27:1—28:9)
D Evening encounter with divine beings at sacred site near border; blessing (Gen 28:10-22)
E Internal cycle opens; arrival; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception (Gen 29)
F Rachel barren; Leah fertile: Rachel fertile; Jacob breeds herds (Gen 30)
E' Internal cycle closes; departure; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception (Gen 31)
D' Evening encounter with divine beings at sacred sites near border; blessing (Gen 32)
C' Deception planned; fear of Esau; blessing-gift returned; return to land (Gen 33)
B' Interlude; strife; deception; covenant with foreigner (Gen 34)
A' Oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; blessing; death; resolutions (Gen 35:1-22)

Fishbane's general structure is compelling, even though some individual points are disputable, and it requires treating Genesis 35:23—36:43 as a postlude standing outside the main composition (see also Rendsburg). Though one might be surprised to find that the central element is concerned with fertility, in a narrative concerned largely with strife, service and deception, it underlines the fundamental significance of *blessing in the narrative (see 3 below).

1.2.4. Story of Jacob's Family (Gen 37:2—50:26). It has been argued that Genesis 37—50 is also arranged palistrophically. Yet differences of opinion are just as frequent here as in the primeval history and Abraham story. For example, Rendsburg sees the center as Joseph's testing of his brothers and *Judah's reply (Gen 44:1-34), while Garrett has the whole narrative hinging on the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27. G. J. Wenham suggests that Genesis 39—47 is structured as A-B-C-A'-B'-C', but there is only a general correspondence of episodes building "to a peak" rather than precise connections of content, and of course it does not cover the whole Joseph story. Once again, the mutually exclusive suggestions simply demonstrate that this structuring device cannot be applied universally throughout the book and also show the need for more methodological rigor.

1.2.5. Conclusion. From the foregoing summary of representative attempts to discern formal structures for major blocks of Genesis, it can be seen that in most cases the text resists such analyses. The book can be read as a coherent whole, with detailed correspondences between its parts, but in the main this is achieved through a detailed study of its plot development and repeated themes and motifs rather than through occasional parallel or concentric structures that might occur.

2. Plot.

Given the fact that Genesis is a narrative text, it is surprising that its plot has been relatively ignored in scholarship. *Historical-critical methodologies, with their emphasis on reconstruct-ing sources, positing historical contexts and mapping the text's evolution, fragment the book. Thus, even in compendious treatments of Genesis the plot of relatively small units, let alone of the book as a whole, has not even been attempted (e.g., Westermann). Even investigations of the plot of individual hypothetical sources have been rare (e.g., Hendel). Yet it is precisely the book's overarching plot that provides its coherence, revealing a work that is far more than a miscellaneous collection of loosely connected stories.

2.1. Progressive Complexity of Genesis. As Cohn has demonstrated, the main narrative blocks of Genesis become increasingly complex at the levels of plot, characterization and theology.

2.1.1. Primeval History (Gen 1:1—11:26). While the primeval history is certainly more than an assemblage of unrelated narratives, its individual episodes are relatively self-contained. Just as its genealogies move steadily from one generation to the next, so too do the narratives. Thematic connections bind the episodes together, but individual characters do not spend enough time on the narrative stage to allow for complex characterization or sophisticated plot elaboration. Apart from God, *Noah has more narrative space than any other character, yet even he remains a bland individual, contributing little depth to his narrative. However, the very lack of complex plot and characterization complements the subject matter of Genesis 1—

11, which sets out broad foundational aspects of cosmic origins and the divine-human relationship.

2.1.2. Abraham Story (Gen 11:27—25:18). In comparison, the Abraham story is dominated by its main character, who appears in almost every episode. He provides both continuity and complexity to a section founded on divine promises and blessings (Gen 12:1-3). To a greater degree than in Genesis 1—11, the story progresses by human initiatives rather than by divine decree. As human characters become more autonomous and God becomes less anthropomorphic, they each become more rounded. Human actions are more morally ambiguous, necessitating that readers be less passive than they were in the black-and-white world of Genesis 1—11. Its plot is more integrated and less straightforward than that of Genesis 1—11, containing numerous complications, such as Sarah's barrenness, Ishmael's rejection and the command to sacrifice Isaac.

2.1.3. Jacob Story (Gen 25:19—37:1). The Jacob story has even greater complexity. It is clearly less episodic and even more integrated than the Abraham story. Episodes are grouped together into larger interrelated sections, such as Jacob's conflicts with *Esau (Gen 27—28; 32—33) and with Laban (Gen 29—31). Abraham is clearly not one-dimensional, but Jacob is more complex, even enigmatic, no more so than on the issue of his moral integrity. God is less dominant in the Abraham story than in the primeval history, and that trend continues in the Jacob story, where God appears less frequently and more transcendently.

2.1.4. Story of Jacob's Family (Gen 37:2—50:26). The story of Jacob's family brings the increasingly sophisticated narrative of Genesis to its consummation with a masterful integration of plot and characterization. More than any other block in Genesis, this is a continuous story, emphasizing its human dimensions. Joseph is the central character, eclipsing God as an active participant. Yet paradoxically, even though Joseph is the most acutely portrayed of all the characters in Genesis, he is in the end the most baffling of all. Thus in many ways the Joseph story is a mirror image of the primeval history, replacing its divine omnipresence and morally unambiguous characters with divine reticence and human ambivalence.

2.2. Promises and Blessings. Genesis is too complex for its overall plot to be analyzed in a brief span. Nevertheless, the scholarly consensus that the book's central core is found in its divine promises and blessings is undoubtedly correct. It is significant that the foundational passages of blessing and promise are stated at the outset of the primeval history and also of the stories of Abraham, Jacob and Jacob's family. Remove these elements, and the coherence of the book as a whole disappears. Thus, an investigation of the book's plot that places these elements in the foreground will take us to the heart of its narrative world.

2.2.1. Primeval History (Gen 1:1—11:26). The main issues that will dominate the plot of the primeval history are summarized in Genesis 1:28, with the divine blessings/commands concerning human multiplication, subjugation of the earth and dominion over the animals. One or more of these elements is present in every episode in Genesis 1—11. On the one hand, the success of human multiplication is emphasized throughout, with formal *tôlĕdôt* (Gen 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10) and other subsidiary information (Gen 4:17-26) witnessing to universal human fruitfulness. Yet, because Genesis is a plotted story, complications attend this human task. For example, the curse on the woman that announces painful childbirth introduces a disincentive to reproduction (Gen 3:16a), yet one that the intensity of human sexual attraction will overcome (Gen 3:16b). Similarly, the goal of human reproduction, to fill the earth, will clearly not be achieved quickly, given the genealogical refrain "and he died" (Gen 5:5, 8, etc.), the reduction of the human population to eight at the deluge (Gen 8:18) and simple human refusal to comply (Gen 11:4b).

Likewise, subduing the earth is made more difficult by divine curses on the ground (Gen 3:17-19), resulting in toil and sweat for the man. Indeed, the announcement that the man will return to the dust of the earth in death (Gen 3:19) suggests that the earth will subdue the man as much as vice versa. The deluge demonstrates convincingly that the earth is anything but a docile environment in which humans will exercise dominion. God's renewal of his creation edict after the deluge (Gen 8:21—9:7), which otherwise develops his previous creation blessing, tellingly omits any mention of subduing the earth.

The development of the third blessing/com-

mand, to have dominion over the animals, is just as complicated as the other two. The *serpent is the first animal to have an independent role in the story, and quite clearly the humans do not master *him* (Gen 3:1-15). That possibility is held out as future hope rather than a present reality (Gen 3:15). On the wider front, the original command to have dominion over the animals was given originally in a vegetarian context (Gen 1:29-30), clearly limiting aspects of the dominion envisaged. Yet accelerating human depravity and divine judgment brutalize human-animal relations to the point where God announces that all animals may serve as human food (Gen 9:3).

Taken as a whole, therefore, the plot of the primeval history develops in complicated and surprising directions. In doing so, it sets the tone for the rest of the book.

2.2.2. Abraham Story (Gen 11:27—25:18). The initial divine speech to Abraham concerning nationhood, land and blessing (Gen 12:1-3) develops some of the plot elements seen already in Genesis 1—11. The general multiplication motif is transformed into a promise of nationhood (Gen 12:2a), and subjugation of the earth is transformed into the promise of land possession (as it is eventually defined). A feature of the Abraham story is that the broad intent of the initial divine speech only becomes clear gradually as the plot unfolds. The knowledge that Sarah is barren (Gen 11:30) does not present an insuperable problem for the nationhood promise, for that is addressed to Abraham alone (Gen 12:1), and there are, possibly, a number of ways to fulfill it. The plot unfolds by first hinting that Abraham might see nationhood coming to him vicariously through his nephew *Lot. While leaving his father in Haran as commanded (according to the MT chronology), Abraham nevertheless takes his fatherless nephew with him. In addition, he seems to be more concerned about Lot's welfare (Gen 14) than he is about his wife's (Gen 12:10-20). Lot fades from the scene by Genesis 15, where Abraham is informed for the first time that he must father the promised heir (Gen 15:4). The birth of *Ishmael to the Egyptian Hagar fulfills the condition of Abraham's paternity, but God then eliminates Ishmael by revealing one further condition: Sarah is to be the mother of the promised child (Gen 17:16). This is a turn of events that neither Abraham nor Sarah finds easy to believe (Gen 17:17-18; 18:12-15). Even when Isaac is born, his life is threatened by the seemingly bizarre divine command to offer him as a sacrifice (Gen 22:2), and he is rescued just in time. Thus the central promise of the Abraham story, which at first seems achievable in several ways, is then circumscribed by conditions that render its fulfillment, from a human point of view, extremely unlikely. Then, when finally Isaac is born, his very existence is threatened by God himself. By the end of the Abraham story, therefore, the promise of nationhood remains viable, but only by the slenderest of threads.

Like the progeny promise, the full significance of the land promise is not evident at the outset, where Abraham is simply told to go to the land that God will show him (Gen 12:1). Even by the time of his death Abraham has only the promise that the land of Canaan will be given *to his descendants* (e.g., Gen 15:18; 24:7), and his only personal possessions in it are a well he has dug (Gen 21:30) and a grave he has purchased (Gen 23:17-19). Possession of land remains as precarious as potential nationhood.

Rather than announcing what he shall become, God commands Abraham to be a blessing (Gen 12:2), ultimately for the benefit of "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). (For a discussion of the Hebrew, see Turner 1990; Alexander 1994). Without denying that Abraham has a number of sterling qualities and is capable on occasions of demonstrating great faith (Gen 15:6; 22:12), he is clearly not a blessing to most of those he meets. His journey to Egypt and his lies concerning his "sister" might bring blessings to Abraham (Gen 12:16), but they lead to plagues on Pharaoh's house (Gen 12:17). This experience is shared by *Abimelech, who is told by God, "you are about to die" (Gen 20:3) when Abraham repeats the ploy. While Sodom receives some blessing from Abraham's hand, this is purely incidental to his main aim of rescuing Lot, which necessitates routing several foreign kings (Gen 14:15). To give but one more example, no matter how much the Canaanites deserve to be dispossessed of their land (Gen 15:16), neither Abraham nor his descendants will be blessing these particular foreigners (Gen 15:18-21).

When the progress of the Abrahamic blessings/promises within the plot of the book as a whole is considered, it is clear that the resolution of numerous complications lies beyond

Genesis. As late as Genesis 46:27 the embryonic "nation" numbers only seventy. The final words of the book, "in Egypt" (Gen 50:20), underline that the promise of possessing Canaan has been deferred (cf. Gen 15:13, 16). And while Joseph might have saved Egypt from starvation, it is done at the price of enslaving the populace (Gen 47:21) and confiscating their land (Gen 47:20). Thus, the nations still await their Abrahamic blessing. This is just one area in which Genesis anticipates the trajectory of the rest of the Pentateuch.

2.2.3. Jacob Story (Gen 25:19—37:1). The conflict between rival claimants to the line of promise is a subtheme in the Abraham story, but it becomes more prominent in the Jacob story. Indeed, conflict begins before the birth of the main antagonists, in the intra-uterine struggle between Jacob and Esau. The divine oracle to Rebekah announces that this presages division between her offspring, with the elder serving the younger, and projects beyond the individual brothers to include the nations that will arise from them (Gen 25:23). The blessing that Jacob later tricks Isaac into giving him confirms the reversal of primogeniture (Gen 27:29) and bestows fertility and prosperity on Jacob (Gen 27:28). As a result, Isaac can only announce to Esau the result of Jacob's deceit: Jacob is Esau's lord, Esau will serve him, and he will be deprived of fertility and prosperity (Gen 27:37, 39-40).

However, the plot of this story confirms none of these pronouncements. In the rest of the narrative, it is Jacob who does all of the serving (*ʿābad*). He not only serves his uncle Laban for his wives (Gen 29:20, 30) but is also hired by Leah to fulfill her maternal longings (Gen 30:16). Yet it is his reunion with Esau that produces the most surprising outcome of all. He tells his entourage to inform Esau that the herds of animals he is sending ahead of him "belong to *your servant* Jacob; they are a present sent to *my lord* Esau" (Gen 32:18 NRSV). Isaac's blessing had predicted that Jacob's brother would bow down to him (Gen 27:29), yet the only bowing done in the whole story is done by Jacob and his family before Esau (Gen 33:3, 6-7). Given Jacob's record of deceit in the plot up to this point, one might well question how genuine he is here, but his words and actions form a graphic inversion of the predictions of service and obeisance found in both the divine oracle and Isaac's blessing.

Other expectations raised at the outset of the story are similarly complicated as the plot develops. The contrast between Isaac's two blessings on his sons should result in fertility and prosperity for Jacob and deprivation for Esau. While Jacob certainly is blessed in these areas, one should not forget that Rachel experiences infertility (Gen 29:31; 30:2). But Esau's fate counters predictions. He can afford to refuse Jacob's initial offer of the gift of flocks with the words, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself" (Gen 33:9 NRSV). And afterwards, the two brothers part company because each has too many possessions for them to live together (Gen 36:7). So against all the forecasts, there is nothing to choose between the brothers as far as material prosperity is concerned.

The third element of division between the brothers also develops in a surprising direction. Jacob's initial flight from Esau's murderous designs (Gen 27:41) results in the two brothers being separated for a large part of the story. When they do meet again, contrary to expectations the two are reconciled (Gen 33:4). When they separate again at the end of the story, this is not caused by animosity (the reader's expectation) but by the need for each to find space to accommodate his prosperity (Gen 36:6-8). Taken as a whole, therefore, the plot of the Jacob story inverts initial expectations.

2.2.4. Story of Jacob's Family (Gen 37:2—50:26). The story of Jacob's family is prefaced by two dreams (Gen 37:6-11). These predict future relationships within the family and produce the strife central to the story's development. While similar, each dream has a precise focus. Assuming that the interpretations provided by Joseph's brothers and father are correct, the first predicts that his brothers will bow down to him and the second that his brothers, father and mother will do so. In keeping with the trend of the book as a whole, it should come as no surprise that actual events are more complicated than that. While the first dream is fulfilled partially by ten brothers in Genesis 42:6 and then by all eleven in Genesis 43:26, 28; 44:14, the second dream, taken as a whole, is unfulfilled. While his brothers bow before him, his father never does. In fact, it is Joseph who bows before his father (Gen 48:12). And his mother never gets the opportunity, for she had already died giving birth to Benjamin (Gen 35:18). At the very least, therefore, the journey taken by the plot of the Joseph

story is not as straightforward as the reader was initially led to believe.

2.2.5. Conclusion. The individual narrative blocks of Genesis have a coherent plot development. The fact that the reader's expectations are rarely fulfilled in a straightforward way is not evidence of a lack of literary finesse, but rather the reverse. The outcome of individual episodes, and of the book as a whole, depends on the complex interplay between divine actions and pronouncements on the one hand, and human initiatives on the other. This is hardly ever straightforward, but never less than interesting (see 3 below).

3. Theology.

Genesis is a narrative book, and its theology is conveyed through features such as its structure, plot and characterization, rather than through set pieces of divine promulgation, as in legal or prophetic texts.

3.1. Theological Implications of the Book's Structure. The basic structural division of Genesis into primeval (Gen 1:1—11:26) and ancestral (Gen 11:27—50:26) histories shows the book's overarching theological interests. The primeval history, which takes the reader from the creation of the universe (Gen 1:1) and humanity (Gen 1:26-27; 2:7, 21-22), by way of a universal *flood (e.g., Gen 6:17; 7:19), through to the dispersal of the nations at Babel (Gen 11:9), indicates its universalistic preoccupations. It asserts divine concern for the whole of creation in general and for humanity in particular. This global focus in Genesis 1—11 provides a significant theological preface to the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), which governs the ancestral history. The universalism of the primeval history is adopted as the subtext of the ancestral history, in which the one family in focus will be the agent for blessing "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3).

The structural device of alternating *tôlĕdôt* and other genealogical information on the one hand with narratives on the other (see 1 above) has theological implications, producing two perspectives on divine-human relationships. The summary genealogies are characterized by an orderly progression from one generation to the next. In many cases, however, particularly in the primeval history, they are also schematic and predictable. For example, individual genealogies often structure each generation in virtually identical ways (e.g., Gen 1:1—2:4a; 5:1-32; 11:10-26) or conform to a simple catalogue of sons born to fathers, with occasional brief comment (e.g., Gen 10:1-32; 25:12-18; 36:1-30; 46:8-27).

Many also show a preoccupation with the number seven. The account of the "generations of the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1—2:4a), which depicts creation as occurring in six days, culminates in a climactic, highlighted and unique seventh day (Gen 2:1-3). Genesis 4:17-24 sketches human descent from Cain down to Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam. Lamech's entry is expanded, uniquely including a speech in which he refers to "sevenfold" and "seventy-sevenfold" vengeance (Gen 5:24). Note that his namesake in the genealogy in the next chapter dies at the age of 777 (Gen 5:31). The genealogy of Genesis 5 moves through ten generations from Adam to Noah, but the seventh generation of Enoch is highlighted. In a passage reluctant to divulge anything other than bald genealogical data, it is mentioned twice that "Enoch walked with God" (Gen 5:22, 24), and his entry alone disturbs the refrain "and he died" appended to all other generations (see Gen 5:5, 8, etc.; cf. 9:29), with the enigmatic "then he was no more, because God took him" (Gen 5:24 NRSV). The table of nations in Genesis 10 contains seventy (seven times ten) elements, if the parenthetical comment concerning Nimrod (Gen 10:8) is omitted. One might also note that the final verse of Shem's genealogy, and of the primeval history as a whole, registers Terah fathering Abram, Nahor and Haran at the providential age of seventy (Gen 11:26). Such interests are not confined to the primeval history. Genesis 46:8-27 lists the sons and grandsons of Jacob, in which the seventh son, Gad, himself has seven sons. The numerical value of his name is seven. And the entire family numbers seventy (Gen 46:27) (see Turner 2000; Sasson). Such schematic genealogical elements convey the impression that there is an overriding divine scheme to human history; the broad sweep of the generations is understandable and to some extent predictable. Moreover, through the genealogies attention is focused on a particular family line that is central to God's purposes, a theme developed in the "seed" motif found in the narratives (Alexander 1993).

Unlike the genealogies, the narratives are neither schematic nor predictable. They are open-ended, contingent on all kinds of details.

Characters are free to act in unpredictable ways and with ambiguous motivations. For example, a reader who observes Abraham showing great faith (Gen 15:6) yet objecting to God's plans (Gen 17:18), or trying to persuade God not to exterminate Sodom (Gen 18:22-33) but obeying his command to sacrifice his son (Gen 22:1-10), would be hard pressed to forecast Abraham's next move and what might motivate it.

These two contrasting perspectives produce a significant theological paradox regarding the relationship between divine sovereignty (as exemplified in the genealogies) and human free will (as demonstrated in the narratives). Genesis does not choose between either option but affirms the necessity of holding both in a theological tension. God's sovereignty cannot be nullified by human freedom or vice versa. The paradox is not explained, but merely asserted through the book's structure (see Robinson; Fretheim).

3.2. Theological Role of Genesis 1—11. The primeval history provides a significant theological backdrop for understanding the blessings and promises that dominate the ancestral history. The major theme of Genesis 1—11 is arguably that of order-disorder, which works at two levels. The creation account commences with a picture of the earth in a state of disorder (*tōhû wābōhû,* Gen 1:2). From this unpromising beginning the ordered universe is brought into existence by God in a thoroughly systematic manner, with the environments created on each of the first three days being matched on each of the next three days by "creatures" to live in or rule those environments. The initial disorder is balanced by the final rest of sanctified time on the seventh day.

Disorder (Gen 1:2)

Day 1. Light (Gen 1:3-5)	Day 4. Light bearers (Gen 1:14-19)
Day 2. Firmament (Gen 1:6-8)	Day 5. Flying creatures (Gen1:20-23)
Waters	Water creatures
Day 3. Dry land (Gen 1:9-13)	Day 6. Land animals (Gen 1:24-31)
Vegetation	Humans

Day 7. Rest (Gen 2:1-4a)

Creation, therefore, moves from disorder to order. This dynamic is reworked in the narrative of the flood, where the earth returns to its primordial disorder, once again covered by water (Gen 7:17-24), before it is once again transformed to an ordered new world, where creation mandates are repeated (Gen 9:1-7; Turner 2000).

Yet the order-disorder motif is not limited to the physical sphere but also operates in the moral-spiritual arena of the human-divine relationship. Genesis 3 marks a transition from the initial harmonious relationship that humans have with God (Gen 1:31; 2:15-17) and with each other (Gen 2:23-25) to a situation of disorder in which they accuse each other and God (Gen 3:12) and are in conflict with the rest of creation (Gen 3:15, 17-19) and where their personal relationships include pain and domination (Gen 3:16). The disorder of human existence is exemplified in Cain's murder (Gen 4:8), in his exclusion to a life of aimless wandering (Gen 4:12-16) and in Lamech's chilling exultation (Gen 4:23-24). The trend climaxes in the judgment on universal human depravity that introduces the flood (Gen 6:5). It is recapitulated in Genesis 11:1-9, the final narrative of the primeval history. Here humanity resists God's desire to fill the earth (Gen 1:28; cf. 11:4) and is judged, receiving the name of "Babel," explained by wordplay with the verb *bālal,* "to confuse or disorder" (Gen 11:9).

The primeval history is thus bounded by disorder. But the physical disorder with which it started was easily reversed by divine command at creation. The moral-spiritual disorder of Babel still looks for a solution as the primeval history concludes. The solution to the human dilemma is provided by the call of Abraham and its programmatic blessings that govern the ancestral history. The ultimate beneficiaries will be "all the families of the earth," the very ones affected by the crisis of Babel (Gen 12:3; cf. 11:1, 9).

3.3. Theological Implications of the Promises and Blessings. While almost everything that happens in the ancestral history can be related in some way to the divine will outlined in Genesis 12:1-3, the narrative clearly does not present the inexorable outworking of a preordained plan in every particular (see 2 above). On the one hand, human attempts to enforce the blessings, or to further them through purely human initiatives, tend to frustrate them. For example, Abraham's decision to take Lot despite being told to leave his kindred (Gen 12:1, 4), passing off Sarah as

his sister (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18) and fathering Ishmael (Gen 16:1-4) might all be defensible human actions given Abraham's knowledge of the nationhood promise revealed to him up to that point. However, each action complicates the eventual fulfillment of the promise as finally defined by God (Gen 17:15; 18:10). The failure of Jacob's initiatives to fulfill the hopes of divine oracle and paternal blessing (Gen 25:23; 27:27-29; cf. 33:3-8) that he should be Esau's lord and that his brother would bow down before him conforms to the same pattern. A complementary relationship also seems to be present: human attempts to frustrate the blessings tend to fulfill them. For example, Joseph's brothers act against him for the explicit purpose of overturning his dreams (Gen 37:20). Yet that very motivation, which results in his exile to Egypt and elevation to power, produces the situation where the first dream can be fulfilled (Gen 42:6; 43:26, 28; 44:14). Thus the dynamic governing the relationship between divine sovereignty and human free will observed in the general juxtaposition of genealogies and narratives (see 1 above) is complemented by the human involvement with the blessings presented by the narratives alone. It also passes comment on the nature of human faith. Faith is never in a state of equilibrium but is always developing, sometimes accepting divine initiatives, sometimes questioning and occasionally straining to understand what that might be.

The blessings and promises are presented as being radically theocentric but not predestinarian. The blessings contain elements that from a human point of view are beyond expectation: for example, the promise that from Abraham will come a great nation (Gen 12:2). That general hope is remarkable in itself without being complicated, as it is, by subsequent divine revelations that it will be achieved by transforming barrenness to fertility (Gen 17:16) and reversing the rights of primogeniture (Gen 17:18-19), to say nothing of its being threatened by a divine command to dispatch the sole child of promise (Gen 22:2). The initiative throughout rests with God, without whom there would not even be a story. But the direction the story takes is just as often decided by human initiative, which makes the story yet more complicated. By the end of the book none of the blessings or promises has been fulfilled. They are inherited by the rest of the Pentateuch, developed by Scripture as a whole, but can only be properly understood when read against the background provided by Genesis.

3.4. Conclusions. It can be seen from the dynamics of the text outlined above that a simple synthesis of the way in which the divine-human relationship operates in Genesis is not possible. However, a coherent development is suggested by the narrative thrust of Genesis. It begins with the ever-present, anthropomorphic God of the primeval history and moves on to Abraham, in whose story God appears and acts in the majority of episodes, with Abraham acknowledging God's presence and actions at regular intervals. In the Jacob story, God's involvement with Jacob and the latter's response is less frequent and more enigmatic. In the Joseph story God hardly ever speaks or acts explicitly, and his involvement is conveyed largely through the infrequent reflections of Joseph (Cohn). Thus Genesis does not present a static theology of God's involvement with humanity, but regardless of his mode of engagement, God is present and active, if sometimes only to the eye of faith. As such Genesis provides an appropriate theological introduction to the rest of the Pentateuch, in which God's freedom to interact with his creation is amply demonstrated and where God's commitment to the world cannot be negated by humanity's ambivalent attitude to him.

See also ABRAHAM; ADAM; CREATION; EDEN, GARDEN OF; ESAU, EDOMITES; EVE; FALL; FLOOD; GENEALOGIES; HAGAR; IMAGE OF GOD; ISAAC; ISHMAEL; JACOB; JOSEPH; MELCHIZEDEK; NATIONS, TABLE OF; NOAH; PROMISES, DIVINE; SARAH; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES. *See* BORDERS.

GILGAMESH EPIC. *See* FLOOD.

GIRGASHITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

GLORY. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; TABERNACLE.

GOATS. *See* AGRICULTURE.

GOD. *See* GOD, NAMES OF; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

GOD, NAMES OF

In the Pentateuch, narrator and narrative indicate understandings of aspects of Israel's God. Their genres include narrative, law and list, rather than theological treatise or philosophical discussion. Therefore, understandings often appear more obliquely, through story or statute rather than through a systematic analysis. We thus will try here to systematize some of the diverse information available.

Three main independent forms and numerous compounded ones in the Pentateuch designate God. The first of these encountered in the text is *ʾĕlōhîm* and the related singular forms *ʾēl* and *ʾĕlōah*, the common noun "God, god, gods" (Gen 1:1 and 811 additional times in the Pentateuch; 2,600 total in the OT; cf. *DCH* 1.277-86; Schmidt 1997b, 1.116). The second is *yhwh*, the proper noun "Yahweh, the LORD" (Gen 2:4 and 1,827 additional times in the Pentateuch; 6,828 times in the OT; cf. *DCH* 4.122-50; Jenni 1997c, 2.523-24). The third is *ʾădōnay*, a combination plural common noun plus pronominal suffix, literally meaning "my lord(s)" (Gen 15:2 and seventeen additional times in the Pentateuch; 439 times in the OT; cf. *DCH* 1.133-35; Jenni 1997b, 1.24). These divergent designations have given rise to much discussion regarding not only the nature of Israel's God but also the nature of its religious documents.

In English, names are usually chosen for such reasons as having been in the family previously, the way they sound in themselves or in combination with the surname, or due to some

parental whim. Any meaning of a name is generally unknown and irrelevant in its choice. Hebrew names, on the other hand, are readily "readable" by those who hear or see them: David means "beloved"; Nabal, "fool"; and Ishbaal, "man of the lord." They can actually carry some meaning instead of just being an arbitrary symbol for the one who bears them. This is evident from the numerous naming episodes in the Bible in which the reason for the name is explained. For example, Dan ("he vindicated") is so named because "God has vindicated me" (Gen 30:6). This is not always the case, however, since sometimes names were chosen for reasons other than their meaning, or at least no significance is attached to the name within the extant texts. Names that do have a meaning might be chosen just because of the intrinsic meaning, not because the meaning has anything to do with the child itself. For example, neither Absalom ("father of peace") nor his father David had a peaceful life, even though the name has pleasant connotations.

1. The Noun *ʾĕlōhîm* and Related Forms
2. The Personal Name Yahweh
3. The Epithet *ʾādôn/ʾădōnay*
4. Other Forms
5. Pentateuchal Source Documents and the Designations of God

1. The Noun *ʾĕlōhîm* and Related Forms.

Cognates of *ʾēl* indicate the divine in most Semitic languages throughout the different periods of language development (*ilu* in Akkadian [*CAD* I/J.91-103]; *il* in Ugaritic [*UT* 357-58, cf. 163]; $ʾl_1$ in Aramaic, Palmyrene, Phoenician and Punic [*DNWSI* 1.53-55]; $ʾlh_1$ in Aramaic, Hatra, Nabatean, Palmyrene and Samal [*DNWSI* 1.57-60]; Ethiopic is the only exception [cf. Murtonen, 24]). The derivation or etymology of *ʾēl* and its related forms is unclear. There is even debate whether *ʾĕlōah* and *ʾĕlōhîm,* which are clearly related, are from the same root as *ʾēl* (BDB, 41-42; Schmidt 1998a, 1.107). Most likely the term has to do with power (Murtonen; Eichrodt, 1.179; see *DCH* 1.259-60, which lists a homonym meaning "power").

In numerous texts reflecting the Ugaritic Canaanite culture, El was the proper name of the titulary head of the hierarchy of deities (as in numerous other Semitic cultures). In Ugarit, Baal's power overshadowed that of El (Pope). It was also used as the name of a deity in some early texts in Old Akkadian (*AHw* 1.373; Gelb 1957, 28; 1961, 140) and Amorite (Cross, *TDOT* 1.243-44; Huffmon, 162-65). In spite of Israel's geographical proximity to Canaanite religious influences, there is debate as to whether the Israelites ever used *ʾēl* in relation to their own deity as a proper noun, which is defined as "a name or noun used to designate a particular individual"(*OED,* 1469; cf. Judg 9:46; Ezek 28:2, where it probably refers to the Canaanite El [Cross 1974, 1.254-55]), rather than as a simple noun. Since Israel was theologically monotheistic, if not always so in practice, the term, when applied to Israel's own God, would for all practical purposes be viewed as a proper noun.

The term *ʾĕlōah* is rarer among the Semitic languages (occurring in Ugaritic, Aramaic dialects [*DNWSI* 1.57-60], Old South Arabic and Arabic [*allāh; HALOT*]), as it is in Hebrew (fifty-eight times in the OT, of which two are in Deut 32:15, 17). Its derivation and meaning are even more unsure (Murtonen [39-41] gives five suggestions, favoring it being a vocative form). That it, in contrast to *ʾēl,* does not occur in any place names or personal names might suggest that in the minds of native speakers there was a distinction between the two forms that we are yet unable to ascertain. The grammatically plural form *ʾĕlōhîm* is best seen to derive from this form, due to the included *h* and also the existence of a separate, distinct plural form of *ʾēl,* namely, *ʾēlîm* (Ex 15:11, of pagan gods).

In the Pentateuch, *ʾĕlōah* occurs only in the poetic Song of Moses (Deut 32:15, 17). It is synonymous both with "Rock" (*ṣûr;* see below; Deut 32:15, 18) and *ʾēl* (Deut 32:18), referring to the uniqueness of Israel's Creator God (cf. Ps 18:31 [MT 32]; Is 44:8) and contrasts with pagan, idolatrous nongods. That *ʾĕlōah* refers twice in the OT to pagan deities (Dan 11:37, 39) indicates that it is a general designation of the divine rather than being reserved only for Israel's God.

The word *ʾēl* as a freestanding form in the Pentateuch is most frequently encountered in the *Balaam prophecy. In this context *ʾēl* is contrasted to fickle and changeable humanity (*ʾîš* and *ben ʾādām,* Num 23:19). God speaks (Num 24:4, 16) and acts in power (Num 24:23) and is not negatively affected by magical practices (Num 23:23) but is able to deliver his people from Egyptian captivity (Num 23:22; 24:8). Even God's lack of action precludes Balaam from taking action (Num 23:8). The biblical writer places

all of these descriptions of the character and role of God in the mouth of a non-Israelite prophet (cf. Rom 1:20).

The three other uses of *ʾēl* are found in Moses' mouth: he pleads to God to heal *Miriam, who was made leprous from speaking against Moses (Num 12:13); sings of the birthing God (Deut 32:18); and, in the sole use of the singular form in reference to a pagan god, declares Yahweh's incomparability much as Balaam had done (Deut 3:24).

The designation *ʾēl* rarely occurs by itself. It more commonly appears either in relation to an adjective (e.g., "the great God") or in a genitive construction with another noun that further modifies it (e.g., "the God of X"). The first such combination is *ʾēl ʿelyôn* ("God Most High"), which in the Pentateuch is found only in the *Melchizedek story, where it is used by the narrator (Gen 14:18), Melchizedek himself (Gen 14:19, 20) and Abram, who links it with Yahweh (Gen 14:22; see further below). Another foreigner, Balaam, uses the adjective *ʿelyôn* in parallel with the noun and also with *šadday,* which will be discussed later (Num 24:16). This could indicate that the phrase had a foreign origin, since numerous ancient Near Eastern deities were associated with mountain heights (cf. the Ugaritic high god El, who was associated with a height, the mountain of the north; *UT* 19.2185; Whitaker, 54). The metaphorical use of the adjective is also appropriate for an important, lofty deity (cf. Deut 26:19). In one case (Deut 32:8) the noun has elided and the adjective alone serves as the subject: he who allotted territory to all nations, paralleling Yahweh, whose allotment is his people (Deut 32:9).

Other phrases describe God's attributes and actions. He is a great, awesome God (*gādôl wĕnôraʾ,* Deut 7:21), whose might and valor *(haggibbōr)* raise him above comparison (Deut 10:17), destroying pagan gods from his seat above the clouds (Deut 33:26-27). His uniqueness makes understandable his jealousy, not allowing worship given to others (*qannāʾ,* Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15). He is not only merciful (*raḥûm,* Deut 4:31) but also gracious (*raḥûm wĕḥannûn,* Ex 34:6), a god who is approachable, not horrible. In contrast to his fickle, perfidious creatures, God is faithful, righteous and true (*ʾĕmûnâ, ṣaddîq, yāšar,* Deut 32:4-5), characterized by being a covenant keeper (Deut 7:9). This is augmented by his eternality (*ʿôlām,* Gen 21:33; perhaps with the connotation of his ancient venerability; Cross 1973, 50; de Pury 552) and the fact that he lives (*ḥayyîm,* Deut 5:26). This awesome God is also one who sees the predicament of a foreign slave-girl (*rŏʾî,* Gen 16:13), who answers one in need (Gen 35:3) and whose intimacy is such that a songwriter is able to call him "my God" (*ʾēlî,* Ex 15:2).

God exhibits a special association with and control over places (Bethel, Gen 31:13), people ("your fathers," Gen 49:25 [cf. 46:3]; Israel, Gen 33:20) and other entities (e.g., the wind, Num 16:22). After all, he is also designated as "El Elyon, creator *[qnh]* of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:19, 22; cf. also the later name Elkanah [1 Sam 1:1] and the eighth-century B.C. Phoenician text in *KAI* 26 A III 18).

The meaning of one description of God is particularly debated. The compound *ʾēl šadday* occurs six times in the Pentateuch (and one further time in Ezek 10:5). The word *šadday* has been variously interpreted as "strength" ("Almighty" in KJV, NIV, NRSV), "mountains" (cf. Akkadian *šadû;* Albright 1990, 108 n. 140; *HALOT),* possibly relating to the mountain dwelling of the Canaanite El as well as other deities, or even "God of the breasts," based on the Hebrew *šad* or *šōd* ("breast"; *HALOT*). Goddesses do supply nourishment for royalty and other gods in Ugaritic (Athirat and Anat, *COS* 1.102.337; Chisholm, 4.47) and Egyptian (Keel, 201-2, 253, and fig. 277) mythology, and a tie between Israel's God, nourishment and breasts is brought out by wordplay in Genesis 49:25. The compound *ʾēl šadday* is used in relation to God in the patriarchal stories (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3), and in Exodus 6:3 it seems to be the regular designation from that period. Balaam uses the term *šadday* in parallel with *ʾēl* (Num 24:4, 16, where it also parallels *ʾēl ʿelyôn;* cf. Ps 91:1) rather than in apposition, as do the other occurrences. None of these connotations of the term can be definitively ruled out, since each one points to characteristics of the God portrayed in the OT.

The plural form *ʾēlīm* occurs only once in the Pentateuch, referring to pagan gods in contrast to the God of Israel (Ex 15:11).

The form *ʾĕlōhîm* occurs 225 times in the Pentateuch and refers to pagan gods (e.g., Ex 20:3; 23:13; 32:1; Deut 4:7, 28; 5:7 and eighteen further times in Deuteronomy) as well as to the God of Israel. Though morphologically plural, the word is regularly used as a singular when re-

ferring to Israel's God. This is shown by the regular use of singular verbs and adjectives in conjunction with the term (GKC §124g; *IBHS* §7.4.3b and n. 16). The purpose and meaning of the plural form is debated, with some seeing it as a plural of majesty, or royal plural (GKC §124g), as an intensification or claim to exclusivity (Ringgren, *TDOT* 1.273; Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 1.405), or as an honorific (*IBHS* §7.4.3b)

Through these numerous occurrences, the writers show many attributes and actions of *ʾĕlōhîm*. He is first presented as a creator (*ʿbrʾ* ["create"], Gen 1:1, 27; 2:3, 4; 5:1; Deut 4:32) or maker (*ʿśh* ["make"], Gen 1:7, 25; 2:2; 3:1, 21), creating by oral command (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 20-21, 24), by differentiating between different elements (Gen 1:4, 7), by setting in place (Gen 1:17) and by molding and shaping material (Gen 2:7, 21-22). He also is a discerning God, evaluating his creation (Gen 1:4, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 2:18; 6:12; cf. 30:6) and also categorizing it by giving names to its different elements (Gen 1:5, 8, 10; cf. 35:10). God is specifically said to *bless or provide benefit for parts of his original creation (Gen 1:22, 28; 2:3; cf. 9:1) as well as those with whom he is pleased (Gen 25:11). On the other hand, he also judges (Gen 31:53; Deut 1:17), curses (Gen 3:14; 12:3; Deut 27:15-26; cf. Ex 22:28) and punishes (Gen 3:23; 6:13; 19:29) those who oppose him.

Humanity, from among all the rest of *creation, has a special relationship with God by bearing his *image and likeness (see Gen 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 41:38), without being equal to God, who is incomparable (cf. Michael ["who is like God?"], Num 13:13). God is with humanity (Gen 21:20, 22; 28:20; 48:21; Ex 18:19); knows about them (Gen 3:5); reveals things, including himself (Ex 3:14-15; 6:2), to them (Gen 21:19; 35:9; 41:39; 48:11); speaks with them (Gen 8:15; 9:8, 12, 17; 17:3, 23; 21:2; 35:15; 46:2; Ex 20:1; cf. Ex 20:19), including with foreigners (Gen 20:3; Num 22:9, 12, 20; 23:4-5; Deut 4:33; 5:24); listens to them (Gen 21:17; 30:17, 22; Ex 2:24); and even calls them when they are separated from him (Gen 3:9; cf. Ex 3:4). God has a special place and provisions for people (Gen 1:29; 2:8-9, 15; 4:25; 9:27; 22:8; 28:4; 30:18, 20) and makes *promises (Gen 17:19) and a *covenant with them (Gen 9:16). They also have obligations to God, since he gives them commands (Gen 2:16; 3:1, 3; 6:22; 7:9, 16; 17:9, 16; 21:4, 12; 31:16, 24; 35:1, 11; Ex 18:23). While an appropriate response to God is reverential awe (*yirʾâ* ["fear"], Gen 20:11; 22:12; Ex 9:30; 18:21; cf. Gen 35:5), he is also characterized by graciousness (Gen 33:5, 11; 43:29), doing good (Gen 50:20; Ex 1:20), healing (Gen 20:17), protecting (Gen 31:7, 9, 16; 45:5, 7) and walking with his people (Gen 3:8). In the midst of troubles, even if the result of their own inappropriate actions, God remembers humanity (Gen 8:1; 19:29; 30:22; Ex 2:24).

2. The Personal Name Yahweh.

The most common designation for God in the Pentateuch, and in fact the most common Hebrew noun in the Bible, is Yahweh. It is made up of the Hebrew consonants *yhwh*, called the Tetragrammaton, the "four-letter" word par excellence. The precise pronunciation is uncertain, since during the Second Temple period the name dropped from active use and was replaced by other forms (for a discussion, see 3 below). It is a proper noun comprised of a third-person masculine singular prefix verb from the root *hwh/hyh*, "be, happen, become" (*HALOT* 2.502, 511-40). Depending on the stem of the verb, which is uncertain due to the lack of original vocalization, the name could be understood as "he is/becomes/will be(come)" (Qal) or "he causes to be/become" (Hiphil; BDB, 218; cf. detailed discussions of the several meaning options in van der Toorn, 1717-23). The latter seems preferable based on its rendition in Greek (e.g., *Ia ouai/e* [Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.6.34]; *Iabe* [Hexapla on Ex 6:3; *HALOT*; van der Toorn, 1711]; *Iaw* [Baudissin, 2.193-215]) and Akkadian (Tallqvist, 90-92; Murtonen, 44) and in some biblical names in which forms of it occur (e.g., *yĕšaʿyāhû*, Isaiah ["Yahweh saves"]), though problems remain in the explanation of the name in Exodus 3:13-15 (see below).

The earliest extant occurrence of the name is in the Moabite Stone (ninth century; *COS* 2.23.138; van der Toorn, 1713), and it also occurs in controversial eighth-century texts from Kuntillet ʿAjrud (*COS* 2.47.171-72) and Khirbet el-Qom (*COS* 2.52.180), on seventh-century potsherds from Arad (Aharoni, 30, 35, 42) and in sixth-century texts from Khirbet Beit Lei (*COS* 2.53.180) and Lachish (*ANET*, 322; for the use of the name in early Israel, see further Miller, 41-43; for inscriptional use, Davies, 366-67).

The name occurs also in several shortened forms. *Yhw* occurs in names from Hebrew inscriptions from the eighth century on (Davies,

269-70, 273, 365-69 and passim) and is the form of choice in the fifth-century papyri from Elephantine (e.g., Porten and Yardeni, 1.30, 58, 71; on an ostracon, 4.114), while the ostraca from there generally use *yhh* (Porten and Yardeni, 4.168, 170, 172, 180). *Yhh* and *yh* also occur outside the Bible (Jenni 1997c, 2.522; Davies, 269, 333, 364 and passim). The name *yāh* occurs twice in Exodus (Ex 15:2; 17:16). Names with possible shortened forms include *yĕhôšûaʿ* (*Joshua ["Yahweh is salvation"], e.g., Ex 17:9; *HALOT)* and *yôkebed* (Jochebed ["Yahweh is glory"], Ex 6:20; Num 26:59). Much more doubtful are *ʾoznî* ("Yahweh has heard," Num 26:16, possibly a shortened form of *ʾăzanyâ*, Neh 10:9 [MT 10:10]; *HALOT)*, *ʾayyâ* ("Where is Yahweh"; *DCH* 4.149), *buqqì* ("proven of Yahweh," Num 34:22, possibly a shortened form of *buqqiyyāhû*, 1 Chron 25:4), *gĕmallî* ("Yahweh has rewarded," Num 13:12, perhaps a shortened form of *gĕmalyāhû*, *DCH* 2.365) and *zikrî* ("Yahweh remembers," Ex 6:21, possibly a shortened form of *zĕkaryâ*, 2 Kings 14:29, itself a bi-form of *zĕkaryāhû*, Zechariah; for discussions of Yahweh used in personal names, see Tigay 1986, 1987; Fowler). In earlier Ugaritic literature, the name *yw* in a fragmentary text (*KTU* 1.1.4.14) has been suggested as being related but probably is not (van der Toorn, 1713). Other shortened forms from Ebla and Mesopotamia have also been suggested (Houtman, 96, 99), though the matter is still under discussion (van der Toorn, 1712-14).

The personal name Yahweh seems to be native to Hebrew, since there are no certain occurrences of it outside of Israel prior to the time of Moses (cf. the Egyptian "Shasu-land of Yhw" from the fourteenth-century text of Amenophis III [Giveon, 26-28]; if this is an earlier use of *Yahweh,* it would be the self-designation of the peoples in the area settled by Israel and later associated directly with Yahweh [cf. de Moor, 111-13]; the occurrence of the name in Genesis, a pre-Mosaic context, will be discussed in 5 below). Its origin is unclear, though ties with Sinai and Midian have suggested that it arose in the south (e.g. Ex 3, 6; Mettinger, 24-28, 39; cf. de Moor). The biblical text gives the name divine recognition, if not divine origin (Ex 6:3). Its sole explanation occurs in Exodus 3:13-15, where God reveals his name to Moses. He is the one who exists (Ex 3:14); he is with the people (Ex 3:12) and wants to be known by them (Ex 3:15). Continued, active presence and relationship, not some existential concept of being, is the message here (de Vaux, 71-72). This passage does not seem to involve a concept of causing being, an argument against a Hiphil (causative) stem of the verb, which does not occur elsewhere in Hebrew (*DCH* 2.511-40; contra Albright 1957, 259).

A full exploration of the nature of the God identified as Yahweh is beyond the scope of this article, but important elements of his character can be derived from Exodus 20:2, the introductory verse to the *Decalogue: "I am the LORD [Yahweh] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." Yahweh has a personal relationship with his people, as shown by the personal pronouns employed. This is in an "I-thou" relationship of person with person; Yahweh is not some impersonal, cosmic force. Israel is particularly mentioned as having this relationship with him (e.g. Ex 3:18; 5:1; 6:7; Deut 1:6)

Second, Yahweh is a God of *grace (cf. Ex 33:19; 34:6), starting Exodus 20 with a promise of his relationship even before giving any of the expected responses. His commitment ("I am . . .") precedes his commandment. This gracious commitment also exists in spite of the people's condition. The Bible presents the scene of Moses meeting with Yahweh on Sinai while at the same time the people worship a *golden calf at the foot of the mountain (Ex 32), in effect already breaking the first covenant stipulation (Ex 20:3).

Third, the Hebrew grammar of Exodus 20:2 suggests that the commitment is fixed and immutable, at least from the side of Yahweh. A verbless clause indicating identification ("I = Yahweh"; cf. *IBHS* §8.4.1) is used rather than a conditional clause (e.g., "I might be Yahweh, your God, if you would only . . .").

Fourth, Yahweh is also shown as a jealous God (Ex 20:5; 34:14), claiming a unique, monogamous relationship with his people: "I, and no other, am your God" (e.g., Deut 4:24; 5:9). This desire for exclusivity between Yahweh and other persons leaves him open to suffering, not only *along with* those whom he created (Ex 3:7-8) but also *because of* them (Gen 6:5-8). One author has suggested that Yahweh's decision to allow a world damaged by corruption to continue rather than to destroy it completely (Gen 9:8-17) necessitates his suffering (Fretheim 1984, 112). Opening himself to his creatures in this way, allowing

a creation to continue after it has shown itself rebellious, makes Yahweh vulnerable, exposed to abuse (e.g., Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11) and grief (Gen 6:6; 18:20). Another has poignantly put it that "God is love. That is why he suffers. . . . The tears of God are the meaning of history" (Wolterstorff, 90). This close relationship is portrayed elsewhere through the metaphors of lover (cf. Deut 7:7-9) or parent, including both father (Ex 4:22; Deut 32:6) and mother (implied in Num 11:11-12; cf. Deut 32:18-19, where Yahweh occurs in conjunction with "Rock" and *ʾēl*).

Other attributes and aspects of Yahweh can, of course, be derived from other passages. In analogy to a human king, he is said to reign, establishing, protecting and uniting his people (Ex 15:18; Num 23:21; Deut 33:5). Related to this role, he also is portrayed as a divine warrior (Ex 15, especially v. 3; cf. Judg 5:11, 31). Having authority to command without explicit motivation other than his own will (e.g., Gen 2:17), he is also pictured as pondering or deliberating over decisions (e.g., Gen 3:22; 8:21-22; 11:6-7) and at times even discussing these decisions with his creatures (e.g., Gen 18:22-32; Ex 32:7-14; Num 14:11-20; Fretheim 1984, 49-51). Although he, as creator, has power and authority beyond that of any human ruler, he is willing to share elements of that authoritative rule with his human creatures (e.g., Gen 1:28; see also 9:2 with its rewording making more explicit a connotation of military conquest [cf. Deut 11:25] in which placing someone in one's hand indicates power of life and death [cf. Deut 20:13]), giving them not only authority but also procreative ability along with all living creatures. Rather than destroying those liable to hurt him, Yahweh shows compassion (e.g., Ex 33:18-19; 34:6-7; Deut 13:17 [MT 13:18]; 30:3) and provides the means of redemption (e.g., Ex 6:6; 15:13; Deut 9:26; 15:15) and forgiveness (e.g., Ex 32:32; Lev 4—5; Num 15:25-28; Deut 21:8; 30:2-3).

There is a clear identification of Yahweh with El/Elohim (e.g., Gen 21:33, where Yahweh is identified through apposition with *ʾēl ʿôlām;* Ex 3:15-16; later names such as Elijah ["my God is Yahweh"]; Davies [279] lists five nonbiblical inscriptions of "Yahweh your God"). It should therefore not be surprising that there are many characteristics and actions shared by them. Examples are many, but Deuteronomy 32:6-7 provides a number of these when it speaks of Yahweh in terms also used of Elohim as Father (see 4.1 below), the creator of humanity (*qnh,* Gen 14:19, 22; *ʿśh,* Gen 1:26) and as ancient/eternal (Gen 21:33). Another element that is characteristic of Yahweh God's being is *holiness, complete separation from sin and all things unclean (e.g., Lev 19:2; 20:26; 21:8). In light of this evidence, and more besides, it is apparent that for those of the period of the Pentateuch, there was no problem identifying one God using several different terms.

3. The Epithet *ʾādôn/ʾădōnay.*

The rarest of these three forms in the Pentateuch, the epithet *ʾādôn/ʾădōnay* ("lord, master") becomes one of the most commonly used designations for God during the Second Temple period. The term indicates the relationship between a superior and an inferior, often designated *ʿebed,* "servant" (Gen 24:9, 65; Ex 21:4-8; Deut 23:15 [MT 23:16]). Developing from this, *ʾādôn* became used as an honorific, or polite form of address (e.g., Gen 23:6, 11, 15; 24:18; 31:35), directly equivalent to the English "mister," derived from "master," and "sir" from "sire" (cf. Jenni 1997b, 1.26).

For Israel, her God, Yahweh, was "the Lord" *(hāʾādōn)* par excellence (Ex 23:17; 34:23), the "Lord of lords" (*ʾădōnê hāʾădōnîm,* Deut 10:17). These regular singular and construct plural forms more rarely refer to Israel's God than does the variant *ʾădōnay,* which usually is interpreted grammatically as a first-person common singular pronominal suffix on a plural noun with an anomalous lengthened vowel in the pronominal suffix, resulting in a translation "my lords." In the Hebrew Bible, this spelling refers to Israel's God and is translated in the singular (i.e., "my Lord"). The first times the form is encountered in the Hebrew canon it is in apposition with Yahweh (Gen 15:2, 8; also Deut 3:24; 9:26). Each functions as a vocative, "my Lord, Yahweh" being the addressee of direct speech, of which *ʾădōnay* might have become a fixed, fossilized form (e.g., Brettler, 42). A similar function operates in all other uses of the noun referring to God in the Pentateuch, sometimes in association with Yahweh (Gen 18:27, 30, 31, 32; Ex 4:10, 13; 5:22; 15:17; 34:9 [see 34:6]) and once, when found in the mouth of a pagan ruler, standing alone (Gen 20:4). When fear of misusing God's name, Yahweh (cf. Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11), arose at the end of the pre-Christian era, it was replaced by *ʾădōnay,* which became for all

practical purposes a proper noun (cf. Mettinger, 15-19). Some suggest that the actual Masoretic Text (MT) was changed in light of this practice, substituting one for the other (Baudissin, 1.559, 2.81-96; Eichrodt, 1.204), but this does not appear likely, since both *ʾădōnay* and Yahweh remain in the numerous verses mentioned (cf. Jenni 1997b, 1.28). This phenomenon is evident in the MT, however, where the Tetragrammaton, which should not be pronounced lest it be profaned, is revocalized. Sometimes it is to be read as *ʾădōnay*, with this word's vowels appended to the consonants *yhwh* (i.e., *yĕh[ō]wāh,* from which we get "Jehovah" through the more archaic English pronunciation of the letters; e.g., Gen 2:4; Yeivin, 58-59). At times it revocalized as *yĕh[ō]wih* with the vowels from *ʾĕlōhîm* (e.g., Gen 15:2, 8). This practice of substitution carries over into the Septuagint, where *yhwh* is routinely rendered by *kyrios* ("lord"), a practice carried on in the NT (e.g., Mt 4:7, quoting Deut 6:16). This continues in most contemporary English translations (except for the Jerusalem Bible), where *yhwh* is rendered LORD.

4. Other Forms.

***4.1. Father* (ʾāb).** Specific designation of God as Father is unknown in the Pentateuch, possibly in order to avoid any sexualizing of the deity as physical begetter, a feature of the religion of surrounding peoples (Ringgren, *TDOT* 1.2-7; Jenni 1997a, 1.10-11; cf. Abiel ["my Father is God"], 1 Sam 9:1; Abijah ["my Father is Yahweh"], 1 Sam 8:2). God does have a fatherly relationship with his children, Israel, who are called his firstborn (Ex 4:22). He carries them as a father carries a child (Deut 1:31) but also disciplines them as necessary (Deut 8:5). Support and discipline between nation and divine ruler gives the father-child metaphor a covenantal connotation (McCarthy). Some apparently theophoric names with *ʾāb* or *ʾăbî* as one element show the same theology (e.g., Abidan ["my Father is judge"], Num 1:11; Abiezer ["my Father is help"], Num 26:30; cf. Josh 17:2; Abiram ["my Father is (the) Exalted (One)"], Num 16:1).

***4.2. Mighty One* (ʾābîr).** This term appears to relate etymologically to the bull (cf. Ugaritic *ibr;* Schmid, 1.19; Kapelrud, 1.43). There is no link with the idolatrous calves made for Israel (e.g., Ex 32; 1 Kings 12:28), since a different Hebrew word is used. Its meaning lies within the field of strength. It is used only once in the Pentateuch, in Joseph's blessing of Jacob, in what could be a divine name, *ʾăbîr yaʿăqōb* ("Mighty one of Jacob," Gen 49:24; cf. Is 49:26; 60:16; Ps 132:2, 5). It has also variously been interpreted as "the bull of Jacob" (Alt, 25-26; Smith, 51) or as referring to the ark rather than to God (Fretheim 1967, 291; Wakely, 1.233), though the latter does not fit well in the context of Joseph's blessing, since a person rather than an object seems to be intended. The power of God evident here is similar to that suggested for *ʾēl* above.

***4.3. Fear* (paḥad).** Fear or overwhelming awe is a natural human response to the Wholly Other such as is God (e.g., Ex 15:16), especially as he manifests himself in such overwhelming events as war (e.g., Deut 2:25; 11:25). Twice in Genesis the noun occurs in a construct formation with Isaac, (i.e., "the Fear of [his father] Isaac," Gen 31:42, 53). Both are used in the confrontation between Jacob and his brother-in-law Laban in the context of other divine names (i.e., "the God of my/their father," "the God of Abraham" and "the God of Nahor." It is the name by which an oath was made between the two parties (Gen 31:53). The word is suggested by some to be etymologically related to the word for "thigh" (Job 40:17), which is twice related to an oath (Gen 24:2, 9; 47:29), with an extended meaning of "family, clan," showing a kinship relationship between God and Isaac (Malul). However, the concept of fear, which is also associated with deity in Akkadian literature (cf. *CAD* M/2.9-11; *AHw* 2.878-79) better fits the context (Müller, 525-26; Wenham 1994, 278).

***4.4. Rock* (ṣûr).** The immovability of a rock makes it a natural metaphor for an unchangeable God, as it is among Israel's neighbors (Albright 1990, 188-89). Its steadfastness makes it attractive as a place of protection (Deut 32:37). In one Hebrew poem, the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, the term is used as a name for Israel's God (Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31) as well as its use of pagan gods in contrast to Israel's true "Rock" (Deut 32:31, 37). His character as judge comes out in this chapter (Deut 32:4-5 in particular). In Genesis 49:24, another word for rock *(ʾeben)* describes God in his relationship with Israel, also in the context of God as strong.

5. Pentateuchal Source Documents and the Designations of God.

Since the eighteenth century, the two divine names Yahweh and Elohim have been key ele-

ments in the discussion about the composition of the Pentateuch (*see* Source Criticism; Pentateuchal Criticism, History of). It was noted that some passages employ one name (e.g., Yahweh in Gen 2:4b—4:24), while others employ the other (e.g., Elohim in Gen 20:1b-17). This observation led to the suggestion that at least two authors were involved, rather than the traditional view that Moses penned the Pentateuch in its entirety (*see* Authorship of the Pentateuch). In the Documentary Hypothesis of the Wellhausen school of source criticism, the author using "Yahweh" was the tenth- to ninth-century Yahwist (J), while the eighth-century Elohist (E) employed "Elohim," as did the sixth to fifth-century Priestly writer (P). When the varied nomenclature was coupled with suggested differences in style and theological perspective, the evidence for multiple authorship was considered conclusive and became the standard understanding of OT scholarship, though there have always been dissenting scholarly voices. Scriptural support for the existence of several authors is sought from Genesis 4:26 (J), where Yahweh is called upon prior to the flood, while Exodus 3:13-15 (E) and 6:2-8 (P) indicate that the name Yahweh was unknown prior to the time of Moses. It is argued that a single author would not have included two mutually exclusive statements.

But is this the only possible interpretation of these verses? Even if it were the only explanation, the problem is not resolved, since at some stage an editor/redactor combined both statements into what exists today, obviously feeling that they were not mutually exclusive. Other explanations have been suggested, however. G. J. Wenham and others have suggested that the Exodus passages indicate that a later editor inserted Yahweh into Genesis where originally Elohim was used (Wenham 1983). This was mainly, although not exclusively, in the editorial passages in the book rather than in the direct speeches. There is some evidence of name substitution in two instances where personal names with El (Ishmael and Bethel) are explained using Yahweh (Gen 16:11, 13), apparently indicating at least two stages of textual development. There are numerous other instances, however, where his suggestion does not work (cf. Alexander, 93-96).

One problem with this use of the criteria of divine names to propose at least two sources is that this procedure does not follow accepted scientific or even historical practice. The usual approach in these areas is to observe something that needs an answer, to form a hypothesis to provide an answer, to check the hypothesis against the facts, and then adopt, modify or reject the hypothesis on the basis of the facts. Changing the facts to support the hypothesis is not good form. Genesis 1, which is credited to P, employs only Elohim, but Genesis 2:4b—3:24 has the composite name Yahweh Elohim, not the simple Yahweh demanded by the hypothesis. Other passages combine Yahweh (Gen 21:1a) with Elohim (Gen 21:1b-5 [P] and 6, 8-21 [E], while 21:7, which included no divine name, is J; Campbell and O'Brien), including at least one case where Yahweh occurs right in the middle of an E passage (Gen 22:11). Upon analysis, the division is not as neat as it has been claimed. There are also logical problems with the proposed textual development. If J and E were the earliest documents and were developed independently of each other, exclusive use of one name or another would be understandable. If P closes the compositional process, either as an independent document or as a redaction of all of the documents, it would have known both names. Why does it almost exclusively use Elohim in Genesis (though not in Gen 21:1b), even knowing that Yahweh and Elohim are the same? Also, why are the documents not consistent, allowing the other name to creep in at times? Even more puzzling is why P would deny the early use of Yahweh in Exodus 6:3 if he was aware of its early use in the existing J text of Genesis 4:26.

There is also another problem with the use of *ʾĕlōhîm*. According to the evidence of widespread and long-lasting use of *ʾĕlōhîm* and related forms throughout the Semitic world, it would have been at least a common noun throughout the period of the Israelites and would have been used to describe their own as well as pagan gods. In other words, those who used Yahweh as a personal name for their God would also have had available *ʾĕlōhîm* to use as a descriptor of him (cf. Miller, 42). Following from this, authors of any of the proposed documents, whether J, E or P, would have been able to use *ʾĕlōhîm*. It therefore cannot be determinative of authorship, and any exclusive use of one name or another must have been determined on grounds other than authorship. U. Cassuto has suggested that the two names—Yahweh, a personal name; Elohim, a generic

noun—highlight specific features of the character of God: Elohim shows his universality and majesty, Yahweh his covenantal intimacy (Cassuto; cf. Garrett, 19). This is observable in some passages, but not in others. M. H. Segal suggests that the alternation is for variety or else because popular usage used them indiscriminately (Segal, 13). This also might help explain some cases, but it does not really explain why there are other large sections of the Pentateuch where only a single name is used. While scholarship is not close to a consensus view, and even less to proof, of the process of composition, the alternation of names is not only explainable by the Documentary Hypothesis.

See also SOURCE CRITICISM; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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GOLDEN CALF

The overlaid or molten calf (*ʿēgel massēkâ*, Ex 32:4, 8; Deut 9:16; Neh 9:18) and the golden calves (*ʿegĕlê zāhāb*, 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Chron 13:8; cf. 2 Kings 10:29) were images of a young bull used by Israelites in worship at Mount Sinai (Ex 32; Deut 9:15-21; also referred to in Ps 106:19-20; Acts 7:39-41; 1 Cor 10:7) and in the northern kingdom (1 Kings 12:25-33).

1. The Calf Image in the Ancient Near East
2. The Golden Calf at Sinai
3. The Golden Calf in the Northern Kingdom
4. The Literary Context of Exodus 32 and Its Relationship to 1 Kings 12
5. The Golden Calf in the New Testament

1. The Calf Image in the Ancient Near East.

The male calf or young bull was a popular symbol of both power and fecundity throughout the ancient Near Eastern world. Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia and Mesopotamia all had their cult images of the bull, which usually represented the sky or storm god. Sometimes the bull image served as a pedestal for the sky or storm god in question, which god would be represented as such (e.g., *ANEP*, nos. 500-501; 537, 835). At other times the image represented the god directly and was the object of worship (e.g., *ANEP*, no. 616).

It is likely that Israel, living in the eastern Egyptian Delta, where the land of Goshen was located, would have been more familiar with the bull cult centers that flourished in their immediate area than with the more distant (though not dissimilar) cults of the Apis bull of Memphis or the Mnevis bull of Heliopolis. Considering the close links between Canaan and the eastern Delta, as well as the presence of many Semites in the Delta besides the Israelites, it is possible that Israel was also influenced by Canaanite bull or calf cults (Kitchen, 160).

A basic premise in ancient Near Eastern manufacture and worship of images was that there was no consistent distinction between deity and humankind. The gods were considered part of creation. By the making and vivifying of an image, the god in question would be brought near and worshipers would take care of him or her. In effect, this meant that the god came under human control. Against this background, it is understandable that Yahweh, the sovereign Creator, forbade the making of images of himself (Ex 20:4-6; Van Dam, 119-21; Oswalt; for Egyptian thinking, see Lorton, esp. 179-201) and why Moses and Yahweh reacted with such anger on seeing the golden calf (Ex 32:19-35).

2. The Golden Calf at Sinai.

2.1. The Function of the Golden Calf. When Israel became impatient because of *Moses' long stay on Mount Sinai, they demanded of *Aaron: "make us a god *[ʾĕlōhîm]* who shall go before us" (Ex 32:1). Aaron obliged by fashioning a calf of gold, to which the people responded: "This is your god *[ʾĕlōhêkā]*, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (Ex 32:4). The verbs governed by "god" are plural (also in Ex 32:8), a circumstance open to different interpretations but occurring elsewhere in monotheistic contexts as well (e.g., Gen 20:13; 2 Sam 7:23; cf. GKC §145i; Joüon §§148a, 150f). The Septuagint and

Vulgate translate with a plural, but clearly one deity was in view, since this was a feast to Yahweh (Ex 32:5). Also, this event is related in Nehemiah 9:18 using the singular.

How did the golden calf relate to Yahweh? Three possibilities have been suggested. (1) It served as Yahweh's pedestal (cf. section 1 above and Bailey, 97-98). No actual figure would have been standing on the calf in Israel, since the people would have associated it with Yahweh and not with a god of mythology. There is, however, no clear biblical substantiation for this view. (2) The calf served as an emblem of Yahweh. Some evidence exists for the bull serving as emblem of the Ugaritic god El (Toews, 52-53). However, this interpretation is more probable when there is an additional representation of the deity, as in the Ugaritic evidence (Mettinger, 191 n. 75). There is little proof for the older, closely allied idea that the image was a war standard of Yahweh that went ahead of the people (Houtman, 3:607; for the calf as a military emblem symbolizing Yahweh as divine warrior, see Janzen). (3) The most likely possibility is that the golden calf represented and was an image of Yahweh. This would be in accord with calling the image "god," with Aaron's proclaiming a feast for "Yahweh" (Ex 32:4-5; similarly, Neh 9:18) and with it being referred to as a "god of gold" (*'ĕlōhê zāhāb,* Ex 32:31; cf. also Ps 106:19-20). Furthermore, the golden calves at Sinai and later at Dan and Bethel were indeed worshiped (Ex 32:8; 1 Kings 12:28, 32; Ps 106:19; Hos 13:2), just as calf images were worshiped elsewhere (cf. *ANEP,* no. 616).

If the pedestal interpretation is correct, it is clear from the calf worship that the distinctions were too subtle for the people (Cassuto, 407-8; see further, e.g., Curtis, 21-25). Also, if the golden calf indeed represented and was an image of Yahweh as far as Aaron was concerned (Ex 32:5), one needs to consider that the people as a whole may not have perceived the calf according to this official view. In their minds they may have been doing what they had done in Egypt, namely, worshiping other gods (cf. Josh 24:14, 23; Ezek 20:7-8; Acts 7:39-40) and therefore also making another god in disobedience to commands such as those found in Exodus 20:3, 23. In any case, Israel did later in her history identify the golden calf with other gods (see 3 below).

Given the popularity of the male calf image in religious iconography at the time, the choice of a male calf as an image of Yahweh is as such not surprising. The power and fecundity that the taurine image represented was claimed by Yahweh for himself (cf. Oswalt, 12). Furthermore, the cloud and thunder that accompanied Yahweh's appearance at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16-19) would have strengthened Yahweh's association with the calf image in the minds of those inclined to it (cf. Mettinger, 192). If, as is not impossible, the calf also had links with the worship of "the host of heaven" (Kitchen, 160), Israel's worship of "the host of heaven" could be understood as starting at Sinai (cf. Acts 7:41-42).

Two other approaches to the function of the calf can be mentioned. The first is to identify it with Moses, since the image would have been a substitution for Moses, who was absent (Ex 32:1, 4). Some have also suggested that Moses himself was connected to the calf when returning from the mountain with a "horned" *(qrn)* face (Ex 34:29, 30; Vulgate; Sasson, 384-87). However, this understanding of *qrn* is unlikely (Houtman, 3.706-8). Another approach has been to identify the calf with the Mesopotamian moon god Sin (Bailey, 103-15). Such an identity is, however, difficult to prove, given the extensive calf worship with which Israel would likely have been familiar from Egypt and Canaan (Toews, 47). Furthermore, both of these approaches fail to account for the worship of Yahweh (Ex 32:5).

2.2. The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf. After receiving gold from the people, Aaron "fashioned [*ṣûr,* cf. *HALOT,* 1016] it with a graving tool [*ḥereṭ,* or stylus, Is 8:1] and made it into a molten calf." This traditional translation (*Tg. Onq.*, LXX) of Exodus 32:4a has been seen as problematic, for a molten image is not made with a graving tool. One solution (*Tg. Neof.*, Peshitta, Vg, NJPS) is to translate the first clause: "cast [*ṣûr,* cf. 1 Kings 7:15] in a mold *[ḥereṭ],*" presumably understanding *ḥereṭ* as a variant for *ḥărîṭ,* "bag" (cf. *HALOT,* 353). But a bag is not yet a mold. Another old solution (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, which also has the preceding explanation) is to understand *ḥereṭ* as "cloak" (Gevirtz; cf. *DCH* 3.317) and *ṣûr* as "wrap up" and thus translate: "wrapped it in a cloak" (i.e., the gold was first collected in a cloak; cf. 2 Kings 5:23).

Three ways have been proposed to retain *ḥereṭ* as a stylus or graving tool in the description. It was used to draw the blueprint for this

project: "Aaron drew it [the image] with a stylus." Thus, the very beginning and end of the project are mentioned (Jacob, 938-39). A second approach is to accept the traditional translation, realizing that the order may not be chronological (Hahn, 169; KJV, NIV). Third, a graving tool may have been used in the fashioning of the gold plating over the wooden core of the image (Cassuto, 412; see next paragraph). Aaron's speaking of a calf spontaneously coming out of the fire (Ex 32:24) should be understood as a lame excuse.

The term used to describe the image in Exodus 32, *massēkâ* ("molten, cast") most likely refers primarily to a wooden or metal statue overlaid with silver or gold (cf. Hab 2:18-19; Schroer, 310-14). Also, the vocabulary typically used of pouring and casting metal *(yṣq)* is not found in Exodus 32. If wood formed the core, then the destruction of the golden calf by burning becomes more understandable. There is nothing physically impossible in the description of the destruction. The enforced drinking of the water with the remains of the calf can be understood as a covenant ordeal or simply as a way of bringing dishonor on this image (see Begg, 470-71).

An Ugaritic passage describing Mot's annihilation by Anat (*KTU* 1.6.2.31-36; trans. in *COS* 1.70:270) is often cited as a parallel to Exodus 32:20. However, both the object of destruction and the literary presentations are quite different, making a meaningful parallel dubious (*COS* 1.86:270 n. 257). There are close and distinctive parallels between Exodus 32:20 and Deuteronomy 9:21, which can best be explained in terms of the latter being dependent on the former (Begg, 474-79).

3. The Golden Calf in the Northern Kingdom.
Albeit briefly, mention should be made of Jeroboam's erecting a golden calf at both Dan and Bethel to keep his people from worshiping in Jerusalem and eventually returning to the house of David (1 Kings 12:26-29). There is no evidence that Jeroboam wanted to substitute another god for Yahweh (he used virtually the same formula in introducing the golden calves as had Aaron: Ex 32:4; 1 Kings 12:28). However, the presence of the two golden calves promoted religious syncretism (cf. 1 Kings 14:9; 2 Chron 11:15; Kitchen), and his statement, "this is your god who led you out of Egypt" (with pl. verb, as in Ex 32:4), was open to being understood as referring not only to Yahweh but also to Canaanite gods (cf. Toews, 41-49). Such an understanding is supported by the strong condemnation of Jeroboam's sin, both in his lifetime (1 Kings 14:9) and after his death (e.g., 1 Kings 15:30, 34; 16:2-3, 7,19, 26, 31; 2 Kings 17:15-16; Hos 8:5-6), as well as by the fact that such calves were worshiped as a deity (cf. Hos 13:2 and 1 Kings 19:18). Still, the archaeological evidence for calf worship in the northern kingdom is sparse compared to the evidence from earlier (including pre-Israelite) periods (Toews, 49-51; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 191-95).

4. The Literary Context of Exodus 32 and Its Relationship to 1 Kings 12.
Exodus 32 is part of the unified pericope comprising Exodus 32—34 (e.g., Davis) and is also integrated from a literary point of view into what precedes and follows it. It is strategically placed after the instructions for the building of the *tabernacle (Ex 25—31) and prior to its construction (Ex 35—40). If, as seems most likely, the golden calf was meant to be an image of Yahweh, then the tragic irony of the events taking place at Sinai is poignantly conveyed by the sequence of the material. While the infinitely patient Yahweh in covenant faithfulness wanted to come to his people to make his dwelling in their midst (Ex 25:8; cf. Jn 1:14), impatient and faithless Israel sought to pull God down from Sinai in accordance with the religious thinking of their day, seeking to satisfy their need for security by keeping Yahweh near to them on their terms (Ex 32:1-6). While God was instructing Moses about the building of the tabernacle and the consecration of *priests for the sacrificial service of reconciliation (Ex 29) so that he, the Holy One, could be with his people, Israel, oblivious to their sinfulness and God's holiness, demanded of Aaron a golden calf with which to worship a directly accessible Yahweh (Ex 32:7-10). While God directed Moses to ask Israel for gold for the tabernacle (Ex 25:3), the people offered it for the image at the command of Aaron (Ex 32:2-3). Underlining this tragic irony and contrast are the remarkable parallels between Exodus 24:1-11, where the covenant with God was confirmed, and Exodus 32:1-6 with its covenant-breaking sin. Both passages mention Aaron (Ex 24:1, 9; 32:1-3, 5), the building of an *altar (Ex 24:4; 32:5), offering sacrifices (Ex 24:5;

32:6) and eating in the presence of God (Ex 24:11; 32:6; for connecting elements between Ex 32—34 and earlier pericopes, see Houtman, 3.589-90).

There is no real consensus among critical scholars on the tradition and literary history of Exodus 32, a situation that calls into question the objectivity of the criteria that are applied. A common approach is to see Exodus 32 as a polemic against the calf worship of Jeroboam, who is condemned out of the mouth of Moses. If this position is consistently applied, then Exodus 32 has no historical value; consequently, a mediating position is often taken (see survey in Houtman, 3.599-606; cf. Knoppers). On the other hand, others have presented evidence for the priority of Exodus 32 (Davis; Cassuto, 408-10).

5. The Golden Calf in the New Testament.

The heinous nature of the sin of the golden calf at Sinai is evident from the fact that it is even mentioned in the NT. Stephen referred to it (Acts 7:39-41) when he addressed the Sanhedrin, implying that if Israel at Sinai had been obedient, the present leaders would have recognized the Christ and not resisted the Spirit, as their fathers had done. Paul refers to the golden calf as an example of the sins the church should avoid (1 Cor 10:6-7). In short, self-styled religiosity that ignores God's directives is disobedience.

See also AARON; IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS; RELIGION.

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GRACE

While the doctrine of grace is certainly a central concept in Christian theology, with roots in both the OT and the NT, the doctrine of grace did not emerge as a focused, systematic theological theme until the time of Augustine (A.D. 354-430). Yet for NT writers, as well as patristic theologians, the Pentateuch contains foundational texts for the doctrine of grace. This article surveys the key words and themes in the Pentateuch that communicate God's grace and the use of the Pentateuch in some later developments of the doctrine of grace.

1. Key Words
2. A Narrative Theology of Grace
3. New Testament Developments

1. Key Words.
From the handful of notable Hebrew words used to connote God's grace in the Pentateuch, two are of special importance: *ḥānan* and *ḥesed.* A third word, *ʾemet* ("faithfulness"), is often used in combination with these two words, but our discussion will focus on *ḥānan* and *ḥesed.*

Found more than sixty times in the OT, the verb *ḥānan* denotes kindness or graciousness in action, often expressed as a gift. In the majority of occurrences of *ḥānan,* God is the subject who offers grace, a gift that presupposes lack or need in the human recipients. In Genesis 33:5, for example, *Jacob praises God's graciousness in having given him the gift of children. Exodus 33:12-23, particularly verse 19, exemplifies the benevolent prerogative of the giver of grace as God speaks to Moses: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Again in Exodus 34:6 grace and mercy are paired to describe God's kindness to needy humans (a link that occurs frequently in the Psalms). The related noun *ḥēn* means " favor." With *ḥēn* the emphasis shifts to the disposition of the one who shows favor rather than the experience of the recipient of grace (Duffy, 19). This is demonstrated by the phrase "in the eyes of" that usually follows *ḥēn,* as in Genesis 6:8: "Noah found favor *[ḥēn]* in the eyes of Yahweh."

Though deriving from a root that is different from *ḥānan* and having an etymology that remains uncertain, *ḥesed* is the word that most often serves as a substantive for grace in the OT (Duffy, 20). The meaning of *ḥesed* is uniquely nuanced and is best understood in the context of familial and community bonds. *Ḥesed,* found nearly 250 times in the OT, cannot be translated by a single English word. Usually a composite of English words is used: grace, mercy, compassion, steadfast love and so on. *Ḥesed* is the disposition of one person toward another that surpasses ordinary kindness and friendship; it is the inclination of the heart to express "amazing grace" to the one who is loved. *Covenant is only actualized between God and his people in the Bible where there is *ḥesed,* for it is a committed, familial love that is deeper than social expectations, duties, shifting emotions or what is deserved or earned by the recipient. More than just an inclination or emotion, *ḥesed* incarnates itself in action.

The human relational context for the meaning of *ḥesed* makes this word especially important, then, when the term is used to describe God's heart toward humanity. God expresses a personal, familial love for humans. His commitment to people goes far beyond what is dutiful or expected. God's *ḥesed* is, in the words of Bernard of Clairvaux, the "love that will not let us go." For example, in Exodus 34:6-7 God describes himself as being rich in *ḥesed* and faithfulness *(ʾemet),* extending his *ḥesed* on to "thousands." (Many English translations add a word, reading it as "thousandth generation," which is not in the Hebrew; the "thousands" are generally understood to mean the faithful ones; see, e.g., Childs, 602; cf. Gowan, 237). The lavish *blessing of the faithful ones is in contrast to punishment of *sin, which only lasts to the fourth generation. These are the first things God says to Moses from within the cloud, as he prepares to give the law to Moses the second time. The very giving of the *law a second time is an act of *ḥesed* love. As Jacob prepares to meet *Esau after long years of alienation, he prays to God, remembering God's many expressions of *ḥesed* in the past. Jacob pleads with God to continue the commitment of *ḥesed* in protecting him from any harm Esau may intend (Gen 32:9-12). Esau's favorable response to Jacob is evidence not only of God's *ḥesed* toward Jacob but of Esau's mercy and *ḥesed* toward his brother.

Indeed, the fathomless *ḥesed* love of God toward his people is meant to elicit worship from them. Deliverance from bondage in *Egypt, the giving of the law and the promise of a new *land are all expressions of *ḥānan, ḥesed* and *ʾemet.* These acts of salvation predicate the great commandment (the Shema) of Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." In the NT Jesus quotes this commandment and adds (from Lev 19:18) a "horizontal" *ḥesed* dimension about loving one's neighbor as oneself. This, he goes on to say, is the path to eternal life (Lk 10:27). Themes of grace are implied even if not explicitly stated in almost every narrative of the Pentateuch. To some of those narratives let us now turn our attention.

2. A Narrative Theology of Grace.
Grace permeates the primordial history of Genesis 1—11. Genesis 1:1—2:3 portrays the great God of *creation who speaks the world into ex-

istence, ordering the chaos into increasingly beautiful and productive life, culminating in the *sabbath. God graciously gifts humanity with his own being so that they are made in his *image, and he gives them authority over the rest of creation. In the creation account of Genesis 2:4-25, *Adam does not know he needs a partner, but God knows and God acts. Adam and *Eve have done nothing to earn God's favor. Life is sheer gift. God's love is sheer gift. This is the beginning of grace, for God initiates loving acts toward Adam and Eve before they know their need.

With Genesis 3:1-24 temptation and sin enter the narrative. Yet "grace is greater" than the sin that mars God's world. Adam and Eve must face the consequences of their actions, but God neither abandons nor totally rejects them. God himself gives animal skins to Adam and Eve for protective clothing before sending them from the garden. Moreover, as God curses the *serpent for deceiving the man and woman, he says "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15). This verse, which speaks of the eventual triumph over the serpent through striking its head, has long been understood by Christians to be the first messianic prophecy of the OT (cf. Paul's allusion in Rom 16:20).

God's grace toward sinners continues in the story of *Cain. First God warns Cain that sin is "lurking at the door" and encourages Cain to master sin before it masters him (Gen 4:6-7). When Cain murders *Abel, God holds Cain accountable for the crime, yet God does not destroy or totally reject Cain. A protective mark is given so that no one will murder Cain. His life is spared, and he goes to live in the land of Nod, where grace is further evinced when his descendents come to include key figures: Jabal, the ancestor of tent-dwellers and herdsmen; Jubal, the ancestor of musicians; and Tubal-cain, the ancestor of bronze and iron-workers (Gen 4:20-22). The father of these three men, Lamech, boasts to his wives of his violence, likening himself to his ancestor Cain (Gen 4:23-24), yet God allows him to be the father of Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-cain.

Though the dominant theme of the story of *Noah is judgment against sin through the destruction of humanity, Noah's story is also a narrative of grace. God does not completely destroy or reject his creation even though "the LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). God protects Noah and his family, sparing enough animals and people to repopulate the earth. The *rainbow that follows the cataclysmic judgment is a *covenantal sign God gives, promising never again to destroy the earth with a *flood. Thus the rainbow is ever a reminder that God's mercy and grace are woven into his judgment.

The final narrative of primordial history, the tower of *Babel, is yet another story of grace in the midst of human sin and judgment, even though none of the terms for grace is present in the text itself. Rather than destroying the people for building the tower, God acts to stop "corporate evil" before it gets out of hand. By introducing many languages and scattering the people, God spares people and the rest of creation from the evil consequences that would otherwise result.

The call of Abram begins a new series of the ancestral narratives of grace, as God initiates a plan that eventually will bless every nation of the earth (Gen 12:1-3). *Ḥānan* is the grace that results in *Abraham and *Sarah becoming parents despite their advanced age. (Note once again the gift-giving nuance to *ḥānan.*) Through their lineage, in due time, the *Messiah will be born, fulfilling the promise of Genesis 12:3. Again and again in the ancestral narratives of Genesis 12—50 God responds to human error and sin with mercy and grace. God is willing to spare all the evil people of Sodom and Gomorrah if only ten righteous people can be found there (Gen 18:32-33). *Ishmael and *Hagar are delivered from death by an angel and protected by God, even though Ishmael is not the child of promise (Gen 21:8-21). Despite his scheming ways, Jacob is brought to a place of eventual transformation by God, which becomes a source of blessing for generations after him (Gen 32—33). When *Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, then undergoes further injustice in *Egypt, God spares his life, raises him to a position of authority and uses Joseph as an instrument of grace to bless and save his sinful brothers. As Joseph explains to them: "Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today" (Gen 50:20).

The story of God's grace—*ḥānan* and *hesed*—continues in the *exodus and the giving of the law. "God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them" (Ex 2:24-25). Passover precedes the Hebrews' flight from Egypt. The sacred rite exemplifies grace, for the people are spared not through virtuous acts of their own but by the presence of the sacrificial blood on the doorposts (Ex 12:1-13). They have nothing to do with their own liberation other than to cooperate with God in leaving Egypt.

Throughout their wandering in the *wilderness God supplies food, water and safety. The pillar of fire and cloud provide direction. When the Israelites repeatedly rebel against Moses and lose faith in God, God disciplines but never totally destroys them. Though the original generation is not permitted to enter the Promised *Land because of their stiff-necked ways, their children do inherit the *promise, for God keeps the covenant he made with Abraham, *Isaac and Jacob. The *tabernacle with its minutely specified details in construction and its explicitly prescribed use for worship, provides for the people a sacred meeting place with God so that they may be reminded continually of the presence of God in their midst. From the vestments of the *Levites to the regulations concerning the incense for the *altar, every detail of tabernacle worship is a sign of God's gracious purpose for his people.

In giving his people the law, along with foundational principles for human society (e.g., the Ten Commandments), God demonstrates more grace, for these provide practical, ethical and spiritual guidance for reclaiming their lives in the Promised Land. The Hebrews had lived with the dehumanizing bondage of slavery for generations. In order to experience the shalom that God intends, the people must learn to see themselves, others and the world from a new, *holy perspective. These are given not for God's benefit, but for the well-being of the Hebrews (Deut 10:12-13).

One final note must be made about the law as an expression of grace. The laws concerning guilt offerings begin with God's words: "When any of you commit a trespass"(Lev 5:14). God does not say "if you commit a trespass." Although the Hebrew text does not clearly make this distinction, the assumption is implicit: God's people will fail to keep the law. The law is given by God with the full knowledge that God's people will fail to keep it despite the best of intentions. Provision is made within the law for lawbreakers to experience the mercy and forgiveness of God. As Paul explains, the law is neither able to make people righteous nor in opposition to the grace that does. Rather, the law is the disciplinarian or teacher that leads people to justification by grace through faith (Gal 3:19-24). Therefore, the law is part of God's grace.

3. New Testament Developments.

Jesus is the ultimate expression of grace to whom the OT points, NT writers tell us. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill," declares Jesus (Mt 5:17). Unlike other *priests who mediate God's grace to humanity, Jesus is without sin, argues the author of Hebrews; therefore, Jesus is able to mediate God's gracious help to humans who are being tempted. He is able to do this in ways merely human priests never could do (Heb 4:14-16). In the Gospels Jesus is described as the Son of God who mediates unprecedented grace to the world. John writes that Jesus came among us "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14) and that he is the one from whom we have received "grace upon grace" (Jn 1:16). Some of Jesus' most notable teachings from the Pentateuch are his grace-filled interpretations of sabbath law (Mk 2:23-28; Lk 13:10-17). Jesus reminds his questioners that sabbath is for the well-being of humanity and that acts of mercy, grace and compassion are always appropriate to the sabbath. He challenges the legalistic, harsh interpretations the Pharisees have given to sabbath law by healing on the sabbath a man with a crippled hand and by healing and delivering from bondage a crippled woman. Jesus brings his critics back to the fundamental grace behind the law as a whole. Jesus' gracious interpretation of sabbath law serves as a synecdoche for his interpretation and fulfillment of the law as a whole. The grace-filled interpretation of the law as a whole is summarized, Jesus says, in loving God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength *and* loving one's neighbor as oneself.

For Paul, the Pentateuch is the primary scriptural source for theological reflection on grace. His letter to the Galatians, for example, includes

typological expositions on grace and faith versus works and the law, drawing from the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. The author of Hebrews similarly hearkens to the ancestral narratives and the exodus as types of the Christian spiritual journey, with numerous exhortations to receive and live in the grace of Christ.

4. Conclusion.

One feature of postmodern thought is a preference for narrative theology. In the narrative theology of the Pentateuch, the reader encounters grace again and again in the primeval stories of Genesis 1—11, the ancestral narratives of Genesis 12—50, the exodus event and the law of Moses. The grace of God that is revealed in these narratives is seen in conjunction with God's judgment of sin. After all, as D. E. Gowan comments, "There is no such thing as mercy unless right is still right and wrong is still wrong" (Gowan, 237). The tendency for many Christians reading the OT has been to see the judgment while missing the grace. This is why newcomers to the Bible often comment that God seems harsh in the OT but approachable in the NT. With help from pastors and teachers, these readers can approach the text expecting to meet God's grace working in tandem with God's judgment, to bring about God's will in this world.

Both Paul and the writer of Hebrews read the Pentateuch with a midrashic preference for narrative theology, seeing in the story of the Israelites a type of the spiritual journey every believer must make. This level of reading is appropriate today as well, when used along with sound principles of biblical exegesis. As today's church leaders attempt to reach postmoderns with the good news of the grace of Christ, they may find rich resources for teaching and preaching in the narrative theology of grace found in the Pentateuch.

See also ELECTION; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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E. A. Heath

GRADATIONS OF HOLINESS. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

GRAIN. *See* AGRICULTURE.

GRAIN OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

GRAPES. *See* AGRICULTURE.

GROUND. *See* LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

GUILT. *See* SIN, GUILT.

GUILT OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

H

HAGAR

Hagar was an *Egyptian woman who belonged to *Abraham's household, serving as handmaiden to his wife *Sarah. She was in turn elevated as mother of Abraham's firstborn (*Ishmael), then dismissed from the family after *Isaac was born.

1. Biblical Evidence
2. Trends in Interpretation
3. Implications

1. Biblical Evidence.

Hagar's name is of uncertain etymology, possibly tracing to Arabian terms meaning alternatively "splendid" or "flight." If Egyptian, the name may convey stamina, deriving from *ḥgr* "fortress" (on analogy with Egyptian spelling of Hamath using Ḥ; cf. Aḥituv, 109, 113, 208). The story of Hagar consists principally of two OT accounts: the introduction and flight of Hagar (Gen 16:1-16) and the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:8-21). She appears again in the context of Ishmael's family line (Gen 25:12), and finally in the NT as Paul contrasts Sarah with Hagar in an allegorical bid for spiritual freedom over against bondage (Gal 4:24-25).

1.1. Old Testament.

1.1.1. Introduction and Flight of Hagar (Genesis 16:1-16). Hagar served as handmaiden to Sarai, wife of Abram. An Egyptian, Hagar may have joined Abram's household as one of the servants he acquired during his visit to that southern empire (Gen 12:16). Such servants as Hagar, Eliezer of Damascus (Gen 15:2) and the unnamed servant who escorted Rebekah (Gen 24:2-66) give evidence to the extent of Abram's prosperity.

Hagar enters the story as Sarai seeks a solution to her barrenness. The plan is successful—or so it would appear. Hagar does conceive. But strife ensues as the pregnant Hagar shows disrespect toward her mistress. Sarai reacts harshly, inducing Hagar to flee.

With language similar to the Lord's later inquiry of weary Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 19:9), a divine messenger gently inquires where she comes from and where she is bound. The messenger (whose voice is equated with Yahweh's voice in Gen 16:13) then directs her to return to her mistress, offering a *prophecy and name for her unborn son. Hagar's discouragement gives way to amazement over this encounter and to obedience in response to God's direction. She gives the site of the encounter a name that implies that she met not merely a divine messenger but God himself (Beer-lahai-roi, "Well of the Living One Who Sees Me").

1.1.2. Dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:8-21). The second episode occurs after the birth of Isaac. Sarah instructs Abraham to eject Hagar and Ishmael, determined that Isaac must not divide the inheritance with Ishmael (Gen 21:10). Dismayed, Abraham responds to confirmation from God and sends mother and child away. As the youth is about die, God responds to his cry by yet another supernatural encounter. The angel of God reassures Hagar, showing her a water supply and promising again to make her son into a great nation. In time Hagar obtains a wife for Ishmael, a woman from her own homeland, Egypt.

In a historical-anthropological study, N. Steinberg examines the economic implications of the tension between Sarah and Hagar. The quest for economic security understandably would drive a primary wife (Sarah) to enforce her son's primacy. Mesopotamian customs would award that primacy to Isaac as son of the primary wife, even though not firstborn of his father (Steinberg, 79; for summary of Mesopotamian texts,

see Hamilton, 444). J. Van Seters proposes a closer parallel with customs of Ramesside Egypt (c. 1100 B.C.). The Nebnufer adoption text provides that a slave's child born to a master would be adopted by the barren mistress, thereby guaranteeing the adopted son's right to inheritance (Van Seters, 405-6). Perhaps the tension presented in Genesis 21 arose from a conflict of international inheritance expectations, Mesopotamian (affirming primary wife's son) and Egyptian (favoring firstborn, albeit by slave mother).

With insights keenly attentive to rhetorical implications of the account, P. Trible seeks to expose the suffering Hagar experienced at the hands of Abraham and Sarah (Trible 1984). Some may disagree with the extent to which she views Hagar as a "suffering servant," with its allusions to Isaiah 53. J. M. Cohen reviews Hagar's dismissal from Abraham's perspective and suggests that, though pained, Abraham would have recalled God's *promises concerning Ishmael and thus would have been convinced that "his son had a far greater Protector than his mother" (Cohen, 181). Perhaps it was out of a desire to soften Abraham's expulsion, that the *Zohar* of Jewish mysticism offered an additional interpretation, suggesting that his later wife Keturah was in fact Hagar, returning under a different name (Hallevy, 7.1076).

1.2. New Testament. In Galatians 4:21—5:1 Paul draws from the Hagar stories to adduce contrastive evidence for justification by *faith. He allegorically recognizes Isaac as a son borne by a freewoman (Sarah) in a faith response to God's promise, while Hagar's son depicts a child conceived by human ingenuity (*sarx*, "flesh"). For purposes of the Galatians argument, Paul captions Ishmael's birth as an illustration of *law performance. His readers are thus urged to embrace freedom in Christ by tracing spiritual lineage to the freewoman and her son of promise. They must not feel obliged to fulfill the law, as though figuratively descended from the slave woman and her son. Although not commenting on Galatians, I. M. Duguid seems to follow Paul's line of thinking as he explores the notion that the Hagar story comprises one of several instances in the Pentateuch where the people of God experimented with solutions deriving from Egypt, supposed solutions that diverted them from a pathway of faith.

2. Trends in Interpretation.

Similarities between Hagar's two departures from Abraham's household have led many to infer that these two constituted originally a single event, mediated by differing pentateuchal sources (Yahwistic in Gen 16; Elohistic in Gen 21). T. D. Alexander reviews the evidence closely and concludes that a difference in divine names constitutes the sole (and insufficient) evidence supporting the single-event theory. Evidence points instead to two distinct events, further eroding the notion of an Elohistic document continuously paralleling the Yahwistic.

S. J. Teubal seeks to envision the Hagar narrative free from an androcentric overlay (Teubal, 193). But this tension plays primarily between Sarai and Abram, not between Hagar and Abram. When considering Hagar's status as slave or concubine, Teubal postulates that neither designation is accurate, suggesting instead that she was a freewoman attached to the priestess Sarai (Teubal, 54). Difficulties with her conclusions have been observed by J. F. Watson and B. F. Batto. (Waters similarly cites evidence that Hagar might not have been in bondage while serving the patriarchal family.)

P. T. Reis questions whether Hagar's relations with Abram were so restricted as Teubal infers and suggests that it was the very extension of the Hagar-Abram liaison beyond barest need for conception that so angered Sarai (Reis, 83-87). Reis relies in part on reading "you" as feminine in "The Lord judge between you [Hagar] and me" (Gen 16:5).

J. C. Exum differs with Reis's reading, instead citing Genesis 16:5 as "an indictment of the patriarchal system, which pits women against women and challenges their intrinsic worth with patriarchal presuppositions about women's role" (Exum, 77). Similarly, D. S. Williams presents a black womanist reading of Hagar: "Hagar, like many black women, goes into the wide world to make a living for herself and her child, with only God by her side" (Williams, 33; for a thoughtful review focusing primarily on feminist and womanist interpretations, see Bellis, 74-79).

Reis argues instead that this is a story of justice and human compassion (or lack thereof), with sufficient parallels to Exodus to suggest that the writer of Genesis viewed Israel's bondage in Egypt as divine retribution for earlier mistreatment of Hagar the Egyptian (Reis, 106-7). This is not a story dealing primarily with issues of male dominance or ethnic purity.

Concerning the Galatians passage, J. L. Mar-

tyn studies Galatians and concludes that Paul did not intend to pit Christianity against Judaism (as Marcion supposed). Rather, he had in mind "the crucial distinction between the two Gentile missions, one observant of the Law and one Law-free. . . . It is a grave mistake to speak here of a polemic against Judaism itself" (Martyn, 188-89). E. A. Castelli concentrates on the nature of allegory as used by Paul in Galatians, with conscious sensitivity to "the complex matrix formed by postmodernism, feminism and liberal biblical studies" (Castelli, 228). Worthy of particular note is her extensive bibliography (Castelli, 247-50).

3. Implications.

Two implications stem from the Hagar account. First, Hagar was singled out by God as one who was very special to him. Two supernatural encounters were given to this one who in the biblical culture would have been classed as an unlikely recipient. Ancient readers could have listed three reasons potentially disqualifying Hagar: she was a servant, a woman and not part of Abraham's ethnic group. The divine visitations issue a clear message: God is at odds with the notion that gender, economic status or nationality may dispose him to disregard a person. Quite the opposite. As maker of all, God values all, in particular the downtrodden. Hagar further stands out as the only person in the Bible who deigns to assign a name to the deity (distinct from calling *on* the name of the deity; Trible 1985, 229), and the only woman receiving a promise of numerous progeny.

A second implication involves the angel's directive that the fleeing Hagar must return and humble herself under Sarai's authority. The angel uses the same root word employed to describe Sarai's mistreatment of Hagar in the first place (*ʿnh* in the Hithpael stem ["humble oneself"] in Gen 16:9 corresponds to the Piel form ["mistreat"] in Gen 16:6). Does the angel callously consign Hagar to return and endure hardship? Or does God's messenger call on her to exchange earlier disrespect with a humble attitude toward Sarai? The meaning "humble oneself" suggests the latter. The angel's instruction need not equate to sanction of Sarai's rough treatment (contra Trible 1985, 227). The angel plainly labels her experience as "misery" (*ʿŏnî*, still another word related to *ʿnh*, Gen 16:11). By directing Hagar to return, the angel marks out a high road of conduct, calling on her to render respect due Sarai by virtue of her position as employer (Gen 16:8, cf. 1 Tim 6:1-2; 1 Pet 2:18). By her compliance Hagar earns a position among those Gentiles of the biblical record who by their actions exceed the piety of certain of their Hebrew contemporaries.

See also ABRAHAM; ISHMAEL; SARAH; WOMEN.

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HAM. *See* NATIONS, TABLE OF.

HARAN

Haran is the name of an OT place and an OT person, though the two words are spelled differently in Hebrew, *ḥārān* (place) and *hārān* (person). Because they are both spelled the same in English and both appear within the space of a few verses in Genesis 11:27-32, they are treated here under one heading.

1. Haran, the Place
2. Haran, the Person

1. Haran, the Place.

Haran (or Harran) has been associated with *Abraham in both the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions because it was the place where the patriarch resided after he and his family left *Ur of the Chaldees (Gen 11:31). From Haran, Abraham, Sarah, Lot and their households departed for the land of Canaan (Gen 12:4-6). Later, Abraham sent his servant to Haran for a bride for his son *Isaac (Gen 24:10). *Jacob was sent there by his mother Rebecca to avoid the wrath of *Esau, lived there for twenty years and acquired Rachel and Leah as brides. The city of Haran was also important since it was the center of the worship of Sin, the Mesopotamian moon god.

1.1. Archaeological Evidence. The ruins of Haran are about twenty-five miles southeast of Urfa, a major city in southeastern Turkey. The site is on the Jullab River near the source of the Balikh River, where a number of major trade routes linking Assyria and Babylonia with the Mediterranean converged. The city is also about sixty miles north of the confluence of the Euphrates and the Balikh Rivers. The area was described by the Roman historian Ammanianus Marcellinus as very mild in the winter and very hot in the summer (*Res gest.* 18.7.5).

Although Haran is referred to in a great variety of ancient sources and a number of nineteenth-century scholars visited and even surveyed the area (see Mez), only a small amount of archaeological evidence exists for the city, and even less for patriarchal times (Lloyd and Brice; Prag; Rice). Surface finds show that Haran was occupied during the Halaf, Ubaid, Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods (c. 5200-3000 B.C.), although excavators did not reach virgin soil (Prag, 70-71). Private houses with stone foundations (similar to those found at nearby Tell Chuera; Moortgat, fig. 1) and ceramics from the third millennium B.C. Early Dynastic II-III and Akkadian periods have been found. Furthermore, a fragment of a Sumerian seal was also uncovered. There is inscriptional evidence about the Sin temple at Haran as early as the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Material evidence for occupation at Haran in the latter half of the second millennium B.C. is scant indeed; only a single goblet base was found, although the excavators estimate that the city may have housed twenty thousand inhabitants (Lloyd and Brice, 83). In the first millennium B.C. a stela of the moon god was found at Asagi-Yarmica, four miles northeast of Haran (Gadd 1951, 108). In fact, some have theorized that the Sin temple was located at Asagi-Yarmica by the first millennium B.C. and that the city may have relocated there (Prag, 77-78). Moreover, the excavations at nearby Sultantepe show evidence of violent destruction in the late seventh century B.C., presumably the time of the conquest of Haran in 610 B.C. by the Scythians, Medes and Chaldeans.

1.2. Ancient Textual Evidence. Haran was probably founded as a merchant outpost by the Sumerian city of Ur in the late third millennium B.C. The name of the city was referred to with the Sumerogram KASKAL (road) and read by the Akkadians as *ḫarrânu* (Heb *hārān*), a term in Akkadian that means highway, road or caravan (*CAD*, H.106-13). Since the moon god Sin (Sumerian Nanna) was the protective deity of Ur (*ANET*, 523-25), Ur merchants probably introduced Sin worship at Haran. Thus, Sin became one of the primary deities in northwest Mesopotamia and the protector of political order. Old Assyrian business and legal texts from merchants living in Cappadocia mention the city of Haran (c. 1940-1780 B.C.). The Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad I (c. 1814-1781 B.C.) was forced to subdue the area surrounding Haran in order to protect the trade routes (Dossin 1950-1951, 109, text 76.33, 38). Soon thereafter, texts from the Middle Euphrates city of Mari in the early second millennium B.C. (roughly contemporary with the patriarchs) describe the general vicinity around Haran as inhabited by a confederation

of nomadic tribes (including Bene-iamina, or alternatively transliterated, Benjaminites) who were often in an antagonistic relationship with Mari (Dossin 1939, 981-96). The correspondence of Iasmah-Adad of Mari mentions the city of Haran and its king, Asditakum (Dossin 1952, 105, text 75.8'). In the mid-fourteenth century B.C., Suppiluliuma of Hatti and Mattiwaza of Mitanni claimed that Sin and Shamash of Haran witnessed their treaty.

Haran continued as a major trading center in the late second and first millennia B.C. The city appears to have had a unique relationship with the Middle and Late Assyrian kings. The city and temple were apparently destroyed by the Chaldeans and Medes in 610 B.C. (*ANET,* 305). During the classical period (see Pliny *Nat.* 12.40), Haran (or Charran) became a Seleucid military colony and a transmitter of Hellenistic culture (especially science and philosophy) into the area. It continued as a center of moon worship. In A.D. 639 the city was absorbed into the rising Islamic state.

2. Haran, the Person.

There is very little biblical or extrabiblical information concerning the name of Haran and his various descendants. Haran was the son of *Terah, the brother of *Abraham and *Nahor, as well as the father of *Lot, Milcah and Iscah. He died at *Ur before Abraham and his family migrated to the city of Haran in Syria (Gen 11:26-31). The name *Haran* possibly comes from the Hebrew word *hr* (mountain) with a West Semitic suffix appearing with proper names, *anu/i/a* (Sivan, 97-98). The personal names *ha-ri* and *ha-ru* occur in second millennium B.C. texts at Mari and Alalakh, while *ha-ar-ri* occurs in a gloss in a letter from Amarna, but their meaning is not certain (Sivan, 222; Huffmon, 204). The term is also found as the initial element in a Phoenician personal name, *hr-b'l* and an Israelite personal name from Gibeon *(hryhw).*

Not only is Haran's daughter Iscah not provided a genealogy in Scripture; the etymology of her name is unclear. It has been suggested that it is either related to *nsk* ("to pour," Cassuto, 277) or *skh* ("to see"). His other daughter, Milcah (probably a feminine form of *mlk* ["to rule"]; thus her name means "princess"), was married to Nahor, Haran's brother. In fact, both Nahor's marriage to Milcah and Abraham's marriage to *Sarah, his half-sister, are both outlawed by later laws (Lev 18:8, 11; 20:17, 20; they are also similar to Amram marrying his aunt Jochebed in Ex 6:20). It thus appears that marriages such as these were legitimate in the patriarchal period. Milcah's connection to Nahor as both niece and wife has fostered comparisons with the so-called "marriage adoption" contracts from the second millennium B.C. site of Nuzi in northern Iraq. These texts describe the marriage contracts that allow for a woman to take on the status of wife or the adoption of a woman for the purposes of marriage. Thus, she took on the status of daughter, daughter-in-law or sister before her status of wife (Eichler, 45-59; Speiser, 25). The primary purpose was to provide the woman with the support of another family (i.e., godparents; Greengus, 22; Grosz, 140). However, the Nuzi legal practice does not appear to be the background for the biblical narrative concerning the marriage of Milcah to Nahor (Eichler, 48-59).

The personal name Haran is found only two other times in the OT. Haran was a man of Judah, the son of Caleb and his concubine Ephah (1 Chron 2:46), and there was a Levite named Haran, the son of Shimei of Gershon (1 Chron 23:9).

See also ABRAHAM; LOT; NAHOR; TERAH.

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HARDNESS OF HEART

Hardness of heart denotes stubbornness and rejection of God's will. It most often occurs in the exodus narrative concerning *Pharaoh's refusal to allow the *Israelites to leave *Egypt. Because God is sometimes depicted as hardening Pharaoh's heart, these passages present a challenge for interpreters seeking to understand how the concepts of God's will and human responsibility for personal decisions relate to one another. In *Deuteronomy hardness of heart takes on the additional nuance of lack of compassion for other people.

1. Terms for Hardness of Heart
2. Causes of Hardness of Heart
3. Hardness of Heart and Egyptian Religion
4. Theological Challenges in Understanding God's Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart
5. Hardness of Heart Outside the Pentateuch

1. Terms for Hardness of Heart.

1.1. Hebrew Phrases. Hardness of heart is among a cluster of phrases for spiritual deficiencies described in terms of parts of the human body (stiff-necked, heavy-eared, hard-faced). Four different phrases in Hebrew are synonyms for hardheartedness. All of these phrases are a combination of an adjective and the noun *lēb*, "heart." The phrase *ḥāzaq lēb* ("to be strong of heart") is most common and occurs twelve times in Exodus and twice outside the Pentateuch in the OT. Second most frequent is the phrase *kābēd lēb* ("to be heavy of heart"), which occurs six times in Exodus and once outside the Pentateuch. A third phrase, *qāšâ lēb* ("to be hard of heart"), occurs once in Exodus and three times outside the Pentateuch. These three phrases are interchangeable. All three are used in Exodus 7 (Ex 7:3, 13, 14, 22) without any apparent distinction, and no difference in meaning ought to be assigned to them. However, proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis have assigned passages using *kābēd lēb* to J and those using *ḥāzaq lēb* and *qāšâ lēb* to E and P (Hesse, 308; Stenmans, 21; Fabry, 427). A fourth, equivalent phrase, *ʾāmēṣ lēbāb* ("to be strong of heart"), occurs twice in Deuteronomy and three times elsewhere in the OT, but not in Exodus.

1.2. Meaning.

1.2.1. Negative Meaning. In the Pentateuch hardness of heart always denotes a negative character trait in humans. It refers to stubbornness that refuses to listen to God or to obey him. This hardness causes people to fail to respond in a positive way to evidence of God's will as manifested by the plagues on Egypt or to the word of God spoken by *Moses or *Aaron. In Exodus it is Pharaoh, his servants or the Egyptians as a whole who are characterized as having this attitude. In Deuteronomy hardness of heart also includes a lack of compassion and charity toward other humans. Thus, King Sihon of Heshbon was hardhearted and would not allow the Israelites to pass through his land (Deut 2:30). Moreover, Moses warns his fellow Israelites not to be hardhearted and thus fail to provide for the needs of the poor among them (Deut 15:7).

1.2.2. Positive Meaning. Phrases for hardness of heart never occur with a positive meaning in the Pentateuch. In fact, the only positive uses in the entire OT are in psalms that use the phrase *ʾāmēṣ lēbāb* to exhort God's people to have hope

and courage as they rely on God (Ps 27:14; 31:24 [MT 31:25]).

2. Causes of Hardness of Heart.

While the phrases for hardness of heart are synonymous, a distinction in the agent that causes the heart to harden can be observed. The Piel of *ḥāzaq lēb* is never used of humans hardening their own hearts. Rather, God is always the agent who hardens a person's heart when this phrase is used (Ex 4:21; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; all in the Piel stem). Further, the Qal of *ḥāzaq lēb* is used only to describe the hard state of a person's heart (Ex 7:13, 22; 8:19 [MT 8:15]; 9:35) or the phrase occurs as a statement of fact that someone's heart was hard (Ezek 2:4). On the other hand, the phrases *kābēd lēb, qāšâ lēb* and *'āmēṣ lēbāb* are rarely used to denote God as the one who hardens human hearts (Ex 7:3; 10:1) but are often used to speak of humans hardening their own hearts (Ex 8:15, 32 [MT 8:11, 28]; 9:34; as well as 1 Sam 6:6; 2 Chron 36:13; Ps 95:8; Prov 28:14). These phrases are used for a statement of fact (Ex 7:14; 9:7; cf. Ezek 3:7, where Israel is described as "hard of heart"). In the Pentateuch the phrase *'āmēṣ lēbāb* is used once of God as the agent of hardening (Deut 2:30) and once of humans hardening their own hearts (Deut 15:7). Outside the Pentateuch, however, it is used once to refer to humans hardening their own hearts (2 Chron 36:13) and twice to exhort humans to hope and courage (Ps 27:14; 31:24 [MT 31:25]).

3. Hardness of Heart and Egyptian Religion.

3.1. Heaviness of Heart. In ancient Egyptian religion the heart was a critical factor for entering into eternal life. The heart was weighed by the god Anubis on a scale. If the heart was heavier than a feather, the deceased could not enter eternal life. It has been suggested that by using the phrase *kābēd lēb* ("heaviness of heart"), Exodus is stating that God made Pharaoh's heart heavy in order to judge him as unworthy of eternal life (Currid). However, since (1) it is only stated once in Exodus that God made Pharaoh's heart heavy (Ex 10:1), (2) this is not the only phrase used in Exodus to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and (3) heaviness of other body parts is also a sign of spiritual deficiencies (e.g., heavy of ears: Is 6:10; 59:1; Zech 7:11), it is not certain that the phrase *kābēd lēb* is a reflection of Egyptian religion.

3.2. Egyptian Expressions for Hardheartedness. W. C. Kaiser (255) notes that ancient Egyptian had several expressions for hardness of heart that parallel the expressions used in Exodus, showing it to have come from an Egyptian provenance and speaking directly of Pharaoh's stubborn attitude. Coupled with the official Egyptian religious view of the Pharaoh as a divine or semidivine figure, God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a judgment on Egyptian religion and a demonstration of his divine power over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt.

4. Theological Challenges in Understanding God's Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart.

4.1. God's Foreknowledge and Human Will. At the burning bush, before Moses confronts Pharaoh, God tells Moses that he will harden Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh will refuse to let the Israelites leave Egypt (Ex 4:21). This is repeated immediately before Moses and Aaron confront Pharaoh for the first time. God knows beforehand what Pharaoh will do, and God himself hardens Pharaoh's heart. This has led many to struggle with Exodus's view of God's foreknowledge. It could be argued that God's foreknowledge and will overrule human will; therefore, Pharaoh would appear to be an innocent pawn in God's plan. Pharaoh could hardly be blamed for what happened to him or his people. The plagues, Pharaoh's death and the suffering and death of the Egyptians would appear to be unjust. U. Cassuto attempts to deal with this problem by claiming that such questions about God's foreknowledge and human will stem from Greek philosophical presuppositions and not from the mode of thinking characteristic of the Pentateuch (Cassuto, 55-57). He claims there is no difference between God's hardening Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh's hardening his own heart. Instead, according to Cassuto, these are both equivalent to stating that Pharaoh became stubborn and do not raise philosophical questions about human will. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a means to punishing him for earlier sins (presumably the mistreatment of Israel). Cassuto also claims that Exodus nowhere states that Pharaoh was considered sinful because of his hardheartedness. This, however, is difficult to maintain in light of Exodus 9:34: "When Pharaoh saw that the hail and the thunder ceased, he sinned again. He and his servants hardened their hearts." Since the Penta-

teuch appears to be making a distinction between God hardening Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh hardening his own heart, Cassuto's solution cannot be accepted.

4.2. Pharaoh's Continual Stubbornness. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is not solely attributed to God, however (cf. chart in Kaiser, 252-53). In fact, the earliest statements in Exodus that depict Pharaoh's heart growing hard are simple statements of fact (i.e., "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," Ex 7:13, 22; 8:19 [MT 8:15]), as a simple state (i.e., "Pharaoh's heart is/was hard," Ex 7:14; 9:7) or as Pharaoh hardening his own heart (Ex 8:15 [MT 8:11], 32 [MT 8:28]). God is not said to harden Pharaoh's heart until after Pharaoh's heart had been hardened several times (Ex 9:12). Even after this, Pharaoh once again hardened his own heart (Ex 9:34, 35). Only beginning in Exodus 10 does God consistently harden Pharaoh's heart. Thus, it would appear that God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a reaction to Pharaoh's continual stubbornness and not God's immutable will for Pharaoh. Though God had foreknowledge of what would happen to Pharaoh and ultimately chose to confirm Pharaoh's hardheartedness by continuing to make Pharaoh stubborn, God did not condemn Pharaoh unjustly. Instead, he continued what Pharaoh already had started. Therefore, although God foreknew what he would do with Pharaoh and it was his ultimate will to harden Pharaoh's heart, God was long-suffering with him until Pharaoh showed himself to be intransigent (Rom 9:14-24). In fact, while others acknowledged God's work in the signs and wonders of the plagues, Pharaoh remained stubborn to the end (Ex 8:19; Kaiser, 255). We should not read the statements in Exodus concerning God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart as implying that God wanted Pharaoh to be destroyed (cf. 2 Pet 3:9; Kaiser, 256). Instead, God never forced Pharaoh to be anything he was not, and the punishment Pharaoh received was justice for his intransigence and his mistreatment of the Israelites.

5. Hardness of Heart Outside the Pentateuch.

5.1. Hardness of Heart in the Old Testament. Hardness of heart is mentioned nine times in the rest of the OT. Only two of these refer to the Pentateuch. Joshua 11:20 states that the Lord hardened the hearts of the kings of Canaan so that Joshua could destroy them as Moses had commanded. Psalm 95:8 reminds the Israelites not to harden their hearts as they did at Massah (cf. Ex 17:1-7). It is notable that there is no reference to the actual pentateuchal passages where hardheartedness is the subject. Instead, Psalm 95:8 applies the concept to Israelites, though they are never called hardhearted in the Pentateuch.

5.2. Hardness of Heart in the New Testament. The NT refers to hardness of heart several times. Some of these relate to the Pentateuch. Matthew 19:8 and Mark 10:5 refer to Moses allowing divorce because of the hardness of the Israelites' hearts. Hebrews 3:8, 15 and 4:7 refer to the hardheartedness of the Israelites at Massah, quoting Psalm 95:8. The only passage to treat Pharaoh's hard heart is Romans 9:14-24.

See also PHARAOH; REPENTANCE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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HARLOTRY. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

HEALTH. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

HEART, HARD. *See* HARDNESS OF HEART.

HEBREW, CLASSICAL. *See* LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

HEIFER, RED. *See* RED HEIFER.

HERDS. *See* AGRICULTURE.

ḤĒREM

The Hebrew term *ḥērem* has been variously translated as "ban," "dedicated," "proscribed," "devoted" and "devoted to destruction." While its most common use throughout the whole of the OT relates to specific and drastic actions as-

sociated with warfare, within the Pentateuch the term enjoys a broader contextual scope. In every context in which the term is used, it carries a religious connotation. As part of the vocabulary of the sacred, it must be seen as integral to the worldview of ancient Israelite religion.

1. General Considerations
2. *Ḥērem* in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers
3. *Ḥērem* in Deuteronomy
4. Development of Meaning

1. General Considerations.

The verbal form *ḥāram* is found fifty-one times in the OT, forty-eight times in the Hiphil verbal form and three times in the Hophal. Of these, thirteen are in the Pentateuch, eleven times in the Hiphil and twice in the Hophal. The noun form *ḥērem* is found twenty-nine times in the OT, including eight times in the Pentateuch.

The root *ḥrm* is found in Northwest Semitic (Ugaritic, Phoenician, Moabite, Aramaic, Hebrew), Central Semitic (Arabic), South Semitic (Ethiopic, Old South Arabic) and East Semitic (Akkadian), generally with the sense of "forbid," "prohibit" or "separate" (for further discussion of the Semitic root, see *HALOT;* Leslau).

As a whole, the greatest concentration of the terms under consideration is not found in the Pentateuch but in the book of Joshua (verb fourteen times in the Hiphil; noun thirteen times). While the book of Joshua does not fall within the scope of the present work, the student should note that Joshua is closely identified with Deuteronomy, both by those who hold its composition to be closely related in time to the writings of *Moses and by those who believe that both books were composed later, toward the close of the Judahite monarchy.

Philological studies of biblical Hebrew are necessarily concerned with the provenance of the vocabulary studied. One seeks to understand the literary genre; the historical, religious and political *Sitz im Leben;* and the linguistic time frame within which a given word is used. For a document such as the OT, written over the course of a millennium, such matters are of particular concern, for it is commonly accepted by linguists that the usage of a given word is likely to change, often drastically, over such an extended time period. For this reason the reader who wishes to understand the use or uses of a particular word within the Pentateuch must decide whether to understand this great work to be from the hand of one writer or to be composed of texts from different hands, written at very different times and from differing perspectives. The article on *ḥrm* by N. Lohfink, for instance, takes the rather common position that Deuteronomy is, or at least was derived from, the text found in the Jerusalem temple in the days of Josiah, while the portions of Leviticus dealing with priestly matters were completed later, possibly from the time of Ezra in the Persian period. On the other hand, one who understands the Pentateuch as from the hand of one author will seek to understand the word in light of its nuances within the span of a generation or two and its later uses in the rest of the OT as springing from the earlier works. Because the terms are used more extensively, though more narrowly, in Deuteronomy than in the first four books of the Pentateuch, Exodus through Numbers will be dealt with separately here.

2. *Ḥērem* in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

The terms are not found in Genesis. In Exodus—Numbers, the verb is found in just three chapters: once in Exodus 22 (Hophal), twice in Leviticus 27 (Hiphil, Hophal), and twice in Numbers 21 (Hiphil). The noun is found in just two chapters: four times in Leviticus 27 and once in Numbers 18. Exodus 22 deals with the person who sacrifices to other gods. Leviticus 27 considers several vows of separation. Numbers 18 discusses possession of certain property by priests, and in Numbers 21 the issue is warfare against the king of Arad.

Because there is so little agreement among scholars regarding the relative dating of the various textual portions of Genesis to Numbers containing terms related to *ḥērem,* it lies beyond the scope of this discussion to do more than place the portions within commonly accepted and designated units and in the order provided by the final form of the Pentateuch. Detailed discussions relating to *ḥērem* in its wider biblical context can be found in N. Lohfink and in P. D. Stern.

2.1. Exodus 22. Exodus 22:20 (MT 22:19) is found within the so-called *book of the covenant and is the first use of the term in the Pentateuch. It is a simple statement that the *ḥērem* is placed upon anyone sacrificing to any god besides Yahweh. The Hophal emphasizes the person's being acted upon, but there is no agent named. The person's new condition is applied without human action, doubtlessly by the deity.

2.2. Leviticus 27. This chapter, which functions as an addendum to the so-called Holiness Code (Lev 17—26), possesses the greatest concentration of the terms associated with *ḥērem* in the Pentateuch. Leviticus 27:21-29 uses the verb twice, once in the Hiphil and once in the Hophal, and the noun four times. This portion of Leviticus 27 discusses the matter of vows dealing with the setting apart of a portion of one's life or of one's property for use by the deity.

Leviticus 27:16-25 considers the implications of a vow setting aside (but not placing under *ḥērem*) a portion of arable land. Leviticus 27:20-21 deals with the specific instance of a person who sets aside a piece of property with the understanding that he or she may redeem it, but who then sells that land to another (unsuspecting?) party. It would appear the buyer would have use of the land until the Jubilee, but at that point in time the land would pass entirely into the possession of God in perpetuity.

Leviticus 27:28 considers the implications of a vow placing under *ḥērem* any property owned by an Israelite. It is immediately obvious that this vow is more serious than that concerning the setting aside of the field discussed immediately above. In this case, being under *ḥērem* placed the object or person in the category of "most holy," prohibiting forever the object or person from being redeemed.

Leviticus 27:29 considers the special case of a person who had been placed under *ḥērem*. This is the only other use, apart from Exodus 22:19, of the Hophal form of the verb in the Pentateuch, and it is quite likely that this text alludes to that passage. If so, it is stating that such a person was not placed under *ḥērem* by a vow but by the activity of the deity. As a result, such a person was not to be considered a possession of the priests, for by his or her actions this person had forfeited his or her life.

2.3. Numbers. Numbers 18:14 simply states that all *ḥērem* belongs to the agents of Yahweh, his *priests. Numbers 21:1-3 relates an otherwise unknown battle between Israel and an unnamed Canaanite king of Arad in the Negev. Within the final order of the Pentateuch, this is the first use of the term within the context of warfare. Like Sihon and Og (see below on Deut 2—3), this king attempted to prevent the Israelites from taking possession of their land. In the accounts in Deuteronomy dealing with Sihon and Og, the instructions for dealing with these two kings came unrequested from the Israelite God. In this short account in Numbers 21, however, the Israelites first approached Yahweh, seeking to place the *ḥērem* upon this king and his people who stood in their way. This vow was accepted by Yahweh, so the Israelites destroyed the people and the cities. No mention is made with regard to the disposition of their material possessions, whether they were surrendered to the priests as directed in Numbers 18:14 or taken as booty by the people. The text ends with an etiology of the name for the place *ḥormâ*, drawn from the same Semitic root as *ḥērem*, which suggests that even the material remains were destroyed along with the populace and its city.

2.4. Overview. Within Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers these terms are usually closely related to the function of the priesthood or to the worship of the deity. Only in Numbers 21 is the term used in the context of conducting warfare against external enemies. As we shall see below, the texts in Deuteronomy deal exclusively with *ḥērem* as relating to national security threats both from within and from without.

3. *Ḥērem* in Deuteronomy.

Aside from the book of Joshua, the terms related to *ḥērem* are used next most frequently in Deuteronomy (verb eight times in the Hiphil; noun three times). Occurrences are isolated to five accounts found within the scope of five chapters (Deut 2—3; 7; 13; 20). Deuteronomy 2:32—3:7 recounts the defeats of Sihon and Og. Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and 20:16-18 decree the destruction of the nations that inhabit the land that Israel is to possess. Deuteronomy 7:25-26 demands the destruction of the graven images of other nations, while Deuteronomy 13:12-18 commands action against covenant breakers within the Israelite community.

Every instance of the use of the term is associated with matters of national security, whether directly in matters of *warfare or indirectly by those who violate the *covenant and thus expose the community to the displeasure of God. The priests are not the recipients of the material remains; rather, the destruction of the enemies' culture is demanded. Only in one instance do the material remains come into someone's possession, and then not of the priests (as in Num 18:14) but of the people. They are in all other instances to be utterly destroyed.

3.1. Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and 20:16-18. The first

passage lists seven nations that inhabit the land provided by God to Israel, and it decrees that no covenant is to be made with the inhabitants and that the Israelites are not to intermarry with them. The inhabitants' religious *altars, sacred symbols and images are to be torn down, destroyed and burned. This separation from these named peoples, together with the removal of their religious cult, is viewed as fulfilling the terms of the *ḥērem*. Deuteronomy 20:16-18 comes within the context of general instructions with respect to the conduct of warfare. This portion concerns itself with a similar list of six nations (the Girgashites found in Deut 7:1 are omitted from Deut 20:17), the Israelite treatment of which is to be more radical than that afforded most nations. The reason given for devastating the cities of these nations is like that of Deuteronomy 7:1-5, namely, to prevent the inhabitants from causing Israel to deviate from its covenant with God. While it was expected that the neighboring peoples would maintain the worship of their various deities, the eradication of the worship of other gods within the confines of the borders of Israel was paramount to its long-term security.

3.2. Deuteronomy 2:32—3:7. This section recounts the utter destruction of the human populations of two nations that stood in the way of Israel's possession of its land. Sihon of Heshbon and Og of Bashan on the east side of the Jordan Valley, together with their people, were subjected to the *ḥērem* and left without survivors. In both instances, their wealth was confiscated and distributed among the Israelites, not among the priests, as directed in Numbers 18:14. It may be that these nations and their material possessions were treated somewhat differently, since they did not constitute the same degree of cultural threat to Israel as might national groups within its future borders.

3.3. Deuteronomy 7:25-26. These verses pick up on the previous demand that the images of other gods within the borders of Israel be destroyed (Deut 7:5). The concern is that an Israelite might breach the covenant by bringing an image or any portion of it into his or her house. Just as the images and those who worshiped them were to be subject to the *ḥērem*, so any Israelite succumbing to the temptation to embrace their religious symbols or any part of them was to be subjected to the *ḥērem*.

3.4. Deuteronomy 13:12-18. This passage (MT Deut 13:13-19) expands upon the concerns of Deuteronomy 7:25-26 for the individual who succumbs to embrace the religious symbols of the nations dispossessed by Israel. It deals with the Israelite population of any city that turns from the covenant with the God of Israel and embraces any other god. After a full investigation, any such traitorous city, together with its inhabitants, was to be treated as the nations dispossessed, that is, subject to the *ḥērem*. Such a city received the harshest treatment of all. Its inhabitants, its booty and its very site were to be destroyed and left a ruin forever.

3.5. Overview. Within Deuteronomy the use of *ḥērem* centers upon the nations that stood in the way of Israel's possession of its allotted land. The pleasure of Israel's God required that only he be worshiped within those borders and that any individual or party that deviated from this monolatry to worship other gods would be considered traitors and be subject to the same removal as the nations that once stood in the way of Israel's full possession of its territory. The context of the use of the term is primarily focused on the nation of Israel and dangers to its survival, whether those dangers were posed by outside forces arrayed against it, by the previous inhabitants who would resist the Israelites' taking possession of its land or by those Israelites within its borders who, because of their failure to live by the covenant ordering the worship of Yahweh exclusively, endangered its existence. Generally the inhabitants or individuals placed under *ḥērem* were destroyed and their cities destroyed or turned to a perpetual ruin. The wealth of the inhabitants, when it is mentioned, becomes the possession of Israel, as in the case of Sihon and Og in Deuteronomy 2—3.

Despite P. D. Stern's arguments to the contrary, within Deuteronomy *ḥērem* was at the least a form of genocide, though it may have called only for the eradication of the inhabitants of a city and not an entire people. His argument that intermarriage and covenant making were forbidden in the same context as the *ḥērem* (as in Deut 7:3-4) does not necessarily carry with it the assumption that there would be survivors to marry or covenant with. It is equally possible that these instructions for *ḥērem* merely countered the less radical solution of absorbing the inhabitants into the Israelite community. Nor is von Rad correct in viewing warfare conducted as *ḥērem* a strictly defensive action. In every case within Deuteronomy, the *ḥērem* is intentional in

its purpose to appropriate and maintain the communal property of the Israelites.

4. Development of Meaning.
Within the canonical order of the Pentateuch, the development in the meaning of the terms seems to move from a capital punishment for violating the covenant, as found in Exodus 22:19, to the forfeiture of property for the use of the agents of the deity and then to the forfeiture of life and property on the part of alien nations that stood in the way of the divine purpose for the Israelite nation. In this order, the common thread of meaning for *ḥērem* is one of complete loss, whether loss of life for the Israelite worshiping a god other than Yahweh, the absolute loss of property made "most holy" by a vow or the total loss of lives and habitations of those who resisted the plan of Israel's God for providing his people their possession. The difficulty with this understanding is the failure of Israel to surrender the material possessions of Sihon and Og to the priests. According to Numbers 18:14, there should be no exceptions to this policy. On the other hand, many argue that the order of the development of the texts of the Pentateuch is not that of its final form. If such were the case, it is still likely that the initial understanding of the *ḥērem* was indeed a capital punishment for violating the covenant, as found in Exodus 22:19. From this forfeiture of one's life for antagonizing the God of Israel came the understanding of *ḥērem* as including the forfeiture of life and property by alien nations, such as Arad in Numbers 21:1-3, which stood in the way of the divine purpose for the Israelite nation. From this use of *ḥērem* as the utter forfeiture of life and property within warfare, the priesthood then associated persons and things vowed by Israelites as a concession to the deity in perpetuity as also being under *ḥērem.*

See also DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF; WARFARE.

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HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics and exegesis have complementary concerns within the task of interpretation. In *exegesis* we focus on the Pentateuch's meaning in itself and aim to recover its significance for its authors and their hearers. We thus try to put on one side our own concerns and interests and concentrate on the Pentateuch's objective meaning, without asking after any relevance for ourselves. Questions about *hermeneutics* begin from the opposite focus. In studying a text we acknowledge that we are not merely interested in its meaning in itself but in its significance for us, and we consciously study it in the light of our interests. These interests, and the commitments and experiences that we bring to the text, affect what we come to see in it. They circumscribe objective understanding, but they also contribute to it. One reason for this is that their concern with the text's appropriation in our own lives corresponds to the text's own concern. "The Bible always addresses itself to the time of interpretation; one cannot understand it except by appropriating it anew" (Bruns, 627-28).

This article considers ten common sets of interests, commitments or convictions that both contribute to an understanding of the Pentateuch and circumscribe it in this way.

1. Christological Interpretation
2. Doctrinal Interpretation
3. Devotional Interpretation
4. Ethical Interpretation
5. Feminist Interpretation
6. Imperialist Interpretation
7. Liberation Interpretation
8. Midrashic Interpretation
9. Modern Interpretation
10. Postmodern Interpretation
11. Conclusion

1. Christological Interpretation.
According to Luke 24:27, on the way to Emmaus Jesus interpreted the things about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with *Moses. We do not know which passages in the Pentateuch he referred to, though elsewhere the NT gives us examples of such interpretation. The Son of Man had to be lifted up as the *serpent was lifted up by Moses in the *wilderness (Jn 3:14; see Num 21:9). The rock from which Israel drank in the wilderness was Christ (1 Cor 10:4; see, e.g., Ex 17:6). Christ is a priest after the order of *Melchizedek, the priest-king of Jerusa-

lem (Heb 7; see Gen 14:18-20).

The chief means of christological interpretation of the Pentateuch is typology. In its full form, typology involves three assumptions. The first is that there is a consistency about God's acts that makes it appropriate to look for regular patterns in them and to picture a coming event in the light of a previous one. The second is that when an event recurs, it takes more splendid form than the first event did. Both these features can be seen within the OT. The Pentateuch itself uses verbs to describe *Abraham's journey to Egypt and back that it will later use to describe Israel's "going down" and "coming up" from Egypt (see Gen 12:10—13:1). It thus hints that Abraham's journey "foreshadows" Israel's. Isaiah 40—55 implies that the deliverance from Babylon will repeat the deliverance from Egypt, only this time people will not need the haste they needed before (see Is 52:12).

When the NT interprets the Pentateuch typologically, it adds a third assumption, that the literal, material reality now becomes a symbol for something in the nonmaterial realm or with a nonliteral sense. Thus the literal rock with its literal water becomes a metaphorical rock, offering metaphorical water. The Pentateuch required the literal sacrifice of a literal animal by a literal priest in a material shrine. Christ is a not a literal sacrifice or lamb or priest in a material shrine, but taking these literal realities as metaphors helps Christians gain an understanding of the significance of Christ's death.

In subsequent centuries, further pentateuchal texts came to be interpreted christologically. For instance, Christ was understood to be the woman's seed of Genesis 3:15 and to be the one to whom the ruler's staff belongs in Genesis 49:10. This further aids a Christian understanding of Jesus. He is the one through whom the snake's work is undone, and he is the descendant of Judah who rules over the people of God as a whole. In addition, a christological interpretation of Genesis 49:10 was simply taking up a Jewish messianic interpretation of the text. In the same way, Balaam's prophecy of a star coming out of Jacob (Num 24:17) was understood in a messianic sense before and after Christ and thus would naturally have been applied to Jesus.

Christological interpretation thus starts from the knowledge that Christ is Son of God and Savior and that his people are God's chosen people. After NT times, christological interpretation came to be used to attempt to *prove* that Jesus was the Messiah to people who did not believe in him. It is doubtful whether this is an NT practice. The aim of christological interpretation in the NT was to help the community that believed in Jesus to understand more clearly who Jesus was, not to convince the non-Christian community that it should believe in him.

The classic modern exposition of a christological approach to the Pentateuch is the work of W. Vischer. Vischer opens his study with the observation, "the Old Testament tells us *what* the Christ is; the New, *who* he is" (Vischer, 7). He goes on to declare that "all the words of the Old Testament look beyond themselves to the One in the New in whom alone they are true." If this is so, one might infer that christological interpretation will be part of all OT exegesis. But we have noted that the NT utilizes christological interpretation more to throw light on the significance of Christ than to throw light on the Pentateuch. In what sense does it fulfill the latter task?

It does this not by revealing unexpected meanings in the text itself but by setting the text in a broader context. There are few hints in the Pentateuch that an individual ruler (still less an incarnate Son of God who is crucified and rises from the dead) will eventually fulfill a crucial role in achieving God's purpose in the world, but in the event this is what actually happened. It is always the case that earlier episodes in a story need to be read in the light of later episodes and that their broader significance emerges in this context. By seeing the Pentateuch's story as one that comes to its climax with Christ, we gain a wider understanding of the significance of *creation, the *promise to Israel's ancestors, the deliverance from Egypt, the events at Sinai, the journey through the wilderness and the events in the plains of Moab.

We can illustrate the point from either end of this story. First, Genesis 1 tells us of God's plan to rule the world by means of human beings made in the divine *image. This intention was not wholly fulfilled. Describing Christ as bearing the divine image, in a fuller sense than human beings do, helps us see how the complete fulfillment of God's purpose in Genesis 1 is guaranteed. Second, we know that Christ is the "end" of the law (Rom 10:4), though that expression is itself an elusive one. Certainly Christ fulfilled the

expectations of the Pentateuch, brought about the fulfillment of that which the Pentateuch itself served and also brought to an end the time when the Torah was binding on the people of God. This awareness relativizes the significance of the reformulating of the Torah in Deuteronomy.

2. Doctrinal Interpretation.

A major concern of Paul's was to establish the true relationship between divine *grace and human obedience to God. Paul perceived that in Genesis God calls Abraham and gives him promises that have no preconditions—indeed, they have no postconditions (see, e.g., Rom 5). A theological question that arose from Paul's attempt to work out the implications of the gospel thus led to his articulating a significant insight on the text of the Pentateuch itself. At a subsequent stage in the argument of Romans, Paul comes to discuss the further theological question of the place of Israel in God's purpose and what came to be known as the doctrine of *election (see Rom 9). Again, his question leads him to significant articulation of the intrinsic theological implications of Genesis and of the story of *Pharaoh's hardening in Exodus.

Over subsequent centuries, Christians came to interpret the Pentateuch in the light of doctrinal convictions expressed in the Christian tradition as it developed over those centuries. The most subversive instance is the effect of the "rule for the faith," the outline of Christian doctrine that came to be embodied in the Apostles' Creed. This allows no theological significance to the OT beyond the story of creation. It has been devastatingly effective in silencing the OT and marginalizing the place of Israel in the church's thinking.

Under the influence of Greek thought, Christian tradition came to emphasize that God was omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (present everywhere) and omnipotent (all-powerful). This leads to a reinterpretation of the Pentateuch. There God asks questions (e.g., Gen 3:9, 11, 13). God discovers things, experiences frustration and has regrets that lead to changes of plan (e.g., Gen 6:6-7). God declares the intention to do something and is then argued out of that intention (Ex 32). In the Pentateuch God does have extraordinary knowledge, the capacity to be in many places and extraordinary power, and has these in a way equaled by no other being. But the dynamic of the Pentateuch's presentation of God's nature, God's activity and God's relationship with the world came to be obscured when the church gave priority to a stress on God's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence. If that stress is accepted, then the aspects of the Pentateuch just noted cannot be allowed to contribute to its presentation of God. God asks questions but really knows the answers. God does not really have a change of mind but only seems to us to do so. Prayer does not make God do anything different from what God already intended.

At a popular level, the God of the Pentateuch is often assumed to be a God of anger rather than of love. This doctrinal assumption stands in tension with the fact that in Genesis God is said to be hurt but is never said to be angry. Similarly, Leviticus with its regulations for sacrifice never suggests that these relate to God's anger. Christian theology emphasizes God's role as judge and accentuates legal categories in working out God's relationship with humanity. Sacrifice then satisfies the need for retribution and satisfies God's anger. Thus when many Christians read the teaching about worship in Leviticus, they give extra stress to its concern with sin and introduce legal categories and a link between sacrifice and anger that does not appear in the text.

Christian doctrine understands sin to have come into the world as a result of the malice of a heavenly being, Satan. Revelation 12:9 identifies Satan with "that ancient serpent," presumably the snake of Genesis 3, and that leads Christians to assume that the snake there is a figure for Satan. This introduces some incoherence into the text, which itself describes the tempter as one of the creatures that Yahweh God had made. Ironically, Genesis does associate supernatural beings with the world's sinfulness, but it is Genesis 6:1-4 that does this, not Genesis 3 (*see* Sons of God, Daughters of Man). Theologically, it is no doubt appropriate for Christian interpretation to see Satan's activity behind the snake's work. Furthermore, other parts of the OT do describe dynamic powers of disorder as snakelike (e.g., Job 26:13; Is 27:1), and Genesis may indeed see the snake as related to such powers of disorder. But introducing Satan into the text of Genesis 3 obscures not only the exegesis of the text but its significance for Christian readers and for Christian doctrine.

Christian doctrine also emphasizes that God created the world out of nothing. Christian interpretation of Genesis 1 has therefore wanted to establish that Genesis 1:1-2 made this affirmation. Again, this has skewed understanding of the inherent theological significance of Genesis 1. The fact that it is not clear whether God creates "out of nothing" reflects the fact that Genesis's theological agenda lies elsewhere (*see* Creation).

F. Watson has argued that "an exegesis oriented primarily towards theological issues" should allow the framework of "systematic theology" or "Christian doctrine" to shape theological exegesis (see, e.g., Watson, 1). However, this introduces alien priorities and insights into the text. Like any other hermeneutical starting point, the framework of Christian doctrine may be allowed to open up questions, but it must not be allowed to determine answers.

3. Devotional Interpretation.

By devotional interpretation I mean an interest in the Pentateuch that focuses on its significance for people's personal lives, especially their personal relationship with God. The stories of *Abraham, *Isaac, *Jacob and *Joseph have been the main focus of this interpretation, in partial correspondence to the NT references to these characters. Readers have also found devotional material in Genesis 1—11 and in Exodus, though people who have sought to read through the Pentateuch with this interest in mind have usually flagged by the time they reach the middle of Leviticus. The approach thus shows that the encouragement of individual relationships with God may have been one purpose of the Pentateuch but that it was evidently not the sole purpose. On the other hand, the approach corresponds more closely to the nature of the text than do traditional scholarly interpretations of Genesis 12—50, which have focused predominantly on matters such as the significance of the chapters for questions concerning the history of (pre-)Israelite clans and the development of (pre-)Israelite *religion.

Two classic Christian devotional interpretations are the works of F. B. Meyer and Watchman Nee (Nee To-sheng). Meyer wrote "a devotional commentary" on the whole Pentateuch (1955) and a series of studies of people such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Nee wrote an influential exposition of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (1967). Nee suggested that the lives of these three men illustrated three ways in which God works in us. More recent Jewish readings of Genesis 12—50 have read these especially for their insight on personal growth in the context of family relationships (e.g., Rosenblatt and Horwitz; Cohen).

The NT suggests two principles of approach for devotional interpretation. In Romans and Galatians, Paul points to a key feature of the life of Israel's ancestors, specifically of Abraham. The ancestors' relationship with God was based on God's grace. For their part, it was based simply on trust in God. In James and in Hebrews 11, the emphasis lies less on the initiative of grace than on the way in which the response of trust expresses itself in acts of commitment to God and to other people. These two emphases complement each other, and both give access to important features of the stories in Genesis.

Christian devotional reading of Genesis has often been formally committed to the conviction that grace is the founding principle of Christian living. Yet paradoxically it has had difficulty recognizing that this makes the Pentateuch as relaxed about the weaknesses of Israel's ancestors as it is accepting of the absence of any moral basis for God's choice of Israel (see Deut 7). Indeed, the point needs expressing more radically than that. It is not merely that Genesis records the moral failings of people such as Abraham. It is that it is not very interested in moral evaluation of them at all. Thus when Luther and Calvin offer different evaluations of Abraham and *Sarah's treatment of *Hagar in their commentaries on Genesis, it is difficult to say which of them is right, because Genesis does not focus on this question. The mismatch between some devotional interpretation of Genesis and the text of Genesis itself draws attention to the radical nature of Genesis's understanding of God's grace.

Paul also offers what we might call a devotional reading of the stories of Israel's rebellions against God in Exodus and Numbers (see 1 Cor 10:1-11), and this draws our attention to another way in which devotional reading finds itself broadened by the Pentateuch itself. The Pentateuch is the story of *Israel's* origins. Its focus lies on the community. We have noted that a devotional interpretation could open up the possibility of an appropriately individual reading of Genesis 12—50. But another reason why in

other respects devotional reading finds that the Pentateuch does not conform to its expectations is that the Pentateuch instinctively thinks corporately, as modern readers do not. It thus has the potential to rescue devotional reading from some of its individualism.

4. Ethical Interpretation.

Instruction about behavior has a prominent place in the Pentateuch, and the OT itself suggests at least three possible approaches to such instruction. These are exegetical, logical and prophetic. We may illustrate these from the interpretation of the *sabbath command. The exegetical approach asks about the implications of the actual words in the command. Exactly what counts as "work" on the sabbath? Who are the "you" who are to observe the sabbath? Discovering the answers to such questions puts believers in a position to commit themselves to proper obedience.

The logical approach asks what principles underlie a command. The two versions of the command in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 suggest different principles: the nature of God's creative activity and the nature of God's liberation of Israel. If we understand the principles that a command embodies, we may be better able to understand a command's application in a different setting from the one in which it was uttered.

The prophetic approach is more intuitive in asking what a command means in such a new setting. Within the Pentateuch the idea of a sabbath day stimulates the idea of a sabbath year for the land and for the poor (Lev 25; Deut 15). Isaiah 1:12-20 declares that in some contexts the sabbath may mean nothing because it has ceased to accompany a concern for the needy. In marked contrast, the people's opposition to the sabbath is critiqued in Amos 8:5 because it is a marker of their preoccupation with making money (cf. Neh 13). In Isaiah 56:1-8 observing the sabbath is the very index of commitment to Yahweh (cf. Is 58:13; Jer 17:19-27; Ezek 20). In each case the implication of the sabbath command seems to be perceived by inspiration rather than by the use of logic. Mere reason could not generate the insight expressed here.

All three approaches to the task of perceiving the ethical significance of the Pentateuch are still used. Jewish people still debate the implications of words such as "work" in the sabbath command; for instance, does switching on an electric light count as kindling a fire (cf. Ex 35:3)? Often the exegetical approach works backwards in the sense that Jewish people or Christians have come to believe that a certain practice is required or forbidden, and exegesis becomes the means of establishing the fact. For Jewish people the question, "How do we know this?" is the question that "is asked on almost every page of the Talmuds" and usually answered through exegesis of texts (Harris, xi-xii).

One example is the conviction that people should not testify for or against their relatives, which came to be inferred (e.g.) from Deuteronomy 24:16, while another example is the variety of bases for reckoning that it is permitted to circumcise on the sabbath (Harris, 8-9, 29-32). For Christians, the question particularly arises in connection with important postbiblical moral questions such as the propriety of homosexual acts or of abortion. Again people seek to justify stances by reference back to biblical texts.

Of course, such interpretation does not always work from the conclusion backward; for instance, Jewish interpreters did not decide a priori to ban cheeseburgers or milk in coffee. It often works from the text forward, in this case the text prohibiting cooking a kid in its mother's milk. The threefold repetition of this text in the Pentateuch suggests that it must be very important and therefore requires considerable reflection.

The logical approach has been the strength of the work of C. J. H. Wright on the interpretation of the Torah (see, e.g., Wright, 114-16). He takes individual biddings in the Torah as "paradigms" of the embodiment of God's will in the world. They give us concrete examples of what this embodiment looks like. He then suggests a series of questions to ask in their interpretation: Does a given bidding form part of criminal, civil, family, cultic or compassionate instruction? How does it function in the society and fit into the social system? What is its objective in that context? And how can this objective be implemented in our own social context? Applied to the sabbath command, the logical approach generates a concern for (e.g.) the providing of rest for members of one's family, employees and animals, and invites us to ask what the providing of this rest looks like in our context.

The prophetic approach, rather, asks what other needs the sabbath command might speak to in our different social context. One need is

the workaholism of some Western countries. As far as we can tell, this was not a feature of life in Israel, and the sabbath command was not designed to address it, but it has the potential to do so. Another example of this prophetic hermeneutic applied to the Pentateuch was the Christian suggestion that the year 2000 should be treated as a Jubilee year and marked by the remission of debts from third-world countries to Western governments and banks. Neither the marking of a millennial year nor the remitting of national debts is a feature of the Jubilee in the Pentateuch, but the suggestion represents a creative, intuitive perception that a practice commended by the Pentateuch could thus address needs in a very different social context.

An ethical issue that modern Western Christians often raise in connection with the Pentateuch is the question of war-making. The Pentateuch does raise ethical questions about war-making, but it does not see war-making in itself as an ethical problem in the way that modern Western Christians do, just as traditional Christianity has not seen war-making as a problem in itself (*see* Warfare). Several hermeneutical questions are raised by this fact.

One is that modern Western Christians commonly begin their discussion of war from the "just war" tradition, which has little overlap with the approach of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch thus has the potential to critique the just-war approach in principle and not simply in detail. A second question is that it is mainly Christians since the advent of modernity who have felt that war is inherently an ethical problem. The Pentateuch thus has the potential to critique modernity and help Christians see where they are shaped by the thinking of their age rather than by Scripture. A third is that it is mainly Christians within the main war-making nations of the modern world who feel that war is inherently a problem. This suggests that the Pentateuch with its very different stance on this question has the potential to help them reflect on factors that have caused them to have this problem. Presumably the problem lies in their own complicity in war. Feeling uneasy about the Pentateuch's stance on war helps them to feel less guilty about the extent to which their own lives are built on it.

5. Feminist Interpretation.

Feminist interpretation starts from women's experience of life, specifically their experience of being held down and held back by men. The starting point for feminist interpretation of the Pentateuch was the accounts of the origins of man and woman in Genesis 1—3. The fact that the woman was formed after the man and for the man had been taken to imply that the woman was intrinsically secondary. The fact that she was the first to succumb to the snake's temptation had been taken to imply her intrinsic weakness. The declaration that after this the man would rule over the woman had been part of the justification for belief in male "headship."

Feminist interpretation begins from the conviction that women are as fully human as men and are intellectually, morally and spiritually as strong as men. It then reexamines the biblical text and suggests that the interpretation of Scripture has been affected by patriarchalism. Patriarchalism is the assumption that human life should be lived in the light of a hierarchy of relationships that gives authority to certain groups, such as the educated, the members of certain families or particularly the men. Patriarchal interpretation ignores the implications of the creation story in Genesis 1, which describes men and women together as made in God's *image. It also reads patriarchal convictions into Genesis 2. For instance, there is no reason to infer that the creation of the woman after the man in Genesis 2 implies her inferiority (*see* Eve). If this were so, we might have to infer that the creation of human beings after the animals in Genesis 1 implies that the human beings are inferior to the animals. Patriarchal interpretation also reads patriarchal convictions into the story of disobedience in Genesis 3, where the headship of men over women is not a divinely intended principle of creation but a regrettable consequence of human disobedience.

Feminism also resists the notion that women should be defined by their capacity to bear children, and it has thus emphasized the relational implications of the understanding of the complementarity of men and women in Genesis. But Genesis 1—3 does emphasize the significance of procreation, and it seems that here the agenda of *Genesis and that of feminism diverge. One issue in the debate over feminist interpretation is thus the question regarding how far the problem lies in patriarchal interpretation of an egalitarian text and how far the text's own agenda does not correspond to feminism's.

Feminist interpretation also looks more broadly at the way women feature in the pentateuchal narrative. It considers the way God relates to people such as Sarah and Hagar and observes that women play a key role in the initiation of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and in the response to that event (Ex 1—2; 15). Once more, it notes the potential for reclaiming the Pentateuch for women by focusing on the role of women and on the way God relates to them. It also notes the downside to the pentateuchal narrative. This involves recognizing the way women are still marginalized in the story, even if they are less invisible than they have been treated. A symbol of this marginalizing is that the sign of the Abrahamic *covenant is one that only men can receive, *circumcision. At worst, the downside involves recognizing that women are actually oppressed by the hand of heroes such as Abraham and Moses. The story of a woman such as Hagar also raises the question whether they are oppressed by God, though this same story also has God and the narrator giving Hagar a special position and a special covenantal relationship.

Feminist interpretation of the teaching material in the Pentateuch has similarly drawn attention to ways in which the account of the position of women in society accepts or encourages a situation in which women have less freedom and power than men and are subject to constraints. It also notes ways in which texts seek to offer greater scope to women and to limit the constraints that society imposes on them. Deuteronomy, for example, continually emphasizes that the privileges and the responsibilities of the covenant apply to mothers, wives and daughters as well as to fathers, husbands and sons. Feminist interpretation has asked questions about the pollution teaching in the Pentateuch and has perceived male unease about women's *sexuality in the regulations concerning menstruation and childbirth.

Feminist interpretation sometimes offers a new perspective on old problems. Genesis 12—26, for example, includes three stories about an ancestor (conventionally known as a "patriarch"!) who passes off his wife as his sister. The possibility that a similar event simply took place three times does not explain the inclusion of the stories of all three occurrences, when many other stories from the lives of the ancestors could have been included. A feminist interpretation suggests that the stories represent male attempts to come to terms with their ambiguous feelings about their wives' sexuality (see Exum). This suggestion functions both exegetically to explain the meaning of the text and hermeneutically to point us to the significance of the text for modern readers. Feminist approaches to the stories of *Noah and his sons and *Lot and his daughters offer parallel illumination on these stories from a psychoanalytic viewpoint (see Brenner, 82-128).

6. Imperialist Interpretation.

Protestant Christian thinking in Britain in the sixteenth century saw Britain as inheriting the pentateuchal promises to Israel and the vocation of Israel, and it held on to these convictions in extending British rule in countries such as South Africa. There, native Africans were seen as equivalent to the Canaanites. Their culture was to be destroyed, and if they resisted British rule, British troops could kill them, as Deuteronomy required the killing of Canaanites (*see Ḥērem*). This raises difficult questions for Christians of black African descent today reading a book such as Deuteronomy.

European settlers in America in the sixteenth century adopted from Britain the understanding of themselves as the "new Israel." This likewise gave them a basis for annihilating Native American culture and, if they met resistance, for annihilating Native Americans. American self-understanding also inverted Britain's way of finding itself in the Pentateuch. The American Revolution was, it was thought, the moment when God delivered the colonies from Pharaoh Britain. As in the Pentateuch, exodus and covenant were held closely together in this self-understanding. The Mayflower group committed themselves in covenant, and the American constitutional documents of the 1780s have the same expectation.

Subsequently, "Washington becomes both Moses and Joshua, both the deliverer of the American people out of bondage and the leader of the chosen people into the Promised Land of independence." This illustrates the conviction of the settlers' pastor, John Robinson, in 1620, that "the Lord hath more light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word" (Cherry, 11-12). Thus the light of God's revelation continued to break forth in crucial events of American history. On July 4, 1776, Congress directed Franklin, Jeffer-

son and Adams to design a seal for the United States. Franklin proposed a portrayal of "Moses lifting his hand and the Red Sea dividing, with Pharaoh in his chariot being overwhelmed by the waters." Jefferson suggested "a representation of the children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night" (Cherry, 65). Both proposals illustrate the way in which Americans read the Pentateuch in the light of their own history and their convictions about their relationship with the stories.

The Civil War was thus the nation's first real "time of testing," analogous to the testing that Israel underwent on the way from Egypt. On April 14, 1861, Henry Ward Beecher preached a sermon on Exodus 14:15 ("Tell the Israelites to go forward"). He retells the exodus story, comments that God's people have often been in the position of Israel before the Red Sea and declares: "Now our turn has come. Right before us lies the Red Sea of war. And the Word of God to us today is, 'Speak unto this people that they go forward' " (Cherry, 162-65).

Cherry adds, "the history of the American civil religion is a history of the conviction that the American people are God's New Israel." The trouble is that this belief "has come to support America's arrogant self-righteousness. It has been all too easy for Americans to convince themselves that they have been chosen to be a free and powerful people not because God or the circumstances of history chose in mysterious ways but because they *deserve* election. The blessings of success, wealth, and power are readily taken as signs of their having merited a special place in history" (Cherry, 21, 23-24).

In considering liberation interpretation (see 7 below), we will need to consider the question whether any nation has the right to see itself in the story in the Pentateuch, as if it represents a subsequent embodiment of Israel. Here we need to note especially the risks involved when a powerful nation does that. A weak nation or an oppressed group, such as the American pioneers, might do so in a way that indeed enabled new light to break out from God's Word, but even in the course of finding their freedom they were involved in displacing and killing other people in God's name. After a revolution, yesterday's newly freed people easily becomes today's oppressor. The process whereby British or American appropriation of the Pentateuch became ideological offers some insight on a dynamic within the OT itself. The Pentateuch warns Israel of the possibility that it may itself go through a process whereby the entity for whose sake Yahweh destroys a superior people in due course must be destroyed itself.

In turn this may help Israelis face the question equivalent to the one that British and American people must face. The Jewish people today have more obvious right to identify with Israel in the Pentateuch, though the State of Israel is but one embodiment of the Jewish people. Neither the state nor its supporters can afford the risk of simply identifying the State of Israel theologically with the people of Israel in the Pentateuch. In 1947, Jewish refugees from the Holocaust in Europe, for which Britain and America must accept some responsibility, again sought to find their way to the Promised Land. Some did so in a ship called *Exodus*, which Britain stopped from landing in Palestine and sent back to Europe (see, e.g., O'Brien, 276-77). It would be impossible to deny such Jewish people the symbolism of seeing their escape from Europe as an exodus. On the other hand, the State of Israel half a century later must face the question whether (in another symbolism) David has become Goliath. To put it another way, interpretation of the Pentateuch in the light of the conviction that our particular nation is an embodiment of Israel needs to be accompanied with interpretation in the light of the possibility that our nation is an embodiment of Egypt.

7. Liberation Interpretation.

Liberation interpretation is the mirror image of imperialist interpretation. Whereas imperialist interpretation is undertaken by people in power, liberation interpretation is undertaken by people who are not in power. Whereas imperialist interpretation identifies with Israel in its strength, liberation interpretation identifies with Israel in its weakness.

Thus in a volume from a series on American biblical hermeneutics, an African American writer, K. Jordan, observes that in America "rather than finding the freedom and liberty that the Pilgrims and Puritans understood as ordained for them, enslaved Africans and their descendants have experienced varying degrees of 'un-freedom'" (Jordan, 105). Jordan suggests that people in dominant positions in the United States, especially the white men who led the journey to a new world and those who identified

with them, have found that the story of Abraham illumined and validated their lives and experience. In contrast, people who were subject to domination, including African Americans who were enslaved by the people who came to this new land, and particularly African American women, have found that it was the story of Hagar that rather illumined and validated their lives and experience.

But it was in the exodus story that African American slaves especially found hope and inspiration. M. Walzer writes, "Though these were chattel slaves, they were also aware of themselves as a separate people, strangers in a strange land, who shared a common fate. Egyptian bondage is paradigmatic for abolitionist politics, and for radical politics generally, because of its collective character. It invites a collective response—not manumission, the common goal of Greek and Roman slaves, but liberation" (Walzer, 32-33). In his book as a whole, Walzer shows the interaction between the experience of a wide range of radical movements and each element of the pentateuchal story of bondage, exodus, wilderness wanderings, covenant making and arrival at the edge of the Promised Land.

Spirituals such as "Go Down, Moses" illustrate the way in which African American slaves themselves read the exodus story. Contemporary African Americans read behind the story of the exodus to the story of Joseph, asking whether Joseph's achievement in bringing all the peoples in Egypt into the position of being the pharaoh's slaves needs to be read ironically in the light of where this led. To put it another way, if an emergent black middle class forgets its poorer fellow African Americans, it has repeated Joseph's error (cf. Reid, 62). At the moment, the African American community stands between Egypt and the Promised Land, no longer enslaved but not having reached the full enjoyment of God's intent.

The first influential exercise in liberation theology in Latin America, where the phrase *liberation theology* originated, was G. Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. It emphasized the significance of the exodus story for people in Latin America who had insufficient food and work and no power to change their destinies. Like African American slaves, they found that the story of Israel's oppression in Egypt resonated with their own experience. There, too, were people whose lives and work were dominated by the demands of another people. Their taskmasters forced them to undertake work that was oppressive and attempted to control the size of their families. Like the Israelites in Egypt, ordinary Latin American peoples cried out to God. Liberation theologians assured them that God heard their cry, as God had heard the Israelites (see also Croatto).

In seeing God's acts at the exodus as a paradigm for acts that God might be expected to undertake today, liberation theology followed an example set within the OT. As we noted above, Isaiah 40—55 had already taken events in the Pentateuch as a pattern for the deliverance that God was about to bring in restoring the people of Judah from their bondage to the Babylonians. In this sense, Isaiah 40—55 provided a biblical precedent for liberation interpretation. On the other hand, liberation interpretation did need to face a question also implicit in imperialist interpretation. The ordinary people of, for example, Peru are no more God's specially chosen people than is a large, powerful nation such as nineteenth-century Britain or the United States over the subsequent century. Other peoples oppressed by the Egyptians were not delivered as the Israelites were. Can any oppressed people today "claim" the exodus story? A possible response to that question is to note that in general God's work with Israel was designed to be a paradigm of God's ways and purpose in the world. All nations were to pray to be blessed as Abraham's family was blessed (e.g., Gen 12:3). All that Latin America was asking was that God should fulfill this promise for it.

Liberation interpretation of the Pentateuch, like feminist interpretation, provides a textbook illustration of the way in which an interpretive stance or commitment both opens interpreters' eyes to aspects of the text that have been ignored and also risks assimilating the text to the commitment that the interpreters have already made. On the one hand, Christian interpretation of Exodus had long been dominated by typological and pietistic interpretation that made it possible to avoid the main thrust of the actual story. Liberation interpretation dealt with this main thrust quite literally.

On the other hand, in its determination not to subordinate the text to the religious agenda of typological and pietistic interpretation, it is subject to converse temptations. First, it could ig-

nore the actual religious interest of the text. For instance, the story is concerned with Israel's relationship with God, with its leaving the service of Pharaoh for the service of Yahweh. And the story works with the conviction that Yahweh's own direct acts fulfill an important role in this process of leaving, announced but not much helped along by Moses. Liberation interpretation wanted to emphasize human political responsibility and thus sometimes went in for a form of demythologizing in interpreting Exodus's own account of events.

Second, in resisting typology, liberation interpretation also took the exodus story in isolation from the story of the exile, as well as from the story of Jesus. In due course, liberation theology had to begin to come to terms with a theology of exile and thus to affirm that we cannot interpret one act in the OT story in isolation from other acts. Nor can we interpret the OT events as a whole independently of the NT events any more than vice versa (see Goldingay).

8. Midrashic Interpretation.

Jewish midrash begins from gaps sensed in texts and questions that readers feel arise in them, which encourage reflection on issues that concern the readers. For instance, interpreters noted that the account of the creation of the first human couple in Genesis 1 is followed by another account in Genesis 2, specifically by the creation of a woman who is made after Adam and from him rather than along with him. Interpreters inferred that something had happened to Adam's original partner. They filled the gap in Genesis with the help of the enigmatic Lilith, the restless female demon in Isaiah 34:14. Her name was assumed to designate her a figure of the night *(laylâ)*, and her activities were known from Babylonian stories about *lilîtu*. From these origins there developed the story of Lilith, Adam's first partner who rejected her position as subordinate to Adam. She was cast out for her rebellion and replaced by Eve (see, e.g., Ginzberg, 1.65-66). In the traditional Lilith midrash, male reflection on the tension between the sexes and male suspicion of the opposite sex thus gains a place in the interpretation of the Pentateuch. In J. Plaskow Goldenberg's modern feminist midrash on the Lilith story, the same technique utilizes the text in order to reflect on these issues from a woman's perspective (see Plaskow Goldenberg).

Again, the story of *Abraham's offering of *Isaac has been of great importance for Jewish self-understanding, but readers also felt that it raised a number of questions. For instance, where was *Sarah when the event took place, and what did she make of it? What was Isaac's own attitude to the experience? Was Abraham not tempted to refuse to sacrifice his son, the one through whom the promise was to be fulfilled? And anyway, why did the all-knowing God need to test Abraham to find out how he would react? The raising of that last issue shows how it was not only Christian doctrinal interpretation of the Pentateuch that was affected by the bringing of theological convictions to the text.

Concerned about such questions, readers used material elsewhere in Scripture and material from their own theological traditions to provide clues to the answers to the questions. For instance, they noticed that the story of Sarah's death directly follows the story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac and inferred that this somehow resulted from her horror when she discovered what was happening to her son. The horror that has often come over readers of the story thus comes to be incorporated into its interpretation. They related how Satan tempted Abraham not to go through with the sacrifice, portraying his activity in the light of the accounts in Zechariah and Job. They inferred that the omniscient God could indeed foreknow the result of the testing but that it was played out so that the world could know that Abraham would indeed pass the test (see Ginzberg, 1.270-90).

Such instances of midrashic interpretation illustrate two key presuppositions. One is that the Scriptures as a whole are the word of God. The other is that there is a oneness between the text of Scripture and the community that develops midrash. These presuppositions mean that other things that God has said in Scripture can be utilized in order to fill the gaps in the text in a way that coheres with the beliefs of the community.

A significant characteristic of midrash is that it can be relaxed about the existence of various answers to questions raised by texts. Admittedly this statement applies to haggadah rather than to halakah. Halakah ("walking") studies the Torah in order to know what is the right thing to do, what is the will of God. We have considered its concern in looking at "ethical interpretation," in particular in noting the "exegetical approach"

to interpreting texts about behavior. When we want to know what to do, there is no space for the equivocal. We need one answer.

In contrast, haggadah ("telling" or narrative or the doing of narrative theology) proceeds on an assumption that is implicit within Scripture in books such as Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. This presupposition is that there can be a number of illuminating answers to a question such as "Why did Job suffer?" or "What was going on when God accepted Abel's sacrifice rather than Cain's?" or "What do we make of the character of Abraham or Sarah or Hagar or Jacob or Joseph or Moses?" The function of such answers is more to offer resources to readers in thinking about themselves before God than to make objective statements about what went on between God and particular individuals in Genesis. The variety of answers enables readers to think about the question. Midrash thus overlaps with some forms of reader-response interpretation of the text. It does not assume that there is never any such thing as objective interpretation, but it does assume that there are texts or aspects of texts that by their own nature leave space for readers to use their imagination in a way that will further their understanding of themselves and their God in their own context.

E. Frankel's *The Five Books of Miriam* uses the technique of midrash to expound "what the Torah means to women." It thus offers a variety of comments on issues that arise in the text, in the form of a conversation between the text and its interpreters. These include traditional rabbinic interpretation and Jewish women's tradition as it developed over the centuries, the insights of contemporary scholarship and the questions and convictions of contemporary Jewish women, and the imaginary voices of great Jewish women such as *Sarah, Rachel, *Miriam and Huldah. The manner of the presentation parallels that of talmudic discussion in that often the conversation on a passage is not closed. Readers are thus drawn into it and encouraged to come to their own conclusions—or rather to add their contributions.

9. Modern Interpretation.

Midrashic interpretation thus assumes that the Pentateuch is one whole, along with the rest of the Scriptures. Apparent gaps in the text are a stimulus to interpretation, which is undertaken in the light of that conviction that the whole of Scripture came from one author. Confronted by the gap between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, modern interpretation instead assumed that the two chapters issued from two authors. The question of the substantial relationship between the two texts then does not arise. The way to handle unevennesses in texts is to look behind them. Looking behind a text is also a means to discovering the text's unequivocal meaning—though actually it is, of course, the unequivocal meaning of a different text. Whereas midrashic interpretation assumes that unclarities are a challenge to build something onto the text, modern interpretation assumes that they are a challenge to take the text apart so as to find the unequivocal meaning that once must have been there.

Like midrashic interpretation, modern interpretation presupposes that interpretation involves treating the Pentateuch in the light of our assumptions. For modern interpretation the key to interpretation is to look at the Pentateuch historically, for this is a basic principle of modern interpretation. It thus seeks to discover the different human authors of the texts and leaves aside the question of divine authorship that was a key presupposition of midrash.

The interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 provides fine examples of the results of this approach. On the one hand, spectacular illumination emerges from reading Genesis 1 in the context of the stories about creation told by other Middle Eastern peoples and in the light of the experience of Judean people transported to Babylon. Strictly, the results of this historical study constitute exegetical insight rather than insight on the interrelationship between Genesis and our own questions, but the historical study facilitates modern readers' reflections on that interrelationship. On the other hand, more equivocal results have issued from reading Genesis 2—4 against the background of the early monarchy. One problem here is that the evidence for this dating is even more circumstantial than is the case with the exilic dating of Genesis 1. The other problem may be not unrelated. It is that widely different interpretations of the stories and their significance for us have been offered on the basis of a link with this period.

One key feature of the critical interpretation of Scripture that characterizes modernity is the refusal to be bound by traditions of interpretation. In this sense Reformers such as Luther and

Calvin were among the first modern interpreters of Scripture, for this was their stance. It was taken up by seventeenth-century Enlightenment figures such as Thomas Hobbes and Benedict Spinoza. The rejection of christological interpretation, doctrinal interpretation and midrashic interpretation naturally follows.

H. Frei's book *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* explores another key starting point of modern interpretation of the Pentateuch. Before the seventeenth century, readers of the Pentateuch made at least two assumptions about the text and about their relationship with it. First, they assumed that the Pentateuch offered a literal historical account of events from the creation of the world to the end of the life of Moses. Interpreters could thus in principle, for instance, count up the time periods in the Pentateuch and work out that the creation took place around 4004 B.C. (*see* Chronology). The world of the text and the real world back then were one world. Second, they assumed that this world was also one with their own world. How God related to people in the Pentateuch was also how God related to the readers of the Pentateuch. They could, indeed must, fit their world into the biblical world.

Frei shows how text and history fell apart. The world of scholarship came to recognize that there was a difference between the story the Pentateuch told and the actual history of creation and of the early millennia in the Middle East. It then had to decide which of these two "stories" would henceforth count. It was no contest. The importance of history in modernity meant that henceforth it was the reconstructed prehistory of Israel and the world that became the focus for study of the Pentateuch, rather than the story told in the Pentateuch.

Granted, the Pentateuch is concerned with events that actually happened, and to this extent this decision was one that encouraged a study of the Pentateuch that went with the grain of its own agenda. But inevitably the actual investigation of that history is affected by the cultural context of the investigators. The dominance of a "scientific" worldview affects the study of the Pentateuch both by more conservative and more liberal scholars. One reason why more liberal scholars may dismiss the historicity of the Pentateuch's account of events such as the plagues in Egypt, the Red Sea crossing and the people's provision in the wilderness is that these events have no analogue in our own experience. Also on the basis of a scientific worldview, more conservative scholars are often attracted to "explanations" of such events that account for them in partly natural terms, but these are inclined to lose the mystery of the events by "explaining them away."

Further, like other biblical narratives the Pentateuch signals that an account of actual events is not all that is required in order to make a story a witness to God's acts. Words are also required, both words that announce ahead of time and words that interpret retrospectively. The Pentateuch embraces all these, but modern study of the Pentateuch focuses resolutely on history.

The attempt to reconstruct what actually happened in Moses' time and before involves first coming to some prior conclusions on the historical background of the material within the Pentateuch. Unfortunately, while from time to time there has been a scholarly consensus on some conclusions about that, the nature of the Pentateuch is such as to give few sure clues as to the date of the material within it. A scholarly consensus on the questions is thus always vulnerable to collapse, and the end of the twentieth century saw such a collapse. It became impossible to make any broadly accepted statements about the origin of the Pentateuch. Some of the world of scholarship then began trying out the idea that the historical background against which to read the Pentateuch is the Persian period. But there is no more concrete reason to think that this is right than was the case with the old consensus that J should be interpreted against the monarchy (*see* Source Criticism).

The idea that the key to interpreting the Pentateuch is either the quest for concrete historical information within it or the dating of the material within it must be mistaken. Modern interpretation hoped to discover *the* objective meaning of the Pentateuch, but its method and its results combine subjectivity and objectivity, certainty and uncertainty, and do so as integrally as other approaches to interpretation.

10. Postmodern Interpretation.

Midrashic interpretation sought to see how Genesis 1 and 2 related to each other as part of God's one Word. Modern interpretation sought to unlink them. As humanly devised stories, they are independent of each other. The only link

between them is a historical one. Postmodern interpretation seeks to put the two stories in conversation with each other.

One of the characteristics of the postmodern attitude is to assume that we cannot know the whole truth about anything. Even if total, objective truth exists, the only formulations we have are partial, subjective and provisional. Yet it is characteristic of human formulations to express themselves as if they were final and definitive. At least, they do this on the surface. But usually underneath the surface we can see the concealed other side of the coin. Thus one task of interpretation is to analyze the construction that texts place on things and to look for the other side of the coin that may lie beneath the surface.

In Genesis 1 and 2, postmodern interpretation thus perceives two different understandings of God, the world and humanity. Another then appears in Genesis 4. Postmodern interpretation does not then claim that the truth lies in harmonizing these three or in choosing one over against the other but in letting them dialogue with each other in the conviction that all contain insights.

Whereas modern interpretation abandons the tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and seeks to discover who did so, postmodern interpretation perceives this question as having led to a dead end. Yet it also sees that we cannot simply revert to the premodern tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, because the reasons that led to its abandonment are still compelling. Rather, it starts by acknowledging that we are never going to know who wrote the Pentateuch. The interpretation of the Pentateuch has to be undertaken without knowing who wrote it. Its interpretation involves reading the books, which have covered the tracks of their origins. In focusing on the history that lies behind it, we are working against the grain of its own nature.

Premodern interpretation put power in the hands of the church to decide what Scripture meant. Modern interpretation took that power away from the church but gave it to the university. The authority of scholarship replaced the authority of bishops, and student papers began sentences with "most scholars say" instead of "the church teaches." Postmodern interpretation invites people to read the Bible for themselves. They do so in the company of other people who are not too like themselves, to protect them from their individualism or the idiosyncrasy of some group.

In postmodern interpretation, relational categories have priority over legal categories, and this affects the way interpreters read the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and other ancestors, or the nature of covenants in the Pentateuch. Further, identification replaces distancing, and engagement replaces detachment; the point is to change the world as well as to understand it. In this respect, postmodern interpretation again contrasts with the characteristic stance of modernity.

Believing that we cannot find the key to understanding texts by looking outside them to events of history or to the lives of authors, postmodern interpretation is more inclined to look for clues in the various textual worlds to which texts belong. The study of intertextuality assumes that all texts stand in relationship to other texts. They reflect statements made and questions raised in other texts from their culture. Perhaps implicitly and unconsciously, they stand in dialogue with these other texts, affirming aspects of them but putting them in a new context, denying aspects of them or answering questions they raise. Because this is their origin, they are not directly portraying a world that actually exists but taking part in a corporate creative enterprise of painting a picture of something.

There are thus links between postmodern interpretation and midrashic and other premodern forms of interpretation. Midrashic interpretation subconsciously presupposes that "the Torah, owing to its own intertextuality, is a severely gapped text," filled from within its own world and the related world of the readers (Boyarin, 16). The oddities, unclarities and repetitions are all there by design, not by accident. Harris (215) reports an argument by the nineteenth-century rabbinic writer Jacob Meklenburg, who proposed that God deliberately inspired the Torah in ambiguous form because this makes it necessary for readers to work harder in order to obey it, and it gives them easy opportunity to avoid its demands. "By presenting his norms in such a way, God provides more fully for the development of the strength of character humans need to lead full ethical lives." Thus the ambiguity of the Bible is a product of God's love for humanity (Harris refers to Meklenburg's הכתב והכבלה [*Scripture and the Tradition*], vol. 1 [4th ed.; Berlin, 1880], vii-x).

As interpreters we may not wish to believe in the Pentateuch's indeterminacy, but we may yet affirm its polysemy (see Stern, 15-38). It is not the case that there are really no meanings. There *are* meanings because there is someone behind these words. The mystery of truth and the richness of Torah mean that it is not surprising that there are many meanings. Polysemy implies "a claim to textual stability rather than . . . an indeterminate state of endlessly deferred meanings and unresolved conflicts" (Stern, 33).

For example, pentateuchal texts about *circumcision raise historical and exegetical problems that cannot be "solved" by modern approaches to interpretation. We can make it possible for the texts to speak to us by beginning from our own experience in asking what might be the significance of the fact that these texts were incorporated in Scripture, in their enigmatic form. Our own awareness of the need for male sexuality to be disciplined suggests the possibility of taking this as the clue to understanding the reason for preserving these texts about circumcision. It suggests that Israel had the same need for texts that raised issues about the disciplining of male sexuality, a possibility that fits a number of the accounts of male sexual behavior in the Pentateuch and elsewhere. Postmodern interpretation, too, thus contributes to exegesis as well as aiding appropriation.

11. Conclusion.

There is no one hermeneutic of the Pentateuch, nor is there anything Sinaitic about the number *ten*. We may expect coming decades to see the increased flowering of newer approaches to interpretation, such as those concerned with the cosmos and with animal rights, postfeminist ("masculist") hermeneutics and "postcolonial" interpretation. In addition, wholly new approaches will also emerge. (The journal *Biblical Interpretation* is a useful guide to new approaches to interpretation.) These will add to the way in which the approaches to the Pentateuch that we have examined open up aspects of the text's own meaning, though they also have the capacity to obscure the text's own meaning. It is inevitably the case that we come to the text with questions and assumptions—in this sense there is no such thing as objective interpretation. But once we acknowledge this fact, we can profit from it rather than being its victims. Our (subjective) questions and awarenesses can help us see things that are objectively there in the text. Our experience of finding that the text is not relevant to us can then stimulate us into trying a different set of questions that arise from other people's awarenesses and thus discovering more of what is there. And the latter process may also help us see where our first set of questions and awarenesses has caused us to misread the text.

See also HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; PREACHING FROM THE PENTATEUCH; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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ḤESED. *See* ETHICS; GRACE.

HEXATEUCH. *See* DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF.

HIGH PRIEST. *See* AARON; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD.

HIGHWAYS. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

HISTORICAL CREDO. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM

The Pentateuch and historical criticism have long been issues crucial to the interpretation of the OT as a whole. Since the Pentateuch not only comes at the beginning of both the Jewish and Christian canons but also introduces the major themes and topics of the OT, its origin, integrity and context are essential to any reading of the OT. Historical criticism as a method and system of interpretation began challenging traditional biblical interpretation by examining the Pentateuch. In this article a definition and brief history of the major approaches utilized in the historical criticism of the Pentateuch will be undertaken, focusing on its philosophical foundation as well as its varied methodologies. An introduction to the questions of the historicity and historiographical method of the Pentateuch will also be included. A discussion of specific challenges and questions raised by historical criticism follows, including, among others, the correlation of different divine names to differing textual sources, doublets, historicity and large numbers. The contribution of recent developments in comparative studies; literary analysis focusing on the structure of the Pentateuch as a whole; archaeological data pertaining to the patriarchal period, the exodus and sojourn; and linguistic analysis of the development of Hebrew as a language will also be reviewed. Finally, a concise conclusion will seek to synthesize the results of this article and to attempt a look into the future of this important field of study.

1. Definition and Description of Historical Criticism
2. Philosophical Presuppositions of Historical Criticism
3. Historiography of the Pentateuch
4. Specific Challenges of Historical Criticism to the Unity of the Pentateuch
5. Conclusion

1. Definition and Description of Historical Criticism.

Historical criticism is a generic term describing differing methods of approaching an ancient text, all of which share common philosophical and methodological presuppositions developed during the period of enlightenment in the seventeenth century onward. The word *criticism* is etymologically related to the Greek verb *krinein* ("judge, distinguish, decide") and indicates the basic approach to the biblical text asking critical questions as opposed to the traditional Christian stance of accepting Scripture as divinely inspired and expressed by human agents. The adjective *historical* emphasizes the interest of the modern era to determine the meaning of a given text in its original historical context in order to establish the historical meaning and circumstances of that text. The most important approaches, grouped together under the heading *historical criticism,* include *source criticism, *form criticism and *tradition criticism/history. (For a more detailed discussion of the history of the interpretation of the Pentateuch—including the development of the major methodological concepts; see Cees Houtman 1994.)

1.1. Source Criticism. Source criticism seeks to identify differing written documents (sources) utilized by an ancient author/editor and to assign them relative (or, if possible, absolute) dates. The emphasis in this method is upon the written stage of a document, and scholars utiliz-

ing this method look for textual inconsistencies, repetitions, doublets and stylistic differences (Barton, 162-63; Johnson, 101-4) that might provide a clue to a text's context and development. In European scholarship the term *literary criticism* is often used as an equivalent to source criticism (Steck, 49-63) and has to be differentiated from the more recent methodological approach of *literary analysis*. Traditional source criticism of the Pentateuch (as defined by the classic Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis formulated at the end of the nineteenth century) posits four basic source documents: J (based on the German word for Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist) and P (Priestly source) (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of). These four sources were traditionally arranged in sequential chronological order as follows: J in the tenth century B.C.; E in the eighth century B.C.; D in the seventh century B.C. in the time of the Josianic reform (2 Kings 22); and, finally, P in the sixth century B.C. during the exile. According to conventional historical-critical thinking the Yahwist is characterized by its original theological thinking, giving shape to the OT idea of the history of salvation. Furthermore, J utilizes predominantly the tetragrammaton *(yhwh)*. The Elohist is held to have originated in the northern kingdom, utilizing the name *'ĕlōhîm* for God and focusing on moral and lifestyle issues in Israelite religion. The Deuteronomist source corresponds essentially to the book of Deuteronomy and does not have a characteristic divine name but utilizes covenant-legal vocabulary. It also emphasizes the uniqueness of Jerusalem (the central focus of adoration) and views Israelite history in terms of obedience/disobedience. The Priestly source is characterized by ritualistic and liturgical texts, genealogies and laws pertaining to the priesthood. According to the standard Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, these four sources underwent a long process of editing, reaching their present form in the fifth century B.C.

1.2. Form Criticism. Form criticism, based upon the assumption that most of the OT was transmitted orally over a long period of time, seeks to describe the different life contexts that gave rise to different forms of literature. These reconstructed sociocultural contexts are referred to by the German phrase *Sitz im Leben* (lit. "setting/seat in life"). Consequently, when the biblical authors recorded these oral traditions, they were "reshaping the traditions, not creating new material" (Johnson, 104). Form criticism focuses on the discovery of these ancient traditions and their subsequent developmental stages (Steck, 99-125; Johnson, 104-6) and defines genres as a means of categorizing texts. Historically, form criticism as originally introduced and developed by the German scholar H. Gunkel at the end of the nineteenth century, was a reaction to the orthodoxy and "barrenness of source criticism" (Hasel, 36-37).

1.3. Tradition Criticism or Tradition History. Tradition history/criticism presupposes both source and form criticism but is mainly interested in determining the precompositional stage of texts when stories and sayings were composed, retold, recited and preserved over long periods of time (Knight, 6:634; Hasel, 43; Steck, 127-49). The ultimate interest of tradition historicists is to present a relative chronology of the growth of the traditions with its changes, reinterpretations and additions, which ultimately informs the evolution of religious thought and practice (Steck, 141). Important representatives of this method include G. von Rad and M. Noth in the early part of the twentieth century and more recently R. Rendtorff and E. Blum (Seidel, 480-82; Cees Houtman 1994, 236-38, 240-49).

2. Philosophical Presuppositions of Historical Criticism.

Like any other research paradigm, historical criticism in all its incarnations is based upon specific philosophical presuppositions. Some of the most important principles will be presented below and will then be evaluated in light of historical Judeo-Christian interpretation. Historical criticism developed during the age of enlightenment and sought to transcend subjective cultural limitations in order to establish the (more objective) historical meaning of the text once and for all (Harrisville and Sundberg, 262-63). Historical criticism has been compared to the metaphor of psychoanalysis, which seeks to uncover the repressed or forgotten historical, religious and literary realities that informed the biblical traditions (Levenson, 4, 28). The pre-Enlightenment period has often been described as a prescientific period, which logically would lead to the assumption that everything following that watershed point in the history of biblical interpretation would be described as scientific method. This scientific method is primarily characterized by skepticism and universal doubt

as its starting points (Maier, 281; Linnemann, 84-92). Practitioners of historical criticism approach the biblical text as a collection of ancient documents that must be studied utilizing the same principles of interpretation as any other ancient documents. According to most practitioners of this method, there is no room for metaphysical realities in modern historical research. One either *believes* the biblical text and by extension is therefore ahistorical, or one opts for the *critical* approach, which has to discard every notion of supernatural intervention. Several important principles of historical criticism as a scientific system have been described and will be synthesized in three main areas. These principles were first formulated by E. Troeltsch at the end of the nineteenth century but continue to inform consciously (or subconsciously) modern historical criticism.

2.1. Principle of Correlation. This principle suggests that every event or historical phenomenon can only be understood in terms of a "closed system," that is, in terms of its specific historical context. Thus, there is no place for supernatural intervention as an explanation of historical realities. According to this basic principle of historical criticism, God cannot intervene in history, because that would be—historically—not verifiable and thus impossible.

2.2. Principle of Analogy. This principle proposes that all historical events demonstrate a fundamental homogeneity. That means that all events described in the biblical text must be understood in terms of our present experience and conditions. This principle emphasizes a movement from the known to the unknown.

2.3. Principle of Criticism. The third principle postulated by Troeltsch describes the critical attitude as the most basic approach to research. Absolutes do not exist, only probabilities. According to this principle, our judgment about specific aspects of the biblical text or biblical history can only be tentative or probable, never absolute.

2.4. Critique of Underlying Philosophical Principles of Historical Criticism. It is clear that philosophical presuppositions determine the outcome of research inasmuch as prevailing paradigms do not easily allow for deviation (Kuhn). In the case of historical criticism, it seems that the very positivistic approach taken by its early proponents is limited and short-sighted, trying to bring uncontaminated "clean-room" conditions to a discipline dealing with real history, real people, real languages and real theological perspectives. This positivism is even more surprising since it is not in the least connected to the underlying "scientific" and critical method. As a result historical criticism tends to imprison the biblical text in the past without providing "objective" tools to uncover that past. Therefore, by trying to bring biblical studies into a higher sphere of objectivity, the exact opposite—that of increased subjectivity—is apt to be achieved. Ultimately, the criteria of the scholar are postulated to be the highest measure of authenticity instead of looking to the inherent testimony of the biblical text with its claim of inspiration and authority. This has resulted in some type of anthropocentricity in historical criticism. It is noteworthy to point to the fact that this has led to reactions from both within and without the historical-critical perspective. Archaeological discoveries have resulted in manifold challenges to the standard positions of historical criticism, although they have also raised questions and challenges for traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation. A renewed historiographical interest has helped to open the relationship between literature and history employed in ancient Semitic texts that are so far removed from our reality (Long 1994 and 1997). Ultimately, the question of presuppositions boils down to the issue of authority. If the biblical text is only a collection of diverse ancient texts, it cannot claim an authority in terms of its content. However, if the biblical text began with revelation from a being outside of our own system, then the issue of authority needs to be addressed from a different angle. Keeping this in mind, the following section seeks to describe the latest research concerning historiography, which forms the basis for historical reconstruction by providing the necessary tools to understand the exact historical nature of the biblical text. Nevertheless, it should be noted that while there is a direct link between historicity and authority, which is based upon Scripture's own inherent claim (2 Tim 3:16) of divine intervention in the process of the writing and transmission of "truth," historicity is not the trademark and litmus test of every biblical text. A good example can be seen in the OT genre of proverbs, which do not provide a specific historical framework, but do have a truth-claim. In the NT context, Jesus' parables are not historical accounts but are authoritative. Thus genre and authorial intention need to be taken

into consideration when discussing the historiography of the OT and, more specifically, the Pentateuch.

3. Historiography of the Pentateuch.

A large portion of the Pentateuch can be described as historical writing, that is, texts that describe events in the past in a context involving human beings and their interconnection with other human beings and with Yahweh, the covenant God of the OT account. These histories demonstrate a wide variety of foci, including personal histories (Gen 37, *Joseph is sold by his brothers), national histories (Ex 2, affliction of the Israelites by the Egyptians, which connects for the first time the term *ʿam* ["people"] to *benê yiśrāʾēl* ["sons of Israel"]), social histories (Num 27:1-11, a section dealing with inheritance rights; *see* Zelophehad, Daughters of) or religious histories (Lev 8, ordination ritual of *Aaron and his sons, indicating the initiation of the formal cult). All of these share common features (such as setting, structure, plot, roles) but at the same time underline the basic "perspectivist nature of historical research" (Deist, 111), that is, the suggestion that history is always shaped by perspective (Long 1994 and 1997). Recent research in ancient historiography has brought to the fore two basic and opposing positions (with varying degrees in between) concerning the historicity of the OT books: those who maintain that the OT is of very limited use when writing a "history of ancient Israel" (Lemche; Thompson; Whitelam) and those who suggest that while the nature of the biblical text does not demonstrate entirely the characteristics of twentieth-century history writing, it does, however, represent a major source of information for the reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel that merits consideration and, together with archaeology, comparative material and social sciences, must form the basis for reconstruction (Long; Provan; Kaiser; Merrill). It is the latter position that is adopted in this essay. Following E. H. Merrill (1997) and V. P. Long (1994; 1997), a "canon" concerning the most important characteristics of the historiography of the Pentateuch will be presented to indicate some of the do's and don'ts of pentateuchal historiography.

3.1. Increasingly Specific. The Pentateuch shows a sense of increased specifics. The term *specifics* in this context refers to an increase of the amount of information supplied by the author to the ancient and modern reader of the book(s). Three distinct story lines can be observed that are finely connected by an internal interplay of poetry and prose (Sailhamer, 1987). While Genesis 1—11 focuses upon primordial history and includes the origins of humanity (including *creation, *fall, universal *flood and main people divisions), Genesis 12—50 continues with the patriarchal history and concentrates upon one family and its descendants, at the same time beginning to describe its destiny in relation to other people (as can be seen in the story of Joseph in Egypt). Finally, from Exodus 1 onward to the end of Deuteronomy, the text focuses upon a specific people, the *exodus event, journey, *covenant stipulations and the preparations for the conquest of Canaan. This third section is very specific, including a large number of legal and religious/ritual sections that are always connected to the people of Israel and that often contain an echo of earlier histories of the first two sections (Sailhamer 1992, 32-46). It appears that this increase in specifics is not an indication of three different sources or authors but rather a subtle literary strategy—common also in modern homiletics—in which an author (or preacher) starts from the general and finally ends with the very specific.

3.2. Firmly Grounded. Genesis functions as a prolegomenon of Israel's history, and with its histories of different origins (of humanity, of *sin, of Israel as a people, etc.) it anchors the subsequent history of Israel. It is clear that this history is theological in nature, since it is mainly interested in describing the relations of Yahweh, the covenant God, with his people.

3.3. Theological. Theological history is not "ahistorical" history. It rather refers to the theocentricity of the text and has been recognized in many ancient texts. The fact that ancient societies and cultures were more holistic and less compartmentalized (as compared to modern Western society) does not automatically indicate a lower level of historicity. If one accepts Long's (1997) modified definition of the principles of criticism in the context of metaphysical commitments, this rather naive and convenient distinction cannot be maintained any longer. At the same time, however, it should be noted that while the Pentateuch exhibits historiographical traits similar to those found in neighboring cultures (as, for example, in Mesopotamian, Hittite, Egyptian or Greek historiographies), there also

exist striking distinctives (Yamauchi 1994). Some important characteristics of the comparative method, comparing and contrasting different texts, will be explored below.

3.4. Selective. The historiography of the Pentateuch is tendentious and selective inasmuch as it focuses on individuals, groups or a people who represented not necessarily the most important individuals, groups or people of their time. In other words, pentateuchal historiography does not concentrate on the history of the superpowers of its time but rather looks at the more mundane facts of clan (and later state) formation of a small and obscure group to be called the Israelites because, according to its theocentric emphasis, this was important for salvation history. Does this tendentiousness and selectivity make it less historical? For many modern historians, accepting the philosophical presuppositions of historical criticism, the answer would be a resounding yes. However, when understanding the very nature of history writing in terms of the metaphor of artistic reproduction (Long 1994 and 1997), the artistic (or historic) perspective explains the supposed tendencies and selections. As has been shown by Long (1997, 88), "historiography, . . . like portraiture, is driven by an overarching aim to 'paint a picture' that truly represents and interprets the significant features of its historical subject." In the case of the Pentateuch one notes the gap of about 335 years (according to its internal chronology) between the death of *Jacob and *Moses' birth (Gen 50 and Ex 2), and no specific information can be gleaned indicating important events, dynasties or political, social or religious developments. A similar gap can also be discerned between the story of the tower of *Babel (Gen 11:1-9) and the call of *Abraham (Gen 12:1; actually the story begins in Gen 11:27), although the exact elapsed time cannot be established from the text. The author has connected these gaps by inserting *genealogies (Gen 11:10-32 and Ex 1:1-5), which are most probably abbreviated and incomplete. These gaps can also be related to the previously mentioned characteristic of pentateuchal historiography, that of moving from the less specific (or universal) to the more specific (individual/national). Do these gaps and the definite selectivity of the data make the Pentateuch a worse historical source than any other historical source, ancient or modern? If one would respond in the affirmative to this question, every kind of history writing would have to be questioned, because each author always applies his or her perspective to the data *as he or she sees it.* However, being aware of these tendencies will help the reader to view the data through the author's eyes, that is, with the same or a similar perspective.

3.5. Interpretive. Pentateuchal historiography is unabashedly interpretive. Most events are commented on from the perspective of Yahweh. *Noah finds favor in Yahweh's eyes in a time when the earth is ripe for judgment (Gen 6:8). Yahweh sees from heaven the intention and performance of the tower builders of *Babel and, speaking in the royal plural, introduces the strategy to counter their efforts (Gen 11:7-8). Yahweh evaluates the comportment of the people during the *golden calf episode, and he does so by conversing with Moses (Ex 32:7-14). All these examples help to illustrate the interpretive nature of the pentateuchal text. The reader—ancient and modern—is somewhat drawn into the story and looks at events and the processes leading to these events through the eyes of the author of the text, who describes reality from God's perspective. This often involves literary artistry. However, it also presupposes a rather distinct worldview that allows for divine interventions and consequently interprets them adequately. As has been suggested above, this literary artistry and competence does not necessarily stand in opposition to reliable historiography but helps the reader to focus on what is important, at least from the ancient author's viewpoint.

3.6. Biographical. Pentateuchal historiography is profoundly biographical. Specific individuals are the objects of focus (such as *Adam and *Eve, Noah, Abraham, *Isaac, Jacob, *Joseph, *Moses, to mention a few). Traditional historical criticism has often argued that this emphasis on the individual over against a nation or nations is a characteristic of unhistorical writings (see Van Seters [1983]). J. Van Seters bases his work upon the rather restrictive definition of history by the philosopher Huizinga (1936, 9), who suggested that "history is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself about its past." Clearly, Van Seters is interested in intentional history writing, and in this regard national history is the preferred vehicle of history writing. In this sense, the distinct biographical focus of pentateuchal historiography is by de-

fault out of line and, as a result, is often evaluated critically. B. Halpern (2001, 107-12) has recently suggested that OT historiography needs to be looked at in the broader context of culture and identity. It is not only descriptive of the recent or remote past (Van Seters, 1995) but also creates community, connecting the individual (e.g., Abraham, Jacob or the later David) to the communal (Israel as a whole). As has been pointed out by many reviewers and commentators, the plea to view biographical historiography as legitimate history writing is a corrective to the fascination of the modern age (roughly beginning with the Enlightenment) with nation structures, a perspective that does not reflect the cultural context of the ancient Near East (Yamauchi, 1994) with its emphasis on community, tribe, clan and family.

3.7. Intentional. Finally, the modern student of the Pentateuch has to focus upon the entire story and intention of the ancient author. Intention is a major factor in understanding ancient ritual texts (G. A. Klingbeil 1998, 43-45) and can also provide a valid research paradigm for historiographical studies. Ultimately, authorial intention focuses on the broader view as opposed to the microlevel research agenda favored by traditional historical criticism.

In order truly to understand the historiographical nature of the Pentateuch, the modern reader needs to be aware of the literary, theological and cultural underpinnings of a text, written several thousands of years before our present time, in a language distinctly different from ours, in an intellectual, religious and cultural climate that is far removed from and strange to our reality. Thus, it requires linguistic, literary, theological, cultural and historical competence in order to fully appreciate and understand this remarkable primary source.

4. Specific Challenges of Historical Criticism to the Unity of the Pentateuch.

During the course of the past 250 years, scholars basing themselves on the philosophical and methodological presuppositions of historical criticism have raised important questions concerning the unity of the Pentateuch in terms of its origin, literary structure and historical reliability. Some of the issues raised by historical criticism have helped to sharpen the understanding of modern readers, making them aware of tensions that exist in the text. Others have offered a valuable entry point for focusing on underlying realities and worldviews that are very distinct from western twenty-first-century perspectives. The interest in the literary development of the text has also provided new impetus for overarching reconstruction of the history of Israelite *religion. However, most historical-critical studies (in the classical sense of the term), ultimately raised the question of the authority and reliability of the text for the scholarly or non-scholarly reader. Clearly this was often based on a specific (not necessarily the implicit OT) perspective of what history is and what makes a text a document that is historically reliable. Some of the issues concerning the historiographical challenges of the Pentateuch have already been discussed above. In this section some more specific issues will be analyzed. It is clear that not all of these questions can be discussed in the limited context of a dictionary article. However, the main arguments will be scrutinized and commented on in the light of recent findings and research undertaken during the past thirty years.

4.1. Differing Names of God as an Indication of Multiple Sources. The year 1711, with the publication of H. B. Witter's book *Iura Israelitarum,* marked the introduction of the divine-name argument in the discussion of the origin of the Pentateuch. Witter suggested that Genesis 1:1—2:3 represents an old poetic section and should be contrasted with Genesis 2:4 and following, which uses the tetragrammaton *yhwh* instead of the name *ʾĕlōhîm,* thus indicating a different author. Some years later, J. Astruc sought to defend the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch by taking up Witter's suggestion of two major sources utilizing the two differing divine names that were used by Moses when he finally edited/wrote the Pentateuch. Later on, he also posited ten more fragmentary sources for Genesis (Cees Houtman 1994, 62-70). Since then, the difference in divine names has formed the basis for the original formulation of source criticism, with a surprising inconsistency between the different practitioners of this method in terms of the indication of the limits of the distinct sources. Behind this lies the more fundamental question of whether divine names (among others) can be used to determine distinct underlying sources of a specific document. Is the consistent use of a specific divine name a credible marker of a specific textual unit? As has been pointed out

(Brichto 1998, 7), in reality name consistency is not a particular trait of the four major supposed sources. Some occurrences of Yahweh (J) appear in sections generally assigned to the Elohist (E) and have been interpreted by historical-critical scholars as J contaminations or erroneously permitted editorial substitutions. Methodologically, this explanation cannot be satisfactory since it puts into jeopardy the underlying theoretical basis of the hypothesis. This internal inconsistency has been well documented (Segal, 11-14). Additionally, the historical reconstruction of the sequence based upon divine names is founded upon faulty exegesis (see Garrett, 19-20, for some examples).

Several strands of evidence have a bearing on the divine-name usage in the Pentateuch. Recent iconographical studies have demonstrated that deities in the ancient Near East did have a variety of names, the usage of which depended on the region where they were worshiped, but that similar (or even exact) characteristics would indicate the same deity (Keel and Uehlinger, 393-94; M. G. Klingbeil, 182-83). Thus the motif of the smiting god, which has been connected to Resheph or Hadad-Baal in Syria-Palestine, can also be found in Egypt as Baal-Seth. On a bronze figure from Megiddo, dated between 1050 and 1000 B.C., the same smiting deity with the addition of a small shield can be found. Most experts would connect this with the deity Resheph or Baal. Similar iconographical motifs and positions can also be connected with the Egyptian Horus. Several hundred years later the same motif is connected with the non-Semitic deity Hercules (M. G. Klingbeil, 165-72). While it is clear that iconographical data is not directly applicable to a textual or literary problem, it helps to keep in mind the cultural continuum of the ancient Near East, where texts and images were not distinct entities. This principle can be seen in the monumental or private art of all major ancient Near Eastern cultural centers, including Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Levant. A text was naturally illustrated by an image in Egypt and in the stamp seal collections from Palestine (Keel 1995), and thus text and image generally interacted. In this sense, the interchangeability of divine names/attributes seems to challenge the rigid divine name argument in the literary realm. Is it possible that the usage of divine names was rather part and parcel of a literary strategy or a name theology, where each name represented a specific facet of the deity (see Cassuto, 15-41)?

Apart from the pictorial evidence, the use of different divine names in the same ancient Near Eastern text describing the same deity has been well documented (Kitchen 1966, 121-25). Qumran has demonstrated the same phenomenon in biblical texts, as can be seen in 1QIs^a, which changes the divine name in sixteen passages as compared to the MT (Hasel, 15). While this may be due to a different Hebrew *Vorlage* (though unlikely, since 1QIs^a is textually close to MT; Ulrich, 1.385), it at least suggests that the changing of divine names may have happened in the process of transmitting the text and thus cannot be a dependable criterion for establishing distinct sources.

The above evidence does not suggest that that no sources were utilized in the formation of the Pentateuch. The case has been made repeatedly that the so-called toledoth formula found so frequently in Genesis (e.g., Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10 etc.) indicates earlier shorter sections, often connected to genealogies (as has been demonstrated in a review of the evidence and current theories; Garrett, 91-106). Other separate sections may have existed, although the structural unity, the narrative strategy apparent in the text and the noticeable lack of uniformity (Sailhamer 1992, 1-25) would make their existence difficult to determine. However, as has been demonstrated, divine names do not represent the most helpful resource for determining sources. Modern critical scholarship has responded differently to these challenges, sometimes suggesting more sources (with a tendency toward greater fragmentation) and at other times rejecting the methodological basis of source criticism and opting for a more holistic reading of the Pentateuch. Unfortunately, these new proposals do not yet appear in standard introductions to the OT, and thus the illusion of the "assured results" of historical criticism is kept alive.

4.2. Large Numbers as an Indication of the Ahistorical Nature of the Pentateuch. The large numbers found in the Pentateuch have long been described as problematic, and historical criticism in general has rejected them as being "ahistorical" or impossible. These large numbers include the grand total of the Israelites participating in the exodus, which according to Exodus 12:37 included "about 600,000 men on

foot" or, according to the more accurate census in Numbers 1:46, equaled 603,550 men who were able to bear arms. The second census in Numbers 26:51, taken after the sojourn in the desert, gives the figure of 601,730 men over the age of twenty years. It is clear that this large number would signify at least a total of two million men, women and children, which represents a major quantity. Over the past decades, several solutions have been suggested in order to explain the nature of these figures, and a good presentation of these different solutions can be found in T. R. Ashley as well as C. J. Humphreys. In the following, three main proposals will be presented, including their main positions and their contributions and problems for the current discussion.

4.2.1. Literal Interpretation. This is the standard conservative viewpoint, taking the figures at face value and projecting a sum of about two million people (or more; see Allen [681], who rightly suggests that four to five million would be more appropriate a number to support some 600,000 soldiers) for the Israelites during the exodus. This obviously would make the survival of such a group in the desert an extraordinary feat, notwithstanding the miraculous intervention of the Lord. However, it does not seem to be congruent with Deuteronomy 7:7, which suggests that Israel was indeed "the smallest [or fewest] of all the nations." Exodus 23:30 indicates that taking over the Promised Land would be a gradual process ("little by little"), "until you have increased enough to take possession of the land" (NIV). Additionally, when studying the conquest of Canaan as described in Joshua, the scenario portrayed by the biblical author seems to be one of miraculous delivery and victory by the Israelites, facing a Canaanite population that—as archaeology suggests—was not to be numbered in the millions but rather in the thousands (Merling, 212-20).

4.2.2. Symbolic (or Hyperbolic) Interpretation. This viewpoint has recently been advocated by D. M. Fouts, although it has a long tradition in biblical studies. The hyperbolic interpretation holds that the large numbers should not be interpreted in terms of literal numbers but should rather be understood in terms of figurative language similar to cuneiform annalistic literature. Fouts (387) emphasizes that this use by no means diminishes the historiographical viability of the biblical record. However, on a methodological basis, the limits of this interpretation—while being attractive and inviting—are not clearly defined. Which marker in the Hebrew text will indicate that any given number (being large or small) is not meant symbolically but rather literally? As has been indicated above, the fact that pentateuchal (and OT) historiography often employs a theological angle does not diminish its reliability, and a wholesale interpretation of large numbers in this sense does not appear to make sense, both internally and on the comparative level. While there are elements appearing both in OT historiographical literature and in ancient Near Eastern annalistic texts, both textual corpora also show marked differences in terms of audience and focus (McMahon) and involve definite ideological and propaganda features (Liverani). Connecting the symbolic interpretation with the theological nature of pentateuchal historiography, theology might have been the driving force for the numbering scheme utilized in the Pentateuch where rhetorical exaggeration was utilized deliberately and purposefully to "bring glory to God, derision to enemies, and point forward to the fulfillment of God's promise to the fathers that their descendents will be innumerable" (Allen, 688).

4.2.3. Semantic Interpretation. This perspective was first introduced by F. Petrie in 1906 and later taken up by G. Mendenhall in 1958. J. Wenham also published a variant interpretation based upon Petrie's proposal. The semantic interpretation takes its point of departure in the Hebrew root *ʾlp,* which can denote: (1) "a thousand" (Gen 20:16; Num 3:50 and pointed as *ʾelep);* (2) "leader, chief, captain" (Gen 36:15; Ex 15:15; the term was pointed by the Masoretes as *ʾallûp);* and (3) "clan, family, group, troop" (Judg 6:15; 1 Sam 10:19; pointed as number 1 above, *ʾelep).* In this interpretation, in the first census of the Israelites recorded in Numbers 1, the Hebrew of Numbers 1:21—*šiššâ wĕʾarbāʿîm ʾelep wahămēš mēʾôt* ("six and forty *ʾelep* and five hundreds")—is understood as forty-six clans/troops and (comprising) five hundred men. It is possible that the second *waw* introducing the final sum of five hundred could be interpreted as a *waw explicativum* (cf. Baker). C. J. Humphreys's recent contribution to the question of the large numbers of the Israelite census in the Pentateuch represents a major step forward, since it provides a coherent, mathematically consistent solution to this vexing problem, which surpasses

the more eclectic (albeit similar) solution of Wenham and the limitations of Petrie's interpretation.

However, it should be kept in mind that several unproven presuppositions (such as the average size of families and the distributions of people over and under twenty years of age) are made at the outset of his synthesis. This is not to say that the presuppositions are incorrect or illogical but rather points to the complex nature of the entire issue. Humphreys's point of departure is the statement found in Numbers 3:46, indicating that the number of firstborn that exceeded the number of Levites (who functioned as a symbolic "firstfruit offering to Yahweh" for the entire Israelite congregation, as indicated by Num 3:41) was 273. He also presupposes that in a fast-growing population group, about half the population would be aged under twenty years. As a result of these presuppositions, he concludes that the number of men over twenty and able to bear arms during the exodus was 5,550. Humphreys suggests that as a result of his mathematical analysis there were between eight and nine males in the average Israelite family, which is consistent with the claim in Exodus 1:7 that the Israelites had multiplied vigorously, since the average number of males born to the sons of Jacob entering Egypt was 4.8 (Gen 46:8-25). Figure 1 is a sample table from Humphreys's analysis (Humphrey, 212) of the first census in Numbers 1, translating *'elep* with "troop, military unit," which will serve as a good illustration of some of the results of his study. It should be noted that the average "men per troop" has been rounded to the nearest full number.

Humphreys posits that the final figure of 603,550 in Numbers 1:46 was reached by a later scribe who, conflating the numbers and instead of writing 598 "troops" (=*'elep)* involving 5,550 men, ran together 598 *'elep* and 5 *'elep* (of the 5,550 men) to yield 603 *'elep* (= 603 thousands) and 550 without realizing that *'elep* in this context meant troop rather than "thousand(s)." It should be noted that the average troop size is slightly above nine, which would indicate that more or less two families were combined in one *'elep* ("troop"), emphasizing the social boundaries of this unit. The variation in troop size (for example, Simeon only averages five) could be indicated as variation in family groups. Furthermore, it is interesting to see that the smallest

Tribe	Numbers if *'elep* = 1000	Numbers if *'elep* = troop		
		Number of troops	Number of men	Men per troop
Reuben	46,500	46	500	11
Simeon	59,300	59	300	5
Gad	45,650	45	650	14
Judah	74,600	74	600	8
Issachar	54,400	54	400	7
Zebulun	57,400	57	400	7
Ephraim	40,500	40	500	12
Manasseh	32,200	32	200	6
Benjamin	35,400	35	400	11
Dan	62,700	62	700	11
Asher	41,500	41	500	12
Naphtali	53,400	53	400	8
TOTAL	603,550	598	5,550	9.3

Figure 1. Census Figures in Numbers 1: Two Interpretations

fighting units in the Amarna correspondence coming from the fourteenth to thirteenth centuries B.C. also involved ten men (Humphreys, 204). In Mesopotamian texts, the strength of military units is given starting at ten, fifty and one hundred men (Nemet-Nejat, 232). Additionally, it should be noted that the second census in Numbers 26, taken after forty years of desert sojourn, results in 596 troops with 5,730 men and an average size of 9.6 men per troop (Humphreys, 213) when interpreted along similar lines. This is in line with the harsh desert conditions and a virtual lack of population growth. One difficult aspect of this theory, however, is the relationship between the census in Numbers 1 and the encampment numbers in Numbers 2. When applying the semantic principle to the description of the east side of the camp (Num 2:1-9), Judah had 74 troops with 600 men, Issachar accounted for 54 troops with 400 men and Zebulon had 57 troops with 400 men. Mathematically, the total of troops for this section of the camp would result in 185 with 1400 men. Numbers 2:9, however, states the total as 186 thousand (= troops) and four hundred. Humphreys again suggests a possible corruption of the text where

a later scribe did not understand the distinct usage of *'elep* both as "troops" and "thousand," and thus 185 troops were connected with the final sum of the men (= 1,400). The suggestion of systematic textual corruption in the total numbers debilitates the semantic-interpretation approach, although it still presents a viable possibility.

If the semantic interpretation is to be accepted, one would expect to have a total of 20,000-25,000 for the people of Israel. This is a figure that would be consistent with the issues raised above concerning the size of the population of Canaan during the time period under consideration. At present, Humphreys's reconstruction appears to be the most consistent, although it requires substantial textual conflation of the MT, which was the result of misunderstandings based upon a change in semantics. The other solution to the vexing problem of the large numbers in the exodus as recorded in the Pentateuch would be to reserve judgment or to admit that the ancient conventions for recording numbers are not as transparent to the modern reader as they were to the ancient author and his audience.

4.3. Doublets and Repetition as an Indication of Multiple Documents in the Pentateuch. One of the standard criteria of historical criticism is the presence of supposed doublets occurring in the Pentateuch, which according to a list presented by Friedman includes twenty-seven incidents, beginning with the *creation account(s) in Genesis 1—2 and extending to the list(s) of forbidden animals in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Due to space limitations, this article will focus on the stories involving the wife/sister incidents in Genesis 12, 20 and 26, which have always been presented as one of the prime cases in point. Arguing that they are part of an intentional literary strategy, J. Van Seters (1975) has presented a coherent critical reconstruction of the three incidents, suggesting that Genesis 12 represents the original folk tale, with Genesis 20 and 26 representing later literary variants. As T. D. Alexander (148-49) has rightfully pointed out, the narrative involving Abraham, *Sarah and *Abimelech in Genesis 20:1-18 has important external connections (such as the birth of Isaac in Gen 21:1-7) that explain the specific information contained in the story, including the fact stressed by the author that Sarah did not have intercourse with Abimelech. Thus, against Van Seters, the supposed doublet is not necessarily an expansion and explanation of some of the open questions of the original folk tale but should rather be understood in its specific narrative context and should be read as an independent event. It is also worth noting that Genesis 20:12 raises an additional legal dilemma that is not even alluded to in Genesis 12, as it suggests that Sarah was also Abraham's sister, a notion completely alien to pentateuchal law (Lev 18:9-11).

Furthermore, it is important to note that repetition and the shaping of similar events along common literary structures is often used to show that God is surely at work (Sailhamer 1992, 143) and has parallels in other ancient Near Eastern literature (Garrett, 22-25). In ritual literature, for example, a distinction should be made between prescriptive and descriptive texts (such as Ex 29 and Lev 8 concerning the ordination of Aaron and his sons) without posing two distinct sources. This distinction is widely accepted and understood by specialists in this area (G. A. Klingbeil 1998, 104-7; also Levine). J. K. Hoffmeier (1992) has suggested a novel interpretation of the wife/sister incidents, connecting them to (failed) attempts by the patriarchs to establish good relations with foreign kings through diplomatic marriages. While this interpretation maintains the narrative integrity of the stories, it does not seem to take into account the personal relational tension involving Abraham and Sarah and later on Isaac and Rebekah respectively. The narrative of Genesis 26, involving Abraham's son Isaac and having a similar sister/wife motif, might also be a conscious effort by the author to emphasize the continuity between both patriarchs, in this case also involving similar negative character traits of a man hiding behind a woman. V. P. Hamilton has pointed to the fact that in Abraham's case the episodes, separated by twenty-five years, might indicate that the precovenant Abraham (as found in Gen 15) is not much different from the postcovenant Abraham. In both scenarios, the historicity of the events involved is not in question.

4.4. Camels in the Patriarchal Narratives as an Indication of the Anachronistic Nature of the Pentateuch. The Hebrew noun *gāmāl* ("camel") occurs twenty-eight times in the Pentateuch from Genesis 12 onward, mainly in connection with the patriarch Abraham. Critical scholarship ex-

plains these references as a typical anachronism (Lemche), inasmuch as camels were only domesticated in Palestine at the end of the second millennium B.C. and not earlier. Depending on the position taken for the date of the exodus (*see* Exodus, Date of) and subsequently extrapolating back to the patriarchal period, one would date the call of Abraham either to (1) 2200-2150 B.C. in the early exodus (= fifteenth century B.C.) and long sojourn view; (2) 2000-1950 B.C. in the early exodus but short sojourn view; or (3) 2000-1950 B.C. (the same date as the preceding view) in the late exodus and long sojourn view. A. E. Hill and J. H. Walton (83-85) have provided a very useful introduction to the chronological issues involved in pentateuchal studies, together with a helpful table summarizing the different positions.

The paleozoologic, iconographic and textual evidence concerning the domestication of the camel in the ancient Near East is ambiguous, but it seems clear that the camel (including both the Bactrian two-humped camel *[camelus bactrianus]* and the one-humped dromedary *[camelus dromedarius]*) had been domesticated in lower Mesopotamia and southern Arabia by 2500 B.C. (Hesse, 217; Staubli, 184-85; Borowski, 112-18). R. Younker has recently discussed some petroglyphs depicting camels being led by human figures in the Wadi Nasib, Sinai. These petroglyphs were discovered in close proximity to a Proto-Sinaitic inscription found by Gerster in 1961, which he dates not later than 1500 B.C. Zarins (1825-26) notes that osteological remains from Shahr-I-Sokhta in eastern Iran in a context dated to 2700 B.C. clearly indicate a domesticated camel. In the Arabian Peninsula bones found at Umm-an-Nar and dated to the late third millennium B.C. would also support the view of an early domestication of the camel. Some bone remains have been found at Arad in an Early Bronze context (c. 2900 B.C. ; cf. Wapnish), although it is not clear whether they indicate a domesticated animal. Looking from the angle of Jordan, J. Sauer has argued that the camel was definitely domesticated by the third millennium B.C. but that its widespread use only began to emerge during the final moments of the Late Bronze Age. It would thus appear that Abraham's "camel connection" is not a good example for an anachronism but rather can be confidently explained in the context of either the early or late date connected to the patriarchal period, beginning around the end of the third millennium B.C. O. Borowski (113) has made the interesting observation that camels were instrumental in the establishment of desert nomadism with its change in lifestyle. The Genesis story of Abraham leaving the urban center of Ur and becoming a *gēr* ("stranger, traveler, man without an established residence," Gen 15:13; 23:4) living in a tent does coincide with this function.

4.5. Tents and Patriarchal Nomadism as an Indication of the Anachronistic Nature of the Pentateuch. D. J. Wiseman (1978) has conveniently summarized the evidence for the existence of tents during the patriarchal period. He suggests that the nomadism of the patriarchs is hardly the same as the "enclosed nomadism" as found in the Mari documents of the Middle Bronze Age. Since the references to tents are mostly connected with the act of building an altar and after the initial move from Ur to Haran to Palestine are only mentioned when Abraham was forced to move from the Bethel area, it is possible to argue that they represent seasonal movements of a specific group, something similar to the phenomenon visible in modern-day bedouins living in the twenty-first century. Sufficient extrabiblical evidence from Mesopotamia and Egypt has been marshaled by D. J. Wiseman (197-98) to dismiss this critique raised by traditional historical criticism. The issue of nomadism is also significant regarding the existence of a tent sanctuary and needs to be understood as the matrix for the discussion of the following section.

4.6. Tabernacle, Tents and Religious Terminology as an Indication of the Anachronistic Nature of the Pentateuch. It has been alleged that the tent of meeting or *tabernacle described in Exodus should be understood as a rehashed version of the temple adapted for the prehistorical times by exile-suffering priestly experts (and thus connected to the elusive P source). However, recent studies of the archaeology of temple/tent sanctuaries during the Late Bronze Age have demonstrated the existence of these structures in Egyptian and Northwest Semitic contexts (Kitchen 1993; Fleming 2000). Meanwhile V. A. Hurowitz (110-13) has emphasized the parallel literary structure of the tabernacle building account with Mesopotamian building accounts. Cornelis Houtman (1994) has also indicated the resemblance of the tabernacle with Persian

royal tents, which themselves were not a new architectural development but rather the continuation of a well-established ancient Near Eastern tradition. All this evidence suggests that tent sanctuaries would fit in the Late Bronze Age and, based upon comparative material (including the structure and position of Ramses II's war tent during the battle of Kadesh, which needs to be understood in terms of the Egyptian theology of the divine king [Kitchen 1993, 121*] and B. Rothenberg's discovery of an Egyptian Sinai sanctuary at Timna' from the Late Bronze Age involving a tent structure) would support the notion of the historicity of the tabernacle building account in Exodus during that same period.

The main issue in this question is the true time frame of the texts containing the description of religious space (such as the tabernacle section) or ritual/legal activity connected to the religious events. The majority of these texts have been generally assigned to the P source in traditional historical criticism, with occasional reference to the so-called H substratum, and have been thought to include a substantial part of Exodus plus the major part of Leviticus. One of the arguments regularly brought forward in standard commentaries on Leviticus is the lack of comparative material of religious ritual from the Late Bronze Age that would corroborate the biblical account of these practices and texts. However, recent comparative evidence dating to the second part of the second millennium B.C. challenges this specific line of argumentation and provides palpable evidence of similar religious institutions and practices in a time frame parallel to the indicated historical period of the historical Moses in the second half of the second millennium B.C.

At this point it would be wise to consider the advantages and limits of the comparative method in theological and historical studies. Both *parallelomania* and *parallelophobia* have been widely documented in the history of interpretation of biblical and ancient Near Eastern research (G. A. Klingbeil 1998, 332-35; Malul). When utilizing comparative material, one should first seek to compare comparables and not the proverbial apple with an orange. This requirement involves texts of similar genres and also texts originating in the same historical and geographical sphere. Second, one should work contextually (Hallo), seeking to take into account not just an isolated phenomenon of a given culture but attempting to understand the entire cultural and religious system behind the phenomenon—including the marked and less obvious differences. Third, the comparative method understood in this manner does not seek to explain origins (which endeavor in itself, because of chronological questions, is often quite challenging) but rather should be used to describe a cultural or religious phenomenon and posit it in a more general historical context.

Examples of recent comparative studies that are helpful in terms of the issue of the origin and development of the Pentateuch involve material from Emar in Syria. Emar (modern Tell Meskene) is situated some 90 km east of modern Aleppo and in six seasons was excavated as part of a salvage operation during the construction of a dam on the Euphrates near Tabqa. The city existed on this particular site for roughly two hundred years, from the fourteenth to the end of the thirteenth centuries B.C., after which it was destroyed (G. A. Klingbeil 1998, 344; Adamthwaite). The important contribution of Emar, however, does not primarily involve its archaeology but rather the immense quantity of cuneiform texts (written mostly in Akkadian, but also including Hittite and Hurrian texts) unearthed in different parts of the city. It is interesting to note that different scholars working independently have arrived at the conclusion that Emar ritual texts shed significant light upon pentateuchal ritual texts and their historical contexts *(Sitze im Leben)*. A helpful example can be found in the anointing rites during the ordination ritual of Aaron and his sons (Ex 29 [prescription] and Lev 8 [description]). Until recently, the traditional historical-critical credo (and often espoused in commentaries on Exodus or Leviticus) was that anointing rites of priests could only be attested outside of the OT in the postexilic period. However, the evidence from Emar (369.3-4, 20-21) is unequivocal and involves the high priestess (NIN.DINGIR) of the deity ^{d}IM (most likely the storm god Baal), who has oil poured on her head twice on two different days during her ordination ritual (G. A. Klingbeil 1996 and 2000; Fleming 1998). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that both anointing rites are not connected with urban centers and well-established temples and palaces but are situated in the context of limited leadership. D. E. Fleming (1992) has discussed this specific Syrian model of societal structure

under the heading of "limited kingship," emphasizing the distinct difference with urban, king-focused societies of Mesopotamia during the second half of the second millennium B.C. Other comparative evidence pointing to the later part of the second millennium for ritual, legal and religious phenomena attested in the Pentateuch include the order and origins of the Israelite *festival calendar, which should not be understood in terms of postexilic innovations but rather as the reflections of ancient realities from an earlier period (Fleming 1999a and 1999b).

Other relevant material from Syria (Ebla) and Asia Minor (Hittites) have been discussed concerning elimination rituals, such as the well-known scapegoat ritual in Leviticus 16 (Zatelli; Wright). Other relevant comparative material includes the Ugaritic ritual texts concerning sacrificial and divinatory rites (Pardee; summary of Smith, 97-100, 197-200, 220-223), dating to the Late Bronze Age and demonstrating distinctly close parallels, especially concerning the sacrificial system. D. P. Wright (275), for example, finds that while there are definite connections between elimination and purification rites from the OT and the ancient Near East, there are also explicit differences, distinguishing the two different textual corpora with their often conflicting worldviews. This leads to an important aspect of comparative evidence regarding analogy. It can be often observed that similar phenomena have distinct foci in different cultural entities. Thus the simplistic equation of origin or cultural/religious influence that one culture had on another should be discarded in favor of a more complex view in which the modern researcher seeks to understand the underlying intention(s) and worldview of the author of the biblical text. What is clear from the evidence mentioned above, however, is that important ritual elements found in the so-called Priestly source cannot be marked as "late" in the context of the history of Israelite religion.

4.7. The Egyptian Connection in the Pentateuch and Its Repercussions for Historical Criticism. A major part of the storyline of the Pentateuch is connected to Egypt, involving sections of Genesis (Abraham's visit to Egypt in Gen 12; the story of the servant of Sarah, *Hagar, in Gen 16; and the Joseph cycle in Gen 37—50), and Exodus—Deuteronomy (exodus event and the manifold references to it). Over the past twenty years a renewed interest in studying the relationship between Israel/Palestine and Egypt can be seen in research. Some of the important recent works include D. B. Redford, K. A. Kitchen (1994), J. D. Currid (1997) and J. K. Hoffmeier (1997). Currid (23-27) has provided a fascinating discussion as to why the renewed interest for studying the relationship between Egypt and Palestine/Israel has only hit academic circles from 1985 onward. Some of the hesitation of Egyptologists tackling the question of historical connections between Palestine and Egypt can be explained in terms of a negative view concerning the biblical writers' familiarity with Egyptian cultural, linguistic, religious and perhaps even political realities. Furthermore, some historians refuse to take the possible connection seriously, arguing that the biblical text does not seek to write history, but rather theology, and thus cannot be utilized as a bona fide historical source. As has been shown above, this perspective appears to be rather simplistic in view of the complex issue of historicity and ancient historiography in general. Another factor for the relative lack of qualified studies of the relationship between Israel and Egypt in biblical times can be found in the centrality of Mesopotamian thought over against the Egyptian background that many scholars posit, especially regarding the content of Genesis. Finally, scholars have long argued that the total lack of references to the exodus event in Egyptian sources precludes the historicity of this event. However, this argument from silence needs to be seen in its proper context, as can be seen in other areas of ancient Near Eastern research where long-cherished theories (usually critical toward the biblical record) have seen their systematic erosion or—sometimes—destruction in the light of new and forthcoming evidence. As a good example, Currid mentions N. Glueck's thesis concerning the archaeology of Transjordan, which suggested that no sedentary evidence from the Late Bronze Age could be found in Transjordan, thus discrediting the biblical record of the conquest. However, this older view of the archaeology of Transjordan had to be totally reformulated in view of current data (cf. LaBianca and Younker). One could include here also the recent discussion concerning the historicity of David and the "monumental" tenth century B.C. in Israel and the influence on this discussion of the Aramaic Tel Dan inscription dated to the ninth century B.C.

Recent research concerning the connection between Israel and Egypt can be divided into three main areas, although systematization is always prone to simplification and runs the risk of leaving out important aspects. First, it focuses upon linguistic connections between Egyptian and Hebrew, involving the text of the MT and Hebrew onomastics. A second major field where Egyptian studies can contribute to our understanding of the meaning and historical *Sitz im Leben* of the biblical text is the religious world referred to both in the biblical text (specifically in Exodus) and in the Egyptian texts. Third, the archaeology of Egypt can contribute to our understanding of the historical and societal conditions of the period described in the Pentateuch. Obviously, the latter contribution is problematic inasmuch as it requires a decision upon the historical context of the exodus event. D. Merling (20-58) provides an in-depth discussion of the distinct models concerning the exodus/conquest events with both their weak and their strong points. It seems that in the age of models and paradigm changes, every new reconstruction of historical events related to the Bible proposes also a new framework of events and causes connected to these events. This clearly points to the difficult nature of the data, but it also can say something about those trying to reconstruct biblical history (or its lack thereof, a position maintained by modern critical scholarship). These differences cannot only be evaluated on the basis of the different data sets but should also take into account the distinct philosophical and theological presuppositions scholars arrive at when studying the text.

Egyptian data can help to provide a matrix against which these paradigms can be evaluated. In the following (sections 4.7.1-3), the three main areas of contact (linguistics, religious thought and archaeology) will be discussed in more detail.

4.7.1. Egypt and the Pentateuch—Linguistics and Onomastics. Relevant data for this section comes from the Joseph cycle (Gen 37—50) and we will focus the discussion on specific names in the narrative. The appropriate historical setting for this story is the Middle Bronze Age, and Egyptian material that broadly could be connected to this period includes the Execration texts and the Story of Sinuhe. Genesis 37:36 describes the first contact that Joseph has with Egyptian society in the form of his new master, a man named Potiphar, who is portrayed as the *sĕrîs par'ōh* ("one of Pharaoh's officials," NRSV), which is followed by *śar haṭṭabbāḥîm* ("commander of the guard," NJB). In Egyptian the name *Potiphar* literally means "he whom Re gives" (Currid, 75) or "the gift of [the god] Re" (Kitchen 1994, 85), and it has been suggested that it is an abbreviated form of the name *p3-di-p3-r'*, which is also the name of the future father-in-law of Joseph (Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20) and which might be a conscious literary device expressing irony, especially in view of the events about to take place. Both names are rendered *Petephrēs* by the LXX. However, this name type does not appear earlier than the Twenty-First Dynasty in Egyptian inscription, which corresponds to the eleventh century B.C. and definitely falls outside the possible time frames for either chronology of the patriarchs. Traditional historical criticism has interpreted this fact as an indication of the late nature of the text, although Kitchen (1994, 85-86) has argued for a conscious modernization of an earlier form *didir'*, ("the gift of Re"), which utilizes a known pattern *didi-X* ("gift of X [= deity]"). This name pattern is attested for both the Middle Kingdom and the later Hyksos period and thus would fit the biblical chronology. While modernization is not uncommon in biblical literature (cf. the geographical name *Leshem*, which apparently was the earlier Canaanite name of *Dan* [Jos 19:47], but which was not used in earlier texts referring to Dan such as Gen 14:14) and sometimes during the process of transmission scribes "updated" a geographical or administrative term that they did not understand anymore for a newer one, Kitchen's suggestion of meaningful modernization of an Egyptian name by a Hebrew scribe is doubtful. Perhaps it might be better to argue that the existence of the definite article *p3* as an onomastic element in Brooklyn Papyrus 35.1446 from the Thirteenth Dynasty could be an indication that the name pattern reflected in the biblical name might even be earlier, although no specific examples have been found (Hoffmeier 1997, 86-87).

Genesis 41:45 describes the elevation of Joseph in the service of Pharaoh, after his convincing explication of the dream of Pharaoh. As part of this change of status (involving visible insignias of power as well [Gen 41:40-43]) the king also gives Joseph the new name Zaphenath-paneah. Y. Muchiki (224-25) provides a good re-

view of the many prevailing interpretations of this name, including Steindorff's generally accepted suggestion to read **ddp̄ntrīwf ʿnḫ* ("The god said, 'Let him live' "). Kitchen (1994, 82-84) proposed a consonantal metathesis (i.e., a change of position of consonants because of phonological reasons), resulting in a possible *Zathenaph* instead of *Zaphenath.* This would correspond to the Egyptian *ḏd-n.f-[ʾI]p- ʿnḫ,* which one could translate "X ("Joseph" in the context of Gen 41:45) is called *ʾIpʿnkh.*" This name structure as well as the name itself (Kitchen 1982, 2.1129) can be found in Egyptian texts from the time of the Middle Kingdom onward, and Kitchen has documented his suggestion sufficiently to make it a viable option. However, one should remember that it is based upon a metathesis in Hebrew. Muchiki (224) suggests the reconstruction **ḏf[ɜ.i]-nṯ[r] p[ɜ]- ʿnḫ* ("my provision is god, the living one") without resorting to a metathesis or any other phonetic "freestyling." Contextually, this etymology would also make sense in the framework of Genesis 41.

Muchiki's work is a gold mine for OT scholars studying Egyptian elements and loanwords in northwest Semitic languages. It is noteworthy that most Hebrew personal names with possible or clear Egyptian linguistic connections appear in the Pentateuch or in genealogies connected to that period. Furthermore, vocalization can be used to determine a possible time frame when the term entered the Hebrew corpus as an Egyptian loanword. The vocalization of the Hebrew term *patrūsîm* ("Pathrusim") in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10:14 suggests that the Egyptian word *pɜ-tɜ-rs[i]* ("upper Egypt") probably entered Hebrew in the second millennium B.C., since its first-millennium vocalization, based upon its occurrence in a neo-Assyrian text from Esarhaddon, was *pa-tu-ri-si,* which would include the sounds *e/i* instead of the long *u*-sound (Muchiki, 234-35). It has also been shown that most of the Egyptian loanwords (45 percent) in the OT correspond to the semantic domain of natural products (minerals, botanic terminology), and 35 percent can be classified as describing the domestic material culture (Muchiki, 323). This stands in stark contrast to the Akkadian loanwords, which come primarily from the realm of administrative/political terminology. Thus it can be shown that a second-millennium sojourn and exodus from Egypt could be supported in view of the linguistic data. On leaving Egypt, Israel was not yet mature as a nation—a fact that can be appreciated both in the biblical records in books such as Joshua, Judges and Samuel as well as in the semantic domains of the loanwords brought out of Egypt.

4.7.2. Egypt and the Pentateuch—Religious Terminology and Concepts. Currid (83-103) has successfully demonstrated the connection of Egyptian religious thought with the specifics of the plagues as described in Exodus 7—12. Exegetically, it is important to focus more on the polemics of the plagues instead of looking merely on their succession, historicity or sequence. In his discussion of the introductory serpent miracle (Ex 7:8-13), Currid establishes convincingly the religiously polemical nature of the subsequent plague narrative, which must be understood as the cosmic battle between the pharaoh (the human representative of the Egyptian pantheon) and Moses and Aaron (the human representatives of Yahweh). In Egyptian religious thought the snake was both feared and revered. When the Egyptian "wise men" could duplicate the miracle and thus—apparently—nullify the effect of the miraculous introduction of Moses and Aaron, the snake of Moses and Aaron ate the magician's snake, which ironically prefigures the final outcome of the confrontation about to begin (see Currid for numerous textual references from Egyptian sources). Another important contribution of Currid is his discussion of the "hardening of the heart" of Pharaoh and its religious undertones in Egyptian religious thought (*see* Hardness of Heart; Exodus, Book of, §7.3). Hoffmeier (1997, 135-63) provides a convincing discussion of the phrases "strong hand" and "outstretched arm" in the Pentateuch (Ex 3:19; 6:6; 13:3, 14, 16; 15:6, 12, 16; 32:11; Deut 3:24; 6:21; 9:26, 29; 26:8), which he connects with Egyptian *ḫpš* ("strong arm") and *pr-ʿ* ("the arm goes forth/is extended"). Both terms are usually related to the Egyptian sovereign and indicate conquest. Evidence of this concept can be found in Egyptian iconography (Hoffmeier 1997, fig. 15) as well as in the Akkadian *zu-ru-uḫ* in the Amarna letters of the king of Jerusalem (EA 286.12; 287.27; 288.14) sent to the pharaoh in Egypt. S. B. Noegel has provided additional references to Egyptian religious (magic) activity as found in the book of Exodus. The growing corpus of studies researching these aspects points to their relevance for the discussion of the historicity and origin of the Pentateuch.

4.7.3. Egypt and the Pentateuch—Archaeology and History. Kitchen (1994 and 1998) and Hoffmeier (1997) usefully review historical and archaeological material pertinent to the question of the origin and development of the Pentateuch. In this short section only the specific areas will be highlighted with further references to the studies indicated above. Both Kitchen and Hoffmeier provide ample textual and iconographical evidence for the presence of Semites in Egypt starting already in the First Intermediate Period and onward. During the Second Intermediate Period the so-called Hyksos controlled most of the Delta and other sections of Egypt. The work of Bietak at Tell el-Dabʿa has demonstrated the reality of this Semitic presence in terms of archaeology as well (Hoffmeier 1997, 63-65, 122-23), although it is not an easy undertaking to correlate ethnicity with specific archaeological data. There are two specific issues where archaeology can provide possible answers: (1) concerning the identity of the store cities mentioned in Exodus 1:11 (Rameses [Heb Raamses] and Pithom) and (2) regarding the possible route of the exodus. Both issues are still under discussion. Rameses is generally identified with Tell el-Dabʿa in the East Delta, while Pithom—whose identification is more complex—has several candidates, including Tell el-Maskhuta and Tell er-Retabe. Concerning the name of Rameses, it has often been argued that the city received its name from either one of the pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty bearing that name. W. C. Kaiser (85-86) has provided some good arguments in favor of an earlier origin of the name and has documented research connecting the Nineteenth Dynasty to earlier Hyksos (or Asian/Semitic) predecessors. This would make the name a less compelling argument in favor of the later date of the exodus, during the thirteenth century B.C., and opens the possibility for an early date.

In terms of literature, Exodus 12:37; 13:17-20; 14:2 and Numbers 33 can be described as itineraries, and they have generally been connected to the P source. However, D. B. Redford's comparison with Egyptian itineraries of Thutmose III has underlined the similarities to this genre, including not only lists of cities but also geographical features (such as mountains, springs, rivers). Thus care should be taken in assigning these sections an unhistorical character on the assumption that they were written during the fifth century B.C. (see Hoffmeier 1997, 177-78). According to Hoffmeier's reconstruction, the OT portrays the Israelites as leaving from the eastern Delta and moving in a southeastern direction toward the Tjeku region in the eastern end of the Wadi Tumilat. It is clear that temporary desert camps will not leave much to be discovered by even the most dedicated archaeologist. However, future research should focus upon more general topographical features, including the location of the Eastern Frontier Canal, recently discovered by satellite images (Hoffmeier 1997, 164-75; *see* Exodus Route and Wilderness Itinerary).

4.8. Literary Studies of the Pentateuch and Their Repercussion for Historical Criticism. Since the early 1980s a new trend has been observed in studies of the Pentateuch. More and more studies have discarded the limited historical angle (based upon a restrictive understanding of OT historiography) of traditional historical criticism and have read the text in its final/canonical form. Some important works include T. W. Mann's study of the narrative unity of the Pentateuch, J. H. Sailhamer's focus on the Pentateuch as an integrated narrative (1992) and also the efforts of H. C. Brichto and W. Warning, all of whom approach the issue from the background of OT and ancient Near Eastern studies. A parallel phenomenon can be seen in literary critics such as R. Alter and L. Ryken (together with biblical scholar T. Longman) who—reading the text in its final form—have applied standard literary conventions to the text and have arrived at surprising results, such as suspected doublets or proposed distinct sources being interpreted as conscious narrative strategies that help to unify, focus and sharpen the reader's attention. Concerning Leviticus, Warning (180) has suggested that the supposed distinction of layers of P and the relation of the P to the H are "seemingly irrelevant, or even non-existent." Warning found numerous chiastic structures, structures based on numbers, open-envelope structures and parallel structures based on identical forms and key phrases. Lately the British anthropologist M. Douglas has published a fascinating study of Leviticus from a literary perspective, utilizing anthropological criteria and suggesting that Leviticus should be read as a unit reflecting the tripartite division of Israelite religion (as visible in the tabernacle structure and space, involving the entrance area for everybody; the holy place, where only the special-

ists entered; and finally the holy of holies, where only the high *priest would enter once a year). From this selective review it is clear that structural and literary analysis of the Pentateuch does not appear to support the fragmentary nature of the Pentateuch suggested by practitioners of historical criticism.

4.9. Linguistics of Hebrew and Historical Criticism. One name connected to the recent discussion of linguistic data and its importance for pentateuchal studies is A. Hurvitz of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His work on the linguistic characteristics of P has revolutionized this aspect of research. Hurvitz has convincingly argued that, based on linguistics and the usage of specific terminology, P cannot be a product of the postexilic period, thus challenging seriously the traditional reconstruction of Israelite religion and literature. Recently, V. Sasson has studied the use and purpose of the *waw consecutive* forms in both old Aramaic and biblical Hebrew. He suggests that these forms can be used for dating texts diachronically, since this stylistic feature was used sparingly in archaic texts. However, it should also be kept in mind that the transmission history of the OT is very complex and not easily reconstructed. This makes an exclusively linguistic emphasis, without external controls and additional disciplines, subjective and limits its value.

5. Conclusion.

Current research on the Pentateuch is changing. More and more specialists are discarding the traditional research paradigm of historical criticism. Historical criticism as a method is in a crisis but continues to thrive as an underlying philosophical position. Unfortunately there is great disparity between the emerging data and the presupposition(s) of the historical-critical method. In this review article an underlying historiography of the Pentateuch was formulated as the basis for a discussion of issues raised by standard historical criticism. While the Pentateuch is not primarily a historical document, it is definitely not unhistorical or even ahistorical. Theology, both in the OT and in the ancient Near East, was always connected with history because these societies shared a holistic concept of life, God and history. Thus, viewed from this perspective, the historicity of the Pentateuch can be postulated without resorting to dogmatism or being labeled "unscientific." In the face of specific challenges to the unity and historicity of the Pentateuch, we have seen that evidence gathered from such diverse fields as paleozoology, archaeology, ritual studies, Egyptology, comparative studies, linguistics and literary analysis, among others, supports the notion of an emerging nation called Israel, part and parcel of the Late Bronze Age period. The evidence fits better religiously, economically and historically in this period than in other periods connected to the distinct sources. Literary analysis of the canonical text of the Pentateuch contributes significantly to our understanding of the meaning, structure and authorial intention. However, more needs to be done. Future research should seek to formulate an overarching theory of the origin and composition of the Pentateuch, taking into account both the latest research while taking as a point of departure a high view of Scripture. Furthermore, more work needs to be done to understand ritual in the Pentateuch, which represents a significant part of the text but generally receives little attention. It is clear that, in the limited space of a dictionary entry, not every argument and position of historical criticism can be treated in detail and with due consideration—even more so when the topic is so laden and beset with a tremendous history of interpretation.

See also ARCHAEOLOGY; EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; EXODUS, DATE OF; EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; FORM CRITICISM; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM; TEXTUAL CRITICISM; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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HITTITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

HIVITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

HOBAB. *See* JETHRO.

HOLINESS. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

HOLINESS CODE. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF.

HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

Yahweh, Israel's God, is inherently holy, as conveyed by the statement that God's name is holy (Lev 20:3; 22:2, 32; lit. "it is the name of my holiness"). Because key names were intricately tied to the bearer's identity in the ancient Semitic world, this means that holiness is the quintessential nature of God. This is confirmed by Yahweh's self-assertion, "I Yahweh, your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2). In Scripture, holiness is exclusive to Yahweh; the holiness of anything else is derived, either from God's presence or from consecration to the sanctuary. Further, because only God is holy, there is nothing either within humans or on earth that is inherently holy, and no Scripture attempts to define "holy." However, two major genres in the Pentateuch allow us to build a concept of holiness, namely, the reports of God's appearing (theophany) and the regulations for worshiping the holy God (cultic prescriptions).

Two ideas commonly associated with holiness need to be qualified at the outset. First, holiness is often defined as separation, because objects and persons consecrated for use at the sanctuary are removed or set apart from ordinary use. However, separation does not get at the essential meaning of holiness—neither in reference to God, the Holy One, nor in reference to the variety of items described as holy—for it fails to provide any content to the concept of being holy. Second, the *ethical and the holy are often so equated that the terms are used synonymously. In biblical faith this is common because Yahweh, the holy God, is righteous. Consequently, *holy* defines the character of biblical ethics. Nevertheless, we need to be aware that holiness encompasses far more than ethical behavior. In fact, in most other religions holiness and the ethical are not connected. In nonbiblical contexts, "holy" often refers to a sacred power that inhabits an element of nature, such as a tree or a stream or a specific space such as a burial ground. These sacred objects or places, being closely related to the spirit world, have numinous qualities. In the polytheistic religions of Israel's neighbors, only some of the gods possessed holy power, albeit imperfectly. Holiness as a spiritual force often stood over against the various gods of a pantheon.

As we investigate the idea of holiness in the Pentateuch, we need to be mindful that holiness, being the quintessential character of God, is the center of divine motivation. It affects everything God does. Moreover, the adjectives at-

tached to holiness, such as *majestic, glorious* and *awesome,* inform us that the essence of beauty lies in holiness.

1. Genesis
2. Exodus 1—24; 32—34
3. Exodus 25—Numbers 36
4. The Call to Be a Holy People (Leviticus 11—27)
5. Deuteronomy
6. Conclusion

1. Genesis.

There is little direct emphasis on holiness in Genesis. The Hebrew root *qdš* ("holy") occurs in a positive sense only in Genesis 2:3 in reference to God's making the seventh day holy. The other occurrence of this root refers to "a holy woman," that is, one belonging to a shrine (Gen 38:21-22). However, parallels between the garden of *Eden and the sanctuary in the wilderness (*see* Tabernacle) have been enumerated in some key studies. These parallels favor the assertion that the garden of Eden was holy. Eden was an ideal environment separated from the rest of the earth, presumably wild and uncultivated, as suggested by the narratives in Genesis 4. Although the term *holy* is never used to describe the garden in Genesis, it is in Ezekiel (Ezek 28:13-14). The ideals of the garden—spontaneous divine-human fellowship, harmony among all members of the divine and earthly realms, and fruitfulness of the garden to support all life for us—all reflect an environment infused with holiness.

2. Exodus 1—24; 32—34.

Unlike Genesis, holiness is a dominant concept in Exodus and the other books of the Pentateuch. Holiness is powerfully manifested in God's revelations: God's commission of Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:1—4:17), God's deliverance of Israel at the sea (Ex 15:2-18), the theophany at Sinai (Ex 19:1—24:18) and *Moses' special vision of God (Ex 33:18—34:9).

2.1. At the Burning Bush. While Moses was shepherding in the Sinai wilderness, he came upon a bush that was on fire, but it was not being consumed. When he approached to investigate this marvel, God spoke to him out of the flame, instructing him to take off his shoes, for that ground was holy. Moses obeyed. Yahweh then spoke to him about leading Israel out of Egyptian bondage. In commissioning Moses to deliver Israel, God displayed great compassion for the suffering of *Abraham's seed.

2.1.1. God's Name. Near the beginning of the conversation, Moses asked God to reveal his name. God answered, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex 3:13-15). "I AM" is the name God uses for himself, while the Israelites use Yahweh ("He Is"). R. W. L. Moberley (24-25) has shown the nexus between Yahweh's self-revelation at Sinai/Horeb and holiness; God's giving the divine name on holy ground underscores the truth that the God of revelation, Yahweh, is indeed holy (*see* God, Names of).

2.1.2. God as Holy. In the account of Moses at the bush we discover several qualities of holiness. (1) The holy God often manifested his presence as a glowing brightness comparable to a fire (*see* Theophany). (2) The reference to holy ground was based on the premise that the space where God manifested his presence became holy, but only while God was present. When God's prescence departed, that space once again became common ground. For Israel sacred space was not something intrinsically holy from primordial times, as it was in many polytheistic religions. (3) In speaking to Moses, the holy God reached out to communicate the divine purpose to humans. This divine penchant is confirmed throughout the Pentateuch by the frequent connection between God's appearing as holy and his communicating with Moses or the Israelites (Ex 19:18-19 with 20:1; Num 14:10-12; Deut 5:1-5, 24-27). (4) In this conversation the holy God expressed compassion for the hardships being borne by the descendants of Abraham in Egyptian bondage. God's compassion is a characteristic expression of his holiness. (5) In giving Moses his personal name, the holy God made himself accessible to humans. God's openness to humans contrasts the popular notion that holiness distances itself from ordinary human life.

2.2. At the Sea. While attempting to flee *Egypt, the Israelites became trapped at the sea and desperately cried out to God. God heard their cries and compassionately intervened to deliver the Israelites by driving back the waters of the sea with a strong wind. The Israelites then crossed safely through the sea. After they had crossed over, God drove back the waters, causing *Pharaoh's chariots and warriors to drown. Before such a terrifying display of holy power, they sang: "Who is like you among the gods, O Yahweh? Who is like you—majestic in holiness,

awesome in praiseworthy deeds, performing marvels?" (Ex 15:11). Israel's glorious victory at the sea was a display of God's terrible power and of his love for his people, both mighty expressions of his holiness.

2.3. At Sinai. When Israel reached Mount Sinai, God descended on the mount in a majestic display. There was lightning and thunder and the blast of a horn as a thick dark cloud hung over the mountain (Ex 19:16). With the mountain shaking, fire descended and a plume of smoke was ascending. The people heard the blasts of a ram's horn growing louder and louder (Ex 19:18-19). The fire communicated the coming of the holy God, and the thick cloud guarded the people from the danger of looking directly at God's glory. The sound of the ram's horn most likely represented God speaking. In many ways this description brings to mind a volcanic eruption, but it differs in that the fire is descending, rather than ascending. Images from three powerful natural forces—a mighty thunderstorm, a volcanic eruption and an earthquake—indicate that Israel truly witnessed a manifestation of God, not merely some extraordinary disturbances in nature. The fear and trembling of the Israelites at the mighty manifestations on Mount Sinai (Ex 20:18-19), placed alongside God's anticipation that the people might rush up the mountain to see God (Ex 19:21), show that humans are filled with both terror and fascination before a spectacular revelation of God's holiness.

God's glory, which appeared on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:16-17), accompanied the Israelites in their journey through the *wilderness as a pillar of smoke by day and a fire by night (Ex 40:38; Num 9:15-23). Th. C. Vriezen defines glory as "the radiant power of [God's] Being, as it were the external manifestation of [God's] mysterious holiness" (Vriezen, 150). This glory-holiness juxtaposition is very similar to that found in Isaiah 6:3.

2.3.1. Appearances of the Cloud at Times of Deliverance. The first pentateuchal reference to the cloud occurs as Israel sets out from Egypt (Ex 13:21-22). For this band of poor slaves Yahweh's presence in the cloud and pillar of fire served as a guide through the trackless wilderness (cf. Ex 40:36-38). This manifestation of God at times also had a protective role. When the Israelites became trapped at the sea, the cloud positioned itself behind the people to shield them from the advancing Egyptian army (Ex 14:19-20).

On their way to Mount Sinai, the Israelites grumbled for food (Ex 16). While *Aaron was telling the people that God had heard their complaints, the glory of Yahweh appeared in a cloud. Out of that cloud Yahweh spoke, promising the people plenty of meat and bread that very evening (Ex 16:10-12). This visible display of God's presence proved to the people that Yahweh was the provider of the food. In light of the commandment against making any representation of Yahweh (Ex 20:4; Deut 5:8; *see* Decalogue §6), these manifestations of God's glory gave the Israelites concrete evidence that they had truly experienced an encounter with God.

2.3.2. Appearances of the Cloud at Times of Punishment. The glory also manifested itself when God punished the people for their stubborn disobedience. When the Israelites refused to go up and take the Promised Land, the glory of God appeared at the tent of meeting. Then God pronounced judgment on the congregation (Num 14:10-25). In the punishment of Korah and his company for rebelling against Moses' leadership, God caused a plague to sweep through the camp (Num 16). The people's anger grew so hot that they were on the verge of rioting against Moses. At that tense moment the glory appeared to protect Moses and Aaron and punish the people (Num 16:41-45). These leading priests responded by interceding for the people, thereby staying God's wrath from consuming them.

2.3.3. The Intensity of the Glory. On a few occasions the glory was so powerfully present that the people were overwhelmed. After Moses anointed the *tabernacle, the glory descended in such power that not even Moses could enter the tent of meeting (Ex 40:34-35). This report is the denouement of the book of Exodus. The glory that had led Israel out of Egypt and had appeared on Mount Sinai now came and occupied the newly built tabernacle. The holy God had come to dwell among the *covenant people. This powerful manifestation of God's glory communicated to the Israelites the power, dignity and splendor of God's holiness.

2.4. Moses Beholding God's Glory. After having stayed God's wrath, which was kindled against the Israelites for worshiping the *golden calf, Moses asked God that he might behold the divine glory (Ex 33:18-23). God agreed. On that occasion God hid Moses in a rock crevice and covered him with his hand, letting him see only

the back of his being, since it was impossible for any human to look directly at God and live. While passing by, God made a self-proclamation: "Yahweh, Yahweh, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, but never clearing the guilty, requiting the iniquity of the fathers on their children and grandchildren to the third and the fourth generation" (Ex 34:5-7; cf. Num 14:18). *God's* self-proclamation asserted that he expresses holiness *to the covenant people* in gracious love and faithfulness and also occasionally in judgment.

Out of compassion God is inclined to forgive sins, but not casually or indulgently, for the holy God always upholds justice. As Isaiah says, "The holy God displays holiness in righteousness" (Is 5:16). Righteousness, then, is an integral expression of holiness for the God of revelation. If God's people persist in sinning or refuse to seek forgiveness for wrongdoing, God out of justice will hold them accountable. That is, God is never so indulgent in showing love that justice is undermined. This connection between holiness and justice is clearly displayed in the laws given at Sinai, both in the *Decalogue (Ex 20:2-17) and in the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:33). These laws teach a high standard of justice in order that God's people might truly live a holy life (Ex 19:5-6). Consequently, by providing insight into justice, these laws also provide insight into holiness.

3. Exodus 25—Numbers 36.

The legislation found throughout Exodus 25—Numbers 36 describes the organization of the worship of the holy God in ancient Israel. Among the variety of issues treated in this large section of the Pentateuch are the instructions for making the tabernacle (Ex 25—31; 35—40), the regulations for offering *sacrifices (Lev 1—7), the rules of ritual purity (Lev 11—15) and the laws for holy living (Lev 17—26). The book of *Numbers cannot be so easily segmented, for it blends two kinds of material: reports of incidents that happened during the wilderness and regulations for ordering the camp, particularly the role of the levitical families at the sanctuary and in transporting the tabernacle. Our understanding of holiness is enhanced by investigating both the operation of the sanctuary and the rules for the priesthood.

3.1. The Sanctuary. The sanctuary (*see* Tabernacle) was located at the center of the camp; it is called "a holy place" (Ex 29:31; Lev 6:16, 26, 27 [MT 6:9, 19, 20]; 10:13). There the covenant people had access to the divine presence. At the eastern end of the courtyard was the great bronze *altar. At the western end stood the tabernacle with the entrance facing east. It had two rooms: an outer room, called "the holy place," with three pieces of furniture—the menorah, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense—and an inner sanctum, or adytum, called "the holy of holies," with the ark of the covenant (Ex 26:33-34; 28:29; 29:30; Num 4:4, 19). Yahweh was enthroned over the ark, which was elegantly and artfully designed.

3.1.1. Gradations of Holiness at the Sanctuary. The sanctuary had three levels of increasing holiness: the court, the outer room of the tabernacle and the adytum. In correspondence to these gradations the construction materials became more costly and exhibited a higher quality of workmanship in moving from the court to the adytum. In the court stood the altar and the laver, both made out of copper (Ex 27:2; 30:18; 38:2, 8). Pure gold was used in both rooms of the tabernacle (Ex 25:11, 17-18, 24, 31; 30:3; 37:2, 6-7, 11, 17, 26). The "mercy seat" (NRSV) or "atonement cover" (NIV), which sat on top of the ark of the covenant, was made out of solid gold. The curtains of the tabernacle were finely woven out of the finest materials dyed blue and purple, conveying elegance and majesty. Farther from the adytum the materials were made out of a patterned weave, and even farther away a plain weave was used.

Parallel to the beauty and elegance of the adytum, the high priest's garments (*see* Priestly Clothing) were regal: purple, woven out of fine linen, adorned with gold and having twelve precious stones set in the breastpiece (Ex 28:3-39; 39:1-31). They are described as possessing glory and beauty (Ex 28:2, 40). The emphasis on holiness at the sanctuary was reinforced by the word "holy" engraved in a gold plate fastened to the high priest's turban with blue lace (Ex 28:36-39; 39:30-31). The majestic adornment of the high priest honored and praised God, before whom he ministered on behalf of the people. Corresponding to the first room of the tabernacle, the Aaronides had special clothes also conveying glory and beauty (Ex 28:40-43).

3.1.2. Gradations of Holiness in the Congrega-

tion. These gradations of holiness were echoed in the organization of the community. The people became holy by being in covenant with God (Ex 19:5-6). The priests, however, had to have a higher degree of holiness in order to serve at the sanctuary. The priestly families were organized into three levels or classes corresponding to the levels of holiness at the sanctuary: the *Levites, the priests and the high priest. The levels of holiness in the members of the community also paralleled those in the sanctuary. Being holy, the people were able to enter the court to offer up sacrifices. The Levites, having a higher measure of holiness, assisted the people and the priests at the main altar in the court. Some posit that part of the court area, namely, between the altar and the sanctuary, was an area with greater holiness and was, therefore, restricted to the priests (Haran, 184-85). The priests, being holier, had access to the entire court area and, when necessary, the outer chamber of the tabernacle. The high priest, being the holiest, could enter the tabernacle whenever necessary, and only he could enter the holy of holies, ordinarily limited to the Day of *Atonement (Lev 16:2).

3.1.3. Marriage and Mourning Standards for the Priests. The rules pertaining to the priests' marriage and mourning (*see* Burial and Mourning) for the deceased corresponded to their standing in the cult. A high priest could marry only a virgin of his own kin (Lev 21:13-14); a priest could probably marry an Israelite virgin or a widow of a priest (Lev 21:7; cf. Ezek 44:22). By contrast, a layman could marry a virgin, a widow or a divorced woman. In mourning the deceased, a high priest was permitted to mourn only for his wife, but he could not let his hair go unkempt or tear his clothes (Lev 21:5, 10). A priest could mourn the death of a wife or close relative, and he could let his hair be unkempt and tear his clothes, but like any Israelite he could not shave his head or beard or lacerate his body (Lev 19:27-28; 21:5).

These rules regarding mourning for the priests inform us that holiness relates to the fullness of life. Death, being antithetical to holiness, had to be avoided by those in the community who possessed a higher degree of holiness. In general, contact with a carcass made a person unclean until evening (Lev 11:24-28, 39-40), while contact with a corpse, a human bone or a grave made one unclean for seven days (Num 19:11-16). In the latter case a person who became unclean in this way had to perform special lustration rites on the third and seventh days during a week of uncleanness in order to be restored to a state of cleanness (Num 19:17-21). Death was so defiling because, on the one hand, it was the opposite of *life/holiness and, on the other hand, it was the punishment on all humans for the brazen disobedience of the first humans against God (Gen 2:17). The antithesis between holiness/life and death reaches its highest expression in the restrictions placed on the priests in regard to mourning the deceased.

3.2. Sanctification of the Tabernacle and the Priests. After Bezalel and Oholiab had made the tabernacle and its furnishings, Moses set up the tabernacle (Ex 40:1-8, 20-33). In a special ceremony he anointed the tent of meeting and all its furnishings, sanctifying them for use in the worship of Yahweh (Ex 40:9-11). After the anointing, the divine glory descended on the tabernacle, confirming the anointing (Ex 40:34-35). Exodus 29:43-46 stresses that God's presence made the tent of meeting holy, empowering all parts of the sanctuary to function effectively, serving as the place where the covenant people could worship the holy God and find forgiveness for their *sins. Since the bronze altar was holy, all that touched it became holy (Ex 29:37).

On the day that the tabernacle was anointed, Moses also consecrated Aaron and his sons (Lev 8; cf. Ex 29), thereby endowing them with a higher level of holiness in order that they might carry out the offices of high priest and priest. Because of the importance attached to the sanctifying of both the tabernacle and the priests, each ceremony is reported separately (Ex 40; Lev 8).

3.3. Time as Holy. Certain segments of time were declared to be holy. During holy time the people were to forsake earthly commerce (i.e., what today is called secular). Work was particularly excluded from holy time, for work binds humans to the earth. Of course, certain essential tasks were permitted on holy days, but on days of the highest holiness (e.g., the Day of Atonement), no work at all was permitted (Lev 16:29, 31). Not having to work freed the people from their material burdens so that they could celebrate their relationship with God and their families. On a holy day numerous sacrifices were offered at the sanctuary to honor God and to provide an abundance of meat for feasting. Israel was commanded to make each *sabbath

holy by observing it as a day of rest (Ex 20:8; Deut 5:12; cf. Ex 31:15; 35:2).

The phrase for announcing a holy day, *miqrā' qōdeš*, is variously translated: "a sacred occasion" (NJPS), "a sacred assembly" (NIV, NAB) and "a holy convocation" (NRSV). Besides defining a certain day as holy, this phrase may also communicate that there was an official call for the Israelites to assemble for worship (Is 1:14-15). The seventh day of the week was defined as holy from the beginning (Gen 2:3), and in the Israelite calendar the *sabbath was defined as "a sacred occasion" (Lev 23:3). Other days so identified were the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:16; Lev 23:6-7; Num 28:18, 25) and of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:35-36; Num 29:12) and the single day of the Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:21; Num 28:26). Two additional high days had this designation: the first day of the seventh month (Lev 23:24; Num 29:1) and the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27; Num 29:7) (*see* Festivals and Feasts).

The Israelites were also to treat the fiftieth year as holy (Lev 25:10). During this year the fields were to lie fallow, and every family who had been forced to lease out their inheritance received it back. This was a year of liberation (*see* Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, Jubilee).

4. The Call to Be a Holy People (Leviticus 11—27).

In order that Israel might be in covenant with the holy God, she was exhorted to "be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26; also Lev 11:44-45). To heed this call the Israelites were to respond to God by becoming like God; that is, they were to develop in themselves characteristics such as those God possesses. Specifically, Israel's being holy meant: (1) they were in a covenant relationship with God; (2) God was present in their midst; (3) they were to promote justice throughout the community by keeping divine instructions; and (4) they were to observe the rules of ritual purity.

Observance of both the ceremonial regulations and the moral law was required for the fulfillment of this call to be holy. Keeping the law in itself did not make the people holy but prepared them to be made holy by Yahweh's presence, as the phrase "I am Yahweh who sanctifies you" attests (Lev 22:16, 32). God's sanctifying presence built the character of his people, but this does not mean that the people were to be passive before God's presence. Rather, they were to sanctify themselves daily by faithfully observing the rules of ritual purity and adhering to the moral laws (Lev 11:44; 20:7).

The exhortation to be holy is the theme of God's speech in Leviticus 19. This speech, a collage of moral and ceremonial laws, serves as the setting for the great command to love one's neighbor as one's self (Lev 19:18). This setting for this command discloses that God's people were to display a holy character by showing love to others. The surrounding laws and exhortations provided specific guidelines for fulfilling the command to love one's neighbor. The context identifies a neighbor as one's fellow, a hired laborer, one who is physically challenged, a person of higher or lower social standing, even one who has caused offense. A landowner, for example, was not to keep a laborer's wages overnight, thereby preventing that worker from buying food for his family's daily needs (Lev 19:13). People were to show mercy to the physically challenged. Specifically, landowners were not to harvest a field so thoroughly that there would be nothing left for the poor and resident *aliens to glean (Lev 19:9-10). No one was to take advantage of a person's disability, such as by putting an obstacle in the path of the blind (Lev 19:14). These laws teach that being holy means being compassionate without either undue rigidity or indulgence in regard to standards. Later in this speech the circle of persons to be loved is extended to include resident aliens (Lev 19:33). This extension shows that there are neither ethnic nor class boundaries that limit expressions of love, which are acts that promote another person's well-being.

Placed among the moral laws in Leviticus 19 are a variety of rules dealing with specific ways of ordering life in the community. For example, a field was not to be sown with two different seeds (Lev 19:19), and the fruit of a newly planted tree was not to be eaten before its fifth year (Lev 19:23-25). The way one relates to the earth and to one's own land promotes a holy character. In addition, this speech also has several cultic laws, such as the one regarding the offering of peace offerings (Lev 19:5-8). Careful observance of the rules for worshiping God thus contributes significantly to the building of a holy character.

This variegated collection of laws in Leviticus 19 reveals that in striving to be holy and loving,

God's people must keep both cultic and moral regulations. They further promote inward holiness by following specific disciplines in daily living that orient their perspective to the purity and unity of God.

4.1. Rules of Clean and Unclean (Leviticus 11—15; Numbers 19). Most of the rules about ritual purity are clustered in Leviticus 11—15. The rules regarding corpse defilement are found in Numbers 19.

These rules on ritual purity were not designed either to separate the Israelites from dealing with foreigners or to set up classes within Israelite society, as was often the case in other cultures (Douglas 1993b, 25-26, 152-57). This claim is supported by the fact that most causes of uncleanness come from a person's body, the body of every person, both priest and laity, not from contact with certain classes or with foreigners. The purpose of these rules was to establish boundaries in the routine of daily life in order that the Israelites might live as a holy people serving Yahweh, who is holy. The primary boundary was to prevent any impure person or thing from entering sacred space; therefore, all had to be ritually clean before entering the sanctuary lest holiness consume them.

The priests had the duty of teaching the people to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, the common and the holy (Lev 10:10-11). Two sets of polarities are identified: clean/unclean and holy/common. These sets were complementary rather than overlapping. People, objects, space and time could be described as holy. In regard to space, the holy was an area dedicated to God's presence; all other space was common. Thus the sanctuary was "holy," and the camp was common. However, when the camp was compared to the area outside the camp, it could be considered holy (cf. Deut 23:14). The category clean/unclean, on the other hand, primarily defined the ritual standing of people, food and space. A person became unclean from contact with some contaminating substance. Space too could be classified within these poles. Certain areas outside the camp were also designated as clean or unclean; such defined spaces played an essential role in completing certain rituals performed at the sanctuary or fulfilling some of the regulations regarding purity (e.g., Lev 4:12, 21; 6:11 [MT 6:4]; 14:40-41, 45). Animals were classified as clean/unclean primarily to establish which ones could be consumed as *food.

Cleanness was noncontagious. The potency of uncleanness, however, varied. A mild uncleanness, particularly one that lasted a day, was noncommunicable, but stronger cases of uncleanness, those lasting a week or indefinitely, were communicable. Anyone who was unclean with a minor impurity could remain in the camp, but a serious uncleanness required the person infected to live outside the camp.

In the routine of daily living, every Israelite became periodically unclean. No shame or harm attended becoming unclean for a brief period of time. The major danger in becoming unclean lay in coming into contact with the holy, for holiness is powerful, consuming all that is unclean. There was a latent moral danger: any person who failed to take the steps leading to ritual purity committed a deliberate sin against God and became subject to the penalties for such a wrong. As long as a person followed the ceremonial and the moral law and used the means available to rectify any failure in keeping these laws, that person continued to be numbered with the holy people of God.

4.2. Categories of Uncleanness. The rules in Leviticus 11—15 specifically address uncleanness in regard to animals (Lev 11), parturition (Lev 12), skin diseases and growths in houses and on garments (Lev 13—14), and genital discharges (Lev 15).

4.2.1. Clean/Unclean Animals. The rules regarding clean/unclean animals differ from the other rules on ritual purity in three major ways. (1) The classification of animals as clean/unclean was unchangeable. (2) The meat of unclean animals was an external source of impurity, while the other kinds of uncleanness addressed in Leviticus 12—15 come from within a person. (3) These rules assume that the Israelites would not eat meat from an unclean animal, whereas the other causes of uncleanness were unavoidable, being an essential part of human life. As a result, no cleansing rituals for ingesting meat from an unclean animal are included (*see* Foods, Clean and Unclean).

Animals were classified as clean/unclean in order to identify those whose flesh could or could not be eaten. The primary legislation put animals into four categories: land animals, fish, birds and creeping creatures (Lev 11:2-23). Land animals with cloven feet and that chew the cud

could be eaten (Lev 11:3-8). Cattle, sheep and goats (wild and tame), deer, gazelles, roebucks and antelope were the primary clean animals. Fish with fins and scales were edible (Lev 11:9-12; Deut 14:4-5). In regard to birds, in place of an identifying principle of classifying unclean birds, there is a list of twenty birds that could not be eaten (Lev 11:13-19). While winged insects were not to be eaten (Lev 11:20, 25), four kinds of locusts with legs for hopping were permissible (Lev 11:20-23). Animals that swam, such as reptiles, invertebrates, rodents and certain small animals, including possibly the weasel, were unclean (Lev 11:41-43).

Attached to the food laws are rules about uncleanness from contact with carcasses of various small swarming animals (Lev 11:24-28, 39-40). There is a list of eight animals, including several lizards, the weasel and the mouse, whose carcasses rendered household objects unclean (Lev 11:29-38). Specific reference to the carcasses of these animals may have been because these creatures infest storage places in dwellings.

4.2.2. Uncleanness from Parturition. Giving birth made a woman unclean, seven days for a male child and fourteen days for a female child (Lev 12). In addition, the woman could not come into contact with anything holy for an additional period of thirty-three days for a male child and sixty-six days for a female child. The reason for the longer period of separation for a female baby is not stated. A possible reason is that the baby girl is a future menstruant. A similar explanation is that at birth some girls have a vaginal discharge of blood. At the end of the days set apart for her purification, the mother would present a year-old lamb for a whole offering and a pigeon or a dove for a purification offering.

4.2.3. Uncleanness from Certain Skin Diseases. Certain skin diseases made a person unclean (Lev 13). Whoever developed an eruption or a bright spot on the skin, primarily on the facial area, had to go to the sanctuary and be examined by a priest. If the priest suspected that the eruption was grievous or infectious *(ṣāraʿat)*, he had the person secluded for a week. After one or two periods of quarantine, if the priest determined that the disease was deep in the skin or spreading, he pronounced that person unclean. The unclean person had to live outside the camp.

The generic term used for polluting skin diseases *(ṣāraʿat)* is difficult to render into contemporary English: NIV uses "an infectious disease," and NRSV "a leprous disease" (Lev 13:3, 8, 11, etc.). While this term has often been translated "leprosy," that is an inaccurate translation, since the symptoms of the diseases described here do not fit those of Hansen's disease, the disease now referred to as "leprosy." Nevertheless, the term *leprosy* captures both the horror that a person who had such a blemish felt and the repulsion that person experienced in the community. On recovery from such a disease, a person had to go through a complex ritual of aggregation that included two ablutions and the presentation of costly sacrifices (Lev 14:11-20).

A growth in a garment and a spreading mold in a house rendered the infected objects unclean. An infected garment or cloth had to be burned (Lev 13:47-52; 14:33-53). The bricks of a house infested by a persistent mildew had to be removed and destroyed.

4.2.4. Uncleanness from Genital Discharges. Discharges from the genitals were a common cause of uncleanness (Lev 15). A male or a female became unclean from contact with semen (Lev 15:16-18; cf. Deut 23:10-11). After laundering and bathing, they became clean at evening. Menses rendered a woman unclean for seven days (Lev 15:19). Anything she lay or sat on became unclean (Lev 15:20). Whoever touched her or anything made unclean by her became unclean until evening; waiting until evening along with laundering and washing made that person clean (Lev 15:21-23). A man who slept with a woman during menses became unclean for seven days (Lev 15:24). Since intercourse with a menstruating woman was forbidden (Lev 20:18), this law must have applied to intercourse that took place inadvertently at the inception of menses. Seven days after the start of menses, a woman became clean after laundering, bathing and offering a sacrifice.

If either a man or a woman had a continuous discharge from the genitals, that person was continuously unclean, making every bed and chair used by the person unclean (Lev 15:3-12, 25-27). Whoever touched either an unclean person or an object made unclean by such a person became clean at evening after laundering and bathing. Whenever an abnormal discharge ceased, the afflicted person waited seven days. On the eighth day that person offered two turtledoves or two pigeons at the entrance to the

tent of meeting, one for a purification (sin) offering and one for a whole offering (Lev 15:13-15, 28-30). In reference to a man, the law explicitly required that he wash his clothes and bathe in running water (Lev 15:13).

4.3. Defilement from a Corpse. The strongest defilement was conveyed by a corpse (Num 19; *see* Life, Disease and Death). Having contact with a corpse or even being in an enclosed structure containing a corpse made a person unclean for seven days. Any open vessel in an enclosed room with a corpse became unclean (Num 19:11-15; 31:19-20). Whoever came in contact with a human bone or stepped on a grave also became unclean for seven days (Num 19:16). Persons and objects unclean from contact with a corpse communicated this uncleanness to whomever touched them; that person became unclean until evening (Num 19:22).

A person made unclean by a corpse had to go through an involved process of cleansing that lasted a week. On the third and seventh days that person was sprinkled with a special solution called "water of impurity" ("water for cleansing," NRSV) made from the ashes of a red heifer and running water (Num 19:12, 18-19). On the third day the tent where the corpse had lain and all of its furnishings were also sprinkled with this special solution (Num 19:17-18). After the sprinkling on the seventh day, that person laundered and bathed in water and became clean at evening (Num 19:19; 31:19, 24). Anyone who did not go through this ritual of cleansing after becoming unclean by a corpse defiled the tabernacle and was expelled from the camp (Num 19:13, 20).

4.4. Reasons for These Rules on Clean/Unclean. Many proposals have attempted to account for the various laws of ritual purity. Three of the most prominent may be noted. (1) These rules promoted the health of the community. In particular, the laws about unclean animals guarded the Israelites from disease carried by certain animals (e.g., pork is a carrier of trichinosis). This view has been advocated by medieval rabbis such as Rashbam and recent scholars such as R. K. Harrison. (2) These rules prevented the assimilation of foreign cultic practices into Israel's worship of God. (3) The clean animals exhibited behaviors desirable in humans (e.g., the several references to an animal's chewing of the cud symbolize meditating on the law). This view goes back to Jewish rabbis of the intertestamental era. An adaptation of this position in sociological categories is set forth by M. Douglas in *Purity and Danger.*

These explanations and others provide insight into some of the laws on ritual purity, but none of them is sufficiently encompassing. If the laws of clean/unclean animals were given to promote the people's health, for example, Jesus did a great disservice in declaring all foods clean (Mk 7:14-20). Nevertheless, the numerous rules on washing certainly promoted the health of the ancient community, for cleanliness guards against the spread of disease. Some of these laws did set a barrier against pagan worship, but they did not do so categorically. For instance, the bull, the most valued sacrifice in Israel, was likewise highly revered by many of Israel's neighbors. However, these rules did establish guards against occult practices, for most ceremonies dealing with demons and magic had rites that would render an Israelite unclean. Thus finding a system that accounts for these rules as a whole is formidable.

J. Milgrom has argued that the nexus of life/death is the underlying principle. This nexus does offer a wide-ranging explanation for the rules of purity/impurity. The rules dealing with a corpse or with carcasses of various animals are rooted in the abhorrence of death and in the fact that death is the opposite of holiness, the life center. Skin diseases, besides being repulsive, give the appearance of sapping the life out of person. Certainly grievous growths in bricks and garments are destructive of those materials. The loss of blood and semen represent the loss of life-giving bodily fluids.

In light of this principle, Milgrom has posited that the laws regarding clean/unclean animals promoted reverence for life by limiting for Israel the flesh they might eat to a few animals, primarily domesticated small and large cattle, some wild game, fish, birds and locusts. His position has much to commend it. Certainly hunting as a sport did not gain the prominence in Israel that it had in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Israel's attitude toward hunting may be rooted in the food laws and the prohibitions against consuming blood. Furthermore, many of the prohibited wild animals were carnivorous or eaters of carrion. In this light it is valid to postulate that in general the food laws were based on the death/life nexus.

These rules of clean/unclean had a powerful

impact on the social and spiritual life of ancient Israel. They were a strong force for social cohesiveness. Later Jews of the Diaspora gave greater prominence to these rules in order to preserve their identity while living among Gentiles. They also provided numerous symbols of the character of holiness, especially of "unity, integrity, and perfection" (Douglas 1966, 54). The standard of wholeness explains why blemished animals could not be offered and priests with physical imperfections could not serve at the sanctuary (Lev 21:16-23; 22:17-25). The prohibition against various mixtures, such as sowing a field with two kinds of seed or wearing a garment of two different materials (Lev 19:19), symbolized the integrity of holiness. That "clean" symbolized moral purity is evidenced in the parallel of "a pure heart" with "clean hands" in Psalm 24:4.

The rules regarding corpse defilement kept the Israelites from highly valuing funerary monuments, as was the case in ancient Egypt. Since cemeteries in Israel were never considered holy ground, they could never function as places for Yahwistic worship (cf. Is 65:2-5). Burial grounds could never be located in proximity to a sanctuary, nor could a corpse be interred in a residence. These impossibilities struck a fatal blow against ancestral worship and also erected a huge barrier against occult practices, especially necromancy (cf. Deut 18:10-12). Thus they kept the concept of the demonic from enslaving the minds of God's people.

By relegating all human *sexuality to the common area, the rules on ritual purity excluded any kind of sexual expression as a way of worshiping Yahweh. It is important to stress that these rules regarding genital discharges did not demean the proper expression of human sexuality in the marital context. They actually promoted male and female fertility, thereby enhancing the fulfillment in each family of God's promises to Abraham that his seed would be numerous (e.g., Gen. 12:2-3). Their role was to separate this vital dimension of human living from sacred space.

The rules dealing with clean/unclean animals were a strong moral force, for they made the Israelites conscious at every meal that they were to order their lives to honor the holy God with whom they were in covenant. That this design is inherent to the food laws is confirmed by the presence of the command to be holy as God is holy. This command appears in three listings of the rules regarding edible animals (Lev 11:44-45; 20:25-26; Deut 14:21; cf. Ex 22:31). Daily observance of these food laws established a pattern of obedience to God, thereby exalting the pursuit of spiritual values above following a pragmatic way of promoting the community's welfare.

5. Deuteronomy.

The teaching of Deuteronomy moves between two poles: Yahweh's gift of the *land and Israel's obedience to God. Love is the motivating force on each side of these poles. God elected Israel, entered into covenant with her and gave her the land of promise as an inheritance solely because of his love for her (Deut 7:6-8; 10:15). The Israelites responded to God's *election by loving God with all their heart, soul and strength (Deut 6:5; 10:12; 30:6). They expressed love for God by obeying what God commanded (Deut 11:1, 13, 22; 13:4; 19:9; 30:16, 20).

5.1. Holiness and Love. The bedrock for the Deuteronomic message of love and obedience is God's holiness. That this is a premise in Deuteronomy is confirmed by the fact that Israel's being a holy people frames the corpus of laws (Deut 7:6; 26:19). In enumerating the blessings of the covenant, Yahweh promises to make the people holy (Deut 28:9). Deuteronomy continues the characterization of Israel as a holy people (Deut 14:2, 21) and mentions that her camp is holy (Deut 23:14). Being a holy people, Israel gains praise, fame and honor (Deut 26:19); she enjoys a noble reputation as others honor her. Israel's attachment to God is the basis of her honor.

The wedding of love and holiness as found in Deuteronomy is one of the most distinctive insights that Scripture offers into God's being. This union is clearly taught in Hosea (esp. Hos 11), in Isaiah's speaking of God as both the Holy One of Israel and the Redeemer (Is 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5) and in the teachings of Jesus (e.g., Mt 5:48).

5.2. The Jealous God. Deuteronomy also presents God's holiness under the rubric of divine jealousy (Deut 7:4; 29:24-26; 31:16-17; cf. Eichrodt, 1.210 n. 1), as communicated powerfully in the confession, "Yahweh, your God, is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (Deut 4:24). "Jealousy" clearly identifies God as a person. It also captures the intensity of the divine love that ema-

nates from holiness. The metaphor *devouring fire* conveys that a marvelous display of power attends God's coming. That which is unclean or defiled is consumed, and that which is pure and honorable is purified or authenticated.

Moreover, jealousy guards God's actions from ever being influenced by an impure motive (Ex 20:5; 34:14). It guarantees that God will always be true to his holy character, will keep his promises and will nourish his established relationships. It moves God ever to seek the well-being of those in covenant with him. In addition, holiness purifies jealousy so that its expression is always appropriate and honorable. In God jealousy, therefore, never degenerates to envy, self-pity or undue concern for self-protection. Jealousy is the energy that keeps vital covenant love *(ḥesed)* and leads God to bless his people as promised in the covenant (Deut 28:1-14). Furthermore, God's holiness means that he never remains neutral to persistent disobedience. In covenant with God, Israel experiences the divine jealousy primarily as love that burns warm. It also tells us that God is partial to the relationship, earnestly desiring it to be an exclusive relationship.

Conversely, jealousy arouses God's anger against anything that defiles or is harmful either to his people or his sanctuary (Deut 6:14-15; 7:4; 11:16-17). Whenever Israel turns her affection from God, by doing wrong or by pursuing idols, she encounters God's holiness as blazing, jealous wrath (Deut 6:14-15; 29:18-21; 32:16, 21). Should Israel persistently disobey the terms of the covenant, God's jealousy would lead him to inflict on her the sequence of curses enumerated in the covenant (Deut 28:15-68). Even if Israel should come under the severest curse (i.e., exile), she has the hope that if she forsakes her wrongful behaviors and turns back to God, God will again reinstate her as his people (Deut 30:1-10), given the gracious character of divine holiness (Deut 4:30-31).

6. Conclusion.

Holiness is at the center of God's being, distinguishing him from everything on earth and in heaven. God mightily revealed his holy character to Israel at the sea and at Sinai. At the sea he demonstrated his love in delivering his people from Egyptian bondage. At Sinai God displayed his majestic power as he entered into covenant with his people in order that they might be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. By observing the covenantal law, his people would develop a community characterized by gracious righteousness. Their obedience would open them to God's sanctifying presence; thereby they would respond to God's call for them to be holy as he is holy. The pursuit of a holy life would yield an abundant life under God's blessings.

God also revealed his holiness in the instructions for building a sanctuary and in the regulations regarding its operation. To deal with the covenant people's sins, God gave them a place where they might find atonement and be empowered to live according to the divine will. By reason of the divine holiness, none might approach the sanctuary presumptuously; rather all had to prepare themselves to come before God with clean hands and a pure heart. The laws of ritual purity provided the people a guide, especially in matters of daily living, for preparing themselves so that they might approach the holy God with confidence. At the same time, these rules guarded the sanctuary from being accidentally defiled by that which was unclean. To assist the people in maintaining their relationship with the holy God, an order of ordained priests was instituted. The priests' having to live by stricter regulations in order to minister at the sanctuary bore further witness to God's holiness.

In becoming a holy nation, Israel was to function as a kingdom of priests. That is, they were God's agent of redemptive grace to all peoples. In time God fulfilled the goal of providing blessing for all peoples by sending his Son to secure forgiveness for any who accept the priestly work of Jesus. As a result, the call to be holy as God is holy continues to be the call to those who are under the new covenant (1 Pet 1:15-16).

See also FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF; LIFE, DISEASE ABD DEATH; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; TABERNACLE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH; THEOPHANY.

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HOLY CAMP. *See* TABERNACLE.

HOLY OF HOLIES. *See* TABERNACLE.

HOLY PLACE. *See* TABERNACLE.

HOLY WAR. *See ḤEREM;* WARFARE.

HOMOSEXUAL ACTS. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

HONEY. *See* ZOOLOGY.

HONOR AND SHAME

In the cultural world of the Pentateuch, honor and shame functioned as important social sanctions promoting behavior that contributed to strong families and an orderly society and dissuading behavior that weakened families, undermined hierarchy and disrupted social expectations. Knowing whom to honor and how to act in ways that would be regarded as honorable were essential to successful navigation of life in Israel. The ultimate foundation for a person's life was to honor God—to give God his due weight—through careful observance of God's *law and avoidance of all that God abhors.

1. The Vocabulary of Honor and Shame
2. Honor, Shame and the Physical Body
3. Honor, Shame and the Social Body
4. Women and Honor
5. God's Honor and the Honor of Israel

1. The Vocabulary of Honor and Shame.

The strong presence of words connected with the values of shame and honor invites and launches the fuller investigation of these values in the Pentateuch. Honor is represented most

prominently by the word group formed from the verb *kābēd* ("to be heavy"), which yields readily to the metaphorical sense of "to be weighty or impressive; to possess honor and importance" (Oswalt, 426). The noun *kābôd* is also used to describe the visible manifestations of that worth and honor, as in the vestments of the priests or the appearance of the "glory" of Yahweh at the tabernacle (e.g., Ex 16:7, 10-12; 24:16-17; 29:43, 45; 33:22-23; 40:34-35). The antithesis is provided by the following word groups: the root *qll*, which denotes diminution or lessening, hence degrading or dishonoring; *qlh*, which denotes disgrace and dishonor (bringing low), *bôš*, which signifies shame; *bzh*, "despise"; and *ḥrp*, which expresses verbal degradation, among others (for more detail, see Olyan, 203 nn. 5, 6; Bechtel, 54-55). The vocabulary of honor and shame is increased as one comes to recognize those specific values or behaviors for which people are honored (or, in the absence or violation of which, people are put to shame) in early Israelite culture, as well as the means by which honor and dishonor are displayed in interpersonal interactions. For example, given the dishonor attached to incest and the importance of one's genealogy for establishing one's honor, Genesis 19:36-38 constitutes a clever assault on the honor of the Moabites and the Ammonites, peoples with whom Israel was historically at odds.

2. Honor, Shame and the Physical Body.

As early as the *creation story, the reader is taught to associate nakedness with "shame," the feeling of vulnerability to inspection that makes urgent the need to hide oneself, as in fact *Adam and *Eve did from the sight of God (Gen 3:8-10), or to cover oneself, as God did for Adam and Eve with the skins of animals (Gen 3:21). Shame is born of disobedience in this story (cf. Gen 2:25 with 3:7); it is at once the consequence and penalty for transgressing the norms of the community. That the male genitals may be referred to as "shameful things" (*mĕbūšîm*, Deut 25:11) reinforces the connection between nakedness and shame; some things are proper only to oneself or to the marriage bed, and one is dishonored if they are seen by the wrong people or in the wrong places. Such a dynamic underlies the story of the drunken *Noah, whose nakedness Ham viewed unabashedly, but whom *Shem and Japheth covered up with eyes averted. Noah understood Ham to dishonor him, so Noah diminished Ham as well through the power of the curse (Gen 9:20-27). *Priests had to take special care that their "shameful parts" were never visible in the tabernacle, for by revealing their shame they affronted the God of the *tabernacle, who would respond to the affront by diminishing them—permanently (Ex 28:42-43).

The body was also a means by which honor and dishonor could be displayed. Bowing down low, even stretching out upon the ground, was a prominent gesture by which one party showed honor to another, recognizing and acting out the proportionately greater honor of the one to whom one bowed (see Gen 18:1-2; 19:1; 23:7, 12; 37:7-8; 41:43). Physical assaults, such as the slap to the face, spitting in the face or beating or mutilating the body, were ways in which to enact dishonor and ascribe disgrace.

3. Honor, Shame and the Social Body.

Internal structures and hierarchies were created and sustained by codes of honor—giving honor where honor was due. The honor of parents, and thus their social authority over their children, was repeatedly reinforced (Ex 20:12; 21:15, 17). Affronts to the honor of the parent threatened to claim the very life of the child as reparation. Similarly, those who were appointed as leaders, priests and judges were to be honored rather than treated lightly (*qll*, Ex 22:28 [MT 22:27]; Lev 24:11-16) and their rulings followed to the letter (Deut 17:11-13). Challenging their rulings was regarded as an inappropriate challenge to their honor, an act of presumption improper for those who were "lighter" in terms of social honor and value (see, e.g., Num 16:1-4). Of course, at the head of all these codes stood the mandate to honor God (Ex 20:2-7; 22:28a; 34:13-14) by offering God proper worship, avoiding the ascription of divine honors to any rival and speaking the Name only in a manner befitting its "weightiness." The honor of one's fellow Israelites was also to be respected. Thus one was not to slander one's fellow Israelites nor mock the handicapped (Lev 19:14, 16). Social cohesion was thus promoted by admonishing those who lightly trampled upon the honor, the weight, of other Israelites.

A peculiarity of Israelite honor and shame discourse was the degree to which it was permeated with, and expressed within, the language of

*holiness and the common, of purity and defilement (see Lev 22:31-33), a manifestation of the truism that each culture enfleshes the social sanctions of honor and disgrace in terms appropriate to its own worldview and ethos (Pitt-Rivers, 38). Lines of status within Israel were also inscribed using the language of purity and sanctification, of holiness versus the ordinary. Thus the *Levites were separated from the other Israelites to belong to God and to serve at the tabernacle, which was also the center of the community, through purification and cleansing (Num 8:6-7, 14-15), and provided an important component of the hierarchy of the theocratic state of early Israel. On the other hand, that which "defiled" was to be removed from the community. Anything threatening the status of the whole community was spoken of in terms of purity and pollution, although the social dynamics were those of honor and shame (see Num 5:2-3). The leper is not explicitly said to be a "disgrace," but the marginalization of the leper, the hiding of part of the face and the state of the hair and clothing, together with the label "unclean" (though a purity term), all revealed a person's place in the community, that one's honor was severely jeopardized by the feared diseases (Lev 13:44-46).

D. Daube (46) argues that the culture of Deuteronomy was one in which community members were deeply sensitive to one another's opinion and thus susceptible to the social control of shaming. Aversion toward humiliation or public scorn (Gen 38:23) and desire for honor (Num 22:16-17, 37) were expected to carry weight as people deliberated about their actions. Similarly, behaviors could be sanctioned against through the use of shame labels. Leviticus 18 uses the label "abomination" *(tôʿēbâ)* to dissuade people from engaging in homosexual acts (Lev 18:22) and to guard against incest and bestiality (Lev 18:17, 23, 26-27, 29; *see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics). Such terms serve to attach a social stigma to certain acts, functioning very much like "shameful" *(aischron)* in Greek ethical literature. The use of such terms in Proverbs to dissuade students from certain courses of actions merely by the value-laden power of these labels, bears out this observation. Thus, *tôʿēbâ* became an important shaming label by means of which the conduct of Israelites was to be distinguished from the conduct of the native Canaanites, whom God displaced (Lev 18:24-30; Deut 18:9, 12). "Dishonorable" conduct was thus construed in such a way as would reinforce Israelite identity and group boundaries. That which was "abhorrent" was such specifically in the eyes of Yahweh (see the sanction against dishonesty in trade in Deut 25:16). God's opinion is ultimately the guiding force in pentateuchal *ethics; that which Yahweh disapproves (abhors) is heavily sanctioned against.

When the community's norms were transgressed, the transgressors were themselves subjected to shaming by the community. Deuteronomy 25:1-12 strings together three case laws in which the shaming of the offender is a prominent element of the punishment for specific infractions, making the treatment of the offender a deterrent to future infractions (Wilson). The beating of an Israelite male was a physical assault on his honor, made all the more disgraceful since it was deemed "deserved" by his community, those in whose eyes his honor was established or diminished. Deuteronomy 25:3, however, protected the offender by not allowing him to be stripped completely of his dignity in the eyes of the community, so that he had some means of recovery and continuing in community life.

The second piece of legislation prescribes a shaming ritual for an unwilling levir, a brother-in-law who refused to raise up a child for his dead brother with the widow (Deut 25:7-10). This law leveled a sanction against the person who put material gain (standing to inherit his dead brother's share of the paternal inheritance) ahead of the "name," the ongoing honor and remembrance of his brother (thus Daube, 35; Matthews, 100; Bechtel, 58). The man was made to endure the aggressive actions of the widow; the removal of his sandal may have represented the metaphorical exposure of his *pudenda* or the removal of privilege of having intercourse with her (Bechtel, 60); the spitting was an obvious display of contempt. Moreover, ongoing disgrace threatened to attach to the family, who might therefore pressure the man into fulfilling his obligations so as not to besmirch the family's reputation (Bechtel, 61).

The third piece of legislation in this series concerns the "no holds barred" intervention of the wife of one of the contenders in a fight between two Israelite males. If she dared to violate the "shameful parts" (*mĕbūšîm*, Deut 25:11) of an Israelite male, her hand, the instrument of the

offense, was to be cut off, thus marking her with a sign of disgrace for life (Wilson, 227).

The ultimate and final disgrace for an offender was the exposure of his or her corpse after execution. Criminals' corpses were hung out for viewing specifically to enhance the public nature of the shaming to which the offenders were subjected and thus to enhance the deterrent effect. Even here, however, Deuteronomy sets limits: shameful things degrade that which contains them, and for the sake of the land these corpses were not to be hung overnight (Deut 21:22-23).

4. Women and Honor.

One of the primary ways in which females achieved and protected their honor was through the proper use, direction and effectiveness of their sexual energies (*see* Family Relationships). Sexual exclusiveness was thus a primary location of honor. For the unmarried, this meant virginity (Gen 24:16). "The chastity of the girl becomes an indicator of the social worth of the family and the men in it. The honor of the family is at stake, for real men have the strength and cunning to protect and control their women" (Frymer-Kensky, 84). The legislation in the case of the slandered wife (Deut 22:13-21) reveals an awareness of this connection, since reparations were to be made to the wife's father. When the husband accused his wife of not having been a virgin at their wedding, his accusation implicated the family; either they were unable to uphold their responsibility to keep their daughters chaste, or they were guilty of fraud, passing off an experienced woman as a chaste maiden. If the charge was false, the honor of the family had to be restored through the public shaming of the husband through scourging and the offering of restitution through a fine (Matthews, 110).

Because the honor of the *woman was embedded in the honor of the family, attempting to gain improper access to the "virtue" of the woman was regarded as an assault on the family's honor (an "insult," as in Gen 39:17-18). Because honor and reputation were critical to a family's well being in terms of other families being willing to interact with them and fearing to trample or abuse them, families tended to defend their honor vigorously. *Abimelech was thus quick to give *Abraham a large sum of money as restitution, a sort of proof that he had not actually dishonored Abraham by lying with Sarah and thus a pledge that no feud should arise between Abraham's people and Abimelech's people, since no honor had been lost. An even more dramatic expression of this principle is the episode of Dinah in Genesis 34. Shechem's violation of Dinah (which may not have been forced rape; see Frymer-Kensky, 86-91), enacted without regard for *Jacob's rights over Dinah and thus in flagrant abuse of his honor, dishonored the family. While Shechem, Hamor and Jacob sought to repair the situation through negotiation of a suitable bride-price and formal union, *Simeon and *Levi adopted deceit and aggressive behavior. In the latter's eyes, peaceful negotiation would not suffice to restore the family honor. In the biblical story, Jacob's opinion prevailed: upon his deathbed, Jacob "diminished" them (along with *Reuben, also for undermining the family's honor by encroaching on his father's concubine), with the result that *Judah, the fourth born, stood at the head of his brothers (Gen 49:3-8). In the intertestamental period, however, Simeon and Levi were vindicated against Jacob's diminishing of them (see Jdt 9:2-4; *T. Levi* 2:1-4; 5:1-7) as those who had properly enacted zeal for Israel's honor in that situation.

Childbearing was also essential to the honor of the married woman. Sarah suffered disgrace on account of her infertility, and the ability to bear children gave her handmaiden Hagar cause to regard herself as better than her mistress and to violate the normal expectations of mistress-slave relationships (Gen 16:3-9). Leah expected that her bearing of multiple sons would lead to her being honored by Jacob at last, while Rachel celebrated the birth of her first child as the removal of her "reproach" *(ḥerpātî)* by God (Gen 30:20-23).

5. God's Honor and the Honor of Israel.

The honor of God was intimately connected with the fate of Israel, the people God had called by his name. Their connection with the "name" was Israel's connection with *blessing and honor (see Num 6:23-27, in which the placement of the "name" upon Israel leads to blessing). God's plagues upon the *Egyptians, disgracing the Egyptians (Ex 10:2), were meant to establish God's honor as deity both in the eyes of the Egyptians (Ex 7:5) and in the eyes of the Israelites (Ex 10:2). God's *hardening of Phar-

aoh's heart was a means by which God showed greater and greater signs and thus gained "honor for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and his entire army" (Ex 14:4, 17-18), again with a view to God's revelation of his "weight" to Israel and Egypt alike (see also Ex 34:10). God's reputation was tied to the fate of his people, and thus even he could be induced to act out of concern for his reputation, avoiding shame in the eyes of the other nations (Ex 32:11-12; Deut 32:26-27).

God also willed to be honored by those whom he had benefited. One of the basic ideological underpinnings of the covenant was that those who honored God by keeping the covenant stipulations would be honored by God, while those who showed contempt for God and his honor by neglecting or violating those stipulations would themselves be subjected to contempt and disgrace (see Olyan, 204-8). This is a repeated emphasis of Deuteronomy: Israel's obedience to the Torah would give her an international reputation for wisdom (Deut 4:6-8). As a result of covenant loyalty, God would exalt Israel "in praise and in fame and in honor" above all other nations (Deut 26:18-19; see 28:1, 13). If Israel engaged in the sort of behavior that had characterized the Canaanites, however, it would be despised by its neighbors (as in Ex 32:25) and utterly humiliated by God (Deut 28:25-26, 37). It would incur a memory of lasting shame as a "byword," "proverb" and "reproach." Transgression of God's *law was thus presented as a grave threat to Israel's national honor.

Transgression was so serious because it enacted a low estimation of God's honor, power and "weight" (this correlation is especially clear in Num 14:11, 21-23; Deut 28:58; 31:20). Engaging in *idolatry and the worship of other gods was especially targeted as that which enacted contempt for God (see Deut 31:20; 32:15b-17). Assigning a low value to something or someone, then treating that thing or person according to the standards appropriate for that assigned value, stands behind the term *despise*. Despising someone or something of great value, as Esau "despised" his birthright (Gen 25:34), failing to give it sufficient "weight" in his deliberations, is a terrible mistake. Unintentional sins against God's honor could be remedied with sacrifices. Just as gifts could forestall the revenge of those who had been unintentionally dishonored (or satisfy the honor of the affronted one by presenting a display of repentance in which one acknowledges the true worth and "weight" of the offended party, as in Gen 32:19-20; 33:8-11), so animal sacrifices provided atonement for unintended affronts against God's honor (Lev 4:2-3; 5:5-6). Intentional transgression, however, constituted an affront for which there was no reparation except the destruction of the transgressor (Num 15:30).

*Aaron's two sons *Nadab and Abihu disobeyed God's prescriptions concerning the fire to be used at the *altar: their "light" regard for those instructions resulted in God reestablishing his honor in the sight of all through their destruction (Lev 10:1-3). Numbers 14 preserves another episode in which Israel did not give God his due "weight," thinking more highly of the Canaanites. God Took their disobedience at the threshold of the Promised Land as a display of contempt, despite the signs he had provided to make known his honor and strength, his "weightiness," and thus to engender trust (Num 14:11-12, 21-23). The result was the death of the entire generation in the desert. Dishonoring God results in divine vengeance against the one who has treated God with less than proper respect. By bringing the offender low, God's own honor and reputation is restored.

Whatever honor Israel possessed, it possessed as God's gift. Deuteronomy 8:11—9:7 negated any attempts by the Israelites to interpret their success in Canaan as an achievement of their own and thus a claim to honor. They were not to "exalt" themselves, forgetting that God's beneficence and faithfulness (and not their own merit) were responsible for their enjoyment of the good things of the land (Deut 8:12-14). Topics of benefaction, and the consequent debt of gratitude (shown through covenant loyalty and obedience to the Torah), were thus to replace and undermine boasting. Deuteronomy 9:6-7 even goes so far as to shame the hearers, calling to remembrance their stubbornness and their failures in the desert, as a means of establishing the greater weight of God's patience and faithfulness. The Pentateuch, then, affirms that Israel's collective honor is bound up with, and wholly dependent upon, the one God and with their proper manifestations of reverence toward him (Deut 10:20-21).

See also FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES.

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HORSES. *See* ZOOLOGY.

HOSPITALITY. *See* ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT.

HOUSEHOLD GODS. *See* IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS.

HOUSEHOLDS. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

HUMANITY. *See* IMAGE OF GOD; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

I

IDOLATRY. *See* IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS.

IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex 20:4 NRSV). This familiar second commandment encapsulates the Pentateuch's basic view of religious images. The pentateuchal legal materials communicate a pervasive aniconic viewpoint. The very title of this entry divulges the pentateuchal perspective that sacred icons are anathema. Icons are mere idols, not divine images. Despite the witness of the legal pronouncements, the astute reader of the Pentateuch will notice, however, that the materials do not present a uniform perspective on religious images. It appears that there may have been varying degrees of iconic acceptance and practice among the people of ancient Israel, this being the stimulus for the text's critique. The *law banning the use of divine images suggests that this type of worship was practiced, but that it was considered heterodox by the pentateuchal authors.

1. Idols, Idolatry
2. Teraphim, Household Gods

1. Idols, Idolatry.

The anti-image viewpoint emerges most clearly from reading *Deuteronomy. In addition to promoting aniconism as part of its pervasive program of assuring religious purity, Deuteronomy prescribes a purge of unauthorized places of piety. From the standpoint of the historian of Israelite *religion who might wish to discover additional remains of the actual religious practices of the Israelites, both orthodox and heterodox, Deuteronomy 12:2-4 represents the nadir of this view:

> You must demolish completely all the places where the nations whom you are about to dispossess served their gods, on the mountain heights, on the hills, and under every leafy tree. Break down their altars, smash their pillars, burn their sacred poles with fire, and hew down the idols of their gods, and thus blot out their name from their places. You shall not worship the LORD your God in such ways. (NRSV)

The writer, painting false worshipers with a broad brush as "the nations," "Canaanites" in the worst sense of the word, commands the faithful to eradicate all of the outdoor sacred sites. Notice that the writer marginalizes these worship practices by referring to the practitioners as non-Israelite, "the nations whom you are about to dispossess," and by locating their worship in nature settings, not within the confines of the settlements. While *archaeological evidence does affirm the physical existence of high places during the Israelite period at the fringes of settlements, ideologically Deuteronomy places these "worship centers" at the fringe of acceptable practice, both spatially and nationally. According to Deuteronomy, true Israelites will worship at a central city shrine. The writer also designates the deities as "their gods" in contrast to "our God." From the standpoint of iconographic worship, the Deuteronomic disciple is enjoined to break down, smash, burn and hack anything connected with the worship of these false gods. The delicate, indeed destructible, nature of "their gods" contrasts with the indestructibility of Yahweh, who cannot be represented by an idol, but whose Name alone resides in the central sanctuary as a witness to his presence.

The final line, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in such ways," seals the distanc-

ing of the practices of "the nations" from the true worship of Yahweh. The Israelite faithful will not do such things. The commandment certainly concerns obliterating the divine images, but the focus extends to the razing of the site so that future generations would not be able to remember the name of the deity once worshiped at the site. This commandment, of course, assumes that the deity worshiped at such a site was not Yahweh. Significantly, Deuteronomy demands that the faithful destroy the sanctuaries to such an extent that they would be unusable even for the worship of Yahweh. The faithful follower of Yahweh, in contradistinction, should worship God without images and without any assortment of shrines. More importantly, Deuteronomy commands the faithful Israelites to leave the periphery, where the erstwhile Canaanites once worshiped, and to travel with their contributions to the center where Yahweh has established authorized worship. The Pentateuch never identifies this center, referring to it as "the place" (e.g., Deut 12:5), but modern scholars have tended to identify this place with Jerusalem, though before the monarchic time the place may have been Shiloh.

To appreciate the biblical aniconic tradition, one might consider some of the terms used in the Pentateuch to describe religious images. For example, the word *ṣelem* ("image") occurs only six times in five verses in the Pentateuch. The first two (Gen 1:26, 27) describe the *creation of humankind. Humans represent deity in a significant sense, at least with regard to having authority over the remainder of creation. Genesis 5:3 describes this "image" as something almost genetic, since *Adam passed his image to his son Seth. Genesis 9:6 connects the "image" with divinity and provides a rationale for capital punishment: since humans are in God's image, anyone who kills another person may be put to death. Finally, Numbers 33:52, a passage anticipating the conquest of the land, uses the word *ṣelem* to indicate the "molten images" the "inhabitants of the land" worship. The true Israelite will destroy both the images and their devotees.

The word used in the second commandment quoted above is *pesel*. This word, or the bi-form *pāsîl* when plural, occurs ten times (Ex 20:4; Lev 26:1; Deut 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 7:5, 25; 12:3; 27:15). Some translations, such as the NJPS, distinguish the *pesel* as a "sculptured or graven image" as opposed to a molten figure, and *pāsîl* as a generic term "images."

The first pages of the Pentateuch confront the reader with the beginnings of opposition to images representing the deity. The order of creation and the concept of the *imago Dei* provide fodder for the polemic against the use of humanly fashioned objects to represent the presence of the deity. God fashioned humans in the *image of God. Humans, in contrast, may not fashion God in the image of humans or anything else. Potential potters of deity must realize that the fashioner was fashioned by the divine to evoke God. The equation, however, does not work in reverse; humans may not take it upon themselves to represent the deity by earthly fabrications. Ironically, since humans themselves imitate God, any human contrivance by hand would be derivative and redundant. But, as indicated by the case of Adam and Seth (Gen 5:3), humans may legitimately reproduce the divine image by means of procreation. By extending the human line, humans extend witness to God's creative presence in the world. Producing children, then, is an authentic re-creation of the divine image and thus one of the key blessings from Yahweh in the OT. Human creativity gone awry, as in the production of unauthorized images, is denounced. Humans are forbidden from using their divinely given creativity to manipulate the created order to attempt to craft something that suggests God.

As noted above, the legal traditions of the Pentateuch, especially Deuteronomy, develop this resolute anti-icon viewpoint, introduced in the foundational narratives, with particular fervor. Some of the stories interposed between the primeval sagas and the legal texts, however, destabilize this negative view. In some passages images are accepted as part of a story without evaluative comment. Conversely, an original story that appears tolerant of iconic worship could be modified, though not in a thoroughgoing fashion, to bring it into line with the dominant aniconic paradigm. When read canonically, in the light of the added witness of the legal materials, the writer provides a corrective to the view that accepts worship with images.

The making of the *golden calf (Ex 32) presents a noteworthy example of such a partial adaptation of a story. At a rudimentary level, this text bears witness to the existence of the iconic worship of Yahweh in ancient Israel. Clearly in the story *Aaron and his followers view the calf as an appropriate Yahwistic symbol. They iden-

tify the calf image with the God who brought them out of Egypt (Ex 32:4). Aaron announces to all that the next day will be a *festival to Yahweh (Ex 32:5). As the story continues, *Moses descends from the mountain and enforces the aniconic worship of Yahweh (Ex 32:7-29). God, through Moses, asserts that the Israelites have misconstrued their past. According to this divergent layer of the story, some Israelites have forgotten Yahweh and inaccurately attributed their deliverance to the golden calf. The reader's attention is deftly redirected from acceptance of the worship of Yahweh by means of the calf (Ex 32:1-6) to rejection of such humanly misguided representational worship (Ex 32:7-29). The text presents the rebuked worshipers as foolishly worshiping a statuette and not the living God.

The location of the story of the golden calf within the canon is noteworthy; its impact is strengthened by its placement in the Sinai material. The people's offense appears as a violation of the expanded commandment of Exodus 20:23: "Do not make silver gods next to me; gold gods do not make for yourselves." The ultimate expansion of this aniconic law occurs in Deuteronomy 4:15-25, with the somewhat redundant "an image in the form of any figure" and the extension of the prohibition to all artistic representations with the potential to lead the people astray.

Of course, although the people in the narrative of Exodus would have heard and agreed to the commandments, they might not have grasped the gravity of them. The text says that Israel acted with Aaron after Moses had disappeared up the mountain for an indeterminate period of time (Ex 32:1). While Moses was receiving the directions for the *tabernacle and its utensils, which included the ark of the covenant, the people acted hastily by failing to wait for the detailed building instructions. They created the golden calf, an item that conceptually could supplant the place of the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies, to signify the immanence of Yahweh. The writer of the narrative firmly rejects their bovine symbol. Thus, the story of the golden calf both attests to the historical reality that some in ancient Israel worshiped Yahweh by means of plastic representations and condemns that practice by advocating a strict aniconic perspective. The God connected to the portable shrine, whose immanence was signified by the golden chest within the holiest place, was not to be worshiped by means of a brute symbol. The worship of the calf-users has been marginalized. The text clearly asserts the aniconic viewpoint: the golden calf was burned, ground up, scattered and imbibed to signify its complete denunciation. Israel must place only the ark, the divinely authorized, manufactured token of God's presence, into the holiest place.

An interesting point is that the calf worshipers of Exodus 32 were not "the nations" or "Canaanites," but "Israelites." Significantly, Moses' own brother was the ringleader of this iconic worship style. Additionally, the calf was connected by those who used it with the worship of Yahweh and the recollection of Yahweh's saving activities. At its core this text reveals that at least some of the despised worshipers in ancient Israel were iconic Yahwists and not residual "Canaanites" or outsiders. This story signifies that Israel was like other nations of antiquity in struggling to envision the divine. The author's condemnation of idolatrous practice, the use of unauthorized images, was necessary precisely because some in ancient Israel sought to worship Yahweh, and perhaps other deities, in this manner.

In this regard, archaeology provides evidence for anthropomorphic cult statuary in Iron Age Palestine in obvious contrast to the strict prohibition of such figures in the pentateuchal legal traditions. This evidence is important for understanding the views of the Pentateuch, since the biblical materials received their final shape with these Iron Age realities in view, not during the Late Bronze Age settings of the stories. These Iron Age discoveries reveal how Israelites actually lived in the land in the light of aniconic injunctions. We uncover, in harmony with the witness of the historical and prophetic writings, that a portion of Israelites lived as though there were no rules against religious icons.

Of the many scholars who have written on the study of Israelite divine images over the past century, one must note especially the influential work of O. Keel and C. Uehlinger. While an exclusivist form of monotheism seems to have been a late station on the ancient Israelite religious landscape, there is nothing along the way to connect any particular image to Yahweh. From the twelfth to the late tenth centuries B.C., we find some metal and stone statues. There are also terra-cotta cult stands, terra-cotta shrine models and terra-cotta anthropomorphic vessels in the archaeological record. The cumulative evidence attests to or implies the fabrication and

utilization of anthropomorphic cult statuary throughout the early Iron Age in Israel. Uehlinger suggests that the iconography of the early Iron Age is not the place to look for the roots of aniconism, because the figurative representations of male and female deities did not abate (Uehlinger, 111-12). The Israelites seem to have ignored the injunctions against image-making—or at least reinterpreted them to avoid making images of Yahweh while producing other idols.

Uehlinger provocatively and convincingly concludes that there was no general recession of anthropomorphism in the visual art of Iron Age Palestine. Second, generally speaking the official cults in royally sponsored central state temples of Iron Age II Palestine focused upon the worship of major state and dynastic deities that were figuratively represented by anthropomorphic cult statues. Third, in the case of the kingdom of Israel, archaeological, inscriptional and iconographical evidence clearly points to the use of anthropomorphic cultic statuary by Israelites to a degree similar to their neighbors. In the case of the southern kingdom of Judah, growing and indisputable evidence contradicts the claim that its religion was essentially aniconic. We see repeatedly that biblical texts engage and critique the religious practices of some, especially any worship beyond the Temple Mount. While the main thrust of Yahweh worship seems to have remained aniconic throughout the history of Judah, the existence of some 854 Judean pillar figurines and the Khirbet el-Qôm and Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions reveal that, at least in some quarters of the southern kingdom, Asherah was worshiped alongside Yahweh. It appears that the Judean pillar figurines were found and probably used at all levels of human activity, especially in the daily, domestic realm (Kletter, 62). These types of discoveries seem to indicate that the religious landscape of ancient Israel was more variegated than the pentateuchal legal traditions would have preferred. Ultimately, and unfortunately, we have to admit that in spite of growing material evidence and the reevaluation of long-known sources, our picture of the nuances of Israel's cultic life still remains awkwardly fragmentary. Scholars must proceed by means of analogies between Israel and her neighbors, since primary documentation is often lacking. Of necessity, this approach highlights commonalities throughout the Levant and is less suited to measure the distinctive features of ancient Israelite religion (Uehlinger, 152-53).

In reading the varied witnesses of the Pentateuch regarding images, we note a progression along a continuum from silence regarding images to a total antirepresentational viewpoint. On one end of the spectrum, we see that the text does not condemn Rachel's theft of Laban's teraphim (see 2 below). The narrator does not judge her act of thievery and does not evaluate the pilfered items themselves. At the other pole, Deuteronomy demonstrates a strident and unsympathetic perspective against local and iconographic worship. Commenting on this continuum, M. B. Dick, building on the work of D. Knapp, suggests the following stages in the development in the *Bilderverbot* (prohibition of images): (1) no prohibition; (2) prohibitions rooted in intolerant monolatry; (3) Hosea's extension of the notion to every image, since each posed a threat of Israel's assimilation to other peoples and religions; (4) a complete prohibition of images as the final stage in process (e.g., Deut 5:8 [and later Ex 20:4]; see Dick, 11). This modern schema places the pentateuchal condemnations as the latest and most strident of an emerging perspective on images. This progression and the critical reconstruction of the Pentateuch it assumes may not be obvious to the casual reader of the Pentateuch, however. Rather, the average reader simply notices a stark contrast between the commandments of Exodus and Deuteronomy on the one hand and the laissez-faire attitude toward images in the Rachel story on the other.

2. Teraphim, Household Gods.

The teraphim offer a specific and troubling manifestation of divine images in the Pentateuch. The plural term *tĕrāpîm*, which is used even when it denotes a singular item, occurs fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible. Only three uses are pentateuchal (Gen 31:19, 34, 35), and all of these are restricted to the tale of Rachel's robbery of these items from Laban. The other dozen are spread out over the Former Prophets (Judg 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 20; 1 Sam 15:23; 19:13, 16; 2 Kings 23:24) and the Latter Prophets (Ezek 21:21 [MT 21:26]; Hos 3:4; Zech 10:2). The meaning of this term is not clear. Scholars have proposed various etymologies, but none has won particular favor. Interpreters have associated the term with "healing" (from the root *rpʾ*), "sagging" *(rph, trp)*, "vileness" (postbiblical *trp*),

"noninterpreters of dreams" (*trp* from *ptr* by metathesis) and "benevolent or malevolent spirit" (from Hittite). T. J. Lewis, in his survey of this material, prefers this last option, connecting ancestor figures with necromantic functions, though the interpretation is not without difficulties (Lewis, 844).

Unfortunately, ancient Near Eastern resources do not help in interpreting the term. The word does not occur outside the Bible. Since there is no direct verbal parallel, many scholars have sought to understand the teraphim by analogy with ancient Near Eastern materials that seem to parallel the teraphim in function, at least in the mind of the modern interpreter. On the basis of texts from second-millennium B.C. Nuzi, some have connected teraphim to the Akkadian word *ilānu* "gods." The common translation of teraphim as "household gods" betrays this purported Nuzi connection. This association is strengthened by Laban's question upon overtaking Jacob, "Why did you steal my gods?" (Gen 31:30). Laban, at least in the mind of the writer of Genesis, attached divine significance to the stolen teraphim. Other studies connect the gods more specifically with the *etemmu*, the spirits of the dead, and thus link the teraphim with ancestor worship.

While it is not clear what these teraphim were, they were certainly objects of sufficient value that when Rachel stole them she raised Laban's ire. As stated above, Laban possibly considered these items as images of the divine realm. The teraphim were possibly believed to provide access into heaven by some *divinatory method. The story of the theft is never resolved in Genesis. As far as the reader is aware, *Jacob never learned of his wife's action and Laban never traced the theft to his daughter. K. Spanier suggests that Rachel's theft was connected to her continuing struggle for primacy in Jacob's household over Leah. Since her husband was blissfully unaware of her activity, the theft could not be for his direct benefit. Perhaps Rachel saw this pilfering as a means of establishing the priority of her son as the chief heir. This supposition, though speculative, does offer a reasonable interpretation for Rachel's act, Laban's outrage and, possibly, the ascendancy of *Joseph in Jacob's family.

If one assumes that the term *teraphim* throughout the Bible refers to the same or similar items, then these teraphim could vary in their dimensions. For example, according to 1 Samuel 19:13, 16, the teraphim was large enough to serve as a substitute for David in bed. By covering a teraphim with bedclothes and a wig, Michel was able to deceive Saul long enough for David to escape pending doom. But in the case of Genesis 31 considered above, the figures must have been small enough to allow Rachel to hide them in her camel cushion and thus avoid the scrutinizing eye of Laban.

See also DIVINATION, MAGIC; GOLDEN CALF; IMAGE OF GOD; RELIGION; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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ILLNESS. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

IMAGE OF GOD

Known in classical Christian theology as the *imago Dei*, this term refers to the idea that humankind, by virtue of *creation and mandate, corresponds somehow to the Creator. Interpretations of this correspondence range all the way

from a sharing of characteristics and attributes—even in the physical realm—to a relationship in which the human race does not resemble God in any way but merely represents him. The fundamental question is whether *image* should be taken in an ontological sense or as simply a functional term. Is humankind like God, or does it only serve him as his agent?

1. Old Testament Texts and Terms
2. Humankind as Divine Image in the Ancient Near East
3. The Old Testament Concept of the Image of God
4. The Image of God and Postbiblical Jewish Tradition
5. The Image of God and the New Testament

1. Old Testament Texts and Terms.

The *locus classicus* for the biblical teaching of the image of God is Genesis 1:26-27. The relevant lines read, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen 1:26), and, "So God created the human race in his image, in the divine image he created it; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). The word translated "image" in all three places is *ṣelem*, whereas its explanatory synonym "likeness" renders *dĕmût*. The Greek (LXX) translation offers *eikōn* for *ṣelem* and *homoiōsis* for *dĕmût*. The next occurrence of these lexemes is in Genesis 5:1: "In the day that God created humankind, in the divine likeness he made them." Here *dĕmût* occurs alone, but it is rendered *eikōn* by the LXX, the usual translation of *ṣelem*. In Genesis 5:3, however, Adam is said to have sired a son "in his likeness" *(dĕmût;* LXX *idea)*, "according to his image" *(ṣelem;* LXX *eikōn)*. The final use of *ṣelem* in this technical sense is in Genesis 9:6, where God informs Noah that murder must be viewed as a capital offense, for "in the image [LXX *eikōn*] of God he made humankind." In addition to these few occurrences of *ṣelem* and *dĕmût* in the context of *imago Dei*, they appear commonly throughout the OT to describe images and idols designed to represent the deities of pagan worship or even Yahweh himself on occasions of apostate Israelite cultic activity (Num 33:52; 2 Kings 11:18; Ps 73:20; Is 40:18; Ezek 7:20; Amos 5:26).

2. Humankind as Divine Image in the Ancient Near East.

2.1. Mesopotamia. The Akkadian term cognate to Hebrew *ṣelem* is *ṣalmu*, a word used commonly to describe ordinary statues and, in religious settings, images of the deities. Kings are sometimes referred to as the image of certain gods, as are such persons as sorcerers. The Sumerian creation myth Enki and Ninmah states,

> O my mother, the being whom you named is there:
> associate the image [?] of the gods with him,
> mix the nucleus of clay above the primal-ocean.
> The gods and princely figures [?] will thicken the clay,
> but you must give life to the limbs. (Beyerlin, 77)

2.2. Egypt. Humankind as the earthly representative of the gods is a major tenet of Egyptian theology, especially as humankind is individualized in the monarchy. This is linked with the notion that humanity is the image of the gods, especially of the sun god, as is clear from the so-called Instruction of Merikare:

> Well tended is mankind—god's cattle,
> He made sky and earth for their sake,
> He subdued the water monster,
> He made breath for their noses to live.
> They are his images, who came from his body,
> He shines in the sky for their sake;
> He made for them plants and cattle,
> Fowl and fish to feed them. (Lichtheim, 1.106)

2.3. Syria-Canaan. The paucity of creation texts may explain why few references to humankind as the image of God are yet attested in the region between Mesopotamia and Egypt. The terms *ṣlm* and *dmwt*ʾ (= Heb *dĕmût*) do occur together, however, in the bilingual Akkadian and Aramaic Tell Fekheriye inscription from the late ninth century B.C. In line 22 Akkadian *ṣalam* is rendered by Aramaic *ṣlm*, but in line 26 it is glossed by *dmwt*ʾ, thus suggesting (as in Hebrew) that the two words are synonymous. In any case, the reference in the inscription is to the statue of a king and not to an image of a deity.

3. The Old Testament Concept of the Image of God.

3.1. The Central Text (Gen 1:26-28). The concept of the image of God originates in the creation narrative of Genesis 1:1—2:3. That narrative is developed in a way that proceeds from the most general ("the heavens and the earth") to the most specific (i.e., a single or soli-

tary being, Gen 1:26) and from the most inert to the most complex and dynamic. The purpose is to highlight humanity as the climax, the most significant, of all of God's creative work. As early as day five, sea creatures and birds are said to have been created "according to their kind" (Heb *mîn*, Gen 1:21), and the same is said of land animals of all types on day six (Gen 1:24-25). The word *mîn*, approximating perhaps the modern taxonomical idea of species, makes clear that all living creatures must be understood in terms of categories. That is, they find their identity by virtue of their resemblance to creatures of the same kind.

The creation of humankind is set off clearly from what precedes and not only because the human race does not belong to a category called *mîn*. First, God says, "Let us," a formula unique to the creation of humans. In all other cases, the phrase is merely "God said, 'Let there be . . .'" and the like (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). Second, humans are not compared to creatures of the same kind, for there are none with whom to compare humans. Rather, humanity is compared to God himself; that is, humanity is (in) the image and likeness of God. Third, the human race is charged with the responsibility of filling the earth and having dominion over it and everything on it, a responsibility frequently described as the creation mandate. Fourth, gender distinctions are clearly made, though obviously they are implicit in the creation of other living creatures (cf. Gen 2:18-20). It is as both male and female that humankind is to function as the image of God (Gen 1:28). Animals thus relate to one another within their own subhuman category, but in some grand and mysterious sense humankind resembles God.

The nature of this resemblance is determined largely by the meaning of the comparative particles in Genesis 1:26. God had determined to make humanity "*in* his image" and "*according to* his likeness." The preposition *bĕ* ("in") ordinarily signifies the idea of at, in, among, within, upon or according to (*HALOT, 103-5*). The traditional translation here is "in," a rendition that, in light of the following particle *kî*, is to be taken as "according to, after the manner of, as the same kind as" (*HALOT, 453-54*). The translation of prepositions, subordinate conjunctions and other such particles covers a wide semantic range, however, and is frequently governed by considerations of context, authorial intention and theology. This is methodologically proper, but it opens one up to possibilities that transcend common points of view.

A basic issue here is whether humankind is being compared to God ontologically, that is, in terms of God's nature, character and attributes, or in some other way. Does being "in our image" *(bĕṣalmēnû)* and "according to our likeness" *(kidmûtēnû)* suggest that humankind is actually like God? If so, in what ways can this be true, inasmuch as humanity is, in fact, not God? The usual explanation is (1) that humans share with God such qualities as personality, will and sensibility, but (2) that they share these not in an essential manner but only in a derivative way. That is, humanity's resemblance to God is analogous but not ontologically identical. To be like God is to be patterned after him but, at the same time, to be qualitatively inferior to him.

Support for this understanding of the image exists in the creation narratives themselves. Both God and humans speak, are referred to by personal pronouns, exercise authority over lesser beings and have the capacity to make choices (Gen 2:17). On the other hand, God has always existed (Gen 1:1), whereas humanity was created (Gen 1:27); humankind is under the dominion of God and is therefore not equal to him (Gen 2:16); humankind is physical and corporeal (Gen 2:7), but God is spirit (Ex 33:17-23; cf. Jn 4:24); humans are mortal (Gen 2:17), but God is eternal. To be in the image of God cannot mean equivalence between deity and humanity, then, but only an analogous or corresponding relationship between the two.

An alternative understanding of the meaning of the *imago Dei* is that humankind is not *in* the image but *is*, in fact, the image. Humanity does not so much share with God his essential reality but, rather, is a representative of that reality. That is, humankind has a functional role to play, a role that requires no ontological commonness with God. Such a case rests grammatically on the well-attested use of the preposition *bĕ* as a so-called *beth-essentiae* (or *beth* of identity). This permits a translation such as "Let us make humanity *as* our image." The following comparison ("according to our likeness") does not have a *beth-essentiae*, it is true, but such a *beth* does occur with "likeness" *(dĕmût)* in Genesis 5:1 *(bidmût)*. Clearly, if a case can be made for a functional use of *beth* in Genesis 1:26 with *ṣelem*, then it can be made in Genesis 5:1 with *dĕmût*.

This opens the possibility that *kĕ* (usually translated "according to") in Genesis 1:26 may also signify function rather than similitude (cf. Wis 14:17). Humankind, thus, *is* the image and *is* the likeness of God. The synonymous nature of *ṣelem* and *dĕmût* also supports this option.

More persuasive than the grammatical evidence, perhaps, is the inner textual elaboration of what is meant by the image of God. Immediately after the resolution to make humanity "in the image" and "after the likeness" of God is the statement of purpose for human creation, namely, that humans have dominion over all God's creation (Gen 1:26). Then again, following the statement of creation (Gen 1:27), God pronounced a blessing over the male and female, a powerful word of effective promise that humanity should fill the earth and dominate all its creatures (Gen 1:28). The connection between the notion of image and humanity as sovereign seems most apparent: to be the image of God is at the same time to be God's vice-regent in the exercise of divine lordship.

Reflections of this role appear later in the narrative as well. When God created *Adam, he placed him in a garden for the express purpose of working (*ʿbd*) and overseeing (*šmr*) it (Gen 2:15). The garden—perhaps a microcosm of all creation—provided a testing ground for humanity's role as image. That role is even more clearly in view in Adam's naming of the animals (Gen 2:19), for in the naming he demonstrates his superiority to the things named.

The full significance of the *imago Dei* must, it seems, be drawn from both these notions. Humankind is *in* the image of God but also serves *as* the image. Humans have resemblance to God, even if limited, but stand in God's place in the administration of God's creation.

3.2. Derivative Texts (Gen 5:1, 3; 9:6). The terms *ṣelem* and *dĕmût* occur next in Genesis 5:3 to describe Adam's son *Seth, who, it is said, was in Adam's likeness and image (in this order; not as in Gen 1:26). The word *dĕmût* appears also in Genesis 5:1 as a loose term to connect Adam to God. The point here is that Adam and all his descendants share in the privilege of imaging God, the *fall of the human race into sin notwithstanding. The image may be blurred, but it is not obliterated. This truth of continuing imaging is underscored in the instructions to the postflood world that murder must be avenged by capital punishment, since humankind is (in) the image *(ṣelem)* of God (Gen 9:6). The egregious nature of murder and the call for the death penalty mark the remainder of the OT law, thus testifying to the profound significance of the divine-human correspondence (cf. Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17; Deut 19:11-13).

4. The Image of God and Postbiblical Jewish Tradition.

Judaism in the Second Temple period and later shows surprisingly little interest in the concept of the image of God (cf. Wis 2:23; Sir 17:3). Philo understood the term *eikōn* in two ways: as visible and as an idea, including the concept of the logos. To Philo, man is the image of God in the sense that he is patterned after the logos, the archetype. *Genesis Rabbah* reports that when the Lord created Adam the angels thought he was divine and would have worshiped him had not the Lord caused him to fall asleep, thus revealing his mortality (*Gen. Rab.* 8:10). Moreover, humans are like the angels in that they stand upright, speak, understand and see peripherally. On the other hand, humans are like the animals since they eat and drink, procreate, excrete and die (*Gen. Rab.* 8:11). Clearly the notion here is that of humankind's resemblance to the divine as well as its functional role.

Besides incidental references in the Mishnah (*m. ʾAbot* 3:14; *b. Meg.* 9a; 28a), only *b. Sanh.* 38b has any extensive comment on the *imago Dei*. For example, some rabbis suggested that only one man was created in order to "show forth the greatness of the Supreme King of kings." At the same time, Rab Simon relates that a company of angels questioned the wisdom of God's creating humans in his image, for God knew that humanity would become corrupt. The Lord's response was to destroy those impudent celestial beings (*Gen. Rab.* 8:5). Yet the question of the meaning and purpose of humanity's imaging remained unanswered.

5. The Image of God and the New Testament.

The NT translation of Hebrew *ṣelem* ("image"), following the LXX, is invariably *eikōn*. The one occurrence of "likeness" with reference to the *imago Dei* is rendered *homoiōsis*, reflecting the LXX translation of Heb *dĕmût*. The four NT references to the image of God as a technical term are limited to Paul (*see DPL*, Image of God). He urges men not to cover their heads while at worship, for they are "the image *[eikōn]* and the

glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7). Paul also describes the "new person" in Christ as being "renewed in knowledge in the image *[eikōn]* of his Creator" (Col 3:10). But it is Jesus, in the apostle's theology, who is most preeminently the image of God. Paul speaks of "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image *[eikōn]* of God" (2 Cor 4:4), and most strikingly of Christ, "who is the image *[eikōn]* of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). Paul thus raises the idea of the *imago Dei* to a higher dimension by identifying Christ as such, an exaltation argued also by the author of Hebrews on the basis of Psalm 8, itself a commentary on Genesis 1:26-28 (Heb 2:6-8). Finally, James refers to human beings as being made "in the likeness of God" (Jas 3:9). "Likeness" translates *homoiōsis,* the term used by the LXX to render Hebrew *dĕmût* in Genesis 1:26. The sparing use of terms in the NT for the concept of the *imago Dei* ought not to suggest that it is unimportant to NT thought and to Christian theology, since NT authors would assume the foundational treatment of the idea in Genesis 1:26-27.

See also ADAM; CREATION; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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IMAGO DEI. *See* IMAGE OF GOD.

IMPERIALIST INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

IMPURITY. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

INCEST. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

INGATHERING, FEAST OF. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

INHERITANCE. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF.

INIQUITY. *See* SIN, GUILT.

INJURY. *See* BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER.

ISAAC

Isaac *(yiṣḥāq),* whose name means "laughter," is best known in his roles as the promised son of *Abraham and the father of *Jacob. Though viewed skeptically or marginalized by some OT scholarship, Isaac is presented in the biblical text as the longest lived of the patriarchs of Israel and, not insignificantly, his name is found in twenty-one biblical books, mostly in the Pentateuch. There are nineteen references to Isaac in the New Testament.

The presence of Isaac is between the promise of his birth (Gen 17) and the report of his death (Gen 35), with the major focus on his life from Genesis 21 to 28. Later uses in Genesis primarily refer to him as Jacob's father, to Abraham and Isaac as Jacob's forefathers or, climactically, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as recipients of the *covenant, which is the context of the majority of other uses in the Hebrew Bible. In the NT, roughly half the references to Isaac (besides genealogies) echo this historic OT linkage of patriarchal names.

1. Critical Assessment of Isaac

2. Isaac as Transitional Figure Between Abraham and Jacob
3. Isaac, Son of the Promise
4. Isaac, Husband and Father
5. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
6. Isaac in the New Testament

1. Critical Assessment of Isaac.

Earlier generations of pentateuchal scholars were in general agreement concerning the main features of source analysis (i.e., J, E, D, P; *see* Source Criticism) of the Genesis narratives that include Isaac. However, that is no longer the case. With the exception of the tendency to date the final editing of the documents late (i.e., often postexilic), there is nothing approaching a current consensus in regard to composition (Martin-Achard).

The text of Genesis provides abundant information concerning the characters of Abraham and Jacob. By comparison, the details surrounding the character of Isaac are quite sketchy. Generally speaking, this phenomenon would appear to support the opinions of many scholars who view Isaac as a marginal, weak or inconspicuous character (Hicks). Isaac's early years are, for the most part, passed in obscurity. He was already a young man by the time of the Moriah account (Gen 22). Then, although the events regarding his arranged marriage to Rebekah are recorded in detail (Gen 24), Isaac recedes into the background of the Genesis narratives for another twenty years, until his twin sons Jacob and Esau are born (Gen 25). Only in Genesis 26—27 does Isaac receive sustained focus in the biblical text. After that, Isaac is mentioned infrequently until his death (Gen 35), underscoring his basically peripheral relationship to the movement of the narrative.

The biblical account conveys a portrait of the patriarch in a largely passive, even subordinate, light. For example, he shows no noteworthy reaction to his impending *sacrifice in Genesis 22. Also, it is his father Abraham who takes the initiative to acquire an appropriate wife for Isaac (Gen 24:1-9). Further, Isaac avoids direct confrontation with the shepherds at Gerar through compromise concerning water rights. In fact, it can be said that Isaac only plays a true leading role in Genesis 26.

Although Isaac may understandably be perceived as unremarkable, some commentators note elements setting Isaac apart from the other patriarchs (Sarna). The circumstances of Isaac's birth are so clearly miraculous as to engender laughter (Gen 17:17; 18:12-13). He is the first newborn male child circumcised according to the stipulations of the covenant between Abraham and Yahweh (Gen 17:10-14; 21:4). As Abraham's heir (Gen 25:5) and only successor, Isaac provides the essential genealogical link between Abraham and Jacob, advancing the overall theme of "patriarchal promises." In addition, the prophet Amos later employed the phrases "shrines of Isaac" (Amos 7:9) and "house of Isaac" (Amos 7:16) as epithets for Israel, reaffirming the historical importance of Isaac as the fulfillment of the Lord's promised blessing of "seed," the recipient of the covenant, and acknowledging his key function as progenitor of Israel.

It can also be said that Isaac is morally distinctive in certain respects. He remains fully monogamous, this despite Rebekah's prolonged infertility (Gen 25:20-21, 26). Although Isaac originally set out for Egypt, he is the only one of the patriarchs who remains in the land of Canaan, even during famine (Gen 26:1-6). Consequently, Isaac enjoys the fruits of great agricultural prosperity, a cause for envy among the Philistines (Gen 26:12-14). Furthermore, he does not typically employ the manipulative behavior that often characterizes Jacob and Rebekah (Wenham), though Isaac is open for criticism regarding lapses of judgment. Out of timidity and fear for his life, he endangers the future promise of progeny by passing Rebekah off as his sister while sojourning in Gerar (Gen 26:7-10). Also, he apparently ignores the birth oracle to his wife (Gen 25:23) in attempting to give Esau the blessing of the firstborn (Gen 27:1-4).

Isaac's status of respect is revealed in his encounter with *Abimelech, who eventually recognizes that God is blessing Isaac (Gen 26:28-29). Following Abraham's death, the Philistines blocked up the wells in the area, a violation of the previous agreement between Abimelech and Abraham (Gen 26:15). When Abimelech approaches to petition Isaac, he is accompanied by a political advisor and a military officer (Gen 26:26), indicating Isaac has a status equal with a king. Isaac then initiates a pact, a function usually reserved for a king (Sarna). The two parties negotiate a mutually satisfying agreement confirmed by a common meal and sealed with an oath. In doing so, Isaac's peaceable nature and

desire to avoid conflict contrast markedly with the ongoing strife between his sons Jacob and Esau (Wenham).

Isaac is guilty of favoritism toward his firstborn son, Esau. When Isaac, aging and blind, decides to transfer the blessing of birthright upon Esau, Jacob deceitfully substitutes himself in Esau's place, securing the blessing of the firstborn for himself (Gen 27:1-29). Acknowledging the birthright as divinely sanctioned, and reminded by Rebekah of Esau's improper marriages (Gen 26:34-35), Isaac directs Jacob to travel to Rebekah's family in Paddan-Aram to procure an acceptable wife (Gen 28:1-2).

Thus, an overall assessment of Isaac reveals that he is actually a surprisingly complex figure. Possessing certain noteworthy strengths, he also manifests significant weaknesses. And even if he is not center stage in the biblical text nearly as much as Abraham or Jacob, Isaac is the most prominent "supporting actor" in the patriarchal narratives.

2. Isaac as Transitional Figure Between Abraham and Jacob.

The Isaac stories function as a hinge in the larger narrative structure of Genesis, looking retrospectively to Abraham and prospectively to Jacob. Isaac plays a significant role in advancing the theme of patriarchal *blessing, providing the necessary genealogical link between Abraham and Israel. The Lord's promise to Abraham is repeated in the latter stages of each patriarch's life (Gen 22:17-18; 26:24; 35:9-12), which is framed within the scope of divine promise (Fishbane). Isaac is frequently identified either as Abraham's son ("my son") or as Jacob's father ("my father"). Various forms of "bless" *(bārak)* predominate in the narratives, emphasizing the person of Isaac as the manifestation of promised blessing and the designated channel through which that blessing would flow (Gen 26:3-4, 12, 24, etc.). The Lord's distinctive promise of continual presence with Isaac is reiterated at several junctures in the text (Gen 26:3, 24, 28) and continues on through the Jacob narratives (Gen 28:15; 31:3, etc.).

Sophisticated structural analyses (e.g., Rendsburg; Fishbane) point out the parallel nature of the accounts of Abraham and Isaac, and Isaac and Jacob, creating a larger concentric unit. The general consensus is of a mirror image symmetry between the stories, which overlaps at various points. Such an observation substantiates the deliberate arrangement of the patriarchal narratives (Rendsburg). Broadly speaking, the Isaac accounts continue a narrative cycle of crisis-tension-resolution in which the promised seed is jeopardized, resulting in a question regarding covenant fulfillment, then eventually brought to resolution through divine intervention (Gen 21:1-2; 22:15-18; 25:21). The stories are crafted using diametrically opposing concepts: barrenness/fertility, nonblessing/blessing and absence from land/homeland. These correspond to the three aspects of God's covenant promise: seed, blessing and *land.

Located just before the end of the Abraham narratives, the extended length of Genesis 24 indicates a distinctive function. The chapter develops the concept of covenantal loyalty through (1) Abraham's conscientiousness in seeking a proper marriage for Isaac, (2) the faithfulness of his entrusted servant and (3) God's divine providence in making the search a success (Ross).

Isaac's marriage and Abraham's death set the stage for the emergence of the next generation. Then the themes of strife, deception and fertility accompany the spotlighted birth of Isaac's sons in Genesis 25:19-26 (which later find their counterpart in Rachel's struggle in childbirth in Gen 35:16-20). The section creates the setting for the life of Jacob and foreshadows the development of later episodes.

Genesis 26 links the Jacob cycle with the Abraham cycle through several references to Abraham as well as the chapter's sequence of events, including famine, repetition of the blessing and promises, the disguising of Rebekah as his sister, and Isaac's renewal of the pact with Abimelech paralleling Abraham's experience in Genesis 20. In addition, Genesis 26 is mirrored by Genesis 34 (Mann; Fishbane), both passages containing events revolving around deception and making a covenant with a foreigner, as well as common vocabulary. These similarities, along with the fact that both Genesis 26 and Genesis 34 do not demonstrate an obvious relationship to their immediate literary contexts, negate any assumption of unorganized arrangement. If anything, the parallels argue for the arrangement of the narratives to display covenant transition between the generations.

3. Isaac, Son of the Promise.

The birth of Isaac furnishes the first tangible

manifestation of God's previous pledge to Abraham. The divine promise, initially made by the Lord with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), consists of three elements: descendents, blessed relationship and land. This promise, which was reaffirmed and clarified several times to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15-17; 15:7-21; 17:4-8; 22:16-18), is then repeated to both Isaac (Gen 26:3-5) and Jacob (28:13-15).

Since Genesis 12—50 concentrates on descendants or "seed," Isaac is a key ingredient in the Abraham cycle, advancing the movement of the book as the fulfillment of the promise of an heir for Abraham. He also plays an indispensable role in the later Jacob cycle as Jacob's precursor. As the internal progress of the Genesis narratives narrows the scope of the blessings to a particular people through the use of genealogies functioning as literary linchpins between the patriarchal accounts, the birth of Isaac bridges the gap. He inherits the covenant promises as son and also becomes a father of the future nation of Israel.

The issue of progeny creates a series of tensions in the Genesis narratives in which the promised heir is jeopardized. Early on, Abraham passes off Sarah as his sister in Egypt (Gen 12:10-20). Similarly, Sarah is later allowed to become part of the harem of Abimelech (Gen 20).

Also, Abraham and Sarah are faced with the seemingly insurmountable problem of infertility, which leads Sarah to offer to Abraham her handmaiden Hagar, who bears a son, Ishmael (Gen 16). Ishmael is the potential heir as the only son of Abraham until the birth of Isaac, the son of promise (Gen 21:1-7). Sarah perceives Ishmael mocking Isaac as a threat to her son and his role, so Hagar and Ishmael are expelled (Gen 21:8-21).

Finally, the Lord's instruction to sacrifice Isaac on a mount of Moriah (Gen 22) seriously endangers the future of Abraham's seed. God tests Abraham's trust and obedience by instructing him to sacrifice his son of promise. Abraham's willingness to relinquish Isaac expresses his dependence on the Lord himself, not just on the divine promise alone. Abraham recognizes his son Isaac as a gift ultimately belonging to God, and the fulfillment of the Lord's covenant promises as a privilege, not a right. As a result, the Lord declares even expanded blessings on Abraham's descendants (Gen 22:16-18), who would be, of course, the "seed" of Isaac.

4. Isaac, Husband and Father.

The description of the death and burial of Sarah in the purchased family *burial cave at Hebron (Gen 23) does not even mention Isaac. However, even this silence begins the refocusing of the wider narrative toward Isaac. With the passing on of the mother of the son of promise, progress toward the next generation of the covenant is accelerated.

This overarching movement of the narrative is seen clearly in the proportion of the remaining two passages dealing with Abraham. The search for a wife for Isaac (Gen 24) is the longest narrative in the entire book (i.e., 67 verses). In stark contrast, the description of Abraham's marriage to Keturah, the ensuing large family and his death are summarized in only ten verses (Gen 25:1-10). With the end of the Abraham cycle, "the account of Abraham's son Isaac" (Gen 25:19 NIV), though most of it focused on Jacob, is set to begin.

After a twenty-year wait for children, Isaac's prayer is answered in the birth of twin sons to his beloved wife, Rebekah (Gen 25:19-26). The following verses (Gen 25:27-34) represent a compressed chronology and general preview of the lives of Jacob and Esau, especially Genesis 27.

In Genesis 26, as discussed above, the circumstances are clearly intentionally paralleled to Abraham's misportrayal of his wife in Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 20. Relatedly, in forbidding Isaac to go to Egypt, the Lord restates the covenant with Abraham to the second generation (i.e., Isaac; Gen 26:2-5). That Isaac is no "second-class citizen" in regard to the covenant in comparison to Abraham or Jacob is seen in the following extended chiastic structuring, covering the three patriarchal generations (Luter):

A (Gen 12:3) In you (Abraham) all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
  B (Gen 22:18) In your (Abraham's) seed all the nations shall be blessed.
    B' (Gen 26:4) In your (Isaac's) seed all the nations shall be blessed.
A' (Gen 28:14) In you (Jacob) and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

By Genesis 27, however, the focus is already beginning to shift away from Isaac to Jacob. Though an older and increasingly infirm Isaac (Gen 27:1-4) is the patriarchal bestower of blessing, the narrative basically pits a naive Esau ver-

sus the scheming team of Jacob and his mother Rebekah, with Isaac virtually a pawn in the unfolding stratagem. It is not immediately clear how much of Isaac's violent trembling, upon discerning the ruse (Gen 27:33), was anger and how much was brought on by the fearful realization of Isaac's shortsighted choice to ignore the birth oracle that "the older will serve the younger" (Gen 25:23 NIV).

The next set of verses brackets Jacob's time in Paddan-aram. After Isaac sent Jacob away to take a wife, but also to protect him from Esau (Gen 27:41—28:9), "the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac" (Gen 28:13 NIV) restated the covenant to Jacob (see above), who then bargained with God for safe return to "my father's house" (Gen 28:21). Then, twenty years later (Gen 31:38), when Laban overtook a fleeing Jacob, the phraseology "Fear of Isaac" is used twice (Gen 31:42, 53). This wording, which has been the subject of an unusual amount of scholarly speculation (Hillers; Puech; Malul), actually seems to be fairly easily understood in this context. In Genesis 31:42 "the God of my father" is simply further described as "the Fear of Isaac," which is reiterated in Genesis 31:53.

Isaac's name is then mentioned in Jacob's prayer about meeting Esau to the "God of my father Abraham" and "Isaac" (Gen 32:9; MT 32:10). It is not mentioned again until the Lord's restating of the covenant to Jacob (Gen 35:12) and then in Jacob's reunion with his father in Genesis 35:27, apparently shortly before Isaac's death (Gen 35:28-29).

5. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

After Isaac's death, his name appears five more times in Genesis. Jacob offered a sacrifice to "the God of his father Isaac" as he was leaving the land on the way to Egypt (Gen 46:1). Later, Jacob used Isaac's name twice in blessing Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:15-16). Genesis 49:31 reports a charge to bury Israel (Jacob) in the family burial ground where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah were buried, back in the land. Finally, Joseph's request for his body to be likewise taken back to the Promised Land is the occasion for the first use of the phrase "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Gen 50:24).

The eighteen additional references to Isaac in the Pentateuch all connect Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Sometimes it is in the phrase "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3:6, 15; 4:5; cf. 3.15), sometimes as recipients of the covenant (Ex 2:24; in reverse order in Lev 26:42) or of the "word" (Deut 9:5) or of some specific aspect of the promise, such as the land (Ex 6:8; 33:1; Num 32:11; Deut 1:8), that God "swore" to bestow (Deut 30:20; 34:4). The variant wording of "Abraham, Isaac and Israel" is found in Exodus 32:13.

Of the remaining fourteen uses in the Hebrew Bible, the wording "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (or Israel)" is found in 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; and 2 Chronicles 30:6; while the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is in view in various ways in 2 Kings 13:23; 1 Chronicles 16:16; and Jeremiah 33:26 (variant spelling). Joshua 24:3-4 is a brief historical review at the beginning of Joshua's swan song. The uses in 1 Chronicles 1:28, 34 (2x) are genealogical. The only somewhat unusual uses are a variant spelling of Isaac in Psalm 105:9 *(yiśhāq)* and references to the "house of Isaac" (Amos 7:16, variant spelling) and the "shrines [high places] of Isaac" (i.e., Israel; Amos 7:9, variant spelling).

6. Isaac in the New Testament.

The common OT phraseology linking the names of the three patriarchs of Israel is still highly visible in the NT. Of the nineteen references to Isaac in the NT, eleven (all in the four Gospels and Acts) are in genealogical contexts (Mt 1:2; Lk 3:34; Acts 7:8) or include the general wording "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32) or place the three names in an eschatological context (Mt 8:11; Lk 13:28).

The remaining uses are more theologically oriented. Romans 9 uses Isaac as an example of God's election. Hebrews 11:17-18 shows how God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac was not really in tension with the election of Isaac in the mind of Abraham the believer. James 2:21 considers Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac as a classic OT example of "working faith." In Galatians 4:28 Paul's elaborate allegory pictures Isaac symbolizing believers as "children of promise." Interestingly, only in Hebrews 11:20 is Isaac individually spotlighted for blessing Jacob and Esau by faith (see Gen 27).

See also ABRAHAM; ESAU, EDOMITES; JACOB.

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A. B. Luter and S. L. Klouda

ISHMAEL

Of the six persons in the OT bearing this name (cf. 2 Kings 25:23-25; 1 Chron 8:38; 2 Chron 19:11; 23:1; Ezra 10:22), the son of *Abraham by *Hagar is by far the most significant historically and theologically. Frustrated by the lack of a son to carry on God's covenant *promises to him, Abram bypassed his barren wife Sarai (*see* Sarah) at her suggestion and fathered a son by a surrogate mother, Hagar the Egyptian (Gen 16:1-4). While Hagar was yet pregnant she was forced out of the home by Sarai and alone in the desert received a revelation from the angel of Yahweh to name her expected son *Yišmāʿēʾl,* "God hears" (Gen 16:11). Hagar returned to Abram and Sarai but after some years was once again expelled, never to go back. This time Yahweh revealed to her and her son that they too would receive unusual blessing as a people.

1. Ishmael in the Old Testament
2. Ishmael in Post-Biblical Jewish Tradition
3. Ishmael in the Qur'an and Islamic Tradition
4. Ishmael and Historical Criticism

1. Ishmael in the Old Testament.

1.1. The Setting and Circumstances of His Birth. Eleven long years after Abram had been given the promise of innumerable offspring (cf. Gen 12:4; 16:16), his barren wife Sarai was still unable to conceive. Abram had hoped that Yahweh might be content to allow Eliezer, his servant and adopted son, to fill the role of covenant heir (Gen 15:1-3), but Yahweh had foreclosed that option, promising again that Abram's own flesh and blood would do so (Gen 15:4). Abram's great faith notwithstanding (Gen 15:6), as time continued to elapse he and Sarai despaired once more of seeing the promise come to pass. They therefore resorted to a measure that, while conforming to the cultural mores of their time, proved to have disastrous consequences, namely, procreation by a substitute mother. Sarai's servant girl Hagar thus made her entry into the narrative as the unwitting cause of tension in the family. Eventually she would become the mother not only of a son but of a whole nation of people, a nation identified by Islamic tradition as the Arab people.

1.2. His Rejection as a Son of Abraham. Abram's attempt to take matters into his own hands was clearly displeasing to Yahweh, and it was not long in bearing negative consequences. No sooner had Hagar conceived than she began to look upon her mistress with condescension (Gen 16:4). Sarai rebuked her husband for having given his blessing to the arrangement, and then made life so miserable for Hagar that she fled to the desert (Gen 16:6). The angel of Yahweh found her there and told her to return to Abram and Sarai. He then promised her that her offspring would be beyond counting. Moreover, her son, to be named Ishmael, would be a nomad living in the east. He would be a "wild donkey of a man," that is, one free of the restraints of sedentary life. His life would be marked by conflict with his neighbors as they all laid claim to rights and privileges in that hostile desert environment (Gen 16:7-12).

1.3. His Blessing as a Son of Abraham. Some fourteen years after Ishmael was born (Gen 16:16; 17:1; 21:1-5), Sarah at last was with child

and gave birth to *Isaac. Some time later after Isaac was weaned, Sarah observed Ishmael mocking (Heb *mĕṣaḥēq,* a play on the name Isaac, *yiṣḥāq)* Issac. He may have been making fun of the toddler as he tried his first baby steps. Sarah saw no humor in it, however, and fearing for her own son's position as heir of the patriarchal promises, she expelled Hagar and Ishmael from the home (Gen 21:8-10). Abraham's consternation was assuaged by Yahweh, who told him that the *covenant descent would indeed be through Isaac but that he also had great blessing in store for Ishmael and his progeny as well (Gen 21:13). After being sent away by Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael made their way to the vicinity of Beer-sheba, where Ishmael, though in his mid-teens by then, was at the point of exhaustion and even death for the lack of water (Gen 21:15). With bitter lament Hagar implored the Lord to intervene. The Lord heard her and the boy and not only met the immediate need (Gen 21:19) but also promised that Ishmael, like Isaac, would be the founder of a great nation (Gen 21:18).

Abraham's relationship with Ishmael was distressingly difficult. Though he clearly understood that Ishmael was not destined to be the covenant heir after Genesis 17 (Gen 17:16), he nonetheless held on to the hope that God might relent in the absence of a son by Sarah. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sarah eighty-nine and humanly speaking incapable of bearing children, Abraham pleaded with God that Ishmael might be an acceptable substitute (Gen 17:18). The appeal was denied, but Yahweh did affirm that Ishmael would be blessed by founding a great nation of twelve princes (Gen 17:20; cf. 25:16). In addition, Ishmael was forever bound to the Abrahamic covenant community by the rite of *circumcision, a sign that he and his offspring held special claim to the promises of God (Gen 17:9-14, 25-26).

Isaac and Ishmael were clearly not in a close relationship for the remaining years of Abraham's life (cf. Gen 21:21; 25:18), but they did come together for their father's burial (Gen 25:9). Thereafter Ishmael and his clan settled in various encampments in the Negev and Arabian deserts (Gen 25:12-18). Even then the families of Isaac and Ishmael intermingled to some extent, a case in point being Esau's marriage to Mahalath (or Basemath), a daughter of Ishmael (Gen 28:9; 36:3).

2. Ishmael in Post-Biblical Jewish Tradition.

On the whole the Mishnah and its talmudic elaborations do not speak well of Ishmael. The tractate *b. Šabbat* 146a says that impurity did not cease from the patriarchs until the third generation, Abraham's begetting of Ishmael being an example. As for the enumeration of Ishmael's years in the Torah, it served only to provide a chronology for Jacob (*b. Meg.* 17a). On the other hand, if one sees Ishmael in a dream, it is a sign that one's prayer is accepted as Ishmael's was (*b. Ber.* 56b). The tractate *b. Sanhedrin* 89b relates that Ishmael said to Isaac, "I am greater than you in the precepts, for you were circumcised at the age of eight days [when you could not protest], whereas I [was circumcised] at the age of thirteen years [when I could have protested]." The mocking of Genesis 21:9 is said in *Genesis Rabbah* 53:11 to allude to inheritance. When Isaac was born, everyone was happy. Ishmael said, "You are fools! I am the firstborn, and I will take a double portion." The *Zohar* explains the fact that God heard the cry of Ishmael in the desert on the grounds that though he was wicked, he was not yet twenty, and the Heavenly Court punishes only from the age of twenty (*Zohar* 1:118b). Finally, a *baraita,* eager to put Ishmael in a good light, explains that Ishmael repented during Abraham's lifetime (*b. B. Bat.* 16b).

3. Ishmael in the Qur'an and in Islamic Tradition.

The Qur'an identifies Ishmael as a prophet (Sura 19:54; 21:85; 38:49) but, more important, as one of the ancestors of the Arab people and a worshiper of Allah (Sura 2:127, 133; 4:163; 6:87; 14:39; 19:54). It was only after Muhammad moved to Medina that he discovered that Ishmael was a son of Abraham, and he thereafter linked the two as founders of the Kaaba in Mecca, the destination of the Hajj or sacred pilgrimage (Sura 2:127-129). Another important variation from the biblical presentation is the Qur'anic view that Abraham bound Ishmael, not Isaac, to the altar at Moriah (Sura 37:99-110). Later Islamic tradition relates that after Hagar and Ishmael were expelled by Abraham they wandered in the vicinity of Mecca until they happened upon the spring of Zemzem, which had burst forth from the ground. These refreshing waters from then on provided sustenance to Muslim pilgrims en route to Mecca. These same

sources relate that Ishmael settled in the area of Mecca, married a girl of the Djurhum tribe and learned Arabic from them. Subsequently the northern Arabs, or Musta'riba, were linked with Ishmael as their progenitor.

4. Ishmael and Historical Criticism.
Ishmael and Hagar appear in two narratives: Genesis 16 and Genesis 21:1-21. Source criticism generally describes Genesis 16 as part of the patriarchal history of the Yahwist, with Genesis 16:1b-2, 4-14 joined by a redactor with the Priestly genealogical framework of Genesis 16:1a, 3, and 15-16. Most of Genesis 21:1-21 is assigned to the Elohist, interrupted only by the P interpolation of verses 3-5. Such a reconstruction depends, of course, on the supposition of such sources in the first place, a supposition that lacks any independent and external evidence (Alexander; *see* Source Criticism).

Historically, the argument is made that the narratives in question have limited value in representing historical reality. Ishmael is viewed as the eponymous ancestor of people widely known not only in the OT but in cuneiform literature of the early first millennium. The stories about him are then considered to be etiologies whose purpose is to account for these peoples and their traditions and customs. Again, however, such conclusions have validity only if one rejects the historical credibility of the Genesis stories to begin with and only if one disregards the increasingly available extrabiblical literature attesting to the antiquity of Ishmaelite peoples and, hence, the figure who served as their ancestral source.

See also ABRAHAM; HAGAR; ISAAC; SARAH.

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E. H. Merrill

ISRAELITES

Within the Pentateuch, the "children [sons] of Israel" (*bĕnê-yiśrā'ēl,* usually translated as the gentilic "Israelites") refers generally to the members of the twelve tribes of Israel—as an ethnic designation for the descendants of the eponymous ancestor Israel/*Jacob, or as a national designation anticipating the monarchic period (though during the period of the divided monarchy "Israel" was taken over as the national name of the northern ten tribes in distinction from the southern kingdom of Judah) or as a *covenantal/religious designation for the worshipers of the Israelite God Yahweh or followers of his *law. The designation of "Israelite" explicitly as a gentilic is found only in Leviticus 24:10-11 to designate an ethnically Israelite woman married to an Egyptian man, whose son was found guilty of blasphemy—serving to establish an equal law for those aliens and native-born among the congregation. However, the "children [sons] of Israel" as an ethnic or national identification occurs quite frequently (over five hundred times beyond references to the man, the God of, the land of and the like).

Within Genesis "the sons of Israel" refers, understandably, to the literal sons: the eponymous ancestors of the twelve tribes living as a family in Canaan and then finally in *Egypt (with the exception of Gen 32:32 [MT 32:33], which anticipates the later descendants), while "Israel" itself refers generally to the man himself. Genesis 46:8 and Exodus 1:1 use "sons of Israel" in reference to its genealogical list of seventy direct male descendants of Jacob (excluding wives) who had entered Egypt. After this point the reference is always to the collective descendants enslaved in Egypt (in distinction from the Egyptians) and then delivered from that *slavery to wander in the *wilderness as a congregation.

After the second name change of "Jacob" to "Israel" in Genesis 35, the two names of Jacob and Israel seem to be used interchangeably throughout the OT and are frequently paired in

poetic parallel (e.g., in Gen 34:7; 46:2, 5, 8; 49:2; Ex 1:1; 3:15; 19:3; Num 23:7, 10; 24:5; Deut 33:28; also in 2 Sam 23:1; 2 Kings 17:34; 1 Chron 16:13; plus numerous times in Psalms, Isaiah and elsewhere in the prophets). "Children [sons] of Israel" seems quickly to take over as the preferred name for the people (over 2,200 occurrences to Jacob's 270, the majority of which refer to Jacob the man, though "house of Jacob" comes up regularly), referring collectively to "all Israel" in Joshua, Judges and Samuel in the earliest history of the nation, then subsequently only to the northern kingdom after the split and finally to Judah as the sole remaining remnant of Israel when the northern kingdom is out of the picture.

"Israelite" as the primary designation for the ethnic group, conceived as genealogically connected through the ancestry of Jacob/Israel, is joined in the text by the more generic designation of "[your] brothers" *(ʾāḥ)*, "native" *(ʾezraḥ)* or words related to "people" *(ʿam)* or "companion" *(rēaʿ)*. The Israelites are also designated as the "*people* of [the children/sons of] Israel" or the "house of Israel" (compare "house of Jacob" in poetic parallel). The common usage of "brother" language in legal contexts to indicate Israelites reflects the kinship-based nature of society as well as a self-conception of common ancestry. Another parallel designation is the rather more ambiguous "Hebrew," used as an ethnic designation, though probably originating as the socioeconomic status of a landless "client class" comparable to that of the *gēr* (*see* Alien, Foreign Resident) and only later taking on ethnic overtones (see Milgrom, 2252-53; Cross, 69; Wright, 253-59; Weippert; Loretz). Contrasting designations in the Pentateuch would be "alien," "foreigner," "stranger" (*gēr, nokrî, zār*—especially in legal contexts) or specific foreign people groups such as the Edomites, Moabites, Midianites and the like. It should be noted that within the laws placed at Mount Sinai, beyond the general designation of the collective congregation of the "children [sons] of Israel," a distinction is regularly made between the ethnic Israelite (brother, native, Hebrew, etc.) and the ethnic "alien" living within the congregation or envisioned as later living within the land of Israel.

1. Israel as Eponymous Ancestor
2. Israel as National, Ethnic, Covenant Community
3. Archaeological Considerations

1. Israel as Eponymous Ancestor.

The Israelites ("children [sons] of Israel") are so named in reference to the eponymous ancestor "Israel," who is equated with Jacob the son of *Isaac and grandson of *Abraham, who became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The two names, Jacob and Israel, seem to be used interchangeably in the biblical text of the Pentateuch within all of the traditionally identified sources, in both prose and poetry, and in reference both to the ancestor and to the anticipated nation. Most significantly, they are used as parallels in poetic texts identified by some scholars as the most ancient in the Bible (e.g., among the oracles of *Balaam in Num 23:7, 10, 21, 23; 24:5, 17).

1.1. Derivation of the Name "Israel"—Several Theories. Two accounts in Genesis of the renaming of "Jacob" as "Israel" survive. The first and most memorable comes in a mysterious *dream in Genesis 32, where Jacob wrestles with an angel and seemingly wins. The etymology given there (Gen 32:28 [MT 32:29]) is traditionally interpreted as deriving the new name from a root *śrh* (original *śry*, meaning "to fight, struggle"), with the explanation that he "struggled with God" (NIV) and overcame. This interpretation presents an apparent difficulty in that it suggests *opposition* between God and Jacob, his chosen servant, with the two struggling *against* each other. A somewhat more positive interpretation using the same derivation would be that "he struggled with [the help of] God," but the wrestling scene unequivocally presents an image of opposition rather than support. From a theological perspective, conflict with God, and the necessity of ultimately submitting to him, is part of the human condition and integral to the gospel. Still, from a historical perspective, this is a rather puzzling image to be chosen to represent the relationship of the honored ancestor with his God, let alone to represent a nation.

The second, somewhat less colorful renaming account is found in Genesis 35:10. This account leaves out the negative connotations of the struggle and associated *śrh/śry* etymology. Instead, it is preceded by Jacob's building of an *altar upon his return to Bethel and is directly followed by a statement of covenant renewal couched in the terms of divine *blessing from Genesis to "be fruitful and multiply." The new name is not actually used in the text for the man until after this point, being found only in two in-

stances where it indicates the future nation (Gen 32:32; 34:7).

Much debate continues as to the proper translation of the name and its real meaning. G. V. Wigram translates the Genesis 32 etymology, "as a prince you have power with God," presumably from the Hebrew root *śrh* II ("rule[?]," comparable to *śrr*, "to rule over or have power as a prince," denominative of *śar* ["prince"]; cf. Hos 12:3 [MT 12:4]: "by his strength he had power [was a prince] with God"). BDB lists "Israel" under the root *śrh* I (975a), "persist, persevere," citing an Arabic cognate and noting Hosea 12:4 (MT 12:5), where the construction is made as if from a nonexistent root *śûr*. The name then translates as "El persists" or, in the jussive, "Let El persist" (noting the usual translation as "Let El contend"), with the explanation translated as "he persevered with God." The literature (as summarized by Danell) most often reconstructs an original root *śry*, interpreted by various scholars as meaning "to fight," "to persevere," "to shine" and "to rule, dominate." Two more proposals suggest deriving the name from *y/wśr*, "to heal" (Albright), or "to cut or judge" (Coote). Yet another proposal derives the name from *ʾṯr* ("happy, blessed"; Proto-Semitic *ṯ* corresponds to Hebrew *š*), connecting it with the divine name "Asher" (consort of the goddess Asherah) to mean "Asher is God" (Naor, followed by Haldar). Another proposal is that of E. Sachsse (1914) for *yšr* ("be just, right").

For these last two proposals, the chief difficulty is explaining the shift from *š* to *ś*, which, although graphically identical in Hebrew prior to Masoretic writing conventions, would certainly have been heard and understood differently. The spelling of "Israel" in the Merneptah Stela (Stager, 1985b) with *s* rather than *š* is compelling, though not absolutely conclusive since Egyptian inscriptions do not always represent semitic sibilants accurately in the transliteration of foreign names (e.g., the sibilant in Jerusalem is transliterated as *š* in the Execration Texts but as *s* in the Amarna Letters, as observed by B. Mazar, 2.698). The arguments of E. Sachsse and E. Naor for a dialectical variation as suggested by the *šibbōlet-sibbōlet* incident in Judges 12:6 are not convincing. Albright's arguments for a *yod/waw*-sibilant-*resh* root, based on the Assyrian inscription of Shalmaneser III (Albright 1927, 166-67), make the *yšr* derivation more likely than an *ʾṯr (ʾšr)* derivation.

F. K. Wong bolsters Sachsse's proposal with the arguments of Albright and then uses a political-historical argument for a transition in interpretation of the name to explain the shift from an original *šin* to the *śin* preserved in the Masoretic tradition. In Wong's theory the personal name granted to Jacob (and later the national name) originally derived from the root *yšr* ("be just, right"), recorded by the original author in the Piel stem as *yišširʾil* ("El has made right," "El has made righteous" or "El has justified"; this is a hypothetical, reconstructed D-stem form in early Hebrew, based on the work of Huehnergard). In a purely consonantal script, the etymological explanation of Genesis 32:28 would have been written as

kyšrtʿmʾlhm Because you are right with God
wʿmʾnšmwtkl With men you will prevail.

This meaning fits well with the narrative of Jacob's reconciliation with his brother, characterizing a fundamental change in the pattern of Jacob's life and his relationship with God. Wong theorizes that following the division of the nation, and the subsequent use of this name by the northern kingdom with Jeroboam's rival sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan, there was an historical transformation of the interpretation of this name from the positive connotations of "El has made right" to the negative connotations of one who "strives against God." This suggestion highlights parallel designations of the people of Israel in early texts such as Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26 and Isaiah 44:2 as Jeshurun (*yĕšurûn*, "righteous ones"), Balaam's oracle in Numbers 23:10 (with *yāšār* [righteous] parallel to "Israel") and references to the "Book of Jashar" in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18. Yahweh is also designated as *Yāšār* (Righteous One), and Isaiah 40:4 also uses the roots *yšr* and *ʿqb* as a contrasting pair. Finally, within the context of the renaming story (Gen 32), a *yšr* root makes a suitable contrast to the prior Jacob as "deceiver" or "usurper," eliminating the puzzling derogatory connotation of the new name.

By explaining that this derogatory understanding of the name (surprising for the divinely assigned name of the revered ancestor or of God's "chosen" people) was the result of a mistaken (or perhaps prophetically purposeful) Masoretic pointing of the name spurred by polemic against the northern kingdom that had

adopted it, Wong offers an intriguing solution to an old problem. The resultant theological implications of a name change from "He deceives/supplants" to "God has made right" are profound. The proposed *yśr* derivation does not fit the narrative context as it stands in Genesis 32:22-32, however, where the new name is given at the conclusion of a wrestling match in which Jacob was injured. Moreover the passage itself suggests a laudatory connotation for the name as received (Gen 32:28), praising Jacob's perseverance during difficult, though at times self-imposed, circumstances.

1.2. Theological Significance of the Jacob-Israel Name Change. Within the narrative of Genesis, the renaming of Jacob seems clearly intended as an act of redemption, parallel to God's forgiving treatment of *Adam, *Eve and *Cain, where the sinner is punished (conventionally by *exile) yet continues to be loved and protected. The identity of "Jacob" as a "deceiver" was earned in his interaction with his older twin brother, *Esau, first by tricking him out of his birthright and then by stealing his father's blessing. The power struggle here, arising out of sibling rivalry, had potentially disastrous consequences, as witnessed by the Cain and Abel conflict. Esau was provoked to the point of murderousness, forcing Jacob to flee in fear for his life. The immediate result was Jacob's forced exile from the Promised *Land (a traditional punishment in the Bible), and the long-term result was the establishment of a pattern of deception in Jacob's life that was repaid to him sevenfold (as he was himself deceived by his father-in-law Laban in regard to his wedding and his wages, by his favorite wife Rachel's stealing the household gods, by *Simeon and *Levi in the Shechem debacle, by *Reuben in unlawfully taking his father's concubine Bilhah [Gen 35:22], by his sons in regard to *Joseph's faked death and enslavement, and by Joseph in his false accusation of *Benjamin). Ironically, the deceit seems to have worked to fulfill God's purposes as revealed in the prophecy to Rebekah (possibly her motive for intervening to plan the deceit with him). Still, this derogatory understanding of Jacob's name is unexpected for a "chosen" ancestral protagonist or, for that matter, as a name that a mother would assign to her newborn child. The name must surely represent a reflection on these later events of his life, from which the renaming was clearly *intended* to signal a change. However the new name is interpreted, it must be understood as having a positive connotation.

The change of Jacob's name coming at the point of reuniting with his wronged and potentially murderous "unchosen" twin brother Esau signals a reconciliation from a relationship of deceit to one that God has restored and "made right." The text here intentionally builds up the tension with expectations of well-deserved retribution (e.g., Gen 32:6-11), climaxing with the wrestling episode in Genesis 32:24-32. Reconciliation with Esau was rendered possible only by God's transformation of Jacob's heart and character, as symbolized by the change in name. Instead of grasping after power not his own, he learned to grasp after God himself in humble determination to know God's own name and character. Thus his own name and character were transformed.

Jacob's subsequent humble approach to his brother, bowing down and declaring himself to be Esau's servant, seems a reverse fulfillment of both the prophecy to Rebekah (Gen 25:23) and the blessing of Isaac (Gen 27:29), since we see that it was Jacob who, out of fear of his brother, was "exiled" from the land of promise and enslaved by his father-in-law, and Jacob who now bowed down as a servant (Gen 33:3-11). Yet by leaving his habits of self-interested grasping behind, he was able to realize God's fulfillment, and the reconciliation was sealed by Esau's unexpected generosity of forgiveness (Gen 33:4, 9; though still treated with some suspicion by Jacob in Gen 33:10-17, as similarly between Joseph and his brothers in Egypt in Gen 50:15-21). Thus Jacob's change of name signaled a break in the pattern previously established in his life, ultimately allowing God's plans to be fulfilled.

2. Israel as National, Ethnic, Covenant Community.

The "national" history of the Israelites cannot be said to have begun until the Iron Age, when they gained sovereignty over a territory substantial enough to act as a "nation." However, in their own self-understanding the Israelites traced themselves back through a long period of enslavement to an individual family, with the later tribal groupings explained as descending from brothers, the sons of a single father (through four mothers). The catalyzing event for their emergence into nationhood in this self-conception was the *exodus from Egypt, when

Yahweh their God miraculously freed them from oppressive slavery in Egypt and brought them into the land of Canaan that had been promised to their forefathers.

Thus, at its base, the term *Israelite* must be acknowledged as conceiving an ethnic group, bonded by *genealogical ties of kinship, traditionally presented as twelve tribes descending from the twelve sons of Israel (but without a clear one-to-one correspondence, as Joseph's sons count for two of these tribes, while the descendants of *Levi are not allotted a separate territory of their own and thus are not counted among the "tribes," revealing a symbolic intentionality in the number). This basic kinship grouping, supplemented by those who joined themselves to it in the exodus, provided the basic structure of Israelite society.

Its use in the Pentateuch also anticipates the postconquest establishment of a nation, such that "Israelite" quickly became a national designation, clearly intended to indicate the people as a whole—a unity of the original twelve tribes—acting as a more-or-less-unified political entity (somewhat loosely allied for mutual defense) within the borders of its Promised Land. The careful arrangement of the tribes within the camp in the wilderness anticipated their distinct existence later within the land.

This national conception of what it meant to be "Israelite" is vastly overshadowed in the Pentateuch by the religious conception of Israel as a covenant people bound together by mutual loyalty to a single God—Yahweh—as his special, "chosen" inheritance, and by mutual obligations of upholding the covenant law. As can easily be seen from the stories of sibling rivalry in Genesis, incessant complaining in the wilderness (*see* Murmuring), and intertribal squabbling in Judges, kinship ties were not enough to hold them together as a nation. It was their mutual worship of the one God Yahweh, the "God of the fathers," that supplied their strongest unifying strand. "Israelites" are conceived ultimately as a religiously based covenant community, bound together chiefly by a voluntary oath of loyalty to Yahweh and his covenant as his chosen people. Anyone straying from this covenant was to be excised from the community.

Along with that religious conception, then, was founded a more concrete conception of the Israelites as a people bound by covenantal *law: defining themselves as "brothers" and "natives" over against "foreigners," "strangers" and "aliens"; bound in community by the strictures of the law that governed all aspects of life (food, work, worship, sexuality); shown physically in their very bodies by rites of *circumcision; and demonstrated daily and weekly by the practice of *sabbath and by dietary restrictions as well as by distinctive traditions of worship and ideals of justice (such as political egalitarianism). More than anything else in the Pentateuch, it is probably obedience to the law that most properly defines *Israelite.*

3. Archaeological Considerations.

That "Israelites" existed as a people by about 1200 B.C. can hardly be disputed in view of their attestation as such in the Merneptah Stela just prior to that date, along with several Canaanite cities of the time (including Ashkelon, the corresponding pictorial representation of which clearly shows a Canaanite rather than a Philistine population), as noted by Stager (1985b).

The *archaeology of Syria-Palestine reveals a significantly new settlement pattern at the beginning of the Iron Age (c. 1200 B.C., to which most scholars would date the Israelite conquest or settlement). As argued by L. Stager (1985a), the significant numbers of new settlements appearing in the central hill country at the beginning of the Iron Age are greater than can be accounted for by natural population growth, strongly indicating the immigration of a new population group into the area at this point. Based on the later emergence of the Israelite nation with power centers in precisely these areas, combined with the biblical record, it seems reasonable to associate these new settlements with the arrival of the Israelites.

It is difficult, however, to distinguish Israelite ethnicity based on archaeological artifacts, as the cultural remains of these new Israelite settlements appear identical to (if somewhat cruder than) those of the Canaanites that preceded them. Pottery and architecture generally associated with Israelite settlements seem basically derivative of Canaanite forms, if perhaps more limited in their variety. This general indistinguishability of Israelite cultural remains from Canaanite has given rise to several alternative theories of Israel's establishment as a nation in the land. They provide alternatives to the biblical "conquest" model and are much debated. Some see Israel as having originated either

among nomadic elements in Syria-Palestine that for some reason adopted a more settled way of life at the beginning of the Iron Age, or else among a disenfranchised, landless peasant population of Canaan that revolted against the societal structure of the Canaanite city-state and broke off to establish their own poor settlements in the less fruitful central hill country (hence the radical egalitarianism of biblical law). While some elements of these theories may be useful in explaining some facets of the emerging Israelite culture, the Israelite self-understanding of who they were and where they came from explains much more and would be extremely difficult to relegate to a fictive creation.

The biblical conception of the Israelites is that they began as a small family band of immigrants from *Ur in Mesopotamia toward the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (thus probably inheriting a number of Mesopotamian legal and literary traditions from the Ur III dynasty). They settled as "resident aliens" in Canaan and were subsequently enslaved in Egypt as refugees from famine. It was in Egypt that they grew to national proportions before their miraculous escape. They then had to endure a generation of harsh nomadism in the desert before successfully taking over a substantial territory among the Canaanites. The biblical text does give some indication that the Israelite community emerged as a "mixed multitude," incorporating a number of diverse elements within it from the beginning (including Canaanite, Midianite and Egyptian). Even within this scenario of diversity, however, retention in the national literature and self-understanding of this unusually inspiring story of the core family as applied to the whole, along with the basic cultural assimilation of their subsistence economy, should not be surprising.

As argued by Stager, a few distinctive elements in Israel's material culture may be found. Statistical survey studies of faunal remains indicate a mysterious lack of pig bones in Israelite settlements as compared to Philistine or Canaanite settlements, despite an ideal habitat and an abundance of acorns for fodder in the hill country. This surprising absence may arguably be attributable to the Israelite dietary taboo against pork (*see* Foods, Clean and Unclean). Similarly, a lack of male divine figurines in Israelite cultic settings as compared with non-Israelite shrines may reflect the Israelite aniconic tradition as found in the Ten Commandments (*see* Decalogue), prohibiting images of the (male) deity. For the later monarchic period, the discovery of four-horned *altars at outlying locations, having been intentionally dismantled at a time corresponding to religious reforms seeking to centralize the cult in Jerusalem, may be clearly identified within the evolving ideological framework of Israelite society. The inscriptions of enemies offer occasional outside confirmation of various aspects of Israelite identity as well.

Historically and archaeologically the Israelites were part of a wider phenomenon at the beginning of the Iron Age, namely, the emergence of ethnically based national bodies encompassing blocks of territory that replaced a previous system of separate city-states. The Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Philistines, Phoenicians and Arameans, for example, also emerged as ethnically based nation-states following the same pattern, possibly afforded by the relative weakness of Mesopotamia and Egypt, both of which had lost their dominating power at this point in history.

The picture of Israel in Judges, following the conquest, is one of considerable disunity among several loosely related tribal groups with distinct dialects. It is likely that the encroachment of the Philistines as a constant military and territorial pressure did much to consolidate Israel as a nation by creating a necessity for mutual defense against this sustained threat. The intentional affirmation of genealogical ties as recorded in Genesis, along with their strategic reinforcement by intermarriage and adoption practices designed to consolidate unity and inheritance, then served this political necessity. Yet indications of strife even among these ancestors belie any solid unity—a reality foretold by the family stories of strife among brothers in the Pentateuch.

See also ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; GENEALOGY; JACOB; NATIONS OF CANAAN; NATIONS, TABLE OF; SHEM.

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ISSACHAR

Issachar was the ninth son of *Jacob and the fifth son of Leah (Gen 30:18; 35:23). As is the case with the other sons of Jacob, Issachar died in Egypt and was buried there. Yet Issachar lived on in a significant way through the descendants who bore his name: one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Pentateuch presents the tribe Issachar as a hard-working and loyal group of people worthy of the honor accorded them by later Jewish tradition.

1. Issachar, Son of Jacob
2. Issachar, Tribe of Israel
3. Issachar in Jewish Scholarship

1. Issachar, Son of Jacob.

Little is known of Issachar, the son of Jacob and Leah, and not much more is known about the tribe of Issachar. Even the name Issachar is of uncertain meaning. S. Beyerle unsuccessfully attempts to link the name to an Egyptian deity Sokar, but some scholars think the name reflects a combination of the words *yiśśāʾ śākār*, "he takes wages," or *ʾîš śākār*, "man of wages" (Leah's link in Gen 30:16, 18 is by sound rather than etymology.) Brown, Driver and Briggs note that the name could be derived from *yēš sākār*, "there is recompense," though they regard *ʾîš śākār* as more probable. The name is found at Mari with the meaning "May God be gracious," *yaskur-il* (Strus, 68 n. 32). That derivation suggests an allusion to a day-laborer, a worker, an allusion indicating the character of the tribe.

2. Issachar, Tribe of Israel.

The tribe numbered 54,400 in Numbers 1:29 and 64,300 in Numbers 26:25 (see Historical Criticism §4.2). Issachar took its place on the east side of the *tabernacle (Num 2:3-5). The tribe is mentioned briefly when Israel left Mount Sinai (Num 10:15), when the spies explored Canaan (Num 13:7) and when the boundaries for Canaan were assigned to the tribes (Num 34:26). In Numbers 7:18-23, Issachar is second only to the tribe of *Judah in bringing its offerings for the dedication of the tabernacle. In Deuteronomy 27:12, Issachar is one of the tribes that bless the people of Israel on Mount Gerizim.

2.1. Issachar in the Last Testament of Jacob. Some controversy has surrounded the tribe of Issachar and the varying views of Issachar's relationship with the surrounding Canaanite tribes after the conquest of *Joshua. Most critical scholars think that Genesis 49:14-15 reflects a time when Issachar submitted to *slave labor rather than do the hard work of subjugating the land. The oracle in Genesis 49:14-15 is generally considered one of derision of the freemen who had let themselves be enticed by the fertile plain and had thereby become humiliated as beasts of burden. Noth suggests that in the early days *Zeb-

ulun, *Dan and *Asher (see Judg 5:17) paid for their settlement on territory controlled by Sidon by providing forced labor in the Sidonian ports, while Issachar did the same for Deborah to the south (Noth, 79). These points of view, however, rest largely upon critical presuppositions in the translation of Genesis 49:14-15 and in the reconstruction of the history of Israel.

A letter in the Amarna texts from approximately 1400 B.C., however, speaks of men working at forced labor at Shunem, a town within the territory of Issachar. This lends credence to the commonly accepted viewpoint. R. de Vaux writes, "The eastern part of the plain of Jezreel must therefore have been colonized by groups of people coming from Zebulun, who chose to live as serfs on good land rather than as shepherds or herdsmen in a poorer district" (de Vaux, 664).

There are several things about the customary interpretation, however, that are unsettling. First, the two blessings before Genesis 49:14-15 and the several blessings that follow are positive. The only two clear rebukes in the chapter are in verses 3-4 and 5-7, and they obviously refer to historical events of the past. We would expect another rebuke to do the same, but there is no record of any shameful deed done by Issachar.

Like other verses in the chapter, these verses contain an animal comparison. The positive nature of all the other animal comparisons in Genesis 49 suggests a positive thought here. Verse 15 pictures a strong donkey that has been working. The donkey has been carrying two saddlebags, but it has paused to "rest from exertion."

I. Mendelsohn reflects the common critical viewpoint, taking *lĕmas ʿōbēd* to mean "a slave at forced labor." The phrase *lĕmasʿōbēd* appears in the OT for the first time in Genesis 49:15. In this archaic chapter, the phrase can be taken in an elementary sense to refer to "a body of workers that works the land," that is, a tribe that made the transition from the nomadic existence of the desert to the pastoral existence in Canaan. The meaning "a slave at forced labor" is a later development of the phrase, perhaps occasioned by the entrance into Canaan and the use of that phrase there. The LXX supports the elementary meaning of the phrase, translating, *kai egenēthē anēr geōrgos*, "and he became a farmer" (or "tiller").

This interpretation yields a consistent picture of Issachar, viewing Issachar in a positive sense, thereby allowing verses 14-15 to mesh well with the context. The two verses say that Issachar is a sturdy, hard-working donkey who is resting from his labors. Such will the tribe continue to be in the future.

In verse 15, Issachar sees a beautiful, pleasant land. Part of Issachar's inheritance was to include the fertile plain of Jezreel. "Resting place" *(mĕnūḥâ)* is a term for the settled life in contrast to the nomadic life (see Deut 12:9; Ps 95:11). When Issachar sees how good this inheritance is and how productive the land may become, he will continue his hard-working efforts. Genesis 49:14-15 should thus read, "Issachar is a sturdy donkey lying down between two saddlebags. When he sees how good is a resting-place and how pleasant the land, he will bend his shoulder to bear, and he will become a body of workers that work the land."

The fact that this tribe produced Tola, Deborah and Barak and was praised by Deborah in Judges 5:15 for its part in the battle against Sisera strongly suggests that Issachar did not trade its freedom for peace with the Canaanites.

2.2. Issachar in the Last Testament of Moses. The picture painted in Deuteronomy 33:18-19 includes Zebulun, paired with Issachar, not only because they were both sons of the union of Jacob and Leah, but also because they received their inheritance next to one another in Canaan. Zebulun and Issachar found the trade route that led through the Plain of Jezreel in their backyard and thus were in position to control the trade routes through Israel.

3. Issachar in Jewish Scholarship.

In Jewish scholarship, the proximity of Issachar to Zebulun in the last testament of Jacob (Gen 49:13-15) and the pairing of Issachar and Zebulun in the last testament of Moses (Deut 33:18-19) set up the two tribes as a paradigm for life. Zebulun was the merchant, while Issachar was the scholar who studied the Torah. Zebulun's livelihood made possible Issachar's important work of study, and, according to rabbinic exegesis, Issachar made a more worthy choice.

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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J. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

JACOB

Jacob was the third of the great Hebrew patriarchs and second born of the twins of *Isaac and Rebekah. He is presented as a man who sometimes manifested flashes of great faith and in his later years showed a deep spirituality. But in spite of these excellent qualities Jacob was, in some ways, an unusual hero, for especially in his early life he fluctuated between godliness and worldliness. He was sometimes conniving, as when he deceived his father. He was a crafty opportunist in his dealings with his brother *Esau. He was an embittered and angry father when *Joseph was lost to him. He was a man who was sometimes selfish to the extreme of unethical conduct in some of his dealings with his uncle, Laban. Concerning some of these faults, however, there may have been extenuating circumstances. His twin, Esau, was far more forceful and less interested in spiritual matters than he; Laban was himself a deceitful charlatan; and his mother, Rebekah, may have encouraged him to assert his promised dominance over his brother.

1. Literary Pattern
2. Early Life
3. Jacob in Haran
4. Jacob's Final Years
5. Evaluation of Jacob.

1. Literary Pattern.

The Jacob material consists of a number of biographical episodes that constitute almost all of the "generations *[tôlĕdōt]* of Isaac" (Gen 25:19—35:22). This material is sandwiched between that of *Ishmael (Isaac's elder brother) and Esau (Isaac's elder son), neither of whom was a part of the line of promise. Given the suggestive boundaries, and noting that certain occurrences seem to be closely parallel to one another, it has been proposed that individual events of Jacob's account are unified in the literary pattern of a chiastic structure. The most complete and convincing presentation of this position is the analysis of M. A. Fishbane:

A oracle sought; Rebekah struggles in childbirth; *bĕkōrâ* ("birthright"); birth; themes of strife, deception, infertility (Gen 25:19-34)
  B interlude; strife; deception; *bĕrākâ* ("blessing"); covenant with a foreigner (Gen 26:1-35)
    C deception; *bĕrākâ* stolen; fear of Esau; flight from the land (Gen 27:1—28:9)
      D encounter (verb: *pāgaʿ*) with the divine at a sacred site near border; *bĕrākâ* (Gen 28:10-22)
        E internal cycle opens; arrival; Laban at border; deception; wages (Gen 29:1-35)
          F (Gen 30:1-43)
            Rachel barren; Leah fertile (Gen 30:1-24)
            Rachel fertile; Jacob increases the herds (Gen 30:25-43)
        E' internal cycle closes; departure; Laban at border; deception; wages (Gen 31:1-55)
      D' encounters (verb: *pāgaʿ*) with divine beings at sacred sites near border; *bĕrākâ* (Gen 32:1-32)
    C' deception planned; fear of Esau; *bĕrākâ* gift returned; return to land (Gen 33:1-20)
  B' interlude; strife, deception; covenant with a foreigner (Gen 34:1-31)
A' oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; *bĕrākâ;* death, resolutions (Gen 35:1-22)

This pattern demonstrates skillful literary foreshadowing that builds exquisite dramatic tension. Many of the themes recur, to the delight of the reader. Some of the wordplays give insight into the author's purpose.

2. Early Life.

The material on Jacob's early life is contained in the A and C sections of the chiasm (Gen 25:19-34; 27:1—28:9; see 1 above). Before narrating the episode with Esau, the author recounts three portentous matters: (1) Rebekah was the sister of Laban of Paddan-aram; (2) she was barren; and (3) after Isaac interceded, she conceived twins, whose prenatal struggles caused her considerable difficulty.

Jacob and Esau were born when their parents had been married for twenty years (Gen 25:20); Isaac was sixty years of age at the time (Gen 25:26). The twins were born, probably at Beer-lahai-roi at about 2006 B.C., as an answer to prayer (Gen 25:21). Prenatally they struggled within Rebekah, a harbinger of their struggle throughout their lives and the future history of their respective progenies. In the OT world, the naming of a child was an auspicious occasion. Esau ("hairy") was named because of his appearance, but Jacob's name ("one who takes by the heel" or, by derivation, "one who supplants," similar to the word for "heel") came from his unusual behavior at birth. Jacob and Esau were twins, but there was little resemblance between them. As they grew their differences became manifest, for Jacob chose a quiet, domestic life, staying close to home, probably working closely with the shepherding business. He was "a quiet man, living in tents" and totally unlike his brother, who pursued the perilous work of a hunter (Gen 25:27). Jacob was the favorite of his mother, whereas his father was partial toward Esau.

Under normal circumstances, the firstborn son received certain inheritance rights, including a double portion of the material inheritance, family headship with a special emphasis on spiritual leadership and the father's "deathbed" *blessing. Such customs reflected the practice of the ancient Near Eastern world. For example, the family estate was typically divided into a number of portions equaling the number of sons plus one, and the firstborn son would receive two portions. With regard to leadership of the family, C. F. Keil writes, "With the patriarchs, this chieftainship included rule over the brethren and the entire family [Gen 27:29], and, of even greater significance, the title to the blessing of promise [Gen 27:4, 27-29], which included future possession of Canaan and the covenant fellowship with Jehovah [Gen 28:4]" (Keil, 1.268-69). By actual birth order, Esau was in line for these special privileges of primogeniture, but God gave Rebekah, while she was carrying the twins, a special message indicating, among other things, that "the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen 25:23). Although God's sovereign purpose gave Jacob these "firstborn" privileges, the manner in which Jacob appropriated those advantages is seen by some as devious and conniving, which was demonstrated in two separate events.

2.1. The Birthright. The first occasion of Jacob grasping Esau's firstborn position was in the acquisition of the birthright. The incident occurred one day when Jacob was cooking lentil stew as Esau was returning from a hunting expedition. It should be noted that in the culture of that time, food preparation was done by both men and women. Jacob took advantage of his brother's famished condition and purchased Esau's birthright for a portion of the stew. Although Jacob grasped this opportunity, the narrator comments that "Esau despised his birthright" (Gen 25:34). According to Hebrews 12:16, Esau was a "godless" person, and Malachi 1:2-3 reports that Yahweh loved (had a covenant relationship with) Jacob but hated (had no covenant relationship with) Esau.

2.2. The Blessing. The second occasion of Jacob's devious manner of acquiring his promised rights occurred when his father was 137 years old; this material is presented in chiastic section C (Gen 27:1—28:9; see 1 above). Either Isaac was unaware of the exchange of birthright or did not recognize the transaction as valid, for he offered one of the specific elements of the birthright—the deathbed blessing—to Esau. Isaac commissioned Esau to hunt and prepare venison in order to induce the best possible frame of mind for giving this blessing.

2.2.1. Deception of Isaac. Rebekah overheard her husband's words to Esau. Since such a blessing was considered as binding as a modern legal document would be, she and Jacob acted quickly to procure the blessing for Jacob himself. They deliberately deceived Isaac by Jacob's impersonation of his brother, by direct falsehood and by

subterfuge. The blessing included promises of fertility of the ground, supremacy over other nations, mastery over Esau and his progeny and a special promise that those who blessed Jacob would be blessed, and those who cursed Jacob would be cursed. Understandably, upon learning of the deceit that had been practiced by Jacob, Esau became regretful and vehement against him.

2.2.2. Esau's Response. Esau resolved to kill Jacob at the earliest possible opportunity, but he determined to postpone the murder until after the demise of their father. When Rebekah became aware of Esau's intentions, she advised Jacob to flee to *Haran in Paddan-aram to take refuge with her brother Laban, justifying her counsel by urging Jacob not to marry one of the local Canaanite women, as Esau had done, but to seek a wife among his own people. Endogamy (marrying within a select group) seems to have been the recommended procedure during patriarchal times. Jacob's flight occurred when he was about seventy-seven years of age.

3. Jacob in Haran.

3.1. Jacob's Journey. Jacob would have traveled over the central-ridge route from Beer-sheba through Hebron, through Bethlehem, past Jerusalem, and on through Gibeah, Mizpah and Bethel (also called Luz), where he had a dream of a ladder—more likely a staircase—reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending (Gen 28:10-22). There God promised to Jacob his continuing presence with him. The next morning, Jacob anointed the stone he had used as a headrest to commemorate God's confirmation of the patriarchal *covenant promises to him, which assured Jacob of God's protective presence, and to remind him of certain vows of appreciation (e.g., the tithe of his wealth) that he had made. Jacob's commitment to God was essential at this juncture of his life, for he would soon enter a culture where false deities were worshiped. Following this significant, personal occasion, Jacob renamed the town of Luz, calling it Bethel ("House of God"). This divine encounter is presented in chiastic section D (28:10-22; see 1 above); section D' (Gen 32:1-32) describes another divine encounter. Beyond Bethel, the north-south ridge is interrupted, but the general route continues to Shechem, Tirzah, and Beth-shean, where this local route joins the international highway to Mesopotamia. The entire distance that Jacob would have traveled it is somewhat over four hundred miles, or about twenty days' journey.

3.2. Jacob's Arrival. Arriving at Haran, Jacob met Rachel, Laban's daughter, who was serving as a shepherdess. Since shepherding was the normal domain of men, this probably indicates that Laban had no sons at that point in time. Having given Rachel a kiss of greeting, Jacob assisted her by removing the heavy stone that covered the well. After Jacob introduced himself as a kinsman, Rachel told her father of Jacob's arrival, and Laban welcomed him into his home. Jacob was to spend the next twenty years as part of his uncle's household.

3.3. Jacob's Marriages. After Jacob spent a month in Laban's house, his uncle inquired what wages Jacob needed to be paid. Since Jacob wished to marry Rachel and under normal circumstances a marriage would have included a payment as a sort of "trust fund" to be given to the bride's family by the groom or his family, Jacob requested to marry Rachel in return for seven years' service to Laban. During the wedding ceremony at the close of that period, Laban surreptitiously substituted Leah for Rachel, excusing his behavior on the basis of the custom of the country. In light of Jacob's deceit of his brother and father, it is particularly ironic that his father-in-law cheated him, not just this once, but consistently during the twenty years they lived together.

Laban suggested that, as soon as the seven days of the wedding festivities accompanying his marriage to Leah were fulfilled, Jacob could marry Rachel, on the condition that he work for Laban for an additional seven years. In providing Zilpah as a handmaid for Leah and Bilhah for Rachel, Laban assured that each of his daughters would have a personal servant to assist in the performance of their duties.

3.4. Jacob's Children Born in Haran. During his service to Laban, Jacob fathered a number of children. Leah was the mother of the first four: *Reuben ("See, a Son!"), Simeon ("Heard"), *Levi ("Joined") and *Judah ("Praise"). Because she had not borne children, out of jealousy Rachel presented Bilhah to Jacob for the purpose of having children on her behalf. Bilhah then gave birth to a son whom Rachel named *Dan ("Judge"); Bilhah's second son was *Naphtali ("Wrestling"). Then, entering the spirit of competition, Leah gave her handmaid Zilpah to

Jacob; Zilpah proceeded to bear *Gad ("A Troop") and *Asher ("Blessed"). After the children of the two handmaids were born, Leah gave birth to *Issachar ("Wages") and *Zebulun ("Dwelling"); Leah was also the mother of Dinah ("Judgment"). Following the births of these ten sons and one daughter, God allowed Rachel to have a son, whom she named *Joseph ("Adding"). The end of Jacob's second term of seven years' service to Laban and the end of Rachel's barrenness established her status in Jacob's family, so Jacob felt free to ask Laban's permission to return to Canaan. (Later, during the family's journey back to Canaan, Rachel died as she gave birth to Jacob's twelfth son, *Benjamin ["Son of a Right Hand"].) Apparently Jacob's service to Laban had been a great benefit, for instead of granting his permission for Jacob and his family to leave, Laban persuaded him to remain longer. As it turned out, the arrangement was mutually beneficial, for Jacob was able to establish his own wealth during that time.

3.5. Jacob's Further Service to Laban. During further wage negotiations, Jacob suggested that in return for shepherding Laban's flocks and herds, Jacob's portion would be all of the animals that were not of a solid color. Because Laban knew that animals that were striped, spotted or speckled normally made up only a small proportion of the herd, he was quick to accept Jacob's suggestion. Contracts from that time period suggest that Jacob would have been receiving a far smaller share than was usual for shepherds, for ancient documents show that they sometimes received as much as twenty percent of the new births. The arrangement was already extremely favorable to Laban, but he took a further precaution of removing the variegated animals from the breeding herd and placed them under the care of his own sons. Responding to Laban's duplicity, Jacob, who as a shepherd was familiar with the breeding cycles of his animals, knew that the breeding of robust sheep would produce healthy lambs. N. Sarna suggests that the unusually marked sheep and goats were hybrids demonstrating certain recessive genes, and when Jacob removed these particular animals, the recessive genes had a greater possibility of appearing (Gen 30:40). But Jacob evidently also believed the superstition that using visual aids with the mother could affect the characteristics of the offspring. It would seem that uncle and nephew were each trying to cheat the other. Still, God blessed Laban with great increase of his own flocks and herds (Gen 30:29-30), but God blessed Jacob even more abundantly, and the multicolored animals became particularly plentiful. Jacob's success displeased Laban and his sons greatly, and their attitude toward their kinsman deteriorated further.

At that juncture Jacob, having worked for Laban for an additional six years (making a total of twenty), received special instructions from God that it was time for him to return to Canaan. It is of interest to note that, according to Jacob, God identified himself as "the God of Bethel," reminding Jacob of the vow that he had made in Genesis 28:20-22. Clandestinely, he made plans with his wives, who, because of their father's financial dealings with him, were willing to leave with their husband. It may even have been the case that Laban had adopted Jacob and was planning to disinherit him in favor of his sons who had been born subsequently to the adoption. If this was the case, it was a severe measure indeed! Such an adoption might explain the fact that, unknown to Jacob, Rachel had stolen Laban's household "gods," which may have served to guarantee inheritance rights and may also have been recognized as tangible evidence of Jacob's right to all that he possessed (*see* Idols, Idolatry, Teraphim, Household Gods). Many scholars, however, question this function of the "household gods" *(tĕrāpîm).*

3.6. Jacob's Return to Canaan. To avoid open conflict, Jacob waited until a time when Laban was preoccupied with sheepshearing. After those eventful twenty years, Jacob then gathered his family and his property and set out for Canaan in about 1909 B.C.

Hearing of Jacob's departure three days later, Laban was angry and pursued Jacob's company. Before he overtook Jacob, God appeared to Laban in a dream and warned him not to hinder Jacob's return. Able to move much faster than Jacob's party, Laban overtook him at Mizpah in the region of Gilead, about 275 miles from Haran, suggesting that for his return Jacob had chosen the Kings' Highway running along the western edge of the Transjordanian Plateau. Laban acidly complained to Jacob that he had covertly left Haran, accused him of stealing his household gods and remonstrated with Jacob that the secrecy of the departure had precluded an opportunity to have a farewell celebration, such as was common in that culture. Jacob re-

turned reproach with recrimination as he explained his stealthy departure in terms of lack of trust in his uncle. He vehemently denied the theft of the *tĕrāpîm,* even recommending death if the thief were found in his group. Tricking her father, Rachel sat upon the idols, pleading her monthly cycle as an excuse for not arising in the presence of her father. This excuse may have been accepted partly because, in the ancient world, menstrual blood was often believed to be a haunt for demons.

Laban then almost threateningly declared that Jacob's wives were his daughters, that Jacob's family was his family and that Jacob's wealth was his wealth. This unpleasant meeting ended with both parties agreeing not to intrude on the domain of the other. To witness their agreement, they set up a pillar at Mizpah. On Jacob's part, this represented a pledge that he would take no other wives. The pillar may have also served as a kind of boundary marker between the areas of influence of the two men. They further sealed the agreement with a sacrificial meal (Gen 31:54), heightening the solemnity of the occasion. Then they parted amicably.

3.7. Jacob at Mahanaim.

3.7.1. Jacob's Meeting with Angels. Twenty years earlier, as he was journeying to Haran, Jacob had seen a company of angels in his *dream; now, as he made his return journey, he again saw a company of angels (Gen 32:1). From a literary perspective, this seems to form an inclusio, setting off the Haran experience as a literary unit. Just as the first of these angelic experiences had led Jacob to name the place Bethel, so this second angelic manifestation led him to name the place Mahanaim ("Two Camps").

3.7.2. Jacob's Preparations to Meet Esau. Jacob wished to contact his brother Esau with a report of his own status, so he sent messengers, who continued down the Kings' Highway toward Seir; these messengers returned with the alarming news that Esau and four hundred men were coming to meet him. Fearful, Jacob divided his people and animals into two camps as a precautionary measure, so that in the eventuality of attack one of the camps might escape. This also offers a second etiological explanation of the name Mahanaim. He then sent Esau a generous gift as a peace overture.

3.7.3. Jacob's Encounter with the Angel. Fearing the threat of hostility from Esau, Jacob sent his people and animals to the south side of the Jabbok River while he himself remained on the north side. There Jacob spent an agonizing night of prayer. During this time he experienced a confrontation during which he wrestled with the angel of Yahweh. As they fought, the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated, leaving him to limp. The angel asked for Jacob's name and then changed it to Israel ("Striver with God" or, less likely, "Prince of God"). Jacob then asked that this supernatural being give him his name, but his request was denied. However, he was assured of God's continuing presence with him. Following this remarkable encounter, Jacob named the place, near the fords of the Jabbok, Peniel ("Face of God"), for, he said, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

3.7.4. Jacob's Meeting with Esau. When morning broke, in spite of the assurances provided the previous night, Jacob was still fearful when he saw Esau approaching with his retinue. He divided his own party into three groups, the least expendable accompanied by the handmaids and their children, the next group with Leah and her children, and the most protected with Rachel and Joseph. Jacob went ahead of the groups and upon approaching Esau bowed himself seven times. Bowing was an expression of respect for a superior; repeating it seven times magnified the respect exponentially. Esau received him kindly, embracing him tearfully with no sign of anger or bitterness. Esau offered to return Jacob's gifts, but upon Jacob's urging kept them. Esau implored Jacob to accompany him to Seir, his homeland, but Jacob declined, saying that the weak and young of his party could not keep pace. Esau then offered to leave some of his own men for assistance; Jacob declined this proposal as well. Actually, it seems that Jacob had no intention of going to Seir, for instead of traveling south he changed direction to the west, more or less following the course of the Jabbok to Succoth, near the Jordan River. After fording the Jordan, he took his group northwest up the Wadi Faria to Shechem (identified as Tell Balatah). At Shechem, he purchased property and there built an altar to El-Elohe-Israel (God, the God of Israel).

3.8. The Continuation and Conclusion of Jacob's Journey. In Shechem, Jacob's daughter Dinah was raped by the son of a city leader. Hearing of Dinah's violation, Jacob was strangely reticent. It seems that he was anxious to preserve good relations with his neighbors, perhaps out of fear. When Hamor asked Dinah's hand in marriage,

her brothers responded by insisting that all the men of the city first undergo *circumcision. While the Shechemite men were incapacitated, the brothers wreaked terrible revenge. Jacob was thus rendered *persona non grata* and was commanded by God to go to Bethel. Before leaving, Jacob wished to purify his camp and took all the "foreign gods" and buried them "under the oak that was near Shechem."

At Bethel, God appeared to Jacob and renewed the covenant with him. As Jacob's party traveled from Bethel to Ephrath, Rachel died during the birth of Benjamin. Jacob set up a monument there where he buried his beloved wife. Moving further south he reached Hebron, where his father Isaac still lived. It was during this time of sojourn in Hebron that ten of Jacob's sons sold Joseph to a caravan of traveling merchants, telling their father that Joseph was dead. Jacob was thus devastated by the loss of his favorite son. Shortly after that loss, Isaac died. For the burial, Jacob was joined by his brother Esau.

4. Jacob's Final Years.

4.1. Jacob's Journey to Egypt. Twenty years after his loss of Joseph, the famine that ravaged the land made it necessary for Jacob to send his remaining sons, with the exception of Benjamin, to Egypt to buy grain. They were diligently questioned by the Egyptian in authority, not knowing that he was actually their brother Joseph. During their interview, Joseph asked them specifically about Jacob and Benjamin. Joseph then informed his brothers that they could receive no further sustenance from Egypt unless they were accompanied by Benjamin. Furthermore, Joseph had his servants restore to each of his brothers what had been paid for the grain. Later, when the provisions were exhausted, Jacob again asked his sons to go to Egypt to buy grain. Judah reminded Jacob that they could buy no grain unless Benjamin were with them; finally, yielding to Judah's insistence, Jacob allowed Benjamin to go. Upon their return they discovered Joseph's identity and were sent back to Canaan with an invitation from Joseph for the entire family to come to Egypt. Responding to the news that Joseph was alive and receiving the gifts he had sent, Jacob traveled to Egypt when he was 130 years of age to again see his beloved son Joseph. After being presented before *Pharaoh, Jacob lived in the area of Goshen for seventeen years; these were probably years of joy and fulfillment. He died at the age of 147 (Gen 47:28).

4.2. Jacob's Death. Shortly before his death, Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons and then his own eleven other sons. His body was embalmed, then taken to Canaan for interment in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron. Because he was father of the progenitors of the twelve tribes, Jacob can be considered to be the father of the nation bearing his changed name, Israel.

5. Evaluation of Jacob.

What should the reader make of Jacob? It is clear that Jacob's reputation as a deceiver is corroborated by the biblical account, which raises the issue of how God could use such a one as he. There are very few moral judgments offered in the narrative, so this conclusion must be a theological conclusion. Surely this was a matter of divine grace accepted by one particularly in need of it. Jacob did not deserve these blessings, but God bestowed them.

See also ESAU, EDOMITES; ISAAC; ISRAELITES; JOSEPH.

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JACOB'S LADDER. *See* DREAMS.

JAHWIST. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

JAPHETH. *See* NATIONS, TABLE OF.

JEALOUS GOD. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

JEBUSITES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

J, E, D, P. *See* PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

JETHRO

Jethro, the father-in-law of *Moses mentioned primarily in the book of *Exodus, serves an important literary function in the story of the Israelite *exodus from *Egypt, with respect both to the character development of Moses and also to the story's plot. This article examines the narrative role of the character Jethro within the poetics of the exodus story and addresses some of the historical problems connected with his textual appearances.

1. Narrative Role
2. Historical Problems

1. Narrative Role.

As a character in the developing story of Moses, Jethro is mentioned first in Exodus 2:16-22, although, curiously, not by this name. Various historical problems have been perceived by interpreters over the past century due to this fact; however, it is clear that both naming as a characterization device and the literary principle of characterization in the service of the plot are unmistakably at work. To summarize this section, Moses has recently fled from *Pharaoh's presence in Egypt because his killing of an Egyptian man—seemingly indicative of a concern for justice—has become known by the Egyptian monarch, who now seeks to kill Moses. Moses flees north into Midian, where he encounters another act of injustice at a local well. A group of seven women, he observes, have come and drawn out water for their flocks, poured it into the troughs, but then are driven away by a group of shepherds who hope to quench the thirst of their own flocks with the water that the women have drawn. Moses rises to the occasion and "delivers" them—a microdeliverance that foreshadows the macrodeliverance of the exodus event itself. When the daughters return home early, their father inquires as to why, and they explain the events at the well. He rebukes them for abandoning "the Egyptian man" and sends them out to fetch Moses, who returns with them and is invited to dwell with them more permanently, an offer he accepts without hesitation. The father also gives one of his daughters, Zipporah, to Moses as a wife.

The fabric of Exodus 2:16-22 is woven by interspersing brisk action with dialogue to assist the characterization of its players and their development, and it is clear from a literary standpoint why the character naming occurs as it does. R. Alter and others have utilized the theoretical framework of the "type-scene" for interpreting this episode. This convention emphasizes the repetition of forms and patterns as a conscious device of literary composition. Exodus 2:16-22 is designated, then, a betrothal type-scene, similar to Genesis 24 (*Isaac and Rebekah) and Genesis 29 (*Jacob and Rachel).

Jethro is named initially in Exodus 2:16 as "the priest of Midian," a character description that evokes status and a strongly religious role in the social hierarchy of Midian, which highlights him at the beginning as a person of central importance to the story. Not only is he the *priest, but one with *seven* daughters! His significance is further emphasized by the fact that he is properly named Reuel—meaning "friend of God"—in Exodus 2:18, which provides a sharp contrast to the oppressive, anticreational bent of the Pharaoh who has just been described as seeking to kill Moses (Ex 2:15). The hospitality of the priest toward Moses the outsider not only contrasts with Pharaoh and his banishment of Moses from Egypt but also serves to illustrate the im-

pending legal concern for upholding the cause of those on the margins of Israelite society, soon to be emphasized in the *book of the covenant.

These naming descriptives reinforce the symbolic geography of the exodus story thus far, reflecting how Moses has gone from a negative to a more positive topography in terms of the receptivity and support that is accorded him in Midian as compared to Egypt. Geographically speaking, this pericope also facilitates the relocation of Moses to Midian, the place where one of the foundational *theophanies of the OT occurs, along with his *prophetic call that sets the narrative fully in motion toward eventual resolution of the plot and its growing conflict.

Attempting to trace the history of the tradition, G. W. Coats, in a speculative reconstruction, considers the origin of the tradition that associates Moses with Midian to lie in the marriage story. Behind the present plot structure of Exodus 2:11-22, says Coats, is an older kernel of tradition about marriage, but its primary focus is between Moses and his Midianite father-in-law, which, along with Exodus 18:1-27, was "designed, at least in part, to justify a positive relationship between at least a portion of Israel and her traditional enemy" (Coats, 10). However the history of this tradition has contributed to its present shape, it is clear that the priest of Midian plays a significant role in the life of Moses within it.

Although he is not called Jethro in Exodus 2:16-22, several subsequent verses refer to him by this name, some identifying him clearly as the father-in-law of Moses (e.g., Ex 3:1; 4:18 [2x; the first occurrence in Ex 4:18 calls him Jeter, either an error or a variation on his name and certainly not an unknown name throughout the Hebrew Bible]).

It is somewhat difficult to itemize and pinpoint specific character types who are presented within such a stock literary form. The shepherds are easily recognizable as *agents* who provide conflict in the microplot of this episode, which Moses resolves as a heroic figure. Although the story focuses mainly upon the priest of Midian, supported by the fact that the female characters—his daughters—are named with reference to him, both his and his daughters' interests remain with "the Egyptian man." The daughters should be viewed as *agents* (along with the shepherds) who enable Moses to meet Reuel and find a wife as a development of the domestic aspect of Moses' character. Reuel the priest is a *type*, manifesting parental concern and social propriety. As with the previous section (Ex 2:11-15), the indeterminacy fostered in the narrative toward the character of Moses reveals him to be a *round* character. His unpredictability is evident alongside his ambiguity, and the reader must exert special effort once again to perceive his nature and course of action. For example, the past act of his murdering the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12 contributes suspense to the reader's expectations of how Moses will deal with the shepherds of the present episode.

The second primary section in which Jethro occurs is the two episodes of Exodus 18:1-12 and 13-27, where the formerly called Reuel is introduced as "Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses" (Ex 18:1). In the first episode, Jethro, having heard of Yahweh's great deeds through the plagues and marvelous act of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, comes with Zipporah and her two sons Gershom and Eliezer to meet Moses in the wilderness. This is the first we have heard of Moses' sending her away subsequent to his earlier return to Egypt from Midian and also our first introduction to his son Eliezer (Gershom was introduced in Ex 2:22, with the etiology of his name summarizing Moses' experience between Egypt and Midian). Moses and Jethro go into a tent, where Moses recounts Yahweh's mighty acts over the journey from the plagues to the exodus, and Jethro offers up a confession and consequent sacrifice that sounds as though he has become a new convert to Yahwism (although some scholars speculate that this passage represents the initiation of *Aaron and the elders into the pre-Mosaic cult of Yahweh). His confession, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods" (Ex 18:11), maintains the theme of knowledge that has been unfolding throughout the Exodus narrative, reinforced with the twofold intent of the plagues and exodus from Egypt that Israel would know Yahweh more intimately (e.g., Ex 6:7; 10:2; 16:6, 12) and that the Egyptians would know—as a form of *recognition*—that there is no other god like Yahweh in all the earth (cf. Ex 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 14:4, 18), in response to Pharaoh's preliminary question, "Who is the LORD . . . ?" (Ex 5:2).

The second episode (Ex 18:13-27) shows Moses' father-in-law contributing to his leadership success by initiating the principle of delegation into the Israelite administration of justice (*see* Leadership, Elders). Moses, potentially wear-

ing himself out by judging cases of civic dispute from morning until evening, is shown by Jethro how to choose respectable men of integrity and to teach them principles of jurisprudence in order for them to be able to deliver justice to the people. With this new system, Moses would need only to judge the most important cases, which would not only prevent him from getting burned out but would also reduce the grumbling of the people, who, prior to this were having to stand around for much of the day until their turns came up. Here the priest of Midian is named in relation to Moses, called his "father-in-law" (Ex 18:14, 15, 17, 24, 27).

2. Historical Problems.

Although these represent most of the OT appearances of Moses' father-in-law, he is also mentioned elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible with references that are not without difficulty. For example, as we have seen, the "priest of Midian" of Exodus 2:16 is called Reuel in Exodus 2:18 but referred to as Jethro in Exodus 18:1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12. In addition, in Judges 4:11 mention is made of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses. Cumulatively, not only is Moses' father-in-law given the three names of Reuel, Jethro and Hobab, but the latter does not align with Numbers 10:29, which describes Hobab as the *son* of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law. Different proposals have been presented to solve this dilemma, from *source-critical solutions (Jethro = E; Reuel/Hobab = J), to the suggestion that a misreading of the Numbers passage may have influenced the identification of Jethro as Hobab in Judges, to the proposition that we may be missing fine distinctions between personal and clan names. This latter perspective was advanced by W. F. Albright, who concluded that Reuel was a clan name and Jethro his proper name, with the seeming reference to the same person in Numbers 10:29-32 attributed by him to a misvocalization in the Hebrew text (Albright read *ḥōtēn* as "son-in-law" of Moses instead of "father-in-law"; others read "brother-in-law").

The introduction of Yahwism to the Hebrews has been connected with Jethro and Midian in the so-called Kenite hypothesis. This perspective suggests that Yahweh, the tribal god of the Midianites or Kenites (a group of metalworkers), was introduced to the Israelites by Jethro his priest (Moses' father-in-law is given Kenite roots in Judg 1:16 and 4:11). This hypothesis, however, has received little sustained support.

In summary, Jethro manifests a positive character in the unfolding biography of Moses and the narrative of the Israelite exodus out of Egypt. He brought stability to the individual Moses and facilitated a streamlined reorganization that affected the collective Israelite community on their journey to the Promised *Land.

See also LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; MOSES.

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JOSEPH

The consideration of the man Joseph is inextricably bound into the story of which he is the central character, and which occurs in the last patriarchal section of Genesis (Gen 37—50). The content and features of this story will be summarized before considering the man himself and the clans, Ephraim and Manasseh, that sprang from him.

1. The Joseph Story (Genesis 37; 39—48)
2. The Man Joseph
3. The Joseph Clans

1. The Joseph Story (Genesis 37; 39—48)

1.1. Introduction: The Evidence of Artistry in the Story.

1.1.1. The Narrative as a Whole. This story reflects a high degree of craftsmanship by the narrator. Whatever the origin of the story, it is well told and tooled, a far cry from some naive preconceptions of "primitive literature."

Coming at the end of Genesis (Gen 37—50), the Joseph story and accompanying material is a bridge between the patriarchal narratives and the accounts of the *exodus and *wilderness wanderings. The stories of *Abraham, *Isaac and *Jacob form the family history background

of all that follows. The stories grow in complication and intrigue through three generations, with Jacob at once the inheritor of all that precedes, the hero and the antihero. Then, what could be called the crime of the century is perpetrated within the family itself. The old man Jacob, who had deceived his father in his youth and thus imperiled the family unity, is now himself cruelly deceived. Jacob has a precocious young son of seventeen, one of the two sons of his favorite wife Rachel. Physically handsome and intellectually gifted, Joseph is a *born leader* (Lowenthal's 1973 brilliant conjecture for *ben zĕqūnîm* in Gen 37:3). Jacob makes for him a special coat (possibly a coat with sleeves or at least a coat of the sort worn only by supervisors), popularized by Luther as "a coat of many colors." To Jacob's open favoritism of his son, further fuel is added to the fires of sibling jealousy by Joseph's recounting to his brothers—and even in the presence of his father—his outrageous dreams of lordship and supremacy. Jealousy boils over into violence when the brothers catch Joseph alone in the open country. At first planning to murder him on the spot, the brothers are deterred by *Reuben. Finally, at *Judah's suggestion they sell him into slavery in Egypt. All that remains to be arranged is the coverup, and this is achieved by tearing Joseph's coat, staining it with goat's blood and showing it to Jacob with the query "Is this your son's cloak?" Jacob is devastated on seeing the torn and bloody remnant of the cloak, and the brothers are saddled with a long-term guilt complex.

Thus, in Genesis 37 occurs what can properly be called the inciting event (narrative template, Longacre 1996) of the story. In two different ways, Genesis 37 is treated as something special: (1) in regard to special internal marking; and (2) in regard to being contextually set apart by the intrusion of the material found in Genesis 38.

Genesis 37, itself a narrative, has its own template with Joseph's telling of his *dreams (Gen 37:5-11) as the inciting event of the embedded narrative. This inciting event is framed by references to the brothers' hatred and jealousy in Genesis 37:3-5, 11. In verses 3-4 the all-important prop, the special cloak, is introduced in a special Hebrew construction, the *waw*-consecutive with the perfect *(wqtl)* in the phrase *wĕʿāśâ lô kĕtōnet passîm:* "And he made him a special cloak." The *wqtl* form (Longacre 1994, 71-84), when used as an isolated occurrence in narrative, marks something pivotal or climactic; here the *wqtl* form, used to refer to the making of the cloak, tags this event as fateful in terms of what follows. The immediate result, recorded in verse 4, is: "When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."

Genesis 37:11, which follows the recitation of the dreams, tells us "His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the thing in mind." The passage then reports that Joseph's father, Jacob, sent him to Shechem to check up on his brothers and the flocks in their charge. Not finding them at Shechem, Joseph was directed by a stranger to Dothan. The next two incidents are told in a remarkably parallel fashion, which stylistically befits the climax of the account of the inciting event of the main story. In Genesis 37:18-24, the brothers sight Joseph coming in the distance, sit down and conspire to take his life, and then act out their intentions when he arrives on the spot. They seize him and strip from him the hated cloak. Deterred from killing him by Reuben, they throw him into an empty cistern. Here some fine details are added, namely, the conversation of the brothers and the explanation that "the pit was empty; there was no water in it." In quite parallel fashion the next episode records that the brothers sighted a caravan, sat down to discuss the possibility of selling Joseph as a slave and carried out this intention when the caravan arrived on the spot.

Besides this parallelism between episodes, several further special features mark this last episode of the embedded narrative: (1) the careful description of the caravan bound from Gilead to Egypt with a description of its merchandise; (2) the dual identification of the traders as first Ishmaelites (referring to lifestyle, as in Judg 8:24), and then Midianites (referring to ethnic group); and (3) actually pulling Joseph up from the pit and selling him. The latter is reported in three clauses in verse 28, employing the proper name Joseph three times:

> And they pulled up and raised Joseph from the pit,
> and they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver,
> and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

It is clearly beyond the needs of normal participant reference to use the proper name three times in these three clauses. The narrator is certainly employing special rhetorical marking

here. The heinousness and tragedy of the event is marked by the threefold repetition of the name, as if telling us "Now, mind you, this is happening to Joseph, Jacob's favorite son." Or to use a different figure, the threefold occurrence is like the tolling of a bell, and for whom does the bell toll but for Joseph!

The inciting event, embodied in Genesis 37, is set off from the rest of the story by the intervening story of Judah and *Tamar in Genesis 38. What person, reading the story for the first time, is not at least mildly outraged by the intrusion? As we shall see below, the matters relating to Joseph constitute but one strand of the "life and times of Jacob" *(tōlĕdôt ya'ăqōb)*, the other strand of which is the broader concerns of the family. The material relating to Judah and Tamar is certainly relevant to this second strand, but of greater import is the insertion of this further material precisely at this point. Why here and not elsewhere? Actually, the suspension of the story, awaiting its resumption in Genesis 39, is a further manifestation of the narrator's art: the inciting event is recounted, then the story is broken off much as in a contemporary television series (cf. Longacre 1995).

1.1.2. Peak and Closure Phenomena. In the Joseph story the various episodes consist of embedded discourses, most of which have their own peaks and often have noteworthy closure phenomena as well. The inciting event (Gen 37), in addition to the peak phenomena described above, has a chiastic paragraph as its closure (Gen 37:34-35), with verse 36 being mainly a link looking forward to the resumption of the story in Genesis 39. Literally translated, Genesis 37:34-35 reads:

A And Jacob *tore his clothes.*
  And *he put sackcloth* on his loins.
  B And *he mourned* for his son many days.
    C And all his sons and daughters *rose up* to *comfort* him.
    C' And he *refused* to be *comforted.*
  B' And he *said,* "I will go down to my son *mourning* to Sheol."
A' And his father *bewailed* him.

In episode 2 of the story, Joseph's rise to prominence in Potiphar's house, we find an episode structured as a single paragraph. It reaches a paragraph climax (similar to a discourse peak) in Genesis 39:5-6a. To begin, we note that the first part of verse 5 contains an unusually fulsome back reference to the preceding verses: "And it happened that from when he appointed him [Joseph] over all his house and over all that was to him." Such a long and explicit back reference to preceding material would more likely be paragraph- or even episode-initial; here it marks paragraph climax. The verse continues: "Yahweh blessed the house of the Egyptian on account of Joseph." We now encounter the same lexical material paraphrased with the verb "bless" nominalized: "And the blessing of Yahweh was to him in all that he had in house and field." Genesis 39:6a proceeds to reiterate Potiphar's giving Joseph oversight over everything: "And he abandoned all that was to him in the hand of Joseph, and he didn't keep account of anything except the bread that he ate." Closure of this episode in Genesis 39:6b is unrelated to the preceding material and constitutes an ominous link to what follows in the next episode: "Now Joseph was shapely of form and fair of face."

Episode 3 of the story, Joseph's degradation (Gen 39:7-23), portrays a lively fracas between Potiphar's wife and Joseph as she tries to persuade him to lie with her. Finally, on her grabbing on to his clothing, he leaves the clothing in her hand and runs outside (Gen 39:12). The next verse recapitulates this as "When she saw that he had abandoned his clothing in her hand and had run outside," and then records her crying out and throwing a scene in which she accuses Joseph of attempted rape. She tells her story to the men of the house, including the crucial fact that Joseph abandoned his garment in her hand and ran outside. When Potiphar arrives home, she gives him the same story culminating with the same reference to the apparently incriminating fact that Joseph left his clothing and ran away. In this way, by multiple repetition, the high point of the story is marked. The closure of this episode is remarkably parallel to the recounting of Joseph's rise to prominence in Potiphar's house; just as Joseph had gone to the top in Potiphar's estate, he now rises to the position of first trustee in the jail, and everything prospers under his management (Gen 39:20b-23).

While episode 4, Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of the two courtiers (Gen 40), has no special features of peak marking or closure, episode 5, Joseph's vaulting to power as grand vizier of Egypt (Gen 41), lacks nothing in the use of dramatic and rhetorical devices both in regard to peak and closure. The narrator begins by recounting Pharaoh's dreams. The account starts

with: "And it happened at the end of two full years, that also *Pharaoh* had dreams." The conjunction before the proper name Pharaoh implies that Pharaoh is now having dreams; it's finally his turn after the dreams of Joseph himself and then the courtiers. The narrator recounts Pharaoh's dreams and the fact that he could not find anyone to interpret them. The courtier then remembers that "a Hebrew lad, a slave of Potiphar's" had interpreted correctly the dreams that he and the chief baker had experienced in prison. So then in six short successive clauses (Gen 41:14) we are told how Joseph was quickly readied to appear before Pharaoh. Then Joseph stands before the king of Egypt, and after the briefest of greetings Pharaoh recounts his dreams (Gen 41:17-24)—adding in a few details of his own that weren't mentioned by the narrator.

Joseph's reply (Gen 41:25-36) has three points: the meaning of the dream; a prophecy that seven years of plenty are coming soon to be followed by seven years of famine; and a suggestion to Pharaoh that he initiate a grain conservation and storage program under the hands of competent men. Pharaoh decides that Joseph is the man to head up such a program. It is noteworthy that Joseph in his speech before Pharaoh strongly emphasizes divine providence: God has been merciful to Pharaoh and to Egypt in giving them advance warning of the coming hard times. After discussion with his courtiers and the announcement of intent to Joseph (Gen 41:37-40), another succession of action clauses follows (Gen 41:41-43), as Joseph is installed in his new position with appropriate powers and is declared to be second only to Pharaoh himself. Joseph is given an Egyptian name and an Egyptian wife and goes out from Pharaoh's presence as lord of Egypt, to embark immediately on his program.

It is significant that the two arcs of the action peak—preparation to see Pharaoh, and the installation ceremony—bracket a didactic peak (Joseph's speech) that presents well the theme of divine providence. The combination of action peak and didactic peak makes the whole section the climax of the story. This passage is followed by three postpeak episodes of the embedded discourse that constitutes the section. The first postpeak episode (Gen 41:46-49) pictures Joseph traveling around Egypt, storing the grain of the countryside in its main cities, and "heaping up grain like the sand of the sea" (Gen 41:49). The second postpeak episode records the birth of Joseph's two sons.

The last postpeak episode (Gen 41:54b-57) of this embedded discourse sketches the onset of the famine in a chiastic paragraph:

A And there was famine in *all the lands,* but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.
B And all the *land of Egypt hungered.*
C And the *people* cried out to Pharaoh for *bread.*
D And Pharaoh said to all Egypt, "Go to *Joseph;* whatever he says to you, do it."
(A' And the famine was on all the face of the land.)
D' And *Joseph* opened all [the stores] that were in them.
C' And he sold *[grain]* to the *Egyptians.*
B' Nevertheless, the *famine* was strong in the *land of Egypt.*
A' And *all the earth* came to buy [grain] to Joseph for strong was the famine in *all the earth.*

We note this chiasm for two reasons: (1) this is still another instance of the use of chiasm to close an episode in the story; and (2) it serves to underscore the severity of the famine and prepares us to anticipate the appearance of the brothers in the next episode as they come down from Canaan to buy grain.

Episode 6 (Gen 42) is of very peculiar structure. Since episode 5 is climax and episode 7 is denouement, and both are surface-structure peaks in this story, episode 6, which comes in between the two, could be entitled the interpeak episode. This episode, which records the brothers' first descent to Egypt for famine relief, has a sustained level of excitement, no discernible internal peak of its own and two chiastic paragraphs (Gen 42:14-16, 18-20), both speeches of Joseph, which occur internally to the episode rather than marking closure.

Episode 7, the denouement, is long and action-packed (Gen 43—45). It opens with a see-saw argument between the brothers and their father Jacob about taking *Benjamin along on this their second trip. Jacob eventually has to capitulate and makes a speech in which he advises his sons to return the money that had been enclosed in their grain sacks and to take gifts to the demanding and mercurial lord of Egypt (Gen 43:1-14). When the brothers arrive in Egypt, everything apparently goes well—although when invited to a banquet in Joseph's house they are

puzzled at being seated at the table in order of their birth, and Benjamin is outrageously favored (Gen 43:15-34). The morning after the night of wining and dining, everything goes wrong (Gen 44). The brothers depart with their grain sacks loaded and with Joseph's silver cup planted in Benjamin's sack. Joseph's steward overtakes them and accuses them of theft. On lowering and opening their grain sacks—suspensefully reported as "beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest" (Gen 44:12)—Benjamin is found to be the (apparent) thief. So it's back to Joseph who, on their arrival before him, announces that he will keep Benjamin as a slave and let the others return to Canaan (Gen 44:17). The brothers, no longer disposed to save themselves by sacrificing the youngest, are utterly disconcerted. Finally Judah comes forward and makes an impassioned presentation of what the loss of Benjamin would do to Jacob (who had lost Benjamin's brother Joseph so many years ago). Then Judah volunteers to be kept as a slave in place of Benjamin (Gen 44:18-34). At this juncture, Joseph utterly loses his emotional control; the brothers now are men to whom he can be reconciled again. He proceeds to make himself known to them, as graphically described in Genesis 45:1-4. The man, whom they didn't believe understood or spoke Hebrew, now blurts out, *ʾănî yôsēp:* "I [am] Joseph." Seven verses more (Gen 45:9-15) give Joseph's instructional discourse: they are to go up and tell Jacob and bring him and their families down to Egypt, where they can be nourished through the remaining years of the famine. Meanwhile, Pharaoh, having heard the news, adds his official invitation and sends royal carts up to help bring the clan down. When the brothers arrive back at Canaan, Jacob is informed of the startling news. This is reported in a chiastic dialogue paragraph (Gen 45:25-28) that brings the episode (denouement) to a close.

Episode 8 (Gen 46:1—47:12), which is postpeak, contains the story of Jacob's going down to Egypt, including the list of all those in the embryonic nation who went down there. While such a "roll call" seems to Western readers to put the story on hold, it may have appeared as privileged and even exciting material to the Israelite reader for whom it was intended. The nation was now there in germ, and the promises to Abraham were being fulfilled!

In episode 9 (Gen 47:13-31), the last years of Joseph's famine-relief program are pictured as a rising crescendo of desperation on the part of the Egyptian populace who, out of money and cattle, finally sell themselves as serfs to Pharaoh to obtain grain.

In episode 10 (Gen 48), probably the last episode that can properly be counted as part of the Joseph story, Manasseh and Ephraim are blessed by the dying Jacob. Nevertheless, although part of the Joseph story, it contains much material that is related to broader concerns, which are especially relevant to section 3 below: (1) Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons amounts to his giving to Joseph a double portion of the patrimony. (2) Jacob in blessing Joseph's sons crossed his hands and put his right hand on Ephraim, thus giving him preeminence over his brother. (3) A special blessing is given to Joseph's sons apart from the blessing on Joseph in the following chapter. (4) In Genesis 48:22, Jacob gives to Joseph "the ridge of land that I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow," certainly a reference to Shechem and the surrounding countryside. (5) If that were not enough, it is given to Joseph on the grounds that he was over his brothers. All of this, especially points 1 and 5 above, strongly indicate that Jacob, in effect, was treating Joseph as his firstborn—in spite of what is said concerning Judah in Genesis 49:10.

Broader concerns of Jacob and his family come to the fore in Genesis 49—50, which do not simply constitute an addendum to the Joseph story but are peak and conclusion to the whole *tōlĕdôt yaʿăkōb* section of Genesis—even though the Joseph story proper occupies most of that section.

1.2. Macrostructural Concerns. The term *macrostructure* may be given the following working definition: the gist or abstract of a text that exercises a controlling function over the text in respect to (1) what is included or excluded from mention; (2) what parts are developed in relatively more detail than others; and (3) departures in internal ordering of the parts of the text from the default ordering indicated in the template on which the text is built.

The macrostructure of the Joseph story surfaces within the story itself in two places: (1) When Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, he immediately adds: "And now don't be distressed and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. . . . But God sent me ahead of you

to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen 45:5, 7). (2) In an echo of the story in Genesis 50:20, Joseph remarks to the brothers after Jacob's death: "You intended to harm me, but God meant it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." From these passages—in which Joseph himself is removed a few years from the more sordid aspects of the story and able to grasp better its meaning—and from the speech before Pharaoh we understand that the theme of the story is *divine providence.* But while a theme can thus be summarized in a noun phrase, the macrostructure needs a more detailed statement if we are to generate this particular story from it. Putting together the material in Genesis 45:5, 7 and 50:20, we formulate the macrostructure of the Joseph story as follows: Joseph's brothers, meaning to harm him, sold him as a slave into Egypt, but in reality God sent him there so that he could save Jacob's family and many others from death by starvation.

The elements that enter into this macrostructure can be made explicit as follows: (1) the intent of Joseph's brothers to harm him; (2) the selling into Egypt to carry out this intent; (3) God's overruling, making Joseph a savior from starvation—and this in turn entailing all the providential means employed to put Joseph in a position that empowered him to do what he did; (4) implementation of the measures that saved Jacob's family and others from death by starvation; and last but not least, (5) the severity of the famine itself.

The macrostructure may be considered to generate the whole story as the author progressively fleshes out its details. There is, however, a broader concern, the whole *tōlĕdôt ya'ăqōb,* of which the Joseph story is a part, albeit the larger part. The Joseph story proper has three main participants: Jacob, Joseph and Judah, who finally emerges as a hero of sorts. What about Genesis 38, which recounts how Judah's sons were born to his daughter-in-law? And what of the poetic material in Genesis 49? As for the deaths first of Jacob and of then of Joseph, the recounting of such events is a customary way of concluding a *tōlĕdôt* section of Genesis. But to capture the broader and more inclusive concerns of the *tōlĕdôt ya'ăqōb,* that is, to posit a macrostructure for it, we need to see what is going on in Genesis 49 itself.

With Jacob (a main participant of the Joseph story) passing away, we are left with Judah and with Joseph (and the latter's two sons). Judah had achieved a certain prominence in the story even as Reuben, the firstborn, proved to be an ineffectual leader. Also, Jacob never forgave Reuben's involvement with his concubine Bilhah (Gen 49:4). Simeon is more of a prop in the Joseph story than a participant; he is kept as a hostage between the brothers' two trips to Egypt. Levi is a nonentity. However, both Simeon and Levi come in for dishonorable mention in Genesis 49:5-7, which probably refers to the sacking of Shechem recorded in Genesis 34. With Reuben, Simeon and Levi thus disposed of in Genesis 49:3-7, Jacob comes to Judah, of whom he speaks in Genesis 49:8-12. Verse 10 is the crucial verse here: "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his" (NIV). Here, to Judah's descendants is promised a continuing line of rulers until the Rightful Ruler comes on the scene, and a promise is made of the gathering/obedience of the nations to him. Jacob mentions others of his sons rather briefly and summarily in Genesis 49:13-21, but then Genesis 49:22-26 deals with Joseph, followed by one verse devoted to Benjamin, Joseph's full brother. The blessings heaped on Joseph in verses 25-26 are indeed fulsome, ending with, "Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers" (NIV). What, then? It is clear that Judah and Joseph get a good deal more "coverage" from the dying father than do the others, and a certain preeminence is granted to both. The scepter is to go to Judah with the accompanying promise (Gen 49:10), but to Joseph, as the continuing favorite of his father, rights and privileges are given such as would be given to a firstborn. I posit, then, that the macrostructure of the *tōlĕdôt ya'ăqōb* can be stated as follows: Among the descendants of Jacob, Judah and Joseph are to be preeminent both as individuals and as tribes—with ambiguous and somewhat conflicting claims.

We might say that the Joseph story has a macrostructure, which involves participants in a human-relations drama. But the whole *tōlĕdôt ya'ăqōb* is concerned with the ranking and fortunes of all the tribes of Israel.

1.3. Historicity. The nagging question of the historicity of the patriarchal stories, including that of Joseph, necessarily intrudes itself here

and elsewhere. Are these stories simply retrojective expressions of later Israelite faith—along with attempts at explaining the present in terms of the past, or are they valid representation of the past out of which the later developments unfolded?

Here the essays in A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman (1983) are a good starting point. Thus J. Goldingay (1-34), while admitting that bare history is necessarily reworked into story in these accounts, argues strongly for their factual base. In this he consciously takes a position contrary to such historical minimalists as T. J. Thompson (1974). Millard (35-51) argues that the patriarchal narratives are "family history," comparable to those of other prominent personages of the ancient Near East (e.g., Gilgamesh, Sargon of Akkad, Naram-sin), which are partially and fragmentarily supported by material from other sources. He argues that "where there is no other evidence, where a literary text exists, we should be no less ready to treat it as a valuable and reliable record, unless it can conclusively be shown to be false in many matters" (Millard, 48). In the same volume M. J. Selman (91-139), after sifting through a number of alleged parallels between the patriarchal and other materials of roughly the same horizon (e.g., Nuzi), insists that there remain thirteen valid parallels between the two (Selman, 134-38).

Especially noteworthy in this regard is J. K. Hoffmeier's (1997) examination of the evidence for the authenticity of the exodus tradition. He examines the story from the standpoint of an Egyptologist. In his discussion of "Joseph in Egypt" (Hoffmeier, chap. 4), he differs considerably from such treatments as D. B. Redford's. In what is perhaps his most valuable contribution to the question of the historicity of this particular story, the "Egyptian Dimensions of the Joseph Story," he points to several pieces of evidence, including: (1) the detail that the price for which Joseph was sold, twenty pieces of silver, was the price of a slave in the first half of the second millennium (2000-1500 B.C.), while at later periods the price was considerably higher; (2) the Egyptian counterparts/etymologies for the names Potiphar (Joseph's master), Potiphera (Joseph's father-in-law), Asenath (his wife) and Zaphenath-paneah (Joseph's Egyptian name); (3) the role of magicians as dream interpreters in Egypt; (4) the significance of Pharaoh's "birthday" (reinterpreted according to Egyptian sources as the anniversary of accession/coronation); (5) the scenes of investiture of high officials whose details parallel the account of Joseph's investiture; (6) Joseph's status where the Genesis account suggests several Egyptian titles and parallels; and (6) even Joseph's age at death (110 years), which has been recognized for two centuries as an ideal age according to Egyptian sources.

Hoffmeier aptly comments: "It seems to me, however, that if the narratives look like history, are structured historiographically, and the events described (especially in the Joseph story) are not incredible and compare favorably with the Egyptian backgrounds, . . . then the narratives ought to be considered historical until there is evidence to the contrary" (Hoffmeier, 91).

2. The Man Joseph.

What sort of man emerges in the story that we have summarized above? As a youth of seventeen, Joseph was precocious and showed leadership qualities that pleased his father and antagonized his brothers. Strutting around in a coat such as supervisors wore, not day laborers, and naively recounting his dreams of splendor and overlordship, he was totally insensitive to the ill feelings he was arousing.

For this spoiled and favored youth, his being sold into Egypt was the watershed of his life. Now the very qualities that had raised his brothers' animosity served him in good stead. As a house slave in Potiphar's household he proved to be a quick learner not only with respect to the Egyptian language and culture but the administrative arts as well. He quickly rose to the top in Potiphar's estate and, when degraded, to chief trustee in prison.

He is pictured as a man of integrity and faith. When Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him, he refused to calculate the possible gains of placating her but pleaded that to do so would be a betrayal of Potiphar and, even more to the point, a "sin against God" (Gen 39:9). No doubt his belief in divine providence was severely tested in his years in prison. In interpreting the dreams of the two imprisoned courtiers he did not profess to be a great magician or seer but simply said, "To God belong the interpretations of dreams" (Gen 40:8). In much the same vein he assured Pharaoh some two years later, "God will give Pharaoh a satisfactory answer" (Gen

41:16). Furthermore, his speech before Pharaoh takes as its theme divine providence (Gen 41:25-36). The man and his message were one.

But why did such a man as this feel obliged to test his brothers so severely on the occasion of their two trips down to Egypt? Here we need to remember that Joseph's last experience of his brothers before they showed up again at the frontier to buy grain was that of cruel and implacable men deaf to his pleadings not to sell him as a slave (Gen 42:21). Had they changed since he saw them last? What if he were to put them into a position from which they could extricate themselves only by jettisoning Benjamin, his younger brother—treating Benjamin in effect as they had once treated himself? So Joseph proceeded to arrange circumstances to that end. On his tightening the screw the last turn, Judah stepped forward to offer to remain in Egypt as a slave so that Benjamin could go back to Canaan and Jacob would not suffer another great heartbreak of the sort that might finish the old man off. Now Joseph had his answer. But even during the process of the testing, Joseph had to turn aside a time or two to weep, and, on selling the grain to his brothers, he secretly restored their purchase money. His love for his family was never maudlin but all the more sincere for not being so.

One thing more about Joseph: in accepting office under Pharaoh he stood loyally by his overlord. In the next to the last episode of the Joseph story, he insists on payment for the relief supplies, and when the populace no longer have money, cattle or other possessions, he has them sell themselves to Pharaoh as serfs in exchange for survival.

3. The Joseph Clans.

One of Jacob's last acts was to take to himself Joseph's two sons, thus making their descendants tribes of Israel as if they were his own sons. This gives Joseph, as we have already observed, a double portion of the patrimony. In place of one tribe of Joseph there would be the two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The scene in which Jacob has his two grandsons in front of him lined up with Manasseh on Jacob's right hand and Ephraim on his left pictures the old patriarch as crossing his hands so that his right hand rests on Ephraim, to whom he gives preeminence. When Joseph thinks that his father is mistaken, Jacob insists that he intends to make the younger son preeminent (Gen 48:12-20). The scene is graphically portrayed with the best resources of the narrator.

A further favor of Jacob to Joseph is expressed in the immediately ensuing passage (Gen 48:21-22). Jacob is referring here to Shechem, where he settled for a while and which his sons, led by Simeon and Levi, sacked and plundered (Gen 34). This last statement of Jacob's would presumably indicate that Jacob considered Shechem and the region around it his possession ever after. Now he gives this land specifically to Joseph. The book of John records that centuries later a wearied and thirsty Jesus sat at a well in a Samaritan village called Sychar "near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph" (Jn 4:5-6). One may add to this the tradition referred to by Stephen (Acts 7:16) that the patriarchs, probably Joseph's brothers, were buried at Shechem.

Ephraim and Manasseh are shadowy characters about whom we are told almost nothing as individuals—except for one puzzling passage (1 Chron 7:20-24). Here we are told that two sons of Ephraim died as cattle rustlers down near Gath, and that "their father Ephraim mourned for them many days." Then it tells of Ephraim's having another son, and a daughter who proceeded to found three settlements in the region. All this seems to suggest a scenario in which Ephraim is living in Canaan rather than in Egypt. Now add to this the fact that at the time of Joshua's conquest, himself of the tribe of Ephraim, there is no record of a conquest in central Canaan in and around Shechem, but only of northern and southern campaigns. Nevertheless, it was to Shechem that Joshua mustered the tribes before his death to challenge them to be faithful to Yahweh and to renew the covenant. Shiloh, where the tabernacle worship was settled on, was somewhat to the south of Shechem.

All this tallies up to the possibility, suggested some years ago by Albright (279), that Shechem was an Israelite possession prior to the conquest. Funeral processions from Israelites in Egypt came up to this town and, for a while, at least, Ephraim and his immediate family may have settled there. When the main wave of Israelite conquest arrived under Joshua, they made contact afresh with this ancestral possession and the enclave living there.

In the apportionment of the land after the

conquest, half of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan up north in a region with no natural frontiers to commend it; they were easy prey to Aramean and Assyrian invasion and conquest. The other half of the tribe of Manasseh settled in the regions around Shechem and northward. Ephraim settled just to the south in a region that included Shiloh.

In celebrating the united monarchy the psalmist wrote: "Then he rejected the tents of Joseph, he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which he loved" (Ps 78:67-68). Nevertheless, at a later time, when the united monarchy under the hegemony of Judah broke up, it was an Ephraimite, Jeroboam, who rebelled against Rehoboam and established the northern kingdom. Did something in the ambiguity of Jacob's words and behavior toward his sons Judah and Joseph give some credence to the actions of Jeroboam and those associated with him? At any rate, the Joseph clans were a force to be reckoned with in the days of monarchical Israel.

In still later and more tragic years, this central region, where the sons of Joseph settled, apparently survived as a core of the northern kingdom after much of that kingdom had been carried away, so that, for example, the prophet Hosea refers to his audience as "Ephraim." To end on a more positive note, the psalmist in Psalm 77:15 wrote: "With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph."

See also EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; GENESIS, BOOK OF; JACOB; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM.

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R. E. Longacre

JOSEPH CLANS. *See* JOSEPH.

JOSEPH NARRATIVE. *See* JOSEPH.

JOSHUA

Joshua was an Ephraimite chieftain notable for standing with Caleb to exhort Israel to enter the Promised Land at Kadesh-barnea (Num 13:25-33; 14:5-12). Although the central figure in the book that bears his name, Joshua plays only a minor role in the Pentateuch. With but one exception he appears only in connection with *Moses. A series of brief appearances, as Moses' aide and military commander, work together to communicate a close association between the two men in preparation for Joshua's commissioning as Moses' legitimate successor. Joshua accompanied Moses as he ascended Sinai (Ex 24:13) and when he spoke to Yahweh at the tent of meeting (Ex 33:11). When Moses' authority was challenged, Joshua stood with him against the people (Ex 32:15-20; Num 14:1-10). As a consequence of his faithfulness, Yahweh allowed Joshua to enter the Promised Land, a privilege not granted to Moses (Num 14:30, 38; cf. Num 27:12-14). Because Moses would not cross the Jordan with Israel, Joshua was commissioned to do so (Num 27:12-23; Deut 31:1-29). A subtle stylistic device, however, signals that Joshua would remain subordinate to Moses

even after the latter's death. The first and last passages in which Joshua appears (Ex 17:8-16; Deut 31:1-29) each include a report that the words of Moses were written down in the presence of Joshua, intimating that Moses would continue to lead Israel through his designated successor (cf. Josh 1:7-9; 11:15, 23). By emphasizing Joshua's subordination to Moses, along with his success in battle, the Pentateuch anticipates the themes that shape his character in the book of Joshua.

The texts in which Joshua appears thus exhibit a continuity of theme and perspective that confirms his historical connection with Moses.

1. Military Leader
2. Moses' Aide
3. Moses' Successor

1. Military Leader.

Joshua first appears as a military commander who leads Israel to victory over the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-16), a role that echoes the sense of his name ("Yahweh saves," Heb *yĕhôšua'*). "Saving" (*yš'*) is often associated with military contexts, where it denotes deliverance from a superior force (Judg 6:14; 1 Sam 4:3; 2 Sam 3:18). Joshua's name therefore not only reinforces his role in the conflict with Amalek but also situates him between Israel's deliverance from Egypt (cf. Ex 14:30) and its future victories over the superior might of the Canaanite kings. The text presents Joshua as Moses' surrogate on the battlefield; Joshua led Israel and achieved victory, but only as long as Moses' hands remained raised. The episode establishes a command-execution pattern that underscores Joshua's obedience to Moses. The narrator quotes a command of Moses and follows it with a report that "Joshua did as Moses had told him" (Ex 17:10). The pattern looks forward to the book of Joshua, where it serves a similar function (cf. Josh 5:2-3; 11:6-9).

A second episode demonstrates Joshua's faithfulness and courage (Num 14:1-12). In this case Joshua joined Caleb in exhorting Israel to follow Moses' command that they go up and take possession of the land, against the protests of their companions and the entire nation. The two men confirmed the goodness of the land and exhorted the people in both negative and positive terms, chiding their kinsfolk for their rebelliousness and declaring that the Canaanites were defenseless because Yahweh was with Israel. The episode and its consequences (that generation's forfeiture of the promise) further sets Joshua above the people and reinforces his obedient character.

2. Moses' Aide.

Joshua is called Moses' aide in Exodus 24:13; 33:11 and Numbers 11:28. These and other texts set Joshua apart from the people and emphasize his close association with Moses. Joshua set out with Moses after the elders feasted with Yahweh on Mount Sinai, although it seems that Moses then continued up the mountain alone (Ex 24:13-14). Joshua was also present when Moses descended with the two tablets of the *covenant and mistook the sound of revelry for the sound of battle (Ex 32:15-18). Although both instances suggest that Moses alone met with Yahweh and received the tablets, they also highlight the unique status of Joshua, who left the elders and people to accompany Moses and who stood with Moses against the people's devotion to the golden calf. This unique status is reinforced by a short note that associates Joshua with Moses and the tent of meeting (Ex 33:11). A final episode accentuates Joshua's zealous loyalty to Moses while demonstrating that charismatic leadership derives from and is endorsed by Moses (Num 11:26-29). When informed that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, Joshua seemed to regard the act as a challenge to Moses' authority and entreated Moses to stop them. Moses responded with a question that indirectly affirms the passionate loyalty that Joshua displayed: "Are you jealous for my sake?"

3. Moses' Successor.

Two texts report the succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua (Num 27:12-23; Deut 31:1-29). Although the texts are often attributed to different pentateuchal traditions (P and D respectively; *see* Source Criticism), they have different literary roles and combine to offer a multifaceted account of this crucial change of leadership. The first (Num 27:12-23) focuses on the reason a successor needed to be designated (the imminent death of Moses) and the means by which Joshua was empowered and commissioned. It is primarily concerned with demonstrating that Joshua was the legitimate successor of Moses. At Yahweh's command, Moses presented Joshua to *Eleazar the priest and imparted some of his authority by laying his hands

on him.

The second passage (Deut 31:1-29) is more complex and consists of exhortations to Joshua, instructions regarding the book of the *law and predictions of future success and apostasy. In this case the text emphasizes Joshua's role in leading Israel to take possession of the Promised Land and continues the themes of obedience and disobedience prominent in the preceding materials (Deut 27:1—30:20). Following the *chronology of the Pentateuch, Joshua was therefore commissioned twice, once by Moses and Eleazar prior to the campaigns in the Transjordan, and then again by Yahweh himself as Israel prepared to enter the land.

The account of succession related in Numbers 27:12-23 implicitly links the succession of Joshua with that of Eleazar, which preceded the death of *Aaron (Num 20:22-29), and provides an occasion for defining the relationship between charismatic and institutional authority. In response to Yahweh's decree that he would not enter the land, Moses asked Yahweh to appoint someone over the congregation who would "go out and come in before them," a request that carries distinctively militaristic connotations (cf. 1 Sam 18:13). Yahweh identified Joshua as "a man in whom is the spirit" and instructed Moses to lay his hands on him (Num 27:18). The attribute seemingly qualified Joshua to be Moses' successor, but it is difficult to determine what the reference to the "spirit" means; endowments of wisdom, prophecy, skill and courage have all been advanced to explain it. The text focuses, however, on Yahweh's command that Moses impart some of this "authority" by laying his hands on Joshua (Num 27:20). The Hebrew term *(hôd)* occurs only here but appears to refer to a transmission of demonstrable power, sufficient to elicit obedience from the congregation. Yahweh stipulated that this was to be done in the presence of Eleazar the priest and the entire community and declared that "at his word they shall go forth and at his word they shall come in" (Num 27:21). The text thus presents Joshua as Yahweh's choice to lead Israel into the Promised Land and situates his military and political leadership, acquired through Moses, under the authority of the priesthood.

The Deuteronomic account (Deut 31:1-29) is characterized by a complex interweaving of texts and themes. Here the succession of Joshua is not the central focus but one of many themes that identify manifestations of Moses' continuing authority and presence within Israel. As in the previous account, the passage begins with the announcement of Moses' imminent death. But in this case the subject rapidly shifts to a preview of Israel's entry into the land, punctuated by divine promises and commands (Deut 31:1-6). With this scenario in mind, Moses summons Joshua and, in the presence of the community, decrees that he will put the people in possession of the land (Deut 31:7-8). However, at this point the narrative shifts abruptly and reports that Moses wrote down the law, gave it to the priests and instructed them to read it every seventh year during the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:9-13). The matter of succession is then resumed with another announcement of the imminent death of Moses and a divine command that Moses and Joshua present themselves at the tent of meeting (Deut 31:14-15). Once again the story is interrupted, this time by Yahweh, who breaks in to predict Israel's future apostasy and to introduce a song that Moses is to teach the people as a witness against them (Deut 31:16-22). The narrative then returns a final time to Joshua. In a brief note that underscores the significance of the event, Yahweh commissions Joshua and confirms Moses' promises and assurances (Deut 31:23). The episode concludes with a return to the themes of the codification of Moses' words (Deut 31:24-26) and Israel's future apostasy (Deut 31:27-29). By interlacing these themes, the narrator emphasizes that Moses will remain present with Israel even after his death: through his successor Joshua, through the book of the law and through the song that will testify against the people.

Compositional analysis of the sections that deal with Joshua (Deut 31:1-8, 14-15, 23) has suggested that an earlier, pre-Deuteronomistic tradition that associated Joshua with the tent of meeting (Deut 31:14-15, 23; cf. Ex 33:11) has been supplemented by Deuteronomistic material that situates the succession within its literary context and forges links to the book of Joshua (Deut 31:1-8; cf. Josh 1:5b-9). The latter has been the focus of particular attention, due in large part to N. Lohfink's assertion that it reflects an "installation genre" that has been appropriated and modified by the Deuteronomist. Lohfink surmised that the genre derived from ceremonies in which someone was installed into a public office and identified a three-part scheme,

consisting of an exhortation to "be strong and resolute," a declaration of the task and an assurance of divine presence. While his hypothesis has found support in a number of subsequent studies (e.g., Porter; McCarthy), recent discussion has inclined toward viewing the scheme more as a literary genre, with a focus on military leadership. From a literary perspective, the installation of Joshua may be viewed as a paradigm for succession that anticipates the monarchy by demonstrating the importance of an orderly transition of leadership. More broadly, the passage may present Joshua as an ideal figure who, as successor to Moses, demonstrated the necessity of following the Mosaic torah (see Schäfer-Lichtenberger).

Within its literary context, the commissioning of Joshua in Deuteronomy 31 opposes themes of faithfulness and obedience (Deut 31:2-6, 9-13) with those of future rebellion (Deut 31:16-22, 24-29), thereby demonstrating the necessity of continuing human leadership after the death of Moses. The three passages in which Joshua appears carefully trace the transmission of authority, echoing a broader thematic transition from life in the wilderness to future life in the *land. In the first scene (Deut 31:7-8) Moses summons Joshua, exhorts him to be courageous, declares that he is Yahweh's choice to lead Israel into Canaan and assures Joshua of Yahweh's continuing presence. In the middle scene (Deut 31:14-15) Yahweh summons Moses to present Joshua, and the three meet at the tent of meeting. However, only Joshua and Yahweh appear in the final scene (Deut 31:23). Here Yahweh commissions Joshua and succinctly reiterates Moses' words of encouragement and assurance. The repetition of exhortations and promises looks ahead to the book of Joshua, where they will be repeated once again as Israel prepares to enter a new era as a settled people in the land promised by Yahweh (Josh 1:6-7, 9; cf. 10:25).

See also LEADERSHIP, ELDERS; MOSES; WARFARE.

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JOSIANIC REFORM. *See* DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

JUBILEE. *See* SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

JUDAH

Judah is the name of several individuals in the OT, most noteworthy of whom was one of the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel. During his life Judah the son of Jacob experienced both periods of leadership and moments of sin, a trait shared with nearly every other character in the Hebrew Bible. After Judah's death, the tribe that bore his name grew to prominence within Israel, eventually producing the line of David and, after the formation of the northern kingdom of Israel, even constituting an independent nation. Even today Judah's name is recalled every time one speaks of God's chosen people, the Jews.

1. Judah the Patriarch
2. Judah the Tribe
3. Judah the Kingdom.

1. Judah the Patriarch.

Judah was the fourth of the sons of *Jacob by Leah. At Judah's birth Leah exclaimed, "This time I will praise the LORD," and she named her fourth-born son Judah ("Praise"; Gen 29:35). In the ancient Near East, the naming of a child was a particularly significant event. As a general rule it represented some circumstance or predilection at the time of birth. The name itself was not

thought to determine a child's destiny but rather seems to have been related to the person's essential self. Often the name was significant in the experiences of one's life.

1.1 Judah and Joseph.

1.1.1. Judah's Suggestion. When Judah was about twenty-four years old, he and his brothers were in the field when Joseph came seeking them. Taking advantage of this opportunity to rid themselves of the brother they hated, they plotted to kill him. After *Reuben circumvented their plot, as an alternate plan Judah suggested that they sell *Joseph to the passing Ishmaelites; Judah's words convinced his brothers (Gen 37:26-27). This is the first time Judah's leading role among his brothers is asserted.

1.1.2. Judah and Tamar. Interrupting the flow the Joseph history is Genesis 38, the incident of Judah and *Tamar. The placement of this episode certainly increases interest in the events portrayed. In this chapter, Judah plays one of the key roles in one of the most sordid accounts in the OT, a story of base, immoral actions. Judah's first mistake was departing from his fellow Hebrews and settling near Hirah the Adullamite. His second mistake followed shortly: he married the daughter of Shua, a Canaanite, resulting in the birth of Er. This union was the first recorded marriage of an Israelite with a member of the Canaanites (*see* Nations of Canaan). Judah also became the father of Onan and later of Shelah, who was born at Chezib. Judah took Tamar (who was evidently a Canaanite) as a wife for Er, his firstborn, but Er was killed because of his wickedness. It was evidently a custom of the time for a brother or other near relative to marry a widow to raise up children for the deceased. (Later, this was incorporated into the Mosaic legislation as a part of the levirate responsibility.) In keeping with this custom, Judah then told his second-born son, Onan, to fulfill this responsibility. Evidently hesitant to lessen his own inheritance, Onan was unwilling to father a child by Tamar. At his refusal he too was stricken dead. Fearing that his youngest son Shelah would also die, Judah asked Tamar to wait until Shelah was older before making her second levirate marriage claim; this was simply a diversionary tactic, for Judah had no intention of giving Shelah to her. So Tamar returned to her father's house.

When Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua the Canaanite, died, Judah went to Timnah with his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Hearing of his presence there, Tamar disguised herself as a harlot in order to make her claim upon Judah. He decided to patronize Tamar, whom he took to be a prostitute. As they negotiated a price, Judah offered to bring her a kid from the flock as collateral. Tamar asked Judah to leave his seal (probably a signet ring), cord (probably the string worn around his neck from which the signet ring hung) and staff. After these arrangements were completed, Judah had sexual relations with Tamar, and she conceived. When Judah tried to deliver the kid and redeem his pledges, there was no sign of the "harlot," for Tamar, of course, had departed. In about three months, it became obvious that Tamar was pregnant. Upon learning of her condition, Judah was enraged and demanded that she be burned as an adulteress. As Tamar was being brought out, she sent to Judah the signet ring, cord and staff, saying that they belonged to the father of her unborn child. Faced with the evidence, Judah guiltily acknowledged his own paternity, and her claim to have a child by one of her husband's kin was legitimate (Gen 38:1-11). Judah admitted his personal guilt absolutely; he not only exonerated but praised Tamar. As the subsequent history demonstrates, had it not been for her courageous actions, Judah's family line, the line of the Davidic family—and, ultimately, the messianic line—would have come to an end.

1.1.3. Judah and the Famine. Judah and his family suffered greatly during the widespread famine that had been revealed to Joseph. The second year of the famine, Judah and his brothers (except *Benjamin) were sent by their father Jacob to Egypt to acquire grain. During this visit the brothers were recognized by Joseph, who accused them of being spies and questioned them carefully about their father and younger brother. In the end, *Simeon was kept as a hostage until they should return. Joseph had instructed his servants to replace each brother's money in his sack, which caused great consternation among Judah and his brothers when they later discovered it. Some time later, when the famine continued to be severe, Jacob told his sons to return to Egypt. Judah reminded him that the Egyptian who had queried them, not yet known to be Joseph, had strictly instructed the brothers that they would receive no further aid from Egypt unless Benjamin accompanied them when they returned. When Jacob began to

blame his sons for revealing the existence of Benjamin, it was Judah who stated that the Egyptian (Joseph) had questioned them especially as to their family connections and specifically as to whether they had a younger brother. Judah then offered to guarantee Benjamin's safety, so Jacob finally agreed to let Benjamin go with them (Gen 43:3-10).

1.1.4. Judah as Spokesman. Following this visit, Joseph instructed his servants that along with the grain each brother should again have his money replaced in his sack and that his own divining cup (possibly associated with his interpretation of dreams) be placed in Benjamin's sack. This was intended as a test for his brothers, who thereupon departed. Joseph then had his house steward pursue the brothers and accuse them of abusing his goodwill by stealing his cup. Avowing their innocence, the brothers rashly said that they did not have it, but were the cup found among them, the one in whose sack it appeared should be killed and they would all become the Egyptian's slaves. Of course, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

When they returned to Joseph, he roundly scolded them, pointing out that they could not hide the truth from him. It was Judah who spoke the abject confession of the brothers, pointing out that all the brothers would forfeit their freedom. Joseph responded that only the person in whose sack the object had been found was to be his slave and the others could return to their father. Judah then approached the man whom he did not yet know was his brother Joseph, reminding him that he (Joseph) had closely interrogated the brothers concerning their father and brother. Judah continued pleading by pointing out that if the brothers returned without Benjamin it would surely precipitate the death of their aged father. He further explained that, because of his father Jacob's reluctance to allow Benjamin to accompany them, Judah had offered himself as surety for Benjamin's safe return. He then pleaded that he be allowed to be a slave for Joseph as a substitute for Benjamin (Gen 44:1-34). Following Judah's remonstrances, Joseph, with great emotion, revealed his identity to his brothers, urging them to bring the entire family to be his guests in Egypt, an invitation which Jacob accepted gratefully.

1.2. Judah in Egypt.

1.2.1. Judah's Leadership. As Jacob and his clan approached Egypt, Jacob chose Judah to prepare the way for the family to occupy Goshen (Gen 46:28).

1.2.2. Jacob's Blessing on Judah. Jacob's blessing on Judah began with a marked paronomasia, "Judah [= "Praise], your brothers shall praise you." Judah was promised preeminence not only over his enemies but his family as well. He was likened to a lion going forth to conquer great prey then returning to his rest, from which no one dared rouse him. A great royal promise was given to him, "The [royal] scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh [NRSV: tribute] comes to him" (Gen 49:10). This "Shiloh" has been interpreted in several ways, such as "to be at rest," "to be content," "one who brings rest and contentment" or "ruler" (so Luther). However, from the clear, uncontracted phrase in Ezekiel 21:27 the word seems to be an abbreviation for the words "which to him," that is, "him to whom it belongs," a reference to the messianic king and ultimately to *Messiah himself. Finally, Jacob promised to his son Judah material prosperity (Gen 49:8-12).

Among the tribal blessings given by Jacob, the blessing on Judah is singled out by its length to be especially significant. Only the blessing on Joseph is of similar extent. Judah and Joseph each seem to be given certain "firstborn" privileges. Prior to the giving of the Mosaic law, it would seem that the privileges of primogeniture were not necessarily automatically set by the actual birth order. By birth order, Reuben was firstborn, but Jacob took away his right of primogeniture because of Reuben's incest. Simeon, the second born, was disqualified because of his misconduct following the rape of Dinah. One of the prerogatives of the firstborn was to be the priest of the entire family, but God accepted the tribe of Levi, the third born, to be priests to serve as a redemption for the firstborn of the tribes. Jacob had chosen Joseph to receive the firstborn's double territorial prerogative, giving him two tribes, one for each of his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus God chose (and Jacob affirmed) Judah as firstborn to receive the prerogative of ruling.

2. Judah the Tribe.

2.1. In the Wilderness. When Judah entered Egypt he had three sons, but so greatly did his family increase that in the first military census of

males twenty years and older, it numbered 74,600, being first in population of all the tribes. His tribe camped on the east side of the tabernacle, along with Issachar and Zebulun, two other Leah tribes (Num 2:3-9).

During the march through the wilderness, Judah's place was in the vanguard of the host (Num 10:14). Arriving at the border of the Promised Land, Judah's representative among the spies sent to reconnoiter was Caleb, son of Jephunneh (Num 13:6).

At the second military census, taken at the close of the wanderings, the males twenty years and older in Judah's tribe numbered 76,500, still retaining its first rank among the tribes (Num 26:19-22). During the conquest, the defeat at Ai was occasioned by Achan, a member of the tribe of Judah "who caused Israel to sin" (Josh 7:1-26). It has been surmised that this may have been one of the reasons why Judah was required to mount an independent attack on the Canaanites (Judg 1:1-2). Joshua won several victories within Judah's tribal territory (Josh 11:21). Judah's leaders came before Joshua with Caleb to make his request for his family portion (Josh 14:6).

2.2. Judah's Tribal Territory. Judah was the first of the tribes west of the Jordan to receive its territorial allotment, which included over a third of the whole land. The boundaries and contents of the territory allotted to Judah are described at great length (Josh 15:20-63). Basically, Judah's portion was bordered on the north by the tribal lands of Dan and Benjamin, on the west by the Mediterranean, on the east by the Dead Sea, and on the south roughly as far as agriculture was possible. The portion of Judah's allotted territory that the tribe actually occupied consisted primarily of the central hill country of that region. Being an especially favored tribe, Judah, along with the tribe of Ephraim and the Transjordanian tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, did not participate in the division of the land by lot described in Joshua 18 and 19, for its territory had already been assigned. At the allocation of the tribal allotments, the tribe of Simeon received a portion of Judah's tribal territory (Josh 19:1-9). The levitical cities within Judah's tribal boundaries are listed in Joshua 21:4.

3. Judah the Kingdom.

In Jacob's blessing he prophesied that the kingdom would be centered in the progeny of Judah, but the first choice of king by the people was Saul, who was a scion of the tribe of Benjamin. Following Saul's death, the tribe of Judah immediately chose David as king, crowning him at Hebron, but after Saul's son Ish-bosheth died, the people recognized Judah's tribal stability and leadership and enthusiastically made David king over all twelve of the tribes, thus beginning the fulfillment of Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49.

Further development of Judah's blessing came after the kingdom's division into two separate kingdoms. Judah emerged as the major component of the southern kingdom of Judah. After about two hundred years, the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, but Judah continued as a kingdom for a over a century. The kingdom of Judah was ended when Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 587/586.

Following its captivity, Judah was reestablished under Zerubbabel with the rebuilding of the temple. Later still, Judah found spiritual revival under Ezra, and the walls were restored during the time of Nehemiah.

See also MESSIAH; TAMAR.

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JUDGE

The pentateuchal concept of "judge" bears both similarities to and differences from the modern notion of a legal official. On the one hand, a number of pentateuchal legal texts authorized the establishment and regulated the behavior of a select body of individuals who were to preside over a variety of civil and criminal proceedings in ancient Israel. On the other hand, the language and theology of judging was not limited to this narrow legal realm. For example, the Pentateuch reflects the common ancient Near Eastern practice of closely associating the roles of judge and ruler. Moreover, the biblical text clearly presents God as the judge par excellence from whom all other judges—whether the head of a household or the legal arbiter of the entire people—derived their authority.

1. Judging as an Action
2. Judges as Agents
3. Conclusion

1. Judging as an Action.

Judging as an action is expressed in the Pentateuch by means of two roots, *špṭ* and *dyn.* The root *špṭ* appears sixteen times, only in the Qal stem (Gen 16:5; 19:9 [twice]; 31:53; Ex 5:21; 18:13, 16, 22 [twice], 26 [twice]; Lev 19:15; Num 35:24; Deut 1:16; 16:18; 25:1; on the Qal participle of *špṭ,* see below). The subject of this root in the pentateuchal passages listed above is either divine (Yahweh [Gen 16:5; Ex 5:21]; "God or gods" [*ʾĕlōhîm,* Gen 31:53]) or human (Lot [Gen 19:9]; trustworthy people *[ʾanšê ʾĕmet]* appointed by Moses [Ex 18:21-22, 26]; a court [*mišpāṭ,* Deut 25:1]; an assembly called to make decisions in civil cases [*ʿēdâ,* Num 35:24; *šōpĕṭîm,* Deut 1:16]; officials or scribes [*šōṭĕrîm,* Deut 16:18]). Judging typically takes place between individuals, such as "brothers" (*ʾaḥîm,* Deut 1:16), a "brother" and a "stranger" *(gēr)* or fellow citizens (*ʿāmît,* Lev 19:15).

The root *dyn* occurs four times, also only in Qal. Genesis 15:14 states that Yahweh will "judge" the nation that will enslave his people, while Genesis 30:6 reports that God "made justice" to Rachel by listening to her prayer and providing her with a son named Dan. In Genesis 49:16, the root *dyn* appears with the meaning "to govern," as the writer makes a play on words: "Dan *[dān]* will govern *[yādîn]* (his people)." Finally, Deuteronomy 32:36 states that Yahweh will "plead the cause" [*yādîn* paralleled by *nḥm,* "to have compassion"] of his people. The noun *dayyān* ("judge") is not found in the Pentateuch. (It shows up only in two places in the entire OT: 1 Sam 24:15 [MT 24:16]; Ps 68:5 [MT 68:6].) In the case of the root *dyn,* the subject is Yahweh, God or an individual (e.g., Dan), while the object is either peoples (e.g., Israelites, Egyptians) or individuals. The roots *špṭ* and *dyn,* though used in parallel, are not necessarily synonymous in meaning (cf. Mafico, 3.1104).

As for the meaning of *špṭ,* the general view is that the two notions of *governing* and *judging* constitute the makeup of this root, whose origin is West Semitic (cf. the Ugaritic title *ṯpṭ,* "ruler, judge"; Phoenician *špṭ,* "to rule"; South Arabian [Qatabanic] *ṯpṭ,* "to decide, order"; in Akkadian and its dialects the term *šāpitum* ["district governor, judge"] is a loanword; see Liedke, 3.1393; cf. Niehr). The verb is used with the first meaning with respect to Lot in the phrase *yišpōṭ šāpôṭ* ("to act as ruler"; Gen 19:9). In the Sodomites' view, Lot did not come to dwell *(gûr)* among them but rather to be a ruler. The transition from *governing* to *judging* is reflected by the formula *šāpat bên . . . ûbên* ("to decide between," Gen 16:5; 31:53; Ex 18:16; Num 35:24; Deut 1:16; cf. Niehr, 12.417-18). "Judging" means "to condemn" (Hiphil of *rš*ʿ) and then "to declare innocent" (Hiphil of *ṣdq;* Deut 25:1; cf. Liedke, 3.1394). The Septuagint renders the verb *špṭ* by *krinein* ("to judge") and the title *šōpēṭ* mostly with *kritēs* ("presiding judge"), though occasionally (e.g., Ex 2:14) with *dikastēs* ("a judge"). In Numbers 25:5, the Septuagint misreads *šōpēṭ* as *šēbet,*

which explains the rendition *phylē* ("tribe").

2. Judges as Agents.

The agent "judge" is designated by the substantivized participle *šōpēṭ;* the other two terms discussed below are usually rendered "judge," but there is still room for debate over their precise meaning.

2.1. Šōpēṭ. Genesis 18:25 portrays Yahweh as "the judge *[šōpēṭ]* of the whole world," as the one who renders "justice" *(mišpāṭ)* by punishing the "wicked" *(rāšāʿ)* and sparing the "righteous" *(ṣaddîq).* According to Exodus 2:14, Moses acted as an "arbitrator/judge" during a private dispute between two Hebrew slaves living in Egypt. Significantly, the term *šōpēṭ,* followed by the preposition *ʿal* ("over") rather than the more common *bên* ("between"), shows up here in parallel with *śar* ("prince"), thus emphasizing the "governing" connotation of the root *špṭ.* Later Moses addressed "Israel's judges" (*šōpĕṭê yiśrāʾēl,* Num 25:5), whose main duty was of a military nature. The "judges" (contrasted with the "leaders *[roʾšê]* of the people") were the executioners of Baal's worshipers. In Deuteronomy 1:16, Yahweh charges the "judges" *(šōpĕṭîm)* to listen to the parties and to render "justice" *(ṣedeq)* in cases concerning Israelites ("brothers," *ʾaḥîm*) or those involving an Israelite versus an "alien" *(gēr).* According to Deuteronomy 16:18, "judges" *(šōpĕṭîm),* in parallel with "officials" *(šōṭĕrîm;* scribes?), were to be appointed in all of Israel's "gates" (i.e., cities) for all the tribes. The juxtaposition of tribes and cities echoes the transition from tribal life to urban life in Israel's social structure. Finally, Deuteronomy 17:9, 12; 19:17 refer to a "judge" *(šōpēṭ)* who stood beside the *levitical *priests and whose main obligation was "to hold an inquiry" *(drš)* and deliver a "sentence" *(dĕbar hammišpāṭ).*

2.2. Pĕlîlîm. Exodus 21:22 refers to the price of restitution paid to the judges; according to E. S. Gerstenberger (10.613), the assumed meaning "to judge" for *pll* (cf. GesB 643-44; BDB, 813c; KBL, 881) is often questionable and perhaps influenced by our modern way of thinking. E. A. Speiser (303) argues for the idea of "estimation" (cf. Ex 21:22; MT: *bipĕlîlîm;* LXX: *meta axiōmatos* "according to estimate"; versus *Targum Onqelos:* "judge"). In Hittite Laws §17 one finds a similar example to that in Exodus, with one difference: in the apodosis the Hittite document assesses the "estimate." for the damaged embryo, while the OT text focuses on the husband's authority. The meaning "estimate," implied in the Hittite document, is supported by the Septuagint's rendition. In addition, the plural ending *-îm* on *pĕlîlîm* may indicate, as elsewhere in Hebrew, an abstract noun. At Deuteronomy 32:31, the KJV, JPS and RSV offer the translation "our enemies *[ʾōyĕbênû]* themselves being judges," but according to Speiser (303), the Hebrew may be rendered "Even in our enemies' estimation." Note also that the Septuagint reads *anoētoi:* "(our enemies are) without understanding."

2.3. ʾĔlōhîm. Exodus 21:6, a text that belongs to the *book of the covenant, more precisely to the section dealing with slaves, stipulates that a slave who does not want to be freed is to be brought by his master "before the judge [literally, God]" *(ʾel ʾĕlōhîm)* and then to the door. The Septuagint renders this phrase *pros to kritērion tou theou* ("to the judgment seat of God"), but according to Schmidt (1.118), here *ʾĕlōhîm* designates rather the household gods as the protectors of the family (cf. Gen 31:30). Similarly, Exodus 22:8 states that an owner of a house accused of stealing items entrusted to him by a neighbor was to come into the presence of the "judge" (*ʾĕlōhîm,* 22:7 MT) declaring his innocence. The Septuagint reads *enōpion tou theou* ("in the presence of God"), and Exodus 22:9 broadens the legislation to state that in cases of disputed ownership both parties were to present their cases before the "judge" (*ʾĕlōhîm,* 22:8 MT). According to this verse the "judge" was to pronounce the verdict. In each case the Septuagint translates the Hebrew with *theos* ("God"), as do the Targum, Peshitta, Aquila and Symmachus (as they also do in Ex 18:19; 1 Sam 2:25; Ps 82:1). The evidence for reading *ʾĕlōhîm* as "judge" is therefore not compelling.

3. Conclusion.

Summing up, one may notice that in the Pentateuch Yahweh is described as "the judge of the whole world" (Gen 18:25); in this capacity, God delegates to certain individuals the responsibility to administer justice.

Prior to the monarchic regime, the administration of justice was done by the head of the household (Gen 16:1-6; 31:25-53; 38:24-26) or elders as the representatives of the families in the clan (*zĕqēnîm,* Deut 22:16; 25:7, 9). The elders used to sit in front of the city gate, where the

cases were judged (Gen 23:10, 18, noting that these are non-Israelites and are not identified as elders); expressions such as "the elders at the gate of the town" (Deut 21:19) and "the elders of the town" (Deut 21:3, 6) reflect this custom. The elders imposed the penalty (Deut 22:18-19), though in the case of capital punishment this was to be carried out by the witnesses against the accused or by all the men of the town (Deut 17:7; 21:18-21).

The appointment of officials as "judges" *(šōpĕtîm)* can be traced in Exodus 18:13-27; an earlier echo of this tradition is found in Exodus 2:14. These officials appointed by Moses are the prototypes of the professional judges in Israel. Texts such as Deuteronomy 16:18; 17:8-13 refer to the centralization of jurisdiction to the capital and cities: judges are to be installed in every city. In Deuteronomy 17:9; 19:17, priests appear beside judges, and a priestly jurisdiction should be assumed.

The first responsibility of a judge was to render "justice" *(mišpāt)*: to punish the wicked and save the righteous (Gen 18:25); "to give one a fair hearing" (*šāpaṭ ṣedeq*, Deut 1:16). But the most important duty of any judge was to restore the peaceful situation that existed prior to the conflict (Gen 16:5; 19:9; Ex 2:14); hence their basic function was that of arbitrators (cf. Mafico, 3.1105).

See also LEADERSHIP, ELDERS.

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JUSTICE. *See* ETHICS.

KIDNAPPING. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

KING, LAW OF. *See* DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

KINSHIP. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

L

LABAN. *See* JACOB.

LAMPSTAND. *See* TABERNACLE.

LAND, FALLOW. *See* SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE

Land is an important theme in the Pentateuch and has even been described as "*the central theme* of biblical faith" (Brueggemann, 3). The theme is prominent in all five books of the Pentateuch and impinges on other main themes such as *blessing and descendants. N. Habel suggests that land is such an important and comprehensive symbol in the OT that "it could be ranked next to God in importance" (Habel, 6).

1. Vocabulary Related to Land Issues
2. Divine Sovereignty over Land
3. Relationships Between People and Land
4. The Patriarchs and the Promised Land
5. The Significance of the Exodus and the Wilderness Wanderings
6. Israel's Occupation of Canaan
7. Regulations Concerning Land
8. Conclusion

1. Vocabulary Related to Land Issues.

The main Hebrew words denoting "land" in Genesis are *'ereṣ*, *'ădāmâ* and *śādeh*. Although the terms are often used synonymously, each has its own particular emphasis. The word *'ereṣ* occurs most frequently. It occasionally denotes "ground" (Gen 18:2; Ex 4:3; Deut 15:23) but usually refers to large stretches of territory such as a particular region or country (Gen 12:1, 5; 17:8; Ex 2:15; Lev 11:45; Num 13:2) or to the earth as a whole (Gen 1:1; 2:1; 6:4; 11:1; Deut 28:25); *'ădāmâ* may denote the habitable earth (Gen 12:3; Deut 14:2) or a particular country (Gen 47:20), but most occurrences refer to the soil or the ground (Gen 2:5, 7, 19; 3:17, 19, 23; 4:2, 3, 10; Ex 3:5; Lev 20:25; Deut 4:18). Occasionally *śādeh* denotes a particular country (Gen 14:7), but usually it refers to cultivated land (Gen 37:7; Ex 9:22; 10:5; Num 16:14; Deut 11:15) or to the open countryside (Gen 2:19, 20; 3:1, 14; 25:27, 29; Ex 23:11; Deut 22:25). Thus *śādeh* is used, for example, in relation to the land that *Abraham bought from the Hittites (Gen 23:8-20).

2. Divine Sovereignty over Land.

God is cast in the roles of Creator and "supreme landlord" in the Pentateuch. The land owes its existence to him, and he creates its inhabitants, continually monitoring and supervising their behavior. He allocates land to people: *Adam is placed in *Eden (Gen 2:8), Canaan is promised to the *Israelites (Gen 15:16-21) and there are references to the allocation of land to the Edomites (Deut 2:5), Moabites (Deut 2:9) and Ammonites (Deut 2:19). Conversely, he removes people from land when they do not behave in a worthy manner: he expels Adam and *Eve from Eden (Gen 3:23-24), scatters the tower builders over all the earth (Gen 11:8) and earmarks the Canaanites for expulsion from their land when the level of their sinfulness warrants it (Gen 15:16).

The sovereignty of God over land is revealed in the *exodus of Israel from *Egypt. The plagues demonstrate that "the earth *['ereṣ]* is the LORD's" (Ex 9:29; cf. 19:5) and that he is Lord in all the earth/land (Ex 9:14). In the account of each plague its effect on the land is prominent. For example, there is blood in all the *land* of Egypt (Ex 7:19, 21), the frogs cover the *land* (Ex 8:6) and flies destroy the *land* (Ex 8:20-24). Furthermore, as a result of the plagues the Lord's name is proclaimed throughout the land/earth (Ex 9:16).

While Egypt is referred to as *Pharaoh's land, it is clear that his is a subservient role, and although Pharaoh does not recognize Yahweh's authority, he nevertheless has to yield to it and accede to his demands when Yahweh passes through his land and strikes it (Ex 12:12-13).

3. Relationships Between People and Land.
Land and people are portrayed in a close interdependent relationship. This is initiated when God, having already commanded the ground to bring forth vegetation, uses the soil *(ʾădāmâ)* as the material for the creation of humankind (*ʾādām*). Although there is probably no etymological link between *ʾādām* and *ʾădāmâ*, the close relationship between human beings and the ground is emphasized by this wordplay. This assertion, that the man is made from clay, elevates the ground while reminding human beings of their innate vulnerability; not only do they come from the ground, but when they die they return to it as mere dust (Gen 3:19). The close relationship that humans have with the ground means that they are obliged to care for it and enabled to reap its benefits (Gen 2:16), but it also means that anything adverse that affects the ground/land strikes deeply at the very basis of their existence.

Human beings are instructed to fill and subdue the earth (Gen 1:28). The word used for subduing *(kābaš)* the earth means "to make subservient, to establish one's authority." It is used to describe what the Israelites must do when they enter Canaan (Num 32:29) and emphasizes that the creator has delegated control and authority over the created order into the hands of human beings.

The relationship between land and its inhabitants is contingent on good relations between humans and God. When humans are alienated from God there are significant repercussions, because God uses the land to punish his recalcitrant subjects. Misdemeanors as diverse as eating "forbidden" fruit (Gen 3:17-19), fratricide (Gen 4:10-16) and building a tower without divine approval (Gen 11:5-9) are all punished in relation to land. As a result, the ground is cursed (Gen 3:17-19), thorns and thistles make the ground more difficult to cultivate and less productive (cf. Gen 5:29), human beings must still work the soil but the benefits they receive are greatly reduced (Gen 3:19, 23), and the harmony established at *creation is replaced by alienation culminating in the expulsion of the human beings from the idyllic surroundings of the garden of Eden (Gen 3:24). The account of the fratricide perpetrated by *Cain shows that crimes such as murder could result in further alienation from the ground and in a total loss of fertility of the ground. The final crime in the primeval narratives is that of the tower builders whose insubordination results in them being scattered over all the earth.

In these early stories fertile land is a gift from God and a sign of his *blessing while infertility (famine) may be a consequence of divine displeasure. While later famines in the Pentateuch are not explicitly described as punishment from God, they clearly imply the absence of blessing and suggest that the lands so afflicted are not blessed with divine favor (Gen 12:10; 26:1). Fertile soil and secure boundaries, however, are evidence of divine favor and blessing (Gen 26:12-33).

4. The Patriarchs and the Promised Land.
Until the call of *Abraham there is a progressive deterioration in the relationship between God and human beings with the concomitant repercussions in relation to land. However, the call of Abraham represents a turning point. Beginning with the Abraham narratives the movement is toward a harmonious relationship with God in the Promised Land. Adam is expelled from Eden because of his disobedience; Abraham must be obedient in order to receive the land of *promise. At first the promise of land is fairly vague and is introduced to Abraham as "the land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). However, the promises become more explicit as the narrative develops (Gen 12:7; 13:15-17), and eventually God makes a clear, unequivocal oath to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his descendants (Gen 15:12-21). These promises go hand in hand with a harmonious relationship between God and Abraham: God speaks to him and Abraham listens and obeys (Gen 12:1-6; 22:1-3); he builds *altars and calls on the name of the Lord (Gen 12:7-8); he fears God (Gen 22:12) and walks before the Lord (Gen 24:40).

Following Abraham's death, the promise of land passes to *Isaac (Gen 26:2-3) and then to *Jacob (Gen 28:13-15). Eventually Jacob and his family leave Canaan during a famine and live in Egypt, but they leave with the assurance that their descendants will return and take possession of it (Gen 46:1-4). Through the leadership of *Moses the return toward the Promised Land

begins (Ex 12:31-39). The movement toward land is accompanied by divine revelations and legislation that facilitates harmonious relations between Israel and God (Ex 20—31; 35—40; Lev 1—7; 11—26; Num 5—10; 15; 18—19; 28—30; Deut 4—30). Thus in the primeval narrative humankind had moved away from God and, consequently, from secure land. The reverse happens in the remainder of the Pentateuch as first the patriarchs and then their descendants move closer to the Promised Land.

5. The Significance of the Exodus and the Wilderness Wanderings.

The continuity between the promise of land to the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt is often emphasized (Ex 3:8; 6:4, 8; 12:24-25; Deut 1:8, 21; 31:7, 21). The differences between the new land and the land of Egypt are described. Egypt is a land that is irrigated "by foot" (perhaps a reference to the way that water channels were regulated using small mud dams built up or breached by the feet of the farmer). However, the land of Canaan is a "land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, a land that the LORD your God looks after" (Deut 11:10-12). Israel's need to rely on God, whether in the *wilderness or in the Promised Land is highlighted by this contrast.

One of the main crises that threatens possession of the land is the Israelites' refusal to enter Canaan following the report of the spies. Returning to their camp with a huge cluster of grapes, the spies dramatically confirm that the depiction "flowing with milk and honey" aptly describes the land of Canaan (Num 13:27), but most also argue that it will be impossible for Israel to conquer the country (Num 13:28-33). They fail to give sufficient credence to the truth that this land is being given to them by God and instead they focus on their inability to conquer the country. Further ingratitude toward God is evidenced in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Ironically, they accuse Moses of bringing them "up out of a land flowing with milk and honey" into a wilderness (Num 16:13). Their punishment is apt: the earth/land swallows them (Num 16:31-33).

Condemned to wander in the wilderness the Israelites are dependent on the providential supplies of water and *food. The wilderness cannot provide for them, and it serves as a foil for the fertile land. Just as the shortcomings of characters such as Cain and *Lot highlight the roles played by *Abel and Abraham respectively, the inadequacy of the wilderness enhances the attractiveness and desirability of the Promised Land. The wilderness is a negative and hostile place (Num 20:4-5). It stands in sharp contrast to the fertile garden of Eden and to the Promised Land of Canaan. The Promised Land is characterized by its fertility. It is a good land (Deut 1:25) that is endowed with flourishing cities, houses, wells, vineyards and olive groves (Deut 6:10-11). It is a land "where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper" (Deut 8:9-10).

6. Israel's Occupation of Canaan.

The occupation of Canaan is portrayed as a divine gift to an unworthy people. It is Israel's *naḥălâ*. This word is usually translated "inheritance" in the English versions, but the idea of passing on property at death is not always prominent in the Pentateuch. Habel argues that the gift of a *naḥălâ* to Israel "seems to be equivalent to a legal grant of land or property" (Habel, 35). Thus terms such as "land-grant" or "entitlement" may convey the sense of the Hebrew better than "inheritance."

On the other hand, paradoxically, the land that is given to Israel as a land-grant or entitlement must be occupied and retained through obedience and conquest. These apparently contradictory aspects of Israel's occupation of Canaan are presented as two compatible aspects of Israel's relationship with God. Through this relationship the gift of land is realized but obedience is required for the maintenance of the relationship without which the gift will be withheld or withdrawn.

The occupation of the land of Canaan is associated with *"rest" (Ex 33:14; Deut 3:20; 12:9-10; 25:19; 28:65). From the time God curses the ground and expels human beings from Eden, they long for rest (Gen 5:29). Egypt and Israel's sojourn there epitomized hard labor, and the wilderness is a place of restless wandering. The acquisition of the Promised Land, while not explicitly described as a return to Edenic bliss, gives Israel the rest and security that was endemic to paradise. This rest is not just understood in the negative sense of no longer needing to wander but also denotes security and safety from one's enemies (Deut 25:19). In the NT this concept is developed and associated

with a *sabbath rest (Heb 4:9).

7. Regulations Concerning Land.
In preparation for taking possession of the Promised Land, the Israelites are warned that the behavior of its inhabitants will affect the land. The Israelites must treat the land with respect and not defile it with vile practices, as the previous inhabitants did (Lev 18:25). In their pursuit of good harvests the Canaanites practiced promiscuous fertility rites. This brought the inhabitants into confrontation with God and also alienated them from their land. The land is portrayed as having been nauseated by its inhabitants. Like a person who has eaten something disagreeable, it vomits them out (Lev 18:28).

The gift of the land to Israel is explained in terms calculated to engender a sense of respect and humility: it is not because Israel is righteous that they receive the good land but because the previous inhabitants were wicked and because of God's close relationship with the patriarchs (Deut 9:4-6). To remain in the land and to enjoy longevity, the Israelites must subject themselves to God's will as their forefathers had done (Deut 4:40; 5:33; 11:2; 32:47).

The tripartite relationship between God, humans and land in the garden of Eden portrays the ideal for which Israel must aim. In Eden God's presence was openly manifest, and there was communion with him. There were laws to be kept concerning the land, and people had certain responsibilities in relation to caring for it and exercising control over it (Gen 2:15-17). Failure to obey God led to expulsion from Eden. It is against this background of the rebellion and subsequent punishment of the first humans that the laws and regulations are given in the Pentateuch. It is recognized that humans will receive the best benefits from land when they live in harmony with God. Israel is not chosen simply in order to receive a special promise of land but to have a special relationship with God within the secure boundaries of Canaan. Relationships with land and God are, therefore, interdependent. The Promised Land reflects the ideal conditions in Eden and replicates significant aspects of the primeval paradise. Like Eden, the Promised Land is a place of fertility where God's laws are respected and his presence manifest. The erection of the *tabernacle and the giving of the ceremonial *laws that are so prominent in the Pentateuch are an essential part of the preparation for living in the Promised Land, since harmony with God is the paramount requirement for those desiring fertility from the ground. However, although Israel's settlement in Canaan is presented as reminiscent of Eden, it is not presented as equal with Eden. Canaan does not fully replicate the uninhibited communion with God or the harmony and fertility that were endemic in the primeval garden.

The laws regarding the sabbatical year that are given in the wilderness (Lev 25:1-55) would seem harsh if they were given to people already reaping the benefits of *agricultural land. In the wilderness setting, however, the emphasis is not on how much God is taking from them, since they have no agricultural land, but on how much he is giving them. God is giving them fertile land for six years. In the seventh year they must leave it fallow. This recognizes that they have responsibility to treat the land well. Just as the sabbath laws for human beings recognize their right to rest, now Israel must recognize that the land has the right to a sabbath rest, though not every seventh day but every seventh year. Furthermore, the sabbatical year reminds them that the land ultimately belongs to Yahweh.

When the people are blessed with fertile land, they are to avoid greediness and dishonesty. Their generosity should be apparent in the way they harvest their crops. They are commanded to leave some of their crops in the fields so that food will be available to the poor and needy who have no land of their own (Lev 19:9-10; cf. Ruth 2). Furthermore, when buying or selling, their weights and measures should be fair and accurate (Lev 19:35-36). They should always remember that the Lord who makes these stipulations is the one who brought them out of their poverty and slavery in Egypt (Lev 19:36). They should acknowledge the Lord's sovereign right to the land by the symbolic act of a *priest presenting a sheaf of the first grain harvested (Lev 23:9-10).

The law also makes provision for the redemption of land so that if a person is forced to sell land, it can be bought back (redeemed) for the family by a relative (Lev 25:24). In cases where land is not redeemed, it is safeguarded by the prohibition of permanent land sales. The maximum lease was forty-nine years, since every fiftieth year the land returns to its original owner. The *Levites are not permitted an allocation of land (Deut 10:9). A consequence of this ruling is that they need suitable housing and pasture for

their animals (Num 35:1-5). This is not regarded as a land-grant but as the minimum provision for the flocks and herds. In the laws about the Jubilee year, there are special provisions to protect the rights of the Levites (Lev 25:32-34).

Since land and justice are clearly related, there are laws about bloodshed. In the event of accidental death, the perpetrator can escape the vengeance of the family of the deceased by taking refuge in certain cities nominated for this purpose (Num 35:6-29). However, unpunished murder defiles and pollutes the land and requires atonement, which can only be provided by the *blood of the murderer (Num 35:30-34). As T. Frymer-Kensky observes, "The most serious contaminant of the land is the blood of those who have been murdered. . . . Because of the seriousness of the crime of murder, and perhaps also because of the mystical conception of blood in Israelite thought, the blood of the slain physically pollutes the land" (Frymer-Kensky, 154). Failure to obey God's laws within the covenant obligations and failure to treat the land properly will be severely punished: their rain will turn to dust and powder; they will be scattered over the earth; their land will be burned out by sulfur and salt (Deut 28:24, 64; 29:19-23).

8. Conclusion.

The primeval narratives describe how humankind became alienated from God and brought a curse on the land. The restoration of harmonious relationships between God, people and land required the direct intervention of God (Gen 3:15). The role of Abraham was particularly significant. Through Abraham and his descendants God enabled the harmony between himself and the human population of the earth to be renewed. The Promised Land is to some extent a return to Eden. While the Israelites are obedient and live in harmony with God, they will enjoy Eden-like relationships with both God and the land: the Lord will send rain on their land, and it will yield abundant produce (Lev 26:4-5), and he will walk among them (Lev 26:12). If, on the other hand, they disobey, their land will be infertile and will be afflicted with pestilence (Lev 26:20). If they persist in their disobedience, they will be driven from the land and scattered among the nations (Lev 26:31-35).

See also BORDERS; CREATION; EDEN, GARDEN OF; REST, PEACE; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

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J. McKeown

LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH

The scope of this article includes three parts: a discussion of the history of languages in and around Palestine during the third and second millennia B.C., a consideration of the grammar and style of the Pentateuch's language in comparison with Classical Hebrew, and a study of those linguistic elements within the Pentateuch that might relate it to the period in which the narratives and events recorded in Genesis through Deuteronomy claim to have taken place.

1. The Language World of the Pentateuch
2. The Language of the Pentateuch
3. Connections Between the Language of the Pentateuch and Its Historical Context

1. The Language World of the Pentateuch.

By way of introduction, some sense of inner biblical *chronology is important. Although not the only crucial text, 1 Kings 6:1 is one of the most significant:

> In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD. (RSV)

Although the exact interpretation of the 480 years is open to debate (either literally 480 or symbolically twelve generations and thus about three hundred years), the Bible understands Solomon to have been active in the middle of the tenth century B.C. and the exodus to have taken place at least three centuries prior to his reign. Since the events of Exodus through Deuteron-

omy purport to have taken place within a generation (forty years) of the time of the exodus, they should fall sometime between the fifteenth century B.C. and the end of the thirteenth century B.C. This period is identified with the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C., although the end of the Late Bronze Age is now dated by many a few decades later than 1200). Further, texts such as Genesis 15:13, 16 suggest that the period of the patriarchs in Genesis occurred a few centuries before the exodus, or during the first half of the second millennium B.C. This period (2000-1550 B.C.) is known as the Middle Bronze Age. It is likely that it includes the period from Abraham through *Joseph. The events of Genesis 1—11 confound attempts to relate them to historical events or periods outside the Bible, but they are obviously intended to occur before the time of Abraham.

Geographically, the earliest biblical connections we have place Abram and his larger family in northern Syria at the site of *Haran in the Balikh River Valley, one of the rivers that feeds into the Euphrates. Although *Ur is also mentioned, it does not appear associated with Abram's family, nor is it where his servant goes to find a wife for *Isaac nor where *Jacob flees to his uncle Laban. The places of Terah's death, of Rebekah's homeland and of Laban's household are all located in and around *Haran. In Genesis 12, the scene shifts to Palestine and remains there until the events of Joseph's life, when the family of Israel moves southwest to *Egypt. They leave Egypt at the time of the exodus and journey into the wilderness on their way to Canaan (Palestine).

Egyptian (the language written in hieroglyphic script) remained the dominant language in Egypt throughout these periods. In all other places mentioned, the dominant language was actually a family of languages or dialects known as West Semitic (or Northwest Semitic, as some would designate it). West Semitic is one of three major branches of the Semitic language family. The other two are East Semitic and South Semitic. South Semitic is not well attested before the Christian era, although it occurs earlier as Epigraphic South Arabic. Later it includes Classical Arabic and Ethiopic (initially, Ge'ez). East Semitic is attested throughout this period in the form of its two major dialects: Babylonian and Assyrian. Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian occur predominantly in texts from the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 B.C.), while Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian are found in texts of the Late Bronze Age (1550-1000 B.C.). Since East Semitic, or Akkadian, as it is better known, was the lingua franca for the Middle East throughout much of the second millennium B.C., important archives of Akkadian cuneiform texts have been discovered in some major sites in or near the world of the patriarchs and the West Semitic world in general. These include Mari on the Euphrates (c. eighteenth century B.C.), Alalakh on the Hatay plain (two archives from about the eighteenth and fifteenth centuries), Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast (fifteenth to early twelfth centuries B.C.), Emar between Ugarit and Mari (thirteenth century B.C.) and Amarna in Egypt (fourteenth century B.C.), the latter being a collection of correspondence that includes letters from town leaders and Egyptian bureaucrats throughout Palestine and Syria (and further afield). Although many of the texts in these archives share in the Old Babylonian style of writing (even those that are Late Bronze Age), they also contain important West Semitic influences.

Attestations of the West Semitic language may predate the second millennium B.C. Excavations at another site in northwest Syria, Tell Mardikh, have yielded thousands of tablets from the ancient city of Ebla. These texts describe events at the city in the twenty-fourth century B.C. Many appear to be written in a language that has been identified as Eblaite and classified as West Semitic on the basis of some roots and morphological elements, as well as the site's location in the region of later West Semitic archives. More than two decades after its initial discovery, the style of the cuneiform and the absence of parallels continue to make translation of these texts a challenge. Therefore, little information is available about the Eblaite language or West Semitic in the third millennium B.C.

In the early second millennium B.C. (Middle Bronze), evidence of the West Semitic language is found in texts from Mari and Alalakh (Level VII). The language has been called Amorite, although it is more accurately described as a collection of dialects. It is not directly related to any of the OT Amorites, who come from a different region and tend to date to a later period. No text written in Amorite from this period has yet been found. Instead, all evidence of Amorite derives from the personal names of West Semitic peoples who are mentioned in these texts, otherwise written in Old Babylonian. The names in these

texts identify West Semitic name-bearers contemporary with the patriarchs and their families as found in Genesis 12—50. In addition, two contemporary sets of Execration texts from Egypt contain personal names of various leaders in Syria and Palestine. There are also names of Hyksos preserved on seals from the time these West Semitic peoples influenced and ruled Lower Egypt (i.e., c. 1750-1550 B.C.). Finally, there are names occurring in a variety of Old Babylonian cuneiform tablets found at tells scattered throughout Palestine and Syria, such as Hebron, Hazor and elsewhere.

The period of much of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and of the exodus and wilderness wanderings saw the development of the alphabet, a West Semitic invention. Although possibly originating in the previous era, this new invention flourished and became a vehicle for the communication of West Semitic dialects during the Late Bronze Age. At Ugarit it was translated into a cuneiform script, even though, with fewer than thirty different signs, it was far easier to learn than the syllabic Akkadian script, which used hundreds of different signs and values. In the Sinai peninsula and in Palestine itself alphabetic scripts developed on the basis of sign forms that would form the foundation for the Aramean and Canaanite alphabetic scripts of the first millennium B.C. In the western Sinai at the turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadem, West Semitic workers left graffiti inscribed on the monuments in Proto-Sinaitic alphabetic script. In Canaan, including the areas of the modern lands of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon, arrowheads inscribed with West Semitic personal names use the Proto-Canaanite writing system. Abecedaries such as those at Beth-shemesh (c. 1200 B.C.) and Izbet Sartah (twelfth to eleventh century B.C.) give evidence of an increased interest in and use of alphabetic writing systems. If one assumes a thirteenth-century date for Israel's exodus from Egypt, this form of writing would have been known to the generation of Moses.

One of the most important sources for the West Semitic language can be found in the Amarna correspondence. Although writing in Akkadian, the fourteenth-century B.C. scribes from places such as Byblos, Tyre, Shechem and Jerusalem were heavily influenced by local Canaanite dialects and betray this linguistic influence in the vocabulary, morphology, syntax and style of their correspondence. These glosses and "linguistic (sub)strata" bring the reader closer than any other extant texts to the language of Israel at the time of the exodus. These were the precursors (albeit indirect) to the West Semitic languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite and Edomite that emerged in the first millennium B.C.

In addition to Egyptian, two other non-Semitic languages were used in the second millennium B.C. and had an impact on the Pentateuch. One is Hittite, an Indo-European language that was used by the Hittites who lived in modern-day central Turkey. A second is Hurrian. This unique language was spoken by inhabitants of northern Syria in the land of Mitanni. The country was annexed to the Hittite realm in the fourteenth century B.C. Special elements of Hurrian culture and family customs are preserved in the texts from archives at Nuzi and Alalakh. Hurrian personal names are also found there and in all the second-millennium B.C. archives. Hurrian cultural and onomastic influence waned in the final centuries of the second millennium and disappeared altogether after the tenth century B.C. (on the basis of present evidence).

2. The Language of the Pentateuch.

As a preface to this part of the study, it might be observed that grammars of biblical (or classical) Hebrew do not distinguish the Hebrew of the Pentateuch from that found elsewhere in the OT. Therefore, it is neither useful nor necessary to distinguish between the orthography, morphology, syntax and style common to both the Pentateuch and the remainder of the Hebrew Bible. The basis for this grammar has already been laid and can be found in the standard reference grammars of Gesenius, Joüon, Waltke and O'Connor, and van der Merwe.

However, it is legitimate to consider whether there are any distinctive elements found in the Pentateuch that might set it apart from the grammar of the remainder of biblical Hebrew. Unfortunately, no comprehensive studies of this question exist. However, recent research has isolated significant features of orthography, morphology and syntax that are distinctive to the Pentateuch. In part, this study has emerged from questions raised by the Documentary Hypothesis (*see* Source Criticism) and more recent theories that locate most or all of the pentateuchal literature in the later part of the first millennium B.C.

In this context distinctive grammatical items have been thought to demonstrate the appearance of archaic forms that can be argued as evidence for an earlier date to the Pentateuch. Again, the common appearance of these forms in a variety of literary genres in the Pentateuch has been thought to demonstrate the uniform nature and origin of various texts that have been ascribed to a variety of source documents or redactional layers. However, such evidence is supportive at best. Even the appearance of demonstrably archaic forms cannot prove the age of a text that could have been subject to archaizing tendencies. Nevertheless, the presence of these forms, if they can be shown to exist, does question the validity of either a Documentary Hypothesis or a Persian/Hellenistic origins theory insofar as these dispute clear and conscious links with great antiquity.

Radday and Shore's 1985 study of the authorship of Genesis used dozens of grammatical and syntactical features to tag each of the words studied from that book. They concluded, based upon a computer analysis of all the data, that the Documentary Hypothesis was invalid insofar as the analysis failed to indicate distinctive styles for each of the putative documents. However, Forbes (199-201) has severely criticized the method from numerous angles. For example, their assignment of texts of Genesis to various sources created source divisions that were unrecognizable, that is, at least thirty percent at variance with those found in Eissfeldt's divisions. Further, a random check of the data and the categories leads to evidence of some confusion and inaccuracy. Finally, Forbes is not persuaded that multiplying categories of syntactic tagging has increased the accuracy of the conclusion.

The work of Andersen and Forbes (1986) in analyzing the spelling patterns of the Hebrew Bible demonstrated an awareness of the weaknesses and strengths of the statistical method. Nevertheless, it examined plene and defective spellings of internal vowels in the Pentateuch. Among their conclusions they noted that all the texts from the Pentateuch clustered within one group that was distinct from the remainder of the Hebrew Bible. These spelling patterns were described by Andersen and Forbes as "old fashioned." The possible explanations of this phenomenon are summarized by Forbes (202):

> Perhaps the manuscripts of this part of the Bible came from a different community, one with different spelling practices than the source of the rest. Perhaps it enjoyed greater veneration and so resisted modernization. Perhaps it is older than the rest.

Of these possibilities, the first seems least likely due to the historic and ancient authority accorded to the Pentateuch. The second and third may both be true. The random nature of the use of vowel letters throughout the Masoretic Text has been noted by James Barr, the most severe critic of this study (Barr 1988). Nevertheless, his arguments do not succeed in overturning the methodological soundness of the analysis (Forbes, 204).

3. Connections Between the Language of the Pentateuch and Its Historical Context.

As noted above, the language of the Pentateuch is similar to that of the remainder of the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of a tendency to spell words with fewer vowel letters. This seems to betray a greater antiquity. However, the *absence* of distinctive features within the grammar of the Pentateuch, features that can definitely be recognized as possessing greater antiquity than the remainder of the Hebrew Bible, implies one of three possibilities: (1) the entire Hebrew Bible was written at about the same time; (2) there is no history to the Hebrew language so that it did not change over a period of a thousand years of usage; or (3) the Pentateuch, though written earlier, was edited or updated at a later period so that its language would conform to that of the remainder of the Bible. The first option has been articulated by Whybray, who would date the Pentateuch's composition to the fifth century, and by Davies, who wishes to date it several centuries later in the Hellenistic period. This option must remain plausible unless one can identify other elements in the text to argue an earlier date to the pentateuchal traditions. In fact, there are a variety of pieces of evidence to suggest an early date for books in the Pentateuch. The concern here is with the linguistic evidence noted below.

The second option is the least likely one. Not only would it make Hebrew unique among the living languages of the world, it would also contradict the evidence already cited in the study of Andersen and Forbes.

The third option is both reasonable and likely. If true, it would suggest that evidence for an earlier dating of the Hebrew text may have been lost in the process of transmission. This should not be the case with some of the poetry

in the Pentateuch, where updating the text would necessarily destroy poetic forms and possibly rhythm and meter. Along these lines, Cross and Freedman have suggested that early verbal forms (*yaqtul* forms) are used in the poem of Exodus 15 to describe the past narrative tense. These forms do not occur either in the later poetry or in the narrative passages of the OT. They do occur in abundance, however, in the fourteenth-century Amarna letters from Palestine (Rainey, 222-27, passim). Thus, here one finds a morphological feature implying a second-millennium B.C. date for some of the poetry in the Pentateuch.

This raises a related question: Is there any linguistic evidence embedded in the *prose* narratives of the Pentateuch that might suggest an earlier date for this literature? The most useful material is to be found in the proper names. These alone would not be updated or altered but preserved in their original form, sometimes to the point that some of the understanding behind them was lost to posterity. Not every proper name is relevant, of course, for there are many personal names, place names and people names that occur in many or all periods in which scholars have supposed that the Pentateuch could have been written. Still, one can point to certain lines of evidence that suggest an earlier date for the Pentateuch.

Two examples from place names may be given. First, there is the reference to Shinar, first mentioned in Genesis 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9. Although previous scholars identified this place name with Sumer, Zadok has related Shinar to a name for Babylonia and its foreign rulers used by the Hittites and others in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.), namely, Shanḫar. If this correlation is correct, then it argues for an origin to this name and its associated text in the second millennium B.C., since the name does not occur later in the cuneiform record. However, Shinar also occurs in Joshua 7:21; Isaiah 11:11; Daniel 1:2; and Zechariah 5:11. Except for the Joshua reference, these must all come from a later period.

A second place name comes from the opposite end of the Fertile Crescent, Rameses in Egypt. This is one of the store cities that the Israelites built, according to Exodus 1:11 (Heb Raamses). Exodus 4—14 describe events that place the *pharaoh's capital, the location of the Israelites and the best of pharaoh's army in the vicinity of each other. From c. 1300 to c. 1100 B.C. Pi-Ramesse (or Piramesse) was an Egyptian capital in the eastern Delta where Apiru slaves worked on building it. After this period it was no longer an important city and ceased to be the capital (Hoffmeier, 116-18). Therefore, the use of the place name Rameses connects this site with the latter part of the second millennium B.C. but not later (*see* Exodus, Date of).

In addition to place names, personal names play an important role in identifying the linguistic and cultural influences behind the people and literature of the Pentateuch. While some names occur in various times, others are limited to particular ages and places. One name by itself may not prove much, but the cumulative evidence of many personal names may point to a common origin for the names and the texts in which they are found. Thus the personal names in Genesis 1—11 accord best with the earliest period of well-attested West Semitic, the Amorite language(s), and the personal names and place names (in the case of *Shem's genealogy) found in north Syria (Hess 1993). *Adam, Methuselah, Methushael and Jabal are names containing West Semitic roots that occur in personal names in the early second millennium B.C. and gradually disappear toward the end of that millennium. Names in Shem's genealogy, such as *Terah, *Nahor, Serug and *Haran, are best identified as place names located in and around Haran in northern Syria.

Genesis 14:1, 9 mention a king Tidal, who has been identified with Tudḫaliyas, a royal name in the Hittite dynasty that flourished in the second millennium B.C. and disappeared shortly after 1200. The name was not used again.

Several of the patriarchs preserve a distinctive style of personal names, those that are formed by a verbal element beginning with a *yōd* prefix in Hebrew (Kitchen, 57, 90, 92). Examples include Isaac and Jacob (a form of which is reflected in the Hyksos name Ya'qub-'al). This style of personal name is most frequent in the Amorite names of Mari and other early second millennium B.C. sites. It becomes more rare as one moves into the Late Bronze Age and is highly unusual in the Iron Age.

Again, various names of the exodus era are Egyptian names or contain Egyptian elements found in names of the thirteenth century B.C. These include Moses, Phinehas, Hophni,

Shiphrah and Puah (Yurco, 46-47). They are found less frequently later in the second millennium and rarely in the following periods.

Mention should also be made of the possible presence of Hurrian names and name elements among the personal names of the Pentateuch. Genesis 1—11 contains two examples. The first occurs in the line of Cain: Tubal-cain, mentioned in Genesis 4:22 as a forger of instruments of bronze and iron. Although it is possible that the "Tubal" part of the name may relate to a Semitic root found in the names Jabal and Jubal, also in Cain's line, it is now more likely that this is some sort of Hurrian gloss. This is because the Hurrian term *tubališ* means "metal smith" (Hess 1993, 52-53, 127).

A second example of a possible Hurrian name is found in the name of Noah. Although related by wordplay in Genesis 5:29 to the Hebrew verb *nāḥam* ("relief, comfort"), it also bears a close resemblance to the first part of the name of a figure who has been identified in the Hurrian flood story (Hess 1993, 29).

However, Hurrian names are not limited to the earliest accounts of Genesis. They also appear among personal names of the sons of Anak who are mentioned among the fearsome Canaanites residing in the region of Hebron (Num 13:22, 28, 33; Deut 9:2; Josh 15:13-14; 21:11; Judg 1:20; Hess 1996, 210-13). In Numbers 13:22 they are named Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai. Ahiman is likely a West Semitic name related to names from Ugarit such as *a-ḫi-ma-na* and *a-ḫi-ma-nu*. The name is not particularly significant for dating, since it occurs in a variety of eras, including the Persian period (1 Chron 9:17). However, Sheshai and Talmai are unusual. They are not West Semitic and do not occur later than the tenth century B.C. in or outside of the Bible. Sheshai occurs as *še-ša-a-a* in the major source for Hurrian personal names, the second-millennium B.C. site of Nuzi. At Ugarit it is written in alphabetic texts as *ššy*. Talmai also may be a Hurrian name. It appears at Nuzi in the form, *tal-mu-ia* and *tá-al-mu*. At Ugarit it appears as *tlmyn,* and in Late Bronze Age Alalakh there are many occurrences of *tal-ma* and *tal-mi-ia*. The name also is found in the tenth century as the king of Geshur and father-in-law of David (2 Sam 3:3; 13:37; 1 Chron 3:2).

As has been argued elsewhere (Hess 1996), the appearance of Hurrian names is significant. Outside the Bible these names occur in second-millennium B.C. texts but not in the first millennium. Within the Bible the same is true. The attestations of Hurrian names diminishes and disappears after the tenth century B.C.

Thus, despite the absence of clear grammatical features that would distinguish most of the language of the Pentateuch from the remainder of the Hebrew Bible, the personal names (and to a lesser extent the place names) provide indicators that correlate best with the second millennium B.C. It is not clear how these names can otherwise be explained. Further, their presence attests not only to an antiquity but also to a close correlation in place and time with what the surrounding narratives purport to describe. Thus the Egyptian context of the exodus produces Egyptian names from the Late Bronze Age. The generations immediately before and after Abraham yield names related to north Syria in the early second millennium B.C. Biblical traditions about the Anakim correlate with the influence of Hurrian onomastica in Late Bronze Age Canaan. This can hardly be coincidental or the product of a postexilic Jewish scribe grafting on an old list of names to a newly invented story. Further, these are not only personal names of major figures, such as Moses. In many cases the name-bearers are mentioned once or twice in the Bible and play a tertiary role in the narratives. Thus it is unlikely that these names would have been preserved outside the narratives in which they presently occur (Hess 1997). The agreement of the personal names with the periods that the narratives in which they are embedded purport to describe lends credence to the antiquity of the narratives themselves.

Finally, a note should be made regarding the theophoric elements in the construction of personal names in the Hebrew Bible and especially the Pentateuch. West Semitic names are often composed of elements that include a divine name. Sometimes these names are shortened by the omission of the divine name and its replacement by a hypocoristic suffix such as *-y*. In Hebrew personal names the *-yh* suffix could resemble a shortened form of the divine name, *yhwh*. If fact, this suffix and variants such as *-yhw* or *-yw*, became characteristic indicators of Israelite personal names in the first millennium B.C. They were compounded with the divine name of Israel's deity. It has been observed that these forms occur frequently in Israelite onomastica of the first millennium B.C., both within and out-

side the Bible. However, in the second millennium B.C. they are nowhere found affixed to names outside the Bible, with the possible exception of the prefix on the name *ywḥnn* found on an arrowhead and dated to the eleventh century B.C. (if correctly read by Cross; see Cross and citation there of original publications). This paucity of evidence is paralleled in personal names found in the Pentateuch. Andersen (50; see also de Moor) observes that in the Pentateuch there are no occurrences of personal names with the *-yhw* suffix and possibly one with the *-yh* suffix (Gen 36:24). Contrast this with 1 and 2 Kings, where there are 239 occurrences of personal names with the *-yhw* suffix and 82 with the *-yh* suffix (1 and 2 Chronicles have 269 and 219, respectively). The evidence suggests that the presence of Yahwistic suffixes on personal names distinguishes those narratives found throughout the Pentateuch from the later biblical narratives. Again, there is agreement with the onomastic evidence from the world outside the Bible.

See also BABEL; SOURCE CRITICISM; TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

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LAVER, BRONZE. *See* TABERNACLE.

LAW

"Law" in the OT is the usual translation of Hebrew *tôrâ,* but as is often the case with important words, the equation is not exact. The English concept of law is narrower than that represented by *tôrâ,* and discussion of both terms is complicated by the fact that neither can be confined to a single meaning. It is therefore important to seek to define these key terms as a preliminary to understanding the pentateuchal concept of law. To that end, this article will explore the relationship between law and *tôrâ,* especially in its distinctive literary, historical and theological aspects.

1. What Is *Tôrâ*?
2. Law and Its Historical Development
3. Theological Issues
4. The Purpose of *Tôrâ*
5. Interpretation of *Tôrâ*

1. What Is *Tôrâ*?

1.1. Tôrâ *and the Pentateuch.*

1.1.1. Tôrâ *as a Description of the Pentateuch.* Although both Jewish and Christian literature describe the Pentateuch as "the Law," this usage occurs in parts of the Bible outside the Pentateuch rather than in the Pentateuch itself. In

the NT, the Pentateuch is called "the law" (e.g., Mt 5:17-18), "the law of Moses" (e.g., Lk 2:22) or simply "Moses" (e.g., Lk 16:31; Acts 15:21). NT writers also use "the law" for the OT as a whole (cf. Jn 10:34 concerning Ps 82:6; 1 Cor 14:21 concerning Is 28:11-12). The OT has a number of comparable expressions, including "book of the law of Moses," "book of the law of God," the "law of Moses" or even simply "the law," though the latter phrase sometimes refers to the Pentateuch as a whole and sometimes to a particular section within the Pentateuch. In the light of this evidence, it seems that the designation "the Law" only emerged gradually as a title for the Pentateuch (*see* Source Criticism).

1.1.2. Uses of Tôrâ *in the Pentateuch. Tôrâ* occurs fifty-six times within the Pentateuch and is used in five different ways. It can refer to: (1) an individual pronouncement, (2) a group of laws on a single subject, (3) a particular collection of laws, (4) a general description for God's laws and (5) a combination of narrative and law.

(1) The use of *tôrâ* for an individual pronouncement is rare; it is probably restricted to Numbers 19:14, though it may also be found in Exodus 12:49 and Numbers 31:21. The corollary of this is that the normal referent of *tôrâ* (or the plural *tôrôt*) is a group of laws or *law* in general, not an individual command or instruction. (2) The use of *tôrâ* for a group of laws on a single subject is actually the commonest in the Pentateuch. It is particularly frequent in titles or summaries in Leviticus and Numbers, as for example with "the law of the Nazirites" (Num 6:13, 21) or "the law of the burnt offering" (Lev 6:9 [MT 6:2]). (3) *Tôrâ* as a description of a law collection only occurs twice, concerning the Ten Commandments (Ex 24:12; *see* Decalogue) and the laws of Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 31:9). Presumably it could also apply to other collections, though if it does, the usage in these two examples makes it likely that *tôrâ* refers to more than just God's commands. The Ten Commandments are more like basic principles than laws, and the phrase "this law" in Deuteronomy seems to refer to more than the laws of Deuteronomy 12—26 (see further 2.1 below). (4) The usage to describe God's laws in general always occurs in the plural (Heb *tôrôt*). It includes the sole mention of *tôrâ* in Genesis (Gen 26:5) as well as a few passages elsewhere in the Pentateuch (e.g., Ex 18:16; Deut 4:8). The main point in all these instances is that *tôrâ* comes from Yahweh. It describes what God has spoken by his own authority and refers to his commands or requirements in general. (5) Finally, *tôrâ* is used occasionally in Deuteronomy to refer to a combination of narrative and law. This special usage seems to be an intermediate stage that led eventually to the ascription of *tôrâ* to the whole Pentateuch (see 1.3 below). These last three uses clearly demonstrate that *tôrâ* means more than law, though it certainly includes the latter. We will now proceed to investigate the meaning of *tôrâ* more closely.

***1.2. The Meaning of the Word* Tôrâ.** The noun *tôrâ* is associated with the verb *hôrâ*, "to teach" (Hiphil form of *yārâ*). As a result of this connection, it is often assumed that the noun is derived from the verb and that *tôrâ* should accordingly be translated "teaching, instruction" (cf. HALOT). Some scholars find the original idea of teaching in *hôrâ* and *tôrâ* in the practice of extending a hand or finger to point in a particular direction (e.g., Östborn), but only on the basis that other alternatives are even less convincing. Since, however, it is impossible to be sure in which direction any borrowing between *hôrâ* and *tôrâ* took place or whether *tôrâ* is linked with this verb or with either of two other Hebrew verbs with the same spelling, it is extremely doubtful whether *tôrâ* can be defined on any etymological basis. Translations of *tôrâ* as "law" in the ancient versions and the NT (e.g., *nomos* in Greek) are also of only partial value in determining its meaning, since usage shows it has a wider reference than "law." History and tradition are therefore of only limited help in understanding the meaning of *tôrâ*.

A survey of the 220 occurrences of *tôrâ* throughout the OT reveals three main aspects to this word. It involves (1) teaching or instruction to be learned, (2) commands to be obeyed and (3) guidance about how to live in specific situations. These meanings can be distinguished by the verbs associated with *tôrâ*, by the context of those addressed and by the responses expected. Commands, for example, are normally expressed in the imperative or jussive mood. Teaching and commands are normally applicable to a range of contexts, whereas guidance usually belongs to a specific setting. Commands expect the response of obedience, whereas the possible responses to teaching and guidance are more varied. Only two of these three emphases are reflected in the Pentateuch, namely, teaching and commands. The explicit sense of *tôrâ* as

guidance is lacking in the Pentateuch, though it is associated with *tôrâ* in some legal passages such as Exodus 18:15-16 and Deuteronomy 17:8-13.

The idea of *tôrâ* as teaching is particularly prominent in Deuteronomy and Exodus. Deuteronomy emphasizes that *tôrâ* should pervade Israel's life from beginning to end. Having previously been nurtured on what Moses had taught (Deut 4:5, 8), Israel's life in the future should continue to conform to God's ways as taught by the priests and the judges (Deut 17:8-13; 31:9-12). Meanwhile in the present, Moses expounded the *tôrâ* as the basis of Israel's anticipated occupation of the Promised Land (cf. Deut 1:5). The verb used in Deuteronomy 1:5 (*bē'ēr*, "to expound," "to make the meaning plain") indicates the need for Israel to understand Moses' words rather than just hear them read. Exodus concentrates more on the idea that *tôrâ* is designed to be taught. Exodus 24:12 even portrays God in the role as a teacher of *tôrâ,* as in the phrase, "the law and the commandment that I [i.e., God] have written to teach them" (Ex 24:12). Moses was also told to "teach them the decrees and laws *[tôrôt]* and inform them of the way in which they should walk" (Ex 18:20). The notion of teaching is usually conveyed through the verb *hôrâ* ("to teach"), though occasionally it is implied by a corresponding emphasis on Israel's need to learn (Heb *limmad*) the *tôrâ.* Teaching and learning took place primarily when the *tôrâ* was read and explained, perhaps at a family Passover meal or a national assembly (Ex 13:8-9; Deut 17:18; 31:12), though difficult issues might also be clarified in a law-court setting.

Tôrâ also has the meaning of command or commandment and in this sense comes nearest to the modern idea of "law." When *tôrâ* has this meaning, it is often accompanied by other synonyms for law. The terms most commonly associated with *tôrâ* in the Pentateuch are "decrees" (Heb *ḥuqqîm*) and "judgments" (Heb *mišpāṭîm;* e.g., Lev 26:46; Deut 4:8), though "commands" is also found fairly frequently (Heb *miṣwôt;* e.g., Gen 26:5; Ex 24:12). In all such contexts, the idea of commandment is reinforced by the accompanying verbs. *Tôrâ* is often required to be "kept" (Heb *šāmar;* e.g., Gen. 26:5; Deut 32:46) and "obeyed" (Heb *šāmaʿ;* Deut 31:12), and Yahweh is to be "feared" (Heb *yārē';* Deut 17:19; 31:12). However, it is important to distinguish between the biblical sense of *tôrâ* as Yahweh's law and the modern idea of law as a requirement of the state. It is the personal association between Yahweh and law that gives *tôrâ* its distinctive flavor in the OT (see 3.1 below).

The Pentateuch often combines the notions of teaching and command. This combination is particularly common in Deuteronomy, where, for example, the seven-yearly reading of the law at the Feast of Tabernacles was designed so that the Israelites would learn the *tôrâ* in its entirety (= the book of Deuteronomy?) and so keep "all the words of this *tôrâ*" (Deut 31:12). Almost identical expressions occur in relation to all Israel in Deuteronomy 5:1 (cf. Deut 4:44) and to the king in Deuteronomy 17:18-19. The same point is made in Exodus (Ex 18:20; 24:12) and in Leviticus and Numbers, though in different ways. In the two latter books, the use of the indicative rather than the imperative mood for the "decrees and judgments" indicates that the laws are communicated as instruction as well as orders to be obeyed (cf. the various *tôrôt* in Leviticus 11—15 and Numbers 5—6). Education and understanding were clearly vital to the biblical notion of *tôrâ,* though understanding was not to be regarded as an end in itself. Once the people had grasped what *tôrâ* was about, they were required to live by the *tôrâ* as the expression of their obedience to God. Israel was expected to live under the authority of *tôrâ* as well as benefit from its enlightenment.

1.3.* Tôrâ *as Law and Narrative. The fact that *tôrâ* cannot be confined to the idea of law in the sense of command raises an important question about the proper literary form(s) of *tôrâ.* If *tôrâ* cannot be restricted to the laws of the Pentateuch, it must be viewed in the context of the Pentateuch's entire narrative framework. This latter view of *tôrâ* has received increasing attention in recent years, though this is the result of various factors. For some it is a consequence of studying the Pentateuch holistically rather than as a collection of sources (Clines; Mann); for others it arises from the application of narrative studies to the Pentateuch (Sailhamer; Stahl); and for yet others it is simply a way of finding a rationale for the Pentateuch's combination of law and narrative (Carmichael; Watts). This approach has also been influenced by a recognition of the more positive aspects of the law in the NT, especially in relation to more recent understandings of Paul's view of law. In light of the

Pentateuch's own tendency to understand *tôrâ* in a wider sense, these approaches should be taken seriously.

Although most writers still reserve the term *law* for the laws rather than for the whole Pentateuch, the terminology of Deuteronomy suggests that this approach needs amending. Deuteronomy begins with a reference to "this *tôrâ*" (Deut 1:5), but which *tôrâ* is in view? Though it might refer to the laws in Deuteronomy 5—6 and 12—26, this is not evident from the context of chapter 1. It is much more likely that the term includes the speeches of chapters 1—11 along with the laws of chapters 12—26 and perhaps extends to Moses' speeches throughout chapters 1—31, if not the entire book. While it is probably impossible to decide the precise limits of "this *tôrâ*," it seems quite clear that *tôrâ* incorporates both narrative and law. This view also finds support from other uses of "this *tôrâ*" in Deuteronomy. The fact that the phrase occurs randomly in narrative and legal contexts throughout the book (e.g., Deut 4:8; 17:18; 27:3; 31:9) strongly supports the conclusion that it refers to the large majority of the book rather than to any specific literary form within it.

Deuteronomy's view of *tôrâ* is distinctive, but it is entirely consistent with the fact that all the Pentateuch's law collections are firmly embedded in their own narrative contexts (see 2.1 below). What Deuteronomy has done is to give this combination the explicit designation *tôrâ*. The use of *tôrâ* for the Pentateuch as a whole is a further extension of the same idea. Though most references to *tôrâ* outside the Pentateuch are to laws that had to be kept and obeyed, several passages also reflect the broader view. According to the Psalms, the Israelites used the *tôrâ* to teach their children about God's wonders and Israel's repeated rebellion (Ps 78:5), while the prophets show that rejecting Yahweh's *tôrâ* involved denying the purpose of the exodus as well as failing to keep God's requirements (Amos 2:4-12). References to a book of the *tôrâ*, apparently in direct dependence on Deuteronomy (Josh 8:31; 2 Kings 22:8; cf. Deut 30:10), and to *tôrâ* as a source of blessing rather than condemnation (cf. Josh 1:8; Neh 8:10-18) also support the idea of a document combining narrative and laws.

Though J. W. Watts interprets the Pentateuch as a single entity, he still regards "law" as the "primary, though not exclusive, meaning" of *tôrâ* (Watts, 158). It is important to note, however, that his conclusion is based more on historical and theological concerns rather than literary ones. In his view, *tôrâ* is characterized by Yahweh's binding authority and is explained by drawing an analogy between Yahweh's giving of the law to Israel and the Persian emperors' recognition of postexilic Israel's temple law as imperial law. In order to pursue our comprehensive understanding of *tôrâ*, we must therefore include an examination of historical and theological issues.

2. Law and Its Historical Development.

Historical investigation of *tôrâ* has been primarily concerned with the development of the various topics dealt with in the laws. However, the main contents of the laws and the form in which they are expressed must be analyzed first before their historical relationships can be explored. The pentateuchal laws occur mainly in groups, though they can be scattered throughout a narrative, especially in Numbers. There are four main collections: (1) the Ten Commandments (*see* Decalogue) and the *book of the covenant (Ex 20—23), (2) the *tabernacle laws (Ex 25—40), (3) the laws of *Leviticus (Lev 1—27) and (4) the laws of *Deuteronomy (Deut 12—26).

Each of these collections has its own identity, which is partly determined by the narrative context in which it is set. The Ten Commandments, the book of the covenant and the tabernacle laws belong to the events at Sinai, while the laws of Deuteronomy are located in the plains of Moab, just before Israel entered the Promised Land. All of them therefore take their place in the larger narrative of Israel's life as the people of God and have their own specific historical and theological context.

2.1. The Law Collections. The law collections are sometimes called law "codes," but this is an unhelpful expression. They are not codes in the modern sense of being enforceable by a human authority, and they are not a complete set of requirements intended to cover every eventuality. It is therefore better to use the more neutral term "collection."

2.1.1. The Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant. The first collection is popularly known as the Ten Commandments, though this term is not used in the Bible. The OT calls them the "ten words," that is, the *Decalogue (Ex 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4). They were written by

"the finger of God" (Ex 31:18; Deut 9:10) on two stone tablets and were preserved in the ark of the covenant in the most holy place. The Ten Commandments occur in three versions. Two are almost identical with each other (Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:1-21), but the third, which apparently replaced the tablets that were broken, is quite different and may include as many as twelve "words" (Ex 34:10-28). The relationship of this third version to the other two is problematical but cannot be discussed here (*see* Decalogue). The Ten Commandments have two sections preceded by a statement identifying Yahweh as the God who had already set Israel free from the bondage of slavery. The first section requires Israel to maintain an exclusive relationship with Yahweh and have nothing to do with other deities (commands 1-4). The second sets out the parameters of the Israelites' interpersonal relationships, instructing them not to take from one another in any way, whether that involved a human life, someone else's marriage partner, other people's property or even merely desiring other persons or possessions (commands 5-10). Exclusive worship of God was to be complemented by total respect for one another.

It is often thought that a consistent original pattern of all the commandments can be reconstructed, based on the kind of short sentences found in Exodus 20:3, 13-16 and the simple negative forms in which all but two of the commands are framed. But though it is attractive to imagine what might realistically be inscribed on two stone tablets, such reconstructions are arbitrary and lack independent evidence. It is important not to impose an artificial consistency on the biblical material, since similar biblical laws can occur in various forms.

The Ten Commandments have been variously categorized. They have been called an "ethical decalogue" in contrast to the so-called "ritual decalogue" of Exodus 34 (Wellhausen), ancient Israel's criminal law (Phillips), the only unalterable law in Israel (Lohfink), "the foundation scroll of the Israelite community" (Weinfeld, 262) or a summary of the pentateuchal laws. But none of these descriptions is convincing, though perhaps Weinfeld comes closest to an accurate categorization. For one thing, the Ten Commandments look more like basic principles than actual laws. They would be quite inappropriate in a law court, since they prescribe no penalties and cannot be easily enforced. They are also too broad to be limited to either ethical or legal matters and too narrow to be treated as a summary of the rest of the law, despite the traditions of Christian theology. On the other hand, they clearly enjoyed a special role within ancient Israel. That is, the fact that they are ten in number suggests a definitive list, they occupy key positions at the head of the laws in Exodus and Deuteronomy, their repetitive stylised language makes them particularly suitable for memorizing, and they are quoted directly elsewhere in the OT (Jer 7:9; Hos 4:2; Ps 50; 81).

What chiefly differentiates the Ten Commandments from other forms of *tôrâ* is that they were given directly by God rather than through any human agency. They were uniquely written on two stone tablets by "the finger of God" (Ex 31:18), and the lawgiving was accompanied by a dramatic theophany. The significance of this is explained in some detail in Deuteronomy 4:15-40. The fact that Yahweh gave the commandments to those he had freed from slavery in Egypt (Ex 20:1-2; Deut 5:6) emphasizes how closely they are bound up with the person and presence of a redeeming, liberating God. In Exodus 34, these attributes of God include his forgiveness and promise to restore Israel following the debacle of the *golden calf. "The ten commandments thus present the foundational layer of Yahweh's expectation of those who, in response to his gift of himself, desire to give themselves to him" (Durham, 300).

The Ten Commandments are followed immediately in Exodus by the *book of the covenant. This title is taken from Exodus 24:7, and the book apparently includes all the material in Exodus 20:22—23:33. The book of the covenant is closely associated with the Ten Commandments, and together they seem to comprise all the laws ratified at Sinai (Ex 24:3, 7, 12), though certainty in this matter is impossible. The book of the covenant is normally divided into two parts, the "judgments" (Heb *mišpāṭîm,* Ex 21:1) of Exodus 21:2—22:17 (or 22:20) and other laws in Exodus 22:18 (or 22:21)—23:33, though this distinction is based more on differences in form rather than content. The judgments are mainly in the form of casuistic, or case law, whereas the second group is more mixed, including laws in an apodictic format, that is, those framed as concise commands (see further 2.2.1 below).

The book of the covenant covers a variety of

subjects dealing with civil, ritual and moral issues, and it is not easy to see what unites them. However, certain connecting threads are present in the material. One important example is the motive clauses that are scattered throughout the second section. These provide moral and especially theological reasons for obeying the laws, such as the humanitarian ideal of caring for one's neighbor (Ex 22:26-27 [MT 22:25-26]), Israel's status as a holy people (Ex 22:31[MT 22:30]), Yahweh's concern for compassion and justice (Ex 22:27 [MT 22:26]; 23:6) and the freedom that God had given Israel (Ex 22:21 [MT 22:20]; 23:9). Another thread links the book of the covenant with the Ten Commandments. Both require Israel to make the worship of Yahweh their priority (Ex 20:22-26; 23:14-19; cf. 20:3-6), and both emphasize the worship of Yahweh alone, not Canaanite deities (Ex 23:20-33). The same kind of covenant language also occurs throughout the final narrative section (Ex 23:20-33) as in the Sinai narrative in Exodus 19—24 (Ex 19:3-8; 24:3-8). These links suggest that the book of the covenant may be intended to illustrate the principles of the Ten Commandments. Although scholarly debate on the book of the covenant has concentrated on historical issues such as the laws' historical origin and their precise connection with the Ten Commandments, consideration of the book's literary context and theological characteristics seems to offer more help in understanding its nature and purpose.

2.1.2. The Tabernacle Laws. In contrast to the variety of laws in the book of the covenant, the *tabernacle laws concentrate entirely on preparations for worship in the tabernacle. The central theme shows how the tabernacle, in its architecture and the activities that took place within it, was a sanctuary for Yahweh to live among his people (Ex 25:8; 29:44-46). The laws have two main sections, God's instructions (Ex 25—31) and how Israel obeyed those instructions (Ex 35—40), and they are concerned with three main topics: the ark and other symbols of God's presence, the layout of the tabernacle and its courtyard, and the functions of the priests.

The tabernacle laws have a close relationship with their surrounding narrative. First, the laws are part of a narrative relationship of divine command and promise on the one hand and fulfillment on the other. God's commands to build the tabernacle and his promise to live among the Israelites were fulfilled when the cloud of God's glory filled the entire structure (Ex 40:34-38; cf. 25:8). Second, the inclusion of Israel's obedience to God's commands provides an ideal scenario for *tôrâ*. Here is an instance where Israel has fully obeyed God's law, a situation that God confirms by the appearance of his glory. Third, the account of the golden calf in Exodus 32—34 acts as a counterpoint to the main theme. The calf is a rival symbol of God's presence, strongly influenced by Canaanite ideology, but it is vigorously destroyed. Fourth, the laws are closely tied to the larger context of the Sinai covenant, with God's presence in the tabernacle directly continuing his presence at Sinai. Some scholars have also seen a parallel between the orderliness of the tabernacle laws and of creation (Gen 1:1—2:3) and have interpreted the tabernacle as a cosmos in miniature, preserving a means of access to God in a fallen world (*see* Creation).

2.1.3. Laws of Leviticus. The laws of Leviticus continue the account of the tabernacle. In fact, many scholars regard both collections as part of the same Priestly work in view of their similar outlook. The Levitical laws, however, are much more wide-ranging than the tabernacle laws. The first part of the book (Lev 1—16) is concerned with various rituals on matters such as sacrifice, purity and uncleanness, but the second part (Lev 17—27) is much broader, covering such diverse subjects as sexual behavior, blasphemy, the Jubilee and the sabbatical year. Since A. Klostermann (1877), Leviticus 17—26 has often been described as a Holiness Code (or H), on the grounds that this section is characterized by the demand for Israel to be a holy people ("Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy"; Lev 19:2; cf. 20:7, 26). But Gerstenberger (1996, 17-19), Blenkinsopp (223-25) and others are doubtful that these chapters can be separated off in this way. In their view, these chapters lack sufficient internal coherence to be a separate collection, and the requirement about holiness is not restricted to them (cf. Lev 11:44-45).

Apart from the theme of holiness, the Levitical laws reflect three further emphases. First, it is assumed that Israel is incapable of pleasing God, though God will preserve his *covenant even if Israel disobeys and is punished by exile (Lev 26:44-45). Consequently, Israel's worship involves atonement and purification, as illustrated especially by the Day of *Atonement (Lev

16). Second, Israel can experience God's blessings by choosing to obey the laws. The second part of Leviticus contains several exhortations that show God's intention to bless Israel as they cooperate with him (Lev 18:24-30; 20:22-26; 22:31-33; 25:18-24; 26:3-45). Third, the law makes Israel distinct from all its neighbors. It is God's special gift to Israel and is a means to purity, holiness and blessing.

2.1.4. Laws of Deuteronomy. The final law collection is the laws of *Deuteronomy (Deut 12—26). They are part of a series of addresses by Moses set in the plains of Moab as Israel stood on the brink of the Promised Land. They are preceded by a summary of God's actions for Israel (Deut 1—4) and a series of sermons on the general meaning of *tôrâ* (Deut 5—11); they are followed by blessings and curses and a final appeal to make a choice for the covenant (Deut 27—30). This context is essential for understanding the laws, though a particularly close link exists between the laws in chapters 12—26 and the sermons of chapters 5—11.

The laws cover the same sort of range as the book of the covenant and the laws of Leviticus, and as elsewhere, there is a special concern for worship (cf. e.g., Ex 23:14-19; 25—40; Lev 1—7). This is the main theme of the first part of the laws in Deuteronomy 12—18, and the concluding laws about *firstfruits and tithes reflect the same theme (Deut 26:1-15). The laws also have a strong humanitarian character, especially in their concern for justice and their desire to treat all members of the covenant community, including the king, as brothers.

Four features should be emphasized concerning the concept of law in Deuteronomy. First, Deuteronomy contains the most overtly theological approach to law within the Pentateuch. By building on what is implicit in the other law collections, Deuteronomy develops the concept of law and *tôrâ* to the extent of providing the most mature exposition of law found in the OT. In bringing to the fore ideas that are latent in other books of the Pentateuch, it seems to play a role analogous to that of John's Gospel in relation to the Synoptic Gospels.

Second, Deuteronomy is especially concerned with the motivation necessary to keep the laws. In fact, Deuteronomy is often described as preached law, and F. F. Bruce has spoken of its almost "evangelical fervour" (Bruce, 204). The laws and the sermons often take the form of a personal address, which is reflected in such distinctive expressions as "to love him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut 13:3; cf. 6:5; 26:16) or "so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life" (Deut 22:7; cf. 6:2). Among the reasons given for obedience are that God's laws are distinct from all human laws, that they were uniquely given to God's chosen people and that they promise long life. But the chief motivation is that Israel should show wholehearted love to God as their response to God's far greater love for them (Deut 6:4-5; 7:7-8).

Third, law in Deuteronomy is closely linked with covenant renewal. The preaching is directed to the children of those who made the original covenant at Sinai, encouraging them to renew the covenant for themselves rather than rely on what God did for their parents. Israel is repeatedly requested to respond "today" (Deut 30:15-16) to the commands that God gave them "today" (Deut 13:18), rather than to look back to what happened at Sinai. The emphasis on the need for a new generation to make its own response to the preaching of the *tôrâ* and the reasons why they should do so goes beyond the general requirement for obedience found in all the other law collections. It underlines that *tôrâ* was a living concept that had to be appropriated and owned by succeeding generations.

Fourth, the written law of Deuteronomy has attained a fixed and authoritative form. Several references are made in Deuteronomy 28—31 to the "book of the *tôrâ*," which is probably synonymous with "this law" discussed above (see 1.3 above). The existence of a written form of *tôrâ* gave it a final form that was not to be added to nor subtracted from (Deut 4:2). The idea of written *tôrâ* was not, of course, new. It goes back to the Ten Commandments, which were written by God (Ex 24:12), and to the book of the covenant, which Moses wrote at Yahweh's command (Ex 24:4). However, the fact that Deuteronomy includes narrative and sermon alongside individual commands and teaching takes the notion of written *tôrâ* to a new dimension. The presence of extensive sections on the historical context of the new generation (Deut 1—4), interpretation of the detailed laws (Deut 5—11), the need for a fresh response (Deut 27—30) and a future perspective (Deut 31—34) also shows that this authoritative written *tôrâ* contained principles that were adaptable to new situations.

2.2. Relationships Between the Law Collections. The various characteristics of the law collections raise important questions about why more than one law collection exists and why some laws are repeated in more than one collection. Most scholars have sought to explain this situation on the basis of historical and literary factors. For example, because most laws seem to reflect actual practice, interpreters have usually assumed that each collection arose in a specific historical and social context. Scholars have accordingly sought to determine what those contexts were and have attempted on this basis to reconstruct the development of law in the OT period. Two additional elements that must be brought into this discussion are the different forms of OT law and the parallels between OT laws and other laws from the ancient Near East. Although the similarities with other ancient Near Eastern laws confirms the essentially historical nature of the pentateuchal laws, it will be argued that any investigation of pentateuchal law that is primarily concerned with historical issues is likely to produce disappointing results.

2.2.1. Form-Critical Explanations: Apodictic and Casuistic Law. Since the work of A. Alt (1934 [1966]), form critics have regularly distinguished between apodictic and casuistic laws. The former are unconditional commands, as in the Ten Commandments, and the latter are case laws, usually including a protasis ("if . . .") followed by an apodosis ("then . . ."). This basic distinction is still observed, even though it is now widely recognized that Alt's categories are inadequate, especially in relation to the so-called apodictic laws. Even the term apodictic, meaning "of clear demonstration, established on incontrovertible evidence" (*OED* 1.387), is not really appropriate, since it is not a literary term but belongs to the logic of certainty and absolute truth. Apodictic law in fact covers several different forms, as Alt himself recognized, but he did not give sufficient attention to these differences. At least three different forms should be distinguished: (1) unconditional imperatives, such as the Ten Commandments; (2) curses (e.g., Deut 27:15-26); and (3) participial sentences concerning capital crimes (e.g., Ex 21:17). A key formal distinction should be made between expressions that are general principles, whether expressed positively or negatively, and those to which a particular penalty is attached.

Casuistic laws are more homogeneous in form, despite the wide range of topics that they cover. Moreover, the case laws of the Pentateuch have the same basic form as most laws from the ancient Near East. Nevertheless, D. Patrick has made a helpful distinction between two kinds of casuistic law: "remedial law," where a legal remedy is proposed in the apodosis; and "primary law," which uses personal language to express the terms of a relationship (Patrick, 23-24). The former might be better called "judicial law," since it prescribes penalties to be imposed presumably by a law court (e.g., Ex 21:33-34), and it is quite different in content and style from the relational style of primary law (e.g., "If you lend money, . . . then charge no interest"; Ex 22:25 [MT 22:24]). E. Otto's attempt to distinguish casuistic civil law, casuistic criminal law and casuistic social law is less convincing because it depends on hypothetical historical reconstruction rather than the observable forms of case law in the biblical texts.

What seems clear from even this brief analysis is the flexibility of both unconditional and casuistic forms. Both can express general principles as well as laws that function within a legal system. Further, all the pentateuchal law collections, with the exception of the Ten Commandments, contain a mixture of unconditional expressions and case laws. It must therefore be concluded that a simple distinction between apodictic and casuistic law is an insufficient basis for drawing conclusions about different types of law.

The form of a law does, however, convey something about the context in which it was used. Most examples of case law were almost certainly framed in the light of a particular circumstance and belong in the context of a legal system, though the covenant context of the OT's case laws gives them a meaning significantly different from that of any ancient or modern equivalents. Unconditional law, which is a preferable term to apodictic law, also probably reflects actual use. Those that incorporate a particular penalty probably originated in a law court, while the general principles may well have come from contexts of instruction or authority. The latter could be of a religious, educational or legal character, or any combination of these. The fact that curses and unconditional imperatives often occur in series suggests they may have had a teaching function or that they were related to the formation or maintenance of

a covenant (e.g., Ex 20:2-17; Lev 18:6-23; Deut 27:15-26). Attention should also be given to the motive clauses. These are added most often to unconditional imperatives (Lev 18:6-23; 19:1-19; Deut 25:13-16), though they can also be attached to case laws. They supply theological or moral reasons for obeying particular laws, and their explanatory nature points to the teaching function of *tôrâ* in both its casuistic and unconditional forms.

2.2.2. Source-Critical Explanations. Another way of understanding the differences between the law collections is that they are the product of independent literary sources that arose in different periods of Israel's history. This approach is based on an assumption that each law collection represents the outlook and practice of a distinct social and legal context.

The classic historical reconstruction by scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, following Wellhausen, was that the Law basically followed the Prophets, in contrast to the traditional biblical order. This view was based on the comparative scarcity of references to the law in preexilic literature and on the presupposition that the law represented a tendency toward legalism and institutionalism that was considered typical of the decline in Judaism's religious vitality in the postexilic period. It became increasingly common during the latter part of the twentieth century, however, to acknowledge that law actually developed significantly before the exile. The validity and date of individual sources underlying the Pentateuch has also been subject to increasing question, though it must be said that the pentateuchal laws have received much less attention on this issue than the accompanying narratives (*see* Source Criticism).

Among those who adopt this approach, it is widely agreed that the book of the covenant was an independent collection of laws and was the earliest of the law collections. Since it does not mention any royal administration of law, it is usually placed in the premonarchy period, though it is sometimes associated with the preexilic prophetic movement. It is followed in many scholarly reconstructions by the Deuteronomic laws from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. and the tabernacle and levitical laws (part of the Priestly source) from the exile or soon afterwards, though some scholars place the Priestly laws before Deuteronomy. On the other hand, considerable disagreement exists over the role of Moses as a lawgiver and whether or not any or all of the Ten Commandments originated with him. Scholars such as J. P. Hyatt conclude that "there is nothing in the Ten Commandments which could not have originated with Moses" (Hyatt, 208), while others such as F. Crüsemann regard Exodus 20 as the product of a postexilic priestly redaction that is dependent on Deuteronomy 5. The Exodus version has been variously attributed to the Elohist, the Priestly and the Deuteronomic sources as well as regarded as independent of the standard sources.

It is worth noting that the various form-critical distinctions do not play any major role in source-critical discussions. First, the distinctions between unconditional laws and case laws, however they are categorized, cannot be correlated with the proposed sources. Both major forms are found in all the main law collections. Second, Alt's historical conclusions have proved unsatisfactory. His view that apodictic law was unique to Israel has been superseded by the existence of parallels to unconditional law in the ancient Near East (see 2.2.3 below), and his idea that Israel's case law was derived from the Canaanites has proved far too restrictive.

2.2.3. Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Law. It is impossible to study biblical law without recognizing that a substantial number of pentateuchal laws, especially in the book of the covenant, have recognizable parallels in either form or content with other ancient Near Eastern laws, particularly from Mesopotamia. Laws outside the OT are found in two types of documents. One type comprises public documents and includes law collections, royal edicts and vassal treaties. The other consists of thousands of private contracts that contain legal agreements between private parties on topics such as land transfer, family issues and financial matters. The latter are records of real agreements and provide us with direct access to the ways in which law was understood and practiced in the ancient world.

The law collections range from the laws of Ur-Nammu, compiled in Sumerian toward the end of the third millennium B.C., to the Neo-Babylonian laws of the sixth century B.C., though only fragments have survived in each case. Better known and better preserved are the laws of Hammurabi from the eighteenth century

B.C., though several other collections are also known, including those from Assyrian and Hittite sources. The large majority of the laws are in casuistic form, beginning with either the phrase "if a man . . ." or "a man who . . .". Both patterns are familiar from the Pentateuch. Some laws, however, are in the form of statements, especially those concerned with determining prices. Unconditional commands are also found in ancient Near Eastern documents, though they tend to occur in treaties, moral instructions and ritual texts rather than in the law collections.

Many parallels exist between the laws of the OT and those from the rest of the ancient Near East, though no laws have been found so far that are identical in form in both Israel and Mesopotamia. Similar provisions are found, for example, concerning property rights (especially relating to boundary stones or protecting owners from the consequences of neglect), fair weights and measures, condemnation of bribery, and common attitudes against sorcery. Further parallels occur in the area of *family law, including inheritance, especially the rights of the eldest son, various practices such as adoption intended to counter childlessness, and practices relating to marriage and divorce (see further Selman). Many of the links concerning family law involve the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12—50 as well as the laws in Exodus through Deuteronomy, indicating the importance of customary law alongside the formal collections.

Probably the closest parallel between the Pentateuch and ancient Near Eastern laws is the famous *lex talionis*, the principle of an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth (cf. Ex 21:23-25). However, although such laws occur in the laws of Hammurabi, the laws of Ur-Nammu (c. twenty-first century B.C.), the Babylonian laws of the state of Eshnunna (eighteenth century B.C.) and the Hittite laws (c. sixteenth century B.C.), the variations between them illustrate just how difficult it is to interpret their interrelationship. Whereas for the biblical laws, talion, or equivalent retribution, is a general principle applicable to all, the Hammurabi laws prescribe punishment by talion in the case of one freeman who attacks another, but a monetary fine if a freeman attacks someone of lower status. On the other hand, a monetary fine is the only penalty in the laws of Ur-Nammu, Eshnunna and the Hittites. It remains unclear why the earlier laws prefer monetary compensation, why monetary compensation is restricted to those of lower status in Hammurabi's Babylon and whether talion was ever intended to be used in practice anyway. One explanation is that monetary fines represent a lower standard than the principle of absolute equality in the biblical laws, but it is also possible that the biblical laws are simply pronouncements of principle, whereas the monetary compensation reflects actual practice. Even within Israel, it is clear that the law of talion was not always understood literally (see Ex 21:26-27).

The case of talion raises afresh the question as to how differences between similar laws from different contexts should be explained, since even in this instance it is impossible to trace a convincing unilinear line of development from the earliest to the latest examples. According to R. Westbrook, ancient Near Eastern law remained basically static over many centuries, and major changes were only introduced under Greek influence from the seventh century B.C. onward (Westbrook; Levinson). While this is probably an overstatement, it is quite possible that differences between laws reflect special circumstances, such as local preferences and customs, rather than a developing progression. The notion that a common basis of law and custom existed with local variations for centuries throughout the ancient Near East, including Israel, remains the most satisfactory way of explaining both the similarities and the differences. This view gives full recognition to the evident continuity in ancient Near Eastern law as well as allowing for variations. The fact that most of the extant law collections come from the third or early second millennia B.C. also makes it clear that Israel's laws were part of a tradition that antedates the time of Moses by several centuries, even assuming the earliest possible date for Moses. The patriarchs' legal customs were part of this tradition, though their closest links are with practices belonging to the first half of the second millennium B.C.

One of the surprising facts about ancient Near Eastern law is the almost complete lack of correlation between the law collections and the private contracts. No private contract makes any reference to the law collections, though several documents do mention stelae that published rates of wages and prices (Roth, 5-7). This situation poses a real question as to the nature and purpose of the law collections. Two main alter-

natives have been proposed: a legislative function or an academic function. Traditionally, the law collections have been seen as authoritative sources of law underpinning the related legal system, but if that was the case, the failure to make a link in any extant document is surprising. The alternative view that the laws were part of a scientific tradition therefore looks increasingly attractive. According to this latter view, laws were compiled and circulated within scribal schools as part of a wider process of education (e.g., Kraus; Bottéro).

The extant prologues and epilogues in the law collections show that the king played a key role in propagating law and justice. Hammurabi, for example, says he was appointed by the gods as king to be a guardian and protector for the weak and powerless. He set up his laws on a stela in the Esagila temple in Babylon to encourage any person who felt they had been wronged. However, since the majority of the population was unable to read or to gain access to the temple, it is hardly likely that Hammurabi's laws was designed for wide dissemination. A more probable aim is that the laws were intended to promote Hammurabi's reputation before the gods. He asks for his name to be remembered in the Esagila temple and that anyone who benefits from reading the laws should pray for the king to Marduk, god of Babylon.

This extensive ancient Near Eastern background provides an important context for understanding the pentateuchal laws. First, the OT laws plainly participated in the legal traditions of ancient society, and the similarities include shared social norms and customs as well as common legal expressions. Second, attempts to set Israel's law collections in particular historical or legislative contexts are problematic. The ancient Near Eastern examples show that definitive explanations of the relationship between similar laws and law collections remain elusive and that continuity is equally as important as development. Third, if ancient Near Eastern law collections did have an educational purpose, this would tie in with the teaching element in OT *tôrâ,* though Israel's concern with teaching the people as a whole rather than simply educating scribes is a major difference. Fourth, the theological aspect of OT law finds an obvious echo in the religious character of other ancient Near Eastern laws, with the deity having ultimate authority for law in both cases. An analogy exists between Moses and the Mesopotamian kings in that as a civil leader he was responsible for the propagation and administration of law, though his role as the mediator of *tôrâ* is to be sharply differentiated from the kings' aim of commending themselves to subjects and deities alike.

2.3. The Development of Law in Israel. The Pentateuch is not unaware of differences between its law collections, as the case of Deuteronomy illustrates. First, the book not only contains two distinct law collections, the Ten Commandments (Deut 5) as well as its own collection (Deut 12—26), but its laws are clearly dependent on other pentateuchal law collections. Many scholars have noted similarities between the book of the covenant and Deuteronomy. The laws of Deuteronomy are often regarded as a "direct descendant" of the book of the covenant (Patrick, 97), and M. Weinfeld has even claimed that "Deuteronomy used laws identical in formulation with those of the book of the covenant and revised them according to its ideology" (Weinfeld, 19). It is therefore probable that Deuteronomy was intended to supplement the book of the covenant, based upon the continuing validity of the Sinai laws and their need to be adapted to changing circumstances. It is also more probable that Deuteronomy is dependent on the preexilic Priestly laws of Exodus and Leviticus than the other way round. The following factors lead to this conclusion: (1) the existence of extensive ritual laws in the rest of the ancient Near East from a much earlier period, (2) the significant differences in the language of ritual between Ezekiel and the Priestly laws, and (3) the repeated awareness of the Priestly laws in Deuteronomy, which is not reciprocated by any reference to Deuteronomy in the Priestly laws (cf. Milgrom, 3-13). All this points to the conclusion that Deuteronomy represents the climax of development among the pentateuchal law collections.

Second, though *tôrâ* came to Israel with divine authority, Deuteronomy makes it clear that the law was not set in stone! *Tôrâ* retained a remarkable ability to adapt itself constantly to new situations (cf. also Num 36:1-13; *see* Zelophehad, Daughters of). The fact that the *tôrâ* of Deuteronomy was addressed to a new generation after Sinai (cf. Deut 29:1 and W. Brueggemann's observation that Deuteronomy "is Sinai interpreted" [Brueggemann, 586]) and that it required the law to be taught to future genera-

tions shows that this adaptability was built into Deuteronomy's concept of *tôrâ* from the start. The rest of the OT provides further evidence of this adaptability. Prophets such as Samuel or Amos and kings such as David or Josiah interpreted *tôrâ* for their own generations, and priests and Levites did the same as they taught the law (cf. 2 Chron 19:8; Neh 8:7-8). Even the psalmists used the *tôrâ* as a basis for meditation (Ps 1; 19; 119). The reason for such flexibility was not simply *tôrâ*'s need to adapt to changing circumstances, important as that was. It goes back rather to the prophetic element in *tôrâ*, especially to Moses' role as the prophet par excellence (Mann; Sailhamer; Greengus). As a result, law was viewed as God's speaking to each generation as well as highlighting the future consequences of different responses to his word. Because a prophetic dimension was part of the pentateuchal *tôrâ,* the prophets did not see *tôrâ* as inconsistent with their prophetic messages. On the contrary, they recognized that a new covenant inevitably involved a new *tôrâ* (Is 2:3; Jer 31:33).

Though it is possible to draw some conclusions about the relationship of the different law collections to each other, trying to ascertain the social and legal circumstances lying behind each collection remains problematical. Differences in the laws on sacrifice and worship, for example, may be partly explained by changing social circumstances, such as the contrast between the unsophisticated village life represented in the book of the covenant and the more urban society underlying Deuteronomy. But the reality is that we still know very little about how the various law collections developed in Israel. Our evidence is effectively limited to the biblical texts themselves, and the lack of independent verification about the laws' social and legal contexts means that conclusions in this area must remain largely hypothetical. Certainly, neither form-critical nor source-critical explanations are sufficient on their own to account for the changes. The ancient Near Eastern evidence in fact suggests that continuity was as important as change, and that variations were due to local factors. The need reflected in Deuteronomy to educate each new generation in the law indicates that changes in Israel were as much due to the religious health of successive generations as to social, economic or political reasons.

As for the origins of the pentateuchal laws, there seems to be no good reason to deny that the basic core of Israel's laws goes back to the authority and mediation of Moses. It is equally likely that the various collections were regarded from the beginning as Yahweh's laws. The inclusion of unconditional laws having Yahweh's authority, blessings and curses, motive clauses, and the covenant context of all the law collections all provide evidence for this view. It is also reflected in G. von Rad's proposal that an original Hexateuch grew out of a creed in Deuteronomy 26:5-9 (von Rad, 1966, 1-78) and in W. Eichrodt's view that "not only the cultic law, but the secular law derives its validity from being a direct command of Yahweh" (Eichrodt, 1:75). Both scholars have argued for the basic principle that the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) was a theological work from the start, even though von Rad's interpretation of Deuteronomy 26:5-9 is questionable. The various attempts to trace a develop-ment from secular to sacral law within the OT fail to address adequately the question of how something could have become divine law if no such claim had been made for it from the beginning. It is one thing for an original core of divine law to have been developed and adapted, but quite another to envisage it becoming something essentially different from what it was in the first place.

The point at which Yahweh's *tôrâ* became a national law supported by a judicial system remains uncertain. It may have taken place under the general influence of the monarchy, the centralizing tendencies of Hezekiah and Josiah, or the reformation of Ezra and Nehemiah. The process was probably not completed until the postexilic period, when a new understanding emerged under Persian influence about the relationship between the law of the state and the law of Yahweh. The main agent of this change was probably Ezra, who arrived in Jerusalem with the authority of the Persian emperor to establish the "law of your God" and to appoint magistrates and judges under the Persian system (Ezra 7:14). Despite Ezra's political and legal roles, however, he continued to teach the law in his role as a priest (Ezra 7:12, 21). Even in his case, therefore, it seems that the concept of the law as God's teaching was supplemented rather than replaced by the law viewed as an organ of the state.

3. Theological Issues.

Although the literary form of Israel's *tôrâ* is distinct in combining law and narrative, and historically it takes its place alongside other laws from the ancient Near East, its most outstanding feature is its theological character. *Tôrâ* in Israel is portrayed from the beginning in the context of Yahweh's *covenant with his people, and any approach to the study of *tôrâ* that minimizes this element can only prove to be inadequate.

3.1.* Tôrâ *as the Will of Yahweh. The central distinguishing feature of pentateuchal law is that it expresses the will of Yahweh; as F. Crüsemann puts it, "The basic notion that Israelite law is direct divine utterance is not at all common in the ancient world" (Crüsemann, 15). This is the main reason why "instruction" or "teaching" often conveys the sense of *tôrâ* better than "law." Whereas in English "law" primarily connotes human statutes and regulations, in the OT *tôrâ* is associated first and foremost with the person and character of Yahweh. *Tôrâ* is his word of instruction or command, which is inevitably bound up with his merciful nature as well as with his holiness (cf. Ex 20:5-6). It is also a distinctive form of the word of God in the OT and takes its place alongside prophecy, prayers and wise sayings as a major type of divine communication.

More than any other part of the OT, the Pentateuch stresses the special connection between *tôrâ* and the person of Yahweh. The linking together of the *theophany of Exodus 19 with the lawgiving of Exodus 20 shows that theophany was an essential aspect of the whole concept of law. The point is further developed in a meditation on the unmediated experience of hearing God's voice (Deut 4:32-40). After Sinai, the law preserved the sense of God's presence in two ways. The first was the concern of the Priestly laws that the tabernacle and its ceremonies should make possible God's desire to live among his people (Ex 25:8). The sacrificial laws were designed to make sure Israel benefited from God's holy presence rather than be threatened by it. The second was in the nature of the law itself. The principle that Israel learned in the wilderness that "human beings do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh" (Deut 8:3), defines the nature of *tôrâ* and established the pattern for Israel's ongoing relationship with *tôrâ*. Even though *tôrâ* was received indirectly after Sinai, through human mediators rather than directly, it was still regarded as Yahweh's gift (Deut 33:10).

The character of Yahweh pervades all the law collections. The Ten Commandments, for instance, are based around Yahweh's redemption, uniqueness, spiritual nature, jealousy or special concern for Israel, justice, overwhelming love, holiness, faithfulness, morality and omniscience. In the book of the covenant, the simple motive clause "I am Yahweh" is often enough to indicate the impact of his nature upon his demands. The Priestly laws concentrate on God's holiness and its implications both for Israel's worship and for their way of life. The laws of Deuteronomy are concerned above all that God's love for Israel should receive an appropriate response in Israel's loving obedience toward him. Yahweh's character was the bedrock of *tôrâ*. It determined the nature of all the laws, commands and instructions as well as the motivation for Israel's response to the laws.

This association with Yahweh gave the laws a special unity. Though the laws have traditionally been divided into moral, ritual and civil law (for a helpful criticism of these categories, see C. J. H. Wright 1983, 151-59), there is a danger of undermining the unity of law in order to examine its individual parts. Yahweh's law is essentially indivisible and claims the allegiance of the whole life of his covenant people, since the unity of the laws is bound up with the absolute commitment that Yahweh requires. It was precisely when Israelites started dividing up the law, deciding which laws were more or less important, that the prophets challenged them that they were separating what God had joined together. By retaining the idea of the *tôrâ* as a unity (notice the singular in, e.g., Amos 2:4; Hos 8:12), the OT preserved the idea that Israel owed comprehensive obedience to one God.

3.2.* Tôrâ *and Covenant. All the law collections are clearly set in the context of God's covenant with Israel. The immediate effect of this is to take the laws out of the sphere of law per se and put them within God's larger purposes for Israel. God gave the laws to Israel because he had redeemed them from *slavery (Ex 20:1-2; Deut 5:6; cf. Deut 1:1—4:43), circumstances that suggest that the laws were intended to preserve Israel's newly won freedom and to provide further opportunities for them to put their faith in him as they had done in the journey from Egypt. Non-

Israelites were not excluded by the laws, especially since many were present at Sinai. Rather, anyone who wished to live by the covenant laws had to acknowledge that it was first necessary to experience God's redeeming *grace as a foundation for living by that same grace under the law. The covenant was also associated with the idea of God's *promise. Just as the Sinai covenant partially fulfilled God's promises to the patriarchs, so the giving of the laws anticipated further fulfillment of God's promises as Israel lived by God's laws in the Promised Land. The whole covenantal context of grace and promise was intended to maintain Israel's continuing gratitude toward God and to encourage an obedience characterized by love and devotion (Deut 6:1-12; 30:19-20).

The relationship between law and covenant has been interpreted in two main ways. On the one hand, G. von Rad has argued that "in all circumstances the close connection between commandments and covenant must be kept in view" because "Israel understood the revelation of the commandments as a saving event of the first rank" (von Rad 1965, 1.193). In his view, the law was a form of the gospel, because the covenant was completed at a time when Israel had had no opportunity to demonstrate its obedience to the laws. He also thought that the idea of law as something that brought judgment was found first of all in the prophets. Alternatively, W. Zimmerli and H. D. Preuss have emphasized the presence of both curses and blessings in the covenant laws. For Zimmerli, "the election of Israel is unthinkable without the validity of its divine law and the concealed, threatening judgment within this law" (Zimmerli 271; cf. H. D. Preuss, 1:90-94). Preuss notes that since Israel's inability to obey the law is emphasized, the law by itself cannot have power to save.

Although the law focuses on the positive benefits it brings to those who observe it, a fine balance exists between *blessing and curse. The two main law collections in Leviticus and Deuteronomy both conclude with lists of blessings and curses (Lev 26:3-45; Deut 27:12—28:68), and Moses summarizes the choice between them in a most clear fashion: "See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction" (Deut 30:15). Israel's very participation in the covenant was dependent on their attitude to the law. Obedience would enable them to possess the land and to live permanently in it (Deut 8:1; 11:8-15). Persistent disobedience would lead to the loss of all covenant privileges and would involve Israel's expulsion from the Promised Land, the loss of their status as Yahweh's special people and the laying waste of the land itself. The preponderance of curses in both Leviticus and Deuteronomy suggests that the element of threat and punishment must be taken seriously (see further 4.3 below).

4. The Purpose of *Tôrâ*.

4.1* Tôrâ *as Principle. How did Israel understand the purpose for which *tôrâ* had been given? One possibility is that the laws were intended as rules and regulations to be followed; but if this was so, it is surprising that the rest of the preexilic literature in particular makes little reference to specific pentateuchal laws. For example, neither the theft of someone's cloak mentioned in a seventh-century B.C. letter from Yavneh Yam (Lindenberger, 96-98) nor the condemnation of lending of money at interest to a fellow Israelite (Neh 5:1-13) refer to the relevant pentateuchal laws, even though they were apparently in existence (Ex 22:25-27 [MT 22:24-26]; cf. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, 87, 93). Even the regulations about the Passover were apparently ignored for centuries (2 Kings 23:21-23). A greater interest is discernible after the exile about keeping specific laws (cf. the Chronicler's interest in the Levites as carriers of the ark [1 Chron 15:2-15] and the Passover of the second month [2 Chron 30:1-5], neither of which occur in the earlier parallel texts), but before that the only explicit reference to complying with an individual law is in 2 Kings 14:6 (concerning Deut 24:16). In the preexilic period, however, two distinct attitudes toward the law can be detected. First, the law was often mentioned as a whole, usually as a standard to which individuals and the nation of Israel were expected to conform (cf. 1 Kings 2:3; Jer 6:19; Hos 8:12). Second, where individual laws are referred to, they are adapted to current circumstances rather than followed exactly. Compare, for example, the account of Achan's sin, where the law about the ban includes precious metals and fabrics (Josh 6:18-19, 24; 7:10-25), in contrast with the mention of people and animals only in the Deuteronomic law (Deut 13:15 [MT 13:16]), or the acceptance of a treaty with the Gibeonites (Josh 9:15-27) in opposition to the Pentateuch's prohibition of treaties with any of the peoples of Canaan (Ex 34:12; Deut

7:2). Taken together, these examples indicate the presence of the idea of a fixed norm but imply that it was not understood in a rigid way.

Another possible function for the pentateuchal laws is that they provided a record of how law was practiced in Israel. This is often assumed to be the case by those who try to reconstruct the history of Israelite law from the Pentateuch. Support for this approach occurs in the kind of detailed formulation of the case laws and of some of the unconditional laws, which appear to have been drawn up with specific instances in mind. But the lack of confirmation of this kind of understanding in the rest of the OT is a severe obstacle. Even such important laws as the Day of *Atonement (Lev 16) or the Jubilee (Lev 25) are not mentioned anywhere else in the OT, and we actually have no idea whether or not they were observed in OT times or, if so, in what form.

If the pentateuchal laws were not primarily descriptive of legal practice, they were more likely to have had a prescriptive function. It seems that they promoted certain legal principles and ideals based on the use of actual examples. The pervasive influence of the first two commandments, condemning the worship of other deities and idolatry, throughout the Deuteronomistic History (or Joshua—2 Kings) may be cited in illustration. A different kind of example occurs in the two main biblical texts giving instructions for judges (Deut 16:18-20; 2 Chron 19:5-7), which are concerned entirely with the quality of justice and the judges' responsibility before God and show no interest in legislative procedures. The idea of the law as principle is also consistent with the preaching and teaching emphasis of the laws (cf. Ex 18:20; Deut 6:6-9; 11:18-20), especially the ability of *tôrâ* to adapt to new circumstances (see 2.3 above). It is also supported by the persuasive suggestion that the whole Pentateuch was designed for public reading (Watts; cf. Ex 24:3-7; Deut 31:9-11; Josh 8:30-35; 2 Kings 22—23), though it is important to note that each reading needed to be supplemented by exposition in order for the principles of the *tôrâ* to be understood in each new circumstance (cf. Deut 1:5; Neh 8:7-8).

The strong educational emphasis of the biblical laws (see 1.2 above) has an analogy with the Mesopotamian laws, though a distinction must be made between the limited aim of the education of scribes in Mesopotamia and the concern in Israel to make *tôrâ* accessible to all levels of society. At one end of Israelite society, this included instruction for the king, who was to "read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God and follow carefully all the words of this *tôrâ* and these decrees" (Deut 17:19). At the other, it included the whole population of Israel, as is evident particularly in the covenant renewal in Deuteronomy: "men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns so that they can listen and learn to fear Yahweh your God and follow carefully all the words of this *tôrâ*" (Deut 31:12). The aim is quite explicit that king and people should learn about Yahweh and worship him, and this seems to be independent of particular social conditions or legal systems.

The responsibility for teaching *tôrâ* probably rested with various groups within Israel. According to Gerstenberger, it belonged originally with the patriarchal clan leaders and was taken over by tribal elders, though others have proposed the scribes from the royal court (Weinfeld; Fitzpatrick-McKinley). The levitical and the Deuteronomic laws place this responsibility primarily in the hands of the *priests (Lev 10:11; 14:57; Deut 24:8; 33:10), with some assistance from the *Levites (Deut 27:9, 14). In difficult legal cases, priest and *judge were to act together in teaching the *tôrâ* and giving legal decisions (Deut 17:8-13; cf. also Deut 19:17-18), but otherwise the judges were restricted entirely to legal activities. According to the Pentateuch, therefore, the *tôrâ* was to be taught primarily by the priests and only secondarily to be applied in courts of law. The fact that the priesthood was an ever-present feature of Israelite society, whereas courts of law in preexilic Israel were convened only as necessary and judges consisted largely of local elders, also points toward the priests as those most suited to the communication of Yahweh's *tôrâ* from one generation to another.

4.2 Tôrâ and the Nature of Israel. The immediate aim of the *tôrâ* was to enable Israel to live as Yahweh's covenant people or, as the Pentateuch puts it, as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). All the pentateuchal law collections emphasize Israel's status as God's *holy people (e.g., Ex 22:31 [MT 22:30]; Lev 19:2; Deut 26:16-19). The essence of this holiness derived from Yahweh's presence, which was located in the *tabernacle (Ex 29:45-46). Yahweh's character and actions provided Israel with a model for

their own holiness, which was to be based on the imitation of God. Israel was to be holy because Yahweh was holy (Lev 19:2); they were to show compassion to others because of God's compassion (Ex 22:26-27 [MT 22:25-26]); and they were to be committed to justice because God was just (Deut 16:18-20; 32:4). They were also to treat *aliens with mercy because that was how God had treated them in Egypt (Lev 19:33-34), and to maintain the freedom for which God had redeemed them in the exodus (Deut 24:17). For this same reason, slaves were to be set free (Deut 15:12-15) and the whole population was to be relieved of their debts in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:8-55).

Israel's role as a kingdom of priests receives a much lower profile in the Pentateuch, but two aspects are particularly relevant here. First, the right of access to God that Israel enjoyed through the *Aaronic priesthood meant that they could represent the whole people of God, including non-Israelites, in the presence of God (*see* Priests, Priesthood). Second, the idea that the nation of Israel was a priesthood gave them an opportunity to mediate God's blessings to other nations. Though the laws repeatedly insist that the Israelites were to separate themselves completely from the *idolatrous and immoral ways of the Canaanites, Israel was also intended to be a paradigm and example by which people of other nations would be attracted to their God (Deut 4:5-8; 26:19). The *tôrâ* was therefore a theoretical means at least by which Israel could fulfill its own potential and bring the covenant blessings to other nations.

The law makes two particular emphases about Israel's holiness. First, it was to be comprehensive, combining worship with *ethics, the Godward and humanward dimensions of life. This all-inclusive combination is evident in the two sections of the Ten Commandments and is clearly present in all the law collections (see 2.1 above). It is also reflected in Jesus' quotations from the law in his answer to a question about the greatest commandment (Lev 19:18; Deut 6:4-5; Mt 22:34-40). This was a revolutionary concept of holiness that contrasts with the ritualistic understanding in ancient times and the modern tendency to limit it to moral concerns. Second, the people's holiness was to be lived out in the *land of Israel. This emphasis is particularly strong in Deuteronomy, where the Promised Land is a kind of stage on which *tôrâ* is to be demonstrated in reality. So close was the relationship between *tôrâ* and the Promised Land that Israel's prosperity and their continued occupation of the land were dependent on their attitude to *tôrâ*. By keeping the laws, Israel would increase and be fruitful in the land, but disobedience would bring economic and political ruin and would ultimately end in *exile (Deut 11:8-17; 28:38-64).

***4.3 Responses to* Tôrâ.** If *tôrâ* was intended to bring Israel's holiness into reality, this would not happen automatically. Yahweh's *tôrâ* demanded a response. This response is comprehensively summed up in Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and 11:22 as fearing God, behaving according to his ways, serving him wholeheartedly, keeping his commands, loving him and holding fast to him. In other passages, the required response is summed up either as loving God with all one's heart, soul and strength, or as obedience (Deut 6:3-5). Although the law thus presented each generation of Israelites with a choice (Ex 24:3-8; Deut 30:15-20), it was the normal expectation that they would accept its requirements. This they did when the covenant was ratified at Sinai (Ex 24:3, 7; 39:32, 42) and by implication when it was renewed in Moab (Deut 29:1—30:20).

Those who made the choice to obey the *tôrâ* were promised "blessing" and "life." Both ideas are found throughout the laws, but they are particularly prominent in Deuteronomy. Israel was promised, for example, that through the *tôrâ* "you will be blessed more than any other people" (Deut 7:14) and that "Yahweh will send a blessing . . . on everything you put your hand to" (Deut 28:8). This idea of God's blessing continues a key theme in Genesis and underlies the nature and purpose of the whole pentateuchal *tôrâ*. The purpose of the pentateuchal story has been helpfully summarized as "the partial fulfilment—which implies also the partial non-fulfilment—of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs." (Clines, 30). The law collections that are part of this larger *tôrâ* are included in this blessing and continue God's purposes revealed in his promises to the patriarchs.

The idea of *tôrâ* as a source of life is clearly stated in the laws of Leviticus ("Keep my decrees and my judgments, for the one who obeys them will live by them"; Lev 18:5; cf. Rom 10:5), but it receives further development in Deuteronomy in two ways. First, keeping the laws was to be an expression of heartfelt love. The book holds to-

gether the ideas of obedience to God's demands and loving him from the heart within the single concept of a "covenant of love" (Deut 7:9, 12; lit. "covenant and steadfast love"). Living by the law was therefore expressed through a dynamic relationship rather than a duty. Second, the experience of living by God's laws and the result of keeping them are both described as life in Deuteronomy 32:47. Since the laws possessed their own internal dynamic and life-giving properties ("they are not just empty words for you—they are your life"), the natural consequence of obedience was also "life" ("By them you will live long in the land"). The latter was not so much a reward as a continuing enjoyment of God's promises, especially in the permanent occupation of the Promised Land.

This concept of a life-giving *tôrâ* suggests that a sharp distinction should be made between law-keeping and legalism. It is often alleged that legalism only became a real danger in the postexilic period, perhaps as late as the time of the Septuagint when Hebrew *tôrâ* was translated by Greek *nomos*, but the problem is already plain in Deuteronomy. The instruction not to add to nor subtract from God's laws recognizes the temptation to treat them as a matter of mere human origin (Deut 4:2; 12:32), and the importance of the commandments being on people's hearts (Deut 6:6) shows that purely external observance was not sufficient. Genuine dangers also existed as Yahweh's laws were adopted by the Israelite state, since such a move carried the possibility of human authority taking responsibility for law instead of it being recognized as the words of God. The only sign of this development within the Pentateuch, however, is Deuteronomy's instruction to the king to submit himself to "all the words of this *tôrâ* and these statutes" (Deut 17:19).

Alongside this positive understanding of the purpose of *tôrâ*, the Pentateuch also draws attention to Israel's inevitable tendency to break the law. The golden calf incident and Moses' prediction of Israel's future disobedience (Ex 32—34; Deut 31:16—32:42) are only the most prominent instances of this, but the levitical atonement laws assume that Israel would need forgiveness on a regular basis. But though the *tôrâ* is pessimistic about God's covenant people, it remains optimistic about the law. Despite Israel's inability to keep the law, the law collections speak only of Israel breaking the covenant, never of Yahweh annulling it (Lev 26:15; Deut 31:16). The laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy point to Israel's future failure and exile, but Yahweh still promises to remember his covenant and restore Israel to their land (Lev 26:42-44; Deut 30:1-10). In anticipation of this hope, even the case of the *golden calf resulted in a fresh revelation of God's presence and a renewal of covenant law. The balance in the *tôrâ* between life and death, between blessing and curse, is therefore not evenly weighed. The laws were specifically geared in favor of life and blessing, and Deuteronomy in particular encourages Israel to make the only proper choice available, namely, life rather than death, blessing rather than curse (Lev 26:40-45; Deut 30:19-20). There was therefore a gospel in the law that could reverse judgment and curse. In order for this gospel to become reality, however, a human act of repentance and divine action to circumcise the human heart, that is, to bring about regeneration, were essential (Deut 30:1-6).

5. Interpretation of *Tôrâ*.

Pentateuchal law has been the subject of a particularly wide variety of interpretations, mainly as a result of the very different roles it plays in Christianity and Judaism. Whereas for the Jews, law is central to faith and is, at least in theory, regarded as God's living word, Christianity has been much more ambivalent and indeed has often been quite negative toward law. Though this more negative approach is partly due to the cultural and historical distance separating the ancient and modern worlds, the main underlying reason is theological, especially that interpretation of Paul which sees a fundamental separation between the law of the OT and the grace of the gospel in the NT. Luther, for example, understood the law merely in terms of its civil function as a hedge to restrain sin and in its spiritual role as a mirror to expose sin. Even those who interpret the law more positively have often been guilty of a partial approach, affirming essentially only the moral laws of the Ten Commandments for Christian use, though sometimes including also a typological understanding of the ceremonial laws as the Pentateuch's way of prefiguring Christ. A narrower version of this view is represented by dispensationalists, who accept only those parts of the pentateuchal law that the NT specifically affirms. As a result of this

approach, Christianity has often paid little attention to the civil and ceremonial laws, though some rehabilitation of ritual has taken place through the work of anthropologists such as M. Douglas.

Comparatively few Christian interpreters have attempted a more comprehensive approach, but those who have done so usually pursue one of two avenues of thought. On the one hand are those who take an essentially moralist view, based on the assumption that certain fundamental moral principles underlie the pentateuchal laws. D. Patrick, for example, sees the written law as the original formulation of the will of the living God and as a witness to an unwritten law about God's justice and righteousness (Patrick, 253). On the other hand are those who take a more theological approach, such as F. Crüsemann's view that *tôrâ* "identifies the unity of law and gospel and thus the unity of divine word and will" (Crüsemann, 2). A variant on this is C. J. H. Wright's view that the law as a whole has a missionary purpose based on Israel's calling to be a royal priesthood and their role as a paradigm for other nations (Wright 1992, 226-29). A further variant is the theonomic approach, which assumes that the entire pentateuchal law applies to Christians apart from what the NT repeals (e.g., Rushdoony; Bahnsen). Jewish commentators have also tended to take a much more comprehensive view of *tôrâ*, assuming that all 613 prescriptions of the law are God's word to his people, to be studied and practiced as a whole.

The key question for Christians, however, is Jesus' relationship to the law. Jesus' promise that he had come to fulfill the law (Mt 5:17) and Paul's view of Jesus as the end of the law (Rom 10:4) together indicate that all Christian interpretation of the OT must be christological (*see DJG*, Law; *DPL*, Law). Christ's interpretation of the law is determinative for Christians, not only as it speaks about the person and work of Christ, but also about motivation and direction for Christian living. However, this is insufficient without an equal emphasis on a pentecostal approach to the law. Jesus' new command that his disciples should love one another occurs in the same context as his promise of the Spirit (Jn 15:12, 26-27). Similarly, Paul's summary of the law, "Love your neighbor as yourself," is followed by his call to live by the Spirit (Gal 5:14, 16; cf. Lev 19:18). If pentateuchal law is not interpreted christologically and pentecostally, it is always liable to decline into a set of rules and regulations that cannot change the lives of those who seek to live by them.

See also BLESSINGS AND CURSES; BOOK OF THE COVENANT; COVENANT; DECALOGUE; ETHICS; FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; MOSES; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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LAW, ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN. *See* LAW.

LAW COLLECTIONS. *See* BOOK OF THE COVENANT; DECALOGUE; LAW.

LEADERSHIP, ELDERS

Elders are relatively old members of a community who represent it in specific domains and matters as defined by the community and its ethos. The study of the elders in the Pentateuch is influenced by modern constructs of leadership and methods of textual interpretation. This study proposes that leadership is domain specific in its scope (temporal and spatial) and authority. There are various methodological challenges in reconstructing the development of the elders' function from the extant text. Consequently, references to sociocultural organizations are made in general rather than detail.

1. Terminology
2. Nature of the Elders' Leadership
3. Textual Examples

1. Terminology.

The semantic indicators of the "elders" are part of a larger manifestation of the role; therefore, the study of the indicators is a precursor to a substantive evaluation of the text's representation of the roles and functions of the elders.

1.1. Semantic Field. The term "elders" *(zĕqēnîm)* is the masculine plural form of *zāqēn,* "old," an adjective most often used substantively and derived from the Hebrew verb *zāqēn* ("be, become old"). The verb denotes the aged state following youth (Gen 18:12; 27:1, 2). When used as an adjective, *zāqēn* (and its derivatives *zōqen, ziqnâ* and *zeqūnîm*) denotes old age (Gen 18:11; 21:2, 7; 24:36; 35:29; 37:3; 48:10). The term *zāqēn* most often refers to males, but it is also used of females. In Genesis 18:11 it is used of both *Abraham and *Sarah, and the root is used of Sarah alone in Genesis 18:13 and 24:36. While it is possible that the elders were either male or female, it is less probable that they were female, given the sociocultural constraint of the patriarchal system. This argument is suggested on the basis that the qualifications to be an elder were more than age. If it were simply age, all the old persons of the community would have been considered elders regardless of gender.

The adjective *zāqēn* is also used substantively of an "old person/elder" (Gen 43:27; 44:20; Ex 10:9; Lev 19:32; Deut 28:50) in contrast to a young person *(naʿar).* The term *yāšān,* "old"—a synonym of *zāqēn*—denotes aged, namely, of

"old crop" as opposed to the fresh crop of the present harvest (Lev 25:22; 26:10). Other synonyms include *śîb,* "be hoary" (1 Sam 12:2), and its derivative *śêb/ śêbâ,* "gray hair, aged" (Gen 15:15; 25:8; 42:38; 44:29, 31; Lev 19:32; Deut 32:25; cf. 1 Kings 14:4).

1.2. Occurrences. The elders may have existed in peer relationship to other leaders in the community—including chief or prince *(śar, ʾallûp, nāśîʾ),* *judge *(šōpēṭ),* head (of Israel) *(rōʾš),* official *(šōṭēr),* *priest *(kōhēn)* and king *(melek)*—in so far as elders continued to function even after the centralization of the sociopolitical structure of the monarchy. The existence and nonexistence of the elders, their authority and their relationship to other leaders cannot be determined solely by the association of the various leaders on the literary level of the text. Notably, there are several texts in which the elders are mentioned without the judges (Deut 19:1-13; 21:18-21; 22:13-21; 25:5-10), and in others the judges are mentioned without the elders (Deut 16:18-20; 17:8-13; 19:15-21; 25:1-3 (Willis, 49). If the coexistence of the elders is verified by their association with other leaders in the text, in the case of the Pentateuch elders appear to have relatively limited contact with other leaders as compared to the rest of the Hebrew Bible. For example, the associations are as follows: elders and judges (Deut 21:2; cf. Josh 8:33; 23:2; 24:1); elders and priests (Lev 4; Deut 31:9; cf. Josh 8:33; 2 Sam 17:15); elders and heads (of tribes) (Deut 5:23); elders and officials (Deut 29:10; 31:28; cf. Josh 8:33; 23:2; 24:1; Judg 8:14); elders and kings (given the perspective of the Pentateuch, only with reference to the kings of other nations, Ex 3:18; in contrast to 2 Sam 3:17). The limited association does not necessarily indicate the mutually exclusive function of the groups or their domains of authority. Given the composite nature of the text, one must at least acknowledge the possibility that both the presence and absence of association between the leaders may be due to chronological development or their domain-specific authority.

2. Nature of the Elders' Leadership.

2.1. Domain of Leadership. As portrayed in the Pentateuch, Israel is often characterized as a lineage system wherein various contexts of varying sizes define the domains of its leaders' authority. Examples of these domains are familial, tribal, intertribal and national. In the lineage-based society there is a hierarchy of power that corresponds to the vertical organization. Accordingly, the head of a *family/household had particular power over his household but not necessarily over the other households in his tribe. Likewise, there were elders with various domains of influence relative to their location in the societal structure. The head of a family may have been selected as part of a group who would represent the community. Along with others, he was charged with responsibility to the community and as such given authority that encompassed and transcended the scope of the family. As the domain of the leadership extended, the leaders' acquaintance with the totality of the community they represented may have diminished though their knowledge of their immediate community may have continued.

The domains of the elders' leadership (relative to the sociocultural hierarchy) are variously designated in the Pentateuch by genitive phrases in which groups are named (i.e., nations, cities, tribes). The elders are designated as follows: elders of Israel (*ziqnê yiśrāʾēl,* Num 11:16), elders of the children of Israel (*ziqnê bĕnê yiśrāʾēl,* Ex 4:29), elders of the people (*ziqnê hāʿām,* Ex 19:7), elders of the congregation (*ziqnê hāʿēdâ,* Lev 4:15) and elders of the city (*ziqnê hāʿîr,* Deut 21:4, 6). The "elders" were not unique to Israel but were found in other nations, including Egypt (*ziqnê ʾereṣ miṣrayim,* Gen 50:7), Midian (*ziqnê midyān,* Num 22:4, 7) and Moab (*ziqnê môʾāb,* Num 22:7).

2.1.1. Elders of Israel. On the highest sociocultural level—the level expanding over the largest segment of the population—the elders are designated relative to the name of the nation or people-group. They are called the elders of Israel *(ziqnê yiśrāʾēl)* or elders of the Israelites *(ziqnê bĕnê yiśrāʾēl).* Apparently, the composition (i.e., size) varied such that one cannot determine the normative size of the group. Furthermore, the variation in the size of the group also suggests that while elders may have continued to exist in the life of Israel, the size of the group that functioned in various capacities varied. What is readily apparent is that there were more than seventy elders in Israel, but on occasions a group of seventy was selected (cf. Ex 24:1, 9; Num 11:16, 24). On other occasions it appears that the entire group of the national elders were brought together; they were designated as "all the elders of Israel" (*kol ziqnê bĕnê*

yiśrāʾēl; Ex 4:29; 12:21; 18:12; Deut 31:9; cf. Gen 50:7 [of Egypt]). The entire group may also be represented by the designation "the elders of Israel" (*ziqnê yiśrāʾēl;* Ex 3:16, 18; Lev 9:1; Deut 27:1) except where the restrictive use is continued from an earlier reference (e.g., Ex 17:6; Num 11:30).

On other occasions, an unspecified number was convened—namely, "some of the elders"(Ex 17:5). There is no decisive indicator that the task regulated the size of the group. Sometimes the scope of the occasion appears to be a determinant in selecting the national elders rather than the local ones. When the occasion concerned all of Israel, the national elders or a selection from that group were convened: namely, the negotiations with *Pharaoh to release the people from slavery (Ex 3:16, 18; 4:29), the preparation for Passover (Ex 12:21), instructions about the sin and burnt offering (Lev 9:1), the charge to observe the *law (Deut 27:1) and the commission to read the law (Deut 31:9; cf. 31:28). At other times, an unspecified number of the "elders of Israel" was convened even when the occasion concerned the entire Israelite population (e.g., Ex 17:5-6—the people's murmuring concerning the lack of water). In Numbers 11 the selection of the seventy elders is occasioned by *Moses' complaint and request for assistance in guiding the people. As in all the instances where the elders of Israel are identified, they functioned as a group assisting Moses with the task of leading the people. The elders are not portrayed as an independent entity that initiated its own course of action. Rather, the elders as a group derive their task from Moses' leadership and the imperatives given to him by God. Their authority to act, the size of the groups and the task with which they are charged constitute the basis for the ad hoc rather than a permanent entity called the "elders."

There are two other designations that appear to be analogous in scope to the "elders of Israel." First, "the elders of the congregation" (*ziqnê hāʿēdâ,* Lev 4:15) refers to the representatives of the people or nation of Israel. In this sense the elders in Leviticus 4:15 perform their cultic duties to address the unintentional sin of the whole population. Second, in Numbers 11:16, 24, the elders of the people *(ziqnê hāʿām)* constitute the pool from which the elders of Israel were selected. In Exodus 19:7 the reference seems to be to the whole group of Israel's population, to whom Moses brings "the words that Yahweh commanded him."

2.1.2. Elders of the City. The national elders were convened from the general pool of elders, possibly including the "elders of the city" (*ziqnê hāʿîr,* Deut 19:12; 21:3, 4, 6, 19, 20; 22:15, 17, 18; 25:8). In the latter reference, "city"—the place where a group of people lives or meets for various occasions—may refer to one of a few domains, including (1) the center of life for a family or (2) tribe, (3) a religious center that is the interclan center serving several cities, and (4) the administrative city that serves all other cities in a nation. The references to city elders in the Pentateuch most likely represent the first three of the four domains just mentioned (Willis, 15). While the designation "elders of the city" represents the group of leaders, their domain varied. As in the cases of the "elders of Israel," this specification of the domain is qualified by, for example, a pronoun ("*that* city" *[hāʿîr hahiwʾ],* Deut 21:4, 6; 22:18), a pronominal suffix ("*his* city" *[ʿîrô],* Deut 19:12; 21:19, 20; 25:8) or a noun ("*all [kol]* the elders of that city," Deut 21:6). In these cases, the elders who adjudicated were the elders of the city in which the cases arose rather than elders gathered from a variety of cities. Their function was localized and specific to the cases brought to them.

The domains of influence even for the elders were affected by the structure of the society and the relationship of the elders to the governing body of the society. Thus it is possible that the city elders had more extensive power in their cities than they did on a national level, where they had little power (Matthews and Benjamin, 122).

2.2. Authority of the Elders. The elders' domain also included particular adjudicative functions, such as issues of breach of contract (marital contract, Deut 22:13-21) and levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10). The elders served as the jury in these cases, hearing the evidence and rendering a verdict. As to the execution of the verdict, it may be assumed that the verdict's force came from the authority imbued to the elders by the people that they represented. The elders did not make the law but rather executed the law as that law applied to particular cases brought to them. Consequently, the elders were subject to the law that they administered, and their authority was constituted by the validity of their application of the law and the recognition of that validity by and within their community.

The elders' authority may have been specific to their domains, while the source of their authority was multifaceted. Elders existed before they were commissioned with particular responsibilities over the people. In many of the texts where the elders are called upon to assist, accompany or bear witness with Moses, the command to commission is given without any specification of who were to constitute the group (e.g., Ex 3:16, 18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5; 19:7; 24:1; Num 11:16). Even in Numbers 11:16, where there is a specification of the eligible "men," the specification itself indicates the preexistence of the group of elders. The selection of the seventy men *(šibʿîm ʾîš)* was made "from the elders of Israel" *(mizziqnê yiśrāʾēl)*, and that group was made from the existing group of elders, namely, the elders of the people *(ziqnê hāʿām)*. This suggests that their first authority was derived from their community insofar as they represented the concerns of the community. The authority assumed in their role imposed by the commission was therefore indebted to their prior authority.

3. Textual Examples.

3.1. City Elders.

3.1.1. Murder. Deuteronomy 21:1-9 speaks of a case in which a dead body was discovered without evidence of the residence of the deceased or the suspect in the crime. In this case, the elders and priests functioned together. The designated role of the priest was to settle the case. The role of the elders was to ascertain the city of residence and then to perform the ritual to secure the cleansing of the city of blood guilt. In this ritual they acted as representatives of the city and declared that they had neither witnessed nor were guilty of the crime.

3.1.2. Parent-Child Conflict. The elders were also called upon to intervene in families when the parents were unable to manage a rebellious child (Deut 21:18-21). In this case, the parents took the child to the elders, and the men of the city executed the punishment of death on the child. No indication is given concerning the verification of the charge against the child, and the punishment itself seems to have been predetermined. The elders did not decide the nature or type of punishment nor execute it. Rather, they simply sanctioned the execution of the punishment.

3.1.3. Marriage Contracts. The elders administered the law in specific cases relating to marriage. According to Deuteronomy 22:13-21, they were to hear the case, view the evidence brought to them and execute punishment on the culpable party, either the man who had slandered his wife (Deut 22:18-19) or the woman who had deceived the man (Deut 22:20-21).

In the case of a man who refused to adhere to the practice of levirate marriages—to marry the brother's widow (who did not have a son)—the elders also heard the case and facilitated the execution of the punishment (Deut 25:5-10). The elders adjudicated by carrying out a predetermined punishment rather than devising new ones.

3.2. Elders of Israel. The domain of the elders' authority also encompassed the transmission of and obedience to the law. In this manifestation of the leadership authority, they stood alongside Moses as the representative of law and *covenant. The elders were commissioned to take the law and recite it to the people (Ex 19:7; Deut 27:1; 31:9, 28 cf. 32:7). In this role, the elders became accountable to their commission and to the law that they were taught.

See also JUDGE; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

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LEAH. *See* JACOB.

LEATHER WORK. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

LEGEND. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

LEVI, LEVITES

According to Genesis 29:34, Levi was the third son whom the unhappy Leah bore to *Jacob. The text tells us that she gave him the name *lēwî* because she hoped that her husband would become more attached *(lāwâ)* to her for having borne him another son. The man Levi would be completely lost in obscurity to us except for the one notorious episode of Genesis 34. This passage tells how Levi conspired with his older brother *Simeon to get revenge on Shechem son of Hamor, a prince of the city of Shechem, for having raped their sister Dinah. Although Simeon and Levi had a legitimate grievance against Shechem, their response was outrageously out of proportion to the crime—they killed not only Shechem but also his father and every man in the city. Thereafter, Jacob regarded both Simeon and Levi as vicious and as possibly unworthy of a place in Israel (Gen 34:30; 49:5-7).

The tribe of Simeon did in fact eventually descend into a kind of historical oblivion, but the tribe of Levi emerged from the *Egyptian sojourn and the *exodus as the priestly tribe of *Israel. Although they never had a separate territory allotted to them and were dispersed throughout the nation, this lack of real estate was more than compensated for by their religious status and the fact that Yahweh himself became their inheritance (Deut 10:9).

1. The Problem of the Levites
2. The Levites in Contemporary Scholarship
3. A Possible Solution

1. The Problem of the Levites.

The biblical account concerning the Levites leaves the modern scholar with two fundamental questions: (1) Why did the Levites receive sacerdotal duties? (2) What was the relationship between the Levites and the temple priesthood, particularly the Aaronite *priests, since at times their roles seem indistinguishable?

Concerning the first question, a traditional explanation is that the Levites distinguished themselves at the *golden calf episode and therefore received the honor of having the sacred articles placed in their care (see Ex 32:28-29; Deut 33:8-11). This has a number of problems, however, and does not seem to be a sufficient explanation. For example, although *Aaron was a central figure in the creation of the golden calf (Ex 32:21-25), he does not forfeit his right to the priesthood. It is noteworthy that the people turned to Aaron to perform a priestly duty, the creation and consecration of an image, at the beginning of the golden calf episode and apparently *before* Moses announced that God had designated the Aaronites as the priests of Israel (Ex 32:1-3). Similarly, God described the priestly vestments and the consecration of Aaron and his sons with no explanation of why they were to have this office (Ex 28—29), almost as though it were assumed by one and all that Aaron had priestly status. Also surprising is Exodus 4:14, where God calls Aaron "the Levite" *(hallēwî)* the very first time Aaron is mentioned, hinting that the term "Levite" already had special significance among the Israelites. Had it simply been a matter of identifying Aaron's tribe, we might have expected him to be called the "son of Levi" *(ben lēwî)*.

This suggests that the Levites were already at the *exodus in some sense the sacerdotal tribe and that Aaron in particular was already widely regarded as a kind of national priest. Although the behavior of the Levites in the golden calf episode served to confirm their position as the clerical tribe, and perhaps won them the specific right to maintain the tent of meeting, it did not radically alter their status. All of this, however, depends on reading the narratives as historically trustworthy texts, something that many critical scholars today are unwilling to do.

Regarding the second question, the traditional answer is that the Levites served as special assistants who cared for the sacred articles of the tent of meeting whereas the Aaronites actually functioned as priests. Thus the Levites had sanctuary duties but were not actually priests (they are sometimes described as a *clerus minor*, or "lower clergy"). This interpretation is derived primarily from texts in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. For example, the priestly consecration of Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8 starkly contrasts with the commands regarding the Levites in Numbers 3—4. The former sets the Aaronites apart for officiating in *sacrifice and worship, whereas the latter prescribes for the other clans of Levi (the Gershonites, the Kohathites and the

Merarites) specific duties in caring for and transporting the tent, the *altar and the other sacred vessels.

The principal problem with this approach is that other texts of the Bible, especially those associated with Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, seem to regard all Levites as priests. Deuteronomy 18:1 speaks of "the priests, the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi" as though it were a single group and implies that all Levites are (or could become) priests. Deuteronomy's term "the priests, the Levites" (e.g., Deut 17:9, 18) at least indicates that a Levite was not a mere temple servant. Another significant text is Judges 17—18, where a certain Micah as well as members of the tribe of Dan regard it a matter of great importance that their priest be of levitical stock but are apparently unconcerned about whether he is of Aaron's line (see especially Judg 17:13).

2. The Levites in Contemporary Scholarship. Reflecting on the diversity of viewpoints in the Bible, many scholars follow J. Wellhausen's lead and assert that although the OT presents a confused and unreliable account of the background of the Levites, the biblical texts are nevertheless not without value in reconstructing Israel's religious history. In particular, most scholars see in the Bible the redacted fragments of texts that were used by rival claimants to Israel's priesthood to bolster their cases. The story of Israel's priesthood is thus a dialectical historical process in which rival groups (the Levites, the Aaronites, the Zadokites and the Mushites [priests claiming decent from Moses]) contended for the right to officiate at Israel's altars. Each group, to support its claim to primacy, circulated stories that undermined the claims of other groups; these stories have been redacted into the current Pentateuch (and other OT books). The golden calf story (Ex 32), for example, is often thought to have been formulated by the Levites to weaken the Aaronites' claim to the priesthood by presenting their eponymous head as idolatrous (e.g., Haran, 90-92; see also White). By contrast, some have argued, the Aaronites disseminated the story of the rebellion of Dathan, Abiram and the sons of Korah (Num 16—18) in order to show that God sanctioned the priesthood of Aaron over against the pretensions of the Levites.

Although most scholars agree that the history of Israel's priesthood was one of conflict between rival groups, there is wide diversity of opinion about specific details. In Wellhausen's reconstruction, the Levites were originally a warrior tribe and the priesthood was at first mantic rather than cultic. The Levites were dispersed in Israel, perhaps because they were violently dispossessed of their lands during the judges period. With the rise of the monarchy, established priesthoods at cultic sites began to appear, and the few wandering Levites began to take on priestly roles at the high places. For Wellhausen there is no real connection between the warrior tribe of Levi, an early group that effectively disappeared by the end of the judges period, and the religious caste of Levi, a creation of D and especially P (*see* Source Criticism), which was artificially linked to the tribe. Eventually the (nonlevitical) Zadokite priesthood of Jerusalem came into conflict with the more dispersed levitical priests, and under Josiah the Levites were forced into Jerusalem, subordinated to its priesthood and reduced to being temple servants. The process ended with the postexilic denunciation of the Levites in Ezekiel 44:6-16 and the writing of the P document, which gave the official viewpoint that the Levites had always been subordinates (Wellhausen, 121-51).

Some scholars reject the idea that the Levites had a long history as a secular or warrior tribe. A few, on the basis of Minaean inscriptions found at Al-'Ula (biblical Dedan) in northern Arabia, have argued that the term *lēwî* actually means "priest," and thus that there never was a secular tribe of Levites. The priestly personnel who had the title *lēwî* were artificially given a tribal heritage in the tradition. Many scholars, however, reject this interpretation of *lēwî* and regard it as a personal name (see Cody, 29-35).

As an explanation for how the secular Levites came to be a priestly group in the first place, some scholars suggest that they were the losers in an intertribal conflict for land and took over the priestly function as a kind of consolation prize. Others contend that the original Levites were members of a cult association (like the Rechabites). Another suggestion is that the Levites for some reason had or adopted the status of "sojourners" *(gērîm)* within Israel and, because of economic necessity, took up the trade of priestcraft (Cody, 55-61).

Many continue to believe that Ezekiel 44:10-15 and P describe a postexilic demotion of the

Levites to the status of *clerus minor*. M. Haran, however, points out that the situation in P, which presumes that there are far more Levites than priests, contrasts starkly with the reality of the postexilic community, where Levites were few in number (Haran, 94, 109). Some scholars present the conflict between priest and Levite as less a grab for power than a theological debate over Israel's identity; R. Albertz (480-93) reads P as the priestly side of a postexilic debate between "reforming priests" and "lay theologians."

For A. Cody, Exodus 32 was originally not directed against Aaronites but against the nonlevitical priests of Bethel; it was an apology for the legitimacy of the Levites over against the Bethel priesthood (Cody, 146-56). He suggests that the Zadokite priesthood was actually Jebusite and that the Aaronites were a subgroup of Levites in the preexilic south. The Zadokites came into conflict with the Aaronites over the control of the Jerusalem temple at the time of the Josianic reformation, but they ultimately worked out a compromise with the larger group of Levites whereby the Levites would take a subordinate role but the Zadokites would preserve the fiction of a levitical priesthood by declaring themselves to be descended from Levi through Aaron (Cody, 89-93, 155-74).

J. Blenkinsopp generally supports the Wellhausen hypothesis but considers it to have some significant problems, especially in the assumption that the preexilic Jerusalem priesthood was Zadokite. He argues that the postexilic community created the fiction of the priesthood of Aaron. This community subordinated the Levites to the status of a lower clergy but also gave them an expanded role within that status, including work as musicians, gatekeepers, liturgists and especially as teachers of the *law. He suggests that these broader functions allowed them to form, with the support of the laity, a counterweight to the power of the priestly aristocracy (Blenkinsopp, 83-98).

By contrast, Y. Kaufmann places the conflict among the rival groups in the preexilic period. He argues that the Levites were a warrior tribe who distinguished themselves in the golden calf episode and so won the right to serve in a priestly role. He rejects the view that they lived as landless sojourners *(gērîm)* prior to their taking on priestly duties in the shrines. In his view, the Aaronites were an ancient nonlevitical, pagan priesthood. He asserts that the principal conflict was between the Aaronites and the Levites/Zadokites. In Kaufmann's view, the Levites had virtually died out by the end of the monarchy, although Ezra was able to find a few to help fill out the personnel requirements of the restored theocracy (Kaufmann, 197-99).

R. Nurmela argues that the fundamental division was between the Zadokites of Jerusalem and the Levites of the northern kingdom. With the destruction of the northern kingdom, priestly refugees (Levites) flooded the south; in the ensuing tension the Levites were demoted to the status of temple servants. T. Polk suggests that the Levites, especially the warlike Korahites, supported David against Saul and also supported the Aaronite Zadok against the Mushite Abiathar. In return for their loyal allegiance, they were given important functions in the royally sponsored Jerusalem cult (Polk, 3-22).

In summary, there is hardly anything like a consensus of opinion among scholars regarding the history of the Levites. The relationships among the various groups, the circumstances of their conflicts and the *tradition history behind the texts are all disputed. The only constant is the notion that behind the texts stands a conflict between rivals for the priesthood. We must ask ourselves if this, the starting point for research for the last century, is fundamentally misguided. Furthermore, all of the proposed solutions contain significant inconsistencies and improbable constructs. For example, how is it that the Josianic reformation was a major step in the demotion of the Levites and yet it is D, the supposed guidebook for that reformation, that most clearly gives Levites a priestly status? Scholars have offered no convincing explanation of how it is that the OT uniformly presents the house of Aaron as both priestly and levitical if in fact he was not both and may have been neither.

3. A Possible Solution.

If we regard the biblical text as fundamentally trustworthy, the following reconstruction is possible. First, the Levites seem to have come to the exodus and certainly entered Canaan already possessing some kind of clerical status (see also 1 Sam 2:27). The Levites never existed in the land of Israel as a "warrior tribe" or as a group of *gērîm*. The golden calf incident confirmed the status of Levi as the sacerdotal tribe.

Second, none of the often cited texts (Ex 32; Num 16—18; 1 Sam 2; Ezek 44) is a propaganda

piece in a war among rival priesthoods. In the only text in which there is conflict over control of the sanctuary (Num 16—18), *both* groups acknowledge that the sanctuary should be in the hands of Levites.

Third, the position of the Levites vis-à-vis the house of Aaron is not really confused in the Bible. During the exodus wandering, there is only one sanctuary and the Aaronites officiate there; the rest of the Levites serve as the sanctuary staff. Deuteronomy anticipates the dispersal of Israel throughout Canaan and a time when the tent will no longer be on the march. In those circumstances, the primary shrine will no longer require a large support staff. Instead, the Levites will scatter throughout the land and will be free to officiate at other legitimate altars to Yahweh. This is precisely the circumstance we see in the period of the judges and monarchy.

Fourth, Canaanite syncretism and the presence of nonlevitical shrines (1 Kings 12:31) prompted the closure of outlying sanctuaries during the reforms of Josiah. The hard lessons of the exile and the reduced size of the postexilic community encouraged the people to maintain the Jerusalem temple with its Aaronite priesthood as the only legitimate shrine, but the Levites were not "demoted" in the process. At the central shrine they had always been subordinate to the Aaronites.

See also AARON; ELEAZAR; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; RELIGION; TABERNACLE.

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LEVITES. *See* LEVI, LEVITES.

LEVITICUS, BOOK OF

Leviticus is not an easy book to understand. Despite Jewish recognition of the importance of the book, its study has been hampered primarily because the rationales for the rules and prescriptions that dominate the book are rarely spelled out. Although since the 1970s some significant proposals have been made regarding the meaning of offerings and prescriptions, the impression cannot be denied that on the whole any serious grappling with the book has just begun. There exists a wide variety of scholarly views of the meaning of some key Hebrew terms as well as the meaning of the rituals, and a reasonable consensus has not yet been reached. Hence it is hoped that the following article may contribute in a small way toward solving some crucial interpretive issues in Leviticus.

1. The Name and Location of the Book
2. Authorship and Date of Composition
3. Structure of the Book
4. Sacrifices and Offerings
5. The Cleanness and Uncleanness Regulations in Leviticus 11—15
6. Holiness as the Ideal of Living
7. New Testament Implications

1. The Name and Location of the Book.

Leviticus is the Latin name from Greek *Leyitikon* ("relating to the priests"). The Tannaitic name is *tōrat kōhănim* ("the law of priests"). These names suggest that the book deals with priestly matters. However, the name **Levites* itself occurs in this book only tangentially in Leviticus 25:32-33. It may well be that *leuitēs* referred to the priest among Hellenistic Jews. Taking the first word of the book, the ordinary Hebrew name of Leviticus is *wayyiqrā'* ("and he called"). *Sipra,* an important halakic midrash on Leviticus, means "the book," implying the importance of the book for early Jews.

Leviticus is located after the book of Exodus,

the end of which deals with the building of the *tabernacle. The content of Leviticus's opening chapters is a natural sequel to the theme of the last chapters of Exodus. Yet Leviticus 1:1 does not naturally follow the final verses of Exodus (Ex 40:36-38), which foreshadow the account resumed in Numbers 9 of the Israelites wandering in the desert. Another important literary link that indicates the unity of the two books is the fulfillment in Leviticus 8 of the priests' ordination, which is prescribed in Exodus 29. Since Leviticus 1—7, which deals with *sacrifices and offerings, comes in between, it has been argued that Leviticus 1—7 was "inserted" to break the natural sequence of the building of the tabernacle (Ex 40) and the priests' ordination followed by the inauguration of their ministry (Lev 8—9; cf. the discussion by Rendtorff 1997).

However, since the final verses of Exodus form a fitting conclusion to the themes of the book, it is logical that Leviticus should begin with the regulations on how one should make sacrifices and offerings following the completion of the tabernacle. Moreover, in view of the fact that the burnt offering and peace offering already appear in Exodus 29, the positioning of rules on sacrifices and offerings in Leviticus 1—7 suggests that the material from Exodus 25 onward is arranged thematically (see 3 below). Although the book of Leviticus is distinct from the book of Exodus, it continues thematically the story of Exodus.

2. Authorship and Date of Composition.

The issue of the authorship of Leviticus cannot be separated from that of the *authorship of the whole Pentateuch (*see* Source Criticism). Until the rise of modern critical scholarship, the author of Leviticus, as well as the rest of the Pentateuch, was believed to have been *Moses. Still today there are many who believe so. This is not merely an interpretive tradition of traditional Judaism and Christianity. NT writers as well as writers of later OT books appear to ascribe authorship of the Law (Pentateuch) to Moses, though the exact scope of "the Law" is not clear (e.g., Lk 24:27, 44; Jn 5:46; 7:19). However, this position has been heavily challenged by critical scholarship since the nineteenth century.

In OT critical studies from the nineteenth century onward, particularly in those represented by the Wellhausian hypothesis, scholars have viewed Leviticus as belonging to what is considered to be the Priestly stratum (P). P was thought to have been produced after the exile and to have come last among the four major literary strata: J, E, D and P. Mosaic authorship is out of the question in this stream of research.

In later pentateuchal study, P itself was further divided into multiple sources. Leviticus 17—26 in particular was thought to constitute a document separate from P and was named *Heiligkeitsgesetz* (Holiness Code, or H) by A. Klostermann. The scholarly consensus since has been that H was edited by P (cf. Hartley, 251-60).

However, since the nineteenth century, conservative Jewish and Christian scholars in particular (e.g., U. Cassuto, A. H. Finn, K. A. Kitchen) have demurred, criticizing critical scholarship's criteria for literary division in P's narrative over against other codes. Their contributions have not been sufficiently heeded. More recently, from the Jewish side, the antiquity of P has been demonstrated based on its language and institutions in an attempt to argue that P antedates D. Recently, G. Wenham has argued that wherever the materials are conventionally attributed to P in Genesis, P appears to antedate J. In this case, the relative chronology assumed by biblical critics for J and P is questionable. Moreover, A. J. Millard has recently pointed out that rituals in Leviticus can be compared best with those coming from the religious milieu of the Late Bronze Age.

More recently a remarkable argument with regard to the literary aspect of Leviticus has been made by Jewish scholars I. Knohl and J. Milgrom. Based on linguistic and ideological comparisons of P and H, they have advanced the view that P antedates H; H edited P material and not the reverse, as had been thought since the nineteenth century. According to Milgrom, the editor of H belongs to the end of the eighth century B.C. or later (Milgrom 1991, 27).

Space prohibits an extensive discussion of the above position as well as of P itself. However, for the present writer, the very existence of P as well as H is doubtful, though the possibility that the author of Leviticus utilized sources cannot be excluded (cf. Kiuchi 1999a). As regards the date of Leviticus, there seems to be no weighty evidence proving that the material in the book is later than the time of Moses. It is thus the conviction of the present writer that, if not by Moses, the book could well have been written by one of his contemporaries.

3. Structure of the Book.

Under the Documentary Hypothesis it was difficult to see the book as a single whole having a literary unity. However, recently M. Douglas has proposed a so-called ring structure for the book. According to her analysis, Leviticus is chiastically arranged in terms of its themes. Chapters 1—7 (things and persons consecrated to the Lord) correspond to chapter 25; chapter 10 (the holy place defiled) corresponds to chapter 24 (the name defiled); and so on. The center is Leviticus 19 (equity between the people), and it corresponds to Leviticus 26 (equity between the people). This attempt by Douglas should be appreciated as an endeavor to read the present shape of the book, yet the seemingly arbitrary characterization of the chapters is doubtful.

Setting aside the question of literary sources, we propose below another way of looking at the book holistically (see Kiuchi 1999a). This approach also challenges the presumption of H's existence. As stated above, Leviticus is closely bound up with Exodus thematically. It appears that the content of Exodus 25—Leviticus 26 can be seen as flowing from outer to inner aspects of worship, from the material side to the human heart expressed outwardly (Ex 25—Lev 16) and further on to the human heart expressed in obedience to the laws and decrees (Lev 18—26).

After the theme of sacrifice and offerings, Leviticus 8 recounts the ordination of the Aaronide priests. That the priests' ordination follows the theme of sacrifices and offerings matches the above-mentioned thematic flow, moving from material to human. It is logical then that Leviticus 8 is followed by Leviticus 9, in which the first tabernacle worship is conducted by the newly ordained priests. Unfortunately, the trespass of *Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two sons, made the festive day sorrowful and painful for Aaron and the Israelites as a whole. Leviticus 10, therefore, contains the account of the incident in the first half, and in the latter half there is another contingent incident in which Aaron's two remaining sons burned the purification offering that was to be eaten. In the middle of the chapter comes the Lord's instruction for the priests' fundamental roles: they are to differentiate between clean and unclean, sacred and common, and to teach the words of the Lord to the Israelites (Lev 10:9-10; *see* Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean). These verses have a significant role in terms of the structure of Leviticus 10—26, for the distinction between the clean and the unclean is dealt with in chapters 11—16, while the distinction between sacred and common is dealt with in chapters 18—26 (note that *ḥillēl* ["desecrate"] first appears in Lev 18). Thus Leviticus 10:9-10 chiastically anticipates the regulations in Leviticus 11—16 and 18—26. That Leviticus 18—26 deals with the distinction between the holy and the common is also suggested by the very positioning of Leviticus 27, which deals with the legitimate possibility and limitation of redeeming holy things; until Leviticus 26, converting the holy to the common is an illegitimate act of desecration.

Based on these observations it will be argued below that Leviticus 11—26 exhibits a thematic pattern, namely, Introduction-A-B-A'-B'. As the chart in figure 1 shows, A is developed in A', while B is developed in B'.

I Introduction: cleanness and uncleanness reflected in the animal world (Lev 11)
  A Uncleanness from sexual organs (Lev 12)
    B Uncleanness of persons (Lev 13—14)
  A' Uncleanness from sexual organs (Lev 15)
    B' Atonement ceremony purifying the sanctuary from uncleanness caused by sins (Lev 16)

II Introduction: handling of blood securing the way to life (Lev 17)
  A Sexual offenses and other customs in neighboring nations (Lev 18)
    B Becoming holy (Lev 19)
  A' Sexual offenses and other customs in neighboring nations (more emphasis on punishment) (Lev 20)
    B' Conditions for *holy* priests and sacrifices (Lev 21—22)

III (No introduction)
  A Festivals (Lev 23)
    B Rules on lamps and bread and a case of blasphemy (Lev 24)
  A' Sabbath year and the Jubilee year (Lev 25)
    B' Blessings and curses (Lev 26)

Figure 1: The Thematic Pattern of Leviticus 11—26

This pattern does not mean that there are no literary or ideological connections between A and B, B and A', or A' and B'; there are indeed.

However, the pattern is a thematic one that enables us to see the overall arrangement of the material.

Leviticus 11 deals with edible and forbidden food in the first half of the chapter, with rules on defilement interspersed in the latter half. The chapter could be called a chapter on cleanness and uncleanness reflected in the animal world. The theme of Leviticus 12 (defilement from sexual organs) is common to Leviticus 15. Leviticus 13—14 concerns various rules on the so-called skin disease, though the exact nature of *ṣāraʿat*, and therefore the appropriate translation, still eludes moderns. As will be argued below, this disease and its handling relates to human sinfulness in general. Thus, while Leviticus 13 concerns general sinfulness of the Israelites, Leviticus 16 focuses on particular sins of the Israelites committed during the year. Also, the two rituals in Leviticus 16 of the cleansing of the *sancta* and the devolving of the guilt upon the azazel goat (or "scapegoat") have close parallels in Leviticus 14 (cf. Lev 14:4-7, 49-53).

A similar structure can be observed in Leviticus 17—22. First, the central theme of Leviticus 17 is the prohibition of *blood consumption when eating meat. Therefore, Leviticus 17 parallels Leviticus 11 in this theme of eating prohibitions. Leviticus 18 lists sexual and other spiritual offenses that are reiterated in Leviticus 20 with more emphasis on the punitive aspect. Leviticus 19 is a chapter on the holy living required of all the Israelites. Observance of all the commands in the chapter will lead the Israelites to holiness (see Lev 19:2). This requirement for communal holiness is specifically applied in Leviticus 21—22 to people and things called holy, namely, priests and sacrifices. Leviticus 22:31-33 concludes pattern II (note *niqdaštî* in Lev 22:32). Looking back to pattern I, we can see a stark contrast between Leviticus 19 (emphasis on holiness) and Leviticus 13 (emphasis on sinfulness).

Pattern III has no introduction. It is clear that Leviticus 23 and 25 deal with "holy" occasions. Though the intervening chapter 24 has presented exegetes with the question of why these rules are located just here, it is understandable if we suppose that the rules regarding the lampstand (Lev 24:1-9) and the case of blasphemy (Lev 24:10-23) are developed in Leviticus 26; the former symbolizes God's presence and thus adumbrates the blessings (Lev 26:3-13), whereas the latter concern of blasphemy adumbrates the curses (Lev 26:14-39).

Though there are other issues to be addressed regarding the structure of the book, the evidence suggests that a structure like the one proposed above does exist. Moreover, if this is true, there seems to be no need to assume an independent source such as H for Leviticus 17—26. If chapters 17—26 are to be seen as a literary unit, they are a unit that must be studied within the larger literary unit of chapters 10—26.

4. Sacrifices and Offerings.

Leviticus 1:1—6:7 presents five major sacrifices and offerings to be made at the tabernacle: the burnt offering (Lev l), the gift offering (or cereal offering, Lev 2), the peace offering (or well-being offering, Lev 3), the purification offering (or sin offering, Lev 4:1—5:13) and the reparation offering (or guilt offering, Lev 5:14—6:7). Since the names and functions of these offerings are discussed in recent articles on sacrifices and offerings, it needs no repetition (cf. Averbeck, *NIDOTTE*, 4.996-1022; Jenson; *see* Sacrifices and Offerings). Rather, we focus below on other aspects of the offerings and their ceremonies.

4.1. Aspects of Sacrificial Rituals. (1) Sacrifices and offerings are the means for the Israelites to approach God and thus have fellowship with him. The material of the offerings is the Israelites' ordinary foodstuff, such as meat and grains. However, it is not conceived that God is fed by the human offering-bearers (cf. Ps 50:8-13). For example, the sacrifice of burnt offering is totally consumed. The question of whether God actually smells "the pleasing odor" still arises. To what extent should one understand this ritual element metaphorically? If it is not to be taken literally, then in what way is it metaphorical or symbolical, and to what degree? It appears that the cost and sacrifice on the part of the worshiper indicates that merely likening the Lord's smelling the odor to the worshiper's being accepted is not enough. One might suppose that the ritual components refer to spiritual realities and that they are not merely symbolic in a loose sense but are given reality by the fact that the Lord is portrayed anthropomorphically. The language of the ritual, then, approximates the language of the Lord's Supper in John 6:53-54.

(2) While the purification offering (Lev 4:1—5:13) and the reparation offering (Lev 5:14—6:7) are to be offered for specific sins, it is not clear what the specific functions of the burnt of-

fering, the gift offering and the peace offering are. The meanings of the latter are not spelled out, presumably because they are well known to the Israelites. In fact, there are hints that the first five chapters of Leviticus are not just prescriptive texts; they intend to convey certain theological messages that assume general knowledge of the offerings. For instance, while the flesh of the peace offering is normally eaten by the offerer, that part of the ceremony is not mentioned in Leviticus 3 at all but rather is assumed. It seems that by leaving out the element and stressing instead the object of worship (i.e., the Lord), the chapter stresses that the peace offering should be offered to the Lord and not to the demon in the desert (cf. Lev 17:2-7). This indicates that the text emphasizes a certain aspect of the ceremony, assuming general knowledge of the offering (cf. Knierim's discussion on Lev 1).

(3) The five kinds of offering partly overlap in their rites. For instance, ritual elements such as slaughtering, handling of blood and burning of fat are common to the burnt offering, the peace offering, the purification offering and the reparation offering, while they differ in how they should be performed. It is clear that though each sacrifice has its own emphasis, they all overlap in many respects. If this is true when one kind of offering is compared with another, it is even more so when the combination of several kinds of offerings are made, such as on the occasions of the eighth-day service (Lev 9), the Day of *Atonement (Lev 16) and the completion of the Nazirite vow (Num 6). By accumulating similar kinds of rites, greater symbolic effect is achieved.

(4) The symbolism of blood is mentioned in Leviticus 17:11. Although J. Milgrom has contested that the blood here refers to the blood of the peace offering, this is inappropriate, as many scholars judge (see the reasons adduced by Averbeck, *NIDOTTE* 2.694-95). Thus it is reasonable to take the traditional view that the passage relates in general to what happens on the *altar. This is not incongruous with the role of the purifying blood. Further, the blood is not the blood circulating in the animal's body but rather the blood shed when slaughtered. In other words, *life here refers to life given over to death, that is, substitutionary death. Certainly the term "blood" is used symbolically, yet it is given atoning power before the Lord.

(5) The complexities of blood manipulation loom large in the ritual of the purification offering. There are basically two types of ceremony for the expiation of sin (Lev 4). In the case of the leader and the ordinary individual, the ritual blood is to be smeared on the outer altar and it is not brought into the sanctuary. However, in the case of the anointed priest and the whole congregation, the blood is brought into the inner sanctuary and sprinkled toward the *pārōket*-veil seven times while the rest of blood is daubed on the horns of the outer altar. It can be argued that the *sprinkling* of blood adumbrates the same act to be performed by the anointed priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev 4:6; 16:15-17; see the discussion of these verses in Rendtorff 1985-1992).

Corresponding to the two kinds of blood handling, Leviticus 6:24-30 prescribes that the first type of sacrifice should be eaten by the officiating priest while the second type of sacrifice should be burned outside the camp and not be eaten. Anomalies to these rules are found in the ceremonies in Leviticus 8 and 9. However, these can be explained on the assumptions that sinfulness, rather than specific sins, is expiated by the sacrifice and that Aaron and his sons have not yet entered the tent of meeting.

The nature of the two kinds of remaining meat has been debated. Milgrom argues that the ordinary purification offering can be eaten by the officiating priest because its contagiousness is low in degree, whereas offerings that are burned cannot be eaten because their contagiousness is high in degree and dangerous. Alternatively, it is argued that the first type is a priestly due, while in the second type there appears to be an assumption that the agent (the anointed priest) cannot bear his own guilt substitutionarily (see the discussion in Kiuchi 1987, 51-52, 67-85, 130-35).

(6) Because the ritual prescriptions rarely spell out what to say in offering sacrifices, the reader tends to infer that the rituals are to be performed in silence or with few words. However, the possibility should be borne in mind that the absence of any mention of the worshipers' words stresses their need to express inner motives outwardly and that this does not mean that the text has no interest in the inner feeling and words coming out of the worshipers mouths. The reverse situation is found in the prophets' criticisms of offering sacrifices without

sincerity (e.g., Is 1:13-14; Amos 5:21-24).

(7) Later, in contrast to the prophets' denouncements against the people's hypocritical attitude toward the Lord, some of the psalmists confess a need to express their self-devotion in ways other than by sacrifices because they feel that offering sacrifice is simply inadequate to express their devotion to the Lord (cf. Ps 40:6-8; 51:16-17). These texts are to be taken as expressing the inner attitude of individuals and not the public theological attitude toward sacrifices, though they contain prophetic elements (cf. Ps 40:6-8; Heb 10:5-7).

*4.2. **Kipper.*** The term *kipper* frequently appears in connection with expiatory sacrifices such as the purification offering, the reparation offering and the burnt offering. Various etymologies of the term have been proposed: (1) Akkadian *kuppuru,* meaning "wipe off"; (2) Arabic *kafara,* meaning "cover"; and (3) Hebrew *kōper,* "ransom." In the case of the third option, *kipper* is construed as a denominative verb of *kōper.* An extensive discussion of these proposals has been made by Averbeck (*NIDOTTE* 2.689-710). Indeed, it seems necessary to attempt to gain the most exact meaning of *kipper* possible, as this term summarizes the whole significance of expiatory rituals, and particularly of blood (Lev 17:11).

Rather than pursue the discussion here, however, attention should be drawn to three exegetical observations. (1) *Kipper* is a comprehensive term, including the burning of fat and not just the effect of blood manipulation (cf. Lev 4:19 with 4:20; see Kiuchi 1987, 94-101). (2) While *kipper* appears to be synonymous with the ideas of "cleansing" (Lev 16:30) and "sanctifying" (Ex 29:36-37; Lev 8:15; 16:19-20), it also is synonymous with the idea of "bearing guilt" in some passages (cf. Lev 5:1 with 5:6; 5:17 with 5:18; 10:17; 16:22, cf. Schwartz). Uncleanness and guilt are two distinct ideas, and it seems possible to posit that the priest, by cleansing the uncleanness of *sancta* with blood from the purification offering, bears the guilt associated with uncleanness. This substitutionary act is compatible with the role of the blood in Leviticus 17:11 discussed above (see Kiuchi 1987, 87-109, and for a most recent study on this theme see Sklar). Furthermore, since one of the important roles of the priest is to make *kipper,* the priest is also considered to function in a vicarious manner (*see* Priests, Priesthood). (3) Although the evaluation of the phrase "a pleasing odor/soothing aroma" varies among scholars, it is clear that assuaging the divine wrath constitutes at least part of the idea of *kipper* (Lev 4:31; cf. also [1] above). This factor ought to be taken into account in future discussions of *kipper.* The oft-made distinction between expiation and propitiation in regard to atonement may simply be fallacious (cf. Schenker).

5. The Cleanness and Uncleanness Regulations in Leviticus 11—15.

5.1. Meaning and Rationale of Uncleanness. The meaning and rationale of uncleanness in Leviticus 11—15 have long been among the more difficult questions in the study of Leviticus (see Hartley, 142-47; Averbeck, *NIDOTTE* 4.484; Wright, 739). Attempts to see a hygienic motive or cultic polemic against Canaanite customs appear to be unconvincing because both can explain only a portion of the regulations in Leviticus 11—15. What should be called symbolic approaches include the following explanations. (1) Cleanness symbolizes righteousness while uncleanness symbolizes wickedness. This explanation appears to be rather unpopular today, but it involves the fundamental question of whether cleanness and uncleanness have moral connotations. (2) As Douglas propounded, cleanness and uncleanness are concerned with the creational order. For instance, when an animal's locomotion fits in the original creational habitat, it is clean; when it does not, it is unclean. This theory has been criticized, for instance, on the basis that the criterion of locomotion cannot be applied to the creatures in Leviticus 11 with certainty (see Firmage, 177-82). (3) Uncleanness symbolizes an aura of death. The association of uncleanness with death has been noticed since the time of ancient Jewish exegetes, but recently the position has been elucidated by G. J. Wenham with firm scriptural basis (cf. Lev 11:24, 27-28, 39; Num 19). On the whole, a consensus is emerging that the third explanation best explains the text.

In general, uncleanness in Leviticus is not the matter of material "dirt," though the former may evoke the latter. Further, uncleanness in Leviticus has often been described as *cultic, ceremonial* or *ritual* in nature. However, since there is no ritual act without meaning, it is necessary to reappraise these modern terms (cf. Klawans).

In considering what uncleanness means, it

should be borne in mind that uncleanness in Leviticus 11—15 concerns only certain kinds of creatures (Lev 11), sexual abnormalities (Lev 12; 15) and a particular kind of "skin disease" (Lev 13—14). In other words, uncleanness does not result from all kinds of blood discharge, but only from discharge of reproductive organs; it does not result from all kinds of skin diseases, but only from *ṣāraʿat*. Given these data, if uncleanness symbolizes death, it must do so in a more qualified sense.

5.2. Uncleanness and Genesis 3. It is proposed here that the rationale of cleanness-uncleanness regulations in Leviticus 11—15 is based on the event of Genesis 3, namely, what Christian theology refers to as the *Fall. While this view was vaguely entertained by older commentators without distinguishing between uncleanness and sins, it sees in the Fall an unwelcome spiritual metamorphosis that transforms the animal world and human world.

First, the list of unclean animals in Leviticus 11 includes various creatures that have abnormalities in Douglas's sense, such as fish without fins or scales. However, it may well be that such features are not something wrong by themselves, but that they are viewed as reflecting the sin and its consequences of the first humans in a spiritual sense. Another important feature of unclean creatures is that they have contact with death, which came into the world with the sin of the first humans and which makes everything unclean. It is not coincidental that the unclean birds in Leviticus 11:13-16 happen to be those that have frequent contact with death. Thus, abnormalities and contact with death are the features of unclean creatures. Further, swarming creatures are emphatically said to be unclean. Strikingly, though serpents and swarming creatures share the same characteristics (Lev 11:29-31, 41-43), the serpent itself is not mentioned in Leviticus 11. However, there is an unmistakable coincidence of wording between Leviticus 11:42 and Genesis 3:14 in the phrase *ʿal gāḥôn* ("upon the belly"). The phrase occurs only in these verses in the OT, and it is not unreasonable to assume that the legislator of Leviticus 11 has Genesis 3 in mind.

Second, the case of the parturient (Lev 12) can be best explained by having recourse to Genesis 3:14, in which God increases the woman's pangs in childbirth as a consequence of her sin. It is certainly possible that the blood discharge symbolizes the loss of life, but since only discharges from reproductive organs are at issue, it is more likely that the discharge in Leviticus 12 symbolizes the parturient's pangs and thus functions to remind man and woman of their original sin.

Third, the case of *ṣāraʿat* in Leviticus 13 has tended to be dealt with in terms of modern pathology, but it is argued elsewhere (see Kiuchi 2001) that *ṣāraʿat* serves an educational purpose: by remembering and observing this regulation one is reminded of the danger of hiding one's sinfulness. In other words, the disease of *ṣāraʿat* is chosen because its symptoms, being hidden, persistent and, above all, almost indistinguishable from other skin diseases, are most apt for describing the nature of human sinfulness. This interpretation accords well with the fact that the first humans hid their nakedness just after they sinned against God. Thus *ṣāraʿat* indeed symbolizes death or the aura of death, but from this interpretation arises a more essential view of human nature, namely, the constant propensity of humans to hide their own sinfulness. Furthermore, it is the patchy condition that makes one unclean, whereas if the disease covers the whole body, one is pronounced clean (Lev 13:12-13). Uncleanness, thus, lies in hiding one's whole situation. In fact, we find throughout the chapter the strong exhortation to make public one's true uncleanness (Lev 13:13, 45-46). It can even be suggested, therefore, that uncleanness means hiding one's sinfulness.

Leviticus 15 deals with uncleanness from male and female reproductive organs. Why is the discharge from sexual organs defiling? A highly possible explanation would be that semen and blood symbolize life, and therefore their discharge means loss of life (Wenham 1979). However, since the source of defilement is limited to the reproductive organs and does not come from other parts of the body (e.g., from bodily cuts), the rationale of uncleanness here should be sought elsewhere. It is proposed that it comes from the Fall of the first humans, although their sin was not sexual, nor does the tree of knowing good and evil have anything to do with sexual relations. However, they came to know the sense of shame in connection with their sexual organs (Gen 3:7), and the woman even incurred birth pains as a consequence of their sin. This suggests that uncleanness in Leviticus 15 has deep roots in the Fall.

5.3. Meaning of Uncleanness. The terms *clean* and *unclean* have been understood in a "cultic" sense. However, the search for the rationale of cleanness and uncleanness has been complicated by the use of the term *cultic,* since the latter has not been defined clearly. Certainly rituals cannot be mere formalities with no rationale behind them. Rather, these terms are to be taken as indicating states before the Lord, at least in the Israelite context. The clean state means that one is accepted into the divine presence, whereas one is not accepted if one is in an unclean state. If uncleanness in Leviticus 11—15 is based on the events of Genesis 3, not just as background but as its immediate rationale, the case could be made that uncleanness refers to the state of being under the influence of a curse as a consequence of sin. It is vital to realize at this point that the unclean state was caused by humans and not by other creatures. Thus, some creatures became unclean because of human sin. Therefore, if some creatures are said to be unclean, the Israelites had to be reminded of the root of that uncleanness, that is, the Israelites' own present sinfulness.

Since uncleanness is a state of humans before God, it is proposed that it symbolizes sinfulness, or a sinful state, which means being out of the presence of the Lord (hence, the aura of death). Furthermore, it is certain that uncleanness lies in hiding one's sinfulness (Lev 13; cf. Gen 3:7, 21). Here it is to be noted that the meaning of uncleanness cannot be separated from its rationale.

Thus it is inappropriate to make a distinction between cultic and moral/ethical aspects as has been done in OT and NT scholarship. Uncleanness is a result of the Fall, which was itself moral/ethical in nature. Although we moderns tend to envisage the cultic as amoral or at variance with the ethical, the rationale of uncleanness was moral from the start. The thrust of the above proposal is that certain creatures and conditions are called unclean not because they are unclean in themselves but with reference to human hearts being in a sinful state. In other words, by not eating the unclean animals, the Israelites were expected to see the condition of their own hearts (*see* Foods, Clean and Unclean). Certain creatures and blood and semen discharges from sexual organs are not inherently "unclean," but they are unclean in so far as they function to remind the Israelites of their sinfulness and, more specifically, to check whether or not they are hiding their own sinfulness. Thus, from this viewpoint, Leviticus 11:44-45 need not be seen either as an intrusion of ethics or as H's editorial hand.

It is obvious that this proposal calls for a reconsideration of the corpus of "cultic" regulations, for both Jewish and Christian traditions have tended to understand the cleanness and uncleanness laws as amoral and as basically referring to something outside the human heart.

6. Holiness as the Ideal of Living.

The Hebrew root *qdš* ("to be holy") and its derivative words occur primarily in Leviticus 18—26, but they also appear in chapters 1—16. Formerly there has been a tendency to assume that *qdš* (*holiness) is one of the divine attributes. However, the location of "be holy" at the beginning of Leviticus 19 indicates that what follows are all part of holiness. It is more reasonable, then, to assume that *qdš* refers to all kinds of divine manifestations and not just to an attribute such as love, justice, and the like.

Since *qdš* occurs in Leviticus 1—16 in connection with *sancta* and in 18—26 in connection with what appear to be so-called *ethical commandments, it is alleged that there are two kinds of holiness and that they derive from two different religious milieus (cf. Milgrom 1997). However, as has been mentioned above, there seems to be no need to assume a source H, nor is it appropriate to make a distinction between the cultic and the ethical. Thus it is possible to treat the term *qdš* in Leviticus harmoniously. Though one may well tend to consider that the essence of *qdš* first appears in Leviticus 18 onward, the fact is that one of the most important aspects of holiness is already enunciated in chapters 1—16: *holy* sacrifices and offerings, as well as the priest, take the place of the sinful. Thus, we see that becoming a sacrifice is an aspect (and in fact, one of the most important aspects) of holiness. As will be shown below, this aspect is also applicable to the human realm in general. Furthermore, it can also be posited that since sacrificial ceremonies, particularly the expiatory ones, are often characterized by atonement, one becomes holy through substitution, that is, substituting the clean for the sinful.

The Israelites are exhorted to be holy, but on the other hand, it is the Lord who consecrates them (Lev 21:8; 22:9, 32). This suggests that their

consecration is not automatic in any way and that it involves the will of the Israelites. What, then, is the content of "being holy"?

Leviticus 19 is a chapter on holy living. Some features of holiness can be learned from the arrangement of commandments and through exegesis of certain passages. First, the wide range of topics dealt with in the chapter attests to the fact that holiness should be exhibited in all aspects of one's living: from God-human relationships to human relationships to one's attitude toward plants, elderly people and commercial activities. In other words, the demand of being holy is present in whatever the Israelites are engaged.

Second, as Wenham elucidated, the first half of the commandments are so arranged that the love commandment in Leviticus 19:18 becomes the climax of all the preceding commandments (Wenham 1979, 266-67). Therefore, how one reads this so-called golden rule is vitally important.

Although Leviticus 19:18b (for various suggested translations, see Mathys) has been taken as a commandment for ordinary humans to observe, it is important to realize how difficult in practice it would be to keep it, considering the following points (cf. also Lev 19:17). (1) Since the command is given in the context of hate and injustice (Lev 19:16-17, cf. Els, 290), it actually demands the kind of love poured on persecutors, as seen in Jesus (e.g., Lk 23:34) and Stephen (Acts 7:60). (2) The command is not just to love one's neighbor, but to love one's neighbor the same as oneself. (3) The meaning of *ʾāhab* ("to love") means that one gives top priority to the loved one. On the surface one may get the impression that the neighborly love should be equal to self-love, but this contradicts the essence of *ʾāhab*. The kind of self-love mentioned here actually refers to self-denial, denial of one's selfish desires, because selfishness of all sorts, from crude to sophisticated forms, hinders one from loving one's neighbor. Thus, one's selfishness must be shattered in order to be able to love one's neighbor (for the idea of "brokenheartedness," cf. Ps 51:17). The experience of having one's selfish ego broken is to love oneself and the beginning of the neighborly love (cf. Mt 10:39; Jn 21:15). In this sense, to love one's neighbor cannot be separated from self-love in the above sense. It is inevitable, therefore, that the neighborly love spoken of here is self-sacrificial love, which is not naturally obtainable by humans with selfishness of any kind.

If the Lord's demand to be holy is summarized in the love commandment, which is impossible to implement, all humans would sin in this regard and thus be culpable. Moreover, though love for the Lord is not explicitly mentioned in this chapter, the incapacity for this kind of neighborly love implies that humans cannot sincerely love God either, certainly not if they place top priority on themselves (cf. Lev 19:3-4).

Third, priests are holy as a consequence of their appointment. This holiness is given by the Lord in order to carry out through the priests his salvific acts on behalf of the Israelites. Their holy status should be matched by their moral quality as much as possible. Their holiness is also associated with a perfect physique. However, it is unlikely that outer perfection fulfills the condition of holiness. The outer features are merely a reminder that a level of holy living higher than that of the lay Israelites is demanded of them. The priests' infringement of the law is judged as more grave than that of the laity, as is shown by the rules regarding the priests' sins (e.g., Lev 21:1-15; cf. also Lev 4:3; 10:3).

7. New Testament Implications.

One of the central questions of the relationship between the OT and the NT is the relationship between the law and the gospel. Leviticus, because of the nature of the material, is most suitable for discussing the question. Although this question is highly complex and difficult, it is worth delineating a possible picture based on what has been mentioned above, as this directly affects how one reads Leviticus. Among many Levitical themes, we focus here on the following three: sacrificial worship, cleanness and uncleanness, and the love commandment in Leviticus 19:18.

First, regarding sacrificial worship, what Christ did on the cross is seen in the NT as the once-for-all atoning sacrifice for all of humankind and that which far surpasses the sacrificial worship of the OT. Thus, OT sacrificial worship ceased. The term *abolish* has often been used for describing the cessation of the literal observance of sacrificial rituals. However, such an evaluation may not be appropriate, because NT writers frequently utilize sacrificial terms in portraying how NT believers should live (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 2:5). One may understand the

situation brought about by the cross in such a way that the observance of the so-called sacrificial law is seen as no longer necessary, but the ideal (see below) of the sacrifice is still considered applicable in a spiritual way to the Christian life (incidentally, this is foreshadowed in Ps 40:6-8). However, "spiritual" does not preclude the physical element of sacrifice, considering, for example, the pain and troubles the apostle Paul experienced (cf. 2 Cor 4:7-11; 11:23-33). Indeed, for a believer to become a living sacrifice is the goal of the sacrificial ideal that began in the sacrificial worship of Leviticus. In other words, the literal performance of the sacrificial ritual ceased, yet the goal and essence of the sacrifice, the priests and the sanctuary find their fulfillment in Christ and his believers. Thus, there is more continuity between OT and NT understandings of sacrifice than one might think.

Second, in light of Acts 10:9-15, 28, the *ceremonial* distinction between cleanness and uncleanness is clearly seen to be abrogated, and thus the laws of Leviticus 11—15 need not be observed. Moreover, Jesus had already proclaimed that all foods are clean (Mk 7:19). This is in conformity with Jesus' attitude elsewhere, such as when he healed lepers or unclean persons by deliberately touching them (e.g., Mk 1:41; 5:27). It can be posited that by such actions Jesus clearly abrogated the *ceremonial* distinction between clean and unclean. However, it is too simplistic to suppose that the very ideas of cleanness and uncleanness are no longer relevant to Christians on the ground that the distinction is no longer valid or that those ideas became ethical or moral in the NT. For not only does Jesus himself use those terms, as proposed above, but the idea of uncleanness is not amoral; it had inherently moral connotations. Thus, when Jesus averred that cleanness and uncleanness are matters of the heart (Mk 7:20-23), contrary to the commonly held view, it was not a moralization of a "cultic" idea. Rather, Jesus merely pointed out the original meaning of cleanness and uncleanness.

Third, as mentioned above, it is practically impossible for ordinary men and women to observe the kind of neighborly love commanded in Leviticus 19:18. Moreover, if this commandment is the summary of the law, then it inevitably follows that all humans, and not just the Israelites, are likely to be judged as guilty of breaking God's law. The situation becomes more serious when we see that while the infringement of one of the Lord's commandments can be atoned for by offering an expiatory sacrifice, the same offense is considered far more heinous than is generally thought, as the case of hating one's neighbor suggests (cf. Lev 19:17 with Mt 5:21-22). This suggests that the true nature of the offense is revealed in the NT, as well as further aspects of this commandment, such as the definition of "neighbor." In this sense, the commandment of neighborly love is more demanding in the NT than in the OT. If ordinary humans in OT times could not keep Leviticus 19:18 and therefore became culpable, what happens when the same commandment becomes even more demanding? The solution lies entirely in the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, both in areas of sacrificial rituals and neighborly love, we may ascertain that Christ fulfilled their latent purposes and ideals and indeed far surpassed them and that concurrently the law is more demanding upon NT believers. Christians can now observe the law only by the power of the Holy Spirit, who renews them and challenges them by God's high standard, who shatters their selfish egos, and who empowers them to do what they have been incapacitated to do because of their incorrigible sinfulness.

Leviticus is an important book for NT believers in that it provides them with an indispensable foundation for realizing the depth and width of the love that their Lord has shown them. Leviticus points to the pervasiveness of sins, the abyss of human sinfulness, the daunting task of becoming holy and, therefore, the appalling gap between natural men and women and a holy God. The book's various means for bridging the gap, while showing the Lord's condescension, give the impression that they are insufficient, foreshadowing and demanding a fuller system of atonement.

See also AARON; ALTARS; ATONEMENT, DAY OF; BLOOD; FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; SIN, GUILT; TABERNACLE.

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LEX TALIONIS. *See* BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; LAW.

LIBERATION INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH

"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. . . . Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him and holding fast to him; for that means life to you" (Deut 30:15, 19-20).

Like all religious literature, the Pentateuch is profoundly concerned with issues of life, diminished life and death. It opens with the *creation of life and the threat of death. It continues with universal and local destruction as well as indi-

vidual and national survival. It deals with disease as a contamination of this life and a threat to communion with God. And it closes with the stark choice of life or death for the people of Israel. Above all, it presents a unique God as the essence of life itself and the true center of all human life.

Life and death are rich and complex themes suffused throughout the Pentateuch, in primeval, patriarchal and Mosaic material, and in both narrative and legal texts. The themes are seldom addressed directly, and where they are, as in Genesis 2—3, the interpretation is not straightforward. Thus their theology is often more implicit than explicit. By contrast, disease is treated mainly in the middle section of *Leviticus, but in an unexpected context for the modern reader. Its theology is more obvious if less expected.

1. Life
2. Disease
3. Death

1. Life.

1.1. Life from God. God himself is the source of all life, and his existence prior to creation is simply assumed (Gen 1:1). Life was an essential characteristic of deity throughout the ancient Near East (Ringgren, 4.329), but in Israel this aspect of Yahweh was inevitably enhanced by his uniqueness (Deut 32:39) and by the association of his name with being itself (Ex 3:14). He is "the living God" (Deut 5:26); his most solemn oath is "[as surely] as I live forever" (Deut 32:40), and the strongest Israelite oath is "as Yahweh lives" (e.g., Judg 8:19; 2 Sam 4:9).

God is the Creator of all life: physical, animal and human (Gen 1—2). Both the creation accounts distinguish humanity from the rest of creation as created in the *image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and as receiving the divine "breath of life" (Gen 2:7). Many scholars insist that the latter text does not present human nature as dichotomous (Knibb), and indeed most of the Hebrew Bible assumes a psychosomatic unity, without distinction between material and immaterial aspects. However, this should not be absolutized, since various prophetic and wisdom passages seem to envisage some form of continued if enfeebled existence beyond death (Cooper; Johnston).

God has absolute power over life: "I kill and I make alive" (Deut 32:39). This is repeatedly illustrated in the Pentateuch. God destroys *Noah's generation, Sodom and Gomorrah, and various *wilderness rebels. Conversely, he gives children to several barren matriarchs, and preserves the enslaved Hebrews from genocide. He is the creator and progenitor of Israel (Deut 32:15, 18) and so has the right to their absolute allegiance.

1.2. Life Under God. Life under God is supremely one of *blessing. God blesses the first couple with luxuriant vegetation for food (Gen 1:28). He blesses Noah and further allows meat for food (Gen 9:1-5). He blesses *Abraham, promising him prosperity, descendants, land and international blessing (Gen 12:2-3, 7), and reiterates this to Jacob (Gen 28:13-15). He promises to bless his liberated people (Ex 20:24; 23:25), does so in their wanderings despite their unfaithfulness (Deut 2:7) and pledges to do so as they enter the Promised *Land (Deut 7:13-26). And he offers them abundant blessing in the future: human fertility, agricultural fecundity, prosperity, health, longevity, security and international influence (Deut 28:2-14). But there are also expectations at each stage: innocent obedience, respect for life-blood, circumcision, righteousness, and especially whole-hearted obedience to God and his laws.

The life of faith is not necessarily easy: Abraham must sacrifice his son (Gen 22), blessing in Egypt becomes oppression (Ex 1:6-10), *Moses' mission is immediately threatened (Ex 4:24-26) and God's presence frightens the Israelites (Ex 20:19). However, these are reminders that God surpasses human comprehension, even when this is enlightened by faith. Moreover, the purpose behind each bewildering development is to elicit greater obedience and holiness, which in turn should result in long, fruitful and contented life (Deut 28).

2. Disease.

Leviticus devotes significant attention to disease and health, in the context of uncleanness, cleanness and holiness (*see* Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean). In particular, it deals with diet (Lev 11), birth (Lev 12), "dermatitis" (Lev 13—14) and discharges (Lev 15; so Darling). Until recently these regulations were often seen as mainly hygienic and were admired as unique in ancient literature (so Rosner). But biblical scholars and medical practitioners now see them as primarily theological (see the commentaries). At the same time, they contain valid health bene-

fits, including isolation of contagious patients, disinfection by washing and quarantine for observation (Darling). The skin disease *ṣāraʿat* (Lev 13—14) was traditionally translated "leprosy," but this is now widely accepted as inaccurate, since true leprosy is first attested in India in the sixth century B.C. and in the Middle East in the third century B.C. Rather, *ṣāraʿat* is probably a generic term for various surface ailments that affect and discolor skin, cloth, leather and plaster but that are generally noninfectious and nonpermanent (Browne).

Legislation also dealt with disfigurement, since this represented a lack of wholeness and necessitated exclusion from the sphere of holiness. Thus *priests with any physical imperfection were excluded from ministry, though maintaining their right to eat consecrated food (Lev 21:16-23), and men with genital mutilation were excluded from the assembly (Deut 23:1).

Most of the widespread "diseases" recorded in pentateuchal narrative are interpreted as divine judgment, notably the various plagues in *Egypt and in the *wilderness. Some may have viable physical explanations, such as severe weather, food poisoning and the like (see Marmal; Sussman), but the biblical text focuses on their divine origin and purpose, as shown in their reason, timing and selectivity. Similarly, *Miriam was inflicted with skin disease (the only record of individual illness in the Pentateuch) as divine judgment for her jealousy of Moses (Num 12:10).

Disease is a major element in the judgment threatened for future apathy and apostasy. It is described graphically as "consumption and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away" (Lev 26:16); "pestilence [that will] cling to you until it has consumed you off the land that you are entering to possess" (Deut 28:21); and boils, ulcers, scurvy, incurable itchiness, madness, blindness and mental confusion (Deut 28:27-28, 35). The thrust of the passage lies not in the medical nature of each term (see Sussman) but in the urgency of the appeal. Sadly, such dire warnings proved ineffective.

3. Death.

3.1. Death as Punishment. Death is first mentioned in the Pentateuch as a punishment for eating forbidden fruit in *Eden (Gen 2:17). This does not mean that *Adam and *Eve were intrinsically immortal—to live forever they needed continued access to the tree of life (Gen 3:22), and from this they were banished after their disobedience. Rather, their condition of mortality was sealed on the day of their sin (Gen 3:19).

Elsewhere death is occasionally associated with divine punishment. The curtailment of the lengthy antediluvian life span to 120 years immediately before the *flood was punishment for illicit marriage (whatever the interpretation of these marriages and the lengthy lives; *see* Sons of God, Daughters of Man; Gen 6:3). Then the flood itself wiped out nearly all humanity for its sinfulness (Gen 6:5-7). Later Sodom and Gomorrah were also destroyed for their wickedness (Gen 19).

In their wilderness wanderings Israelites were repeatedly killed for rebellion, either by fellow Israelites (Ex 32:28; Num 25:8) or directly by God (Ex 32:35; Lev 10:2; Num 11:1, 33-34; 16:31-35; 25:9). Further, almost the entire exodus generation was punished for their unbelief with death in transit, though their punishment was more the place than the fact of death (Num 14:23). In the same way, disobedience after settlement in the land would bring death and destruction (Lev 26:22, 25, 30; Deut 28:21, 26).

Death was the prescribed penalty for certain offenses, primarily the taking of human life (*see* Bodily Injuries, Murder, Manslaughter). This was affirmed after the flood (Gen 9:6) and repeatedly in the Mosaic legislation (Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17-21). It applied to premeditated or avoidable murder, when the community was responsible for punishment, and the sentence could not be commuted (Ex 21:14; Num 35:16-21, 30-31; Deut 19:11-13). It also applied to false witness in capital cases (Deut 19:16-21). It could apply to accidental manslaughter, when the nearest relative "avenged" the death, but here there was a crucial concession: the guilty party could flee to a *city of refuge and remain there until the incumbent high priest died (Ex 21:13; Num 35:22-28, 32; Deut 19:4-6). Implicitly, the high priest's death atoned for the bloodshed, and the slayer was then free to return home.

The death penalty was also prescribed for other offenses in several areas: (1) religious offenses, including *blasphemy (enacted in Lev 24:14-23), *sabbath breaking (Ex 31:14-15; 35:2; enacted in Num 15:32-36), false *prophecy (Deut 13:1-5; 18:20), *idolatry (Deut 13:1-18; 17:2-7), sacrificing children to Molech (Lev 20:1-5) and witchcraft (Ex 22:18; Lev 20:27); (2) kid-

napping (Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7); (3) insubordination to parents (Ex 21:15, 17); (4) *sexual offenses, including adultery when married or engaged (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24, cf. Gen 38:24), concealed premarital unchastity (Deut 22:20-21), rape of an engaged girl (Deut 22:25), prostitution of a priest's daughter (Lev 21:9), incestual relationships (Lev 20:11-12, 14), homosexuality (Lev 20:13) and bestiality (Ex 22:19; Lev 20:15-16).

Only the guilty was to be executed, not other family members (Deut 24:16). Death was never prescribed for property offenses in Israel, unlike many contemporary and subsequent cultures (*see* Theft and Deprivation of Property). For certain cultic offenses, God threatened offenders directly with death (Lev 8:35; 10:7; 16:2) and fulfilled the threat (Lev 10:2; Num 16:35).

Other offenders were to be "cut off from their peoples" (lit.). Sometimes this phrase was used for capital offenses (so designated in parallel or elsewhere), such as willful sin (described as blasphemy, Num 15:30-31), sabbath breaking (Ex 31:14), forbidden sexual relations (Lev 18:6-29; 20:17), sacrificing children to Molech (Lev 20:3) and witchcraft (Lev 20:6). Otherwise it applied mostly to ritual offences, such as neglect of *circumcision (Gen 17:14) or Passover (Num 9:13) or the Day of *Atonement (Lev 23:29), misuse of holy oil (Ex 30:33, 38) and other *festival and cultic offenses (Ex 12:15, 19; Lev 7:20-21, 25, 27; 17:3-4, 9, 14; 19:5-8; 20:18; 22:3-6; Num 19:13, 20). In the former group of texts the phrase clearly indicates death, and many scholars interpret "cutting off" as divinely enacted premature death (cf. Gen 9:11; see commentaries). However, Leviticus 20 may present a gradation of penalties (death, cutting off, childlessness). Here the phrase may mean not death but loss of inheritance and banishment, which was in any case severe punishment. Perhaps the sentence could be commuted in certain contexts, like the modern sentence of "life imprisonment."

3.2. Death as Life's Natural End. However, like most of the OT, the Pentateuch generally portrays death not as punishment but as the natural end of life, especially when life has been long and fulfilled. Thus Abraham divided his estate, settled his affairs and died peacefully "in a good old age, an old man and full of years" (Gen 25:8). *Sarah, *Isaac, *Jacob and *Joseph similarly died in contented old age. Natural death in old age was the "death of everyone" (lit., Num 16:29), while the addition of prosperity and posterity indicated "the death of the upright" (Num 23:10).

Only one pentateuchal character escaped death: "Enoch ... was no more, because God took him" (Gen 5:24). Though striking in its genealogical context, this enigmatic reference remains undeveloped theologically here and elsewhere, and Enoch never became a paradigm for Israelite hope in OT times. (Some scholars see an echo in Ps 73:24, but the verb *lqḥ* is too common and its semantic field too wide to sustain this.)

3.3. Death and the Dead. As the negation of life, wholeness and communion with Yahweh, death brought uncleanness. All who touched a corpse, bone or grave, or even occupied the same tent as a dead body, were unclean for seven days. They had to wash twice, wash their clothes and be sprinkled with "the water of cleansing," and those who sprinkled them also had to wash their clothes (Num 19:11-22). Open containers in the tent also became unclean; clay pots were to be smashed, other vessels washed, and all food and liquid in them destroyed (implicitly from Lev 11). Priests might become unclean only for a death in the immediate family (Lev 21:1-3), and even this was forbidden to the high priest and to Nazirites (Lev 21:11; Num 6:6-12). If it happened unwittingly, the Nazirite had to completely renew his vow. Burial is simply recorded as an event, with no religious ceremony (*see* Burial and Mourning).

The destiny of the dead is not generally addressed in the Pentateuch. Moses pronounced the descent of Korah and his fellow rebels to Sheol, and the narrator then records this event (Num 16:30, 33). This is the only occurrence of Sheol in OT narrative—otherwise it is only used in direct speech. Jacob twice foresaw his "gray hairs" being brought down "with sorrow to Sheol" when he feared he would never see Joseph or Benjamin again (Gen 42:38; cf. 37:35; 44:29, 31). But this indicates his foreboding of divine judgment—when his troubles were over and his family was happily reunited, his death is recorded repeatedly without mention of Sheol (Gen 46:30; 47:29-30; 48:21; 49:29, 33; 50:5, 16). The only other pentateuchal reference to Sheol is in the Song of Moses (Deut 32:22), where it indicates the lowest depths of the earth. Here Sheol clearly means a region far lower than the grave (showing that the usual NIV translation of

Sheol as "grave" is inadequate).

The phrase "gathered to his peoples" (lit.) only occurs in the OT for the death of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron (Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33; Num 20:24; 27:13). This "gathering" is distinct from death and burial (cf. Gen 25:7-8) and implies joining one's ancestors in the afterlife, though the location is never defined and the concept not otherwise developed (though cf. Ps 49:19). (The plural "peoples" for one's kinship group is confined mostly to the Pentateuch, indicating the section's distinctiveness and perhaps antiquity.)

Consultation of the dead is repeatedly and strictly forbidden, and its practitioners were to be executed by stoning (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11; *see* Divination, Magic). This is one practice for which Canaan's inhabitants are condemned. Israel, by contrast, was to follow Yahweh's *prophet (Deut 18:14-15). There is growing extrabiblical evidence that among Israel's neighbors the dead were revered, consulted and appeased, and these practices were a constant temptation to Israel (cf. 1 Sam 28; 2 Kings 23:24; Is 8:19). But for Israel the world of the dead was cut off from Yahweh, and its exploration firmly forbidden (see Johnston). Yahweh is the author of life and the God of the living, and this life is the sphere of obedience and blessing.

See also BLESSINGS AND CURSES; BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; BURIAL AND MOURNING; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

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LIGHT. *See* CREATION.

LINEAR GENEALOGY. *See* GENEALOGIES.

LITERACY. *See* WRITING.

LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM

Literary criticism, like *historical criticism, encompasses an array of analytical methods that focus on certain fundamental concerns and questions. Historical critics view the biblical text as a lens through which the skilled observer may gaze into Israel's past and thereby discover those events, processes and contexts that shape its meaning. Put another way, historical critics approach the Pentateuch from a *diachronic* (literally "through time") perspective that concentrates on the dynamic process by which the Pentateuch came into being. Literary critics, on the other hand, view the biblical text as a cut gemstone, a thing of beauty in its own right. Generally speaking, they adopt a *synchronic* ("same time") perspective that focuses on the literary character of the Pentateuch as a subject worthy of study in and of itself. Literary approaches therefore tend to forego questions of history and external referents in favor of others that explore the ways in which the Pentateuch communicates as a written work of art.

1. Literary Study of the Pentateuch
2. Hebrew Narrative and the Pentateuch

1. Literary Study of the Pentateuch.

1.1. The Transformation of Literary Criticism. As conceived within the context of the historical-critical enterprise, literary study of the Pentateuch involved the identification of sources and the description of the editorial process by which they were combined and modified. Literary criticism as utilized by historical critics thus consisted of delineating and describing the Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomic and Priestly sources (and debating the existence and extent of other materials), meticulously fitting pentateuchal texts within a scheme and speculating on the sequence and time periods in which the various

strands were redacted. Although this type of historical-critical study of texts had run its course in literary circles by the 1930s, it continued as the dominant paradigm for the study of pentateuchal texts for another forty years.

By the 1970s, however, many biblical critics had begun to explore alternative ways of studying the Pentateuch as a literary text. The shift derived in part from a dissatisfaction with the so-called assured results of biblical criticism. On the one hand, there was a growing sense that the achievements of historical criticism were anything but "assured." The relative paucity of historical data available to address questions of history and composition meant that answers to questions of composition remained largely speculative. On the other hand, the atomistic tendencies of literary-critical analysis created a measure of discontent with "results," especially within the church and synagogue. Dissection of the Pentateuch into component sources did not adequately address the needs of faith communities that incorporated the canonical form of the texts in preaching and liturgy and whose participants were largely unfamiliar with or disinterested in the complex methods utilized by scholars.

The new openness to literary methods gained momentum in the mid-1970s with the establishment of two new journals—*Semeia* (by the Society of Biblical Literature) and *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (by the University of Sheffield)—which published significant articles by scholars interested in pushing the discipline in new directions. Overall, the impact of the literary approaches was swift and decisive. In 1971, for example, the volume entitled *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* in the popular series Guides to Biblical Scholarship introduced its readers to the topic with an analysis of the sources behind the *creation and *flood accounts in Genesis and descriptions of the Yahwist and Priestly perspectives (Habel). By 1977, however, the situation within biblical scholarship had changed so dramatically that the series revisited literary study with *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic*, a much different treatment that offered, among other readings, a structural comparison between Exodus 1—15 and *The Bacchae* of Euripides (Robertson). Subsequent decades witnessed an increased appreciation for the contribution of literary study, with the result that literary criticism, as distinct from historical criticism, assumed a prominent place in the study of the Pentateuch. What was formerly called literary criticism has now been redefined by such terms as "source analysis" or *"source criticism" in all but a few instances (e.g., Steck, 59-63).

1.2. Structuralism. Structuralism was among the first literary methods to make inroads into the study of the Pentateuch. Deriving from the field of linguistics, structuralism holds that what is true of language at the most fundamental level (sounds, words and sentences) is also true of larger utterances such as narratives. That is, narratives function in a manner analogous to language. Speech appropriates the sounds and structures of a particular language system and can be understood by those familiar with that system. In a similar way, structuralists argue, narratives make use of a finite set of fixed structures and can be understood because those conventions are recognizable. Structuralists are interested in the manipulation of these structures and seek to identify the way they are appropriated in particular narrative units.

Structuralism promised a measure of objectivity and thus was able to present itself as a viable alternative to historical-critical study of the Pentateuch. One particularly influential study was that of French critic R. Barthes, who applied a structuralist paradigm to Genesis 32:23-32 (*Jacob's wrestling match at the Jabbok). Barthes showed that the episode appropriates the elements of a story common in folklore (the hero's quest) but combines the elements of the pattern in surprising ways. The originator of the quest (Yahweh) is also the opponent Jacob faces, reflecting (Barthes argued) Israel's determination to avoid a dualistic theology. Subsequent studies, notably D. Jobling's essays on Genesis 2:4b—3:24 and Numbers 32 (with Josh 22) and S. Kunin's on Genesis 22, demonstrated structuralism's usefulness for addressing the tensions and ambiguities of particularly thorny texts. Overall, however, structuralism has a limited impact on the study of the Pentateuch.

1.3. Narrative Criticism and Poetics. Narrative criticism's entry into pentateuchal studies coincided with structuralism's but quickly overshadowed it. Sharing structuralism's interest in the formative influence of conventions, narrative criticism draws from a variety of theoretical approaches, although rhetorical criticism, Anglo-American New Criticism and Russian formalism are often cited as formative influences. Central to the method is an interest in the ways that a

story is shaped into a narrative. Narrative criticism commonly distinguishes between "story" and "narrative," story being an abstraction that becomes concrete when given utterance through the medium of narrative. Since a story may be told, or narrated, in any number of ways, narrative critics undertake a close reading of texts in order to discern the narrator's strategies and message. Through analysis of the techniques and devices that configure a narrative, the critic attempts to discern the interests, perspectives and purposes of the narrator.

R. Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981) stimulated interest in the approach with an engaging discussion of the distinctive features of Hebrew narrative. Works by A. Berlin (1983), S. Bar-Efrat (1989), M. Sternberg (1985), and D. M. Gunn and D. N. Fewell (1993) followed, some of which employed the term *poetics* to describe the new approach. (The term *poetics* extends narrative criticism's interests to other genres and often functions as a de facto equivalent of "narrative criticism" within OT studies.) Genesis became a particular focal point for analysis, with comprehensive studies (Fokkelman; White) supplementing a burgeoning corpus of articles and essays (see House). As with structuralism, narrative criticism was especially persuasive when dealing with difficult texts and issues. For example, an early essay by R. Polzin on the three "endangered ancestress" stories (Gen 12; 20; 26) showed that the stories work together to effect significant transformations, an attribute of the stories lost on composition critics who saw them only as variations of a common tradition. Alter (3-12) presented the story of Tamar and Judah (Gen 38) as a showcase for his literary argument. Historical critics had viewed the text as a vexing interpolation, but Alter's analysis revealed that it served an integral function within the larger narrative, namely, to confirm the reversal of the law of primogeniture that constitutes the theme of the surrounding story of *Joseph. Along similar lines, M. Sternberg (441-81) elaborated the persuasive and complex rhetorical strategy of the rape of Dinah, another text that had long frustrated interpreters.

Narrative-critical studies also extended to the Pentateuch as a whole. D. J. A. Clines (1978) argued that the entire Pentateuch is unified by a prominent theme: the partial fulfillment of the *promises to the patriarchs. T. Mann echoed many of Clines's points, while drawing a connection between the sense of incompleteness communicated by the Pentateuch and that experienced by its reader. Writing from an evangelical perspective, J. Sailhamer traced the narrative strategy of the Pentateuch, which he described as historical narrative. On a smaller scale, I. Kikawada and A. Quinn utilized literary analysis to argue that Genesis 1—11 is a unified work with parallels to the Babylonian Atrahasis Epic, and J. Rosenberg identified a number of structural symmetries in the garden story and *Abraham cycle.

1.4. New Literary Approaches. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed an increasing diversity of reading strategies as biblical scholars continued to draw on the panoply of methods and approaches characteristic of current literary theory (House). Though vastly different in goals and strategies, the newer strains of literary criticism as a whole presume the indeterminacy of the text and the subjectivity of interpretation, challenging more fundamentally the aims of the historical-critical method and the exegetical program that derives from it. They disavow the notion that any biblical text has one (right) meaning that can be determined by the correct application of "scientific" methods and deny that any interpreter can interpret a text with complete objectivity.

The new critical approaches do not establish clearly defined procedures so much as they reflect self-conscious reading postures. Reader-response criticism focuses on the role and participation of the reader in the production of meaning. Ideological criticism is concerned with the manner in which biblical texts and their interpreters articulate and reinforce systems of power and dominance. Feminist criticism (sometimes included under the rubric of ideological criticism) seeks to align the reader with the experience of women, challenging the patriarchal elements of the biblical texts and interpretations that contribute to the oppression of women. Psychoanalytic criticism applies the concerns of psychoanalysis (e.g., guilt and desire, remembering, generational conflict and inheritance, the fatherhood and otherness of God) to the interpretation of texts. Deconstruction argues that a text advances perspectives and values by negating their opposites, asserts that meaning is ultimately relational rather than absolute and seeks to dismantle the coherence of a text by identify-

ing its aporia, the points at which the text contradicts itself. The related program of intertextuality also denies the autonomy of the text and demonstrates the slipperiness of meaning by revealing how meaning changes when a given text is read alongside others.

Contemporary literary criticism of the Pentateuch can therefore best be characterized as eclectic, and the boundary between criticism and creative writing often blurs as new readings generate new texts. Eschewing the idea that there is one "correct" reading, literary criticism now offers a variety of ways into a biblical text. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the current situation. Clines, adopting a reader-response approach, revisits the "endangered ancestress" stories and, reading them within their literary context, concludes that the "danger" is more of the patriarch's own contrivance. Addressing the same stories, J. C. Exum applies a psychoanalytic approach that sees, in the repetition and variations of the stories, the working through of a neurosis deriving from male anxiety over the control of women's sexuality. Taking issue with M. Sternberg's assertion that the poetics of the text guide the reader to certain evaluative responses, D. N. Fewell and D. Gunn (1991, 193-211) press for a reading of the rape of Dinah that is more self-consciously ideological, overturning Sternberg's evaluation of the characters and the putative moral point made by the story. Like Alter, Gunn and Fewell lift up the story of *Judah and *Tamar as a paradigm for narrative criticism (1993, 34-45) but emphasize instead the ambiguities in the story. Tamar, who acts as a prostitute, is more righteous than Judah the ancestral patriarch, yet her story is ultimately subsumed by Judah's.

2. Hebrew Narrative and the Pentateuch.

2.1. The Nature of Narrative. Human beings tell stories to make sense of the world and their experience within it. By ascribing significance to events and establishing connections between them, individuals and groups construct narratives that ascribe order and coherence and confirm the conviction that life has meaning, that somehow all the disparate facets of existence fit together and make sense. Narratives thus present a view of "what life is like," infused with the perspectives, values, aspirations and self-identity of those who construct them. Critical reading of narratives, then, begins first of all with the recognition that narratives are imaginative, written works of art that convey particular notions about the nature of reality. This starting point is a crucial corrective to readings that, under the influence of a prevailing historical consciousness, read pentateuchal narratives as a strict recounting of historical facts. Narrative criticism makes no judgments about whether the events recounted actually happened. (That is the purview of historical criticism.) Instead, it seeks insight into the way biblical stories are presented and from thence to the worldview, ideologies or theology that it communicates. Put simply, narrative critics assert that narratives have a point to make and thus should be read on two levels, with attention both to content and narration.

One of narrative criticism's most significant contributions has been the discovery and description of the distinctive character of Hebrew narrative. Diverse cultures do not tell stories in the same way. The fact would seem obvious, but in practice the chasm between the conventions encoded in biblical narrative and those that configure the Western literary tradition has not been readily apparent. For centuries the Pentateuch has been read as though it were a compendium of principles, a series of moral tractates or a scientific textbook that, when properly dissected, yields the concrete affirmations demanded by dogma. However, reading Hebrew narrative on its own terms suggests that it may not so much seek to answer questions as to raise them, not so much set out concrete norms as prompt contemplation. As E. Auerbach noted in his classic comparison of the stories of *Abraham and Odysseus, Hebrew narrative is characteristically laconic and mysterious. Possessing an "imaginative subtlety" (Alter, 88), it is typically short on detail and compact in language, heightening a sense of ambiguity by leaving significant gaps in the story. Where, for example, did *Cain's wife come from? Why did Yahweh seek to kill *Moses on his way back to Egypt? Why are the Midianites judged at Baal Peor but not the Moabites? (And why are the Midianites there in the first place?) The purpose of this "gapping" is much debated, and conclusions tend to coincide with assumptions regarding the determinacy or indeterminacy of the biblical text. Those strongly in the "poetics" camp, such as Sternberg, argue that the narrator provides clues about how the gaps are to be filled and speak of

"illegitimate gap-filling" and right hypotheses (Sternberg, 186-229). Those who accord the reader a greater role in the production of meaning see in these gaps the seedbed for a variety of valid readings (e.g., Gunn and Fewell 1993, 46-52, 155-58). Whatever the case, the playful openness of Hebrew narrative powerfully imitates the experience of life, where answers are not always apparent and meaning can be elusive.

Recently, more attention has been given to the way in which the narratives of the Pentateuch encode values and shape a sense of identity. A case in point are those stories that deal with the other peoples of Israel's world (the curse of Canaan, *Lot and his daughters, *Hagar and *Sarah, etc.). Conventional reading of these stories has yielded theological and moralistic interpretations. But when we acknowledge narrative's role in defining a community's sense of itself and its place in the world, the characters of Genesis acquire deep symbolic resonances. Jacob/Israel, for example, is at once an individual and the nation, and the stories associated with him and others express the community's convictions about its distinctiveness, as well as its perceptions of the neighboring peoples. Jacob is not physically powerful but is very clever. His story is united by the theme of transaction. Virtually every episode involves negotiation and deal making, articulating Israel's sense of being a small mercantile nation between great powers, a nation that must live by its collective wits in order to survive and prosper. On the other hand, the stories portraying the Canaanites, Moabites and Ammonites (the peoples closest to the Israelites both in proximity and ethnicity) recognize a common lineage but associate them in repugnant terms with sexual deviance (Gen 9:20-27; 19:30-38; 34:1-3), expressing a common tendency to project reprehensible attributes to groups nearest one's own. *Esau/Edom is also depicted in unflattering terms, but his nomadic lifestyle diminishes his proximity to Israel, and his interactions with Jacob indicate a tenuous rapprochement between the two peoples. Stories associated with Philistia and Aram (the other key players in Israel's part of the world) convey a sense of parity. *Isaac negotiates on an equal footing with the Philistine king *Abimelech (Gen 26:12-31), and Laban, another close relative who lives in Paddan-aram, displays every bit as much savvy as Jacob (Gen 29:1-21; 30:25-43; 31:1-55). Finally, the stories dealing with Hagar manifest Israel's attempt to define itself apart from Egypt, the land where it dwelt for centuries. In the case of Hagar, the tables are turned. *She* is the slave who is cast out into the desert, where she encounters the promising God (Gen 16:1-16; 21:1-21).

2.2. The Ordering of Events. Because human beings perceive events with a consciousness of their location in time, narratives utilize time as a means of organizing, explaining and evaluating experience. Telling a story thus requires decisions about how to situate it within time. Where and how will the story begin? How and when will it end? In what order will the events be presented? In addition, events must be connected so as to explain their significance and to impart a sense of the whole. The narrator therefore has other questions to address. What events and information will be included and what will be left out? Of those events that are included, which will be emphasized and expanded? How will the significance of particular events be conveyed? And how will the perceived relationship between events be communicated? What stylistic features will be employed? Taken together, these and other questions associated with the ordering and presentation of events shape a narrative's *plot.*

Hebrew narrative is marked by its distinctive appreciation for symmetry, expressed most often through myriad forms of *repetition.* Repetition of vocabulary, grammatical structures, events or images unites diverse events and signals their common import. The repetitive language and structure of Genesis 1, for example, unites the separate acts of *creation into one grand masterpiece that expresses both the orderliness of creation and the majesty of the Creator. In another context, the precise recounting of events at a well, through the mouth of Abraham's servant, establishes the trustworthiness of the servant and the efficacy of his mission (Gen 24:1-51). On a broader scale, repetitions of the promise to Abraham unite the entire Pentateuch and articulate its primary theme (see Clines 1997, 37-47).

The Pentateuch also includes a number of repetitive story lines. Besides the so-called "endangered ancestress" stories discussed above, the narratives devoted to Abraham and Isaac contain parallel accounts of the founding of Beer-sheba (Gen 21:22-34; 26:26-33), implicitly confirming Isaac as the legitimate heir of the

promise to Abraham. Three stories of complaining mark Israel's journey to Sinai (Ex 15:22-26; 16:1-36; 17:1-7) and are matched by three parallel stories of complaining as Israel journeys from Sinai (Num 11:1-3, 4-34; 20:1-13), raising questions about whether the Israelites have taken the *covenant to heart.

Repetition can also occur in figurative and subtle forms (see Alter, 88-113). A *Leitwort* is a recurring word root that occurs in diverse forms (including puns) throughout a narrative complex. The root *kbd,* for example, occurs at various points in the exodus story to refer to such things as *Pharaoh's hardened heart (Ex 7:14; 8:32 [MT 8:28]; 9:7, 34), Moses' halting speech (Ex 4:10), increased labor (Ex 5:9), severe pestilence (Ex 9:3), the dense swarm of locusts (Ex 10:14), Yahweh's glory (Ex 14:4) and the clogged chariot wheels of the Egyptians (Ex 14:25). A *Leitmotif* is a recurring image or object, such as the colors white and red in the Jacob story and the recurrence of *dreams in the Joseph story. *Theme* describes a recurring pattern of even broader dimensions, as in the reversals of primogeniture in Genesis, Jacob's transactions and Israel's persistent complaining in the wilderness. A *type-scene* is an episode that follows a fixed sequence, as in the betrothal stories of Jacob, Isaac and Moses (Gen 24:1-66; 29:1-30; Ex 2:16-21), all of which are associated with wells. An *allusion* occurs when a story evokes, in part or whole, connections to another story, as in the texts concerning Hagar (Gen 16:1-16; 21:1-21); these render lexical and thematic allusions both to the garden story and the exodus on one level and to the promise to Abraham on a broader scale.

Variation in repetition often carries significant import, a feature of narrative amply documented by Sternberg (365-440; cf. Gunn and Fewell 1993, 148-55). The variation may occur on the grammatical or syntactical level. When the *serpent confronts Eve, he quotes Yahweh God's command, but with slight modifications. The original command is framed in positive terms and conveys a sense of the Creator's generous provision: "You may freely eat from any tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for on the day you eat of it, you will die" (Gen 2:16b-17). However, the serpent recasts the positive into a negative, implying a demanding Creator more concerned with keeping the rules, and conveniently omits reference to consequences: "Did God really say, 'You may not eat from any tree in the garden?' " (Gen 3:1b). Variations in references to Pharaoh's hardened heart highlight the inscrutable tension between divine will and human freedom (Ex 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 27; 11:10; 14:8; cf. 8:15, 32 [MT 8:11, 28]; 9:34). Differences in episodic repetitions may achieve similar effects. The three stories of complaining on the journey away from Sinai include outbreaks of divine wrath (a feature absent from the corresponding stories prior to Sinai), intimating a change in God's dealings with the nation. On a similar note, Jacob's return to Bethel after wrestling with Yahweh at the Jabbok (Gen 35:9-15) omits the conditional, scheming character of Jacob's response to the divine promise on the first occasion (Gen 28:10-22), suggesting that Jacob has now submitted to Yahweh.

A number of structural devices organize repetitions into symmetries. Structural elements may occur in parallel repetitions, as in the pattern that renders the first creation story (Gen 1:3-31). A *chiasm* introduces a pattern and then reverses it, as in the tongue twister "she slit the sheet, the sheet she slit." While some prefer the term *palistrophe* for structures of more than four components and others distinguish a chiasm from a *concentric structure* (a structure with a single element at the center), the term is widely used to denote any form that fits the general pattern-reversal structure. While smaller, syntactical structures can be identified with relative certainty, large-scale or thematic chiastic patterns have proven more difficult to determine. The chiastic configuration of the Abraham cycle, for example, has been described by both Rosenberg (who prefers the term *palistrophe*) and Kikawada and Quinn, but the two patterns manifest significant differences, even disagreeing on the parameters of the Abraham cycle itself. On the other hand, there has been general agreement on the chiastic pattern that configures the flood story (e.g., Anderson; Wenham; but see Emerton 1987, 1988).

An *inclusio* is a repetition that encloses a section of narrative. One such repetition encloses Yahweh's disclosure to Abraham concerning the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Framing the disclosure are references to the departure of the "men" who had visited Abraham (Gen 18:16, 22). In this case, the parallel references build suspense and forge a connection

between the two ostensibly disparate events (see Walsh, 57-75). A variation of this device, *Wiederaufnahme*, or resumptive repetition, consists of the repetition of previous material when the story resumes after a digression (e.g., Gen 37:36; 39:1; Ex 6:10-13, 26-30).

2.3. The Construction of Characters. A narrator constructs characters so as to influence the reader's perception of them. The characters we encounter in the Pentateuch have thus been shaped to serve the general aims of the narrative. Just as a picture of Moses is not "the real Moses" who existed at some point in time, so the Moses depicted in the Pentateuch is an imaginative representation. This is not to say, of course, that there is no connection between Moses the character and the historical Moses (again, a question for the historian). But narrative critics insist that, when addressing how the Pentateuch works as literature, we must recognize that the two are not equivalent. Within the context of the Pentateuch, even "God" is a character, a representation of the Creator who cannot be fully described or limited by the printed page.

The reader's perception of a character is shaped by a number of factors: descriptions and commentary provided by the narrator, the names or titles ascribed to the character, the character's actions and words, and comments made by other characters in the narrative. Hebrew narrative typically provides few descriptive details or evaluative comments. Because they are exceptions to the rule, description and commentary thus assume special significance when they occur. The narrator's comment that *Noah was a "righteousness man, blameless among his peers" (Gen 6:9) sets him apart from the rest of his generation, who are bad to the bone (Gen 6:5). Inasmuch as it follows a remark that Noah found favor with Yahweh (Gen 6:8), the note makes an important theological point: Yahweh's decision to spare Noah is not arbitrary but demonstrates the deity's concern for righteousness. On another note, the narrator introduces Esau as a skilled hunter who loves the outdoors and Jacob as a "quiet" man who prefers to stay at home (Gen 25:27-28), establishing a contrast of personality that will contribute to the conflict between the brothers.

In many instances the character's name defines his or her essential attribute or significance within the story. Sometimes the significance of a name is emphasized, as is the case when Yahweh changes Abram's name to Abraham ("Exalted Father" to "Father of a Multitude"; Gen 17:5) and Jacob's to Israel ("Trickster" to "Struggles with God"). A new name can also signify a change in status; when Yahweh gives Sarai ("My Prince") the name Sarah ("Princess"), he establishes her identity independent of any man (the prince) to whom she is connected (Gen 17:15). Generally, though, the significance of names becomes apparent only as a story unfolds, sometimes to be disclosed dramatically (as is the case with Esau's agonized exclamation about his brother: "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For he has taken advantage of me twice!" [Gen 27:36]).

For the most part characters in the Pentateuch are defined as much by their words as by their actions. Direct speech tends to be succinct. A brief declaration is enough to establish the vengeful character of Lamech (Gen 5:23-24), the piety of the Midianite chieftain *Jethro (Ex 18:10-11) or the faithfulness of *Caleb (Num 13:30). Within the context of dialogue, direct speech comprises a primary medium for the development of character. The narrator, for instance, establishes the conniving persona of Jacob through dialogues that illustrate his calculating character, first by contrasting his words with those of the impulsive Esau (Gen 25:29-34) and the unwitting Isaac (Gen 76:18-29) and then through a series of dialogues with the equally crafty Laban (Gen 29:15-27; 30:25-36). Monologues are infrequent, and interaction between more than two characters is rare. Longer speeches are mostly confined to major characters and convey attributes more indirectly.

2.4. The Narrator and Perspective. As noted above, a narrative tells a story from a particular point of view and encodes values, assumptions, ideologies and convictions within it. This point of view is conveyed via the narrator. The narrator can be thought of simply as the one through whom the story is told, as distinguished from the author(s) who produced the text. The "narrator" is thus an abstract entity who renders the story into a whole, suggests connections and invests events and characters with significance. There is general agreement that the biblical narrator is "omniscient" and possesses knowledge often not available to characters within the story. The narrator displays knowledge of God's disposition and decisions, although this knowledge is communicated infrequently (Gen 6:6; 29:31). In

some cases, however, the narrator seems to withhold insight into divine motives, precisely when such information might resolve difficulties in the story. At other points the narrator will build suspense by supplying the reader with information that is unavailable to one or more characters in the story. In still other cases, the narrator may delay reporting crucial information until a time late in the story. All these features are employed in the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:1-19), an episode that puts the play of perspective into the foreground. The narrator begins the story with the declaration that God tested Abraham, followed immediately by a divine command that alludes powerfully to Abraham's initial call (Gen 22:1-2; cf. Gen 12:1, 6). The reader thus knows that the story that follows constitutes a "test." But Abraham does not know why the command has been given. Likewise, Isaac knows that he and his father are journeying to Moriah to offer a sacrifice but does not know that he is the intended victim. The narrator exploits the various levels of perspective with a poignant interchange during which Isaac inquires about the intended victim (Gen 22:5-8). The questions heighten suspense by highlighting the gap between what the reader knows and what the characters know. Only when Abraham prepares to plunge the knife into his son do the characters learn the reason for the whole affair. The angel of Yahweh calls to him and now suggests a rationale for the test: "Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me" (Gen 22:12b). The implied explanation (that God requires obedience in order to confirm the promise, Gen 22:15-18) does not easily resolve the interplay of perspectives. What does God know, and when?

Irony, a gap between perceived intent and perceived meaning, can utilize points of view with powerful effect. Dramatic irony takes place when actions yield unintended results. The story of *Joseph, which skillfully appropriates different levels of perspective, contains many instances of dramatic irony, and these become the vehicle for expressing the mysterious involvement of God in human affairs. The sons of Jacob cast Joseph into a pit to rid themselves of him but eventually must confront him as a prince of Egypt. And Jacob, the trickster who has fooled others, becomes himself the object of numerous acts of deceit. Verbal irony works in a similar fashion, often giving a character's words a meaning opposite of that intended. Again in the Joseph story, Judah does not realize the full implications of what he is saying when he reports Joseph's words: "You will not see my face unless your brother is with you" (Gen 43:3). By recourse to irony, the narrator can imbue both words and actions with mystery, thereby enhancing the sense of ambiguity that characterizes classical Hebrew narrative.

Study of the Pentateuch *as literature* thus encompasses an array of methods, approaches and strategies. The questions that literary criticism raises have prodded biblical scholarship to grapple with the fundamental issues of *how* the Pentateuch is to be interpreted (*see* Hermeneutics). Although there are those in both camps who insist that the methods of historical and literary analysis cannot be reconciled, interpretation now commonly utilizes both approaches. Because a text encodes experiences, beliefs and conventions that derive from particular settings in time, historical analysis remains a necessary component for understanding the Pentateuch's message and relevance. Literary analysis, for its part, constantly draws the interpreter back into an encounter with the text and with its distinctive character, tropes and conventions. A symbiosis of the two approaches thus seems desirable but remains very much a work in progress.

See also EXODUS, BOOK OF; GENESIS, BOOK OF; JOSEPH; LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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L. D. Hawk

LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH

Literary structure, or compositional shape, refers to the comprehensive plan in the textual fabric of a written work by means of which it exhibits meaningful cohesion and thoughtful direction reflective of an authored strategy. It encompasses both the organizing framework that defines the literary contours and the embedded patterns that fill out that framework, thereby displaying how the whole and the network of relations among its constituent parts are fashioned into a grand design for a desired effect. An analysis of the literary structure of the Pentateuch then attempts to describe the constructed shape of Genesis—Deuteronomy as a unitary composition by tracing the textured patterns in its larger (super- or macrostructural) and smaller (microstructural) units, by means of which it guides readers effectively to an authored goal.

The interests of literary structure intersect those of authorship and composition, conventional (*source, *form, *tradition) and newer (e.g., narrative) *literary criticism, and individual book analyses. While the exploration of literary structure engages each of these, however, it pursues the discussion along different lines. Specifically, the literary structure of the Pentateuch moves beyond genetic *strata* to purposeful *strategy* and beyond atomistic *structures* to comprehensive *structure.* It therefore shifts the interpretive focus from questions of origin and formation (i.e., the historical route by which the Pentateuch developed from primal sources to present shape) to the evidence for and effect of the resultant configuration, and from independent genres (e.g., narrative, poetry, genealogy, biography and legal materials) to their participa-

tion in and contribution to the larger compositional fabric into which they are meaningfully woven. Further, as the title implies, the literary structure *of the Pentateuch* not only encompasses the entirety of Genesis—Deuteronomy but also treats the material as a true *pentateuchos*, that is, as a five-part *book*. While each of its "books" may display discernible features of internal structure, the focus here falls on the overarching plan of "the *book* [singular] of Torah/Moses" (cf. Josh 1:8; 2 Chron 25:4; Mk 12:26; etc.).

1. Models for Understanding the Literary Structure of the Pentateuch
2. Considerations in Determining the Literary Structure of the Pentateuch
3. A Proposed Structure of the Pentateuch

1. Models for Understanding the Literary Structure of the Pentateuch.

There is no unanimity on the literary structure of the Pentateuch, which testifies not only to the complexity and magnitude of the material but also to the influencing presuppositions that drive the analytical enterprise. Approaches to the question fall broadly into three categories.

1.1. Popular Avoidance. One of the enduring effects of a tradition at least as old as Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 1 §§37-43; cf. 2 Esdr 14:23-26, 38-48; *Jub.* 2:23-24) is the widespread assumption that the Pentateuch consists of five more or less discrete and self-contained books, each with its own title and each registering its presence in the canonical number. While this fivefold division almost certainly was not purely mechanical or driven solely by practical considerations relative to scroll production and storage (Blenkinsopp 1992, 45-47), its influence has discouraged serious reflection on a comprehensive strategy that governs and shapes the Pentateuch as a whole composition. Assuming literary boundaries conterminous with the traditional "books," distributing commentary assignments accordingly and prejudging the nature of the material on the sheer impression of volume (in round numbers the Pentateuch comprises 80,000 of the 305,000 words in the Hebrew Bible, or over 25 percent)—all subtly obscure the meticulous crafting that binds Genesis—Deuteronomy into a single grand structure of meaning with ideological integrity and direction. One negative effect is that questions of the literary structure of the Pentateuch scarcely occur at the popular level, and relatively few proposals have appeared even in the commentary literature.

1.2. Critical Agendas. If popular reading has by and large ignored the literary structure of the Pentateuch, critical scholarship has, in the main, followed agendas leading to structural elusiveness. Among the decisive results of *Literarkritik* (source, form and traditio-criticism), whether in its older classical formulation or in more recent dress, is the acknowledgment that the Pentateuch reflects an apparently complex historical development on its way to formation into the shape in which it now stands. Details of the various hypotheses and their endless revisions are adequately rehearsed elsewhere (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of). For purposes here, the absorbing preoccupation with textual prehistory that dominated pentateuchal research during much of the past two centuries had only limited value for the study of the literary structure of the Pentateuch in its received form.

The reason for this is transparent. As long as textual questions were identified and pursued along strictly historical (diachronic) lines and their explanation subsumed under the hypothetical constructs of geneticism, attention was diverted from the resultant shape of the extant composition as a fixed (synchronic) phenomenon and the significance of that shape for meaning. Maximal *excavative* speculations on the residual effects of superimposed strata or conflated putative sources resulted in minimal *exegetical* attention to the meaningful features of an intentional strategy. In short, with its prior focus on *how* the Pentateuch may have arrived in its present formation, including the social, religious and political impulses that may have precipitated such a production, the history paradigm did not succeed in offering a comprehensive explanation *for* the Pentateuch as it now stands in the Hebrew Bible. Theoretically, at least, divergent theories on literary formation *could* arrive at reasonable proposals on literary structure, each standing on the strength of the reconstruction that supports it. But with a few notable exceptions, the former interests either stopped short of explaining how the Pentateuch *as composition* actually puts its literary features to work in a constructive appropriation of meaning ("behav[ing] as if the final composition was not worth discussing" [Knierim, 352]) or undercut that enterprise altogether by calling into question whether an intentional integrity of the Pentateuch existed at all. Further, the form-critical

analysis of discrete genres or even smaller units within those genres could serve up a miscellany of isolated narratives, poems, genealogies, speeches and legal codes, but it could hardly bring into view the significance of the present, final shape (so Muilenburg). Accordingly, "the book of Torah as a unified story remains largely unexamined. Scholars looking at trees have overlooked the forest" (Eskenazi, 28). Happily, correctives to that shortcoming are now appearing on the landscape of pentateuchal research.

1.3. Recent Advances. With the now widely rehearsed "collapse of history" (Perdue) as the primary paradigm in biblical interpretation generally and the demise of the dominance of historical questions in pentateuchal research specifically, the way has opened in recent decades for renewed interest in the Pentateuch as *product,* whatever the details of its *production* or provenance. While historical interests and formational hypotheses have not been completely abandoned, this shifting of interpretive focus to the present shape of biblical books has resulted in a growing consensus that the Pentateuch does after all exhibit an integrated structure reflective of purpose, even if some of the factors that exerted their influence in the formative stages remain uncertain. Creative and energetic inquiries into the various indications of that structure and its significance for meaning have appeared in recent years, fueled by considerations supporting the logic of an approach that gives prominence and due respect to the Pentateuch as an extant literary phenomenon. This is, after all, the only real Pentateuch that exists—a Pentateuch substantially like that which Jesus and the writers of the NT read and one that is, in any event, an object of study more suitable for confident inquiry than the hypothetical constructs of genetic and formal dissection (Alexander, xv-xviii; Knierim, 352).

Of course, it is theoretically possible that the Pentateuch has no comprehensive design that governs the whole, that the constituent parts, by whatever path they reached the hand(s) of the author(s)/redactor(s), were simply inserted at random. For a growing number of readers, however, textual and thematic indications point in other directions—features that warrant inquiry and demand explanation. Given the state of affairs sketched earlier, not surprisingly only a few examples have emerged to date for the entire Pentateuch, but these models may be regarded as representative of this new impetus. Surveyed here are the most programmatic of these proposals, grouped in the sometimes overlapping categories of dominant focus or principal methodology.

1.3.1. Thematic. In a bold pioneering analysis, D. J. A. Clines eschewed the tendencies in critical research toward both "atomism" and "geneticism," focused on the Pentateuch "in its final form" and asserted the legitimacy of treating the Pentateuch "as a single literary work" that is "not merely the sum of the first five books of the Bible . . . but an independent work in its own right" (Clines, 9-18). Pursuing a unifying theme of the Pentateuch that "arises from the subject [and] is a conceptualization of plot" (Clines, 23), Clines discerned "the shape of the Pentateuch as a movement towards goals yet to be realized" with "the impetus of that movement in the divine promise that initiates the patriarchal narratives" (Clines, 29). According to Clines (30), the pentateuchal theme of "the partial fulfilment—which implies also the partial non-fulfilment—of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs" is anticipated in the "primaeval history" of Genesis 1—11 and consists in posterity (Gen 12—50), divine-human relationship (Exodus and Leviticus) and land (Numbers and Deuteronomy). Although his principal interest lay in discerning thematic unity rather than in literary analysis per se, Clines's model is valuable in demonstrating how textual and thematic considerations together factor into the question of literary structure.

1.3.2. Generic/Biographical. R. P. Knierim's analysis focuses on the question of the dominant genre of the Pentateuch. Proposing a bipartite Pentateuch consisting in Genesis and Exodus—Deuteronomy, with the former introductory to the latter, Knierim argues vigorously that the genre *biography* (specifically, the *Vita Mosis;* cf. Coats; Nigosian) better characterizes the Pentateuch than the widely accepted narrative history of Israel. J. H. Sailhamer (1992) has extended this proposal to the whole of the Pentateuch, demonstrating how the biographies of the patriarchs and Moses are part of the author's conscious strategy in an effort to contrast the life of faith before the law *(ante legum),* represented especially in Abraham, with the lack of faith under the law *(sub lege),* represented especially in Moses.

1.3.3. Narratological. T. W. Mann and Sail-

hamer represent attempts to read the Pentateuch from a narratological perspective, that is, as an integrated story. Appreciating the Pentateuch as "both a composite document and a unified narrative," Mann focuses on the latter in order to delineate both "the internal literary (i.e., redactional) cohesiveness of larger units (e.g., Gen. 1:1—11:9, or the 'Jacob cycle,' or Num. 1—10)" and "the narrative integrity of the Pentateuch as a whole, i.e., how the larger units constitute 'books,' and how the sequence of these books makes sense" (Mann, 6-7). Proceeding "book" by "book" through the Pentateuch, Mann applies insights from literary/narrative analysis to the respective texts, with minimal attention to any comprehensive configuration to the Pentateuch as a compositional whole.

1.3.4. Composition-Critical. Sailhamer's composition-critical analysis (cf. Fohrer; Blum; Rendtorff; Schmitt) is the most ambitious attempt to date to trace the textual and thematic strategy of the whole Pentateuch. Approaching Genesis—Deuteronomy as a single, carefully constructed book exhibiting both unity and nonuniformity, and focusing on the manner in which this authored composition mediates or *represents* the world of historical events for the purpose of instruction, Sailhamer details how the three principal kinds of literary materials in the Pentateuch (i.e., narrative, poetry and legal corpora) are woven into a single literary fabric. He observes, for example, that the pervasive narrative-poetry-short epilogue technique highlights in each of its macrostructural occurrences a central narrative figure who calls together an audience and proclaims what will happen "in the end of days" (cf. Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 31:28-29; Sailhamer 1992, 36). In the Pentateuch's rich use of "narrative typology," by means of which "later events are written to remind the reader of past narratives" (e.g., Gen 41—Ex 12 foreshadowed in Gen 12:10-20; or Ex 25—40 in Gen 1-3), Sailhamer finds evidence in the strategy of the Pentateuch that the author worked "within a clearly defined hermeneutic," namely, "an eschatological reading of his historical narratives" in which "the narrative texts of past events are presented as pointers to future events" (Sailhamer 1992, 37).

Again, the alternating placement of covenant, stipulations and failure accounts between the Sinai narrative sections (Ex 19:1-25; 20:18-21; 24:1-18; 32:1—34:35; Lev 17:1-9) and the collections of laws (*Decalogue [Ex 20:1-17]; Covenant Code [Ex 20:22—23:33]; Priestly Code [Ex 25—31]; extended Priestly Code [Ex 35—Lev 16]; Holiness Code [Lev 17—26]) in the central section of the Pentateuch suggests that the Pentateuch is in considerable measure an extended treatise on the nature and shortcomings of the Sinai covenant. From these and other embedded designs in the pentateuchal texture, Sailhamer is able to discern a twofold theological strategy motivating its present shape: "The Pentateuch intends to look forward into the eschatological future to the coming of a savior-king who will defeat Israel's enemies and restore the blessing God originally intended for all humankind 'in the last days,' " and "the Pentateuch intends to demonstrate the failure of the Sinai covenant and to engender a hope in the coming of a New Covenant" (Sailhamer 1995, 99; cf. 1992, 44-59). In both of these respects the Pentateuch initiates a point of view shared by the rest of the OT books, especially the Prophets.

1.3.5. Integrative (Diachronic-Synchronic). While for J. Blenkinsopp the actual text of the Pentateuch "in its narrative integrity, and not this or that source," is finally "the object of interpretation" (Blenkinsopp 1992, 33), his work represents recent attempts to harness the insights of methodological coexistence or synthesis. Pursuing both historical-critical and internal-structural agendas (cf. also Rendtorff; Blum; Knierim; Whybray; Carr), Blenkinsopp concludes that the Pentateuch is a "constitutional document" with a dominant priestly (P) perspective that was constructed in the matrix of imperial Persian and inner-Jewish interests for the purpose of preserving the uniqueness and consolidation of postexilic Judaism. It was configured, accordingly, to highlight Leviticus and its concerns with ritual laws at its structural center. Here mention should also be made of M. S. Smith's recent exploration of the shape of Exodus and of the Pentateuch as a whole along the lines of a geographical-chronological priestly redaction (sacred space and time) that reflects postexilic liturgical customs associated with the three pilgrimage *festivals. One should also note S. E. Balentine's sociological proposal in which the Persian imposition of social and political directives ultimately defined the shaping and final form of the Pentateuch and of "the Torah's vision of worship."

1.3.6. Rhetorical. Reacting to the favored em-

phasis on narrative material in most of the current discussions on the shaping of the Pentateuch, J. W. Watts has advanced a new analysis along rhetorical lines. Recognizing the intrinsically rhetorical nature of public law readings in ancient Israel, W. Watts addresses the relationship of law and narrative by probing how their combination in the Pentateuch was meant to be read and what rhetorical effects this combination would have had on the intended readers. For Watts, then, the question of the literary structure of the Pentateuch is bound up both in literary-redactional (the interaction of law and narrative) and in historical-sociological phenomena (the impulses of Persian period Judaism). T. E. Fretheim (1996) applies rhetorical interests more broadly to synchronic readings of the individual pentateuchal books.

1.3.7. Summary. To these could be added a burgeoning list of works on narrative (*see* Literary/Narrative Criticism), with their helpful contributions to analyzing narrative conventions and techniques and, of course, an almost endless inventory of commentaries and monographs on the individual pentateuchal "books" (*see* entries on individual books) or smaller pericopes, with their insightful observations on the respective structures within their defined parameters.

Perhaps the point to be drawn from this survey is that amidst the signs and growing conviction of a comprehensive shape to the Pentateuch, the actual identifying of that shape remains an ongoing challenge. Rather than undercutting the validity or value of such a pursuit, however, this observation serves rather to invite further exploration that is both cautious in its attitude toward the sovereign text (not to be treated, as M. Bockmuehl once warned, as vultures hovering over a suspected carcass!) and humble in its spirit toward fellow-explorers. It serves also to emphasize how important it is to clarify the methodological considerations that inform one's proposal.

2. Considerations in Determining the Literary Structure of the Pentateuch.

This is not the place to mount arguments for the literary cohesion or thematic integrity of the Pentateuch but to pursue and display what one finds when research begins on the premise that such integrity and cohesion exist, that the Pentateuch is thoughtfully composed both in terms of *what* it says and *how*. A final-form reading in this manner does not, of course, dismiss diachronic interests or their value to pentateuchal research generally, but it suspends those interests long enough to focus the question on what exists at the end: a composition worthy of study in its own right. Factors influencing the analysis of structure in such a composition fall broadly into three overlapping and converging strategic categories.

2.1. Canonical-Compositional Strategies. On the hermeneutical premise that the whole of a literary work is more than the sum of its parts, analyzing structure appropriately begins with questions about the impact and significance of the largest interpretive environment (canon) and the broadest internal contours (composition; for an ascending proposal that begins with textual units, see Dorsey). Included here are structural indications and implications of both *intertextuality* (relationship of the Pentateuch to the rest of Scripture) and *innertextuality* (relationship of the Pentateuch to itself). Examples include (1) the structural significance of the Pentateuch, with its own recognized integrity (contra Ewald's Hexateuch, Noth's Tetrateuch or Schmitt's Enneateuch), obviously pointing beyond itself and introducing a consecutive narrative history that extends from the creation story to the account of the exile (Genesis—2 Kings); (2) the structural implications of the Pentateuch's own parameters and the relationship, if any, between its beginning and its ending; (3) the structural influence of Deuteronomy and its function relative to the whole; and (4) the structural relevance of material selection, spacing and sequencing (e.g., the obviously selective *creation narrative in Gen 1:1—2:3 or *sacrificial instructions in Lev 1—7, with interpretive value both in what is included and what is excluded; the striking disproportion allotted to events narrated in Genesis [spanning some two thousand years], the stopover at Sinai [Ex 19:1—Num 10:11, covering almost one year], and Moses' farewell address [Deut 1—33, delivered in just one day?]; and the sometimes nonchronological arrangement [e.g., Ex 40:36-38; Num 1:1; 7:1; 9:1, 15], apparent narrative intrusions [e.g., Ex 32—34] or central positioning [Sinai pericope]). The task of structural analysis is to make sense of such canonical and compositional strategies, explaining how the whole exerts shaping influence on the parts and how the parts give meaning to the whole.

2.2. Literary-Linguistic Strategies. Whether one adopts a descending model of literary analysis (working from macrostructure to microstructure) or its ascending opposite or a combination of the two, the primary locus of inquiry inevitably lies in the literary and linguistic details embedded in the texture of the text itself, that is, in the actual markers and movements woven into the written fabric. These patterns of evident structure take a considerable variety of forms, both in terms of how constituent units are marked and how they are related (cf. Dorsey, 21-35). Prominent in the Pentateuch, for example, are a masterful manipulating of genre (esp. the narrative techniques of narrator and narratee, plot, characterization, point of view, temporal and topographical setting, style and gapping) and genre mixing (esp. narratively inset poetry and legal material) and an impressive repertoire of repetition: of sounds (e.g., paronomasia, rhyme), words (e.g., *Leitworter*, or theme-words, resumption, inclusio), stylized formulas (e.g., the creational pattern in Gen 1 or genealogical formula in Gen 5) and episodic analogy or narrative type (echoing). In varying degrees of subtlety and prominence, these and other strategies reflect patterns in the fabric and must be examined thoroughly for the light they shed on the author's structure of meaning. The recurring narrative-poetry-short epilogue pattern cited earlier (see 1.3.4 above) and the well-known *tôlĕdôt* ("generations") pentads in Genesis 1—11 and 12—50 (see 3.3 below) are ready examples.

2.3. Thematic-Theological Strategies. The descending move from canonical-compositional to literary-linguistic investigation leads ultimately to an ascending inquiry into the thematic-theological strategies ("concept criticism," Knierim, 355) that inform and influence the overall structure. It is now widely recognized that the Pentateuch is an ideological composition, decisively shaped by the interests of faith, rather than a strict historiographical reconstruction. This conviction is confirmed by the function of Deuteronomy, a manifestly theological innerbiblical witness to the real meaning and message of the Pentateuch (Deut 1:5; cf. McConville 1984, 1993). This is in keeping with the fact that "the Hebrew Bible is itself a theological book," its texts authored by individuals "deemed to be in a certain sense theologians, who had theological ideas and purposes in mind when they spoke or wrote their texts, and even when they assembled the texts into larger units or books" (Rendtorff 1993, 40-41; cf. Birch et al.; Childs 1985; Seitz and Green-McCreight; Olson 1994; Schmitt; Seitz; and Fretheim 1996, 38, who observes that "theology plays a central role, not only with respect to the content of the Pentateuch but also regarding its very form and its rhetorical strategy"). Textual structure functions in the interest of reflecting an author's perspective on the events narrated. In other words, purpose determines shape, and readers are made privy to the intended depiction by deciphering the patterned texture so defined and determined. While the thematic-theological analysis of structure is not innately any more subjective than other kinds of inquiry (Clines, 9-18; Fretheim 1996, 36-38), its challenge lies in the delicate tension between *explaining* textual cohesion and *superimposing* explanations upon it. It is in the *convergence* of canonical-compositional, literary-linguistic and thematic-theological strategies, then, that readers discover both *how* the Pentateuch is structured and *why*.

3. A Proposed Structure of the Pentateuch.

The preceding discussion lays the groundwork for a concluding proposal, the broad contours of which are sketched in the following outline (see Figure 1: Proposed Structure of the Pentateuch), with selective clarifications appended on the most crucial points. Detailed analyses of the finer aspects of texture must be left to commentary, monograph and journal literature.

3.1. Overall Structure. The broad triadic scheme reflects (1) the transparently introductory function of Genesis 1:1—11:26 with respect to the whole; (2) the manifest concentration on God's purposes achieved through people and events leading to, occurring at and ensuing from Sinai in Genesis 11:27—Numbers 36:13; and (3) the distinctly recollective, interpretive and transitional function of Deuteronomy with respect to the whole.

3.2. Relation to the Rest of the Canon. The merit of the designation "Early Story" is confirmed by the canonical function of Genesis—Deuteronomy as the *first* chapters in the Bible and by the dominant *narrative* framework to the whole, with poetry, legal materials, genealogy, biography and speeches inset and subservient to a pervasive and traceable story line. The thematic-theological rubric "God's Universal Blessing Plan" is corroborated by (1) canonical-compositional and literary-linguistic indicators, includ-

A. Introduction to the Early Story of God's Universal Blessing Plan: Initial Episodes (Gen 1:1—11:26)
  1. Prologue. First Things: Creation (Gen 1:1—2:3)
  2. Story from Creation to Terah/Abram in Five *Tôlĕdôt* Sections (Gen 2:4—11:26)
B. Development in the Early Story of God's Universal Blessing Plan: Unfolding Drama (Gen 11:27—Num 36:13)
  1. The Pre-Sinai Narratives: People of the Blessing Plan Elected and Preserved (Gen 11:27—Ex 18:27)
    a. Story from Terah/Abra[ha]m to Jacob/Joseph in Five *Tôlĕdôt* Sections (Gen 11:27—50:26)
    b. Story of the Exodus (Ex 1:1—18:27)
  2. The Sinai Narratives: Provisions for the Blessing Plan Delineated (Ex 19:1—Lev 27:34)
    a. The Covenant: Defining Israel's Vocation as the People of God (Ex 19:1—24:18)
    b. The Tabernacle: Preparing Israel's Sanctuary as the People of God (Ex 25:1—40:38)
    c. The Life of Worship: Maintaining Israel's Holiness as the People of God (Lev 1:1—27:34)
  3. The Post-Sinai Narratives: Prospect of the Blessing Plan Threatened and Awaited (Num 1:1—36:13)
    a. Story of the First Generation: Disaster in the Desert (Num 1:1—25:18)
    b. Story of the Second Generation: Destined for the Promised Land (Num 26:1—36:13)
C. Conclusion to the Early Story of God's Universal Blessing Plan: Retrospect and Prospect (Deut 1:1—34:12)
  1. Introduction (Deut 1:1-5)
  2. Interpretive Recapitulation of Earlier Narratives: What God Has Done (Deut 1:6—3:29)
  3. Interpretive Recapitulation of the Torah: What God Requires (Deut 4:1—28:68)
  4. Epilogue. Last Things: What God Promises—The "New Covenant" (Deut 29:1 [MT 28:69] —34:12)

Figure 1: Proposed Structure of the Pentateuch

ing the hermeneutical dialectic of the "cosmic" (Gen 1:1—11:26) and the "covenantal" (Gen 11:27—Deut 34:12), with Genesis 12:1-3 pivotal; (2) lexical data, such as the frequency, strategic location and verbal associations of 166 occurrences of the root *brk* ("bless/blessing"), including a conspicuous linking of "blessing" (and its semantic cohort *tôb*, "good") to creation and covenant, especially at the outer extremities of Genesis (88x) and Deuteronomy (51x); and (3) the hermeneutically foundational role of the Pentateuch relative to the rest of the canon, including a verbal and thematic closure (inclusio) in the NT Apocalypse (cf., esp. Gen 1—3 and Rev 21—22). One of the interpretive results of these reflections is that, read in the light of its beginning (Gen 1:1—11:26) and ending (Deut 1—34), the apparently particularistic heart of the Pentateuch (i.e., the story about God's dealings with Abraham and his descendants leading to and from Sinai [Gen 11:27—Num 36:13]) in fact participates in a larger strategy that advances a plot truly cosmic and ultimately eschatological in scope.

3.3. The Tôlĕdôt Formula. The use of *tôlĕdôt* (lit. "what is brought forth," hence, "generations," "ongoing story/account," or simply "what became of") as a catchphrase framing device in Genesis is widely recognized, beyond the much-discussed question of its possible association with source "tablets" (see esp. Mathews, 26-41). Genesis 1:1—2:3 precedes the first *tôlĕdôt* and so functions as a prologue to the ten *tôlĕdôt* sections that follow (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2; the three remaining occurrences of *tôlĕdôt* in Genesis [Gen 10:32; 25:13; 36:9] self-evidently continue or conclude movements) and in fact to the whole Pentateuch. These ten consist in two pentads, defining the structural contours of Genesis 2:4—11:26 and 11:27—50:26, respectively, which division is further supported by the transparent shift in focus and narrative flow beginning in Genesis 11:27. Each pentad pivots on its central panel—the *tôlĕdôt* of Noah (Gen 6:9—9:29) and the *tôlĕdôt* of Isaac/Jacob (Gen 25:19—35:29)—with numerous indications of artistry supporting the symmetry (e.g., respecting the former, the strategic placement and stylization of genealogies [ten generations

from Adam to Noah in Gen 5:3-32, and ten from Noah's son Shem to Abram in Gen 11:10-26], and the manifest links between the creation and flood accounts; respecting the latter, the alternating election-nonelection-election sequence [Terah/Abram—Ishmael—Isaac/Jacob—Esau—Jacob/Joseph] and the obvious centrality of Jacob's family in the continuing pentateuchal story).

Besides its role as a structural catchphrase, as a genuine *leitwort* the *tôlĕdôt* formulary hinges the narrative sections, narrows the focus and intensifies the anticipation. Working in tandem with the genealogical lists and the *zeraʿ* ("seed/offspring") trail, the *tôlĕdôt* superscriptions set the entire pentateuchal story in motion by focusing on "the ongoing account of" a narrowing elect line of promise with a providentially preserved "seed" that will play a vital role in mediating God's blessing to all the nations (Alexander, 6-18). This "seed" will be linked to a royal dynasty descended from Abraham through Judah, and this "seed" will rule the nations in majesty (cf. Gen 49:8-12). This "seed," of course, fulfills the hope of a wounded but winning warrior promised to the first woman (Gen 3:15). (It may be more than coincidental that the opening words in Mt 1:1, *Biblos geneseōs*, precisely echo the LXX rendering of *tôlĕdôt* [or *sēper* ("book of") *tôlĕdôt*] in Gen 2:4 and 5:1.) *Tôlĕdôt* serves then not to define Genesis as a discrete book (the term occurs sixteen additional times in the Pentateuch, twelve of these being in Num 1) but to render programmatic a focusing and forwardly directed orientation to the whole (see 1.3.4 above). This proleptic function, clearly established in the first pentad (Gen 2:4—11:26), continues into the second (Gen 11:27—50:26), which, as the opening movement in the actual pentateuchal body (Gen 11:27—Num 36:13), successfully fixes the reader's perspective for the whole.

3.4. The Centrality of Sinai. The unfolding drama of the Pentateuch consists in a triadic development of material focused unmistakably on its middle and major element—Sinai/Horeb, the mountain of God—which, accordingly, occupies not merely a central place but becomes "the Mount Everest" of pentateuchal theology (Smith 1999, 206). Supporting this conclusion are (1) the compositional location and proportion of the Sinai material; (2) the explicit focusing of numerous passages (e.g., Ex 3:12; 15:13-18; 19:1; Lev 7:37-38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34); (3) a tight narrative flow that binds Genesis 11:27—Ex 18:27 around temporal, geographical and familial markers, leading to a virtual freezing of time and space and community that slow to a standstill at Sinai (Ex 19—Lev 27); (4) the resumption of just these same calendric, locational and national notices in Numbers, now subordinated, however, to larger thematic concerns anchored to Sinai (i.e., Sinai as paradigm, not a mere point on Israel's itinerary, for which reason Num 1:1—10:10 is legitimately regarded as "post-Sinai" even if the actual departure report begins in Num 10:11); and (5) the manifest reinforcement of Sinai-centrism supplied by Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets. While *Moses indeed figures prominently in the Sinai pericope (Knierim; Van Seters 1994), his role remains subservient to Yahweh's larger purposes for the nation as medium of a universal plan of blessing—which plan involves a people, elected and preserved (Gen 11:27—Ex 18:27), who are made recipients of certain provisions delineating the path to blessing (Ex 19—Lev 27), which prospect is both threatened and, beyond the end of the pentateuchal center itself, awaited (Num 1—36).

3.5. The Role of the Legal Material. The dominance of legal material in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19—Lev 27) does not alter the fact that the pericope is narratively framed and driven. The legal corpora are compositionally inset as constituent parts of a larger story, with all the conventional features of narrative apparent (e.g., introductory formulas), and in any event are enveloped between pre-Sinai (Gen 11:27—Ex 18:27) and post-Sinai (Num 1—36) materials that are predominantly and self-evidently narrative. Hence the appropriateness of the title "Sinai Narratives," the warrant for understanding laws as subservient to narrative purposes and the legitimacy of differentiating the immediate addressees (e.g., *bĕnê yiśrāʾēl*) and the implied "any reader," with all the attendant and far-reaching implications of that distinction (e.g., law qua law as covenantal stipulations addressed to the Sinai community versus Torah as revelatory instruction intended for readers in any age, which distinction almost certainly factors in the NT perspective on the "law").

3.6. The Structure of the Sinai Account. The Sinai narratives (Ex 19—Lev 27) in turn reflect a

manifest triadic structure in which three provisions for blessing are delineated: (1) Yahweh's covenant, which defines Israel's vocation (Ex 19—24; esp. 19:3-6); (2) Yahweh's *tabernacle, which locates Israel's sanctuary (Ex 25—40); and (3) Yahweh's worship, which provides the means for maintaining Israel's holiness (Lev 1—27). Central to this schema and therefore lying at the precise structural heart of the Pentateuch is the highlighting of Yahweh's dwelling among a covenant people set apart from the nations to be *holy. This analysis suggests, in other words, that Exodus 25—40 provides a more suitable and deeply embedded literary-thematic center to the Pentateuch than does Leviticus (a more popular proposal that leans suspiciously on the traditional fivefold division). Confirming this conclusion are (1) the transparent fulfillment of the covenant (Ex 19—24) in the establishment of the sanctuary (cf. Ex 24:15-18; 40:34-38) and the equally transparent subordinating of Leviticus to the interests of Exodus 25—40 (see 3.8 below); (2) the volume and conspicuous detail devoted to the tabernacle instruction and construction accounts; (3) the function of the apparently intrusive *golden calf story (see 3.7 below); (4) the conscious echoing of Genesis 1—2 in Exodus 25—40, long recognized in both Jewish and Christian interpretation (e.g., Ex 24:16 || Gen 1:1—2:3; Ex 31:3 and 35:31 || Gen 1:2; Ex 31:12-18 || Gen 2:1-3; Ex 39:43a || Gen 1:31a; Ex 39:32a || Gen 2:1; Ex 40:33b || Gen 2:2a; Ex 39:43b || Gen 2:3a; Ex 40:2, 17 || Gen 1:5; a heptadic pattern for both), depicting the tabernacle as a partial return to the garden of *Eden and Yahweh's indwelling presence as the location and essence of creation's blessing or, in other words, as both the means to and the meaning of God's blessing plan—a veritable new creation! (see esp. Balentine, 136-41; Blenkinsopp 1976; Fretheim 1991, 263-78; Levenson, 78-99); (5) the obvious highlighting of tabernacle concerns in the post-Sinai narratives (esp. Num 1—10); and (6) the explicating of the rescue from Egypt as having its goal in the tabernacle residence of Yahweh with a holy people (e.g., Ex 29:44-46). If these observations are correct, then the literary-thematic center of the Pentateuch fixes on Yahweh's sanctuary *(miqdāš)* as the place of Yahweh's residence *(miškān)* and relationship *('ōhel mô'ēd)* with a called-out people of blessing (cf. Ex 25:8-9; 40:34-38). As R. P. Knierim observes:

> The ultimate goal of Israel's encampment at Sinai during its migration from Egypt to the Promised Land is not the covenant—as important as it was as a precondition—but the permanent sanctuary as the place of Yahweh's presence or appearance in Israel's midst, along with the organization of Israel as a strictly theocratic community around this sanctuary. At the same time, this goal provides the prototype for the ultimate meaning of Israel's existence as a settled community in the Promised Land. (Knierim, 365)

The messianic and eschatological implications of such a reading are suggestive. With the tabernacle, Moses' many trips up and down the mountain come to a halt (Knierim, 360-72; Fretheim 1996, 112), and Yahweh's "coming down" to dwell marks a descent that will climax in a distant day (cf. Jn 1:14; Rev 21:1-3).

3.7. The Structure of the Tabernacle Section. The triadic pattern persists into the very heart of the Pentateuch, where another unmistakable threefold development emerges around tabernacle (Ex 25—31), antitabernacle (Ex 32—34) and tabernacle (Ex 35—40). Moreover, the central panel itself unfolds in three discernible parts: the rebellion and Moses' role as Yahweh's mediator (Ex 32:1—33:6), the "tent of meeting" and Moses' encounter with Yahweh's presence (Ex 33:7-23) and the renewal and Moses' radiance with Yahweh's glory (Ex 34:1-35). The merit of this observation lies in the microstructural reinforcement it brings to the macrostructural conclusion reached in 3.6 above. Specifically, at the triadic center of the Pentateuch (Ex 25—40) lies a triadic central panel (Ex 32—34) that itself pivots on a centerpiece (Ex 33:7-23) that features a "tent of meeting" (!) wherein Yahweh's glorious presence is displayed through a mediator in the midst of a called-out people whose very existence is defined by and depends upon that dwelling presence. And just as the pentateuchal introduction (Gen 1:1—11:26) consists in creation, fall and re-creation (or blessing, forfeiture and preservation), so the "Unfolding Drama" (Gen 11:27—Num 36:13) finds a hub in a microcosm (Ex 25—40) of tabernacle, antitabernacle and tabernacle (or instruction, destruction and construction). Read in this light, the story of the golden calf and its aftermath is only apparently intrusive. In the narrative strategy it highlights a crucial point: "The *real* crisis, for which the story of the golden calf is only the cause, consists of

the destruction of the tablets that were given by Yahweh *in conjunction with his instruction for the sanctuary*" (Knierim, 364; end italics added). Moreover, while Yahweh's plan will be accomplished through sinners, people who are by nature disobedient and rebellious need more than laws; they need Yahweh's faithful mediator, indwelling presence, forgiving grace and revelatory word—all *tabernacle* themes, all prominently displayed in Exodus 32—34 and all awaiting fulfillment beyond the border of the Pentateuch's final page.

3.8. The Sinaitic Role of the Leviticus Laws. The details of Leviticus 7:37-38; 26:46; and 27:34 (cf. Lev 25:1) have not received the attention due their importance for discerning structure in this third and final panel in the Sinai narratives. The common lexical elements are: (1) "This is/these are" *(zō't/'ēlleh);* (2) "the law/laws/commands" *(tôrâ/tôrôt/miṣwōt);* (3) "that Yahweh commanded Moses" *('ăšer ṣiwwâ yhwh 'et mōšeh;* Lev 26:46 has "that Yahweh gave . . . in the hand of Moses" *['ăšer nātan yhwh . . . bĕyad mōšeh]);* (4) "at Mount Sinai" *(bĕhar sînay;* Lev 7:38 adds "in the desert of Sinai" [*bĕmidbar sînay]);* (5) "when he commanded/between him and/for the children of Israel" *(ṣawwōtô 'et/bênô ûbên/'el bĕnê yiśrā'ēl).* These literary-linguistic details serve two purposes. First, they support the correlative canonical-compositional and thematic-theological strategies by maintaining an unmistakable narrative focus on Sinai (see 3.4 above), a point made all the more remarkable by the precise locating of Yahweh's speaking to Moses *mē'ōhel mô'ēd* ("from the tent of meeting") rather than from Sinai in Leviticus 1:1 (i.e., clearly the Sinai notices in Leviticus serve purposes beyond mere itinerary reportage). Even with the sanctuary in Israel's midst and the distance between Yahweh's and the people's locations thereby removed (cf. Ex 19—20), Leviticus is meant to be read as part of the Sinai pericope, subject to the limitations of that earth-bound paradigm.

Second, the clustering details of Leviticus 7:37-38; 26:46 and 27:34 function as compositional road signs marking off the material into three blocks of Yahweh's instructions through Moses to Israel at Sinai. These concern the formal system of worship (Lev 1:1—7:38), the life of worship (Lev 8:1—26:46) and the proper valuation of items consecrated to the Lord in worship (Lev 27:1-34). The exceptional and only additional mention of Sinai in Leviticus 25:1 simply signals the two-chapter conclusion to the large inner frame. The narrative of Leviticus, then, depicts a system and practice of worship appropriate to the Sinai paradigm whereby both priests and people are instructed on how they might conduct themselves in a manner befitting a community centered in the tabernacle and so ensure the blessing of Yahweh's indwelling presence. Organized in this way, Leviticus effectively brings to a close the Sinai narratives that began back at Exodus 19:1, in which three fundamental provisions for the blessing plan have been delineated: a vocation-defining covenant (Ex 19—24) fulfilled in a God-indwelling sanctuary (Ex 25—40) preserved by a holiness-maintaining worship (Lev 1—27). In this connection it is apparent that the tabernacle exists less in the service of worship than worship in the interest of the tabernacle, providing a means whereby God's people could abide in God's presence (cf. Ex 40:34-38). It is for this reason that tabernacle concerns remain central in the post-Sinai narratives (Num 1—36), where the essential pentateuchal vision of Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of a people encamped around the sanctuary continues.

3.9. Numbers. At least some of the issues that make Numbers notoriously defiant of structural analysis (see the introductions and commentaries) evaporate when the narrative in its entirety is read from the perspective of a post-Sinai prospect (see 3.4 above)—the aftermath of Sinai following on the heels of a deeply ingrained future orientation established in the pre-Sinai narrative promises. Functioning more at the level of subdivision than overarching structure, the much-discussed chronological and geographical markers are subordinated to the larger theological-thematic concerns of the blessing plan. Will Yahweh's elected and delivered people—vocation enacted, sanctuary erected, worship exacted—enter the fullness of their heritage in covenant and so discharge their raison d'être in creation? In this light, D. T. Olson's proposal (*see* Numbers, Book of) of a bipartite structure built on the framework of the two census reports (adapted in the outline above) enables the spotlight to fall upon the overarching issues—the effects of disobedient unbelief (first generation, Num 1—25) and the prospects of obedient faith (second generation, Num 26—36). This sets before the pentateuchal reader a twofold para-

digm that compels a decision between faith-obedience-blessing and unbelief-rebellion-forfeiture of blessing. Moreover, the dominant focus of Numbers on the nation's organization around the tabernacle and its concerns (esp. Num 1—10) continues the conviction of the earlier narratives on the heart of the matter: Israel's place and participation in God's blessing plan is to be fulfilled in a campaign mobilized around the sanctuary, with Yahweh in the lead—a "sanctuary camp campaign" (Knierim, 386).

3.10. Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch concludes with an interpretive retrospect and prospect, a commentary of sorts—selective in scope, theological in orientation, homiletic in style, hortatory in language, prophetic in presentation and eschatological in outlook. Following a short introduction (Deut 1:1-5), which details the time and place of Moses' farewell messages and clarifies their purpose (Deut 1:5, *hôʾîl mōšeh bēʾēr ʾet hattôrâ hazzōʾt:* "Moses undertook to expound this Torah"), Deuteronomy consists of three major blocks of material: a retrospective survey of key narrative developments in Exodus—Numbers (Deut 1:6—3:29), an interpretive (innerbiblical) application of various *tôrôt* for the new generation (Deut 4:1—28:68) and a prospective orientation to things yet future—the vision of "new covenant" blessings following a period of apostasy and *exile (Deut 29:1 [MT 28:69]—34:12). These divisions bear more than a superficial correspondence to the principal concerns of the pre-Sinai, Sinai and post-Sinai narratives: a people of blessing elected and preserved (so Deut 1:6—3:29; cf. Gen 12—Ex 18, with new threats and glimmers of hope in Num 1—25). provisions for blessing (so Deut 4:1—28:68; cf. Ex 19—Lev 27) and the prospect of blessing following disaster (so Deut 29:1 [MT 28:69]—34:12; cf. Num 1—36). By engaging the pentateuchal reader to focus on *meaning as message,* meant to be *heard* and *lived* and *awaited,* the "applied theology" (or "*preached* law," Miller, 12) of Deuteronomy provides for the whole "the sense of an ending" (Fretheim 1996, 53-58) that is as hermeneutically indispensable to an understanding of the Pentateuch as it is foundational to the books that follow. These observations confirm earlier suspicions that the Pentateuch is structured along theological-thematic lines that point beyond its own borders to the fulfillment of a yet-unrealized blessing plan that will include, among other things, a new heart (Deut 30:1-20), a new creation (Deut 33:26-29) and the distant anticipation of a new prophet like Moses (Deut 34:5-12). In this way, Deuteronomy brings an ending to the Pentateuch that is decidedly *open-ended.* Moreover, in Deuteronomy the ending meets the beginning (Fretheim 1996, 56-58), as multiplied verbal and thematic links forge an inclusio around the whole (e.g., Gen 1:2 || Deut 32:10-11; Gen 1:26-27 || Deut 4:32; Gen 2:15-17 || Deut 30:15-20; paradise lost || Promised Land anticipated; etc.), which becomes, then, the canonical segue to what follows. It will be for the Prophets to sharpen the pentateuchal vision of God's universal blessing plan by projecting it onto an eschatological screen that awaits apostolic interpretation.

See also DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF; EXODUS, BOOK OF; GENEALOGIES; GENESIS, BOOK OF; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF; LITERARY/NARRRATIVE CRITICISM; NUMBERS, BOOK OF; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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LOT

According to the Genesis tradition, Lot was the son of *Terah's third son, *Haran, and the nephew of Abram (Gen 11:27). Following the *tōlĕdôt* structure of Genesis (*see* Genesis, Book of, §1.1), Lot is known in the Pentateuch only within the framework of the *Abraham narrative (Gen 11:27—25:11). At the narrative's outset, Lot moves from *Ur to Haran with Terah because of the death of his father; at the narrative's conclusion, Lot fathers two sons by his two unnamed daughters. These two sons are identified as the progenitors of the Moabites and Ammonites. In Deuteronomy Yahweh instructs Israel not to harass the Moabites and Ammonites and not to make war with them since they were the "sons of Lot" (Deut 2:9, 19). The enigmatic triple reference to "righteous" Lot (2 Pet 2:7-8) provides an ironic reading of the Lot component of Genesis.

1. Survey of Lot Studies
2. Lot in the Abraham Narrative
3. Moabites and Ammonites
4. Conclusion

1. Survey of Lot Studies.

Analyses of the Lot material have generally taken the approach of *source criticism (von Rad), *tradition criticism (Noth) or, more recently, literary analysis of portions of the Lot tradition (Loader) and intertextual studies (Penchansky). Cultural (Matthews) and ethical (Smith) studies have also joined the ranks of the various approaches. Holistic, integrative treatments that address overall narrative rationale and composition are limited (Abela; Spina).

2. Lot in the Abraham Narrative.

2.1. Introduction. Typical for an analysis of the Abraham-Lot story's purpose is the contrast of Abraham as a man of faith and nobility with Lot as a man who gradually moves away from principled beginnings and whose life ends in ignominy. Such a treatment is the result of reading the accounts either in isolation or only at the Lot-Abraham level rather than addressing both the greater question of the Lot material's contribution to and assimilation into the larger Abraham narrative and the latter's integration into the more comprehensive Genesis narrative. While views differ on this point, D. J. A. Clines, T. D. Alexander and others have shown that discussion of "seed"/"descendants" (i.e., heir) is generally a prominent narrative concern throughout Genesis. In the Abraham narrative, the identity of the one through whom Yahweh will actualize the covenant promise ("I will make you a great nation," Gen 12:2) to the childless patriarchal family is a particular narrative apprehension.

The location and content of the four Lot components of the Abraham narrative seem to provide clues to understanding how they function within the larger narrative setting. The presence of narrative pairs in this material is a point that has long been observed (e.g., two *Sarah-as-sister scenes: Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; two accounts involving Sarah, *Hagar and *Ishmael: Gen 16:1-16; 21:1-34). In the case of the Lot material, two "paired sets" have been integrated, one set in each half of the Abraham story. That the Lot accounts are framed by the two Sarah-as-sister stories indicates that the Lot material has purposefully and artfully been woven into a larger narrative context; that Lot is last seen narratively prior to Isaac's birth is significant for the overall Abraham/Genesis narrative agenda. In an engaging manner, the earlier Lot stories suggest and hold open the possibility of Lot as Abraham's heir. It is not until the second pair of Lot narratives (Gen 18—19) that Lot is narratively eliminated as the potential heir.

2.2. Prologue to the Lot Narrative. Lot's remarkable role in the Abraham narrative is signaled by the narrator's inclusion of his name in the *tōlĕdôt* statement of Genesis 11:27, where he is introduced as the son of Haran and the grandson of Terah. The notice regarding Haran's death in Ur (Gen 11:28) sets up the further observation that Lot was part of Terah's clan that migrated from Ur to Haran (Gen 11:31). Lot's inclusion in the narrative description of Abram's entourage that journeyed from Haran to Canaan (Gen 12:5) anticipates his eventual reappearance in the narrative. Noteworthy, however, in these introductory inclusions (Gen 11:27, 31; 12:5) is the fact that Lot is always secondary to his uncle in the narrative presentation.

2.3. The Lot Tradition, Part 1 (Gen 13—14). Interclan conflict and separation initiate the Lot tradition's first pairing (Gen 13); international conflict, capture and rescue are the primary in-

gredients in its conclusion (Gen 14). In both the account of the move from Egypt to the Negev (Gen 13:1) and the description of individual possessions (Gen 13:5; note the use of *rĕkûš*, "property, goods," in Gen 13:6; cf. 12:5; 14:11-12, 16, 21), Lot continues to occupy a secondary place.

The description of the choice Abram gives Lot ("left"/"right") and Lot's subsequent decision is striking. L. R. Helyer argues that the options given Lot by Abram were between "the north" and "the south"—both sections of Canaan's hill country. Lot's alternative selection represents a third region that was not necessarily included in the initial proposal and that, of course, prepares the stage for all that follows.

The description of "all the circle of the Jordan" (*kol kikkar hayyardēn*, Gen 13:10) as "like a garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt" (Gen 13:10) is noteworthy. Is such a description intended merely to draw attention to the region's fertility, or is it also intended to strike ominous tones, in light of earlier narration involving each? Given the immediately preceding narrative aside ("before Yahweh had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah," Gen 13:10), it appears to function as a double entendre inasmuch as each (the garden of Yahweh; Egypt) has previously been associated with fertility and prosperity (Gen 2; 12) as well as inappropriate conduct (Gen 3; 12). Consequently, Lot's narrated preference for the area carries with it a sense of foreboding. The closing statement of this first movement (Gen 13:13) as well as subsequent scenes (Gen 14; 19) lend credence to such a reading.

It has been suggested, on the one hand, that Genesis 13 is not so much about Abram's nobility as about his concern for "living space and sustenance" (Westermann, 176) as well as his perception that separation is appropriate for survival. On the other, it is read as "Lot's elimination as heir to the covenant promise" (Helyer, 85). It is more appropriate, however, to assert that this is the contribution of the *entire* Lot tradition, not merely Genesis 13, to the Abraham narrative.

The second Lot account is set in the context of an international incident involving four Mesopotamian kings who, in coalition, move west to confront a coalition of the five kings of the cities of the plain (Gen 14:1-10). The narrative's final scene (Gen 14:17-24) has Abram dealing with the king of Sodom and the king-priest *Melchizedek. Framed by these two episodes is the account of Lot's capture by the Mesopotamian kings and his liberation by Abram.

Typically, an approach to Genesis 14 will focus on two different concerns: the historical context and questions related to the opening scene, such as the identity of the Mesopotamian kings (Gen 14:1-10), and the Melchizedek-Abram encounter at the end (Gen 14:17-24). While it is entirely appropriate to give attention to the historical and theological issues that Genesis 14 raises, their immediate significance directly and ultimately relates to the larger narrative issue of Abram and Lot. The opening scene narratively sets up the account of Abram rescuing Lot, and the closing scene is the result of the storied rescue. Together, they form a frame around the central, cryptic account of Lot's capture and deliverance; this scene advances the preceding account of separation (Gen 13). Thus, while Abram—as opposed to Lot—is the dominant human character in Genesis 14, Abram is presented as intervening on Lot's behalf. That intervention and the successful rescue obviously demonstrate that Abram has not disassociated himself from Lot, although the final scene (Gen 14:17-24) suggests that he does disassociate himself from Sodom's king. Curiously, Genesis 14 does not specifically describe Lot's return to Sodom subsequent to his rescue; that he does return is evident from his presence there in the Genesis 19 development. This narrative lacuna at the end of the first movement, however, seems intended to preserve the potential of Lot as Abram's heir.

2.4. The Lot Tradition, Part 2 (Gen 18—19). Genesis 15—17 temporarily puts the Lot story on hold and advances the Abraham narrative significantly. By the end of Genesis 17 "Abram" has become "Abraham," and his heir has been identified specifically and proleptically as *Isaac. This anticipation of Isaac introduces a complication that must await resolution until the end of the Lot tradition. Genesis 18:1-15 moves one's attention from these Isaac developments back to the second half of the Lot story. It is another example of a narrative text that is easily and often misread when isolated portions of it are focused on without regard for the larger narrative agenda. Readings of Genesis 18:1-15 tend to emphasize the visit and the identity of the individuals who announce the future birth of Isaac. This is, to be sure, in the narrative and is

to be treated appropriately. But the men who visit with Abraham and Sarah are on a journey with a specific destination: Sodom and Gomorrah. On their way to enacting judgment on those cities, they visit with Abraham and Sarah to announce the birth of Isaac. Once their visit with the patriarch is completed, they continue their journey to Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot lives.

The two major components constituting the Lot tradition's second part antiphonally echo, in reverse order, dynamics that were prominent in the first half. While Lot again is not specifically part of the Genesis 18 narration, it is apparent that he is still the object of Abrahamic concern in Genesis 18:16-33. Just as Abram intervened for Lot by rescuing him in the second half of the first part of the Lot story (Gen 14), so Abraham's continuing concern for Lot is evidenced through his intercession on Lot's behalf. The impending doom of Sodom and Gomorrah is linked to "the outcry" (*zĕʿāqâ*, Gen 18:20) of those cities and their "very great sin" (Gen 18:20). The former is reiterated in Genesis 19:13 (*ṣĕʿāqâ;* see also Gen 18:21), while the latter is demonstrated through the narration of Genesis 19:4-11.

Genesis 19, the final component of the Lot tradition, consists of several scenes. Genesis 19:1-3 stands as a clear parallel to the "welcoming scene" of Genesis 18:1-5; another important narrative connection between the two components is thereby created. Narration of the confrontation between the city's men and Lot and his guests (Gen 19:4-11) both provides specificity to the evaluation of Genesis 18:20 and sets the stage for the anticipated cities' destruction (Gen 13:10). Obvious linkage, consequently, is established between the two movements of the Lot narrative: Genesis 13—14/18—19.

Separation, launched in Genesis 13, culminates in Genesis 19 with Lot's separation from Sodom, his escape to Zoar and his eventual move to the mountains (Gen 19:30) that he initially sought to avoid (Gen 19:19). Irony in Lot's desire to escape to Zoar rather than "the mountain" resounds in the final scene, where he is "dwelling in the mountains . . . because he was afraid to dwell in Zoar" (Gen 19:30). Furthermore, his explanation for preferring Zoar over the mountains ("lest the evil overtake me and I die," Gen 19:19) finds ironic resonance in his fathering sons by his two daughters (Gen 19:32-38). Resolution of the tension between Lot's potential to be Abraham's heir and the announcement of Isaac as such (Gen 17) is finally reached with the portrayal of the ignominious origin of the Moabites and the *bĕnê ʿammôn* ("sons of Ammon").

Just as a deft transition from the beginnings of the Abraham narrative was created to the Lot tradition's first half, so an equally adroit shift is made from the Lot tradition's second half to the continuation of the Abraham narrative. Abraham's narrated intercession on behalf of "the righteous" (*ṣaddîq*, Gen 18:23) of Sodom and Gomorrah certainly prepares the reader for his intercession for the "righteous" *Abimelech (*ṣaddîq*, Gen 20:4; cf. 20:7, 17-18). Furthermore, Lot's narrative disappearance (Gen 19) appropriately prepares for Isaac's appearance (Gen 21).

3. Moabites and Ammonites.

Except for the Lot tradition's final etiological explanation (Gen 19:36-38) and the Deuteronomic account of Israel's journey northward along the eastern plateau, as they move toward Canaan, the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ben-ammi, are not included in the pentateuchal narrative. However, numerous references to Moab as an existing people-group are found in the Pentateuch, particularly in Numbers and Deuteronomy. They are generally referred to simply as "Moabites" (Deut 2:11, 29; 23:3 [MT 23:4]), though *Moses' Song of the Sea celebrates the trembling of "the leaders of Moab" (Ex 15:15). Similarly, in the context of the *Balaam narrative reference is made to "the elders of Moab" (Num 22:7), and the Israelites are narrated as having sexual relations with "the daughters of Moab" (Num 25:1). Such allusions recognize a people living on the eastern plateau that bear the name of Lot's son by his eldest daughter. Likewise, the Pentateuch contains territorial references that link this people-group to the region that they occupied: "the border of Moab" (Num 21:13, 15); "the desert of Moab" (Deut 2:8); "the city of Moab" (NRSV Ir-moab; Num 22:36); "the territory of Moab" (Num 21:20) and "the plains of Moab" (Num 22:1). Most commonly identified as "the territory of Moab" is the plateau situated between the Arnon (Wadi el-Mojib) and Zered (Wadi el-Hesa) Rivers and the western escarpment, which drops off into the Rift Valley and the eastern desert. Texts such as Jeremiah 48

and others, however, indicate that the Arnon was not always the northern border.

Parallel references to "the Ammonites" (Deut 2:20; 23:3 [MT 23:4]) appear in context with the Moabites. The only other such appellation in the Pentateuch is "the sons of Ammon" (*bĕnê ʿammôn*, Num 21:24; Deut 2:19, 37; 3:11, 16). No other references using the title are attested in the Pentateuch. Ammonite territory, at its optimum, extended northwest of Rabbath-ammon to the Jabbok River and eastward to the desert. The southern limits seem to have correlated with Moab's northern border, and the western confines were influenced by the Amorites.

Scholarly interest in these people-groups is generated, in part, by the accounts of their contacts with the Israelites, preserved particularly in the Former Prophets, as well as their inclusion in the oracles against nations of certain prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos). Various current survey and archaeological excavation projects in both ancient Moabite and Ammonite territories are extending the boundaries of our present understanding of these groups. A more precise delineation of Moab's northernmost border and Ammon's western and southern borders and the cultural history and heritage of each are among the areas that are gradually taking sharper focus as a result of these ongoing investigations.

4. Conclusion.

Without the skillfully integrated Lot material, the Abraham narrative would not only have a somewhat truncated shape but would also lack the color, mystery and suspense that the Lot story brings to it. More important, however, the carefully integrated and strategically located Lot accounts not only dynamically advance the Abraham narrative's storyline but also develop one of its major theological issues: the identification of Abraham's heir and *covenant recipient. Given the obvious concern in Genesis for "seed," being fruitful and multiplying, and nations, the Lot material also explains the origin of people-groups whose stories will play a significant role in the interpretive history of the Former Prophets.

See also ABRAHAM; GENESIS, BOOK OF; HARAN; ISAAC; TERAH.

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LOTS, CASTING. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

LOVE. *See* ETHICS; GRACE.

M

MAGIC. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

MANASSEH. *See* JOSEPH.

MANNA

Manna (Heb: *mān;* LXX: *man* or *manna),* the breadlike food that God graciously provided the Israelites during their forty-year *wilderness wanderings, is discussed in two main narratives in the Pentateuch: Exodus 16 (Ex 16:15, 31-35) and Numbers 11 (Num 11:6-9). It is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:3, 16, as well as elsewhere in the OT (Josh 5:12; Neh 9:20; Ps 78:24). These latter references, however, as well as additional allusions (e.g., Ps 105:40; Wis 16:20-21), seem to be dependent on the Exodus and Numbers narratives. The attribution of the pentateuchal texts to the various *source-critical strata is highly debated (see Coppens; Malina; Maiberger 1983b; Ruprecht).

1. Etymology of the Word
2. Manna as Described in the Bible
3. Manna and the Natural Sciences
4. Manna as a Theological Substance
5. Manna in Later Literature

1. Etymology of the Word.

The etymology of *mān* is much disputed. An early tradition derives it from *mnh,* thereby meaning "gift," but more recent linguistic work has opted for other Hebrew roots (e.g., *myn,* a verb meaning "to separate," with the noun form thus indicating "separation, secretion") or from cognates in other languages. Arabic *mann* might be especially important in this regard, since it is still used by indigenes to refer to the tamarisk "manna" of the Sinai Peninsula (see 3 below) and generally refers to something thin or fine (Maiberger, *TDOT* 8.392). (Hebrew *daq* has a similar connotation and is used of manna in Ex 16:14.) The question of Exodus 16:15 (*mān hû'*: "What is it?"; cf. *mah-hû'* later in the same verse) has been taken to be the folk etymology of *mān,* though some have treated it as a declaration ("It is manna!"; cf. Schult). A question makes better sense of the context, however, and *mn* is attested with interrogative sense elsewhere in Semitic (see *HALOT* 2.596-97; *DNWSI* 2.648; contra BDB, 577; Maiberger, *TDOT* 8.394).

2. Manna as Described in the Bible.

In the biblical texts, manna is variously described as a fine flaky substance left behind after dew (Ex 16:14), which fell with the dew at night (Num 11:9; cf. Ps 78:24) but melted in the sun (Ex 16:21); as bread (Ex 16:4, 8, 12, 15; cf. Deut 8:3) or grain (Ps 78:24); as something like coriander seed (Ex 16:31, Num 11:7); white (Ex 16:31) or the color of bdellium (Num 11:7; cf. Gen 2:12); and as tasting like wafers made with honey (Ex 16:31) or oil (Num 11:8).

According to the texts, the Israelites were allowed to gather only enough manna for one day, but this proved sufficient. Anything kept until morning "bred worms" and spoiled (Ex 16:20; cf. Ceccherelli's derivation from Akkadian *mūnu,* "worm, caterpillar" [also in Old Aramaic, *DNWSI* 2.647]). The Israelites could gather twice as much manna on the sixth day, in preparation for the *sabbath, as the manna was not to be found on that day (Ex 16:22-30). The miraculous provision of the manna was celebrated by keeping an omer of the substance in the ark (Ex 16:32-34). The Israelites are said to have eaten this "food" for forty years—the entirety of the wilderness sojourn—until they entered Canaan (Ex 16:32), when it ceased (Josh 5:12). Manna was either ground or beaten before it was boiled or baked and made into cakes (Ex 16:23; Num 11:8). Some traditions ascribe to the manna a

wonderful taste (Wis 16:20-21), perhaps given its heavenly origin (Ps 78:24-25; cf. Ps 105:40; 2 Esdr 1:19), but others reflect the Israelites' great distaste for it (Num 11:6; cf. Num 21:5).

3. Manna and the Natural Sciences.

The biblical description of manna is tantalizing: detailed enough that it has inevitably led scholars to attempt to identify it with the help of the natural sciences, opaque enough that the results of such investigations are equivocal. There are at least three major options.

The older view is that manna was a species of lichen *(Lecanora esculenta)*, no longer indigenous to Sinai, that grows on rocks and produces fructifications light enough to be carried by the wind. However, these "rains" (cf. Ex 16:4; Ps 78:24) are rare, typically happen in the daytime, and are small in quantity. A second perspective connects manna with the gum resin produced by flowering trees, either *Alhagi maurorum* (Sinai manna) or *Fraxinus ornus* (flowering ash). The third option is by far the most popular, namely, to connect manna with *Tamarix gallica mannifera* (the tamarisk tree; this identification is as early as Josephus and Pliny). Previously, scholars held that manna was an exudation from this tree, perhaps caused by punctures made in the bark by small insects. It is now known, however, that the substance is not a product of the trees, but is the excretion of two closely related species of scale insects: *Trabutina mannipara Ehrenberg* and *Najococcus serpentinus Green.* The excretions are excess carbohydrates extracted from the tree sap that the insect does not need. Rapid evaporation in the desert air causes the drops to solidify into solids (no larger than a pea) that turn a whitish, yellowish or brownish color (Bodenheimer; Maiberger 1983b, 8.392-93). This substance is produced for a relatively short period of time: anywhere from three to ten weeks, usually in May—June, the quantity dependent on the yearly rainfall.

Obviously, there are a number of correlations between the third option and the biblical account, but even it is not comprehensive. This has led B. Golden to conclude that biblical manna involved all of the above substances, because the biblical descriptions of its physical properties and means of preparation are not applicable to only one. Be that as it may, perhaps the most significant result of this research is the confirmation that the biblical numbers for the population of Israelites in the Exodus are hyperbolic (*see* Historical Criticism), as the naturally occurring "manna"—whether lichen, tree exudation or insect excretion—would hardly support a large group. Thus, one should conclude that either the numbers are hyperbolic or that the giving of the manna occurred but once or a limited number of times (see Coppens; Malina). Nevertheless, these scientific approaches have also functioned in a reductionistic fashion, making the miraculous deliverance (in timing if not in origin) of this food to Israel nothing more than a natural and commonly occurring biological process. Of course, it may very well be that, but the biblical text makes of manna much more; indeed, it uses manna to make several significant theological points.

4. Manna as a Theological Substance.

Paramount among these theological points is that manna *came from God* (note Neh 9:20: "*your* manna"). God gave Israel this food and did so for a reason: to humble and test them (Deut 8:3, 16); to teach them that they must rely on God for life (Deut 8:3); and to see if they would keep God's instruction (Ex 16:4), especially concerning the sabbath (Ex 16:22-30). In the Exodus and Numbers narratives manna is associated with the complaining of the people in the wilderness. Yet despite the complaints, the manna was graciously and miraculously provided—in the right amount, at the right time and for the duration of the wandering. So, while Israel learned it must depend on God in this experience, it also learned that their God was dependable. The memorial of this experience—the jar of manna in the ark and the narratives in Scripture—reminded Israel to continue to trust Yahweh in future times of trouble. It may also have provided an impetus to care for the needy (Brueggemann) as the omer of manna gathered was enough for each who gathered; there was no shortage (Ex 16:18; cf. 2 Cor 8:1-15). So clearly, no matter the testing involved, God gave Israel manna "in the end to do you good" (Deut 8:16).

5. Manna in Later Literature.

The theological points found in the OT texts are developed further in later materials, including the Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, pseudepigraphal writings, Josephus, Philo, the midrashim, the targumim, rabbinic documents (e.g., *b. Yoma* 75b) and the NT (Jn 6:31, 49; Heb 9:4; Rev 2:17; cf. 1 Cor 10:2-4). Typically there are

both similarities (some quite marked) and differences in the ways these materials pick up on the OT manna traditions (see further Borgen; Dumoulin; Kugel; Malina; Meyer, 4.462-66; Vermes).

See also EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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MANSLAUGHTER. *See* BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER.

MÄRCHEN. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

MARK OF CAIN. *See* CAIN.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

MARVEL. *See* SIGNS AND WONDERS.

MASORETIC TEXT. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

MEASURES. *See* WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

MEDICAL CARE. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

MELCHIZEDEK

Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a *priest of God Most High, appears briefly in Genesis 14:18-20 to bless *Abram after he returned from a victory over a coalition of kings led by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. In addition to Genesis 14, Melchizedek is mentioned only once elsewhere in the OT. In Psalm 110:4, a royal psalm, the Davidic king is identified as "a priest forever after the manner of Melchizedek." The writer of the NT book of Hebrews pays considerable attention to the figure of Melchizedek in developing a distinctive argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ. The Dead Sea Scrolls and other texts in early Judaism also contain much discussion and speculation on the origin and character of Melchizedek.

1. Prosopography
2. Historical Account
3. Messianic Application

1. Prosopography.

Much of what is known about Melchizedek comes from the prosopographical data offered in the biblical text.

1.1. Name. Although the proper name *malkî-*

ṣedeq is traditionally interpreted as "king of righteousness" (Heb 7:2), scholars disagree on whether it was originally a Northwest Semitic personal name (theophoric or descriptive) or a royal epithet. Complicating the matter is a grammatical issue regarding the *î* suffix on the first element *malkî*. The suffix may simply be the first singular possessive translated as "my king" or an archaic genitival element meaning "king of."

Theophoric names contain a divine element as one part of the name. If Melchizedek is a theophoric name, which element is theophoric? Both *mlk* and *ṣdq* are said to be attested as divine names in ancient Near Eastern literature (Noth; Rosenberg). Thus, the name could mean either "(my) Malk/Melek is just" or "*Ṣedeq* is my king." Similar theophoric names are found throughout the ancient Near East (Fitzmyer, 311 n. 27) and the OT (e.g., *malkî'ēl*, "El is my king" [Gen 46:17]; *malkiyyāh* or *malkiyyāhû*, "Yahweh is my king" [Ezra 10:31; Jer 38:6]; compare also *yĕhôṣādāq* and *yôṣādāq*, "Yahweh is just" [Hag 1:1; Ezra 3:2]).

Melchizedek can also be read as the simple descriptive name "my king is just" (i.e., taking the first element, *mlk*, as an epithet and the second, *ṣdq*, as an adjective). Adoni-zedek, the king of Jerusalem in the time of *Joshua, had a similar type of name (Josh 10:1, 3), and *'ădōnî-ṣedeq* may also be read as a theophoric or descriptive name. It can either mean "*Ṣedeq* is my lord" or "my lord is just."

On the other hand, Melchizedek and Adonizedek may have been Canaanite royal epithets. E. A. Speiser has argued that Melchizedek is the Canaanite equivalent of the Mesopotamian title *šar mēšarim*, "the just king" (Speiser, 318 n. 24). This would suggest that Melchizedek is a royal title rather than a personal name.

The use of *mlk ṣdq* as a descriptive title is attested a few times in the Northwest Semitic world. A fourteenth-century B.C. letter addressed to the king of Egypt discovered at Ras Ibn Hani (*KTU* 2.81) contains several royal epithets applied to the *Pharaoh. Included in this salutatory list are such titles as *mlk rb* ("great king") and *mlk mṣrm* ("king of Egypt"), as well as the phrase *mlk ṣdq* ("just king"). The tenth-century B.C. inscription of Yeḥimilk, king of Byblos, claims that he is *mlk ṣdq wmlk yšr*, "a just and upright king." Later in the fifth century B.C., the inscription of Yeḥawmilk, also king of Byblos, contains the phrase *k mlk ṣdq h'*, "for he is a just king."

1.2. King of Salem. Genesis 14:18 describes Melchizedek as *mlk šālēm*, "king of Salem." Psalm 76:2 (MT 76:3) places Salem in parallelism with Zion, suggesting that Salem is to be identified as Jerusalem. This identification is also affirmed in the Targums, the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QapGen 22:13), Josephus and early rabbinic and Christian literature (McNamara, 9). In the Amarna tablets Jerusalem is spelled *urusalim*, possibly reflecting a combination of the Sumerian word for city *(uru)* and the name Salem.

In A.D. 397 Jerome rejected the view that Jerusalem was Salem. He argued that Genesis 14:18 referred to Sâlim, a town located in Samaria, northeast of modern Nablus.

However, the phrase may not be topographic at all. W. F. Albright proposed emending the text to read *mlk šĕlôm<ōh>*, "a king allied to him" (Albright, 52). It is also noteworthy that Hebrews 7:2 appears to interpret *mlk šālēm* as a title or royal epithet meaning "the king of peace."

1.3. A Priest of God Most High. Melchizedek is also identified as *cōhēn lĕ'ēl ʿelyôn*, "a priest of God Most High." The double divine epithet El Elyon ("God Most High") is only attested in the OT at Genesis 14:18-22 and Psalm 78:35. Later it resurfaces in the Qumran literature. The single name Elyon ("the Most High") occurs by itself a number of times in the OT, as well as frequently in the Psalms, where it is always synonymous with Yahweh.

Melchizedek declares El Elyon to be "possessor of heaven and earth." Several scholars regard this affirmation as evidence that Elyon was the primary deity worshiped at Jerusalem during pre-Israelite times. In the MT Abram's reply to the king of Sodom in Genesis 14:22 is almost identical to the affirmation of Melchizedek except that *yhwh* is placed before *'ēl ʿelyôn:* "Yahweh—El Elyon, possessor of heaven and earth." Some consider Yahweh to be an editorial gloss because it is absent in the Septuagint, Syriac and *Genesis Apocryphon.*

2. Historical Account.

Understanding Melchizedek's dealings with Abram is complicated by its presence within the larger account of Abram and the four kings in Genesis 14. The tendency among current critical scholars is to view the Melchizedek passage as a later interpolation (but see McConville for a helpful alternative).

2.1. Abram's Victory. Abram became involved in the conflict between the four foreign kings

and the five kings of Palestine because the foreign kings had seized his nephew *Lot and carried him away. Along with his Amorite allies (Mamre, Eshcol and Aner), Abram pursued the retreating kings to Dan. In a night battle, Abram routed them and recovered Lot and all the goods taken in the initial battle.

2.2. The Blessing of Melchizedek. On Abram's return the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (Gen 14:17). It is at this point that Melchizedek, king of Salem, appeared to meet Abram with a gift of bread and wine. Then Melchizedek uttered a *blessing. First, he blessed Abram, and then he blessed El Elyon, ascribing to El Elyon the actual delivery of Abram's enemies into his hand.

2.3. Abram's Tithe. The end of Genesis 14:20 states simply "and he gave him a tithe from all." From the MT it is unclear who gave a tithe to whom. The subject of the preceding verb is Melchizedek (Gen 14:19a). Traditionally, it has been interpreted that Abram paid a tithe to Melchizedek (Heb 7:4, 9). However, after this last statement nothing else is said or mentioned about Melchizedek in the rest of the passage.

3. Messianic Application.

3.1. Messianic Interpretation. The combination of the enigmatic figure of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and the reference to him in the royal Psalm 110 gave rise to a messianic interpretation in the NT. The greatness of Melchizedek is suggested by the two facts that he blessed Abram and Abram paid a tithe to him. The NT epistle of Hebrews points out that this shows the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over the *levitical priesthood (Heb 7:10). The Qumran text 11QMelch portrays Melchizedek as an archangelic figure like Michael. Melchizedek exacts the vengeance of God against Belial and then proclaims release for the sons of light. Later targumic literature identified Melchizedek with *Shem the son of Noah.

3.2. Meaning of the Text. Whether or not Genesis 14:17-20 is considered an interpolation or a precursor to messianic interpretation, the question of purpose must be asked. Why does the figure of Melchizedek appear at this point in the final form of the narrative? The actions and whereabouts of Melchizedek after his meeting with Abram are unimportant or irrelevant to the narrator. Instead, Melchizedek functions as a foil for the king of Sodom. Melchizedek was the gracious king who demanded nothing and gave Abram refreshment and blessing. Abram responded in turn by giving a tithe.

The king of Sodom demanded the people freed from their captors. Abram responded by affirming an oath made to El Elyon, "possessor of heaven and earth," that he would not take anything belonging to the king of Sodom. The relationship between Abram and the king of Sodom is clearly not the same as that between Abram and Melchizedek. The narrative implies that Abram's behavior ultimately pleased the Lord (Gen 15:1).

See also ABRAHAM; GOD, NAMES OF.

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MENORAH. *See* TABERNACLE.

MERCY. *See* ETHICS; GRACE.

MERNEPTAH STELA. *See* EXODUS, DATE OF.

MESSIAH

From the earliest traditions of Jewish and Christian exegesis onward, students of the Pentateuch have found references to the Messiah in the first five books of the OT. The passages that feature most prominently in this category are those concerning the conflict between the woman and the *serpent (Gen 3:15), the scepter that shall not depart from *Judah (Gen 49:8-12), the star and scepter coming from *Jacob/Israel (Num 24:17-19) and the *prophet like *Moses whom the Lord will raise up (Deut 18:18-19).

Since the middle of the eighteenth century scholars have become increasingly cautious about the messianic nature of these passages. This has led to a sometimes sharp divide. At one end of the spectrum one finds scholars who maintain that there are no messianic prophecies whatsoever to be found in the OT in general, let alone in the Pentateuch. At the other end of the spectrum are scholars who find numerous messianic prophecies throughout the OT, including the Pentateuch.

This article attempts to chart a way between these opposing views by looking first at the meaning of the word *messiah* and then at the use of the concept of "messianic expectations."

1. Use of the Word *Messiah*
2. Messianic Expectations in the Pentateuch?

1. Use of the Word *Messiah*.

The word *messiah* is used in religious language today most often within the context of Jewish or Christian theology. It usually refers to an individual savior figure whose future coming was announced in the OT. While Jewish believers maintain that this person is still to come, Christians are convinced that a first-century person, Jesus, was in fact this Messiah. This usage of the word has its roots in the way the word was used in the Second Temple period, the period after the return from the exile in the sixth century B.C. through the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, which overlaps with the NT period. It would be wrong, however, to assume that this is also the way the word was used in the OT.

The word *messiah* (and its modern language equivalents) is derived from a Hebrew form *māšîaḥ,* which was used as either an adjective or a noun. The word meant "anointed" or "anointed one." First the use of the word in the OT in general will be surveyed, and next the focus will be on its use in the Pentateuch.

1.1. The Old Testament. In almost all cases where it is used in the OT, the word *māšîaḥ* is used in a compound phrase. When the word is used as an adjective, it is only found complementing the noun *priest* to create the phrase "the anointed priest." As a noun the word is used only once on its own, and in that case without the article, "an anointed one" (Dan 9:25-26, where the referent of the word is identified by the next word as a "prince/leader"). In all other cases the noun is found in the compound phrase "the anointed of Yahweh" (once, "the anointed of the God of Jacob") or in an abbreviated form, with a suffix replacing the divine name, for example, "his anointed."

Usually found in the singular and referring to the king, this phrase is occasionally found in the plural to refer to the people of God portrayed as prophets (Ps 105:15; 1 Chron 16:22). It is perhaps worth pointing out that this usage is found in the representations of direct speech, and not in narrative. The related verb *māšaḥ* ("to anoint") is used with respect to both objects and persons. Persons who could be anointed were priests, prophets and kings. The act of anointing symbolized that God commissioned that individual for a specific task.

In earlier times the referent of the word "anointed (one)" was usually a contemporary figure (one well-known exception is 1 Sam 2:10). In times later than the OT the typical reference of the word became a future figure (so already once in the OT, in Dan 9:25-26, but there, unlike the later texts, without an article), usually a hoped-for king. Out of this latter use a special use developed in which the word could now also stand on its own, that is, without the complement of a divine name or a suffix and preceded by the article: "the Messiah." This is how one finds the word in early Jewish writings, for example, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and its Greek equivalent is found in the NT (*ho messias* in Jn 1:41; cf. 4:25, the Hebrew word in Greek characters, explained by the Greek word *christos,* "Christ").

1.2. The Pentateuch. In the Pentateuch the adjective/noun *māšîaḥ* is used only four times, always complementing the noun *priest* and referring to an acting *priest in the present (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22 [MT 6:15]; this use corresponds with the use of the passive participle of the related verb in, e.g., Num 3:3). In Leviticus 4 one finds regulations for dealing with inadvertent sin with respect to people in general and then

also with respect to "the anointed priest," in case he is the one who has sinned. In Leviticus 6:22 the phrase "the priest anointed in his place" is used with reference to the succession of one priest by another. The related verb (28 cases) is used for anointing persons (priests), food presented in an offering (unleavened wafers), the tabernacle and different parts of its furniture (the tent of meeting, the *tabernacle, the ark, *altar, the basin and its stand).

To sum up, the Hebrew word *māšîaḥ* occurs only four times in the Pentateuch, never as a noun, but as an adjective describing a priest: "the anointed priest." When the related verb *māšaḥ* is used, the only category of persons with respect to whom anointing is mentioned is priests. Thus there is no obvious "linguistic" link with the postexilic use of the word *māšîaḥ*.

2. Messianic Expectations in the Pentateuch?

In the earlier part of this article mention was made of the use of the word *messiah* in the Second Temple period. The origin of the expectations attached to the person to whom this word referred is a matter of debate. There are basically three positions. Some argue that the Second Temple period is the time in which one should look for the origins of what has been called "messianic expectations." Others look to the period of the monarchy for the origins of these messianic expectations, either the time of the divided monarchy or the even earlier time of David and Solomon. Finally, some find messianic expectations starting from the very first part of the OT, that is, in Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch. It is not an easy matter to resolve this issue. In particular it is extremely difficult to avoid circular reasoning. Within the scope of this article, the following observations may be made.

2.1. Definition. One of the most complex issues in the debate is the definition of phrases such as "the Messiah" and "messianic expectations." As has been mentioned, the way in which the word *messiah* is often understood corresponds to the use of the word as it developed only after the books of the OT were written. The problem here is finding a definition of a word for a period (the OT period) in which the word has only started to develop its later sense.

In this article, the phrase "messianic expectations" will be used to refer to expectations focusing on a future royal figure sent by God who will bring salvation to God's people and the world and establish a kingdom characterized by features such as peace and justice. The phrase "the Messiah" is used to refer to the figure at the heart of these expectations. Perhaps it should be repeated here that this is a meaning of the word that developed only after the OT was written. As was shown above, in the OT the word was normally used not for a future figure but for a present one, sometimes a priest or a prophet, most often a king. It should also be noted that the way these phrases are used here takes its lead from the interpretation of the texts as they could be understood within the perspective of the first audience (as far as one can locate them in time and space) of the narrators, poets or prophets, not to the perspective of later audiences, including Jewish or Christian ones, who have found reasons to interpret a particular passage as pointing to the "Messiah."

2.2. Word and Concept. One reason to trace the origin of messianic expectations to the Second Temple period is the fact that this was the time in which the word *messiah* received its technical meaning; in this usage the noun was preceded by the definite article: "the Messiah" (contrast "the anointed of Yahweh" or "his anointed," the usual phrase in which the word is found in the OT). That this development happened in the Second Temple period is not an issue of much debate. It is a matter of confusing language and thought, however, to conclude on this basis that one can speak of messianic expectations properly only after a particular word was used to refer to the person at the center of these expectations. This would exclude the possibility that the concept of a messianic figure was already part of the mindset of the people of Israel even before the phrase "the Messiah" was used to express this concept.

2.3. Disappointment and Failure. Another reason to find the origin of messianic expectations in the Second Temple period is the conviction that the experience of the absence of a king in Jerusalem after the exile was the occasion for the emergence of messianic expectations. That is, the failure of the continuation of the Davidic monarchy after the exile led to the projection in the future of the idea of a coming king. What one can agree with in this view is the observation of the formative influence of notions such as disappointment and failure in the development of messianic expectations. However, it has been rightly pointed out by scholars that such notions were present already at an earlier stage.

2.4. The Eighth-Century Prophets. Already in the period of the monarchy one finds evidence of disappointment and failure. This is most striking in the prophets of the eighth century: Amos, Isaiah and Micah. In their prophecies of judgment they announced the coming of God's judgment over the kings reigning in their own time; at the same time in a number of their prophecies of salvation (though not in all) they saw a role for a new king, often modeled after David, in spite of the failure of the present occupant of David's throne and the resulting disappointment. This future king was in many ways an ideal figure who would meet the expectations of peace and justice, which many of the actual kings failed to meet. According to a number of scholars, it is most probably in this time in which judgment and salvation was announced to the house of David that one has to find the origins of messianic expectations.

2.5. The Dynastic Oracle. Going further back in time, one can observe that future kingship is evidently prominent in the so-called dynastic oracle in 2 Samuel 7. However, the prophet Nathan is talking about a succession of kings, not about one individual king, and the notion of an ideal king does not play a prominent role in the oracle. It has been rightly noted that this oracle is the seed bed from which later messianic expectations could grow, even though one cannot call the oracle itself properly messianic. The promise of God to secure the succession of kings in the Davidic dynasty was the bridge of hope that in a later period led people to the conviction that a time in which kings failed miserably or were even completely absent would not be the last phase in the experience of God's people.

2.6. Kings and Rulers. One of the striking features in the Pentateuch is a consistent future orientation. At several occasions the people to whom God relates in a special way are told to look forward to the future when God will realize what he has promised to them or their ancestors. For example, God promises *Abraham that he will give the land in which he is an alien to Abraham's descendants as their possession. In those cases where there is a recognizable figure at the center of this future orientation, this figure is often a royal figure, though occasionally the figure may be a prophet (Deut 18:18-19).

The expectation of a future royal figure is from the beginning focused on one particular family line. God promises Abraham (Gen 17:6, 16) that kings (plural) will come forth from him. Two generations later *Jacob gives a special position to his grandson Ephraim, the son of Joseph (who had assumed high office in Egypt): together with his older brother Mannaseh, Ephraim is adopted to the same level in the family hierarchy as the sons of Jacob (Gen 48:5-6, 13-20), but in the blessing that follows the younger brother is given precedence over the older. At about the same time, yet another son of Jacob, Judah, receives a promise of a position of authority over his brothers as part of the blessing given by his father (Gen 49:10; only in a later stage will the tribe of Judah leave that of Joseph/Ephraim behind and indeed assume leadership in the nation [Ps 78:59-72]). Toward the end of the time of Israel's wanderings through the desert, the pagan prophet *Balaam uses the imagery of a rising star to pledge to Jacob/Israel a ruler's position, which will result in the submission of neighboring enemy nations (Num 24:17).

In those cases in which one finds the word "descendant(s)" in modern translations, the Hebrew language uses a word that can mean both "seed" and "offspring." This word is singular in its grammatical form but may be used to refer to either an individual descendant (singular) or a group of descendants (plural). The same word is used for the "seed" of the serpent and of the woman in Genesis 3:15. In the case of the "seed" of the woman the word may refer to an individual descendant, since the verbal form, the pronoun and the suffix referring to the seed of the woman are all singular, whereas in cases where "seed" refers to a group the grammatical markers are usually plural. However, while there is no explicit connection made between the "seed" of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent and the kings who will come from the family line of David, according to some scholars the overall genealogical structure of Genesis may indicate a link.

These passages have traditionally been interpreted as messianic. Such a tradition goes as far back as early Jewish exegesis, which is first attested in ancient translations of the OT, such as the Greek Septuagint and the Aramaic Targums. It is interesting that such a clear messianic interpretation is not found in the NT. If one tries to establish the original reference of these passages, it seems more plausible to interpret them as pointing forward to the kingship and dynasty of David.

A decision not to call these passages messianic

expectations in the sense defined above only means that these parts of Scripture do not fit in one particular category of ways in which the OT points to Christ. At the same time, features such as the future orientation with a king often in the center show that later messianic expectations had several characteristics that were not completely foreign to the mind of God's people. In a sense these features prepared for these expectations.

2.7. The Old Testament Points to Christ in Many Ways. This approach should not be understood as an attempt to confine the meaning of these passages within the horizons of the original audience. It is aimed at enabling present-day readers of the OT to appreciate what one could call the historical relief that can be found in its many pages. With respect to the Messiah, this means that when one would want to say that there is a gradual revelation of his identity, one has to bear in mind that this is not a linear process, and it is not a process that is finished on the pages of the OT. The process is rather fragmentary and complementary.

As the New Testament makes clear, there is a variety of ways in which faith in Jesus Christ, who suffered, died and rose from the dead, opens up new ways of reading the OT. Thus, Christians can legitimately say that the OT points to Christ in many ways, but it is better to distinguish these varied ways from one another and to classify them accordingly (for a good example of what such an approach might look like, see Greidanus, who distinguishes seven ways: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament references and contrast) rather than to group all of them under one heading, "messianic expectations."

See also PROMISES, DIVINE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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METAL WORKING. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

MIDIAN, MIDIANITES. *See* JETHRO; MOSES.

MIDRASHIC INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

MIRIAM

Miriam, whose name perhaps means "wish" or may come from the Egyptian word *mr* for love, is the daughter of Amran and Jochebed, Hebrew slaves in Egypt, and the elder sister of *Moses and *Aaron (Num 26:59; 1 Chron 6:3 [MT 5:29]). Although the Pentateuch accords her less space than her brothers, Miriam is set on a par with Moses and Aaron in Micah 6:4, where all three are mentioned as having been appointed by God to deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

Tradition assumes Miriam is the elder sister of the infant Moses mentioned in Exodus 2 who approached Pharaoh's daughter and engagingly argued for Moses' natural mother to be paid for nursing her own son (Ex 2:4-10).

1. Leadership Role
2. Challenge to Moses
3. Later Jewish Interpretation

1. Leadership Role.
Miriam appears to have been a leader in her own right, although texts supporting her leadership remain sketchy. She is called a prophetess in Exodus 15:20, although there is no record of her *prophecies.

Upon the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds (or Red Sea), when the water closed over the Egyptian army, Miriam took a tambourine and led the women in song. Echoing her brother Moses' song (Ex 15:1), she sang, "Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea" (Ex 15:20-21 NIV). The song of Miriam and Moses climaxed four hundred years of oppression in Egypt (Gen 15:13-14). Miriam was the first of many Israelite women who sang and danced as they welcomed warriors home from battle (see Judg 5:1, 28; 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6-7; Ps 68:25 [MT 68:26]).

2. Challenge to Moses.
Numbers 12 reports that Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses' leadership. The chapter begins with Miriam and Aaron confronting and berating Moses because of his choice of a Cushite wife (Num 12:1). Because Miriam's name is mentioned first and the verb is in the feminine, scholars think that Miriam instigated the family rift. (No mention is made of Zipporah, Moses' first wife. Was she dead or divorced, or did Moses take a second wife?) According to one view, Miriam expressed the concern of the community over the marriage.

But the issues among the three run deeper. Miriam and Aaron questioned whether the Lord only spoke through Moses and not through them as well (Num 12:2). Their real motive in challenging Moses appears to have been jealousy.

The Lord called the three to stand before him at the tent of meeting, where he sided with Moses. The Lord spoke directly to them, outlining how he communicated with those whom he called to be prophets. He spoke to them in dreams and visions (Num 12:6). "But not so of my servant Moses," the Lord explained. "With him I speak face to face" (Num 12:7-8). The Lord even permitted Moses to see his form. Because of Moses' special place with the Lord, God asked Miriam and Aaron, "Why, then, were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num 12:8). In the Lord's rebuke, he established Moses' special place with him but left open his calling of Miriam and Aaron. That he spoke to them at all suggests their preeminence among the Israelites.

When the two did not answer the Lord, his anger burned against them. As the Lord's presence departed, Miriam became leprous, "white as snow." Moses immediately interceded for her, calling out to the Lord to heal her (Num 12:13). The Lord, however, confirmed the justice of his punishment by comparing it to the uncleanness that would come from a father spitting in the face of his daughter.

In his action of intercession, Moses fulfilled the first job description of a prophet, that of intercession (Gen 20:7). The Lord replied that Miriam should be sent away from camp in disgrace for seven days and then be brought back to camp (Num 12:14-15). The text leaves open the question of whether she was healed before she went outside the camp or when she came back in.

Because of this incident, Miriam's name evidently became associated with punishment and leprosy (see Deut 24:9). Her name can also mean "bitterness," for it resembles the Hebrew word for bitterness (*Ex. Rab.* 26:1).

Miriam died at Kadesh and was buried there (Num 20:1). The text contains no record of an elaborate mourning time, as with Moses and Aaron. Moses was mourned for thirty days on the plain of Moab (Deut 34:8) and Aaron for the same number (Num 20:29). The deaths of all three leaders, however, coincided with three stops in the wilderness.

3. Later Jewish Interpretation.
Jewish tradition calls Miriam Azubah, the wife of *Caleb. Their son, Hur, was the grandfather of Bezalel, architect of Solomon's temple. He is said to have inherited the wisdom of Miriam, his great-grandmother. Some rabbis believed that David descended from Miriam (see *Sipre Num.* 78; *Ex. Rab.* 48:3-4). Jewish tradition also says that, like her brothers Aaron and Moses, Miriam died by the kiss of God because the angel of death had no power over her (*b. B. Bat.* 17a).

See also AARON; MOSES; WOMEN.

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MIŠPĀṬÎM. *See* BOOK OF THE COVENANT.

MOABITES. *See* LOT.

MODERN INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF.

MONOTHEISM. *See* MOSES; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

MORAL OBLIGATION. *See* ETHICS; LAW.

MORALITY. *See* ETHICS; LAW.

MORTALITY. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF.

MOSES

Since the figure of Moses towers over pentateuchal history, it is not surprising that he plays a major role not only in later rabbinic, Christian and even Greco-Roman traditions, but also occupies a prominent place in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition. Besides Jesus, Moses plays the most important role in Western literature, art and music, and has been the subject of many modern biographies, including Freud's *Moses and Monotheism,* which viewed the prophet as an Egyptian champion of monotheism who was murdered by the Israelites. According to the OT, Moses had a unique status among humans, possessed superhuman traits (e.g., Deut 34:11), and was a prophet, priest, leader of Israel, poet, miracle worker, hero of the *exodus, mediator between God and humans, interpreter of God's words, and founder of Israel's *law, religious cult and political administration. Moreover, he was considered to be the author of the first five books of the OT and served as a prototype for the Davidic monarchy, as he was described as Yahweh's servant, in much the same way as David. He was even described like "god" in Exodus 4:16; 7:1. He is mentioned over seven hundred times in the OT (nearly three hundred times in Exodus alone), and about eighty times in the NT (either as the lawgiver or author of pentateuchal material). Elsewhere in the OT he is described with two primary epithets: "man of God" and "servant of the Lord" (e.g., Neh 10:29).

1. Overview of Moses' Life as Described in the Pentateuch
2. Historical Plausibility of the Moses Tradition
3. Late Traditions

1. Overview of Moses' Life as Described in the Pentateuch.

Any reconstruction of the life of Moses must be done with the understanding that the texts in the Pentateuch tend to concentrate on the deeds of Yahweh and thus must be seen in that light. The details of Moses' life as uncritically ex-

tracted from the Pentateuch are well known and can be briefly summarized. Born in *Egypt into the Hebrew tribe of *Levi (Ex 2:1-4), he was hidden as an infant in an ark that was placed in the Nile River to escape the wrath of an unnamed pharaoh (Ex 2:3). Ironically, an unnamed daughter of pharaoh found and raised him, paying his own mother to be his wet nurse (Ex 2:5-10). Moses subsequently was trained at the Egyptian court until he was an adult. His life took a dramatic change when he killed an Egyptian, fled from Egypt and took refuge in Midian (Ex 2:11-22). There he allied himself to *Jethro, a priest of Midian, married his daughter Zipporah and had two sons (Ex 2:15-22; cf. 4:20). At some point thereafter, Moses ventured upon a burning bush in the desert of Horeb, as he served as Jethro's herdsman, where he encountered the God of Israel, who proceeded to give him his divine commission to lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt (Ex 3:1-10). With his wife, sons and his brother *Aaron (whom he met along the way), he returned to Egypt (Ex 4).

With Aaron at his side, Moses assembled the leaders of Israel and went to Pharaoh with God's demands. Pharaoh repeatedly rejected his pleas, instead increasing the hardships upon the Hebrews. They then murmured against Moses and Aaron (Ex 5—6). By a series of divinely appointed signs and wonders, culminating in the death of the firstborn of Egypt, Moses secured the release of his people (Ex 7—13). However, Pharaoh reconsidered and led his army against the defenseless host, who were saved by the mighty arm of Yahweh. God miraculously opened the Red Sea, bringing salvation to the Hebrews but destruction to the Egyptian army (Ex 14). Moses then led the children of Israel into the wilderness, where he instituted a system of government, received the divinely ordained law of God as part of the *covenant ratification process and set up the *tabernacle and *sacrificial system. However, because of the continued murmuring of the people, the building of the *golden calf (Ex 32), the jealousy of *Miriam and Aaron toward Moses (Num 12), the rejection of the Promised *Land (Num 13—14), and the rebellion of Korah (Num 16), Moses and the people were consigned to remain in the *wilderness for an entire generation. In fact, Moses himself was not allowed to enter the Promised *Land but was able only to view it from a mountain in the Abarim range (Num 27:12-14). After appointing *Joshua as his successor, Moses died at the age of 120 years (Deut 34).

2. Historical Plausibility of the Moses Tradition. Historical-critical scholarship of the past three centuries has centered much of its skepticism on the historicity of Moses. Some have even argued that searching for the historical Moses is an exercise in futility (Van Seters) or that the Moses of the OT is confined to folk tales (Thompson). However, there are still many who view the source material concerning Moses with incipient optimism (Campbell; Albright 1973, 48-76; Beegle; Hoffmeier).

This article will analyze the literary material and the historical plausibility of the Moses traditions as described in the Pentateuch, based upon analogues with other ancient Near Eastern traditions, namely, comparative Late Bronze Age textual and *archaeological material. By itself, historical analogy does not constitute historical proof, but it can assist the scholar in determining the plausibility of the historicity of the biblical record concerning Moses. Furthermore, the greater history of the ancient Near East provides a mine of historical information, not so much for single events, but for the geographical, political and cultural background of the OT.

Currently there are no existing nonbiblical contemporary sources that specifically mention Moses and the exodus. Furthermore, the Pentateuch lacks the type of information that contemporary historians demand: a clear witness to the use of sources close to the period described (i.e., annals, chronicles, inscriptions) and a backing of chronology that lines up with contemporary material.

Analogues from the ancient Near East afford the historian the opportunity to isolate the historical details of the textual material. Thus, we can understand that the Moses sources contain anecdotes, legal material, legends and tales about the prophet. In fact, except for the most skeptical scholars, most who concentrate on the various aspects of the literature and history argue for a modified form of the Moses story and maintain that the text as it stands presents serious difficulties for the historian (beginning with Gressmann). Many see notable differences in the view of Moses as derived by the hypothetical documentary sources, all of which may have been independent narratives (Coats; Thomp-

son; Noth). While one may argue that any reconstruction of the history of Moses must be preceded by literary analysis and a study of the character of the Moses tradition (Auerbach, 8), literary analysis has not achieved any type of consensus (e.g., Coats sees the Moses narratives as heroic saga [37]). Moreover, literary scholars have not always interacted adequately with the massive textual and archaeological material from the ancient Near East.

In light of this, we will attempt to view the pentateuchal narratives as a literary whole and concentrate on using comparative data from the ancient Near East. When attempting comparative analysis, one must use a proper method. Too often scholars have taken an "inventorial" approach to making comparisons, listing parallel phenomena without making clear their significance. They have also been subject to religious polemic. Searching for comparative data can be methodologically unsound, causing one to omit great amounts of relevant data while running the risk of "parallelomania." There must be a "middle ground" that attempts a "contextual method, emphasizing both similarities and differences, while looking for diachronic and synchronic variations (Hallo). Since Israel and the Near East were part of a wider cultural continuum, one can study Moses in his greater cultural and literary environment. But there must be a systematic method through which to study the comparative data. One must address the similarities and differences in context, understand the literary genre and determine whether or not etymological kinship is useful in making comparisons.

2.1. The Date of Moses. There is extensive evidence for Semitic involvement in Egypt during the Old Kingdom (c. 2700-2190 B.C.), as Egypt's Delta provided excellent grazing grounds for Asiatic bedouin. This evidence is even more marked during the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period (c. 2000-1550 B.C.) as many Asiatics were prisoners of war or merchants or were sent to Egypt as diplomatic gifts. Archaeological evidence reveals Semitic settlement in the northeast Delta at Tell el-Dabʿa, Wadi Tumilat, Tell el-Maskhuta and elsewhere. Some scholars place the Genesis patriarchs in the period roughly between 1800 and 1550 B.C. in this area, somewhat contemporary with the Hyksos rule (Hoffmeier, 68).

There was also a significant Semitic population in Egypt in the New Kingdom period (c. 1540-1100 B.C.), putting the exodus story and Moses into a plausible historical context. Laborers making bricks can be seen from the tomb of Rekhmire, vizier of Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.), some of whom were taken as prisoners of war from Canaan, a common use of Asiatics during the reign of this king. Thutmose III's annals provide evidence of thousands of prisoners taken from Palestine during his reign. His successors during the Eighteenth Dynasty continued to bring Asiatics into Egypt. Furthermore, Nineteenth Dynasty monarchs also campaigned in West Asia until the reign of Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.). By this period, there were thousands of Asiatics in the Delta region, if one accepts the historical veracity of the annals. Most likely they were assigned to building projects and to temples (Hoffmeier, 120).

The new Egyptian monarch mentioned in Exodus 1:8 as the "king who did not know Joseph" has been the subject of much discussion, although the statement most likely represents a dynastic shift in Egypt. In this context, it may have been the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty with the accession of Ahmose I, who had expelled the Hyksos. The new Theban rulers would not have "regarded" the people of Joseph. There is also evidence of building activity (military fortresses and storage facilities) in the area of Tell el-Dabʿa (Avaris/Pi-Ramesse [or Piramesse]) dated to Ahmose I.

There appears to have been a renewed interest by the Egyptian monarchs in the northeast Delta region for a century during the reign of Horemhab until Ramesses II (c. 1325-1224 B.C.). This may explain the need for Hebrew "forced labor" in the making of bricks for extensive building projects (Ex 1). Thus, some archaeological data present a possible date for the forced labor and subsequent exodus (and the date of Moses in particular) as the period of the thirteenth century B.C. Of course, the Merneptah Stela (dated to c. 1207 B.C.) is the latest possible date for the exodus, as it implies that Israel was already in Palestine.

The biblical text, however, does not provide straightforward evidence for a thirteenth-century date for Moses and the exodus (*see* Exodus, Date of). Based upon 1 Kings 6:1, the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon's fourth year (c. 966 B.C.), which places it about 1450 B.C. The statement in Judges 11:26 that the Israelites had

been in the land for three hundred years hence (from 1100 B.C.) agrees in principle with the 1 Kings statement. Aside from the possibility that the number 480 might be intended as symbolic (i.e., for twelve generations; which is not done elsewhere in Scripture), there does not appear to be any easy answer to this problem. Most scholars still favor the Ramesside date (c. 1290-1225 B.C.), especially based upon recent archaeological data, with the caveat that the biblical text differs (Hoffmeier, 126). Thus, in this scenario Moses might have flourished during the reign of Ramesses II in the thirteenth century B.C.

2.2. The Birth of Moses. The birth of Moses, unlike the stories of the birth of *Jacob, Samuel or Samson, is not accompanied by any supernatural phenomena or announcement. Further, his parents are not named in the birth account in Exodus 2, although later he is described as descending from the tribe of Levi, the clan of Kohath and the family of Amram (Ex 6:16-25). The story of Moses' birth in Exodus 2 has long been compared to the Legend of Sargon of Akkad, a Mesopotamian monarch who ruled from approximately 2371 to 2316 B.C. (Childs). The extant texts concerning Sargon are, however, dated to the Late Assyrian and Babylonian periods (c. 700-550 B.C.), and it is not known whether they reflect any historical *realia* concerning Sargon's birth. The pseudo-autobiographical birth narrative states that Sargon was born of an *entu* priestess but an unknown father. For some reason, Sargon was cast adrift as a baby in a reed basket on the Euphrates River. Although a foundling (a common legal concept in Mesopotamia for children who were exposed in this way and reared by others), he later became the king of Sumer and Akkad. In a study of over thirty other texts with the "exposed child" motif from the ancient Near East, D. Redford argues that the circumstances of the two stories are superficially similar (Redford, 209-22). Some biblical scholars, however, have long argued for a dependence of the Moses account on the Mesopotamian exposed-child motif (Gressmann, 7-10; Childs; van Seters, 27-29). Some have even argued that the Sargon story is concerning Sargon II of Assyria (reigned 721-705 B.C.). However, there is no evidence of "exposure" in the Moses story. In fact, any similarities warrant the historian to posit that the Moses story belongs to the Late Bronze Age (argued by Gressmann many years ago [7]). Recently, J. Hoffmeier (138-40) has argued that a number of words of Egyptian origin are found in Exodus 2:1-10, which he believes argues against a close Mesopotamian connection for the Moses birth story.

B. S. Childs compared the Moses story with an Akkadian text concerning adoption, where a child is given to a nurse who keeps him for three years and receives a salary. The child is later adopted and educated as a scribe, showing a parallel with the Exodus story.

2.3. The Name of Moses. Moses' name is explained in the biblical text by the fact that he was drawn (Heb *māšâ*) out of the water (Ex 2:10). Although some argue that the word comes from Egyptian *msi*, a common element in many theophoric names of Egyptian monarchs (Griffiths; Hoffmeier, 140-41), recent studies have argued against any Egyptian derivation of Moses' name (Muchiki). Papyri and inscriptions from the Ramesside era contain a number of references to Mose as a personal name, and some have in vain tried to identify one of these persons with the biblical Moses.

2.4. Moses as a Young Man in Egypt. There is evidence for Egyptian monarchs from the time of Thutmose III (c. 1450 B.C.) importing princes from subject peoples (especially from Syro-Palestine) to be trained in Egypt (much like the Romans did centuries later; Hoffmeier, 142-43). The Amarna letters provide ample evidence of this: Aziru of Amurru provided two sons to Egypt (EA 156.9-14), and possibly Abdu-Heba was a subject at the Egyptian court (EA 199.15-21). Moreover, there is substantial evidence of royal harems in Egypt during the New Kingdom period, including at the city of Pi-Ramesse. There was a long-established harem in the Fayum, where royal ladies supervised a domestic industry. A tutor often educated the children in the harem. One could speculate that Moses was raised in one of these harems. Although there is no evidence of Moses being a Semitic prince, it can be argued that the story is consistent with the idea of foreign children residing at the Egyptian court.

Semites rose to prominence under the kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty. For example, a trusted cupbearer of Merneptah was a Syrian, Ben-'Ozen of Sur-Bashan. Moreover, Semitic deities, loanwords and literary themes were assimilated into Egyptian culture. A number of Egyptian officials were educated in Canaanite

language and geography; still others were required to learn Babylonian cuneiform for diplomatic purposes. As a Semite residing in Egypt, Moses may have had access to the Proto-Sinaitic writing system, a script used for inscriptions by Semitic captives employed in the turquoise mines in the Egyptian Delta. These date at least two centuries before Ramesses II.

2.5. Moses in Midian. Although the text explicitly places neither judgment nor praise upon Moses for the act, the Bible claims that Moses fled Egypt as an adult after he killed an Egyptian for attacking an Israelite (Ex 2:12-15), possibly while the Egyptian was serving in an official capacity (Hoffmeier, 143). Flight from Egypt by runaway slaves in this period is attested (*ANET,* 259b).

At any rate, Moses found himself in Midian. The Pentateuch describes the Midianites as a confederation of five seminomadic tribes (Gen 25:2; Num 31:8). They appear to have ranged over a wide area from the Gulf of Aqabah to the Arabian Desert and the borders of Israel. The circumstances of Moses' life in Midian have been deemed authentic (Albright 1963), although some have argued that the Midian tradition is a retelling of the story of Hadad, the political refugee mentioned in 1 Kings 11:14-22 (van Seters, 29-33). However, there is an Egyptian correspondent to this story, the Story of Sinuhe (*ANET,* 18-22), written during the Middle Kingdom (c. 2000-1750 B.C.). Like Moses, Sinuhe fled from Egypt for political reasons, lived as a tent-dweller amongst the bedouin in Canaan, married the daughter of a local chieftain and returned to Egypt later in life. In fact, some have argued that the Sinuhe story is a model for later literary works and that the Sinuhe narrative structure is seen in Exodus 2—5. The flight of political refugees from Egypt was likely a common occurrence, and thus there is no compelling reason for the story of Moses' flight not reflecting a historical reality.

According to Exodus 2:21, Moses married Zipporah, a Midianite. However, Numbers 12:1 states that he married a Cushite or Cushan woman (cf. Hab 3:7,where Cushan is paralleled with Midian). Moreover, Exodus 3:1 states that Moses' father-in-law was *Jethro, while Exodus 2:18 claims his name was Reuel, and Numbers 10:29 gives his name as Hobab. W. F. Albright (1963) argues that Jethro was part of the Midianite clan of Reuel and that Hobab was Moses' son-in-law. At any rate, the father-in-law is called the "priest of Midian" (Ex 2:16; 3:1; 18:1) and offers sacrifices (Ex 18:12). Jethro called upon the name of Yahweh (Ex 18:10), and Moses may have learned about Yahweh in Midian. Consequently, it has been argued that Yahwism developed in Midian. Some claim that Jethro was an official priestly title, since the name means "his excellency" (see Gen 49:3). Egypt developed copper mining in Midian near the end of the fourteenth century B.C. (Albright 1976, 124). The Israelite site of Timnah has an Egyptian temple founded by Seti I (c. 1294-1279 B.C.) and was occupied until about 1150 B.C. The pottery shows a strong Egyptian influence. The Midianites were no doubt interested in controlling the trade routes from the Transjordan to Sinai.

2.6. Moses and Divine Revelation. When he was confronted by God, Moses claimed to be "heavy of mouth and tongue" (Ex 4:10; 6:12, 30), which was apparently a bodily ailment or condition (Tigay). The Hebrew term for "heavy" *(kbd)* often refers to an ailment, as in Genesis 48:10, where *Jacob's eyes were heavy with age (i.e., he could not see). Ezekiel 3:5-6 speaks of the nations as "deep of lip" and "heavy of tongue" (i.e., unintelligible language). It is not surprising that foreign languages were considered somewhat like speech impediments. A cognate term (Akkadian *kabātu*) is likewise used in medical texts to indicate physical illnesses, usually affecting the ears, head, knees, shins, feet and eyes (Tigay, 58-59). Although not used in medical terminology, Sumerian has a metaphorical term "heavy" used of nonfluency of language. Thus, Moses either had a speech impediment or had forgotten Egyptian.

The God who spoke to Moses claimed to be Yahweh, the God of *Abraham, *Isaac and Jacob. The divine name Yahweh (Heb *yhwh*) has been attested elsewhere, including the Moabite Stone, ostraca at Arad, Kuntillet ʿAjrud and in the Lachish letters. Although the verbal forms *iaum, iau* and *ia* are found in Akkadian, they are now not considered to be related to Hebrew *Yhwh* (Freedman-O'Connor, 510-11). *Ya-wi* is also found in personal names in the Middle Bronze Age documents from Mari in Syria. The name Yaum-ilum is found in Akkadian in the Old Babylonian period (c. 1800-1600 B.C.), and a similar usage possibly appears in the Ugaritic texts *(Yw-ilt),* although this has been contested (de Moor 1997, 113-18). *Yhw* is also the name of

a Shasu country in connection with Midian and Seir. These occur in an Egyptian eponym list from the time of Amenhotep III (c. 1400 B.C.) and in a text dated to Ramesses II a century later (Giveon, 26-28). Some have seen this as consistent with the poetic language in the Bible associating Yahweh with the region of Sinai, Seir, Edom, Paran, Teman and Midian (e.g., Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4-5; Ps 68:7-8). Some have argued that the biblical Kenites (a branch of the Midianites) were the mediators of the Yahwistic cult, possibly by way of traders along the caravan routes from the south to the east (Schloen).

The convention used in Exodus 3 for God speaking to Moses is similar to royal proclamation edicts from Syro-Palestine in the early first millennium B.C. (e.g., the Moabite Stone from Moab and Zakkur of Hamath). The description of God as "God of the fathers" is also not exclusive to Israel but found in the Assyrian texts from Cappadocia (c. 1900 B.C.), in the roughly contemporary Mari archives, later at Ugarit and in at least one of the Amarna letters.

2.7. Moses and the Plagues of Egypt. The plague narratives have long been thought of as a mixture of various sources (Childs, 130-42). However, some have seen them as a literary unity consisting of three cycles of three plagues each, with a final plague by itself (Sarna, 73-78). Hoffmeier (149) has argued that the plagues must be seen from an Egyptian viewpoint, since many of the plagues can be found in Egyptian folklore (Dumeruth). In fact, the *serpent changed into a staff, a hand covered with leprosy and water transformed into blood were all claimed to be accomplished by the Egyptian magicians. This indicates some knowledge by the Exodus source of the Egyptian context of these matters. There are a number of Egyptian parallels to the description of the plagues. From the Roman period, a story set during the Pharaonic period originally concerns a son of Ramesses II, who claimed to be able to turn water into blood (Sarna, 69). The Admonitions of Ipuwer, an Egyptian sage, describe the Nile as blood. The Prophecy of Neferti describes the sun-disk, which is covered over and will not shine, much as in the ninth plague.

On the other hand, various attempts have been made to explain the plagues as natural phenomena. G. Hort (1957, 1958) has argued that there is a chain of direct causal connections between the nature and sequence of many of the plagues. She assumes that there was a high rainfall in the East African Plateau, the highlands of Ethiopia, and in the Nile Valley that caused the Nile River to rise higher than normal. An excess amount of red sediment was discharged from the river, causing a discoloration of the waters (and the death of fish), giving the appearance of red blood. Then frogs (the second plague) were unseasonably driven to dry land, along with mosquitoes (the third plague) and insects (fourth plague). The pestilence (fifth plague) and inflammation (sixth plague) that struck the livestock occurred when the floodwaters subsided, allowing for the cattle to pasture in open areas. The succeeding three plagues—hailstorms, locusts and darkness—periodically inundate Egypt. Though seemingly immune in the areas of geology and microbiology, Hort's thesis has been attacked on literary grounds, and the plagues are not depicted in the same order elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Ps 78:42-51; 105:27-36). Furthermore, the biblical text says nothing of the causal connections between the plagues themselves.

2.8. Moses and the Exodus. Hoffmeier (164-75) has investigated a newly discovered canal along Egypt's border with the Sinai, labeled the Eastern Frontier Canal, which may be associated with one pictured on a relief of Seti I (c. 1300 B.C.) at the Karnak temple in Thebes. This canal may be alluded to in Exodus 14:2 and Numbers 33:7 as Pi-hahiroth, the point to which the frontier canal emptied into the Sea of Reeds, according to Hoffmeier (191). The Bible portrays the Israelites as having left Pi-Ramesse, moving in a southeastern direction toward the Tjeku region. In any event, the Exodus traditions present a coherent picture of the route the Israelites took through the Sinai.

2.9. Moses, the Tabernacle and the Ark. The techniques used by Moses and his subordinates to build the portable *tabernacle reflect Egyptian influence concerning portable structures. Exemplars of prefabricated oak shrines were found in the tomb of Tutankhamun (c. 1350 B.C.). In fact, the arrangement of the tribes by their standards in a "hollow rectangle" also betrays Egyptian training. The Egyptians also used silver trumpets for civil, religious and military purposes (Num 10:1-10). Ox wagons were often used on military campaigns in Syria by Ramesses II at Kadesh, similar to the span of two oxen that drew wagons for Moses (Num 7:3,

6-7). The ark also has ancient Near Eastern parallels. A treaty between the Hittites and Mitanni during the reign of Suppiluliuma of Hatti (c. 1370 B.C.) mentions that a duplicate of the treaty was deposited before the sun-goddess (Hittite) and Teshub (Hurrian). A treaty between Ramesses II of Egypt and Hatti was also deposited beneath the feet of the god of the two parties (i.e., at his footstool). The Israelites deposited the treaty in the chest, which was looked upon figuratively like a footstool (cf. 1 Chron 28:2).

2.10. Moses and the Golden Calf. The *golden calf, although forbidden as a representation, was intended to depict Yahweh. However, the calf was probably in fact a baby bull, a common item used to represent aspects of divinity throughout the ancient Near East. The animal was a symbol of lordship, strength and fertility. It has been suggested that Aaron did not intend for the calf (i.e., bull) to represent the deity but to function as a pedestal of the invisible God, Yahweh (Sarna, 151). There are numerous artistic examples where gods stand upon lions and bulls.

The "breaking of the tablets" after the incident of the golden calf is reminiscent of Akkadian legal terminology, where the term "to break the tablet" signifies the termination of an agreement. Furthermore, the goddess Anath pulverized and scattered Mot, the death-god in Ugaritic myth, destroying him in much the same way that Moses burned, pulverized and scattered the remains of the golden calf (Ex 32:20).

2.11. Moses and Egyptian "Monotheism." According to J. Wellhausen, Israelite religion moved in an evolutionary progression from polytheism to henotheism (loyalty to one god without denying the existence of others). It only progressed to monotheism at the time of the Judean prophets in the eighth century B.C. Although this view has been all but abandoned, there is no consensus about when monotheism did take root. Of course, statements such as Exodus 15:11 ("Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?") have been considered proof of attributing a henotheistic belief system to Moses. Furthermore, the first commandment could imply the existence of other deities. The Hebrew term for God (Elohim), which is related most likely to Akkadian *elu*, denoted the function of a being, not its nature. Nowhere does the Pentateuch imply that the "gods" have fundamentally the same nature as Yahweh. Thus Moses could have penned these statements and still have been a true monotheist. The prohibition of worship of other gods and of divine images in Israel appears to be unique in the ancient Near East.

In the past century, there has been a great deal of discussion comparing the religion of the Egyptian king Akhenaten (c. 1370 B.C.) and the religion of Moses. Even Freud succumbed to the idea that there were close parallels, and others have fancied Akhenaten as a teacher of Moses. However, the similarities are at best superficial. Akhenaten's "religion" was not so much a religion but a royal statement concerning the king's relationship with his divine father. In fact, the god of Akhenaten was a solar deity identified with light and the sun-disk. The name of the deity was not new and had few recognizable attributes, unlike Yahweh. In many respects, the sun-disk was a symbolic projection of Egyptian kingship, while Akhenaten mirrored his kingship on the earth. There were also many iconographic depictions of the sun-disk, unlike the prohibitions of portraying Yahweh. Further, Akhenaten was the only one who knew his father, the sun-disk, and the Egyptian people did not enjoy this relationship. Moreover, there was no covenant relationship between the god and the people, as there was in Israel. The similarities are only in the realm of hymnology, as the Hymn to the Aton has been compared to Psalm 104. This, however, is explained primarily by Egyptian literary, not religious, influence.

2.12. Moses and the Law. Many comparisons have been made between the Mosaic codes in the Pentateuch and cuneiform law codes from third-millennium B.C. Mesopotamia, especially the laws from Old Babylonian Eshnunna and the Hammurabi Code from Babylon (nineteenth to eighteenth centuries B.C.). Not only do both employ the conditional "if-then" clause, but many of the laws are nearly identical, exposing a common legal tradition among the Semitic peoples. In fact, many of the biblical laws that we find formulated (and modified) in the Pentateuch may be in fact pre-Mosaic and ultimately derived from a source common to both Israel and Babylonia. There is a unique difference between the Mesopotamian and biblical laws, however. None of the laws are directly attributed to Moses but to God. By way of contrast, the ancient Near Eastern treaties are of human origin and were presented to the deity. Even scholars

such as Gressmann (471-82) and Auerbach (172-81) have considered that many aspects of the Mosaic law, including the *Decalogue (Ten Commandments), date to the time of Moses.

The covenants from the Hittite state archives (c.1500-1200 B.C.) also show remarkable similarities to the Mosaic *covenant, especially that of Deuteronomy. Both use a suzerain-vassal treaty by which a great king (God) is formally related to a vassal (Israel). These stipulations are also found in Aramaic treaties from Syria in the ninth century B.C. and in the vassal treaties from the Late Assyrian Empire (c. 900-600 B.C.). The typical ancient Near Eastern vassal treaty employed a preamble, a historical prologue (events leading up to the treaty), general stipulations, specific stipulations, divine witnesses and blessings and curses. A great power imposed these conditions on a small state, normally one that had been conquered. The structure of the book of *Deuteronomy allows the possibility that the book was written in the Late Bronze Age (c. 1400-1200 B.C.; allowing Mosaic authorship) or in the Assyrian period, since it has affinities to the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon (c. 681-668 B.C.). However, many argue that the treaty structure in Deuteronomy reflects a closer parallel to the earlier (Late Bronze Age) treaties, not the later Assyrian ones. The Deuteronomic treaty formula can be structured in the manner similar to the Late Bronze Age treaties: preamble (Deut 1:1-5), historical prologue (Deut 1:6—4:49), general stipulations (Deut 5—11), specific stipulations (Deut 12—26), blessings and curses (Deut 27—28) and witnesses (Deut 30:19; 31:19; 32:1-43).

P. C. Craigie (79-83) argues for an Egyptian background to the Deuteronomic covenant. The Hebrew word for covenant *(bĕrît)* is found in Egypt as a Semitic loanword in decrees of Seti I and Ramesses III, signifying either a contract or a covenant. Although the form of the Egyptian treaty is not known, it has been assumed to be similar to the Hittite type. Moreover, Deuteronomy appears somewhat like Egyptian wisdom instructions, which were in the form of testaments to kings and viziers. Treaties also may have been used in relation to foreign labor groups within Egypt. It has been argued that the Israelites modified these forms for their own use, as they were labor vassals in Egypt for a long period. When they were liberated from the Egyptian monarch, they subsequently tied themselves to Yahweh in the Sinai covenant.

In the past it was considered that Israel's covenant was unique in that it was an agreement between an entire people and God. This feature has now been attested, however, at Emar, a Hittite vassal town on the wide bend of the middle Euphrates River in Syria (c. 1200 B.C.; Fleming). In their *zukru* treaty, the Emarites made covenant arrangements with a god rather than simply a foreign power. Furthermore, the city of Emar placed their *zukru* outside of the city at a shrine of upright stones, reminiscent of the witness stones at Sinai (Ex 24:4) and elsewhere.

3. Late Traditions.

3.1. Postbiblical Jewish Sources. Hellenistic Jewish authors elaborated and expanded the Moses narratives in the OT, describing him as an inventor, lawgiver, architect of civilization, philosopher, prophet, king and even "divine man" (probably in response to attacks on Moses by non-Jewish authors such as Manetho and Apollonius). Philo of Alexandria wrote a life of Moses *(De vita Mosis)*, primarily for a Hellenistic Greek audience that was somewhat familiar with him. He argued that Moses was the inspiration for Greek philosophy, describing him as the classic king, high priest, legislator, prophet and prototype for the Greek idea of the "divine man." Josephus, also writing for a Greek audience, saw Moses as a "divine man" and even a general in the Egyptian army who married an Ethiopian princess (*Ant.* 2.10.2 §252-53). He also adds that he was taken up into heaven (*Ant.* 4.8.48 §§323-326). Josephus also argued for Moses' Israelite origin, rationalizing that the foundling baby refused an Egyptian wet nurse but was happy to take his Hebrew mother's breast.

Moses was also the main figure in a number of Palestinian Jewish texts, where his life and work were surrounded by legends. These include *Testament of Moses* (an interpretation of Deut 31—34, where Moses informs Joshua that God created the world for the sake of Israel), and *Assumption of Moses* (possibly a portion of the fragmentary *Testament of Moses*), both of which Moses reputedly authored. The book of *Jubilees* is an expanded commentary on Genesis to Exodus 12 with an additional revelation given to Moses by God. Moreover, both *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll* of Qumran are described as having come from a revelation that God gave to

Moses at Sinai. Thus, Moses was given not only the written law but an oral law as well. There are also frequent mentions and amusing stories in rabbinic Judaism, usually highlighting Moses' role as teacher. In Samaritan tradition Moses was the only prophet and God's primary means of revelation. Midrashic tradition was profoundly disturbed with the account of Moses' death in Deuteronomy, and thus it was addressed on many occasions (Goldin).

3.2. New Testament Sources. Moses is frequently mentioned in the NT, primarily in his role as lawgiver, and his name is often cited as representing the law itself. He is described as the author of pentateuchal material (e.g., Lk 24:27, 44). The NT often adds to the Mosaic tradition found in the OT (cf. Heb 11:23-28) and displays knowledge of later Jewish Moses legends (e.g., Acts 7:22; 1 Cor 10:4). Moses appears in the transfiguration scene along with Elijah (Mt 17:3-4; Mk 9:4-5; Lk 9:30, 33). Moses (or the law) is often portrayed as inferior to Jesus (e.g., Jn 1:17; Heb 3:3-6). Jude 9 adds information concerning the contention between the devil and Michael over the body of Moses, which came from the Jewish apocalyptic source *Assumption of Moses* (known only in fragments), and 2 Timothy 3:8 adds the names of the Egyptian magicians (Jannes and Jambres), known only from later Jewish tradition.

3.3. Greco-Roman Sources. Moses was clearly the best known of all Jewish figures in classical sources. The information in these sources appear to have been derived only indirectly from biblical sources, however. According to some (Pseudo-Manetho, Strabo and Apion; see Gager, 19), Moses was an Egyptian priest who was exiled from Egypt along with other inhabitants. Other writers claim for him Jewish descent (Apollonius Molon; Pompeius Trogus), but with a garbled genealogy. The common consensus was that he was the lawgiver to the Jews, although not all saw him in a positive light. Roman authors such as Quintilian (*Inst.* 3.7.21) and Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.4-5) saw him developing a destructive superstition and introducing "practices that were opposed to all other men." He was also known for leading the exodus from Egypt, not as the champion of an oppressed people but as one who fought against true religion (e.g., Manetho; cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1 §§75-90, and in the *Egyptiaca* of Hectaeus of Abdera, as quoted by Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. Hist.* 40.3). Moses was also known as a magician in more popular sources (e.g., Celsus, in Origen, *Cels.* 1.23; 5.41).

See also AARON; ABRAHAM; AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; MIRIAM.

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M. W. Chavalas

MOST HOLY PLACE. *See* TABERNACLE.

MOUNT SINAI. *See* EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY.

MOURNING. *See* BURIAL AND MOURNING.

MURDER. *See* BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER.

MURMURING

The stories of *Israel wandering in the *wilderness include several incidents in which the people murmured about water, food and leaders. While relatively few passages actually describe grumbling Israelites, they form part of a larger picture of the Israelites failing in their relationship with God. Consequently, the entire adult generation that left Egypt, apart from *Joshua and *Caleb, dies in the wilderness.

The writers use rare terms to describe these limited events. The most common word "murmur, complain, grumble" *(lyn /lwn)*, occurs only fourteen times in the Hebrew Bible, with thirteen examples in the Pentateuch (Ex 15:24; 16:2, 7, 8; 17:3; Num 14:2, 27 (2x), 29, 36; 16:11, 41; 17:5; Josh 9:18). When Deuteronomy retells the spy story, it uses a different root *(rgn)* that is found only seven times (Deut 1:27; Is 29:24; Ps 106:25; Prov 16:28; 18:8; 26:20, 26:22). This term may move beyond the concept of grousing to slandering.

The murmuring memoirs present one biblical perspective on Israel before its emergence in the Promised *Land. In addition to the murmuring passages listed, other biblical writers record Israel's struggles to live faithfully before Yahweh in the pre-settlement period and their often flawed attempts to do so (Ezek 20; Ps 106). On the other hand, some biblical texts present the wilderness period in a positive light as a time when Israel enjoyed an uncommon intimacy with Yahweh (Hos 2; Jer 2; Ps 105).

Since the work of M. Noth (1948), scholars have inferred the composite nature of the pentateuchal wandering stories. Noth believed these narratives were added secondarily into earlier documents that covered an impressive array of themes (De Vries, 51). Regardless of how one might separate the extant stories into putative parts, or to what event one might anchor the origin of the murmuring traditions, the canonical shaping of these varied accounts has ordered them along an axis of increasing gravity. The events retold by these accounts deteriorate from complaint, followed by provision, to revolt resulting in decimation.

1. Exodus
2. Numbers

1. Exodus.

The stories of grousing in Exodus are interposed between the chapters describing Israel breaking ties with *Egypt (Ex 1—15) and those outlining Yahweh creating covenantal ties with his people at Sinai (Ex 19—40). These events occur in the period of transition from Egypt to Sinai. They demonstrate that Israel must forsake both Egyptian imprisonment and nourishment if they are to be the people of Yahweh.

1.1. Exodus 15. The first occurrence of murmuring comes immediately after *Moses and *Miriam led Israel in praise at the Reed Sea.

Quickly the people shift from faith to fear, from panegyric to panic. After being on the road one month, the people were facing the harsh realities of life in the wilderness as they trekked from one oasis to another. Public dissatisfaction surfaced and broke into a clamorous outcry against the leadership of Moses and *Aaron (Sarna 1986, 116).

The people traveled three days from the Sea of Reeds and found no water in the wilderness. They located water at Marah (bitter), but this bitter water was undrinkable. At this setback, the people grumbled against Moses and asked the well-founded question, "What shall we drink?" (Ex 15:24). In response God showed Moses a method of filtering the water by means of injecting a piece of wood. Moses ends this event with an exhortation to follow Yahweh faithfully, thus avoiding any of the sicknesses God sent upon Egypt. Immediately after this testing, the people arrived at Elim, where they encamped beside twelve springs of water.

Israel's reaction at finding unpalatable water at Marah is fully understandable. They turn their discontent at this deprivation against Moses, their human *leader. This is the first time the writer uses the term "murmur" to detail the people's reaction to a situation, and subsequently this becomes a stereotyped reaction throughout the wilderness wanderings (Childs, 268). Unfortunately, however, later interpreters of these stories have tended to caricature Israel's reaction to adversity. For example, one writer suggests that "such ungrateful and illogical behaviour in view of God's deliverance illustrates the fundamental biblical conception of sin as human rebellion against God and forgetfulness of his past gifts" (Clements, 94). While this point is well taken, it may be that this kind of comment is too harsh in assessing the spiritual maturity of a people migrating through the desert. From the standpoint of a later, sated situation it seems facile to criticize dry and dispirited people. Perhaps Israel "should" have trusted God more, but desert thirst demands to be slaked. This is a human need; a thirsty person is not ungrateful or illogical to request clean water. Additionally, no divine judgment comes in this account. God meets their need and promises *blessing for future trust.

1.2. Exodus 16. Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin after six weeks on the road. Here the entire community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. They focused on their lack of abundant food, perhaps specifically craving flesh. Furthermore, as they complain they impugn their leaders' motives. "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death" (Ex 16:3 NJPS). The hardships of wilderness living aroused nostalgia for their Egyptian existence where water and food, if not plentiful, were at least available. Again, one might harshly measure Israel's wistfulness. The unsettledness of desert life was rife with basic uncertainty. And in this context the stability of *slavery, the known, might seem preferable to the instability of freedom, the unknown.

Also in these narratives God promises a daily portion of food from the sky. This provision provides another opportunity for Israel to comply with God's program. Moses instructs the people and cautions Israel that grumbling against him and Aaron was tantamount to murmuring against Yahweh (Ex 16:7-8). Despite this slight, however, Yahweh cares for his people by means of daily *manna and occasional quail. These gifts were to remind Israel of God's presence and power. Thus, in these first two instances, the people grumble about their need for water and food. In both cases God provides, though not without teaching about future faith.

1.3. Exodus 17. In Rephidim, thirsty Israel again murmurs, but the situation seems more severe than reported in Exodus 15. Here Israel quarreled *(rîb)* with Moses, the word indicating a kind of juridical seriousness to the situation. The people go beyond grumbling to charge that they have been wronged. Additionally, the people frame their concern as a demand, not as a question as in the previous account (Ex 15:24). Again Moses asserts his inseparability from God, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Yahweh?" (Ex 17:2). But the people continued to grumble (the more common *lwn*) against Moses. They impugned his motives by accusing him of bringing Israel out of Egypt to desiccate them, their children and their livestock (Ex 17:3). This inflammatory rhetoric indicates that a riot, an ugly thing, was about to break out. God averted this rebellion by having Moses use his miraculous rod to make water seep from a rock. Israel's challenge to Yahweh—questioning God's providence—was commemorated by the derogatory

place names Massah ("trial") and Meribah ("quarrel") (Sarna 1991, 93). We note, however, that once again God does not punish Israel for complaining. It may be that their grumbling was not viewed as a serious offense since they were grumbling about basic human needs for water and food. It may also be that the grumbling goes unpunished because it occurs prior to the *covenant between God and Israel at Sinai (Sarna 1991, 94). As we shall see in the next accounts, punishment comes for murmuring after the Sinai pact.

2. Numbers.

2.1. Numbers 14. In this chapter Israel is concerned not with refection but with future foes. This pivotal chapter in the flow of the book of Numbers reverses the direction of the story of Israel's move from Sinai to Canaan. Twelve spies returned with disparate reports, though all agreed on one thing: Canaan "flowed with milk and honey." In response to the majority report, that the Israelites would be squashed like grasshoppers by the Canaanites, the people grumble *(lwn)* against Moses and Aaron, "If only we had died in Egypt, or in the wilderness!" (Num 14:2). Their complaint traces the order of their trek, asserting that it would have been better to die earlier in the process of their redemption than at their entrance into Canaan. First, it would have been preferable to have died in Egypt before the whole process got started. Second, death on the way would have been better than death a hairsbreadth from their destination. In their lament Israel maligns Yahweh's motives, charging God with plotting to use Canaanite swords to kill them (Num 14:3). Their determination to return to Egypt grows stronger.

Joshua and Caleb produce the minority report to persuade Israel to move forward to the land. In response, the people propose pelting their leaders with stones (Num 14:10). Yahweh and Moses discuss Israel's faithlessness and God's response, including replacing all Israel with Moses' progeny. It seems clear that Yahweh considers the people's grumbling as direct complaints against him. In a macabre twist, God grants the people's prayer and allows them to die in the wilderness since they had already asserted that this was preferable to following God (Num 14:26-35). Only Joshua and Caleb, the minority reporters, will live in Canaan. The importance of this is highlighted by the two censuses that frame Numbers 1—26 (cf. Num 26:63-65).

2.2. Numbers 16—17. This complex narrative of Korah's rebellion varies from the previous descriptions of protesting and prosecuting in the severity of both the insurrection and of the divine response. "Israel's fortunes have reached a low ebb. Demoralized by the majority report of the scouts and condemned by their God to die in the wilderness, the people are psychologically receptive to demagogic appeals to overthrow their leadership and return to Egypt" (Milgrom, 129). It appears that several rebellious incidents are fused together in this chapter (Gordon), but the quintessential rebel is Korah. He, with three other instigators, convinced some two hundred and fifty Israelite leaders to rise up against Moses and Aaron. They asserted that the brothers had promoted themselves over Israel. Moses proposed a contest with Korah; Yahweh would indicate the leader by means of selecting an incense offering. Moses scolded Korah for failing to recognize his importance in the community as a *Levite, one who provides worship leadership for Israel. A struggle regarding the right to the priesthood underlies this text or has become a prominent feature of it. Thus a passage beginning with mutiny against Moses also authenticates Aaron's authority. The other levitical groups should accept their position in the worship hierarchy and not grumble against the Aaronides. The ultimate resolution comes as the households of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and the two hundred and fifty leaders were swallowed by a rift in the earth and by fire.

The scorched censers of the rebels were hammered into plating for the altar. This visible memorial of Korah's rebellion and rejection is a warning against future encroachers into the *holy area (Milgrom, 129). Aaron alone should burn incense to Yahweh (Num 16:39-40). The next day, rather than bowing to the divine decision, the people again grumbled *(lwn)* against Moses and Aaron. They accused Moses and Aaron of murdering their leaders. Responding to the people's ire, Moses and Aaron retreated to the Tent of Meeting. Yahweh warned them to step aside so that the people could be incinerated. But Moses, a true *prophet interceding for his people, commands Aaron to use his censer once again and stand between the living and the dead (Num 16:48). The final toll for both phases of the rebellion was almost fifteen thousand souls.

When the plague ended, God instructed Moses to write the name of each of the twelve tribes on staffs that they would provide. Moses placed these in the tent of meeting. In a consummate act of "staff development," God promised to make one of these dead sticks blossom as a means of ending the grumbling toward leaders. Aaron, representing the Levites, provided his staff, and all of the sticks were placed together in the tent. By the very next day Aaron's staff had sprouted. In fact, it became a mature plant overnight, bearing buds, blossoms and almonds. This miraculous branch, testimony to Yahweh's choice of Aaron as priest, was filed away for a warning to future rebels "so that you may make an end of their complaints *(lwn)* against me, or else they will die" (Num 17:10).

See also WILDERNESS, DESERT.

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MYTH. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

N

NADAB AND ABIHU

In the Pentateuch, Nadab and Abihu are two of *Aaron's four sons. They are particularly noted for their sin of presenting "alien fire" before Yahweh and their subsequent death by fire.

1. Genealogy and Consecration
2. Eyewitnesses of the Theophany on Mount Sinai
3. "Alien Fire" and "Fire from Before Yahweh"

1. Genealogy and Consecration.

According to Exodus 6:23, Aaron, brother of *Moses, married Elisheba, daughter of Aminadab, and had four sons: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar (cf. Num 26:60). Every list groups Aaron's sons in two pairs, Nadab and Abihu always in the first place. This literary feature suggests that Nadab was Aaron's firstborn, which is confirmed by Numbers 3:2 where Nadab is so labeled. The longer form of the first son's name, Nedabiah *(nĕdabyâ)*, meaning "Yah(weh) is noble" (cf. Noth, 193), is found in 1 Chronicles 3:18. Abihu *(ʾăbîhûʾ)* means "He is father."

According to Numbers 3:3, Aaron's sons were "consecrated" *(millēʾ yādām:* lit. "he filled their hands") to serve as "anointed priests" *(hakkōhănîm hammĕšuḥîm)*. It is not clear here who consecrated Aaron's sons; the Hebrew text reads "he," though the Septuagint has "they" as subject. Yet according to Exodus 28:1, Yahweh asked Moses to bring near Aaron and his sons from the midst of Israel in order "to serve as priests" *(lĕkahănô)* to God. Furthermore, in Exodus 40:15 Moses is ordered by Yahweh to anoint Aaron's sons, as he had previously done with their father, so that they may fulfill priestly duties.

2. Eyewitnesses of the Theophany on Mount Sinai.

With respect to the witnesses of the *theophany on Mount Sinai, the author of Exodus 24 (i.e., the ratification of the *covenant) mentions three levels of holiness (accessibility). "The people" *(hāʿām)* were not allowed to climb the holy mountain but stood at the bottom of the mountain (cf. Ex 19:17). Moses, accompanied by Aaron and his sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy "elders" of Israel ascended the mountain (Ex 24:1, 9). Only Moses was permitted to approach Yahweh (toward the center of the top of the mountain?); the remainder of the delegation prostrated "from afar" (Ex 24:1-2). The text adds that "they" (the entire group?) saw the God of Israel under whose feet was "something like a pavement of sapphire, as the very sky in purity" (Ex 24:10). In Exodus 24:11 the narrator notes that God did not stretch out his hand against Israel's "chosen people" so they could "gaze" upon God.

3. "Alien Fire" and "Fire from Before Yahweh."

Leviticus 10 presents Nadab and Abihu in a cultic setting. Each took his fire-holder and, placing fire in it, laid incense over it. Leviticus 10:1 notes that they offered before Yahweh "alien fire" *(ʾēš zārâ)*, which they were not ordered to offer. J. Milgrom (596-608, 628-35) lists several explanations for the phrase "alien fire." First, some suggest that in the accounts of Nadab and Abihu and Korah and his band, the phrase "each his fire-holder" (Lev 10:1; Num 16:17-18) refers to private pans. Yet the interpretation that Nadab and Abihu were punished because they used private pans rather than utensils of the sanctuary (Lev 16:12; Num 16:46 [MT 17:11]) should be ruled out since "alien" describes the fire rather than the fire-holder.

Another possibility is to take "fire" as designating coals. Instead of being taken from the outer *altar (Lev 16:12; Num 16:46 [MT 17:11]), the "alien [unauthorized] coals" come from a source that is "profane" (*Targum Onqelos* on Lev 16:1), "outside" (*Targum Yerušalmi I*) or from an oven (*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*). One may also argue that Nadab and Abihu took unfit fire/coals from an idolatrous altar and presented it before Yahweh as an offering. Finally, the attribute "alien" may also refer to the act (offering). That is, God did not ask the two brothers to perform the respective acts of worship. Interpreting the episode to Aaron, Moses cites Yahweh's couplet, found nowhere in the Bible except Leviticus 10:3: "Through those who are near me [i.e., priests] I will show myself holy, and before all the people I will be glorified" (NOAB). Perhaps Nadab and Abihu went beyond the limits of their function by disobeying God and thus ceased to show his glory before the people.

The sin committed by Nadab and Abihu was punished accordingly, with fire coming forth from before Yahweh and consuming both brothers (Lev 10:2). J. Milgrom (599-600) compares Leviticus 10:1 with Numbers 16:18, 35a, suggesting that Nadab and Abihu were struck "at the entry of the tent of meeting" in the *tabernacle court. This view is supported by the following facts: the fire "came forth" from the tent; Moses ordered Mishael and Elzaphan to "come forward," not to "enter" (the tent); and the deaths occurred "before all of the people," that is, in the tabernacle court, the place of the people. This interpretation agrees with the priestly *kābôd* ("glory") theology that the divine fire cloud rests on the ark. On that day the fire came out twice, to consume the *sacrifices and to exterminate Nadab and Abihu.

Regarding the historical circumstances that lie behind this tragic episode, one may mention a few explanations previously proposed. R. Gradwohl sees in this incident a polemic against Jeroboam I, who set up two golden calves at Bethel and Dan (cf. 1 Kings 12:28, 32; 13:1-10). Like Jeroboam's sons Nadab and Abijah, who died prematurely for their father's sin (1 Kings 14:1-17; 15:27-28), Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu were punished for their father's making of the *golden calf at Sinai. J. C. H. Laughlin suggests that the biblical account is a polemic against Zoroastrianism, which mentions the offering of the sacred fire on a censer by two priests in the temple, although this reflects a period much later than that described in the Pentateuch. According to Milgrom (628-33), the background of this incident lies in the religious realm rather than in the political sphere. Thus the Nadab and Abihu narrative is a polemic against the pagan practices of offering incense in private idolatrous settings. Toward the end of the First Temple period, Assyrian astral cults with offerings of incense on the rooftops of private homes found a way into Judah (cf. Jer 19:13; 32:29; 2 Kings 23:5, 12). The biblical evidence is supported by archaeological finds. Small incense altars have been discovered in many Israelite cities (e.g., Gezer, Gerar, Samaria, Lachish), dating from the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. Most of these altars and cultic utensils were found in private homes. Although all biblical passages mentioning this practice refer to idolatry, one may assume that eventually offering incense in private settings infiltrated Yahwistic worship. By telling the story of Aaron's sons, notes Milgrom, the priests meant to say that Nadab and Abihu, even though they offered incense inside the sanctuary, were struck because they offered incense on coals not from the altar but on "unauthorized coals." In the way it is told, this old story invalidates all incense offerings outside the sanctuary, which, based on the archaeological evidence dating from the First and Second Temple periods, were quite prevalent and persistent in the religious life of Israel.

Numbers 3:4 adds three details concerning the tragic fate of Aaron's sons: they were killed "while offering alien fire" (cf. Num 26:61); this mysterious episode occurred in the "wilderness of Sinai"; and since Nadab and Abihu had no sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, their brothers, continued their duty as priests under Aaron's guidance.

See also AARON; ALTARS; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD.

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NAHOR

Nahor is the name of two individuals in the Pentateuch, the father of *Terah (*Abraham's father) and a son of Terah. The name Nahor is also attested in the ancient Near Eastern world, both as a personal name and as the name of a city located near *Haran. Consequently, the OT data about these individuals can be seen to fit well within its ancient Near Eastern context.

1. Nahor, Father of Terah
2. Nahor, Son of Terah

1. Nahor, Father of Terah.

Nahor, descendant of *Seth and *Shem, was born to Serug when Serug was thirty years old. Nahor became the father of Terah when he was twenty-nine. After seventy years, when Nahor was ninety-nine, his son Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran (Gen 11:22-26). All in all, Nahor lived 148 years. The presumed habitation of Nahor at *Ur of the Chaldees, linked with the subsequent migration of his son Terah to Haran, may suggest a religious association with the moon deity Sin (Hess, 996). Both Haran and Ur were centers of moon worship unrivaled by any other Mesopotamian city (Speiser 1964, 81).

The name Nahor is known from the Ur 3 period *(naḥarum)* through to late Assyrian times (Wenham 1987, 252) and may be derived from the root *nḥr*, "to snort, blow out" (Wenham 1987, 252). The origin of Nahor's name may be related to Nahur, located near Haran (Harran in cuneiform texts) on the plain of the Upper Balikh River, a northern tributary of the Euphrates (Boraas, 731). The city of Nahor in Aram-naharaim, to which the servant of Abraham journeyed to find Rebekah as a wife for *Isaac (Gen 24:10), may be the city occupied by Nahor son of Terah rather than a city with the name of Nahor. There is no evidence to suggest that the biblical character Nahor lived in a location other than Ur of Chaldees.

2. Nahor, Son of Terah.

Nahor is the son of Terah and grandson of Nahor son of Serug (an example of the well-attested ancient practice of papponymy, naming a child after his grandfather [Wenham 1987, 253]). Nahor's brothers were Abram and Haran, the father of *Lot. Nahor was apparently born in Ur of the Chaldees sometime after Terah's seventieth year. His wife Milcah, the daughter of his uncle Haran, bore him eight sons, and his concubine Reumah was the mother of four additional sons (Gen 22:20-24). *Source critics attribute the material about Terah and his sons (Gen 11:28-30) to J, and the common critical judgment is that the material is very ancient (Brueggemann, 107), in part because of the seemingly pointless reference to Iscah (Speiser 1964, 78-79).

Nahor's marriage to his niece (Milcah is the daughter of Nahor's deceased brother Haran) has led to speculation that cases of this kind involved adoption followed by marriage. Citing "marriage adoption" contracts from Nuzi involving the legal status of "daughter," "daughter-in-law" and "sister," E. A. Speiser asserts that the pertinent document would be called "document of daughter- and daughter-in-lawship," where the husband became also adoptive father and thereby father-in-law (Speiser 1963, 25). Both Speiser's interpretation of the Nuzi law and the aptness of the parallel have been questioned. Nuzi contracts provided the woman with additional family support (Grosz, 140) rather than providing for marriage between the contracted parties (Greengus, 22). Though some Nuzi adoption contracts discuss the transference of rights in terms of who may arrange a marriage, the biblical narrative provides no evidence that any such transfer was involved in the marriage of Milcah to Nahor (Thompson; Eichler, 48, 59).

Nahor's religion is also an issue of controversial speculation. First, the association of Nahor and his grandfather with Ur and Haran, the cult centers of the lunar deity Sin, has been used as evidence indicating that the worship of the moon god may have been the focus of their religion (Hess, 997). The controversy is directly related to the identity of "the God of Nahor" invoked by Laban in his covenant with Jacob (Gen 31:51-54). On the one hand, Laban may be viewing the God of Nahor as the equivalent of the God of Abraham whom he also invokes in Genesis 31:53 (Boraas, 731). If this is the case, service of the common God is further indication of the close relationship between the tribes of Abraham and the descendants of Nahor. On the other hand, if Laban and Nahor are devotees of the false god of their father Terah (Way, 809; cf. Josh 24:2), then identification of the god of Nahor with the lunar deity Sin is more likely. If that is the case, Laban's oath in the name of the god of Nahor may have involved concern to protect his property (Hess, 997). Since inheritance

clauses refer to the heirs invoking the gods of the fathers (Huehnergard, 429-31), Laban's action seems to be a right and an expectation of heirs. The Jacob and Laban narrative further indicates the distinction in property rights and family responsibilities between Nahor's representative, Laban, in Haran and Abraham's representative, Jacob, in the region to the south (Hess, 997).

Nahor was the father of twelve sons. Abraham received a report (Gen 22:20-24) that his brother Nahor had eight sons by his wife Milcah: Uz the firstborn, Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel the father of Rebekah. According to the same report, Nahor's concubine Reumah bore him four more sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah. The twelve sons have been compared to the twelve sons of *Jacob, *Ishmael (Gen 25:13-16) and *Esau (Gen 36:9-14). The name Milcah means "queen" and has been associated with Malkatu, daughter of the moon god Sin (Wenham 1987, 273). Reumah ("beloved of God"; Coote, 207) is a second-class wife, likely acquired without bride money and having fewer legal rights (Wenham 1994,121).

Additional information about the twelve is limited. Uz is the name of a country in northwest Arabia that was home for Job (though Uz is also the name of a descendant of Aram, according to Gen 10:23 and 1 Chron 1:17). Identifying the region with the first son of Nahor can be no more than speculative. Buz is associated with Dedan and Tema in Jeremiah 25:23, suggesting that it too may be linked to a region in Arabia. Kemuel is the father of Aram. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10:22 lists Aram as the son of Shem in the same generation as Elam and Asshur (eponymous ancestor of the Assyrians), while Genesis 22:20-24 may reflect another person named Aram, though some suggest a different, perhaps earlier, tradition about the ancestry of the Arameans (*BHS* suggests that Aram may have been added later to Gen 22:21). This tradition could mean to identify Kemuel and his brothers as eponymous ancestors of Aramean tribes (Pitard). Aram himself could be the ancestor of the state of Aram-Damascus and in the same generation as Jacob/Israel (Pitard). In any case, there is a close linkage between Israel and the Arameans evident in the whole of Genesis. Bethuel, the father of Rebekah and Laban, plays a secondary role in the engagement of his daughter to Isaac. In his shared speech with Laban (Gen 24:50-51) he attributes the fortune of Abraham's servant to Yahweh. Whether or not this speech indicates devotion toYahweh on the part of Nahor's descendants cannot be determined. Yet it does demonstrate their discovery that God is managing the events of their families' lives (Sternberg, 151-52). Reumah may have been the name of a league or alliance to which her sons belonged. Tebah, Tahash and Maacah were the names of kingdoms or towns in what is now Lebanon or Syria (Wenham 1994, 121).

See also ABRAHAM; HARAN; TERAH.

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NAMES, DIVINE. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

NAMES, PERSONAL. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NAMES, PROPER. *See* LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NAPHTALI

Naphtali was the sixth son born to *Jacob and the ancestor of the Israelite tribe of the same name. He was Jacob's second son by Bilhah, the maid Rachel had given to Jacob as a concubine (Gen 30:1-4, 7-8).

1. Birth and Name
2. Naphtali's Role in the Pentateuch
3. Subsequent History

1. Birth and Name.

The name Naphtali is related to the Niphal of the Hebrew verbal root *ptl,* "to twist or plait," hence "to wrestle," and is derived from a wordplay uttered by Rachel upon Naphtali's birth: "With mighty wrestlings *[naptûlê]* I have wrestled *[niptaltî]* with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed" (Gen 30:8 NASB). This naming speech shows Rachel to have been an aptly suited mate for her husband (cf. Gen 25:22-26; 32:24-32 [MT 32:25-33]). Naphtali's only full brother was *Dan, whose own name means "[God] has judged" (Gen 30:5-6). Thus Rachel's joy in finally bearing two sons—albeit through her maid—was a bit vindictive, though perhaps justifiably so.

Bilhah's two sons were born "on [Rachel's] knees" (Gen 30:3), a phrase signifying Jacob's formal recognition of their sonship through Rachel. Significantly, this phrase does not appear in connection with the birth of Zilpah's sons (Gen 30:9-11).

2. Naphtali's Role in the Pentateuch.

Naphtali plays little more than a background role in the Pentateuch either as a son of Jacob or as a tribe.

2.1. Standard Formulas. Typically Naphtali appears only in standard genealogical or census-related formulas common to each of the sons of Jacob or the tribes (Gen 35:25; 46:24; Ex 1:4; Num 1:15, 42-43; 2:29; 7:78-83; 10:27; 13:14; 26:48-50; 34:28; Deut 27:13). Naphtali appears last, or nearly last, in each of these lists and typically is named in them in connection with Dan, *Asher and *Gad. From a genealogical point of view, this is expected inasmuch as these four tribes were the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Three of these tribes, Naphtali, Asher and Dan, were stationed together on the north side of the camp of meeting at Mount Sinai (Num 2:25-31); eventually all three also settled the northernmost reaches of Galilee. In Moses' two censuses Naphtali was a nondescript sixth and then eighth largest of the Israelite tribes (Num 1:42-43; 26:48-50), dropping slightly in total numbers between the two.

2.2. The Blessings of Jacob and Moses. The blessings that Jacob (Gen 49:21) and *Moses (Deut 33:23) conferred on Naphtali reflect the favored position the tribe would receive once it settled in Canaan. Jacob compared Naphtali to a "doe set free that bears beautiful fawns" (Gen 49:21 NIV, following a majority opinion that emends MT). Moses perceived that that the tribe of Naphtali "is abounding with the favor of the LORD, and is full of his blessing," and further noted that "he will inherit southward to the lake" (Deut 33:23 NIV), that is, the Sea of Galilee. Both of these blessings reflect the wild beauty and goodness of Naphtali's inheritance in Galilee.

Naphtali's tribal allotment lay to the east of Asher, to the north of Zebulun and Issachar, and to the west of the Jordan River (Josh 19:32-39). Naphtali's northern *border was not delineated in the territorial description of Joshua 19 and probably extended as far as Israel was able to settle, perhaps to the Litani River in southern Lebanon. This region includes the high hills of upper Galilee, the broad and lush Huleh Basin and a number of smaller valleys approaching the Sea of Galilee. Naphtali also received abundant water resources (ample rainfall, control of the headwaters of the Jordan River, numerous smaller springs and half the shore of the Sea of Galilee), excellent building materials (basalt, hard limestones and wood) and rich soils. In addition the international highway linking Egypt with Mesopotamia and Europe funneled through the valleys lying along the southern and eastern extremities of Naphtali.

Most of the towns lying within the tribal territory of Naphtali (Josh 19:32-39) are known. Of these, Chinnereth (Khirbet el-ʿOreimeh) on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, Hazor (Tell el-Qedah) on the southwestern end of the Huleh Basin, and Kedesh (Tell Qades) on the heights above the Huleh Basin to the west were strategically significant. All told, Naphtali's natural resources offered a greater promise of abundance and fertility than did those of any other tribe, amply fulfilling the words of Jacob and Moses.

3. Subsequent History.

When one considers the larger scene, however, Naphtali's position astride the northern ap-

proaches of Israel was rather insecure. Isaiah rightly termed the region "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Is 9:1 [MT 8:23]), reflecting the difficulty Israel faced in settling its northern regions in the face of incessant military and cultural pressure by its Gentile neighbors. From the beginning Naphtali was not able to drive out the Canaanites who lived in Beth-anath and Beth-shemesh, cities that guarded the two favored natural routes that penetrated upper Galilee from the coast (Judg 1:33). For the most part Naphtali was able to settle only in the hilly regions of upper Galilee that lay away from strong centers of Canaanite settlement, as is generally supported by archaeological evidence from the thirteenth through eleventh centuries B.C.

Naphtali played a prominent role in the battles of Barak (Judg 4:6, 10; 5:18) and Gideon (Judg 6:35; 7:23), securing its territory for Israelite political expansion under the monarchy (cf. Ps 68:27 [MT 68:28]). Yet Naphtali lay first in the line of Syrian (e.g., 1 Kings 15:20; 2 Chron 16:4) and Assyrian (2 Kings 15:29) advances against Israel. The Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III incorporated Galilee into his empire in 733 B.C., bringing "contempt" upon the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali (Is 9:1 [MT 8:23]). Isaiah used this dark event to speak of "a great light" that one day would shine in Galilee (Is 9:2-7 [MT 9:1-6]). In fulfillment of this prophecy, most of Jesus' public ministry around the Sea of Galilee took place in the old tribal territory of Naphtali (Mt 4:12-17).

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI, LEVITES; REUBEN; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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NARRATIVE CRITICISM. *See* LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM.

NARRATOLOGY. *See* LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NATIONS, TABLE OF

"Table of nations" is the term commonly used to describe the list in Genesis 10:1-32 that details the location of peoples and their relationship to each other. It begins with the expression "These are the *tôlĕdōt* [family history, *genealogy] of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, when children were born to them after the flood." Ten of these *tôlĕdōt* formulae introduce major sections in the book of *Genesis. Until modern times Jews and Christians regarded the table as a comprehensive description of the spread of humans over the whole earth. When, therefore, new peoples were discovered, as, for example, in the Americas, they had somehow to be brought into relation with the groups described in Genesis 10. The *Book of Jubilees* (second century B.C.) attempts to relate the world as it was in its day to Genesis 10 (*see DNTB*, Geographical Perspectives in Late Antiquity). For *Jubilees*, Zion is the center of the world, and the table is used as a basis to prove that the Canaanites rightly belong in Africa and had illegally seized "the land of Lebanon as far as the river of Egypt." Israel's original expulsion of the Canaanites was thereby justified, as was the territorial expansion of the Hasmonaeans (see Alexander, 982). Modern understanding of the world and its peoples compels us to read the table more carefully and to appreciate its context more sensitively.

1. Context
2. Genre
3. Sources
4. Structure
5. Name Categories
6. Lands

1. Context.

1.1. Textual. The table is clearly linked to the preceding story of the history of *Noah's descendants as they emerge from the ark. Beginning with Noah's three sons, *Shem, Ham and

Japheth, human beings will repopulate the earth after their almost total destruction by the *flood. The spread of Noah's family in the post-flood world is anticipated in Genesis 9:19 with the use of the verb *nāpaṣ:* "From them the [population of] the whole earth spread out *[nāpĕṣâ]*." But a related verb, *pûṣ,* appears at the end of the *Babel story in Genesis 11:8: "Yahweh scattered [*yāpeṣ,* Hiph.] them over the surface of the whole earth." These two occurrences of a reference to human beings spreading across the earth form something of an inclusio for the section of Genesis that includes the table of nations in chapter 10 and the Babel account. They also indicate how the spread of humans following the flood must be seen as a result of both divine *blessing and human disobedience that leads to divine judgment. This balance between divine blessing and punishment is ultimately reflected in the next *tôlĕdōt* that begins with Genesis 11:10. Here the account of Shem's descendants is taken up anew, only this time it is traced until it reaches Abram. God's choice of *Abram indicates an important new strategy in his dealing with the human race, and it is developed in the light of God's punishment of humans but also because of his determination ultimately to act in *grace to restore them.

Chronologically the Babel story must precede the table of nations, but the two are arranged as part of a structure intended to highlight an important theological development. The theme of divine grace is explicit in the story of Noah and his family, and the table of nations further develops this theme: God not only preserves the human race but he renews the divine blessing of fruitfulness originally given in Genesis 1. At the same time, however, the content of the table indicates an awareness of the problems that have arisen in Noah's family and the effect of the blessings and curses pronounced on Noah's offspring (Gen 9:18-28). Thus Noah's family not only spreads over the earth but it is now a divided family. The table also anticipates the theme of judgment and its consequences for all human beings that is made explicit in the Babel narrative. The formulae that help to structure the table point to the fact that the one people *(ʿam)* of Genesis 11:6 are actually the nations *(gôyîm)* of the earth (Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32). The one language that the city builders spoke (Gen 11:1) has been replaced by a bewildering variety of languages used by distinct groups located in their own lands and all pursuing their own exclusive interests (Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32).

The human "family" has become the competing nations of the world. In the present context, the main rhetorical function of the table is to demonstrate why, given the dissolution of human unity, God will move to choose a particular individual and his offspring through whom he will restore humans to a new relationship with himself. Abram emerges as that individual. He comes into increasingly sharper focus in the next two *tôlĕdōt* (Gen 11:10-26, 27-31), and finally he receives the divine call and *promises by which he will become a great nation *(gôy)* through whom all the clans of the earth will be blessed (Gen 12:1-3).

1.2. Historical. Most scholarly studies accept that the names and disposition of nations in the table are a reflection of the geography, political associations and ethnic groupings known to the author in his own era. Some suggest that it draws on earlier tradition and so represents ethnological relationships in place much earlier than the time of its final compilation. D. J. Wiseman (265), for example, argues that "the geographical information in Genesis 10 could have been available to the Egyptian court when Moses received his education there in the fifteenth or fourteenth century B.C." If, as this quotation indicates, *Moses is seen as responsible for the material in the table, then his lifetime must represent the latest date for the table. This is commonly taken to be either the fifteenth or thirteenth century B.C. G. J. Wenham (214) thinks that the cosmopolitan tenor of the writing points to an author who is well informed about foreign peoples and probably connected with a royal court. He is prepared to allow for a setting in the fourteenth-century Egyptian court or in the Jerusalem court of either the tenth or seventh century B.C. Those who argue for a date no earlier than the seventh century B.C. generally do so on the assumption that the list is made up of more than one source (cf. Westermann, 503; Alexander, 980). They also point to the presence of some nations in the table that would not, judging by the time of their first appearance in written records, have been known to Israel before the seventh century B.C. T. C. Mitchell (1058) contests this claim: he argues that many of these peoples are likely to have existed as tribes before their appearance in the written records, and knowledge of their existence could have been transmitted through invading groups such as the Kassites. Proposals for dating the ta-

ble in the postexilic period face the problem of the seemingly inexplicable absence of Persia from the table.

2. Genre.

In many ways the table resembles a segmented genealogy (cf. Wilson, *ABD* 2.930-31; Ross 1980, 349-50), but it does not conform totally to this genre (*see* Genealogies). C. Westermann (498) notes that "the traditional form of the genealogy is obviously inadequate. It can present growth and expansion in the family context, but not the division and spread of the nations over the earth as then known. The history of the nations cannot be presented as family history." The table seems, rather, to have used a number of different forms and drawn on a variety of traditions to produce what is widely recognized as a distinct form with a unique contribution to our understanding of the development of human societies.

3. Sources.

Traditional *source criticism identifies Priestly (P) and Yahwistic (J) sources as the major written materials out of which redactors have composed the present table. The P source (Gen 10:1a, 2-7, 20, 22-23, 31-32) is thought to be largely intact and to provide the formal stylized framework of a genealogical pattern. This is intended both to indicate the political realities of the writer's time (probably the sixth or fifth century B.C.) and to trace the peoples of his era to a common family ancestry in Shem, Ham and Japheth. In this way he is also able to locate them within the context of the narrative of sacred history.

The J source (Gen 10:1b, 8-19, 21, 24-30) is said to be present only in a broken form. Westermann thinks that while J is primarily narrative, mostly verbal in its style ("A begot B, sons were born to A"), P displays a formalized and predominantly nominal approach ("sons of").

The confidence that exponents of source criticism have traditionally shown in isolating sources has been increasingly called into question. In the present environment it is easier to point out different styles and emphases within a single pericope than to persuade scholars that these distinctives are a sufficient proof of the presence of the traditional pentateuchal sources J, E, D and P. Thus A. P. Ross (1980, 344-70), for example, recognizes the differences in the verbal "begot" and the nominal "sons of" and offers a reasonable explanation of these without restricting himself to the value-laden descriptors of traditional source criticism. We shall take up the import of the distinction between the "begot" and the "sons of" formulae later.

4. Structure.

Genesis 10:1 is echoed in verse 32, and together they function as an inclusio for the table. These opening and closing verses are very similar in content; both link the story of the spread of humanity with the flood ("after the flood") and with Noah's three sons who have survived it. Yet there is a subtle but significant variation in the terms that are used. Summarizing the new situation, Genesis 10:32 twice mentions the fact that we now have to deal with the emergence of "nations." As we have already indicated, this development is important for appreciating the context and theology of the chapter, for the "family" of humans has developed into the competing nations of the whole earth.

The table's basic three divisions relate to Noah's three sons. In this case, however, the sons appear in reverse order. Japheth and his descendants are mentioned first, then Ham's descendants and finally, in third place, those of Shem. Having Shem and his offspring appear last creates a climax in the table: it intimates that Shem and his descendants will be the central focus of the narrative from this point on. Ham's offspring will have continuous and highly significant contact with the Shemites, hence they are given second place in the list. The sons of Japheth are presented as somewhat remote from the other two, almost on the periphery of the crucial action of the drama, at least for the present. This same pattern of focusing on the elect son by dealing with him last of all is seen elsewhere in Genesis (e.g., Cain, Gen 4; Seth, Gen 5; Esau, Gen 36; Jacob, Gen 37). Also, the number three is an important structural element in the early chapters of Genesis: Cain's genealogy in Genesis 4 ends with Lamech's three sons, and the last person in the continuation of Shem's genealogy in chapter 11, *Terah, has three sons, one of whom is Abram. The table of nations is set out in figure 1.

The whole table has an introductory and concluding formula, but each of the three divisions also has a separate introduction and summary statement (colophon), and each shares formulaic elements with the others. The colophons attached to the lists for Japheth (v. 5), Ham (v. 20) and Shem (v. 31), and the summary

of the whole table (v. 32), are almost identical. They mention that the descendants of (*bĕnê*, "sons of") each of these men are settled as clans in their own land, nations (*gôyîm*) identified by their own language.

The two terms *bĕnê*, "sons of," and *yālad*, "to beget" (and its derivatives), help to structure the table. Japheth's list begins with *bĕnê* and does not use the term *yālad*. Ham's genealogy begins with *bĕnê* but also uses *yālad*, while Shem's list begins with *yālad* and also uses *bĕnê*. Ross (1980, 347) summarizes the way in which the terms are used in the table: "The term *bᵉnēy* points to the ancestor; the term *yālad* (and related forms) points to the descendants. The former emphasizes the beginning; the latter the continuing results. By using these terms correctly the writer, in one table, bridged the past with the present, thus forming a major transition in the book." Source critics have often used these two modes of representing sequences of descendants as one means of distinguishing between P and J source material. The entire table is, of course, described in both its introduction (Gen 10:1) and its concluding colophon (Gen 10:32), as a *tôlĕdōt*, a noun derived from *yālad*.

The table demonstrates a process of selection at work by which only some of the lines of descent of individuals who appear in the list are traced any further. Thus, for example, only two of Japheth's sons have their genealogy extended, and then only to the next generation. Only three of Ham's four sons have their immediate descendants recorded, and only two of these are selected for limited mention of elements of the third generation—most strikingly, the Philistines. Arpachshad and Aram receive extended treatment among the five names in the second generation in the Shem list. Arpachshad's line is traced in the form of a "linear genealogy" for two generations in order to hasten the movement toward Eber and his offspring, Joktan and Peleg. Joktam's offspring receive detailed treatment, but Peleg's line is not developed any further. This seems to indicate that the present form of the table anticipates the even more selective development of Shem's line through Peleg to Terah and then on to Abram in Genesis 11:10-32, and by concentrating here on Joktam it effectively dismisses him from any further role in the developing drama.

Seventy names of the descendants of Noah's three sons appear in the table. Later Jewish tradition links these seventy with Deuteronomy 32:8, where Yahweh allocates land holdings to the nations according to "the number of the children of Israel." The tradition associates the "number" of the Israelites with the seventy who accompanied *Jacob into Egypt and sees this as the basis for God's appointing seventy nations, each in its own land. Israel, however, which is not listed in the table, is said to occupy a special position as Yahweh's chosen portion, and to Israel he allocates its own appointed land (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.*).

5. Name Categories.

Genesis 10 sets out to show how the offspring of Noah's three sons spread and repopulated the earth. But texts within the OT and from the ancient Near East clearly indicate that the names of some of the descendants in the table are those of ethnic groups and geographical locations such as cities and countries.

The names of Noah's sons are intended to represent individuals who survived the flood, and Nimrod is also presented as an individual whose fame is related to a distinctly historical context. Similarly, in Peleg's case a significant historical event is said to have taken place during his lifetime.

Place names like Babel, Accad and Erech occur in a straightforward way in the table to refer to cities in Mesopotamia. However, a quite different category of place names is created when, e.g., Sidon, the name of a major city in Phoenicia, appears as the name of Canaan's firstborn son (Gen 10:15).

The names of people groups appear as the Dodim, Ludim, Caphtorim and so forth, a form occurring in the table most frequently to describe the descendants of Egypt, or as gentilics such as Jebusites, Amorites, Hivites and Hamathites, a form that appears overwhelmingly in connection with the names of Canaan's descendants.

Names of places and people groups may point to individuals who are considered to be the eponymous ancestors of the group or the inhabitants of the location. Ross (1980, 344) points out that the idea of eponyms is used in significantly different ways. For some it means "fabled ancestors to the different nations." Ross thinks that such a definition would rule out the concept here, since the text clearly envisages real individuals as the progenitors of those who spread out to fill the earth after the flood. If, however, "eponymous" may be used to describe a "founder

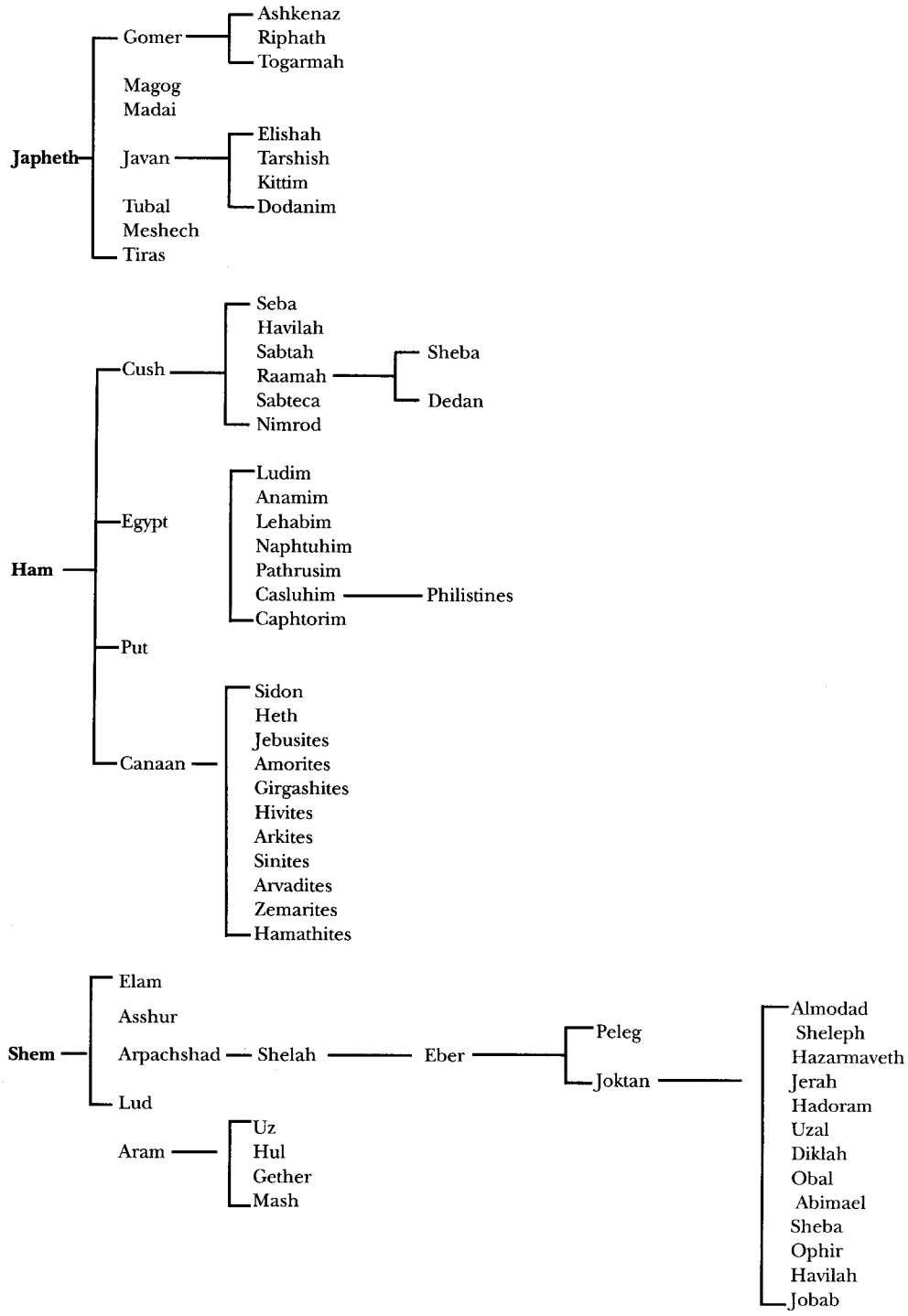

Figure 1: The Table of Nations

or ancestor who gave his name to the people or place," then it is compatible with biblical writer's intent.

The Hebrew terms used to express the relationship between the various elements in the table are the nouns: "son(s)," *ben*, and passive and active forms of the verb *yālad*, "to beget." These terms are used to indicate that all those mentioned here are descended from the "family" that emerged from the ark. Nevertheless, *son* and *beget* are sometimes used in the OT and its world to indicate wider social and political arrangements beyond those of actual family relationships. In the context of covenant making, for example, the junior partner, or vassal, in the arrangement may refer to himself as "son" or be so designated by the senior partner, or suzerain (cf. 1 Sam 7:14; 2 Kings 16:7). The "sons of the prophets" are groups of disciples who gather around major prophetic figures (cf. 2 Kings 2:3). The phrase "sons of Belial" indicates the moral or ethical character of the referents. In general, this wider range of meaning for *son* allows for political or even geographic associations that relate to some sort of links with a putative individual. Similarly, the verb *beget* may be used in a figurative sense. It would be difficult for readers of the table not to recognize the Sidon that Canaan begets as the famous city in Phoenicia.

The image of a father-son relationship between Canaan, the land and a city (and the people groups) within it may be a way of expressing political, social and geographic realities in the author's day. This does not, of course, rule out the fact that the author is claiming to be able to trace a blood lineage back to a much earlier, eponymous but historical individual. Given the passage of time and complex nature of developments in the area, the reality of relations between the various elements in the author's own day may be much more involved than a simple genealogy can fully explain. Wilson (*ABD* 2.931) comments that "in a given society, segmented genealogies being used for differing purposes may exhibit a great deal of variation, for the society's political, economic and religious configurations may be quite different. In such cases the apparently conflicting genealogies are in fact accurately reflecting the way in which the society sees itself in a particular social sphere."

5.1. A Variety of Principles. It seems, therefore, that a number of different principles are used in describing the spread of humanity and the development of nations and their subgroups. The colophons indicate some of these principles when they speak of the earth being replenished with people segregated into clans, languages, lands and nations. This is an indication of family relations, language groupings, geography, political relationships and ethnicity. The reference to language grouping is a clear echo of the Babel story, but otherwise this principle plays no obvious part in grouping names within the table. Principles of geographical, political, family and ethnic relationships do, however, seem to operate in important ways in expounding the interconnections that make up the table's lists.

In a few cases the same names appear in the lists of both Shem and Ham's descendants. This applies to the Lydians (Ludim, Gen 10:13; Lud, Gen 10:22) and Havilah (Gen 10:7, 29). Source critics see this feature as an example of the combination of J and P sources, each of which represents a different tradition about the connections between these people and the redactor's failure to appreciate the contradiction. The final form of the table, whatever the sources that lie behind it, is a remarkable, carefully constructed piece of tabulation with a deliberate theological point to make. It is therefore more than a little strange that a redactor with such obvious skill should twice fail in a simple exercise in tabulation. A more likely explanation may be found in recognizing the way the table uses the range of different principles we have already mentioned. This would allow for the possibility of duplicate, or even multiple, relationships between the various groups.

5.2. Explanatory Notes. A number of names have explanatory notes attached to them. The note attached to the Hamitic Casluhites explains that the Philistines came from there (Gen 10:14). The verb *yāṣā'*, "go out," is used in the table only here and in the note relating to Nimrod to explain the derivation of any person or group.

Nimrod is another Hamite who is descended from Cush. The table provides him with the most extensive and intriguing historical background in a style quite different from the normal tabular form (Gen 10:8-12). Source critics argue that this insert belongs to J, but the original source of the material and history of its transmission cannot really be determined.

Nimrod "began to be a mighty man *[gibbōr]* in the earth [or land]" (Gen 10:8). Here the term *gibbōr* "expresses the idea of violent, tyrannical

power" (Westermann, 516). Westermann also believes that the Hebrew of 10:8 means that Nimrod is the first man of might on earth: "Nimrod's dominion is seen as something new, as an epoch making beginning" (Westermann, 516). However, Gen 6:1-4 also opens with the same Hebrew verbal construction translated in 10:8 as "began to be", and in the chapter six passage *gibbor* (pl.) appears as a descriptor for the descendants of the "sons of God" (6:1). The new beginning of despotic power in the earth may, in fact, simply be a reversion to some older practices of the pre-flood generation.

The most appealing explanation of the expression "a mighty hunter" *(gibbôr ṣayid)* in Genesis 10:8 relates to the fact that Nimrod established a kingdom (Gen 10:10). Scholars point to frequent representations of ancient Near Eastern kings as hunters. But Westermann points out that the later images of kings in scenes depicting the hunt as sport actually mask the original importance of the king's role in providing security for his people from predatory animals. Perhaps it is this royal role that lies behind the phrase applied to Nimrod. He fits the paradigm of a powerful king able to provide for his subjects, but his rule may involve a climate of despotism.

Mesopotamia is certainly the location for Nimrod's kingdom. The kingdom begins with his control of major cities in the land of Shinar (southern Mesopotamia; the prominence given to Babylon is a foreshadowing of the Babel incident in chapter 11) and expands with the establishment of important cities in Assyria. Nimrod's identity is much less clear. Two basic questions arise in any attempt to identify the Nimrod of the table with any known figure in Mesopotamian history. First, he is described as a descendant of Cush, who rules in a geographical region that the table itself recognizes as essentially Shemitic. Second, there is no unequivocal reference to the name Nimrod as a ruler of Sumer and Assyria. Source-critical approaches to these problems simply propose that the Nimrod material is from J. But this does not help us, for it does not explain where and how the tradition linking Nimrod and Cush emerged.

Various suggestions have been made in addressing these problems, and Y. Levin mentions the most important of these. Some of the figures from the ancient Near East who are proposed by various authors as a possible prototype for Nimrod are human rulers: Sargon of Akkad, Tukulti-Ninurta of Assyria and the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III; gods: Nergal, Marduk and Ninurta; or demigods: Gilgamesh. Levin (357) agrees with E. A. Speiser (1994, 272) that there is no textual evidence to support the idea that Nimrod is anything other than a human. Wiseman (1994, 260-61) argues on the basis of archaeological evidence from the sites of the cities mentioned in the verses concerned (Babylon, Uruk, Ashur, Calah and Nineveh) and from literary evidence relating to Akkad that the Nimrod tradition goes back at least to the twenty-third century

Levin agrees with this and makes a strong case for connecting the earliest tradition with Sargon of Akkad, his son Naram-Sin and also with the Sumerian city of Kish. This city established a primacy among the rival Sumerian city-states of the third millennium, and its rulers came to epitomize the very essence of kingship. He sees the tradition developing over a considerable period of time, during which time it became known and modified in Western tradition in the region. The biblical Nimrod is thus a "composite Hebrew equivalent of the Sargon dynasty"(Levin, 366). Unfortunately, Levin has no better proposal for explaining the biblical connection of Nimrod with Cush than to suggest that it is a mistaken identification of the Mesopotamian Kish with the Hamitic Cush. It is highly unlikely that Kish was a sufficiently prominent element in the titulary of Mesopotamian rulers as known in the West for biblical tradition to use that as the basis for assigning a Cushite origin to a prominent Mesopotamian king. Wiseman's proposal that Nimrod's Hamitic links may reflect the non-Semitic origins of the earliest city builders in Mesopotamia, such as the Sumerians and others, seems to have rather more to commend it.

Canaan's list of offspring has an appended note (Gen 10:19) that describes the extent of Canaanite territory. This rounds out the explanations attached to the Philistines, Mesopotamians and Canaanites, people who were to play a vital role in Israel's history.

6. Lands.

While not all the names of descendants of any one of Noah's three sons can be identified with certainty, a general picture emerges of the geographical areas most closely associated with each of the three blocks of people. There are surprises, but these may be best explained by the application of the various principles indicated above.

6.1. Japheth. The inhabitants of the region represented here extends from the Mediterranean islands through modern Turkey and into Iran. The various elements in the Japheth list are normally identified as follows: Gomer = Cimerrians; Magog (cf. Ezek 38:2; 39:6) = Lydia, but this is far from certain; Madai = Media or the Medes; Javan = Greece; Tubal and Meshech (cf. Ezek 27:13) = groups in central and eastern Anatolia. Tiras is not positively identified, but possibly = one of the groups of "sea people."

Gomer's descendants are: Ashkenaz, (cf. Jer 51:7) = the Scythian Ashkuz of Assyrian texts; Riphath is not certain; Togarmah probably = Tegarama, north of the road from Haran to Carchemesh.

Javan's descendants are: Elisha = S. E. Cyprus; Tarshish is westward across the Mediterranean, but its location is not certain; Kittim = Cyprus; Dodanim (1 Chron 1:7 reads Rodanim) probably = Rhodes.

The impression given by this list is of widely dispersed people groups that are geographically somewhat on the margins of the author's focus of interest.

6.2. Ham. The main geographical area represented here is from Egypt and Libya (Put) southward to Nubia/Ethiopia (Cush), touching areas on both sides of the Red Sea, and northward to Phoenicia-Palestine (Canaan).

The descendants of Cush are represented in Upper Egypt and the lower part of the Arabian Peninsula. Some scholars explain the appearance of Havila in both Ham and Shem's lists as an indication of the mixing of Shemites and Hamites in this region. Cush's offspring Raamah produces two well-known tribal groups of Arabia, Sheba and Dedan. This Hamite-Shemite fusion may explain why the note on Nimrod is included at this point in the table.

From *Egypt emerges a series of groups who inhabit regions west and east of the Delta and in Libya and the Caphtorim (Cretans). Crete comes under the political-economic sway of Egypt. The Philistines are here linked to the Casluhim, whereas elsewhere in the OT they are linked to the Caphtorim (Amos 9:7: Deut 2:23; Jer 47:4). Ross (1981, 27) explains the references in all these cases as indicating migration and not origination. They migrate via Crete to Egypt and then later to Palestine.

The list of Canaan's descendants is rather similar to the stylized lists of the inhabitants of the "Promised Land" that are repeated elsewhere in the OT (cf. Deut 7:1; *see* Nations of Canaan). It does, however, also contain reference to Sidon, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites and the Zemarites, cities and groups in Phoenicia, as well as Hamathites, inhabitants of Hamath on the Orontes.

6.3. Shem. It is strange to find a list of Shemites beginning with Elam. Elamite is not a Semitic language, but Semites lived in Elam from the end of the third millennium

Elam was at times subject to Semitic Mesopotamian rule and there was also powerful Semitic cultural influence on it, reason enough to list Elam here. Arpachshad's name is not readily recognized as Semitic, and his location is not known. Lud is probably Ludbu of the Assyrians rather than Lydia in Asia Minor. Aram's descendants are not recognized as corresponding to known groups, but they appear to be located north of Mesopotamia, near Armenia. The thirteen descendants of Joktan are all to be located in the Arabian Peninsula.

B. Oded has argued that the table goes back to very old traditions that were concerned to divide humans into three groups: nomads (Shem), city dwellers (Ham) and seafarers (Japheth). E. Van Wolde develops this understanding of the table. She argues that the Shemites, as the people of God, are essentially a nomadic people, distinct from the settled population, and theirs is a God who travels with them. The table then portrays Yahweh as the god of the outsiders, "not so much the God of a people as the God of a particular social class: the have-nots" (Van Wolde, 162).

This reading of the table seems to impose on it ideas which, at best, may be purely subsidiary to its main thrust. The important thing for the final editor of the text is not that the Semites are not urban sophisticates and must never become such. The emphasis is rather on the God who, though his punishment of the race is real enough and leads to the loss of human "family" unity and the development of self-seeking "nations," will nevertheless pursue in grace his determination to bless humanity—as it was in the beginning.

See also FLOOD; GENEALOGIES; GENESIS, BOOK OF; NATIONS OF CANAAN; NOAH; SHEM.

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W. Osborne

NATIONS OF CANAAN

Deuteronomy 7:1, addressed to the *Israelites as they are about to enter Canaan, the *land promised them by God, lists seven separate peoples who inhabit the land, whom the Israelites are to destroy and whose land they are to occupy: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. This article surveys what is known about these seven peoples from the Bible and elsewhere.

1. Definitions
2. Canaan: Historical Overview
3. Biblical Material Relating to the Seven Peoples
4. Synthesis

1. Definitions.

These seven peoples are said to have occupied a territory described in several biblical texts (e.g., Gen 15:18; Num 34:1-12; Josh 1:4; 11:3; 12:7-8; 13:5): a territory bounded on the west by the Mediterranean and on the east by the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, the southern border running from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and the northern border running from Sidon to Mount Hermon (cf. Josh 11:1-8). Some of these biblical texts seem to include within the territory that God permits the Israelites to occupy additional land lying toward the north and the northeast (Gen 15:18; Num 34:7-11), but none of the seven peoples is said to have occupied any of this land, nor, indeed, did Israel ever take possession of it. Transjordan, similarly, is always treated as a separate territory in the biblical texts.

Biblical texts (e.g., Num 33:51; 34:2) refer to the territory occupied by the seven peoples as "Canaan." This usage is also found in some extrabiblical texts. For the Canaanites, Amorites and Hittites, considerable extrabiblical evidence goes back many centuries before Israel's occupation of Canaan. For the Girgashites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, however, the Bible is the only source.

Scholars also use the term *Canaanite* in a more extended sense to denote a larger territory linked by cultural similarities reflected, for example, in city design, building styles, styles of pottery and other artifacts. "Canaanite" territory in this sense includes Palestine but extends north to take in much of Lebanon and the Syrian coastal territories as far north as Ugarit. But this larger territory was never seen as a single political entity in antiquity. For much of the second millennium the land of Canaan had substantial economic ties with *Egypt, and it was under Egyptian control for much of the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.). The "Canaanite" territories north of Canaan, by contrast, tended to fall under the influence of powers yet further to the north, such as the Hittites and the kingdom of Mitanni. This use of *Canaanite* to denote cultural similarities should be distinguished, again, from "the Canaanites" as used in biblical texts (and by modern scholars following the biblical usage) in reference to the nations of Canaan. According to this slightly confusing usage, for example, Phoenicia was culturally Canaanite but was never part of Canaan and was never identified by the biblical writers as belonging to "the Canaanites."

In addition to these geographical/cultural uses of the term *Canaanite*, it is also used linguistically to indicate the Northwest Semitic languages,

which, in addition to Ugaritic and Amorite, are divided into two main groups, Canaanite and Aramaic (Moscati et al., 7-13). The former includes Hebrew, Phoenician and Punic, Ammonite, Edomite, and Moabite. The latter includes Old Aramaic (including the Imperial Aramaic of the seventh to fourth centuries B.C.), Biblical Aramaic of the period of the Persian Empire, and Middle Aramaic of the third century B.C. through the second century A.D. and the much later West and East Aramaic. There is thus some correspondence with the wider geographical and cultural use of the term and the linguistic use.

2. Canaan: Historical Overview.

In the period known as Early Bronze III (2700-2300 B.C.) Canaan had boasted a flourishing city-state culture, with a number of significant fortified *cities. Around 2300 B.C., for reasons that are not clear, this culture collapsed: the cities were abandoned, many of them destroyed. For the next three hundred years (Early Bronze IV) few sites in Canaan show any signs of permanent occupation. This collapse was part of a wider phenomenon: during these centuries Egypt entered into a time of weakness and confusion known as the First Intermediate Period (2160–2010 B.C.), and in Mesopotamia the empire of Akkad came to an end in 2193 B.C., followed by nearly a century during which no large power emerged.

The beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 B.C.) saw a general revival of the former urban culture in Canaan: old city sites were reoccupied and new sites founded, many of them fortified. This revival may be connected with the rise of the Twelfth Dynasty in Egypt (early twentieth century), which brought a recovery of political and economic unity lost during the First Intermediate Period (*see* Egypt, Egyptians). One of the results was increased trade with Canaan, attested in finds at various sites in Palestine. The reestablished cities of Canaan seem to have formed the basis of a number of small city-states, many of whose rulers are named in the Egyptian Execration texts. These give some idea of the political state of Canaan. The Execration texts were bowls or figurines inscribed with the names of actual or potential enemies of Egypt, which are then shattered by a priest in order to cause the same fate to befall those named on them (*ANET,* 328-29; *COS* 1.32:50-52). They include the names of the rulers of many Canaanite city-states.

Influences between Canaan and Egypt were by no means in one direction. From the nineteenth century on, Canaanites appear to have been settling in the Nile Delta, as evidenced by various newly founded cities similar to those of Canaan: Avaris (Tell ed-Dabʿa) was one such. By the seventeenth century these immigrants controlled much of the Nile Delta, with Avaris as their center of power, and during the next one hundred years they extended their control down the Nile to take in much of Middle and Lower Egypt. This was the period of Hyksos rule in Egypt ("Hyksos" derives from the Egyptian for "foreign rulers"). This period came to an end when rule by native Egyptians was reestablished in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.), whose beginning coincided with the expulsion of the Hyksos rulers from Egypt, saw a great expansion of Egyptian power. Experience of Hyksos rule appears to have fostered a much more aggressive foreign policy. The pharaohs Thutmose I (c. 1504-1492 B.C.), Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 B.C.) and Amenhotep II (c. 1427-1400 B.C.) led a series of expeditions into Canaan and Syria that brought all of Canaan and also much of Syria under Egyptian control. For much of the Late Bronze Age, Egypt would dispute possession of the territories north of Damascus with the Hittites (based in Anatolia) and the kingdom of Mitanni (based in northern Syria). Relations between these powers and Egypt took the form of a series of wars and temporary truces, only brought to an end when Pharaoh Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.) concluded a peace treaty with the Hittite king Hattusilis III in 1258 B.C. (the Hittites having destroyed Mitanni in the previous century). Canaan, however, remained under Egyptian control until the end of the thirteenth century. The Amarna letters, dating mostly from the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten; c. 1352-1336 B.C.), give insight into the state of Canaan in this period. It was a period of some chaos in the area, with rulers of the various city-states accusing each other of disloyalty to their Egyptian overlords (Halpern 1983, 67-79).

The end of the thirteenth century saw the end of Late Bronze civilization throughout the ancient Near East. For reasons as yet unclear, the Nineteenth Egyptian Dynasty ended in confusion at the turn of the twelfth century. The Hit-

tite Empire in Anatolia fell extremely quickly to people from the Aegean, including the Sea Peoples, who were moving into their territory. Assyria, which had gained strength under Tukultininurta I (c. 1234-1197), was weakened after his assassination. The destruction of Ugarit also occurred during this period, either due to the incursion of the Sea Peoples or, more likely, due to earthquake activity (Drower, 147). The Sea Peoples, among whom were the Philistines, were also very active during this period (Howard).

Egyptian power outside its borders dwindled, and after the mid-twelfth century Egypt had little direct influence in Canaan. Israel was by now in the land, as implied both by the accounts in Joshua and by the reference to them in the Merneptah Stela (*COS* 2.6:40-41).

This is the historical context against which we must read biblical and extrabiblical references to the seven peoples of Canaan.

3. Biblical Material Relating to the Seven Peoples.

Many of the biblical texts relating to the seven peoples take the form of simple lists of names (discussed in detail by Hostetter; Ishida; and O'Connell). These lists fall into three categories: (1) lists from Genesis—Kings that relate to Israel's entry into Canaan and that form the bulk of the biblical lists; (2) Genesis 10:15-19, reproduced in large part in 1 Chronicles 1:13-16, the list of Canaan's sons, a category by itself; (3) later lists, along with which it is convenient to include two drawn from intertestamental texts. Since the third category is beyond the purview of this dictionary, these lists will not be discussed here. It is, of course, necessary to take into account the context in which these lists occur. There are also other biblical texts relating to the seven peoples; for example, boundary descriptions of the Promised Land.

3.1. Lists from Genesis—Kings. There are eighteen relevant lists of names in Genesis—Kings from contexts speaking of Israel's occupation of Canaan. They are presented in table 1, "Lists of Peoples" (adapted from Ishida, 461-62). The second column gives the number of peoples in the list; the third column gives the peoples in the order in which they are listed. The table is based on the Masoretic (Hebrew) Text of these passages. There are variants in the Qumran texts and also in Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX (Hostetter, 7-50; O'Connell).

Text	Number of Peoples	Order Listed
Genesis 15:19-21	10	Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, H, P, Rephaites, A, C, G, J
Exodus 3:8	6	C, H, A, P, V, J
Exodus 3:17	6	C, H, A, P, V, J
Exodus 13:5	5	C, H, A, V, J
Exodus 23:23	6	A, H, P, C, V, J
Exodus 23:28	3	V, C, H
Exodus 33:2	6	C, A, H, P, V, J
Exodus 34:11	6	A, C, H, P, V, J
Numbers 13:29	5	Amalekites, H, J, A, C
Deuteronomy 7:1	7	H, G, A, C, P, V, J
Deuteronomy 20:17	6	H, A, C, P, V, J
Joshua 3:10	7	C, H, V, P, G, A, J
Joshua 9:1	6	H, A, C, P, V, J
Joshua 11:3	6	C, A, H, P, J, V
Joshua 12:8	6	H, A, C, P, V, J
Joshua 24:11	7	A, P, C, H, G, V, J
Judges 3:5	6	C, H, A, P, V, J
1 Kings 9:20	5	A, H, P, V, J

Table 1: Lists of Peoples (Genesis—Kings)

(Abbreviations for the seven peoples are Hittites (H), Girgashites (G), Amorites (A), Canaanites (C), Perizzites (P), Hivites (V), Jebusites (J). Other names are given in full.)

As is clear from table 1, the lists vary considerably among themselves. Apart from Deuteronomy 7:1, only two other passages list seven peoples (Josh 3:10; 24:11). Ten of the passages list six out of the seven peoples (the Girgashites being consistently omitted), and other passages list three, five, or even ten peoples. Furthermore, the order in which the peoples are listed varies.

Nevertheless, some patterns are discernible. For example, nine of the lists begin with Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, in varying orders, and continue with Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, also in varying orders. E. C. Hostetter (125-26) explains the first halves of these lists as follows: the Canaanites and the Amorites were two of the larger population groups among the inhabitants of Canaan, as reflected in the fact that "Canaanites" and "Amorites" were sometimes used by the biblical writers as shorthand for all the peoples of the land (see 3.3 below); hence, there would be a natural tendency to place them at the beginning. As for the Hittites, while they do not seem to have been a large group, they were known to be linked to the Neo-Hittites,

themselves the remnants of a once-large empire in Anatolia (see 4.3 below), and might on this account also have tended to gravitate toward the beginning of the biblical lists. This general suggestion may well be correct. But attempts to account in more detail for the varying forms of the lists run into difficulties.

T. Ishida, for example, has proposed a three-stage development in the lists with five, six and seven items, based on the changing positions of the Canaanites and the Hittites in the list. He suggests that the different forms of the lists reflect different underlying historical circumstances (Ishida, 470-73). Thus the earliest form of the list was the six-name list in the order Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites (Ex 33:2); the form beginning Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites (e.g., Ex. 3:8) reflects contact with Neo-Hittite kingdoms in the period of David and Solomon; the form beginning Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites (e.g., Deut 20:17) reflects the usage of Assyrian inscriptions from the seventh century, according to which "Hatti-land" ("Land of the Hittites") referred to the whole of Syria and Palestine (hence it begins this form of the list because it is now used as a comprehensive term that includes the territories of the other peoples in the list). This is highly speculative, however, and the theory of Assyrian influence on some forms of the biblical lists is also questionable. Why should the biblical writers have followed Assyrian usage?

The same objection may be raised against Van Seters's view that some biblical texts use *Amorite* as a general term for the inhabitants of Palestine in imitation of a different Neo-Assyrian usage—attested, for example, in the Sennacherib Inscription (*ANET,* 287; *COS* 2.119B:303; c. 700 B.C.)—according to which the term *Amurru* denoted Palestine and Syria. This view is subject to the further objection that Sennacherib included Edom and Moab in Amurru, but these are never described as Amorite in the OT, in spite of the fact that both Moab and Edom were occupied by Israel at different times (see, e.g., Judg 3:28-30; 1 Sam 14:47; 2 Sam 8:12; 2 Chron 20; the Moabite Stone [*COS* 2.23:137]).

It seems safer to eschew such attempts at dating different forms of the lists and conclude more loosely that the biblical writers were somewhat flexible in the way they listed the inhabitants of Canaan. The very fact that the lists are given in varying forms, but with considerable underlying similarities (only seven peoples are mentioned with any regularity and there are some patterns in their order), "reassures us that we have some reliable data" (Hostetter, 127). We also ought to bear in mind the textual uncertainty noted above that makes any compelling theory difficult.

3.2. Genesis 10:15-19. Genesis 10:15-19 lists the descendants of Canaan, Noah's grandson. These include the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites and Hivites, already familiar to us. The remaining descendants are Sidon and a group of peoples who can be identified from Egyptian, Ugaritic and Assyrian texts as lying along the coast north of Sidon: the Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites. The exception to this is Hamath, which lies inland and which is somewhat surprisingly described as belonging to Canaan (Millard, 29-30). Is this meant as a description of the bounds of Canaan at some early period? If so, it seems to extend the northern border somewhat further north than even texts such as Numbers 34. The territory included goes beyond that ever held by Israel or any other people in the vicinity, so it is unclear what political realities it describes.

3.3. Other Biblical Texts. Other biblical texts refer to one or more of the seven, mainly in geographic lists giving the bounds of land of Canaan (Aharoni, 67-77; *see* Borders). Most of these will be referred to in what follows.

In some other biblical texts *Amorites* and *Canaanites* are used as shorthand for all or most of the seven peoples. At Joshua 7:7 "Amorites" seems to refer to all the inhabitants of Cisjordan (compare 2 Sam 21:2, where the Gibeonites, elsewhere identified as Hivites [Josh 9:7] are described as "survivors of the Amorites"). As noted above, this usage is distinct from the Neo-Assyria use of *Amurru* as a general term for Syria, Palestine, Edom and Moab; the inclusive use of *Amorite* in the biblical texts only has Cisjordan in view. The inclusive use of *Amorites* also occurs in some passages referring to the wickedness and idolatry of the inhabitants of Canaan (Gen 15:16; Josh 24:15; Judg 6:10; 1 Kings 21:26; 2 Kings 21:11). For the inclusive use of *Canaanite,* note the reference to "the land of the Canaanites" at Exodus 13:11 and Joshua 13:4, and the frequent use of *Canaanites* in Judges 1 to denote the original inhabitants of the territories of most of the Israelite tribes (cf. Num 35:10).

3.4. Summary of the Biblical Picture. A consis-

tent picture of these peoples is difficult to determine. Certainly they are more than a list of names (e.g., approximate geographical areas are given for some of the peoples). It is equally clear, however, that we have a very selective and polemical presentation of them. The exact geographical location of the nations is also less than clear (though see tentatively Hostetter, 151). What can be stated with certainty is that the seven peoples of Canaan are regarded in a uniformly negative light by the biblical texts.

It is interesting to briefly compare the way in which the seven peoples are treated with the biblical treatment of three other groups: (1) Amalekites; (2) Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites; and (3) Rephaites and associated groups. These are all groups also said to have been dispossessed of lands, though under different circumstances and at different times. Some of them are mentioned in two lists in which some or all of the seven peoples are also mentioned (Gen 15:19-21; Num 13:29), while others are mentioned in Deuteronomy 2 (Hostetter, 85-113, discusses the biblical data in detail).

(1) Amalekites were descended from Esau (Gen 36:12, 16). They were earlier mentioned in the period of Abraham (Gen 14:17) as being in the area of the Negev (cf. Num 13:29), between Judah and Egypt (Aharoni et al., 45). This reference has been seen as indicating a late date for the composition of the chapter or as indicating two groups called Amalekites, since it is anachronistic if taken in light of the Esau passages. It could rather be a later editorial update. Amalekites are also mentioned during the *wilderness wandering (Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20; Deut 25:17-8), where their opposition to Israel led to their permanent ban (Deut 25:19; 1 Sam 15:2-3), though this was not carried out, since they still existed in later periods (e.g., Judg 2:15; 3:13; 6:3-5, 33; 1 Sam 30; see Mattingly, 1.169-71).

(2) Three groups are at times included with the seven Canaanite nations among whom Yahweh promised land to his own people (Gen 15:19). In later texts some of them had positive links with Israel. The *Kenites* are known mainly in later, Iron Age texts (e.g., Judg 4:11, 17; 5:24-27; 1 Sam 15:6). It is suggested that they descended from Cain and that they were smiths or metal craftsmen, suggestions that are not mutually exclusive (Gen 4:17-22; see Halpern, 4.17-22). The *Kenizzites* are linked to Edom through descent from Esau (Gen 36:11) and also associated with Caleb's family (Josh 15:17; 1 Chron 4:15). The Kenizzites later became associated with Judah (Kuntz). The *Kadmonites* are obscure, linked with the former two in the one passage referring to them (Gen 15:19). Apparently the name is related to the adjective meaning "easterner" (Ezek 47:18), and other texts refer to a group called *bĕnê qedem*, "people of the east" (e.g., Gen 29:1; Judg 6:3, 33; Is 11:14). Association with Moab and Edom could indicate a Transjordanian link for these people (see Reed, 4.4).

(3) *Rephaites* are only in one list of peoples to be dispossessed (Gen 15:19-20; cf. 14:5). It appears to be a general term of uncertain meaning that could be used to include the Emim (former occupants of Moab; Deut 2:10), Anakites (Deut 2:11) and Zamzummites (associated with Ammon; Deut 2:20). All these, with the exception of the Anakites, were regarded as more or less having passed from the scene by the time Israelites arrived in Canaan. The Anakites, known for their great height (Deut 2:10, 21; 9:2), were associated with Hebron (Josh 21:11; possibly at an earlier stage than Gen 23, where Hebron is linked to Hittites), and still around when Israelites arrived (Num 13:22; Josh 11:21-22). They are possibly mentioned in the Egyptian Execration texts (*COS* 1.32:51; Mattingly, 1.222).

4. Synthesis.

4.1. Canaanites. The Canaanites are most frequently the first among the listed foreign nations whose land will be annexed by Israel. They are said to hold territory "near the [Mediterranean] sea and along the Jordan" (Num 13:29). This is apparently the stretch of the Jordan River between the Sea of Galilee and at least halfway down to the Dead Sea, since according to Deuteronomy 11:30 the Canaanites lived in the Arabah (Jordan River valley) near Gilgal, some five miles north of the Dead Sea. There could have been two enclaves of Canaanites, since Joshua 11:3 has Canaanites in the east (the Arabah) and west (the sea; cf. Josh 5:1). They are also said to reside in the Jezreel Valley, especially Beth-shean (the area of Manasseh; Josh 17:11-16; Judg 1:27-28), other tribal holdings in the north (Judg 1:30-33), as well as the vicinity of Gezer (in Ephraimite territory; Josh 16:10; Judg 1:29; 1 Kings 9:16). The picture thus presented is more likely somewhat like a crescent, with territory on the west, north and east of

Israel being Canaanite territory (cf. Hostetter, 151).

Egyptian control of lowlands, valleys and thus the major trade routes, which the Canaanites were said to occupy (cf. Num 14:25), could be reflected in Canaan's incorporation into Ham's family (Gen 10:6; 1 Chron 1:8). In this capacity, the term *Canaan* had much wider use, incorporating all of what would become Israel and even beyond. This is reflected in the Pentateuch by references to the Canaanites much further in the south (e.g., Num 13; 21:1; 33:40; 34; Josh 13:1-4). One of the reasons for the broader use must have been the fact that the entire land was designated Canaan in various texts: the Bible (Gen 10:19; Num 34:29; Ezek 16:3), cuneiform sources at least as early as the fifteenth century (Millard, 32) and hieroglyphs from the thirteenth century (*ANET,* 246). Extrabiblical texts also use *Canaan* as an inclusive term.

The Phoenicians preserved Canaanite culture after the Israelites were established in Cisjordan. They therefore were sometimes later referred to as *Canaan* (Is 23:11; possibly Obad 20).

The etymology of the name "Canaan/Canaanite" is debated. A derivation from *knʿ* ("bow down"; hence "land where the sun bows down; western land"; cf. Amurru below) has been in vogue for some time (Astour), though a derivation from a term for purple dye, a product of the coastal area of Canaan, has also been suggested (Speiser). No suggestion has been found compelling (Millard, 34).

As regards the Canaanites' language, the evidence is rather patchy. The earliest clear evidence consists of the Canaanite glosses on the fourteenth-century Amarna letters, which are themselves written in Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the period. Canaanite has a number of similarities to Ugaritic, from the Syrian coastal area north of Israel, but there are also significant differences. The two languages should not simply be equated (Millard, 34).

Evidence for Canaanite religion comes in various forms, archaeological as well as written. Since Canaanite religion had more direct relevance to Israel after it settled in the Promised Land, when it became important for the *religion and theology of Israel, it will not be discussed here.

4.2. Amorites. The term *Amorite* is imprecise, used to signify different things at different times. It apparently derives from the Akkadian *amurru,* meaning "west," and Sumerian *mar-tu,* used ethnically of foreign cultures to the west of Mesopotamia (Liverani, 102-3). First mentioned during the time of the kings of Akkad (2334-2154 B.C.), the term was used frequently during the time of the Ur III dynasty (2111-2003 B.C.), where it sometimes referred to part of Mesopotamian society and sometimes to hostile forces on northwestern borders. The Amorites seem to have been partly responsible for the collapse of the Sumerian Empire (Mendenhall, 199-201).

An earlier romantic view saw the Amorites as nomads from the Syro-Arabian steppe who invaded the Fertile Crescent in successive waves. More likely, the Amorites had a sedentary existence in northeast Syria from before recorded history, and many of the states that emerged from collapse in the early second millennium were of Amorite descent: Isin, Larsa, Uruk, Babylon. In Syria most of the small city-states were controlled by Amorite dynasties from the eighteenth century on (Mendenhall, 200). The Amorite language was never written down (Amorites wrote in Akkadian), so it is known only from personal names and loanwords in Akkadian. Their history is hard to trace after the sixteenth century, since, although the terms *martu* and *amurru* continue to be used and there was a kingdom of Amurru in western Syria, connections with the Amorites of previous centuries is uncertain. A kingdom of Amurru in the upper Orontes Valley (Syria) in the Late Bronze Age is referred to in fifteenth-century texts from Alalakh, and there are also references in Hittite and El Amarna texts. This kingdom was destroyed at the beginning of the Iron Age (Liverani, 119; Mendenhall, 201).

According to the biblical accounts, Amorites were found in the Transjordan (cf. Deut 1:44). The Amorite states of Og and Sihon opposed Israel in their move from Egypt toward the Promised Land (Josh 12:1-6; Judg 1:36). These states apparently arose after the collapse of the kingdom of Amurru. The boundaries of this kingdom had varied from time to time but generally included parts of Lebanon, the Anti-Lebanon mountains and the Orontes River Valley. Portions of the population of Amurru had apparently moved south into north and central Transjordan. Amorites also settled in the hill country west of the Jordan (cf. Gen 48:22), though not spreading all the way to the Mediter-

ranean, since they are contrasted with the Canaanites "by the sea" (Num 13:29; Josh 5:1; cf. 9:1). The term *Amorite* shows mixed ethnic/geographical use, since in Joshua 10:5-6 five "Amorite" kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon are mentioned. The description cannot be strictly ethnic here, since Jerusalem was Jebusite and Hebron, Hittite (cf. also Ezek 16:3, 45).

4.3. Hittites. Discussion of the Hittites is fraught with difficulty since at least four different ethnic groups of antiquity have this designation (Hoffner 1973, 197; 1994, 152-53). The most important historically were the Hittites (Heth) who, during second millennium B.C., controlled much of modern-day Turkey. At their peak, they were a powerful empire based at Hattusas and reaching from the Aegean to the Euphrates and along the northern Levant (Aharoni et al., 4). The empire collapsed about 1200 B.C., though a number of smaller Neo-Hittite states continued for some time in the borderland between Anatolia and Syria. The relationship between these Indo-European peoples and the Hittites mentioned in the Pentateuch is a matter of debate.

In the Pentateuch, Hittites are mentioned on several occasions. Descended from Canaan (Gen 10:15; 36:2; Ezek 16:3, 45), they all have Semitic names (Hoffner 1973, 214). They were resident around Hebron, and from them *Abraham purchased the land to bury his wife, *Sarah (Gen 23:1-20). There is debate as to whether the legal aspects of the transaction can be used to date the incident, although there are some indications that it reflects early, preexilic practices (Wenham 1994, 125). Esau married Hittite women, to the chagrin of his parents, apparently while resident in the vicinity of Beer-sheba (Gen 26:34-35; 27:46). They were also noted to live in the central hill country (Num 13:29; Josh 11:3). Later, *Hittite* was used to designate two people in David's service: Ahimelech (1 Sam 26:6) and Uriah (2 Sam 11).

Apart from these Hittites in Palestine, further references to Hittites in the north of Israel should be identified with the Neo-Hittites, city-states that had belonged to the Anatolian Hittite Empire before its fall and continued to be identified by that name (Judg 1:26; 1 Kings 10:29; 11:1; 2 Kings 7:6; possibly Josh 1:4). They could be indicated as distinct from the Hittites of the Pentateuch, since the OT uses Hebrew plural forms of *Hittite* only for those groups in Syria and Anatolia.

Were the two groups ethnically distinct? The Hittite Empire never extended as far south as Hebron (Damascus [Apa] probably being the furthest south they came; *ANET,* 319), suggesting that the two groups were not identical. The use of a common term for both groups could have derived from the Neo-Assyrians (Van Seters, 66) or Neo-Babylonians (Wiseman 1956, 25), both of whom used *Hatti* for the combined area of Syria and Palestine, though the OT never uses *Hittite* to denote the whole region, as it does with *Canaanite* and *Amorite.* We cannot rule out the alternative possibility that the OT Hittites in southern Cisjordan could have been remnants of Anatolian or Syrian Hittites who made their way further south, but this would imply that the references in Genesis are anachronistic, and one would also have to assume that these Hittites quickly adapted Semitic names. It seems best to assume at this stage that the pentateuchal Hittites were a completely separate group from those further north (cf. Hoffner 1973, 213-14).

4.4. Girgashites. The Girgashites are the most shadowy of the Canaanite nations (Gen 10:15-16; 1 Chron 1:13-14). The name could be related to the *grgšû* and *bn grgšû* found in Ugaritic texts (*UT* 3.381, entry 619), placing them in a Canaanite context and in the presettlement period. Since their name is attested in the Bible only in the lists, and not in all of them, no description of their territories is available. This is only deduced when the territories of the other six peoples are mapped out according to their main locations. This results in a gap between the Galilee region north of the Jezreel Valley and south of the Lebanon Mountains. They must also have been in Cisjordan (Josh 24:11). Some have associated them with the NT Gergesenes (Mt 8:28; Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26, 37), but the existence of textual variants reading "Gadarenes" and "Gerasenes" rules against this identification (North, 44). Northern ties with the Hittite *Qaraqaši,* followers of a Sumerian god *Geš* (Schnell, 2.399), have also been suggested. This is too far north, and also the deity *geš/diš* is better understood as the Akkadian numeral 1, which symbolized Anu/Ea (Labat, 213, sign 480).

4.5. Perizzites. Unlike many others among the Canaanites, the Perizzites are not listed in the Table of *Nations (Gen 10). They are first encountered in the biblical text in association

with the Canaanites, in the territory between Bethel and Ai, just north of Jerusalem (Gen 13:7; cf. 34:30; Judg 1:4-5). In later texts they are found further north, in the highlands of Samaria (Josh 11:3), the forested territory of Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh 17:15). Here they are associated with the Rephaites (see 3.4 above). The latter were located on both sides of the Jordan (see Deut 2:9-11, 20; 3:11, 13 [Transjordan]; Josh 15:8; 2 Sam 23:13 [near Jerusalem]), so their mention in Joshua is not problematic. In Joshua 9:2 the Jebusites and the Perizzites are also related.

Etymological links for the Perizzites are tenuous. Some link the term to the personal name Pirizzi, which is found in a number of cuneiform texts. In several of these texts a person by this name acts as a messenger from Tushratta, king of Mitanni (a Hurrian kingdom), to pharaoh Amenophis IV. This could indicate that the Perizzites were Hurrian in origin (Boling, 166). Hurrians are known to have lived in Canaan in the fourteenth century (Hess 1989, 1997), but the name Pirizzi provides at best slender evidence for such a view. Another suggestion is to link it rather to Hebrew *pĕrāzî* ("rural person, resident outside a walled city"; Esther 9:19; Ezek 38:11; Zech 2:4 [MT 2:8]; cf. *HALOT;* Boling, 166; Strathmann, 523). If so, then a term originally denoting a social category came to be used for an ethnic group, in a way similar to the proposed relationship between *Apiru* and *Hebrew.* Some have proposed that the combination Canaanite-Perizzite might indicate either a distinction between town (fortified city) and country (or town, hamlet; Gen 13:7; 34:30; Schnell 1962, 3.735) or between Semitic and non-Semitic (Speiser 1962, 3.241; Ishida, 480).

4.6. Hivites. The location and identity of the Hivites is obscure. Descendants of Canaan (Gen 10:17), they are associated with Gibeon, just north of Jerusalem (Josh 9:7; 11:19), Shechem further north (Gen 34:2; in Hebrew "Shechem" is also associated with the Amorites, Gen 48:22) and even further north in the area of Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains (Josh 11:3; Judg. 3:3; 2 Sam 24:1-9). There is also a possible Transjordanian connection through Esau/Edom (Gen 36:2-3).

Identifying the Hivites is difficult. Textual confusion of Hivites with Horites/Hurrians (e.g., Josh 9:7; Is 17:9; *BHS* note; NRSV; cf. Gen 36:2, 20) could indicate the identity of the two (Baker). Other suggestions include a link with the Sea Peoples who migrated into the area from the Aegean (Boling, 338; cf. a possible link with the Ahhiyawa mentioned in the Hittite letters [an alternate name for Homer's Achaeans who were fighting against Troy; cf. Güterbock; Carroll, 719]); an identification with the Hittites, also from the north (Crossan, 152, on Judg 3:3]); a link with residents of Kue (on the eastern Cilician plain in Turkey), if they are identified with the Hurrians (Avalos, 4.102); or a possible original meaning of "tent-dwellers" (i.e., bedouins who then settled down; cf. Wiseman 1982).

4.7. Jebusites. The Jebusites occupied the hill country (Num 13:29; Josh 11:3) between Judah (cf. Judg 1:8) and Benjamin (Josh 15:63). According to the biblical text, Jebus was the pre-Israelite name of Jerusalem (Josh 15:8; 18:28; Judg 19:10), though an exact identity between the two is debated (North, 46; contra J. M. Miller; cf. Reed, 3.653). A powerful city, it was only conquered by the military genius of David (2 Sam 5:6-10). The archaeological evidence is not able to confirm or deny his actions, since it does not show a distinct shift between the remains of the Jebusites and those of the subsequent Israelites (A. Mazar, 353). The term *Jebus* does not occur outside the Bible. The earliest extrabiblical references to the city uses *Jerusalem* (e.g., the Egyptian Execration texts from the nineteenth to eighteenth centuries B.C. [*COS* 1.32:51]; the Amarna letters from the fourteenth century [*COS* 3.92A+B:237-38]; the later Assyrian records, e.g., the account of Sennacherib's siege in 701 B.C. ["Ursalimmu"; *COS* 2.119B:303]). This would suggest that the name Jebus must be derived from the name of the people rather than from the place (cf. Reed, 3.652). Though a captured people, they continued to reside among the Israelites during David's reign (2 Sam 24:18).

The ethnic background of the Jebusites is unclear. Apart from Genesis 10:16, which lists them as descendants of Canaan, Joshua 10:5 lists a king of Jerusalem/Jebus as being an Amorite, but this is clearly a general designation ("highlander"), which is shared with Israel itself (e.g., Ezek 16:3), and need not indicate ethnic affiliation. Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam 24:18; alternatively read "Ornan," 1 Chron 21:15; 2 Chron 3:1) seems to be non-Semitic in form, possibly being Hurrian (Hoffner 1973, 225; Wenham 1987, 225).

See also ARCHAEOLOGY; BORDERS; CHRONOLOGY; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE; NATIONS, TABLE OF.

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NATURAL LAW. *See* ETHICS.

NAZIRITE VOW. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

NEPHILIM. *See* SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN.

NEW MOON. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

NEW YEAR. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

NOAH

The celebrated story of Noah, the account of a man who survived a cataclysmic flood and thus preserved humanity, forms part of the early literature of the Israelites. Similar stories of surviving such a catastrophe occur elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern literature. This article traces the biblical account of Noah's journey, looks at comparable stories among Israel's neighbors and, finally, considers a recent attempt to locate the ark in history and geography.

1. Noah and the Flood in the Hebrew Bible
2. Deluge Heroes Outside the Hebrew Bible
3. The Modern Quests for Noah's Ark

1. Noah and the Flood in the Hebrew Bible.

1.1. Overview of the Story in Genesis 6—9. Noah and his massive ark form a significant part of Israel's primordial accounts in Genesis 1—11. These texts recount how God created the world and everything within it (*see* Creation). Significantly, these origin texts chronicle the initiation of struggles between the divine and human wills. Thus, these introductory sections to Genesis, to the Pentateuch and to the entire canon establish certain important parameters for understanding the drama that unfolds through the pages of Scripture.

The divine-human conflict is described in one way through the contrasting notions of *rest and agitation. The divine intention for rest and a settled existence, established by the divine cessation from creation and the institution of the *sabbath at the end of the creation stories (Gen 2:1-3), opposes human agitation and anarchy in the surrounding chapters. Thus Genesis 1—11 sets the stage for the working out of the divine and human wills that will begin in earnest at Genesis 12 with the ancestral stories.

Noah's story, one-third of the primeval history, resonates with these themes of calm and commotion. Noah's story begins with the announcement of his birth to Lamech (Gen 5:28). It is common to associate Noah's name with the verb *nwḥ*, "to rest." This root is related to the Akkadian word *nâḫu*, which is one of the verbs used to describe the abating of the deluge according to the Mesopotamian version of the flood story (Gilg. 11.131). But, as is sometimes the case in ancient explanations of personal names, the etiological statement announcing Noah's birth (Gen 5:29) connects the child's name to the verb *nḥm* ("to be sorry, comfort oneself, console another") and not to *nwḥ*. The verse declares, "He named him Noah *[nwḥ]*, saying, 'This one will comfort *[nḥm]* us from our work and from the pain of our hands, from the ground that the LORD cursed.' " Ironically, this purported *blessing portends the negative use of *nḥm* as part of the justification for the flood. Yahweh regrets *(nḥm)* that he created humankind and determines to wash all humans from the earth (Gen 6:6). Noah's name foreshadows both the judgment to come and the possibility for consolation in the midst of desolation. Noah, whose name sounds like a blessing (rest from labor), stands as a curse on the people inhabiting the accursed land. He and his family discover

that only the time in the ark provides rest from the frenzy of human life. Noah rests on the floating ark. The remainder of humanity rests on the ocean bed.

As an example of the confusion of human life, Genesis 6:1-4 describes God's displeasure with the breaking down of divinely ordained boundaries between the human and divine worlds. According to one interpretation of this episode, divine males had impregnated human females to produce a race of superhumans (*see* Sons of God, Daughters of Man). In an effort to minimize the amount of time for this sort of mischief, God reduced the normal human life span to 120 years, a reduction of up to 88 percent from the long lives recorded in Genesis 5. According to this interpretation, humans were culpable in the intermingling of the divine and human realms; they had not been forced by the deities. The condemned activities reflect humankind's wicked imagination. As in the garden story in Genesis 3 and the Babel story in Genesis 11, humans *sinned by aspiring to divinity. In Eden, people sought to know everything. In Babel, people overreached by building a stairway to heaven.

The flood story begins in Genesis 6:5 with Yahweh's second evaluation of the deviousness of humanity. God regretted that he had created humans and decided to do more than limit the span of human life. With great remorse, God decided to wash humankind and land-dwelling beasts from the earth. In stark contrast to the rest of humanity, Noah found favor with God (Gen 6:8).

Genesis 6:9 introduces the flood story proper with the introductory line that recurs throughout Genesis: "These are the generations of . . ." (cf. Gen 2:4; 5:1; 10:1, 32; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2). This formula is used to introduce a *genealogy or another episode in the story. According to the episode begun here, God revealed his intentions to destroy all flesh and instructed Noah to build a massive barge with three decks. This vessel would preserve Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives and representative samples of the earth's creatures. Noah was also to take enough food to supply the evacuees. To demonstrate that righteous Noah stood out against his wicked contemporaries, the text notes that Noah did all that God had instructed him to do (Gen 6:22).

After Noah finished the ark, Yahweh instructed his upright follower to enter the ark and to take the animals with him. At this juncture the instruction more specifically distinguished between seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals (Gen 7:2-3). God gave Noah the timetable for the judgment: rain would commence in one week and continue for forty days and forty nights. Once again Noah did all that Yahweh had commanded (Gen 7:5).

When Noah was six hundred years old, all of creation exploded and primeval watery chaos inundated the earth. Chaos did not take over the world, however, for God limited the duration of the rain. Chaos could not harm Noah and his passengers because Yahweh had shut them into the ark (Gen 7:16). The flood continued forty days and carried the ark above the ground. The waters covered even the mountains. All dry-land inhabitants, creeping things and humans, perished in fulfillment of Yahweh's judgment (Gen 7:21).

After one hundred and fifty days, God recalled his promise to Noah and, as in the first act of creation (Gen 1:2), a wind from God blew across the waters, and they began to abate. The ark grounded in the mountains of Ararat (Gen 8:4). After the water receded further, Noah finally opened the ark window. He sent out a raven (Gen 8:7), then a dove (Gen 8:8), to determine if the waters had decreased enough for him to disembark. He sent the dove a second time (Gen 8:10-11), and it returned with an olive leaf. After another week, Noah sent out the dove, and it did not return (Gen 8:12). Finally, after more than a year, the earth was dry and God told Noah and his passengers to disembark (Gen 8:15-16).

Noah's first impulse after landing was to worship Yahweh. Noah built an altar and slaughtered a portion of the clean animals he had taken on the ark. Yahweh responded to the pleasant smell by promising that he would never inundate the earth again. The normal cycles of seasons and of days would continue unabated.

God blessed his new creation and, as at the first creation (Gen 1:28), commanded the people to fulfill the only charge they had obeyed: multiply and fill the earth (Gen 9:1, 7). Once again humans were given authority over the animals. Apparently God extended human authority beyond naming of animals, adding to their apparently primeval vegan diet (Gen 1:29; 2:9). Animals, though not expressly forbidden in the past, were now explicitly allowed as fare, "just as

I gave the herbs to you," so long as people did not consume the blood (Gen 9:3-4).

God proclaimed his previously private decision to spare creation future destruction by flood (Gen 9:9-17). The bow in the sky (*see* Rainbow) would always signify God's promise to Noah and his descendants. In this atmosphere of promise, Noah's sons did their part in repopulating the earth, with all the people of the earth branching out from them (Gen 9:18-19; 10:1-32).

The ark adventure concludes with a disturbing story of Noah's colonized family (Gen 9:20-29). Noah planted a vineyard and ended up drunk and naked in his tent. When Ham told his brothers about their father's state, Shem and Japheth averted their eyes and covered Noah. Whatever the precise meaning of the phrase Ham "saw his father's nakedness," Ham's action against Noah resulted in a curse on Ham's son Canaan that made him the lowest of Noah's progeny.

Thus the themes of violence, distress and a lack of divine rest return in the wake of the reestablishment of human civilization in the post-flood period. Humanity, as at the first beginning of the world, multiplied and spread over the earth. The tower of *Babel episode concludes these elemental stories. Humans still strive to be divine, and judgment comes and spreads wicked humanity across the globe.

1.2. Writing of the Flood Story. Many OT scholars believe that the Pentateuch is the product of the amalgamation of several sources (*see* Source Criticism; Pentateuchal Criticism, History of). The flood story is presented as a parade example of multiple authorship, resulting from the combination of the postulated sources J and P. Some of the pieces of evidence adduced for this theory focus on the divergence of divine names, duplications of events and disparities within the preserved narrative. For example, throughout the story the divine names Yahweh (e.g., Gen 6:3, 5, 6, 7, 8; 7:1, 5) and Elohim (e.g., Gen 6:9, 11, 12, 13, 22; 7:9) alternate. In addition, duplications such as the description of the water rising in Genesis 7:17, 18 (2x), 19, 20, 24 abound. These disparities present the greatest problems to a view of unified authorship. Moreover, the chronology of the flood varies. The proposed J source relates a flood of forty days and nights (Gen 7:4, 12), and the P source a deluge lasting 150 days (Gen 7:24; 8:3). In P Noah is commanded to take a pair of every kind of animal into the ark (Gen 6:19-20; 7:14-15), but J distinguishes between seven pairs of clean animals and one pair each of unclean animals (Gen 7:2-3).

Despite a broad critical consensus on the existence of multiple sources in Genesis 6—9, some scholars attempt to read the Noah narrative as a whole, maintaining that the narrative makes sense as it stands. Though the divine names alternate throughout Genesis 6—9, the divine-name criterion is not a consistent indicator of authorship throughout the Pentateuch. For instance, J uses Elohim in Genesis 3:1-5, and E uses Yahweh after Exodus 3 (*see* God, Names of). This general observation may weaken the argument for the Noah story in particular.

Likewise, duplications may indicate an ancient writing style rather than the existence of discrete sources, a style that appears unnecessarily repetitive to an untrained modern reader. Are all duplicates simple restatements of material, or do they vary from one another in significant ways? Repetition may delay the next scene of the story to build suspense or, perhaps, underline particular elements of the story. Seemingly meaningless repetitions may serve an important narrative function rather than signal the presence of multiple sources.

Suggested internal contradictions within the narrative depend a great deal on establishing that the chronology of the present text of Genesis 6—9 is inconsistent. In contrast to the critical stance of the varying time frames of J and P, there may be no discrepancy regarding the length of the rain. According to the final redaction of the story, the flood may have lasted a total of 150 days. Forty days account for the intense rain and flooding that brought destruction, while 110 days measure the leisurely abatement of the water, perhaps signifying the rest denoted by Noah's name.

In the end we are not left with only two options: a hodgepodge of multiple sources or a unified composition. A third approach recognizes the composite nature of Noah's story and looks for meaningful or sensible editing. This approach allows for tensions within the story without negating the fact that ancient authors respected their traditions and carefully adapted earlier materials to write their stories. Most important, this strategy recognizes that these ancient writers were not hacks who did not have the literary talents of later source critics. Thus

B. Halpern suggests that the editor of the flood story inherited two sources on the subject that had to be treated as a single account, not as stories of separate floods. Genesis 6—9 represents a conflated text that does not suppress its earlier witnesses but shows evidence of purposeful transmission of these inherited materials. The editing is not whimsical or arbitrary, but these conservative editors paid attention to the narrative created by the combined sources in a way that preserved each tradition as much as possible (Halpern, 33).

Halpern is a more recent example of one who wishes to recognize the meaningful adaptation of ancient sources in the flood story. Almost three decades ago, G. Wenham suggested, on the basis of syntax, literary pattern, internal chronology and Mesopotamian parallels, that the Genesis account of Noah's flood was unified and coherent (Wenham 1978, 347). Although Wenham's description of the flood narrative as an extended, elegant palistrophic structure centered around the affirmation of Genesis 8:1 ("God remembered Noah") and his suggestion that Genesis recollects an underlying epic source seem especially specious, he is correct to suggest that the careful reader of Genesis 6—9 must grapple with the joint notions of unity and diversity within this simple story. This is necessarily the case whether one thinks that the text represents the ingenious blending of two accounts or the creative reworking of an earlier epic. According to both interpretive models, the reader appeals to hypothetical materials that stand behind the text in hand.

2. Deluge Heroes Outside the Hebrew Bible. The Noah story in Genesis, and not in some putative pentateuchal prototype, closely mirrors other ancient Near Eastern deluge descriptions (*see* Flood). The written tradition of a massive flood goes back at least to the first half of the second millennium B.C. In addition, several ancient sites reveal flood layers separating strata of occupation. Apparently at various sites and on several occasions floods did wipe out the existing culture. In light of this, it is possible that the flood tradition reflects either a particularly destructive inundation or the telescoping of several local floods (Lambert and Millard, 17).

Though there are other stories of cataclysmic floods from around the world and later allusions to ancient flood traditions, such as that of Berossus, we will focus on three ancient Near Eastern flood heroes: Ziusudra, Utnapishtim and Atrahasis.

2.1. Ziusudra. The Sumerian story of Ziusudra, first published in 1914, was discovered at the ancient city of Nippur, site of an ancient and prestigious scribal school. This was the most important religious center of the Sumerians and was dedicated to Enlil, the chief god of the pantheon. This fragmentary text (about one-third of the original tablet seems to have survived) dates to about 1600 B.C.

This hero of the Sumerian flood story bears a name meaning "Life of lasting days." As with the thematic connection between Noah's name and his story, Ziusudra connects thematically with his version of the story, since the gods granted him immortality after the deluge's destruction. Ziusudra was the last antediluvian king of Shuruppak. The gods may have attempted to destroy humankind before the flood, but the fragmentary nature of the tablets precludes a full reconstruction. The tablets describe the zealous Ziusudra praying daily. Thus Ziusudra's righteousness links him with the perfect Noah. During one of these prayer sessions, Ziusudra overheard the divine plan to destroy humankind and kingship by means of a flood. Thus forewarned, King Ziusudra was saved in a huge boat when a seven-day and seven-night flood swept over the country. At the conclusion of the ordeal, he is once again pictured in prayer, this time also offering a sacrifice of a large number of bulls and sheep. The gods elevated Ziusudra to eternal life, like a god, because he had preserved the seed of humankind. This reward seems peculiar, since the aim of the flood was to wash away humankind. In the end, the gods settled him in the distant and apparently idyllic country of Dilmun (Bahrain).

2.2. Utnapishtim. The recitation of Utnapishtim's flood adventure forms part of a larger narrative complex known as the Gilgamesh Epic. The most complete copy of this epic comes from the library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (669-627 B.C.) in Nineveh. The flood story occurs on tablet 11 of the twelve-tablet epic. Sin-liqi-unninni, an ancient editor, perhaps added it around 1200 B.C. The text of Gilgamesh survives from several different periods in several different languages, including Akkadian, Hittite and Hurrian.

As part of his quest for eternal life, Gilgamesh went to a distant island to discuss im-

mortality with the flood hero. In this Akkadian version of the story, the hero bears the name Utnapishtim, "I have found life." Once again, this personal name suits the outcome of the story, since the hero found long life. In fact, as Utnapishtim explains to Gilgamesh, the antediluvian hero is the only one who may have the life of the gods. The Gilgamesh Epic intertwines multiple themes as Gilgamesh struggles with the meaning of life, life's brevity, connections with the gods, friendship and adventure. Utnapishtim declares that it is not impossible for one to gain eternal life, but it is highly improbable. Utnapishtim and his wife were the only ones granted this gift, and one gets the impression from the text that eternal life is not real living. This faraway couple, removed from the relationships and challenges of normal human existence, have ceased to live truly human lives. They also do not dwell with deities. Utnapishtim and his wife are suspended between two realms.

In this version of the story, Utnapishtim is the supreme sage, although he is removed from normal life by being somewhat connected to the divine realm. He has gained this insight by being neither human nor divine. Gilgamesh believes that Utnapishtim is no different from him, except that he has been granted an exceptional gift by the gods. Gilgamesh says, "I look at you, Uta-napishti: your form is no different, you are just like me, you are not any different, you are just like me" (Gilg. 11.2-3; George, 88). But he is not just like Gilgamesh. Utnapishtim has ceased to be human. Utnapishtim has discovered the meaning of life and, as he shares a portion of his wisdom with Gilgamesh, chides Gilgamesh for his quest that can never be fulfilled.

Utnapishtim used skilled laborers to build his boat after being warned of a coming flood by the cunning Ea. Little did the workers realize that, as they enjoyed Utnapishtim's provisions—the beer, ale, oil and wine that flowed like water (a poignant image in light of the outpouring to come)—they were partaking of their own funerary feast. At the loading of the boat, Utnapishtim took all of his goods and that which was necessary for the reestablishment of culture. He explains, "I sent on board all my kith and kin, the beasts of the field, the creatures of the wild, and members of every skill and craft" (Gilg. 11.84-85; George, 91).

The storm raged for "six days and seven nights," and then the deluge ended. Enlil, the god who sent the flood, blessed the hero and his wife: "In the past Uta-napishti was a mortal man, but now he and his wife shall become like us gods! Uta-napishti shall dwell far away, where the rivers flow forth!" (11.201-203; George, 95). Utnapishtim had gained life, but he was not reintegrated into human society. He may have looked just like Gilgamesh and other humans, but he was different. He and his wife were like gods, at once connected to humankind yet distant and disconnected from it.

This note regarding the difference between the divine and human realms parallels the message of the pentateuchal primeval history: people are to live life as humans, not strive to become like God or to overstep the divinely ordained boundaries in the universe. The strivers who brought about the wrath of God in Genesis are unknown. The memory of the perfect Noah, who apparently was not striving for renown, endured. Gilgamesh gained the eternal life he sought in the retelling of his story.

2.3. Atrahasis. The earliest copies of this Akkadian text date from the seventeenth century B.C. (Lambert and Millard, 23). This story was the source for the flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic. The larger narrative framework is similar to that of the pentateuchal primeval history, including creation and multiplication of humankind, various threats to the viability of human life and the flood as the divider of two epochs. About two-thirds of the original text has survived. It was found in two different editions in the famous library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh.

Atrahasis follows a common Sumero-Babylonian idea that humans were created to relieve the labor of deities by making food and drink offerings. That is, the gods created humans because after forty years of labor the worker gods rebelled against the heavy tasks imposed on them, burning their tools and surrounding Enlil's house. After hearing their grievances, Enlil decided to create humans to dig rivers and canals to ensure agricultural prosperity.

Once created, the human race multiplied and became noisy. In response, Enlil tried to reduce the population to relieve the increasing disturbance. First he tried a plague, then a famine-producing drought. In both cases, Atrahasis appealed to Enki and salvation came. The noise resumed, as did the drought. As a macabre joke on parched people desiring water, En-

lil ultimately sent a flood!

In each case Enlil's punishment failed to produce the desired result. Even the flood failed to exterminate all humanity, for the god Enki warned Atrahasis to build a boat to escape the deluge. This man escaped with his family and a variety of animals on a simple reed boat.

Enki and the other deities grieved at the loss of their creation. The gods began to find the disadvantages of a world without humans. The toil that humans had taken over, digging the rivers and canals, for example, was part of the agricultural process, and with this interrupted supplies of food and drink were cut off. On disembarking, Atrahasis offered food to the gods. This opportune act reminded the gods of the advantages of living mortals. In this satiated state they were less apt to treat this survivor of the planned genocide severely (Lambert and Millard, 12).

3. The Modern Quests for Noah's Ark.

Given the claims of these texts describing global floods, people have regularly sought to locate the ark in wreckage and writing. Some are driven to find remains of the massive boat on the mountains of Ararat as part of a broader concern to establish the "truth" (i.e., historicity) of the early Genesis stories. Others have been concerned to establish the links between the extrabiblical stories and the biblical narrative. Additionally, some have sought to find out how this story, especially if it is not based on a literal universal inundation, was launched in the first place.

R. M. Best provides an interesting recent attempt to establish the origins of the story. Best strips away the distinctive elements—in his words, separating myth from legend—of each story to lay bare the elements common to all of them. In demythologizing the ark stories Best disregards names, mental states and agendas of the gods to focus on the constant parts of the story: (1) the hero builds a boat; (2) a storm occurs, accompanied by a flood; (3) the hero and his family are on the boat during the flood; (4) the boat grounds on a mountain; and (5) the hero offers a sacrifice to a god (Best, 20).

Best traces all of the stories back to a lost legend about Ziusudra, king of the Sumerian city-state Shuruppak at the end of the Jemdet Nasr period (c. 2900 B.C.). A six-day thunderstorm caused the Euphrates River to rise and flood Shuruppak and a few other cities in southern Sumer. The ark was a commercial barge ready to haul grain, beer and other cargo, including a few hundred common animals, when the storm began. There was no parade of exotic animals with great pomp and circumstance. The runaway barge floated down the river into the Persian Gulf, where it grounded in an estuary at the mouth of the river. Ziusudra then offered a sacrifice at the top of a hill, which storytellers later misunderstood as a mountain. This led them to assume that the nearby barge had grounded on the top of a mountain (Best, 2). The mountain tradition, the one constant story element that could not have happened, provides the key to interpreting the flood myth. Although many commentators focus on identifying and locating the mountain, Best argues that this is futile because a worldwide ocean flood rising above any mountain for a year would be physically impossible (Best, 20; *see* Flood §3.4.2.1).

Best's suggestions are thought-provoking, but somehow his reconstructed lost legend lacks the punch that comes from the distinctive elements each culture contributed to the flood story. Best extracts the essentials that breathed life into the stories and inspired their hearers. For instance, on a basic level, all of the flood stories suggest perspectives on the meaning of life. In a turbulent world, one that experienced devastating inundations, the question would arise, how do people survive such natural disasters? Life exists in an atmosphere of preciousness and fragility. These stories recognize that humans are always dependent on the good graces of the gods.

Noah, however, provides a case study that goes beyond these issues of human precariousness. The biblical text notes that humans live before a powerful Creator. For the biblical narrator this fact points toward human responsibility and the serious ideas of sin and punishment and grace. These are among the unique themes developed throughout the remainder of the Bible. They are introduced in this story of an ancient flood before Israel's birth, just as many other themes are introduced in the primeval history of Genesis 1—11. We may never accurately locate the primordial events and their towers, boats and gardens, but their truth for the people of God, in the land, in the Exile, in the Diaspora and beyond, is watertight.

See also COSMOLOGY; FLOOD; RAINBOW.

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NOAHIC COVENANT. *See* COVENANT; FLOOD.

NOAH'S SONS. *See* NATIONS, TABLE OF.

NOMADISM. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

NOVELLA. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

NUMBERS, BOOK OF

Numbers is the title of the fourth book of the OT. The book of Numbers recounts a crucial phase of the wilderness journey of Israel as it traveled from a life of slavery in the land of Egypt to the land of promise in Canaan. The book narrates the death of a whole generation of rebellious Israelites in the wilderness and the birth of a new generation of Israelites who look forward in hope and obedience to entering the Promised Land.

1. Title and Literary Structure
2. The Critical Study of Numbers
3. Content and Themes

1. Title and Literary Structure.

1.1. Title. The English title of the book, "Numbers," derives from the Greek *(Arithmoi)* and Latin *(Numeri)* translations of the OT. This title is based primarily on the two detailed numberings, or census lists, of the twelve tribes of Israel in Numbers 1 and 26. The first census of the *exodus generation of Israelites is taken approximately two years after Israel's exodus from *Egypt (Num 1:1). The second census of the new generation of Israelites born in the *wilderness occurs approximately forty years after Israel's exodus from Egypt (Num 14:20-35; 26:64-65).

In the Hebrew tradition, the book's name is not Numbers but "In the Wilderness." As with the other pentateuchal books, a significant word or phrase from the first line of the book is used as the title. This title underscores the wilderness setting for the book as Israel travels from a great civilized empire in Egypt to its *promised home in Canaan. The forty years of wilderness wandering functions as a transitional interim between these two geographical centers as Israel is formed into a mobile community under a *covenant with God. The threatening wilderness motivates Israel positively to learn from God how to be organized into a *holy community with the *tabernacle as the seat of God's presence in its midst (Num 1—10). On the other hand, the stresses of wilderness life with little *food and much hardship also form the crucible for Israel's eventual series of rebellions against God, which end finally in the death of a whole generation of Israelites (Num 11—25). The trials of the wilderness once again become a positive seedbed for learning as another new generation of Israelites emerges who learn to negotiate a middle way between rigid adherence to patterns of the past and the new challenges of an uncharted future (Num 26—36). Within the larger

biblical tradition, the wilderness is never an ideal place for humans to dwell. It is a place of chaos, threat, danger and death, and thus is a place to be avoided. But when one is forced to endure the wilderness for a time, as Israel is in the book of Numbers, it may be experienced either as a place of maturing and learning or as a place of disintegration and death.

1.2. Literary Structure. One long-standing obstacle in interpreting Numbers has been the wide disagreement among scholars over the question of whether or not the book has a meaningful structure as a whole. Many interpreters complain that the book has no coherent organizational scheme or outline. The alternation of *laws and stories and lists seems so haphazard to many that one commentator calls Numbers "the junk room of the Bible," a book in which editors simply tossed together miscellaneous bits of tradition without intending any meaningful flow of thought or meaning. However, one might begin understanding the overall structure of Numbers by noting the larger context of the Pentateuch in which it is set. As one reads through the Pentateuch, a careful reader notes that the old generation of Israelites who occupy center stage in the books of Exodus and Leviticus are suddenly gone and replaced by a new generation of Israelites whom *Moses addresses in the Mosaic speeches of Deuteronomy. Where and how is the transition made from the old generation of the book of Exodus to the new generation of God's people on the edge of the Promised *Land in Deuteronomy?

This important generational transition in the Pentateuch is made in the book of Numbers. In fact, the transfer from the old generation to a new generation of hope on the edge of the Promised Land forms the primary structure and theme for the entire book. The primary pillars for this generational structure are the two census lists of the twelve tribes in Numbers 1 and 26, which serve to divide the book into two major halves, chapters 1—25 and 26—36. The first census (Num 1) introduces the first half of the book, which recounts the eventual death of nearly all the members of the old generation of God's people who came out of Egypt in the exodus. Numbers 1—25 begins with the census and organization of the people of God on the march in the wilderness in chapters 1—10. When the preparations are complete and the march begins, however, the people immediately fall into rebellion (Num 11—12), which climaxes in the spy story (Num 13—14). The members of that first generation in Numbers are then condemned to die. Much of the rest of this first half of Numbers recounts further rebellions and plagues and deaths (Num 16; 17; 20; 21; 25). Some glimmers of hope shine through along the way. God proclaims laws that will apply to a future time when a new generation will properly enter the Promised Land (Num 15). God gives military victories to Israel over the king of Arad and over Sihon and Og (Num 21). A final crescendo of future hope is sounded in the oracles spoken by a prophet named *Balaam, which promise a glorious distant future for Israel (Num 22—24). The first generation's story ends with the final rebellion of the people and the death of the remainder of its members in Numbers 25.

The second census list in Numbers 26 introduces the second half of the book (Num 26—36). This second census list shares many formal features with the census list in Numbers 1: the same wording of God's command (Num 1:2-3; 26:2), the similar order of the twelve tribes and the census of the priestly *Levite tribe that follows the census of the twelve tribes in each case (Num 3—4; 26:57-62). Although this second census list shares many formal similarities, it also has one major difference with the first census list: no member of the Israelite community counted in the first census remains alive to be counted in the second census except for the two faithful spies, *Joshua and *Caleb (Num 26:63-65; cf. 14:26-35). This second census list begins the second half of Numbers, which narrates the emergence of a new generation of Israelites as they prepare to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. The theme and tone of this part of Numbers is quite different from the earlier chapters. *Life and hope, rather than rebellion and death, characterize the story of this new generation. The story of the new generation begins at the entry point to the Promised Land in the plains of Moab by the Jordan River (Num 26:3), not in the midst of "the wilderness of Sinai," as with the first census of the old generation (Num 1:1).

After the second census in Numbers 26, the second half of Numbers is bracketed by an *inclusio* in chapters 27 and 36. Both of these chapters deal with a legal dispute involving claims to inherit land in Canaan brought by the daughters of *Zelophehad. The legal issue is resolved

through the mediation of competing legal principles and values, setting a positive and hopeful tone for the entire second half of the book. In contrast to the deaths of a whole generation in a series of rebellions and punishments in the first half of Numbers, the second half does not record the death of any Israelite. Moreover, the Israelites are victorious in their first military engagement against the Midianites (Num 31). Potential crises do not turn into rebellions but are successfully negotiated and resolved (Num 27:1-11; 31:14-15; 32:1-42). Numerous laws in this section assume and look forward to future residence in the Promised Land of Canaan (Num 27; 34—36). In short, this second half of Numbers is uniformly hopeful and positive in tone.

2. The Critical Study of Numbers.

Jewish, Christian and other scholarly communities have studied and interpreted the book of Numbers in important ways over many centuries. The apostle Paul, for example, recalls the story of the wilderness generation in Numbers as an example for his contemporary readers: "These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us" (1 Cor 10:11). The early third-century church father Origen wrote a long series of sermons based on the book of Numbers. Origen noted the neglect of the book among Christians, but he argued vigorously for the value of Numbers as a resource for faith. The Jewish tradition likewise continued to develop a long tradition of interpreting Numbers with the *Midrash Sipre,* the Talmud and many other rabbinic commentaries that focused their interpretive energies on the many legal sections as well as the narratives contained in Numbers.

2.1. Modern Studies: The Literary Formation of the Book. Since the eighteenth century, modern scholarship on Numbers has focused much attention on the history of the literary development of the book in relationship to the other literature of the Pentateuch. The Numbers commentary by G. B. Gray (1903) illustrates this overriding concern with discerning earlier and later layers of material within the book. Gray, like many scholars of his time, relied on the Documentary Hypothesis (*see* Source Criticism). This scholarly hypothesis assumes that the Pentateuch is composed of four major literary sources or traditions that appeared in Israel in the following chronological order over the course of the tenth to six centuries B.C.: J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist) and P (Priestly). Gray argued that the bulk of Numbers was composed of P material, especially Numbers 1—10 and 26—36. This P material originated after the exile of Judah to Babylon in 587 B.C. Gray detected an intermingling of earlier J and E material with the P source in Numbers 10—25. According to Gray, the present shape of Numbers is dominated by a Priestly perspective and addresses a postexilic setting in which the yearning of a new generation of Israelites in Babylon to return to the Promised Land matches the situation of the new generation in the book of Numbers seeking to establish a community of worship and service on the eve of entering the Promised Land of Canaan.

Some of Gray's assumptions and positions have continued to generate debate about the dating of the material within Numbers. Some more conservative scholars, both Jewish and Christian, argue for the historicity of much of Numbers, dating it to the Mosaic period, before the rise of Israelite kingship, or sometime before the Babylonian exile. Other scholars follow Gray in dating much of Numbers to an exilic or postexilic time. Most scholars would at least agree that the perspective of the Priestly tradition dominates Numbers, whether dated to the preexilic or postexilic periods. There is less consensus among pentateuchal scholars about the nature and date of the pre-Priestly traditions within Numbers (what Gray called the J and E traditions). Some scholars doubt the existence of an independent E source altogether in Numbers and speak only of a J (Yahwist) or simply "pre-Priestly" material. The dating of this earlier pre-Priestly material is also disputed; some argue that it is much later than originally supposed, dating to the time of the exile, which then pushes the Priestly material later in the postexilic period. Other scholars also see some Deuteronomistic editing at certain points in Numbers. Still others see some if not most of the material in Numbers as quite ancient, dating from the time of Israelite kingship or before. What remains clear in these debates is that the book of Numbers is the product of a fairly lengthy history of literary development and editing from its earliest pieces to the final shape of the book.

2.2. The Varied Forms of Literature Within Numbers. The book of Numbers stands out as containing the greatest variety of literary forms of

any book of the Bible. J. Milgrom lists fourteen different genres within the book: narrative (Num 4:1-3), poetry (Num 21:17-18), *prophecy (Num 24:3-9), victory song (Num 21:27-30), prayer (Num 12:13), *blessing (Num 6:24-26), lampoon (Num 22:22-35), diplomatic letter (Num 20:14-19), civil law (Num 27:1-11), cultic law (Num 15:17-21), oracular decision (Num 15:32-36), census list (Num 26:1-51), temple archive (Num 7:10-88) and itinerary (Num 33:1-49). These individual traditions and forms have been woven into a complex but meaningful pattern in the present form of the book of Numbers.

According to some scholars, the material in these varied genres likely originated throughout the history of ancient Israel, ranging from the early period before the rise of kings in Israel to the much later postexilic period. Many scholars suggest that the earliest portions of Numbers may be found among the poetic sections, especially the following: the priestly blessing of *Aaron (Num 6:24-26), the Song of the Ark (Num 10:35-36), a section from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num 21:14-15), the Song of the Well (Num 21:17-18), the ballad over Heshbon (Num 21:27-30) and the oracles of the prophet *Balaam (Num 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24). Other scholars maintain an early date not only for these poetic pieces but also for larger narrative sections of Numbers.

3. Content and Themes.

We have noted both the great variety of forms as well as the meaningful structure that make up the book of Numbers. The structure of the book in its present form may be outlined as follows:

1. The Death of the Old Wilderness Generation (Num 1—25)
   - A. Obedient Beginnings: Preparation for Israel's March in the Wilderness (Num 1—10)
   - B. An Abrupt Slide into Rebellion: The Death of the First Wilderness Generation Begins (Num 11—20)
   - C. The Final End of the First Generation: Signs of Hope in the Midst of Death (Num 21—25)
2. The Rise of a New Generation on the Edge of the Promised Land (Num 26—36)
   - A. The Second Census, the Daughters of Zelophehad, the Succession of Leadership and Laws for the New Generation's Life in the Promised Land (Num 26—30)
   - B. A Military Victory and Words of Warning and Encouragement from a Generation Past (Num 31—33)
   - C. Law as Promise: Divine Commands in Anticipation of Residence in the Promised Land (Num 34—36)

3.1. The Death of the Old Wilderness Generation (Num 1—25). The first half of Numbers recounts the fate of the old generation of Israelites who were eyewitnesses to the exodus out of Egypt and the covenant with God at Mount Sinai. The beginnings of this first generation was marked by a census list already back in Exodus 1 (see also Gen 46:8-27). There seventy people were counted among the twelve tribes of Israel who came down to Egypt (Ex 1:5). The next census list of the twelve tribes of Israel (Num 1) marks a major transition in the people's wandering. They have been liberated from bondage in Egypt. They have received God's commandments and entered into a covenant with God at Sinai (Ex 19—24). They rebelled against God by worshiping the *golden calf, which required Moses to intercede for God's forgiveness of the people and the making of a new covenant (Ex 32—34). Now with Numbers 1 and after a new series of regulations in Leviticus, this first wilderness generation is ready to organize and begin the new phase of its march toward the Promised Land of Canaan. While the first organizational phase begins with obedience and hope (Num 1—10), the people quickly relapse into rebellion and disobedience (Num 11—20). The story of this wilderness generation concludes in this first half of Numbers with further rebellions and death punctuated at the same time by signs of hope and blessing for a future generation (Num 21—25).

3.1.1. Obedient Beginnings: Preparation for Israel's March in the Wilderness (Num 1—10). This first section of Numbers is dominated by a positive tone. The people of Israel obediently follow all of God's instructions mediated through Moses as they prepare for the march from Sinai to the Promised Land. The twelve tribes of Israel undergo a census in which all warriors are counted and then organized into a military camp with three tribes on each of the four sides. The priestly tribe of Levites are also counted and organized (Num 1—4). Laws are given to preserve the holiness of the camp. The laws deal with issues of purity, suspected adul-

tery and vows of Nazirites who dedicate themselves to special service to God for a specified time (Num 5—6). Included in this section is an instruction for the priestly blessing of the community, which continues to function as words of benediction to conclude worship services in both Jewish and Christian communities even today:

> The LORD bless you and keep you;
> The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
> The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Numbers 7 recounts a twelve-day ceremony in which each of the twelve tribes brings offerings to be used for the dedication of the *altar. What is remarkable is that each tribe brings exactly the same offerings. Anthropologist M. Douglas maintains that this equality among all the twelve tribes of Israel here and elsewhere in Numbers reflects a deliberate critique of the exclusivity of the Ezra-Nehemiah separatist program in the postexilic period. The priestly writers of Numbers, she argues, resisted the favoritism shown toward returned exiles from the tribe of Judah over other groups who had roots in the northern tribes of Israel, including the Samaritans (see Neh 4). Douglas's views assume a later postexilic setting for Numbers, an assumption some other scholars would not share. Nevertheless, the equality among the various tribes remains noteworthy.

Numbers 8 continues with the consecration of the priestly Levites to service in connection with the tabernacle, the seat of God's presence in the midst of the camp of Israel. Numbers 9 describes the celebration of the second Passover since leaving Egypt, the marker of a new phase in Israel's life as God's people as they are about to begin the march to the Promised Land of Canaan. The sons of Aaron are instructed in Numbers 10:1-10 to blow the silver trumpets in order to call the entire community into assembly and to signal the inauguration of the march through the wilderness from Sinai to Canaan. Finally, Numbers 10:11-36 recounts the actual beginning of the march of the holy camp of Israel through the wilderness. The reader has been assured throughout these first ten chapters that the Israelites have obediently followed all the commands of God mediated to them through Moses. As we come to the end of Numbers 10, the general mood of the narrative is positive, hopeful and encouraging.

3.1.2. An Abrupt Slide into Rebellion: The Death of the First Wilderness Generation Begins (Num 11—20). The portrait of Israel's total obedience in Numbers 1—10 is abruptly shattered by the unexpected complaint and rebellion in Numbers 11, which interestingly builds on Exodus 16. Throughout Numbers 11—20, God's people continually rebel, and God punishes Israel with plagues and military defeats. God offers signs of forgiveness and compassion, but the people in each case resume their rebellious ways. First there is a general rebellion of the people (Num 11). Then there is a rebellion for the first time in the wilderness by two leaders of the people, Aaron and *Miriam (Num 12). This is followed in Numbers 13—14 by the most serious revolt against God: in the spy mission into the Promised Land of Canaan. The spy narrative defines the central theme and structure of the entire book of Numbers as the tale of the death of the old wilderness generation and the birth of a new generation of hope on the edge of the Promised Land.

Despite Israel's definitive rebellion in Numbers 13—14, a series of laws offers assurance that a future generation will indeed continue the wilderness journey and enter the land of Canaan (Num 15). However, the cycle of rebellions by the old generation resumes as some Levites, lay leaders and the people join in successive uprisings against God, Moses and Aaron (Num 16). The attack by Korah and others against Aaron and his sons concerning their priestly duties prompts the reaffirmation of Aaron's role as high priest and the laws for supporting the *priests (Num 17—18). The many Israelite rebellions had repeatedly prompted God's judgment of death and plagues so that the community was constantly threatened with the impurity and pollution of contact with dead bodies, which rendered a person unclean (Num 5:2). Thus, Numbers 19 specifies a process involving the ashes of a *red heifer by which people made unclean through contact with a corpse are returned to a state of ritual purity.

The narrative in Numbers 20 returns the reader to a forward movement of Israel's camp. Numbers 20:1 reports that the whole congregation of Israelites "came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh." The people are again on the move toward the Promised Land. Many in the old wil-

derness generation have already died, but the new generation of Israelites is growing toward adulthood. However, just as chapter 20 gets the march of Israel's camp underway, it recounts a series of dramatic events that rock Israel to the core: the death of the leader Miriam (Num 20:1); Aaron and Moses' rebellion against God, along with God's command that Moses and Aaron will not lead Israel to the Promised Land (Num 20:2-13); and the death of the high priest Aaron (Num 20:22-29). This series of tragic blows again interrupts the reader's sense of a moving narrative and a moving Israelite camp. Every time Israel recovers from one of its rebellions, it is interrupted again by enumerations of laws, revolts and death. Progress for the old wilderness generation is slow, painful and ultimately futile, for they will all end by dying outside the Promised Land as predicted by God himself (Num 14:29-30).

3.1.3. The Final End of the First Generation: Signs of Hope in the Midst of Death (Num 21—25). A major break in the narrative of Numbers occurs with Numbers 21. For the first time in this predominantly negative portion of the book, a positive tone is struck with the account of Israel's first military victory over the Canaanite king of Arad (Num 21:1-3). This hopeful story is followed quickly by another rebellion involving a plague of poisonous snakes and the healing power of a bronze *serpent (Num 21:4-9) and another positive conquest account of military triumphs over two kings, Sihon and Og (Num 21:10-35). An extended cycle involving King Balak of Moab and a foreign prophet named Balaam follows in Numbers 22—24. The Moabite king hires the prophet Balaam to curse Israel as it is encamped at the boundary of the land of Canaan. However, an episode with Balaam and his talking donkey ensures that Balaam will speak only what God wills him to speak: words of blessing over Israel rather than words of curse and destruction. The centerpieces of the Balaam cycle are a series of four climactic promise oracles directed to Israel's distant future (Num 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 24:15-24). A final rebellion narrative (Num 25:1-18) recounts the death of the remaining members of the old wilderness generation, who continue to rebel despite God's faithfulness and promises. This section concludes the first half of Numbers (Num 1—25) by weaving together stories of failure and death for the present generation and anticipation of profound promise for the next generation.

3.2. The Rise of a New Generation on the Edge of the Promised Land (Num 26—36). The second half of Numbers and the emergence of a whole new generation of Israelites is inaugurated by the second census list (Num 26). The overriding question in the second half of Numbers is whether this second generation will find a way to be faithful and enter the Promised Land or will rebel and fail as the first generation had done. The spotlight is on the new Israelite generation as they ready themselves to enter the land of Canaan, resolving disputes and making necessary compromises that allow the journey toward Canaan to continue.

3.2.1. The Second Census, the Daughters of Zelophehad, the Succession of Leadership and Laws for the New Generation's Life in the Promised Land (Num 26—30). Two significant texts guide our interpretation of the second census list. First of all, Numbers 26:52-56 suggests that the purpose of this second census list is primarily to determine the relative size of the territories that will be assigned to the twelve tribes when they enter Canaan. The second important text is Numbers 26:63-65. These verses explicitly pick up the theme of the entire book: the death of the old generation and the birth of the new generation of God's people. Except for the two faithful spies (Joshua and Caleb), "not one of those enrolled by Moses and Aaron" in the census list in Numbers 1 is present in the second census list, "for the LORD had said of them, 'They shall die in the wilderness' " (Num 26:64-65). Thus, this second census list is a sign that God's judgment upon the first generation has been completed and that God's promise of a new gener-ation of hope is being fulfilled.

Numbers 27:1-11 narrates the successful resolution of a legal dispute regarding the inheritance of land by the five daughters of a man named Zelophehad (*see* Zelophehad, Daughters of), who had died without leaving a son as a male heir. The decision affirms the important value of maintaining land with each family so that the economic base for each family is secured for the future. Numbers 27:12-23 relates the transfer of leadership from Moses, who will die outside the land of Canaan because of his sin (Num 20:1-13). The office of Israel's leader is given to Joshua, Moses' assistant (Num 11:28; cf. Ex 17:8-13) and one of two faithful spies whom

God promised would enter the land of Canaan (Num 14:30). Numbers 28—30 includes a systematized program of *sacrifices that Israel is to offer once in the land of Canaan and other laws that remove any ambiguities about *women and the legitimacy of their vows. Some commentators argue that this section of laws is among the latest additions to Numbers and the entire Pentateuch, dating perhaps to the postexilic period in Israel's history. Others would date this material much earlier.

3.2.2. A Military Victory and Words of Warning and Encouragement from a Generation Past (Num 31—33). Numbers 31 recounts a successful war of revenge on the Midianites (cf. Num 25:16-19) led by Moses in his last act of military leadership. The battle and its victory functions as the new generation's dress rehearsal for the imminent conquest of Canaan. Numbers 32 tells of a potential crisis involving two Israelite tribes who wish to settle not in Canaan but in the Transjordan area, which lay east of the Jordan River. Moses is upset by the request, but he and the two tribes work out a compromise that resolves the conflict. Numbers 33 is a summary of the itinerary traveled by the old generation of Israelites from Egypt through the wilderness to the edge of the Promised Land with notes of both encouragement and warning to the new generation.

3.2.3. Law as Promise: Divine Commands in Anticipation of Residence in the Promised Land (Num 34—36). The book of Numbers concludes with a series of laws and instructions that assume with assurance and hope that the conquest of Canaan is near at hand. Numbers 34 outlines the procedures for the future division of the land of Canaan. Numbers 35 makes provisions for special cities in which the Levites will live, since the Levites have no tribal lands of their own (Num 18:24). Six of the Levitical cities will also be designated as cities of refuge to which a person who had killed another person unintentionally could flee (Num 34:6). Numbers 36 resumes the case of the daughters of Zelophehad and the inheritance of their father's land in the absence of any male heirs, which first appeared in Numbers 27. The case answers the question whether the daughters can marry outside their tribe. Since the daughters will now own land, marriage outside the tribe would entail the transfer of one tribe's land to another tribe. This would upset the equitable balance of tribal land ownership, so Moses consults with God and another compromise is reached. The daughters may marry whomever they wish within their own tribe, thus ensuring that the tribal lands will not be transferred to family groups outside the tribe.

The varied and rich contents of the book of Numbers combine to paint a realistic and somber portrait of a rebellious community of God's people as they struggle through the wilderness period of Israel's history. However, God's faithfulness to the promises made to Israel ensure the birth of a new generation of hope who stand expectantly on the threshold of entering the Promised Land of Canaan. This new generation seeks to integrate the traditions and lessons of the past with the new challenges and demands of the future that face them. As such, the book of Numbers has remained an essential paradigm for each succeeding generation of God's people that has in some way passed through a wilderness period of struggle and judgment. In the face of such struggles, Numbers continues to offer hope, guidance and a model for faithful dialogue with the past in the face of future challenges and hopes.

See also BALAAM; EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; MURMURING; ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF.

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NUMBERS, LARGE. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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OFFERINGS. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

OLIVES. *See* AGRICULTURE.

OMEN. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

ONOMASTICS. *See* HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

ORAL TRADITION. *See* TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM; WRITING.

ORDER. *See* CREATION.

ORIGINAL SIN. *See* FALL; SIN, GUILT.

ORPHAN

In the ancient world, the term *orphan* often referred more specifically to the fatherless, not more generally to one who had lost both parents. This nuance is also evident in the OT (cf. Lam 5:3). The head of the family was the father, so his early or unexpected death could result in the loss of legal and physical protection and diminished daily provision for both his widow and orphaned children. In most cultures the god of justice and the king became the patrons of the vulnerable, and legislation was designed to guarantee long-term security by specifying the means of the transfer of the family inheritance.

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context
2. Children in Israel
3. Legislation for Orphans in the Pentateuch
4. Concern for the Orphan in the Rest of the Old Testament

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context.

The protection of the widow and orphan is a virtue of the ideal sovereign or leader that is heralded in various literary genres (Fensham; Havice; Weinfeld). It is a moral duty of the chief steward to which the downtrodden can appeal in Egypt ("The Peasant's Lament," *ANET,* 408) and is listed among the duties of a good king in the Keret Epic of Ugarit (*ANET,* 153). In the epilogue to his law code, Hammurabi declares that one of his achievements was to provide justice for the widow and the orphan (*ANET,* 178).

The key socioeconomic problem for orphans dealt with in Mesopotamian law codes spanning a millennium is the disposition of the inheritance. This legislation is, of course, to be coordinated with the guidelines regarding the rights of the widow upon the demise of her spouse. Since these societies were patrilineal (signifying that the estate was passed down through the male heirs), when the father died prematurely the legal system had to stipulate how and to whom the family's property and goods were to be transmitted once the surviving children came of age (e.g., Lipit-Ishtar §31; Code of Hammurabi §§167, 177; Middle Assyrian Laws A §26). In the case of the death of the mother, what was at issue was the dowry with which she had entered into the marriage arrangement. Would this return to her father's home, be kept by the husband or be bequeathed to her children (e.g., Code of Hammurabi §162, 167; Neo-Babylonian Laws §13)?

Many of these concerns also surface in the OT. This does not result, however, in a mere repetition of the same ethical values and laws. Israel's concern for the orphan (Heb *yātôm*) is grounded ultimately in the very nature of Yahweh and his gracious acts on Israel's behalf.

2. Children in Israel.

The multiplication of the human race is part of God's design for humanity (Gen 1:28; 9:7). Within this broader intention appears Yahweh's

commitment to *Abraham to make him into a great nation (Gen 12:2; 15:5; 17:2, 16; 22:17). One of the prominent themes that drives the patriarchal narratives is the divine (and sometimes miraculous) provision of a seed. Barrenness is lamented and even considered a judgment of God (Gen 16:2; 20:18; 30:2-3, 9). It was hoped that a woman would bear many children, who were considered to be a blessing and a gift from God (e.g., Gen 24:60; 29:31—30:24; cf. Ps 127; 128).

Their birth was the cause of great celebration (Gen 21:6-7). This response makes sense, too, in light of the concrete realities of an agrarian social world in antiquity (Perdue; *see* Agriculture). In the primarily subsistence setting of Israel's rural farming communities, children represented important economic potential. They meant more hands for work in that labor-intensive environment and would assure, as well, the future preservation of paternal lands within the family.

Parents, along with the extended family, took it upon themselves to nurture and educate the children. As they grew, these children would be socialized into the appropriate social and gender roles, be trained in skills required for tilling the soil and handling all kinds of chores, and be introduced to a trade (and probably, in the case of the males, to the rudiments of combat). Education within the family also had a religious component. Children were to participate in the *sabbath (Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) and, on occasion, apparently accompanied their parents to the *sacrifices and *feasts (Deut 29:11; 31:12; cf. 1 Sam 1—2). Several texts describe the father's responsibility to recount the history and significance of Israel's faith to his offspring (Ex 12:24-27; 13:8, 14-16; Deut 4:9; 6:4-9, 20-25; 32:46-47). In addition, archaeological evidence points to the practice of household religious rituals, whether Yahwistic or of a more syncretistic kind with the veneration of ancestors and local deities.

This background helps explain the extent of the losses suffered by a child at the death of a parent, especially that of the father. Absent now would be the instructor and model in the many details of life and worship; missing would be the legal head of the home and arbitrator of conflicts. The extended kinship structure (*see* Family Relationships), however, also provided the context for the care of these orphans, along with the other less fortunate, such as widows and resident aliens. These three groups are often mentioned together in passages dealing with the care of the powerless in ancient Israel.

3. Legislation for Orphans in the Pentateuch. Fundamental to the ethical call to the nation to defend and provide for the orphan is the very character of Yahweh himself, who, though he is the incomparable and omnipotent God, had demonstrated unmerited grace in his *election and redemption of Israel (Deut 10:14-22). Attitudes and actions toward the orphan, then, were to be rooted in an appreciation of the divine mercy manifested toward Israel throughout its history (cf. Janzen, 26-86; Millar).

The memory of the exodus is underscored in the demand to treat the orphan (as well as the *widow and resident *alien) with justice in any legal proceeding. Yahweh would "hear their cry," even as he had done when Israel had groaned under the Egyptian yoke (Ex 22:22-24 [MT 22:21-23]; cf. 2:23-25); the people were never to forget their own misfortune and deliverance in the past and, therefore, were to act with equity and compassion toward those experiencing hardship (Deut 24:17-18). This moral demand was emphasized yet again on Mount Ebal by the self-pronouncement of a solemn curse for withholding that justice (Deut 27:19).

The Pentateuch does not delineate the transfer of the family patrimony in the case of orphans with the detail found in other ancient Near Eastern law codes. The account of the complaint of the daughters of the deceased Zelophehad, however, leads into the specification of the proper order for determining the rightful heirs of the inheritance upon the death of the father; male orphans were to have precedence over the females (Num 27:1-11; *see* Zelophehad, Daughters of). The Pentateuch also contains laws that seek to ensure the welfare of children (cf. Wright, 222-38), and its legislation calls for various forms of periodic charity toward the orphan. Such benevolence would be rewarded with divine blessing. Harvesters were to leave some of the gleanings in the fields for the orphan (Deut 24:19-22), and a special tithe was to be collected every third year for their benefit (Deut 14:28-29; 26:12-15).

This communal ethic extended to supplying them with the means for participating in the cultic life of Israel. Families and towns were to facilitate and welcome the involvement of the

orphans in their midst at the Feasts of Weeks and Booths (Deut 16:9-15). These celebrations were annual reminders of Israel's unique corporate identity in the world, and the orphan was not to be cut off from this special privilege. In other words, personal adversity was not to be compounded by marginalization and exclusion.

4. Concern for the Orphan in the Rest of the Old Testament.

Instead of providing concrete measures for enforcement or punishment according to the degree of compliance, the Pentateuch strikes at a deeper ethical level through its moral imperatives. The call to do justice and compassion, which echoes throughout Israel's history, ultimately is a demand to reflect the character of Yahweh himself. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the prophets decried the poor condition of orphans and their abuse by the powerful in their day (e.g., Is 1:17, 23; 10:1-2; Jer 5:26-29; 7:5-7; Ezek 22:6-7; Zech 7:8-10). Later narratives picture widows with children who fell into debt and struggled to survive (1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 4:1-7).

Beneficence toward the orphan was never lost as a moral virtue. Job defended his innocence in part on the basis of his care of these children, when earlier he had enjoyed a position of prestige in the community (Job 29:12; 31:16-23). The protection of the fatherless served as a measure of a king's righteous standing (Jer 22:3). Most important of all, Yahweh himself remained as their divine defender and father (Ps 10:12-18; 68:4-6 [MT 68:5-7]; 146:9). Under his sovereign hand Esther, who had lost both her father and mother and was under her cousin Mordecai's care (Esther 2:7, 15), became queen in Persia and saved the Jews from destruction (Esther 4:14). The courage of this orphan, the ironic fate of the evil Haman and the deliverance of God's people continue to be celebrated in the Feast of Purim (Esther 9:18-28).

See also ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT; ETHICS; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; WEALTH AND POVERTY; WIDOW; ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF.

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P. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

PARADISE. *See* EDEN, GARDEN OF.

PASSOVER, FEAST OF. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

PASTORAL SOCIETY. *See* SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

PATRIARCHAL PROMISES. *See* ABRAHAM; COVENANT; PROMISES, DIVINE.

PATRIARCHAL RELIGION. *See* RELIGION.

PATRIARCHY. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

PEACE. *See* REST, PEACE.

PEACE OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF

The Pentateuch refers clearly to the role of *Moses in the composition of portions of its legal materials (e.g., Ex 24:4; 34:27; Deut 31:9, 24) and other sections (e.g., Ex 17:14; Num 33:2; Deut 31:19, 22). Such references led to a nearly uncontested tradition of Mosaic authorship for the whole Pentateuch in early Jewish and Christian sources. The Talmud (*b. Sanh.* 21b-22a; *b. B. Bat.* 14b), the Mishnah (*m. ʾAbot* 1:1) and possibly the NT (Luke 24:27, 44, passim), along with the Jewish historian Josephus (*Ant.* 4.8.48 §326) assume Mosaic authorship. However, it has long been noted that the Pentateuch itself looks back on the time of Moses as the distant past (e.g., Gen 12:6; Deut 34:6, 10), and from earliest times certain anachronisms and inconsistencies led to doubts regarding Mosaic authorship of the whole Pentateuch (Harrison, 1-9, 497-98; Childs, 31-34). Several medieval commentators raised questions about Mosaic authorship, and in the seventeenth century philosophers Benedict Spinoza and Thomas Hobbes concluded that Ezra was responsible for the Pentateuch, though he used certain Mosaic materials (Childs, 112-13). From the time of the Enlightenment to the present, scholars have considered many possibilities for the Pentateuch's origins. Beginning especially in the eighteenth century, scholars sought to construct literary theories of pentateuchal authorship that would account for the internal features of the text.

1. Eighteenth Century
2. Nineteenth Century
3. Early and Mid-Twentieth Century
4. Late Twentieth Century
5. Conclusion

1. Eighteenth Century.

The *Zeitgeist* of the Enlightenment made possible a reevaluation of traditional understandings of how the Bible was composed, including especially the composition of the Pentateuch. Emphasis on human rationality and the conviction that humankind was coming of age resulted in a rejection of supernaturalism and the concept of divine revelation.

1.1. Jean Astruc. The beginnings of a source-critical approach to the Pentateuch are usually traced to Jean Astruc, though he had less illustrious predecessors. Astruc was a French student of medicine who in 1753 published anonymously an inductive investigation of Genesis. His work is usually acclaimed as the beginning of pentateuchal *source criticism proper. Astruc established the divine names Elohim and Yah-

weh as the basic criterion for identifying and distinguishing the sources used by Moses in the compilation of Genesis. He concluded that Moses used one source referring to God primarily as Elohim (Astruc's source A) and one referring to him as Yahweh (source B). Astruc developed other criteria, including parallel accounts, which he used to further divide the sources for the rest of the Pentateuch.

Astruc never questioned Mosaic authorship or the authority of the Pentateuch. His approach was naive in that he assumed he could approach ancient Near Eastern literature with the same assumptions one might use for modern Western European literature. Yet his primary emphasis on the divine names as a criterion for source analysis paved the way for future source critics of the Pentateuch.

1.2. Johann G. Eichhorn. Eichhorn produced a three-volume introduction to the OT (1781-1783) in which the term *introduction* designated a thorough scholarly treatment of the higher-critical issues for the entire OT. He is sometimes called the "Father of Old Testament Criticism."

In his treatment of Genesis, Eichhorn followed Astruc's lead by accepting the divine names Elohim and Yahweh as the basic criterion for separating the main sources. He designated the sigla E for the Elohim document (Astruc's A source) and J for the Yahweh document (Astruc's B). But Eichhorn also admitted that there must have been other sources for Genesis, since it was evident that some materials did not harmonize with the J and E documentary approach. He speculated about other criteria, such as style and content, as means to understand the original sources better. Eichhorn also applied this approach to the rest of the Pentateuch, and he eventually rejected Mosaic authorship altogether.

Eichhorn's early documentary hypothesis quickly became popular because it seemed to supply the most satisfying explanation of how the Pentateuch was composed. But there were unanswered questions about his conclusions, and the next one hundred years of European scholarship on the OT were devoted to answering two questions. How does one explain the unity of the Pentateuch in light of the diverse documents used in its composition? And, what were the basic characterizing features of each of the documents themselves?

At the end of the eighteenth century, scholars continued Eichhorn's investigations. The period was one of unrestrained confidence and optimism, one might even say arrogance. Some scholars claimed to have isolated as many as seventeen different sources in Genesis alone. K. D. Ilgen was the first to divide E into two separate documents, E^1 and E^2, and grouped the numerous different sources of Genesis into three basic documents: J, E^1 and E^2.

2. Nineteenth Century.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the two- or three-document hypothesis began to lose favor. Several scholars began to advocate a "fragmentary" hypothesis of pentateuchal composition. In this approach the Pentateuch had been produced by combining a mass of fragments rather than documents. Some scholars believed these original fragments were woven together by a redactor (or editor) in the period of Solomon. Others claimed to have discovered as many as thirty-eight or more fragments for the Pentateuch and felt they were edited together during the exile.

2.1. Wilhelm M. L. de Wette. De Wette was among the early fragmentary proponents, suggesting that a group of J fragments and E fragments were behind the present Pentateuch. His views were criticized by Heinrich Ewald, and by 1840 de Wette had changed his position to a supplementary hypothesis (see 2.2 below).

However, the most important proposals made by de Wette had to do with the book of Deuteronomy, the books of Chronicles and the role of law in Israelite religion. Indeed, he was the first to use the critical method to present a view of the history of Israelite religion that is radically at variance with the view implied in the OT itself (Rogerson 1985, 29). The legal traditions of the Pentateuch were not delivered by Moses at Sinai but were from different stages of Israelite history. This led de Wette further to question the historical reliability of Chronicles, which he took as an anachronism that provided no dependable evidence for the religion of Israel in the preexilic period. Concerning Deuteronomy, de Wette argued that it was the last of the pentateuchal books to be written and that it could not have been written before the seventh century B.C. In this he followed the lead of Jerome that a portion of Deuteronomy had been the "book of the law" found in the temple in Josiah's day, which had become the source of the

good king's religious reforms (see 2 Kings 22—23). In many ways, de Wette inaugurated a new era in critical OT scholarship. He raised all of the main questions that were to be of central concern in the rest of nineteenth-century OT scholarship, and he even proposed many of the answers that would eventually be adopted by mainstream scholarship of the century (Rogerson 1985, 28-34; Nicholson, 5-6).

2.2. Heinrich Ewald. Early in his career, Ewald emphasized the unity of Genesis in an attack on the fragmentary theories. In 1823 he suggested a "supplementary" hypothesis, in which a single core E document was supplemented by J and strands from the book of Deuteronomy.

However, Ewald's supplementary theory did not account for all the material in the Pentateuch. The legal sections especially did not belong to any of the three documents, J, E or D. So twenty years later he proposed his complicated "crystallization" hypothesis, in which numerous narrators and editors participated in the composition of the Pentateuch plus Joshua. Ewald joined those scholars who preferred to speak of a Hexateuch (the first six books of the Bible) rather than a Pentateuch. His approach suggested that each of the first six books contained cores, or centers, around which other parts clustered. The earliest of Ewald's "narrators" wrote during the judges period, the fifth and last put the first four books of the Pentateuch and Joshua in something like their present form during the seventh century. During the second half of the seventh century, another writer produced Deuteronomy, which was deeply influenced by the prophets of the eighth century and became the basis of Josiah's reforms. Sometime before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., a final editor combined the previously self-contained Deuteronomy with the work of the fifth narrator to produce the Pentateuch and Joshua. Ewald's theory was overly complex and detailed, and so theoretical that few of his students wished to take his method further. Yet much of the scholarship that followed him in the nineteenth century was indebted to his detailed observations (Rogerson 1985, 93-97).

2.3. Wilhelm Vatke. Most scholars of the nineteenth century described the religious history of ancient Israel in developmental or evolutionary models. Frequently it is argued that Hegel's idealism, particularly the famous dialectic (or logical) philosophy, was the most important philosophical influence on Vatke, which subsequently influenced Wellhausen. Indeed, Wellhausen admits the influence especially of Vatke's developmental understanding of Israel's religious history and states clearly that his approach is near to Vatke's, "from whom indeed I gratefully acknowledge myself to have learnt best and most" (Wellhausen 1983, 13; see Kraus, 179-82; Perlitt). Conservative scholars have often claimed that since the nineteenth-century documentary theories were based on a now defunct and disproved philosophy (Hegel's idealism), those theories can no longer be sustained (Harrison, 21-22, 505-9). However, dependence on Hegel has often been overstated, and in any case such dependence in itself does not predetermine Wellhausen's methods or the validity of his conclusions (Blenkinsopp, 8-11).

There is, however, a certain degree of truth in this critique of nineteenth-century scholarship, since Vatke himself made no secret of his own Hegelian positions (Kraus, 194-99; Thompson, 22-24). The Hegelian principles that had the greatest impact on Vatke by his own admission were the idea of development, an emphasis on comparative religions, and the dialectic between the "religion of nature" and "religion of spiritual individuality," in which Hegel perceived a gradual movement toward ideas of divine transcendence and away from cruder ideas of divine immanence in nature (Rogerson 1985, 70-71). Thus Vatke argued that Israel's religion was primitive and naturalistic during the judges period and the early monarchy (thesis). During the later monarchy and the age of the prophets, Israel's religion emphasized a more personal and spiritual God (antithesis). The postexilic period institutionalized and legislated Israelite faith (synthesis). This evolutionary (or dialectical) approach to Israel's religion became a powerful influence on later OT scholars.

Vatke's developmental approach led him to an innovative suggestion concerning Israelite law and the legal sections of the Pentateuch. He concluded that the law of the OT appeared at the *end* of Israel's religious heritage rather than at the beginning, as the Bible claims (Vatke; Rogerson 1985, 69-78). Vatke's argument that the legal regulations of the Pentateuch were actually composed during the exilic and postexilic periods did not meet with instant approval. But this feature of his work would eventually become the linchpin for the source-critical approach to the Pentateuch.

2.4. Hermann W. Hupfeld and Eduard Riehm. In the mid-nineteenth century these two scholars made adjustments in the documentary approach that would eventually win wide acceptance. In 1853 Hupfeld argued for the presence of three self-contained documents behind the Pentateuch: E^1, E^2 and J. The framework of the whole was provided by E^1, which was the foundational document for the others. J was a continuous document that had been woven together with E^2 (Rogerson 1985, 131-34). In 1853, Riehm identified Deuteronomy as a self-contained, independent source. Thus the four main sources for the Pentateuch were established, though the sequence would change: E^1, E^2, J and D.

2.5. Karl H. Graf and Abraham Kuenen. Initially Karl H. Graf agreed with the Hupfeld sequence of the documentary sources (E^1-E^2-J-D), but he eventually became convinced by the arguments that the law came late in Israel's history. In 1865 he used the fixed date of D (622 B.C., following de Wette) and effectively convinced the scholarly world that E^1 was exilic, establishing the sequence E^2-J-D-E^1. He suggested a significant role for Ezra in the exile, who supposedly compiled the priestly and legal materials in E^1 and later combined them with E^2, J and D to form the Pentateuch (Rogerson 1985, 258-59). Because of the effective way in which Graf argued for the lateness of the priestly legal materials of the Pentateuch, the Documentary Hypothesis that won the day is often known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

Subsequently, Abraham Kuenen reversed the sequence of the first two sources, arguing that the Yahwist (or J author) was the earliest of the four authors, thus establishing the sequence J-E^2-D-E^1. By proposing dates for the composition of the individual sources, Graf and Kuenen elevated source criticism beyond its earlier attempts and began to move in the direction of historical criticism (De Vries, 56-76). This would further set the stage for Julius Wellhausen, whose synthesis of previous work and whose articulation of the Documentary Hypothesis would make him the most significant pentateuchal theorist of the century.

2.6. Julius Wellhausen. Since Eichhorn's day, European OT scholars had been concerned with two main questions: How does one explain the unity of the Pentateuch in light of the sources it used? And, what were the basic characterizing features of each of the documents themselves? After a century of scholarship, most believed the latter question had been answered. The J-E^2-D-E^1 analysis of Graf and Kuenen was widely accepted as self-evident for most scholars near the end of the nineteenth century. But the problem of a unified composition remained. Given the differences in style, vocabulary, theological conceptions and the like, how does one explain the unity of the present arrangement of the Pentateuch?

It was in this atmosphere that Julius Wellhausen gave culminating expression to the documentary approach. With exceptional acumen and clarity, he was able to combine the prevalent source theory of Graf and Kuenen with skillful historical criticism in a way that appeared to explain the unity question. Within a few decades of his work, the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis (also known as the Documentary Hypothesis) had swept the scholarly world. It remains today as one of the leading theories of pentateuchal composition.

Most surveys of Wellhausen's work focus on his monumental history of Israel (two German editions under different titles in 1878 and 1883, but available in English translation since 1885; see Wellhausen 1983). This is the work in which Wellhausen drew together influential ideas from other scholars of the nineteenth century, combining them with his own understanding of pentateuchal composition with such rhetorical and persuasive force that the book became a watershed contribution in OT research generally. But his critical positions on pentateuchal composition were already put forth in a series of articles in 1876-1877, which established the foundation for his subsequent history of Israel. These articles were reprinted in 1889 as *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments,* which is arguably more important to this review of his work (Rogerson 1985, 260).

It is somewhat simplistic to view Wellhausen as the great "documentarian," for he also espoused *supplementary* approaches in his understanding of the history of J and E. Wellhausen sought to redefine the process of composition as not simply an editorial "scissors and paste" process. He pictured redactors who were not merely compilers but who freely shaped, reshaped and in some cases authored materials. By the time J and E had been combined into JE, these sources had gone through their own complex supplementation and transmission history. Subsequently, a redactor (R^{JE}) combined these sources,

which could just as easily be designated J^3 and E^3 because of their own extensive supplementation history. Wellhausen called this redactor the Jehovist, reserving the term Yahwist for the earlier narrative source J (Elohist for E). In sum, Wellhausen saw the Jehovist (R^{JE}) as the creator of the Hexateuch. He had so thoroughly reworked and combined the earlier J and E materials that Wellhausen seldom attempted to reach behind the Jehovist, believing that it was nearly impossible to separate the two (especially in the *Jacob narrative of Genesis and later sections of Numbers).

Wellhausen assumed, with his predecessors, that the core of the book of Deuteronomy had been composed in the seventh century. Now it remained to argue that a later redaction of the book was combined with R^{JE}, resulting in the JE+D work. Further, Wellhausen argued for the existence of an additional self-contained narrative from the early postexilic period, which took the form of a history similar to that of J and E. This document broadly traced four *covenants (those of *Adam, *Noah, *Abraham and the Sinai covenant), which served as the framework for extensive priestly legal additions and ultimately as the framework for the Pentateuch as we have it today. Wellhausen designated the original document Q (*quattuor*, "four," for the four covenants), which was then expanded by a mass of priestly legislation, and perhaps several other editions, resulting in a "Priestly Code," or P (materials that had been designated E^1 by previous scholars). Finally, the last major redaction of the Pentateuch combined JED with P, the so-called Priestly redaction (R^P), resulting in the Pentateuch substantially as we know it today. Wellhausen thus bequeathed to scholarship the now familiar designation JEDP, in that particular order of composition (Nicholson, 3-28; Rogerson 1985, 260-68).

The contributions of Wellhausen are undeniable. First, more successfully than any of his predecessors, he argued for the lateness of Israelite law and its various redactions, which resulted in P. Wellhausen's fundamental assumption was that pentateuchal law appeared at the beginning of the *Jewish* state (that is, in the postexilic period) rather than at the beginning of *Israelite* history (Wellhausen 1983, 1-4). Second, after a period of time in which the "Older Documentary Hypothesis" of Astruc, Eichhorn and Ilgen had been replaced by various supplementary and fragmentary theories, Wellhausen inaugurated an era of general consensus on the documents of the Pentateuch and their transmission history (the so-called "New Documentary Hypothesis"). Third, he brilliantly correlated his three main sources (JE, D and P) with the religious and political history of ancient Israel, appearing to explain the unity of the Pentateuch as we have it today. Thus, JE came to be seen as a product of the divided monarchy, D a product of the seventh century and the Josianic reforms, and P a product of the postexilic restoration (Rogerson 1985, 266).

Wellhausen had convincingly united the results of source criticism with the nineteenth century's understanding of the historical and religious institutions in ancient Israel. It seemed that all the questions had been answered. His presentation was so compelling and persuasive that, by the turn of the century, Wellhausen's reconstruction had convinced most of the scholarly world, including scholars in England and America.

3. Early and Mid-Twentieth Century.

OT scholarship during the first half of the twentieth century was characterized by modifications of Wellhausen's hypothesis and by scholarly refinement of the so-called assured results of the researches of the nineteenth century. Additionally, there were new explorations of the traditions *behind* the established sources and new approaches based on archaeology and the maturing of ancient Near Eastern studies. The following is a brief survey of the most significant developments of the early twentieth century.

3.1. William F. Albright. Just as Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen were giving shape to the Documentary Hypothesis, an entirely new field of research was developing. Egyptian hieroglyphics and Mesopotamian cuneiform had been deciphered in the mid-nineteenth century, and thousands of written documents from the ancient Near East began yielding their secrets. Though ancient Near Eastern research has long since developed into a scientific field of study in its own right, it has had a long relationship with OT studies. Since the world of the OT is the ancient Near East and the books of the OT are products of that ancient culture, these discoveries were immediately brought to bear on the Bible. The first half of the twentieth century was a remarkable period of archaeological discovery, and the fields of Assyriology, Egyptology and Syro-Palestinian archaeology came of age.

The application of these new disciplines to OT studies was most evident in the prodigious works of William F. Albright and his many students in the United States. Albright was an individual of immense gifts and talents who made significant and lasting contributions to the study of ancient languages, archaeology and ancient Near Eastern history in general. His continuing influence on OT studies in particular makes him perhaps the most significant scholar in this field in the twentieth century (Bright 1979, 13; Machinist).

It is not accurate to say that this great mass of new information from the ancient world somehow proved the Bible right or directly related to the problem of the composition of the Pentateuch. In fact, rare is the ancient Near Eastern discovery that has any *direct* connection with an OT event or person. But the burgeoning new field of ancient Near Eastern studies provided an external source of information, which many felt could serve as a check on the speculations of earlier OT scholars. The American Albright "school" contended that archaeology and ancient Near Eastern studies provided hard facts, objective evidence of an ancient world very much like the one described in the Pentateuch, and that properly defined comparative methods were more fruitful than the subjective and unverifiable constructions of nineteenth-century European scholars. Such a perspective was largely a North American phenomenon, partly because it was American excavators and their institutional sponsors who introduced modern scientific techniques into archaeological exploration (along with Kathleen Kenyon in Great Britain).

Albright and his students did not reject the Wellhausian documentary approach, though they challenged the developmental process and the provenances of the sources. They used archaeological parallels to argue for the plausibility of the ancestral traditions of Genesis and the general trustworthiness of other events of pentateuchal history. They reconstructed the history of Israel in ways that called into question the evolutionary and developmental assumptions of the Wellhausen school (pride of place goes here to the classic history of John Bright). In general, Albright objected to the standard nineteenth-century history-of-religion trajectory, especially the conviction that religion moves from polytheism to henotheism to monotheism. He argued that monotheism existed early in Israel's history, a conviction that is best articulated in his classic volume, *From the Stone Age to Christianity.* In general, the American Albright school and its emphasis on archaeology and comparative methodologies can be said to have restrained the excesses of the "assured results" of critical scholarship (at least in the United States).

3.2. Hermann Gunkel. One of the most important developments of the post-Wellhausen decades was the rise of form criticism, which attempted to trace the fundamental ideas of the ancient Israelites back to their preliterary stage. Form criticism has sometimes been viewed as an alternative to source criticism with its speculation about documents and their redaction history. But more often, form criticism has served a complementary role to the results of source criticism, especially with the pioneering scholar who gave definition to the discipline, Hermann Gunkel. Gunkel wrote important works on Genesis, most notably his 1895 volume on creation and chaos, which covered the opening chapters of Genesis (followed subsequently by a more detailed treatment in 1901).

Though Gunkel accepted the basic Documentary Hypothesis as defined by Wellhausen, his approach implied a fundamental criticism of Wellhausen as well. He believed that behind the J and E sources of Genesis were collections of sagas preserved orally for centuries, instead of relatively late writings of a few great individual authors. Gunkel was in many ways closer to the fragmentary hypothesis of the early nineteenth century. Since many of these sagas were preserved accurately, they may in some cases preserve historical kernels of truth. In some ways, the new form criticism was affirming in a different way what the growing body of evidence from the ancient Near East was showing. Ultimately, however, the final text and its meaning became less important to some form critics than the oral stages or the situation behind the text. More recently, the whole question of an extended period of oral transmission has been challenged, so that the possibility of an extensive preliterary stage of pentateuchal materials is now in doubt (Van Seters 1975, 131-48).

3.3. Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth. Gunkel's form-critical approaches were continued in the first half of the twentieth century in the influential works of Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth. They applied form-critical techniques to the text in an attempt to discern the nature of OT law, the so-

cial organization and religious beliefs of the early Israelite tribes and biblical history in general (Noth). Much of their reconstruction of patriarchal and premonarchic Israel has not withstood the test of time, but their form-critical investigations did succeed in raising the possibility of historical reality behind the early traditions, which to a large extent had been precluded by adherents of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. For Noth an important common base-text (or "G" for *Grundlage*) of many pentateuchal sources came into existence in the pre-monarchic period and established the decisive stages of the formation of the Pentateuch. Each of the subsequent non-Deuteronomistic sources (J, E and P) was, in Noth's opinion, the work of individual authors relying on G for the nucleus of the content.

3.4. Gerhard von Rad. Gerhard von Rad, utilizing form-critical and redaction-critical approaches, wrote several important works, all assuming the basic validity of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. Von Rad believed that Israel had preserved its basic history in the form of "ancient credos," short historical creeds still apparent in certain passages of the text (particularly Deut 6:20-24; 26:5b-9; Josh 24:2b-13). These creeds were preserved because they had been used for centuries in liturgical affirmations of faith in public acts of worship.

Von Rad believed he could trace the redactional history of these creeds. He concluded that the author of the J document (the Yahwist) had inherited the basic historical outline of God's actions on Israel's behalf and had filled it out with materials from local and tribal sources. The Yahwist was thus the one who gave the Pentateuch its rudimentary form. Since the creeds themselves omitted any reference to the Sinai covenant, von Rad assumed that this element of the Pentateuch had been edited into the whole by J at a later date. Despite the fact that von Rad's reconstruction of the history of these creeds is extremely subjective (as is the role of the Yahwist in editing these materials), his works have had a tremendous impact on OT studies.

4. Late Twentieth Century.

The works of Noth and von Rad had emphasized certain historical dimensions of the early Israelite traditions. Although they did not often agree with the Bible's self-claims, their form-critical investigations allowed some degree of basic historicity behind the oral and written traditions of ancient Israel. Developments during the second half of the twentieth century would challenge even these conclusions.

4.1. Thomas L. Thompson and John Van Seters. Critical investigation of the early Israelite traditions preserved in the Pentateuch reached a turning point in the mid-1970s when two important books were published just a year apart. Thomas L. Thompson's work (1974) refuted the archaeological evidence for a patriarchal age in Israel's history. His was an attack on the widely accepted argument formulated by the Albright school that archaeology and ancient Near Eastern evidence supports a second millennium B.C. setting for the Abraham narratives. Thompson emphasized the patriarchal narratives as literary creations. Instead of traditions that preserved even the smallest trace of reliable history, they were theological stories from later times reflecting an unrealistic worldview. The patriarchal stories were the invention of the J document toward the end of the tenth century or in the ninth century B.C. They contained nothing of historical value whatsoever from Israel's earlier periods.

Likewise, John Van Seters also denied the second-millennium setting for the Abraham narratives (Van Seters 1975). In Van Seters's view, the Abrahamic cycle is an elaborate response to the exilic situation. Abraham himself was a fictional figure, created for theological reasons. Instead of a preexilic editor of oral and written traditions from early in Israel's history, the Yahwist becomes an author who used materials intentionally to compose a unified introduction to the Deuteronomistic History from an exilic perspective. The P material is a postexilic supplement to the Yahwist, resulting in the book of Genesis in its present form about 300 B.C. (Van Seters 1975, 304-8). Van Seters employed form-critical methods to arrive at his conclusions and then supported them with archaeological evidence from the first millennium B.C. He denied the validity of any second-millennium archaeological connections. In a sense, Van Seters revived the supplementary hypothesis, since the exilic J document was then supplemented by a postexilic P document. He questioned completely, however, the existence of an E source.

4.2. Rolf Rendtorff. A major criticism of the Documentary Hypothesis appeared in the 1970s when Rolf Rendtorff offered a new approach to the production of the Pentateuch. Rendtorff ar-

gued that the tradition-critical approaches of his predecessors in Germany, especially those of Noth and von Rad, were incompatible with the classical expression of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. He averred that their method of moving from the smallest units of the text through the larger complexes of tradition and ultimately to the final form of the text left no room for independent literary sources such as J, E and P. Therefore, the classical formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis had to be abandoned.

Instead, Rendtorff argued that the Pentateuch was composed of large strands of material that have been joined end to end. The primeval history (Gen 2—11), the exodus history (Ex 1—15), the Sinai materials (Ex 19—24) and the various cycles of patriarchal narratives were brought together during the time of Solomon. Unlike Thompson and Van Seters, Rendtorff assumed that the various blocks of materials in the Pentateuch reflected a level of actual historical events, and he valued the ancient Near Eastern control data more seriously. Rendtorff in general rejected the classical source analysis of JEDP and its tendency to atomize the text. Specifically, he denied the existence of self-contained J and E documents and suggested a P and eventual D redaction of the whole.

Rendtorff's student Erhard Blum has carried his approach further. Starting with a study of the patriarchal narratives, Blum rejected completely the parallel sources of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, proposing instead a supplementary approach *(Vätergeschichte)*. First the Jacob narrative *(Jakoberzählung)* was composed in the northern kingdom, which was subsequently expanded to include the Joseph story after the fall of Israel to the Assyrians (together making up the *Jakobgeschichte*). After further minor supplementations this narrative was eventually expanded again to include the Abraham and Lot narratives. This resulting document formed the first patriarchal history (*Vätergeschichte,* or Vg^1). This document was further expanded during the Babylonian exile (Vg^2). During the postexilic period, a Deuteronomistic redaction incorporated the patriarchal history with the rest of the Pentateuch. Finally, a Priestly author undertook yet another revision.

4.3. Canonical and Literary Criticism. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, broad new methodologies developed among North American OT scholars. These new approaches were often (though not always) less likely to accept the classical expression of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. Many trace the beginning of these developments to James Muilenburg's presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968 (though this is overly simplistic; Muilenburg). Muilenburg complained that form-critical studies were too atomistic, too narrowly focused on discrete units of Scripture, and he called for a new rhetorical analysis in which scholars would regain an appreciation for larger movements of the text and would retain the historical context. He is most often associated with the rise of "rhetorical criticism."

The rise of so-called canonical criticism is often associated with Brevard S. Childs and James A. Sanders. Sanders, who first coined the term, sought to find evidence of a consistent "canonical hermeneutic" running through the tradition history of Scripture (Sanders). In contrast, Childs rejected the designation "canonical criticism" in order to emphasize that his own approach was not some new exegetical technique but rather a hermeneutical project focusing on canonical context (Childs, 82). He defined his approach as an attempt to go beyond traditional source and form criticism by focusing on the final form or the received, canonical shape of the biblical witness. Childs assumed that the shape itself is integral to a process whereby the continuing significance of the biblical text can be analyzed, which by definition means the modern exegete must go beyond a reconstruction of some theoretical "original" behind the received text. However it is defined by its practitioners, canonical criticism employs all the various critical approaches but tries to use them in a balanced way, avoiding the extremes of each one. While most scholars who have adopted this approach would not necessarily reject the JEDP analysis, they seek to explore the theological message of the received form of the canon, not only the individual sources or literary traditions behind the text.

Literary critics during the closing decades of the twentieth century were less amenable to the older source-critical approaches. *Literary criticism by definition is less concerned with investigating the historical evolution of the text (that is, its diachronic development) and more interested in the literary artistry of the text as it now stands (that is, its synchronic structure; for overview of the many scholars involved and critique, see Longman).

5. Conclusion.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the collapse of the older consensus on the Documentary Hypothesis and its various applications in form and tradition criticism. Recent decades have brought new challenges to the criteria used by scholars for source identification. The nature of the sources themselves and their respective dates of composition are much in doubt, and alleged archaeological parallels are often in dispute (on the development since 1970, see Wenham). There has not been a total collapse of the Documentary Hypothesis, however, since many scholars continue to work with this theory or from one of its many modifications.

The various critical methodologies are not inherently antisupernaturalistic. Indeed, they are necessary for serious biblical studies and productive in the hands of scholars who respect the unique nature of the Bible. Christian scholars most naturally embrace the concept of divine intervention, which must also be brought together with the intellectual achievements of modern Western civilization. A Christian approach to the biblical text will be a holistic view, which means it will never appropriate only that portion which can be squeezed into a predetermined naturalistic system. Christian scholars should apply the best of their critical skills to the text while always remaining open to divine intervention in the world and in history (Abraham, 187-89). Finally, scholars working on these issues need constant reminders that every hypothesis growing from the critical methodologies is inherently speculative, and indeed must be so. For this reason hypotheses are always in flux and conclusions tentative.

See also AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; FORM CRITICISM; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; SOURCE CRITICISM; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

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PENTECOST. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

PERIZITTES. *See* NATIONS OF CANAAN.

PESHITTA. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

PHARAOH

The Hebrew word *pharaoh (par^{c}ōh; LXX: Pharaō; cf. Akkadian pi-ir-^{3}u-u),* occurring 216 times in the Pentateuch, is a loanword from Egyptian *Pr-^{c}3,* which literally means "(the) Great House," originally referring to the royal palace. It was only later, especially in the Eighteenth Dynasty, perhaps sometime during or prior to the reign of Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.; names and dates follow Kitchen), that *pharaoh* began to be applied to the ruler's person. From the time of Shoshenq I (945-924 B.C.), the term was sometimes included in the titularies of royal inscriptions, and later in the Twenty-Second Dynasty (945-715 B.C.) it was included in the cartouche. By the seventh century it was little more than a synonym for "king" and was conjoined with the proper name (see Redford; Osing; Gardiner; Cazelles, 6.761-62; *HALOT* 3.971).

Four pharaohs are mentioned by name in the Old Testament: "Shishak" = Shoshenq I (1 Kings 14:25), "Tirhakah" = Taharqa (690-664 B.C.; 2 Kings 19:9), "Neco" = Necho II (610-595 B.C.; 2 Kings 23:29) and "Hophra" = Apries (589-570 B.C.; Jer 44:30). Only the last two are explicitly called "pharaoh," while the former are designated kings *(melek).* A fifth pharaoh might be referred to in 2 Kings 17:4, which names a king *(melek)* "So." Since no such pharaoh is known from Egyptian records, the passage is controversial. "So" may be a hypocoristicon for Osorkon (IV [?] 730-715 B.C.) or an epithet, "the Saite" (= Tefnakht [?], 727-720 B.C.; see Meltzer). Whatever the case, none of these references to the pharaoh by name are to be found in the

Pentateuch, which uses the word in its generic sense as a royal title, even though this is anachronistic prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty (1550-1295 B.C.).

1. The Pharaoh in Egyptian History and Literature
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1. The Pharaoh in Egyptian History and Literature.

The third-century B.C. Egyptian priest Manetho is credited with first organizing the history of Egyptian kingship into thirty consecutive dynasties (later, a thirty-first dynasty was added; see Waddell), and his schema, despite its many problems, has remained standard. Subsequent refinement of the Manethonian dynasties by scholars on the basis of further research and other sources (e.g., the Turin Canon) has produced the following periodization of Egyptian history:

Predynastic (c. 4000-3000 B.C.)
Archaic/Early Dynastic (Dynasties 1-2; c. 3000-2700 B.C.)
Old Kingdom (Dynasties 3-8; c. 2700-2160 B.C.)
First Intermediate Period (Dynasties 9-10; c. 2160-2010 B.C.)
Middle Kingdom (Dynasties 11-12; c. 2106-1786 B.C.)
Second Intermediate Period (Dynasties 13-17; c. 1786-1550 B.C.)
New Kingdom (Dynasties 18-20; c. 1550-1069 B.C.)
Third Intermediate Period (Dynasties 21-25; c. 1069-656 B.C.)
Saite-Persian Period (Dynasties 26-"31"; c. 664-332 B.C.)

Pharaonic kingship remained remarkably stable throughout this great sweep of history, despite many political and historical crises and developments. Pharaonic imagery is evident as early as the Naqada I period (c. 3700-3500 B.C.; see Williams). This early imagery often proved formative for subsequent periods (e.g., the smiting pose on the Palette of Narmer; Smith, figs. 13-14). Indeed, the preference for the typical and ideal in presentations of the pharaoh—both iconographical and literary—complicates any attempt to press behind them for information on the individuality of the rulers themselves. The iconography, for example, typically depicts the pharaoh in ideal fashion, at his or her (female pharaohs were rare, but note Hatshepsut [1479-1457 B.C.]) prime, youthful and strong. Notable exceptions to this statement—for example, the distinctive style of Akhenaten (1352-1336 B.C.) and the Amarna age (see Smith, 314-38) or the pensive face of Sesostris III (1862-1843 B.C.; see Aldred, fig. 84), stand out due to their unusual nature. Such idealization of the king is equally evident in Egyptian literature. There the pharaohs often portrayed their own accomplishments by using the very words of their predecessors—indeed, even by reusing lists of their deeds. As B. J. Kemp has put it, this "impressive facade of uniformity and continuity presented by inscriptions and monuments" hinders the historical task as it indubitably "hides a complex and changing political scene" (Kemp, 73).

Nevertheless, several important things about the pharaoh's position as king of Egypt are known. Most prominent of these is the centrality of the pharaoh in Egyptian society. Pharaoh was lawgiver, judge and, in theory at least, the only true priest to the gods, despite the fact that he delegated the actual duties of the various temples to others (Morenz; Hornung 1999; Baines). Yet this centrality was not only political or religious—if indeed these can be separated in antiquity—it was also cosmological. Kingship was introduced at the time of creation: the creator-god was the first king (see *ANET,* 3-4), and according to the Memphite theology Horus was the first king of Egypt (*ANET,* 4-6; *AEL* 1.51-57). Subsequent kings—those of hoary antiquity prior to the First Dynasty—were thought to be demigods (see Waddell).

With such royal ancestors, the office that the king held clearly had divine origins and connections. But was the pharaoh himself divine? This has been the subject of much recent debate, though most scholars would agree that the pharaohs claimed divine status from the very beginning. Later texts from Luxor and Deir el-Bahari indicate that the pharaoh was actually the offspring of Amun-Re and the queen mother (see Frankfort 1948b, 40-47). The king's status may perhaps best be captured in the royal titulary, which, in its fully developed form, included five names: (1) the Horus name, indicating that the pharaoh was the earthly incarnation of that deity; (2) the *nebty,* or "Two Ladies," name, so called after the vulture goddess Nekhbet of Upper Egypt and the cobra goddess Edjo (or Wadjet) of Lower Egypt, signifying the monarch's

role in uniting the two lands; (3) the golden Horus name; (4) the *prenomen*, usually assumed upon accession to the throne and containing the name of the sun god Re, which followed the title "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" (lit., "he of the Sedge and the Bee *[n-sw-bỉt]*"; and (5) the *nomen* proper preceded (beginning with the Fifth Dynasty) by the title "Son of Re" (Frankfort 1948b, 46-47; Gardiner 1973, 71-76). Hence, the monarch was the earthly embodiment of Horus and the true offspring of Re. The monarch was often called the "good god" *(nṯr nfr)* while alive and was identified with Osiris upon death. It would thus seem that B. J. Kemp is correct in his assessment that "divine kingship is the most striking feature of Egypt" in the Old and Middle Kingdoms (Kemp, 71). Such a perspective, which received its fullest scholarly expression in the important monograph of H. Frankfort (1948b), finds support in many texts, not the least in the Autobiography of Rekhmire, lines 17b-18a: "What (?) is the king of Upper Egypt? What (?) is the king of Lower Egypt? He is a god by whose dealings one lives. [He is] the father and the mother [of all men]; alone by himself, without an equal" (Gardiner 1925, 69; cf. also *ANET,* 431).

Nevertheless, more recent Egyptological work has challenged the pharaoh-as-divine consensus (see O'Connor and Silverman). Two works published in 1960 (Goedicke; Posener) cast serious doubt on the pharaoh's fully divine status. H. Goedicke pointed out that even in the Old Kingdom varying terminology distinguished the individual personage of the king from the holder of the divine office proper. This led to the doctrine of the king's "two bodies" (*ḥm* and *nỉswt;* see Morenz, 37). G. Posener's work went further, stressing the many and significant ways in which the king differed from the gods, showing that he was, therefore, their inferior. This research has led most Egyptologists to speak now of a human being in a divine office who, upon ascending the throne and fulfilling the roles and duties of the kingship, became "suffused with the same divinity manifest in his office and the gods themselves" (O'Connor and Silverman, xxv; cf. Baines, 6). Pharaoh was thus "divine but not a god" (Hornung 1999, 4) and might best be termed an intermediary between the gods and humankind (Baines).

Various items support this non- or semidivine interpretation: (1) there was very little worship of the monarch while living, at least on Egyptian soil (Erman, 58; Baines, 3); (2) some of the clearest references to the king as a god—for instance, as Re or Osiris, in the Pyramid Texts—refer to the deceased king (see Morenz, 37-39); (3) even if the king was divinized, this probably only occurred on the occasion of coronation (Hornung 1982, 142; Morenz 38, Hoffmeier 1997b; Erman, 56). Indeed, the development seems to move from an original identification (god-king) that was later reduced to incarnation (king *as* god), thereby making the king an intermediary but not a god "in the full sense of the word" (Morenz, 37). Such a weakening or diminution can be traced in the iconography as well, where earlier presentations portray the king as one with Horus (e.g., the Fourth Dynasty statue of Khafre and Horus; Smith, fig. 107). Later second-millennium pieces begin to portray the king differently, though he is still identified with the divine office (e.g., the Eleventh Dynasty statue of Mentuhotep II [2033-1982 B.C.]; Smith, fig. 151). The realistic presentation of Dynasty Twelve statuary (e.g., Sesostris III; see above) emphasizes the king's humanity in a way that is unmistakable. The New Kingdom continues this humanizing trend, despite a brief break during the Amarna age, and culminates in the presentations of Ramesses II's battle at Kadesh (c. 1274 B.C.). Although Ramesses presented the battle in both art and text as a stunning victory, other sources reveal it was more like a narrow escape—a successful retreat perhaps, but one that served to underscore the humanity and finitude of the pharaoh (see Groenewegen-Frankfort, 129-38).

Still, this weakening process was slow, and the power and importance of the pharaoh—attested above all in the endurance of the institution of kingship—should not be doubted, whatever the details of his divine or semidivine status. Indeed, the debate continues: the king's titles and epithets equate him with the gods, even if it is equally true that he is not their equal in capacity or quality (Hornung 1982, 141-42). So at the very least, "the king *reveals* the deity by being a visible incarnation of it" (Morenz, 41; cf. O'Connor and Silverman, xxv).

2. The Pharaoh in Pentateuchal History.

The debate on the king's status is of particular importance for an assessment of the pharaoh in pentateuchal literature (see 3 below). Before ad-

dressing that subject, it must first be noted that the problems inherent in historical treatments of the king in Egyptian history also obtain for the biblical materials. Indeed, these problems are compounded by the fact that in the large majority of cases—indeed, all instances in the Pentateuch proper—Pharaoh goes *unnamed.* This unfortunate situation precludes certain identification of these pharaohs with those of Egyptian history, barring further epigraphic discovery. Indeed, even deciding which general period or dynasty of Egyptian history to focus on proves a formidable task, as different scholars propose different (sometimes radically so) dates for the ancestral period(s) and for the exodus. Hence, very little can be said of the historical personage of the pharaoh in the Genesis accounts of *Abraham (Gen 12) and *Joseph (Gen 37—50) other than what was said above about the role of the pharaoh in Egyptian society generally (but see further below on Pharaoh's literary character). Even so, two important questions must be addressed, especially in regard to the pharaohs mentioned in the book of Exodus.

2.1. Who Is the Pharaoh of the Exodus? Given the situation described above, an answer to this question is not forthcoming, as both the pharaoh of the oppression/slavery and the pharaoh of the exodus go unnamed. Inferences can be drawn, of course, and candidates identified, but these are dependent on the hotly contested question of the date and historicity of the exodus (see Frerichs and Lesko; Hoffmeier 1997a). It must suffice here to say that, despite some who continue to argue for an early date in the fifteenth century, the majority of scholars agree on a thirteenth-century date for the exodus (*see* Exodus, Date of). This would make Ramesses II (1279-1213 B.C.) the pharaoh of the exodus (or, less probably, Merenptah [1213-1203 B.C.]); the preceding pharaoh (see Ex 2:23) would thus be Seti I (1294-1279 B.C.). To be sure, problems remain with such identifications, but the indirect evidence—especially the rise of the highland villages in the central hill country of Palestine and the Merenptah Stela—clearly points toward the thirteenth-century horizon (see Hoffmeier 1997a).

2.2. Why Is the Pharaoh Unnamed? The preceding paragraph assumes, of course, that there is something historical to the exodus traditions. Yet this is a point that has not gone unchallenged in recent scholarship, some of which has questioned the historical veracity of the accounts on the very basis that the important kings of this event are not identified by name (e.g., Dever, 68). But this situation need not necessarily indicate ahistoricity, as several reasons have been proffered for the lack of a pharaonic personal name—at least in the case of the exodus narratives. F. J. Yurco, for instance, has pointed out that Pharaoh's name is often omitted in administrative documents (Yurco, 50). J. K. Hoffmeier has raised other possibilities, including the fact that the term "Pharaoh" was often self-standing until the tenth century (Hoffmeier 1997a, 87-88; see above), a pattern that is repeated in the biblical literature (no proper names attached until "Shishak"). Hoffmeier also points to the Egyptian practice of not naming Egypt's enemies, at least in official inscriptions. If it could be demonstrated that Israel adopted the same practice in its own literature—but, ironically, *against* the very culture from which it derived the convention—then the lack of a name might actually be an argument (from silence, of course) *in favor* of the historicity or early nature of the tradition rather than an example of its lateness or ignorance, especially since first-millennium biblical and Egyptian sources, perhaps under Neo-Assyrian influence, typically detailed enemy personal names (see Hoffmeier 1997a, 109-12). Alternatively, the lack of enemy names, and perhaps the lack of a name for Pharaoh in the Pentateuch, could be a case of deliberate elimination akin to defacement, the *damnatio memoriae* (Hoffmeier 1997a, 111; cf. the Execration Texts, see *ANET,* 328-29). Whatever the precise case, the name of one of the pharaohs may be preserved in Exodus 1:11, which indicates that the Israelite slaves built Pithom and Rameses (Heb Raamses; see Yurco; Hoffmeier 1997a).

3. The Pharaoh in Pentateuchal Literature.

Yet another reason that Pharaoh goes unnamed may be *theological* in nature: perhaps it is already a hint that the pharaoh has become a larger-than-life figure, one that functions on a literary, narratival and theological level quite irrespective of his function in history. J. K. Hoffmeier, for instance, notes that the exodus narrative primarily witnesses to Yahweh, not Pharaoh; it is thus not surprising that we know so much about the former from these texts and so little of the latter (Hoffmeier 1997a, 109-12; cf. Ex 5:2). Even

in the Joseph cycle, Pharaoh is powerful and yet powerless, despotic and yet determined by a will not his own, self-sufficient and yet massively reliant on Yahweh's chosen servant, Joseph, and therefore also on Yahweh (see Green; Burns). Pharaoh is subordinate, dominated by Joseph (Gen 45:8) and twice-blessed by *Jacob (Gen 47:7, 10). J. B. Burns has pressed these points to their fullest extent, suggesting that the writers of the OT "wage relentless war on pharaoh" (Burns, 17). The fact that few pharaohs are named in Scripture actually proves the point: "Pharaoh plays, for the most part, a theological rather than a historical role," and that role is that of "the enemy *par excellence*" (Burns, 17; cf. Brueggemann 1997, 504-6; 1995).

Hence, subtle theological reasoning may be at work in the presentation of the pharaoh—even in his nonidentification—in the Pentateuch. Indeed, the work of W. Brueggemann, J. B. Burns and B. Green not only serves to deemphasize the historical problems but may also help in addressing long-debated and highly vexed questions such as the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (for the terms utilized and the sources, see Childs 1974, 170-75; Wilson). The *sklerokardia* ("hard heart") passages (Ex 4:21; 7:3, 13, 14, 22; 8:11, 15, 28 [MT 8:15, 19, 32]; 9:7, 12, 34, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8; cf. 1 Sam 6:6) are exceedingly complex and deserve extended treatment (see Wilson; *see* Hardness of Heart; Exodus, Book of, §7.3); only a few comments can be made here. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is obviously connected to the plague narratives (cf. Ex 11:9) and has been variously explained, though attempts to relate the motif to psychological states or theories of divine causality are best avoided (Childs 1974, 174). The plagues themselves have been interpreted as naturalistic phenomena, "decreation" or polemic against various Egyptian deities (see Currid, 108-17; Hoffmeier 1997a, 146-51; Zevit). Each of these interpretations has strengths and weaknesses. It might be noted in the case of the last, for instance, that no Egyptian deities are named apart from the general reference in Exodus 12:12. However, to return to an earlier point, Pharaoh *is* mentioned numerous times. If he is understood as a divine figure, or at least as a representation and incarnation of the Egyptian high god Amun-Re, the hardening of his heart serves to highlight several critical issues: (1) the pharaoh's lack of divine powers vis-à-vis Yahweh, indicating that he is no god or at least no god like Yahweh; (2) the pharaoh's inability to maintain Ma^{c}at (*m$_{3}$^{c}t*), or order, a crucial concept in Egyptian society and a major task of the king (see Currid, 118-20; Frankfort 1948a, 53-56; Hoffmeier 1997a, 151-55); (3) Yahweh's ability to "get glory over pharaoh" (Ex 14:4, 17-18 [2x]); and (4) Yahweh's ability to bring judgment on Egypt—even on its gods (Ex 12:12; Num 33:4).

The hardening serves, in this scenario, to exalt Yahweh while at the same time severely challenging Pharaoh's authority, power and status—not to mention Pharaoh's (and Egypt's) religious system. It may even cast doubt on Pharaoh's *character*, as Egyptian scenes of final judgment often depicted the weighing of the heart. If a person's heart was too heavy (cf. *kābēd* in Ex 7:14; 8:11, 28 [MT 8:15, 32]; 9:7, 34; 10:1), he or she was doomed (Currid, 102-3). Pharaoh, the quasi-cosmic, semidivine if not fully divine, archenemy of Yahweh and Yahweh's people (see, e.g., Ex 1:8-11, 22; 2:15; 5:6-9) is thus, in the final analysis, little more than a puppet on Yahweh's strings—judged, controlled, defeated.

Whether or not Pharaoh's role as archantagonist to Yahweh in the exodus narratives can be stereotyped and applied elsewhere in the Pentateuch or the Bible (so Burns) must be decided by the individual texts themselves. It may be that the texts will refine such an analysis. Even so, in another context, S. R. A. Starbuck has recently argued on the basis of (Egyptian) comparative evidence that the royal psalms *intentionally* suppressed the regnal name of the king so as to democratize and theologize (perhaps, to an extent, even dehistoricize, if not demythologize) them for later audiences. Might the same be happening in the pentateuchal references to Pharaoh? Could it be that earlier versions of at least some of these stories once contained regnal names but that these were later omitted by canonical editors (cf. the dynamics discussed in Childs 1979)? Of course one cannot say for certain, but if so, such a situation would highlight two insights: (1) the (relative) unimportance of the actual, "historic" pharaoh of the narratives; and (2) the importance of Pharaoh as a theological figure—especially as an adversary humbled by God and God's servants—serving, thereby, as a useful pedagogical tool (see Deut 6:20-25, 29:2-3 [MT 29:1-2]). Indeed, the defeat of Pharaoh—named or not—is nothing short of paradigmatic (see Deut 7:17-19).

See also EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; EXODUS, BOOK OF; EXODUS, DATE OF; HARDNESS OF HEART.

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PILGRIMAGE FEASTS. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; RELIGION.

PILLAR OF FIRE. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

PLAGUES. *See* EGYPT, EGYPTIANS; EXODUS, BOOK OF; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; MOSES; SIGNS AND WONDERS.

POETICS. *See* LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM.

POLLUTION. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

POLYGAMY. *See* FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

POMEGRANATES. *See* AGRICULTURE.

POSTMODERN INTERPRETATION. *See* HERMENEUTICS.

POTTERY. *See* ARTS AND CRAFTS.

POVERTY. *See* WEALTH AND POVERTY.

PREACHING FROM THE PENTATEUCH

S. Greidanus laments the fact that the vast majority of Christian preachers seldom if ever base their sermons on any of the material found in the OT. He writes: "Statistics are hard to come by, but from reports of several denominations it is safe to conclude that fewer than 20 percent of the sermons the average church member hears are based on an Old Testament text. This figure is all the more telling when we remember that the Old Testament constitutes about three-fourths of the Christian canon" (Greidanus, 15). A similar point is made by M. Duduit, editor of *Preaching* magazine, who observes, "I annually receive hundreds of sermon manuscripts from ministers in a variety of Protestant denominations. Less than one-tenth of the sermons submitted to *Preaching* are based on Old Testament texts" (Duduit, 9).

Is this absence of OT preaching based on the belief that the OT is not authoritative for Christians? Is the OT the story of the people of Israel with no relevance or importance to the followers of Jesus Christ? Perhaps Christian preachers avoid the OT, or at least the vast majority of it, because they do not know what to do with the customs and culture of that ancient society. What is a Christian to do with animal *sacrifice, male *circumcision and dietary codes that exclude shrimp and pork? What use can a Christian preacher make of religious *festivals based on an agricultural cycle that has no relevance for modern industrial society? Most troubling for many is belief in a God who is known as a holy warrior and who orders the wholesale slaughter of thousands of people who are guilty of nothing more than not being members of the Hebrew nation. For many Christian preachers, the wisest course of action seems to be to avoid the OT altogether.

E. Achtemeier suggests that the OT fell out of favor among Christian preachers as early as the eighteenth century and the age of rationalism. The basis for dismissing it was the widely held view that the content of the OT was the description of what was viewed as a "primitive religion" (Achtemeier 1973, 28). She also states: "The Old Testament was considered to be simply the history of the first stages in man's spiritual evolution, whose lower ideas of God and faith had subsequently been superseded by the higher spiritual truths of Christianity. The Old Testament had no revelatory value in itself. It was simply the historical preparation for the New Testament" (Achtemeier 1973, 30).

1. The Necessity of Preaching from the Old Testament
2. Preaching from the Pentateuch
3. Principles for Christian Preaching from the Old Testament

1. The Necessity of Preaching from the Old Testament.

What must be understood, however, is that it is essential that Christian preachers make regular use of the OT if they are to fulfill the challenge of Paul, who said, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). There are several compelling reasons why preaching from the OT is essential for Christians. First and most important, it is impossible to understand the ministry of Jesus and Paul or the theology of the NT without having a deep and reverent understanding of the OT in general and the Pentateuch in particular. The OT is a part of the Christian canon. Its thirty-nine books are an inseparable and invaluable portion of the church's authoritative text. The second reason the OT must be read, preached from and learned from is that it is the material that served as Holy Scripture for Jesus, the apostles and the NT church. Before the Epistles and Gospels had been written, the writings that we call the OT provided the theological concepts and vocabulary, the historical framework and the religious rituals and practices without which the ministry and teachings of Jesus cannot be understood.

1.1. The Old Testament as the Theological Foundation of Christianity. If someone were somehow determined never to preach from the OT, this person would be unable to make much sense of preferred NT texts, because so much of the NT is dependent on the OT for its language, theology and historical perspective. How does one understand the incarnation of Jesus or the mission of the church in the world without first understanding the central concept of a God who

works in and through history to create a people who will live in obedience to his revealed will? How does one understand the concept of the church described in 1 Peter 2:9 as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" without referring back to the OT concept of Israel as the chosen people of God first mentioned in Exodus 19:6?

1.2. The Old Testament as the Bible for Jesus and the Early Church. How many times does Jesus quote from the OT? This fact alone forces anyone who seeks to preach from one of those texts to go back to that passage to grasp more fully what Jesus is now saying about himself, some doctrinal issue or some controversial question put to him by his critics. For example, in Luke 4:16-21 Jesus returns to his boyhood home of Nazareth, enters the synagogue and reads from the Isaiah scroll. He then says that the passages in Isaiah 61 pertaining to the *Messiah have been fulfilled. Not only must preachers go back and study the Isaiah passage, but they must also come to some informed understanding of the meaning of Messiah, the Spirit of the Lord and the year of Jubilee.

Later in that same passage, Jesus speaks of the love of God extending to Naaman the Syrian in the days of Elisha and to a woman of Sidon in the days of Elijah. Strangely, those comments draw a more hostile response from those gathered in the synagogue in Nazareth than does the idea that comments about the Messiah are being fulfilled in the life and ministry of the man before them. This inevitably forces the preacher back to the relevant passages in 2 Kings. More important, it begs the question of Jewish nationalism tied to the concept of the chosen people that made it difficult for them to imagine the love of God extending beyond themselves, least of all to the hated and despised Syrians and Phoenicians. Thus, this critical passage about the identity of Jesus as the fulfillment of messianic promises cannot be grasped without going back to its OT roots.

Jesus repeatedly refers to such OT characters as *Abraham, *Isaac, *Jacob, *Moses, Jonah, David, Daniel, *Noah, Isaiah, Solomon, Elijah and many more. He refers to such OT events as the *flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the persecution of the prophets. He also draws heavily from OT images and language during the week prior to his death. The Palm Sunday procession is best understood over against Zechariah 9. When he cleanses the temple, casting out those who exchanged money and sold birds and animals that were to be used as acts of atonement, he references Isaiah 56:7. The Lord's Supper is developed out of the context of the observance of a Passover meal. And during his crucifixion Jesus utters a groan in the words of Psalm 22. In short, it is impossible to understand much, if anything at all, about the life and ministry of Jesus without conceding the importance he placed on the OT. If it was important to his self-understanding, we must turn regularly to that material when we plan our preaching.

Jesus made great use of materials from the Pentateuch when he engaged in a conversation with a scribe in Mark 12. When asked which was the greatest of the commandments, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. When Jesus was tempted by the devil after spending forty days in the wilderness (Mt 4), he rebuked Satan three times by referring to passages found in Deuteronomy 6; 8. He referred to levitical laws dealing with *holiness (Lev 9:2), retribution (Lev 24:19-20) and swearing oaths in the name of God (Lev 19:12). Jesus made reference to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which are discussed in the book of Genesis. In Luke 10:25, when an expert in Jewish law asked him what one needs to do to inherit eternal life, the first thing Jesus did was refer him to what is written in the *law of Moses. These are but a few instances of the crucial and irreplaceable legacy that flows from the OT to the NT. There is no way to preach about Jesus Christ without a full and complete understanding of OT terms, times, topography and theology.

2. Preaching from the Pentateuch.

So far as the Pentateuch is concerned, there is much that can profitably be examined in sermons. This is where the heart and soul of the debate surrounding creationism versus evolution is located. In fact, one theory need not exist to the exclusion of the other, so far as the Pentateuch is concerned. From a creationist's perspective, Genesis clearly suggests that creation was willed into existence by the spoken words of God: "Let there be . . ." From the perspective of those who argue for evolution, the biblical text is equally helpful because it places God at the center of that creative process. No matter how many millions of years old the earth may be, evolution

only describes how life emerged upward out of some primordial mystery. What evolution does not do, but what the Pentateuch clearly does, is account for the first essential spark of life from which human life evolved. The answer is plainly stated: "In the beginning, God . . ." No matter which side of the argument one lines up with, the Pentateuch places God at the center of the transaction. A nineteenth-century African American spiritual comes to mind when one considers God as the agent of creation: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."

Several other preaching possibilities emerge from a review of the creation stories in Genesis 1; 2. The first of them concerns the role and status of *women in the community of faith. What shall we make of the phrase "Male and female he created them"? There is no sense of female subordination in this passage. There is no implication that women should not aspire for leadership within the community of faith solely because of their gender. Israel was a patriarchal society, yet the creation of humanity as *male and female* opens the door to some helpful and long overdue consideration of what the Bible teaches and reflects concerning the role of women in ancient Israel. One can also consider the implications of these for the contemporary church as we seek to resolve the still controversial issue of women in ministry and other leadership positions in the church.

No issue is more debated these days than the institution of marriage, and the understanding of marriage that is most commonly held by contemporary Christians is largely rooted in the Pentateuch. Consider the challenge to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28). Then consider the observation that for this reason "a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). When one begins with this image of marriage in mind, it is easier to respond to those who advocate for everything from polygamy to same-sex marriage to premarital sex and teen pregnancy. Issues that perplex us in the twenty-first century may have their solutions in the plain wisdom of Israel. The preacher must address these contemporary concerns, and the material found in the Pentateuch can be of immense help in providing a theological framework within which to speak.

Much of the environmentalist movement is rooted in the Pentateuch's claim that humankind was designated the task of being stewards of the earth. How should we approach the controversial issues of air and water pollution, solid waste disposal, the handling and encasing of toxic nuclear materials, urban sprawl and the loss of green space, urban redevelopment and the reclamation of brown fields? Taking a careful look at the commandment to "subdue [the earth] and have dominion" (Gen 1:28) is a good place to start. Does having dominion over the earth extend to expanding our usable spaces at the expense of other species? These questions, rooted in the Pentateuch, are timely subjects for contemporary preaching.

3. Principles for Christian Preaching from the Old Testament.

From the third to the sixteenth centuries, much Christian preaching from the OT employed one of two standard methods of interpretation or hermeneutics. They were known as allegory and typology. In allegory, every word, character or image in the OT is read as if it actually represents something else of NT relevance. Nothing in the OT means what was written in literal terms. The classic use of allegory involves the story of Rahab the harlot (Josh 2:17-20). Rahab is told to hang a scarlet cord in her window so the advancing Israelite army will know not to destroy that house as they begin their conquest of the city of Jericho. That story was interpreted to suggest that the red cord was a symbol for the blood of Christ and that salvation was possible only for those who sought refuge in him.

Typology was a method that suggested that things mentioned in the OT were types or models of things that would later appear in the NT. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, is viewed as an early expression of the sacrifice that God was willing to make when he allowed his only Son to be sacrificed on Calvary. Typology as a way of interpreting an OT text occurs when an OT event is viewed as a prelude to or an earlier example of something that reaches a fuller expression in the NT. Unlike allegory, where the OT text's literal meaning has no value, with typology the historical relevance of the OT text is preserved. However, in many instances the events of the OT are seen as a foreshadowing of things that would appear in the NT. H. W. Wolff writes: "Typology is intended not to suspend historical-critical work, but to support it in a relevant manner.

The question of exposition remains firmly directed toward the meaning of the text that the authors had in mind in their time. The concern is that the meaning may be missed through the neglect of the New Testament context" (Wolff, 182). In addition to typology, several more recent hermeneutical principles can assist Christian preachers in their attempts to preach from the OT.

*3.1. **Continuity and Discontinuity.*** The first hermeneutical principle concerns continuity and discontinuity. That is to say, as a result of the Christ-event, some aspects of OT theology are no longer instructive or authoritative for Christians, while some things taught and believed by OT Israel remain relevant and binding on the contemporary Christian church. Christian preachers must learn to navigate this issue if they are to make use of the OT.

3.1.1. Discontinuity. The principle of discontinuity must be our point of departure when discussing how to preach from the OT because it makes us sensitive to the way that Jesus has altered the meaning of certain things, such as when he transformed the Passover meal into the Lord's Supper or when he repeatedly stated, "You have heard that it has been said, . . . but now I say to you . . ." (Mt 5). It involves such subtle shifts as moving the day of worship from the Jewish *sabbath (sundown Friday to sundown Saturday), in honor of creation, to the "Lord's Day" (Sunday), in honor of the resurrection. It involves more radical and self-defining practices such as shifting from circumcision and obedience to Mosaic law to *grace as the assurance of membership in the family of God. This is the meaning of discontinuity. Terms, practices and beliefs that were valid for the believing community of the OT no longer have that same claim on the followers of Jesus Christ. This would include such things as the temple rituals revolving around a sacrificial system or nationalist claims revolving around a king of the seed of David sitting on a throne in Jerusalem. In fact, the very centrality of Jerusalem itself becomes a matter of discontinuity.

The words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17 fit in this discussion: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" From the point of view of preaching from the OT, the preacher needs to recognize what aspects of OT faith and doctrine "have passed away" so far as the NT church and the subsequent followers of Christ are concerned. Discontinuity is like a line in the sand of time across which some things do not pass at all and across which other things pass but only after having been drastically redefined. It is discontinuity that is being signaled in John 1:17, which says, "The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

It is discontinuity that is being signaled when Paul, speaking of giving up his Jewish faith for the sake of Christ, says, "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (Phil 3:3–9). It is discontinuity that is being signaled when the Jerusalem Council determines that obligations that some viewed as still binding on Jews who converted to Christianity would not be imposed on Gentile converts (Acts 15). And it is discontinuity that is being signaled when Paul casts aside the social and cultural prejudices of ancient Israel and declares, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

3.1.2. Continuity. When preaching from the OT, one must be careful to inquire whether an aspect of doctrine or religious ritual has authority that passes over into NT faith and practice, or has been dramatically eclipsed or substantially reinterpreted in light of the Christ-event. Continuity and discontinuity converge in some interesting ways around certain concepts. For instance, animal sacrifice on an annual basis as a way of atoning for sin is no longer binding on Christians, a clear instance of discontinuity. We are no longer obligated to honor that part of OT faith and teaching. On the other hand, continuity also appears at this point. The concept of needing atonement for sin continues in the NT, but now that atonement is accomplished through faith in the death of Jesus Christ who is for us "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:36).

Continuity and discontinuity do not always mean the complete elimination of certain terms and concepts from Christian theology. In many instances those concepts have been significantly altered and redefined from their original OT intent to the new ways in which they are applied and interpreted in the NT. Nearly the entire book of Hebrews is a demonstration of this very principle at work. Its repeated references to the high priest, the tabernacle, the sacrificial system

and more are clear reminders of the weight and authority once given to practices and beliefs contained in the OT. Those practices and beliefs are not abandoned as a result of the Christ-event. Rather, they are reinterpreted in such a way as to point out how the ministry of Christ is best viewed as an outgrowth, if not a continuation, of that OT legacy.

*3.2. **Liberation Theology.*** In many contemporary communities of faith, liberation theology has become another lens through which the OT can be used in preaching. What God did at the Red Sea, while the Israelites crossed the Sinai Desert, in the lions' den or in the fiery furnace in Babylon was on behalf of those who were victims of oppression. The God of Israel is not only a jealous God who says, "You shall have no other gods before me." The God of the OT is also a God of justice who says to Pharaoh through Moses, "Let my people go."

Does that mean that God's power as liberator is limited only to those who were members of the community of biblical Israel? Certainly the African slaves of the American South in the nineteenth century did not think so. They regularly appropriated the liberation stories of the OT and reinterpreted them, without benefit of any formal theological training, to serve their spiritual needs. As a result, their songs and sermons were replete with references to "Go Down Moses, Way Down in Egypt's Land" or "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel, and Why Not Every Man"? They took the words of Jeremiah 8:22—"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?"—and turned that question mark into an exclamation point and sang instead, "There is a balm in Gilead that makes the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead that heals the sin-sick soul."

The religion of those slaves is a reminder that another key to preaching from the OT is the use of the motifs of liberation. God takes the side of the oppressed. God comes to the aid of those who are victims of injustice. Moreover, as part of God's *covenant community, Israel and the church are challenged to extend justice to the neediest in society, especially the stranger who dwells in the land, "for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Ex 23:9).

Of course, the careful preacher will present the entire story. There has been a historic weakness attached to most liberation-theology arguments of the last thirty years. That weakness has been the disconnect between the exodus story and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, on the one hand, and the clear command to Moses to bring the people to Mount Sinai, on the other hand, where they were transformed from slaves into a covenant community guided by the Ten Commandments (*see* Decalogue). God did not simply release Israel from bondage under Pharaoh. God did not merely identify with the oppressed. God also called those newly liberated people into a new relationship of accountability to God and to one another.

Christian preachers using the OT can provide a needed corrective to this glaring absence of theological accountability. God did not simply lead Israel out of Egypt, bearing them "on eagles' wings" (Ex 19:4). God also said, "Therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples" (Ex 19:5). Indeed, it was because Israel did not keep that covenant that they were returned to captivity in 586 B.C. when Babylon conquered their nation, sacked Jerusalem, knocked down their temple and sent many of the people into exile. Not only does God demand justice from those in power who oppress us, but God demands justice from us as well.

*3.3. **Promise and Fulfillment.*** A third motif that can serve as a guide to preaching from the OT is the notion of *promise and fulfillment. Preaching from the Pentateuch allows for an encouraging description of a God who keeps promises no matter how hopeless circumstances may appear and no matter how sinful people may be. God made promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning offspring as numerous as the sands of the sea and the stars in the sky, yet the wives of these men—Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel—were all barren. How could God keep that promise in the face of that hopeless situation? By the same token, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were regularly disobedient, and unfaithful Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel all tried to help God accomplish what they were sure God could not do alone. Despite the impossibility of their circumstances and the sinfulness of their lives, God still kept faith with them and fulfilled the promises made to them.

This depiction of the faithfulness of God despite the unfaithfulness of Israel runs throughout the rest of the Pentateuch as well, especially as the exodus story is recounted. Despite the murmuring in the *wilderness, the rebellion in-

volving the *golden calf and the faithlessness of those spies who doubted that the Promised *Land could be conquered, God kept faith with the people. Along with God's faithfulness despite human sinfulness is God's ability to accomplish the divine purpose despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This can also be seen throughout the exodus story. Whether it involved working through the hard heart of Pharaoh, allowing Israel to pass through the Red Sea as on dry ground or feeding the people with *manna and quail during the trip across the desert, God made a way out of no way. It should be possible for creative preachers to make great use of these two themes. A song by Thomas A. Dorsey captures the spirit of OT promise-and-fulfillment texts: "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow!"

The question of promise and fulfillment becomes trickier when assumptions about the Promised Land are concerned. Preaching from the Pentateuch forces the preacher to consider Israel's claims to nationhood as well as the Mosaic versus the royal covenants that undergird that claim. Is Israel's claim to the Promised Land valid and binding on God no matter how Israel behaves? That is the view of those who believe that God gave the land of Canaan to the people of Israel as an inheritance forever. That is the essence of the royal covenant and the basic claim of contemporary Zionists who use that idea to justify the existence of the modern state of Israel. Meanwhile, the Mosaic covenant links Israel's continued ability to remain in the Promised Land to their obedience to the commandments of God. Occupancy of the land of Israel was not an automatic birthright; it was a gift of grace by God to a faithful people.

Having a clear view on this question is useful for contemporary preachers, especially in light of the current dispute about which group has the most authentic claim to the land of Palestine. What are the rights of the Palestinians who were displaced from that land in 1948? Is the present-day Jewish state of Israel, comprised largely of secular Jews who do not practice Judaism, the actual continuation of OT Israel? Should Jerusalem be the capital city for a Jewish or a Palestinian state? These explosive issues, and others, can better be discussed by those preachers who acquaint themselves with the material found in the Pentateuch and throughout the OT.

There is another side to this issue of Israel's claim to nationhood. That is the fact that in the Pentateuch Israel has not yet conquered the Promised Land. In fact, as the Pentateuch ends Israel has still not crossed over into Canaan. The central document of ancient Israel—the Torah, the Pentateuch—did not record Israel living a secure life in the Promised Land. It is this issue that has caused some to argue for a Hexateuch (six books), which would include Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land as part of its core canon. The question that the debate over the Hexateuch seeks to resolve is whether one has to live in the land of Israel in order to belong to the people of God. Making use of the promise-and-fulfillment motif allows the preacher to conclude that being the people of God is a spiritual, and not a geographical, issue. One can serve God from any location, as Israel had to do after 586 B.C. There is immense value for Christians in the notion that communion with God can be sustained no matter where we are physically located.

3.4. Salvation History. Beginning in the Pentateuch and running throughout the OT is another hermeneutical approach to preaching, namely, salvation history. It begins when God calls Abraham to walk by faith, and it culminates in the faith that believers place in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The notion of God working through individuals and events (even evil deeds and wicked schemes) to bring about the redemption of his people is a centerpiece of the OT that leads directly to Christ and the cross. Along the way one encounters such themes as the suffering servant, vicarious suffering and substitutionary atonement.

One way to read the OT is to focus on Genesis 1:31. The created order has come into existence with humankind challenged to be good stewards of creation. God looks upon the whole of creation and declares it to be *very good!* One could argue that what God is seeking to accomplish in salvation history is to return the whole of creation to the place where God can look at it, both in terms of the environment and in terms of human relationships with God and with each other, and once again say, "It is very good."

As Christians, we believe that the salvation-history work of God took a decisive turn in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The work God began with OT Israel was finally accomplished through the life, death and resurrection

of Christ. Moreover, that salvation history is continued today through the preaching of the church and the message that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). However, as was stated at the outset, the Christ-event cannot be viewed as an isolated event. It is an integral part of the story that begins in the OT.

See also HERMENEUTICS.

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PRESENCE, DIVINE. *See* TABERNACLE.

PRIESTLY CLOTHING

The requirements for the high-priestly and priestly garments are set out in Exodus 28:4-43; their manufacture is recorded in Exodus 39:1-31; and the order in which the high-priestly garments are put on is noted in Exodus 29:5-6 and Leviticus 8:7-9 (see also Sir 45:6-13; 50:5-11; Josephus *Ant.* 3.7.1-7 §§151-187). These garments were indicative of the dignity and honor of the respective offices (Ex 28:2, 40; cf. Num 20:26, 28). The priestly garments were for ministering in the holy place and around the *tabernacle (Ex 35:19; 39:1, 41; Lev 6:10 [MT 6:3]; Haran, 172-73) and were holy (e.g., Ex 28:4; 29:29; 39:1). Not to wear them when functioning officially would incur guilt and death (Ex 28:35, 43).

The biblical description of these garments fits culturally with what is known of ancient Near Eastern garments of the second millennium B.C. In view of the critical consensus of a final redaction of Exodus and Leviticus toward the fifth century B.C., a tentative attempt has also been made to relate the garments to much later Phoenician dress as depicted on funerary stelae from Hellenistic times (Maes, 224-30).

1. High-Priestly Clothing
2. Priestly Clothing
3. The Holiness of the Clothing

1. High-Priestly Clothing.

The regular official attire included the ephod, the breastpiece, the Urim and Thummim, the robe of the ephod, and the diadem on the turban. Other clothing is also mentioned as part of the high-priestly attire during regular ministry and on the Day of *Atonement.

1.1. The Ephod, Breastpiece, and Urim and Thummim. The high-priestly ephod *(ʾēpôd)* was a sleeveless garment made from gold; blue, purple and scarlet yarn; and finely twisted linen. It had a waistband of the same material and two shoulder pieces, each with an onyx stone mounted in a gold filigree setting and engraved with the names of six of the tribes of Israel (Ex 28:6-14; 39:2-7). The gold thread, cut from hammered gold sheets, must have given the whole a dazzling appearance (cf. Sir 50:5-11) and a somewhat rigid construction, possibly allowing it to be stored in an upright position (see 1 Sam 21:9 [MT 21:10]; Van Dam, 141-42). Blue and purple were the most expensive colors available and were associated with royalty and power, while scarlet was associated with blood and ritual cleansing. The dyed yarn would have been wool (Brenner, 143-48; Milgrom, 501-2, 548-49).

Opinion is divided about where the ephod was worn. One view holds that it was like an apron and worn below the waist (Haran, 166). The rendering of the LXX *(epōmis)* and the testimony of Josephus (*Ant.* 3.7.5 §162), however, favor the interpretation that it was worn on the upper part of the body. Such ephodlike garments have been attested in New Kingdom Egypt, indicating some cultural affinity with the OT ephod. The term *ʾēpôd* has cognates in Ugaritic and Old Assyrian, where it signifies garments (Van Dam, 56, 66-67, 76-79).

The breastpiece *(ḥōšen)* was about nine inches square, made of the same material as the

ephod, and had mounted on it twelve gems in four rows, with each gem engraved like a seal with the name of an Israelite tribe. In this way the memory of the Israelites was brought before the Lord continually (Ex 28:29). The precise identity of each gem is sometimes uncertain (see Harris; Garber and Funk; cf. Lucas, 386-405; Moorey, 79-103.) Four braided golden chains and rings secured the breastpiece to the ephod (Ex 28:15-28; 39:8-21).

The breastpiece's construction from material folded double is best interpreted as forming a pouch that held the Urim and Thummim, a means of revelation utilized by the high priest. The presence of this oracular means made the *ḥōšen* a "breastpiece of judgment" (Ex 28:15, 30).

It is striking that in a chapter of instructions for making clothes, the manufacture of the Urim and Thummim is not commanded (cf. Ex 28:30). Also, this oracular means is referred to with the definite article (Ex 28:30) and never explicitly described. These factors suggest that the oracle was a known entity. The Urim and Thummim belonged to God (Deut 33:8), and this revelatory means was to be used for matters of national importance (such as waging war) about which Yahweh had not yet made his will clearly known (cf. Num 27:21; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 27:21; 31:6). Although the current scholarly consensus appears to identify the Urim and Thummim with a lot oracle, significant arguments can be raised against this identity (Van Dam, 194-221; for a survey of how this oracular instrument has been understood, see Van Dam, 9-38). The available evidence suggests the hypothesis that the Urim and Thummim were used by God to give a miraculous light as a sign authenticating the message given by prophetic inspiration to the high priest (Van Dam, 221-26). As mediator between God and Israel, the high priest could inquire of God by the Urim and Thummim and so maintain Israel's rights and privileges with God (Van Dam, 161-63, 269-71).

Because the ephod basically functioned to provide a place for the breastpiece of judgment with the Urim and Thummim, reference to the ephod can include reference to the Urim and Thummim (as in 1 Sam 23:9; 30:7). This *divinatory use associated with the ephod could be the reason that in the days of the judges illegitimate copies of the high-priestly ephod were made with which to inquire of God (Judg 8:24-27; 17:5; 18:5; Van Dam, 143-49).

Royal and priestly breastpieces that show features similar to the *ḥōšen* have been attested in Egypt (New Kingdom), Phoenicia (eighteenth century B.C.) and Assyria (from the eleventh century B.C.; see Van Dam, 56-62, 71-76; cf. Aldred). The art of engraving seals from stone and crafting gold chains was also known in antiquity (Aldred, 14 and no. 45; Moorey, 103-6, 229).

1.2. The Robe of the Ephod. The *mĕʿîl* was a type of robe that persons of rank such as Jonathan and Tamar, daughter of David, wore (1 Sam 18:4; 2 Sam 13:18), although the high-priestly robe of the ephod *(mĕʿîl hāʿēpôd)* was of course unique. This blue, sleeveless robe, with a hole to put the head through, was worn under the ephod and probably extended below it (Lev 8:7-8; Josephus *Ant.* 3.7.4 §159), but some think it may have been worn over the ephod (Noth, 224-25; cf. Gabriel, 35-36). The opening for the head was reinforced (cf. Riefstahl, 23) so that it might not tear when being put on (cf. Lev 10:6; 21:10; cf. 13:45). The robe was fringed on the bottom, with cloth pomegranates and golden bells alternating. The bells were to be heard lest the high priest die (Ex 28:31-35; 39:22-26).

1.3. The Diadem on the Turban. A rosette-like gold plate (*ṣîṣ zāhāb,* Ex 28:36), more precisely identified by way of apposition as a diadem (*ṣîṣ nēzer,* Ex 39:30; Lev 8:9; cf. Ex 29:6), on which were engraved the words "Holy to Yahweh," was mounted with a blue cord on the front of the high-priestly turban *(miṣnepet)* made of fine linen (Ex 28:36-37; 39:30-31). The usual meaning of *ṣîṣ* is "flower," but the LXX rendered it "plate" *(petalon),* and the rendering "rosette, medallion" seems justified (*HALOT* 3.1023; cf. Milgrom, 511-12).

This prominent inscription identified the priest as consecrated to God and as God's representative among his people for the atonement of sins (Ex 28:38; cf. Ps 106:16; for views on the content of the inscription, see Gordon, 122-23 n. 13). Egyptian analogies to the rosette-like gold plate have been postulated (de Buck; Noth, 226).

1.4. Other Garments and the Day of Atonement Attire. Underneath these official clothes of the high priest for the daily entry into the holy place were a tunic *(kuttōnet)* of fine linen (apparently checkered), a linen sash *(ʾabnēṭ),* embroidered, presumably, with dyed wool, and fine-twisted linen breeches *(miknĕsayim)* (Ex 28:42; 39:27-29; Lev 8:7; Josephus *Ant.* 3.7.1-2 §§151-56). It is not clear how long the tunic was, whether short and

shirtlike *(HALOT* 2.505) or long, reaching to the ankles (Josephus *Ant.* 3.7.2 §§153-54). Clothes that would be in direct contact with the body, the tunic and the breeches, were of linen and would have made the wearer less prone to sweating, which had to be prevented (cf. Ezek 44:18). No mention is made of sandals, and we may assume that the high priest officiated barefooted in the presence of God (cf. Ex 3:5; Josh 5:15).

On the Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered once a year into the holy of holies, he wore only a tunic, sash, breeches and turban, made simply of linen, instead of "fine linen" (Lev 16:3-4, 23-24, 32). In spite of their simplicity, these were holy garments (Lev 16:4, 32).

2. Priestly Clothing.

The dress of the regular priests (Ex 28:40-42; 39:27-29) included clothes similar to the simple linen garments of the high priest, but there were distinctions. The tunic *(kuttōnet)* of the regular priest was not checkered (Ex 28:40), the sash was probably the same as the high priest's (Milgrom, 519, 548; but cf. Haran, 170) and the turban *(migbāʿâ)* was distinguished from that of the high priest *(miṣnepet;* Haran, 170). Also the breeches were made of linen (Ex 28:42) rather than the fine-twisted linen of the high priest (Ex 39:28).

The tunic, mainly ankle-length, was well-known from approximately 1500 B.C. on in the ancient Near East (Sarna, 184). Except for the priestly clothes, breeches were unknown in the Bible and Near East in preexilic times (Sarna, 117). They were required to cover one's nakedness (Ex 28:42), especially when stepping up to the altar (cf. Ex 20:26; Lev 6:10 [MT 6:3]; 9:22). Such a requirement contrasts with ritual nudity found in Mesopotamia (e.g., *ANEP,* nos. 597, 600, 603, 605).

3. The Holiness of the Clothing.

It is indicative of the high priest's holiness that his garments were made of the same basic material as the curtains of the tabernacle (Ex 26—27; 28:5; 39:1; cf. Lev 19:19), and the blue of his robe matched the blue covering of the ark used when traveling (Num 4:6). Also, the glory of the tabernacle was reflected in the splendor of the high-priestly dress. The high priest was thus equipped to be in God's presence and mediate between God and his people in the Most Holy Place (Houtman, 3.467). In this context it is noteworthy that gems of the breastpiece are mentioned in discussions of paradise (Ezek 28:13; Rev 21:18-21; cf. Garber and Funk, 902-5) (*see* Eden, Garden of).

Next to the high priest's holiness was that of the priests, whose sash contained material of the tabernacle (Milgrom, 519, 548). Next was the sanctity of the Israelites, whose dress only included a blue cord in each tassel (Num 15:38; Milgrom, 548-49; on the graded holiness of high priest and priest, see Jenson, 124-28).

The simple holy linen garments worn on the Day of Atonement indicated that the splendor of the regular high-priestly attire was not fitting for the atoning of sins that included those of the high priest and his household (Lev 16:6, 11-14). In humble simplicity, the high priest would come into the very presence of God (cf. Milgrom, 1016, for other views). The secondary connotation of linen as white underlines the primary emphasis that the garments are holy and pure (Brenner, 93, 148-49).

See also PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; TABERNACLE.

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PRIESTLY SOURCE. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD

The Israelite priesthood was a religious institution within which certain people were given particular and often exclusive rights, roles and responsibilities as mediators between the divine and human realms. The purpose of this article is to describe the Israelite priesthood as portrayed in the Pentateuch. The article will focus on the origin and development of the priesthood, on the symbol system within which it operated and on its roles within Israelite life and faith.

1. The History of the Priesthood: The Pentateuchal Portrait
2. Reconstructing the Historical Priesthood
3. The Message of the Pentateuchal Portrait
4. The Symbolism of the Priesthood
5. The Functions of the Priesthood

1. The History of the Priesthood: The Pentateuchal Portrait.

The origin and history of the Israelite priesthood within the history of the Israelite cult (that is, its system of religious expression) presents one of the most vexing problems for biblical historians. The difficulty has two causes. First, the Pentateuch is composed of a variety of texts that have been composed, collected and edited at different times under differing circumstances. Second, the communicative intention of some of these sources and of the final canonical shaping was not to provide a complete history of the Israelite cult (see 2 below). Although a general portrait, virtually in the form of a montage, of the origins of the priesthood and the official Yahwistic cult of Israel may be gleaned from the Pentateuch as a whole, this portrait is rather incomplete and hazy in places. Moreover, individual traditions in the Pentateuch, as well as in the historical books and the prophetic books, present differing sketches related to the origin and development of the Israelite cult. Attempts of historians to separate out, reorder and bring together all of the sketches like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in order to provide one clear and complete image have not achieved a consensus.

1.1. Priesthood Prior to Moses and the Giving of the Law. As the pentateuchal narrative unfolds, the first direct association of the priestly institution with Israelites designates them all as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" among all of the peoples of the earth (Ex 19:6). However, prior to that reference and prior to the formal creation of the Israelite priesthood (Ex 28—29), which occurs after the exodus and the giving of the *Decalogue at Mount Sinai, the biblical characters demonstrate knowledge of cultic practices. For example, one finds sacrificial acts by *Abel (Gen 4:4), *Noah (Gen 8:20), *Abraham (Gen 22:13) and *Jacob (Gen 31:54; 46:1; see also Ex 24:5). Often scholars have used such evidence to draw the conclusion that in the patriarchal period the patriarchs served as their own priests. However, it is possible that the biblical presentation actually meant to avoid such a picture. M. Haran has argued that in the ancient Near East individuals could offer *sacrifices at *altars without encroaching on the prerogative of the priests, who served the gods within the enclosed sacred space of temples (Haran, 13-42).

The biblical portrait also presupposes a cultural background that from the beginning is familiar with priestly institutions. Examples of priests appear in the Bible prior to the mention of any Israelite priestly system (e.g., Canaanite, Gen 14:18; Egyptian, Gen 41:45; Midianite, Ex 2:16). Indeed, Abraham honors a Canaanite priest, *Melchizedek, who is apparently a worshiper of the same God (Gen 14:18-20; note that "God Most High" is identified here with Yahweh), and Moses' father-in-law was a Midianite priest (Ex 2:16-21; 18:1; *see* Jethro). Moreover, Exodus 19:20-24 gives the impression that some sort of priestly system of Yahweh worship ex-

isted among the Israelites, who had recently exited Egypt, both prior to the giving of the Decalogue at Mount Sinai and prior to the formal instructions recorded later for establishing the priesthood (Ex 28—29). The form and content of this early cultic worship is not clarified.

1.2. The Aaronide Priesthood. Following the giving of the Decalogue and the establishment of the *covenant with the people whom Yahweh had delivered from Egypt, Yahweh took the initiative to establish official forms and means of worship (Ex 25—30). The establishment of the *tabernacle, a portable sanctuary, created an area of "sacred space" in which God would symbolically dwell in order to be present with his people and at which place they could officially worship (Ex 25—26). As in other ancient Near Eastern cultic systems, the creation of sacred space called for the consecration of sacred functionaries, priests, to attend to the matters of that place. The first formal mention of persons being designated as priests to the God of Israel occurs in Exodus 28:1-4, where *Aaron, the brother of Moses, and Aaron's sons (*Nadab, Abihu, *Eleazar, Ithamar, Ex 28:1) are named. (Their actual consecration as priests, which lasted for a week, and their first official actions as consecrated priests are recorded in Lev 8—9.) However, an earlier reference to Aaron and his sons being given the role of keeping the lamps burning in the tent of meeting (Ex 27:20-21), which is later a priestly role, along with the inclusion of Aaron with Nadab and Abihu in the events of Exodus 24:1, 9, gives the impression that their "selection" took place earlier, perhaps when "Aaron the Levite" (see 1.3 below on Levites) was chosen as a cospokesperson with Moses (Ex 4:14). The distinctive garments, role and manner of consecration described for Aaron (Ex 28—29 and Lev 8) presuppose that he will serve as the "high priest," an office that is not specifically mentioned until much later in the Pentateuch (Num 35:25). By divine decree the priesthood became a dynastic role of the Aaronide family (Ex 29:9). The role of high priest was also apparently hereditary, being passed on to Aaron's third son, Eleazar (Ex 6:23; Num 3:2), after Eleazar's two older brothers, Nadab and Abihu, were consumed by fire for offering unauthorized fire before Yahweh (Lev 10:1-3; see Num 20:25-28, where Eleazar becomes Aaron's successor). However, another traditional reason for the perpetuation of the priesthood through a son of Aaron is given in Numbers 25:10-13 (also 1 Macc 2:26, 54). Here the descendants of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, are granted a lasting priesthood because of an act of loyalty to Yahweh by Phinehas.

1.3. The Levites. In addition to the priests proper, there was a lesser order of cultic functionaries known as the Levites. This distinction between the two orders is clearly delineated in Exodus and Numbers. However, Deuteronomy fails to make such a clear distinction and appears to speak of the priestly nature of the whole tribe of *Levi. According to Exodus and Numbers, the Levites primarily assisted the priests in their duties. On a scale of "holiness," the Levites stood between the people, who were "common," and the priests, who had been sanctified for closer contact with the divine realm (see 4.2 below on holiness; see Num 8:5-22 for the purification of the Levites). As a result, the Levites could perform functions that the layperson was not permitted to do, but they were not permitted to fill some of the roles of the priests. According to the traditions in Numbers, the Levites initially had two main duties (Num 3:5-10; 4:1-49; 18:1-32). First, Levites were expected to aid the priests by guarding against encroachment. Encroachment occurred when those who were common or less holy illegally came into contact with the more holy objects of the cult. Second, they were to help with the labor of loading and transporting the cultic paraphernalia of the tabernacle from place to place. (Milgrom [1970] has demonstrated that in priestly texts *mišmeret* means "guarding" rather than the more general "service," and *ʿăbōdâ* refers to porterage-related duties rather than to "work" in general.) Over time the role of the Levites changed somewhat. Once the Yahwistic temple cult became permanently fixed at a site, the latter duty of porterage would have become obsolete. According to the traditions in Chronicles, when David and Solomon centralized the temple cult in Jerusalem, the Levites were also given the role of temple musicians, a function not found in the Pentateuch (1 Chron 15:16-22).

Pentateuchal traditions give us two accounts for the origin of the secondary role of the Levites, although the accounts are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In Exodus 32, when the people followed Aaron in the worship of the golden calf, it was the "Levites" who zealously executed those who had committed apostasy. For this act

of loyalty the Levites were appointed for their special role. Deuteronomy also attributes priestly roles to the tribe of Levi in association with an act of zeal (Deut 33:8-10), although it is not clear whether or not the text is referring to the *golden calf incident. On the other hand, Numbers 1 does not count Levi among the twelve tribes to be numbered but reckons them as simply appointed to the charge of the tabernacle (Num 1:47-53). The reason for their not being counted among the other tribes is found in Numbers 3, where they are taken by God as belonging to him in exchange for the firstborn male children of Israel, who had been spared when God struck down the firstborn males of Egypt.

Because of their special professional role of serving the Israelites as cultic personnel, the whole tribe of Levi, which included the priestly lineage, were not given a tribal allotment of land. Instead they were to be given certain towns with accompanying pastoral land scattered among the other tribal territories (Lev 25:32-34; Num 35:1-8). Also, they were to be maintained by tithes given by the people (Num 18:20-32). Another tradition explaining the landlessness of the Levites is found in Genesis 49:5-7. Here Levi and his brother *Simeon are cursed for their acts of violence (traditionally associated with their actions found in Gen 34), so that they (that is, their tribal families) would be scattered about the land of Israel.

2. Reconstructing the Historical Priesthood. Although a general portrait of the priesthood may be gleaned from the Pentateuch, individual traditions appear to present differing sketches about the origin and historical development of the Israelite cult. As a result, biblical scholars have raised questions about the historical accuracy of the pentateuchal portrait and have sought to reconstruct a more consistent picture. For instance, because of the various traditions regarding the Levites, biblical historians have debated whether the term Levi originally designated a person from the tribe of Levi, and by extension became used for these cultic functionaries, or if the term originally had a cultic connotation and somehow became associated with a tribe called Levi. (A. Cody, however, has convincingly shown that Levi is a proper name and not an appellative [Cody, 29-38].)

2.1. Critical Reconstructions. One classical and popular thesis among biblical historians for sorting out the differences in the individual biblical traditions was tied to the identification of and dating of sources in the Pentateuch. This thesis is known as the Documentary Hypothesis (*see* Source Criticism). Toward the end of the eighteenth century, after over a century of scholarly efforts to identify and date literary strands in the Pentateuch, J. Wellhausen promoted this thesis. In his work, Wellhausen accounted for some of the differing "sketches" in the traditions about the priesthood by arguing a logical progression from more primitive and less organized forms of cultic expression to later and complex forms. The linchpin of his argument was the thesis that the literary source containing the complex cultic forms, the Priestly source, or P (represented for the most part by Exodus 25—40, Leviticus and Numbers), belonged not to the Mosaic age but to the postexilic time and was fabricated as a defense for later cultic practices. Less formal and complex cultic activity was then to be found in the earlier pentateuchal sources of J, E and D. For instance, he posited the following development. In the patriarchal period, primarily recorded in J and E, the patriarchs themselves could function as priests. In the period of the judges, Levites, a name for cultic functionaries, came to refer to the preferred priestly personnel. They later became associated by literary invention with the tribe of Levi. However, there were other competing priestly houses. The D source, mainly Deuteronomy, came from the late monarchy when Josiah centralized the cult at the temple in Jerusalem around 621 B.C. At this time all Levites could serve as priests in Jerusalem. Later, after the return from the Babylonian exile, the Priestly source (P) told about stricter cultic reforms that had occurred. By this time Levites had been demoted to the role of second-class cultic functionaries.

This very influential reconstruction promulgated by Wellhausen did not, however, resolve all difficulties left by the gaps and the differing sketches of the individual traditions found in the OT. Moreover, the linchpin of his thesis was found to be problematic. New evidence of complex cultic institutions with, for example, differing orders of priestly personnel, were found to exist in the ancient Near East even prior to the time of Moses (see Sabourin, 98-157). Scholars also began to date some of the terminology and

practices in P as preexilic in origin. As a result of these factors, during the last hundred years there have been several other attempts to reconstruct the history of the Israelite priesthood. For example, F. M. Cross argued that the discrepancies could be explained better by positing two ancient priesthoods that vied with one another: an Aaronic priestly house with sanctuaries in Bethel and Jerusalem, and a Mosaic (Mushite) priesthood at Dan, Shiloh and other places in the Negev (Cross, 195-215). M. Haran, on the other hand, sees one priestly line going back to the ancient Levites, the kinsmen of Moses, who were distinguished later in terms of their location in the northern kingdom ("Levites") or in the southern kingdom ("Aaronides").

2.2. A Critique of Historical Reconstructions. Many of the assumptions of historical-critical reconstructions are sound. For instance, throughout their history the people of Israel lived in different sociological, economic and political settings: family, village, city, tribal alliance, royal statehood, vassal nation and a province within a foreign empire. One would expect that the precise nature of the priestly office changed within those different settings in terms of its roles, the size and specialization of its members, its status, the ways and means of priestly sustenance and the complexity of its ritual expression. Indeed, the current generation of biblical scholars will need to incorporate our increasing knowledge about the sociological nature of ancient Israel into our understanding of priestly institutions (e.g., Anderson).

The basic pentateuchal portrait also appears to contain different sketches of the priesthood, possibly coming from different traditional sources. If possible, it would be important to identify and date any sources and layers of editing that have been employed in the composition of the Pentateuch. One might expect the cultural and sociological setting of the times of writing and editing to influence the perspectives, emphases and even the agenda of the authors and editors, although the total process of the composition of each text and its inclusion in the Pentateuch was inspired to achieve God's total communicative intent. Understanding those perspectives would then guide the modern interpreter as he or she seeks to reconstruct both the historical developments of the Israelite priesthood and the role the priestly cult played at different times in Israelite life.

However, the presence, the diversity and the historical setting of the individual traditions regarding the priesthood are not the focus of the canonical form of the Bible (see Childs, 84-91, 145-74). In some traditions the priestly institutional features are said to have originated by divine, Mosaic or royal decree. In other instances, cultic features are linked to historical events. But in all cases, the emphasis is on the divine design of the Israelite cult. The biblical cultic texts, the bulk of which are not historical narrative but are instructional and expository discourse, preserve the essence of the Israelite Yahwistic cult. Therefore, although reconstructing the history of the Israelite priesthood is a valid scholarly enterprise, the message about the priesthood in the canonical form of the Bible is not to be found in such reconstructions.

3. The Message of the Pentateuchal Portrait. What the biblical writers and editors preserved and presented was the message about the priesthood's divine origin, its lofty calling to holiness and the dangers of its role being perverted. In the Pentateuch, priestly perspectives have been integrated with the overarching biblical theme of a covenant made with God. Whereas texts that focus on the concept of covenant present Israel's relationship to Yahweh in terms of a legally binding contract, the texts that focus on the priestly cult present that relationship in terms of a symbol system that emphasizes Yahweh's holy presence. The Pentateuch asserts that proper worship was established by God and was an integral part of the covenant. Both *law and praxis came from Yahweh. The modern tendency to separate cultic law from ethical law was unknown.

Because Israel was called to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests to the nations (Ex 19:6), the Israelite priests had an analogous function of being a holy priesthood to Israel. The priesthood held the people accountable to Yahweh by teaching (Lev 10:10-11; Deut 33:10), a role that was expanded from cultic precepts to the totality of the Torah. This was done within a ritual complex that at every turn reminded the people of the awesome holiness of Yahweh and their covenant to be holy (see 4 and 5 below).

However, not to be overlooked in the pentateuchal material is the brutal reminder of the dangers of forsaking God's decrees even in the face of God's graciousness: Aaron created a

*golden calf (Ex 32), priests offered unholy fire (Lev 10:1-3) and Levites tried to usurp the priests (Num 16). Even the sacrificial system that the priests oversaw, which was given by God to atone for sin, was primarily for inadvertent sins rather than for deliberate sins (Num 15:22-31). The priestly system could seek to engender obedience to the holy God and speak of the blessings of obedience and of atonement for some sin (Lev 26:1-13; Deut 28:1-14); however, the cultic system could never atone for consistent, outright rejection of the covenant (Lev 26:14-46; Deut 27:9-26; 28:15-68).

4. The Symbolism of the Priesthood.

4.1. The Symbolic Nature of the Cult. Cultic practices are symbolic by nature. They reflect, enact and shape one's beliefs about reality. They draw on the symbol systems by which one's culture comes to comprehend and create its view of reality. Moreover, it is often the "priests" of a culture who teach, interpret and mediate the important elements of these systems. Therefore, it is important to examine some of the symbol systems that lie behind, and help to explain, the roles of the Israelite priests. As a caution, however, one should note that this section presents the cultic system not in terms of its historical growth but as a whole. Again, it is likely that some of the symbol systems, or at least their forms of expression, developed over time.

The Israelite, priestly ritual complex made use of the imagery of the surrounding cultures but transformed it within a symbol system that expressed a different worldview. The worldview of autonomous primordial beings who were susceptible to various influences by one another and from human magic was disavowed within Israelite priestly theology. Instead, in their worldview Yahweh was sovereign, not contending with primordial beings for supremacy and not susceptible to magical words or gesticulations (*see* Divination, Magic). The Israelite system had no means to coerce God or to heal diseases that others believed were caused by evil primordial forces (see the works of Kaufmann and Milgrom).

The heart of the ritual complex employed classification schemes. In these classification schemes people, animals, places, things and times were recognized as clean or unclean, holy or common (*see* Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean). Biblical scholars have yet to sort out fully the intricacies of these schemes and how they related to one another; however, their importance is quite clear. The role of clarifying these distinctions and preserving them fell to the priests. As they preserved and restored these distinctions, they helped to maintain the divinely created order (see Gorman; Jenson).

4.2. Clean and Unclean, Holy and Common. Cultures often tend to classify people, animals and objects, even places and seasons, as either "clean" or "unclean" (see some of the categories in Lev 11—15). Such categories have nothing to do with modern concepts of hygienic cleanness and are sometimes only indirectly connected with notions of sin. However, by extension these categories also become applied to the realm of behavior and ethics (Lev 18). For Israel, the standard by which something was clean or unclean appears to have rested on a theology of creation that is represented in Genesis 1:1—2:3. In this account of *creation, one sees how God rules over the elements that are contra life and order (the symbols of chaos: darkness, a watery deep and a formless "earth"). God created an orderly separation of these elements into life-ready realms and then filled those realms. God created an orderly, life-filled world and called it good. For Israel, then, that which was associated with the divinely created order or life was clean, and that which somehow was symbolic of chaos or death was unclean.

The normal state of a person was clean. Uncleanness was a state of being that sometimes was contagious or transferable and could make the clean person or object become unclean. Unlike the belief of some of their neighboring cultures, in which uncleanness could be the result of demonic gods, the Israelites represented uncleanness as an abstract dynamic "power" representing human susceptibility to the realm of chaos and death as well as to wrongdoing. Uncleanness had no place in the presence of the God of life and order. It polluted God's dwelling in Israel's midst. Such uncleanness was of two types: tolerated and prohibited. On the one hand, a person could become unclean through normal and necessary actions, such as sexual intercourse, childbirth and preparing a dead family member for burial. (On the symbolism connecting such acts with the concept of uncleanness, see Milgrom; Wright.) Such uncleanness was tolerated and not a sin, although the person was required to go through a ritual act of

cleansing to remove the impurity. On the other hand, flagrant sin resulted from the mismanagement of tolerated uncleanness or from breaches of prohibited uncleanness, such as incest, adultery (*see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics) and spiritualism (see Lev 18; 20).

Things were also classified as "holy" or "common." In the ancient Near East, that which belonged to the realm of the gods was holy. So too, for Israel, that which specifically belonged to Yahweh was holy (Lev 27:9; Num 3:13; 8:17). The normal state of people and things outside of the divine realm was common. Holiness, like uncleanness, was a "power" that in some cases was contagious and could sanctify that which had been common, making it holy. However, God's holiness, God's life-producing essence, had to be approached with utmost respect. Coming into contact with that which was holy could be quite risky. The Israelites believed that improper close contact with God could result in death (Ex 19:21-24; Num 4:19-20; for an example, see 2 Sam 6:6-7). Holiness was found in gradations; there was a scale of holiness whereby some things were more holy than others (e.g., the difference between the holy place and the holy of holies within the tabernacle/temple, Ex 26:33-34). In general, contact between nonadjacent elements on the scale of holiness was prohibited (e.g., that which was less holy could come into contact with the holy, but that which was common could not come into contact with the more holy).

The two classification systems of clean/unclean and holy/common shared a complex interrelationship. For example, a layperson could be common and in a state of being clean or unclean. Also, an object could be holy (a sacrifice) and clean prior to use but unclean after being used to remove impurity.

4.3. Sin and Pollution. Dealing with the distinctions of clean/unclean and holy/common was a serious matter. Mismanagement and violations of these distinctions were sins that resulted in harmful consequences for individuals and for the community. In the pentateuchal portrait, when Israel entered into covenant with Yahweh, they entered into a relationship involving God's presence with them. God's presence in Israel's midst was represented by the portable tabernacle and later by the temple. By extension of this spatial concept of God's presence, Israel viewed the Promised *Land as God's land, in which they were received as sojourners (Lev 25:23). Improper care of the distinction between holy and common when approaching to worship God was an egregious affront to God's gracious presence and could result in death (Lev 10:1-2). Also, the failure to preserve the distinctions of clean/unclean resulted in spiritual "pollution." Such acts of defilement polluted God's land and, more specifically, God's dwelling place as represented by the tabernacle or temple. Such pollution impeded Israel's relationship with God and could result in the people being vomited out of the land (Lev 18:24-29). As a result, the sin of one person had consequences on the total community's relationship with God.

The sacrificial system, for which the priests were the main overseers, provided a major means of dealing with the polluting influence of sin, particularly for unintentional sins as opposed to defiant sins (Num 15:22-31). In some cases, the purging influences of sacrifices were required to cleanse God's dwelling place. However, in other cases purification was not possible. The party guilty of causing such pollution often was to be executed (Lev 20). Continued pollution would result in Israel being "vomited out" of the land (Lev 18:28).

5. The Functions of the Priesthood.

The priests worked to create, maintain and reestablish the divine order symbolized by the classification systems of the clean/unclean and the holy/common. The charge given to the priests in Leviticus 10:10 to "distinguish" *(habdîl)* between the holy and the common and between the clean and unclean uses the same Hebrew root for the divine action of making distinctions in the process of creation (Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18). Therefore, one might say that, just as God established the original creational distinctions between order and chaos, life and death, the priests in particular, and to some extent all people who were created "in the image of God," became "cocreators," or at least "comaintainers," with God. By maintaining those distinctions, they upheld the creational order from the constant threat of encroachment of chaos and death (see Gorman). (See too the use of *habdîl* in Leviticus 20:24, 25, 26: as God has made a "distinction" between Israel and other nations, Israel is to make "distinctions.")

The priestly role corresponded with their unique "position." They occupied the boundary

zone or "no man's land" between the holy (the presence of Yahweh) and the common. To be a priest was to operate in the danger zone of encroaching upon the divine realm for the purposes of representing the divine will to the community and representing the community before God. To be in the presence of the holy God was to risk death (Ex 20:18-19; 28:35, 43; 30:20-21; Lev 10:1-3). Those set aside to be priests were placed in a special state of holiness that allowed them access to the "dwelling" of God (on their consecration, see Ex 29; Lev 8—9). The priests had to wear special garments (*see* Priestly Clothing). These garments not only symbolized the priests' representative status (e.g., the breastplate of the high priest had twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel) but also "protected" them from dying when entering before Yahweh (e.g., their undergarments, the high priest's bells and possibly the seal on his turban; Ex 28). The priests also had to live by stricter rules of cleanness than the layperson, particularly when on duty (Ex 30:17-21; Lev 10:8-9; 21:1—22:16). The priests' position of having a greater status of holiness than that of the layperson not only put them at greater risk of dying but also placed them in a position of being able to serve the community of faith effectively.

The following is an attempt to order the various roles of the priests; however, it should be recognized that these categories, which are not prescribed in the Pentateuch, are imperfect. Certain roles may fit under more than one category or perhaps be better listed separately.

5.1. Custodians of the Cult. The priests were the general custodians of the instructions that were designed to set the community apart as holy to Yahweh (Lev 19:2). As custodians of these instructions, they had several subroles.

5.1.1. Teachers. The priests were teachers. They held the responsibility for teaching the people the instructions regarding clean/unclean and holy/common (Lev 10:10-11; Deut 33:10; see also 2 Chron 35:3; Ezek 22:26; Hag 2:11-13). The various instructions, which expressed these classifications, constantly reminded the people as they went about their daily lives that their God, Yahweh, was a God of life and order and that they should reject "death" and choose life. Yahweh was unfathomably holy and could not dwell with impurity. Moreover, in Jewish tradition the priests' role as teachers expanded from teaching cultic precepts to teaching the totality of the Torah. The movement toward this fuller responsibility is found already in Deuteronomy 31:9-13, where it is prescribed that every seven years, at the Feast of Booths, the priests were to read the laws of the covenant to the assembled people. Perhaps the reason that the levitical cites were spread throughout the land was to make them accessible to the people for instruction. As the people of this holy God, they needed to be aligned with the divine design of life and order to be in right relationship with Yahweh. The priests taught them how to live in that right relationship.

It has also been suggested that priests might have had the role of perpetuating the traditions regarding the origin of their sanctuary and cultic practices, as do the priestly functionaries at some relatively modern Palestinian cultic sites (Gray, 222-23). One might suppose that the Israelite priests knew the stories of the origins of their cultic practices as found in the Pentateuch and that they might have carried the teaching responsibility of passing on these traditions.

5.1.2. Boundary Interpreters. The priests were interpreters of the cultic boundaries in time, space and status. They had to clarify and set the boundaries in the ritual complex according to the guidelines that had been established under divine guidance. It was their role to distinguish between the holy and unholy, the clean and unclean (Lev 10:10; 11:47; *see* Foods, Clean and Unclean). That task involved making an abstract principle clear in concrete situations. For instance, guidelines for distinguishing clean and unclean animals are given in Leviticus 11. These guidelines seem to come from the *zoological classification system of their culture and aided in identifying animals that might have symbolically seemed to have blurred the bounds of the creational order. However, not all animals are listed in such texts. The priest would have to make decisions about other animals based on these guidelines. Another example is found in the case of skin diseases, in which the priests virtually played a diagnostic role. The person who was afflicted with a condition that might be unclean was brought to the priests. They examined the condition and pronounced the person as clean or unclean (Lev 13—15). One would also suppose, however, that new situations and new questions would always be arising. In such cases, it was probably up to the priests to clarify the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable be-

havior on the basis of what had been revealed about the character of Yahweh and how Israel was to be set apart to be a different people. For example, the community was to avoid the polluting practices of the nations that God was expelling from the Promised Land (Lev 18:3, 24-28; 20:22-25). Although some pagan practices are specified in such lists as Leviticus 18—20, not all such practices are mentioned. Apparently the priests were given the responsibility to make these decisions. Practicing cultic rituals at the right time was also important (Lev 23:1-44). However, keeping a lunar calendar was not always an easy task. Although not stated in the Pentateuch, the priests probably also had to track astronomical signs and determine when the holy times and seasons began and ended.

5.2. Agents of Divine Blessing, Holiness and Purification. The priests, as occupants of the medial zone between the divine and the common, enabled communication and transference between the holy and the common or unclean. It was their job to establish, maintain and restore the proper creational order of persons and things.

5.2.1. Purifiers. Most important, priests had the responsibility of purifying the holy place and the *altars, which symbolized Yahweh's dwelling with Israel. First, they "made atonement" for accrued pollution from sins. That is, by the manipulation of the blood of the sacrifices, they cleansed away the pollution and made God's dwelling holy again, bringing the situation back to its proper state and order (e.g., Lev 4:1—6:7; 16:1-19). Second, they purified the person whose impurity had lasted more than seven days, such as in the cases of childbirth and abnormal genital discharges (Lev 12; 15:13-15). The primary function of the sacrificial system, which the priests oversaw, was to restore God's dwelling and people to their orderly status and to enable a right relationship with God.

5.2.2. Spokespeople for God. The priests spoke for God in at least two ways. First, there were times when they pronounced divine *blessing upon the people (Num 6:22-27; Deut 10:8). Such words were apparently seen as efficacious: the pronouncement resulted in wholeness and prosperity. Blessings might be pronounced over the people on public occasions (Lev 9:22) and possibly in response to cultic petitions. Although this latter function is not clarified in the Pentateuch, there is some evidence from passages such as 1 Samuel 1:9-20 (perhaps Judg 17—18) and the Psalms (see Ps 12:5 [MT 12:6]; 85:8 [MT 85:9]; 118:26) that, in response to petitions, a priest might have spoken a prophetic word of blessing on God's behalf. (See also words of blessings that might have been spoken by priests in Ps 20:1-5 [MT 20:2-6]; 115:14-15; 121:7-8; 128:5; 134:3.)

Second, perhaps closely related to the last function, the priests also pronounced oracles announcing the will of God for certain decisions, sometimes having employed the Urim and Thummim, a divining device (Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; see Ezra 2:59-63). The exact nature and function of the Urim and Thummim is uncertain. However, it does appear that they were devices used by the priests to determine the divine response to a petition by a leader, such as *Joshua or a king (Num 27:21; 1 Sam 14:41; 28:6), or to determine someone's status in cultic matters (Ezra 2:59-63; Neh 7:63-65). These cases of priests speaking for God appear to be primarily in response to petitions that were made in cultic settings.

5.2.3. Judges. In Israelite history, the realm of judicial authority probably progressed from the heads of households to recognized elders of status to appointed officials. (In Genesis the patriarchs ruled their households, and in Ex 18:5-27 and Deut 1:9-18 Moses instituted a system of judges.) It is expected in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 that each town would have appointed *judges. However, one also finds provision for the priests to assist as judges in difficult cases (Deut 17:8-13; 19:16-17; 21:1-5). It appears that in these difficult cases, which involved a lack of witnesses or conflicting witnesses, the priests stood as divine representatives and perhaps were expected to divine the truth as they did in the case of the wife suspected of adultery (Num 5:11-31).

5.2.4. Participants in Warfare. The priests participated in *warfare, which was basically viewed as a religious activity. In their role as diviners (see 5.2.2 above) the priests were called on to give oracles from God about whether or not the people should go out to war (Num 27:18-21; Judg 20:26-28). Deuteronomy 20:2-4 has the priests addressing the troops before they go out to battle. The priests probably also went out to battle on many occasions. First, one notes that Phinehas went out to battle taking articles from the sanctuary and the trumpets for signaling (Num 31:6). Second, if it was customary to take

the ark of the covenant and the trumpets into battle, as appears to be the case in nonpentateuchal material (Josh 6; 1 Sam 4; 2 Sam 11:11; the imagery of Ps 24; see also Num 10:33-36; 14:41-45), then the priests would have had to be present, because they were in charge of the porterage of the ark (note that Levites may carry the ark, but the priests are in charge [Num 3:31-32; Deut 31:9, 25] and of blowing the trumpets (Num 10:1-9). Finally, it is possible that the priests made decisions about the purification and division of the booty that was taken in war, at least when it was perceived as sacred war (Num 31:21-31; *see Ḥērem*).

5.3. Supervisors of Cult Objects. Priests would have had some administrative roles. At the least, they would have had charge of caring for the sacred paraphernalia. (See Num 3:5—4:33, where they supervise the Levites.) For instance, although the Levites were to help serve the priests by transporting the cultic objects (Num 3:27-32), the Levites themselves could not come into direct contact with these objects. The priests first covered and prepared the objects (Num 4:1-20). Furthermore, as the temple became part of the hub of the centralized state government, the administrative roles of the priests probably grew in complexity. (At least by the time of the second temple period, the temple had some banking functions [2 Macc 3:10-12].) Any precise historical development based on the biblical sources is difficult to reconstruct.

5.3.1. Guards. The priests literally served as guards. People and objects that were common or less holy were not to come into contact with those that were more holy (Num 3:10). The priests were to "bear the guilt" of the sanctuary (Num 18:1); that is, they were held responsible to keep others from profaning it. Priests had, along with the Levites, the role of protecting the holy things from encroachment by persons and things less holy or unclean. They had to do so upon the penalty of their own lives (Num 18:1-7; for clarification of technical language, see Milgrom 1970 and 1990).

5.3.2. Tithe Assessors and Collectors. As early as the book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:33), in connection with the feasts, tithes of *firstfruits were to be brought to the house of Yahweh (Ex 23:14-19). In Exodus 30:11-16 a payment of atonement money for each Israelite was to be given to Yahweh, presumably through the priests, and to be used for the service of the tent of meeting. Other systems of tithes and offerings are also prescribed (e.g., Lev 27:1-33; Num 18:8-32; Deut 14:22-29; 18:1-8; 26:1-15), which generally fell under the supervision of the priests and Levites, who were to receive part of this income as compensation for their service to the people. Indeed, in some cases priests were to determine the value, often in monetary terms, of what was to be given (Lev 27:8, 11-12, 14, 18, 23). Such monetary transactions were based on the standard weight of the "sanctuary shekel" (Lev 27:3, 25).

The priestly activities, symbolized in rituals involving sight, smell and sound, time, space, and status, taught Israel the healthy fear of being confronted with the presence of the holy God, the Creator of life and order. Israel was reminded of the great gap between their God and humanity. Only the priests, who were specially sanctified, could step carefully into that gap and mediate between the divine and human realms. Through their instructions and rituals, the priests warned Israel how its waywardness, intentional and unintentional, polluted God's dwelling and hindered God's presence in their covenant relationship. Individuals and community alike were called to be "clean" and pure before God. Moreover, through the priestly role, Israel saw that Yahweh's graciousness was not limited to mighty historical acts and the anointed leadership of key individuals. God had provided the means of removing the pollution, of purifying the unclean person and of restoring the divinely intended order. It was through the priesthood that this message of grace was mediated.

See also AARON; ALTARS; ATONEMENT, DAY OF; BLOOD; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LEVI, LEVITES; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH; MELCHIZEDEK; NADAB AND ABIHU; PRIESTLY CLOTHING; RED HEIFER; RELIGION; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; TABERNACLE.

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PRIMEVAL HISTORY. *See* GENESIS, BOOK OF.

PROGENY. *See* GENESIS, BOOK OF; PROMISES, DIVINE.

PROMISED LAND. *See* LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

PROMISES, DIVINE

Divine promises play an important role within the Pentateuch. They occur frequently, take a variety of forms and are important factors in the development of the plot that unites the books of *Genesis through *Deuteronomy. Moreover, because certain major promises remain unfulfilled by the end of Deuteronomy, this orientates the Pentateuch toward the future.

The diversity of divine promises found within the Pentateuch makes it impossible to examine all of them. Almost inevitably whenever God speaks his words, they contain elements that may be labeled promises; those that convey a negative expectation are more commonly called threats. By their very nature, covenants initiated by God contain divine promises. Immediately after the *flood, for example, God promised that he would never again strike down every living creature as he had done on this occasion (Gen 8:21-22). Yet while divine promises permeate the whole of the Pentateuch, the promises associated with the patriarchs are especially important (e.g., Gen 12:1-3; 22:16-18; 26:2-5; 28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3-4). Focusing chiefly on the concepts of land, descendants and blessing, God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob play a special role in the plot of not only the Pentateuch but also the books of Joshua to Kings.

1. Divine Promises and the Patriarchs
2. Obstacles to Fulfillment
3. Beyond the Pentateuch
4. Conclusion

1. Divine Promises and the Patriarchs.

Within the Pentateuch the divine promises associated with the patriarchs have attracted the most attention from scholars. In part this reflects their frequency, for as J. Blythin observes, almost all of the divine speeches in Genesis 12—50 include promises. Biblical scholars, however, diverge in two main ways regarding their assessment of these promises. First, opinions vary concerning the number and content of

these promises. Second, scholars differ as regards which promises were originally part of the earliest patriarchal traditions and which were added at a later stage.

In 1928 K. Galling first suggested that the divine promises were absent from the patriarchal traditions when they were initially transmitted orally; only when the stories were committed to writing were the promises incorporated. While A. Alt rejected this approach, he in turn distinguished two promises: (1) the increase of the patriarchs' posterity and (2) their possession of the Promised *Land. Alt considered the former promise to be the earliest. In 1943 G. von Rad recognized four types of promises within the patriarchal narratives: land, progeny, *blessing and a new relationship with God. Of these, the promise of land belonged to the oldest layer of tradition. The process of distinguishing between original and secondary promises was investigated further by J. Hoftijzer, who concluded that the promises ought to be dated to the time of the exile.

Developing the work of Hoftijzer, C. Westermann (28) concluded that

> only a very small portion of the narratives in Genesis 12—50 were conceived originally as promise narratives. Most of the narratives in which we find promises were transformed secondarily into promise narratives, or else the promises stand outside the ancient narratives as expansions, interpolations, additions, interludes or special scenes representing the giving of a promise. The promise motif belongs in the vast majority of cases to the stage when the early narratives were being put together to form larger units.

Among the small proportion of narratives that initially contained promises, Westermann retained the accounts of the promise of a son in Genesis 16; 18. He also accepted that there must have been an original promise narrative concerning land. While the original version of this narrative no longer exists, Genesis 15:7-21; 28:13-15 resemble it closely. All other promises in the patriarchal narratives are the work of later editors.

To arrive at these conclusions, Westermann made a number of important assumptions. First, only those promises that contain a single element are original. Any promise involving a combination of promises (e.g., land and descendants) should be viewed as a later development in the narrative. Second, promises that are incidental to the story should be dismissed as secondary. Third, original promises relate directly to the nomadic lifestyle of the patriarchs; promises concerning permanent settlement in the land or the establishment of a monarchy were added later. However, all of these assumptions are open to question. As we shall observe below, certain promises may be viewed as part of a larger promise (e.g., nationhood, as found in Gen 12:2, automatically consists of elements concerning descendants and land). It is also exceptionally difficult to establish criteria by which it is possible to determine if a promise is intrinsic to a tradition. Finally, the lifestyle of the patriarchs is not simply nomadic; although they lived in tents (*see* Historical Criticism §4.5), they also settled in various locations for considerable periods of time (e.g., according to Gen 26:12, Isaac planted crops; *see* Agriculture).

Support for Westermann's approach comes from R. Rendtorff, who accepts that few of the patriarchal stories originally contained references to divine promises. According to Rendtorff, the promises were superimposed on originally independent traditions in order to form, first, various narrative cycles (concerning *Abraham, *Isaac and *Jacob), and then, at a later stage, one single narrative unit (the patriarchal story).

Another prominent scholar to argue that the divine promises in the patriarchal stories were introduced at different stages is J. A. Emerton. He suggests that whereas the promises of a son in Genesis 16:11; 18:10, 14, and of land in Genesis 12:7, are original, "the others were added to JE in the seventh or sixth century" (Emerton, 32).

Since most of these scholars approach this issue from within the framework of the Documentary Hypothesis—Rendtorff being a notable exception—their conclusions are heavily dependent on the validity of this theory. However, R. N. Whybray exposes clearly the inadequacy of the criteria by which different sources are isolated, and T. D. Alexander (1997) shows that the Abraham narrative in Genesis 12—25 is a more carefully composed narrative than is commonly assumed. In the light of these studies, doubts must be raised about the ability of scholars to assign the divine promises in Genesis to different stages of composition.

While considerable scholarly attention has

been focused on the significance of the promises in relation to the process by which the patriarchal narratives were composed, less attention has been given to the issue of how these promises function within the final form of the Pentateuch. In 1978 D. J. A. Clines (29) suggested that the "*theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfilment—which implies also the partial non-fulfilment—of the promise to or blessing of the patriarch*" (italics his). According to Clines, there were three elements to this promise: posterity, divine-human relationship and land. From his analysis of the Pentateuch, he concluded that the "posterity-element of the promise is dominant in Genesis 12—50, the relationship-element in Exodus and Leviticus, and the land-element in Numbers and Deuteronomy" (Clines, 29).

Although Clines's study establishes the importance of these promises within the Pentateuch and points to the fact that their ultimate fulfillment must be sought beyond the book of Deuteronomy, Clines's proposal of a main promise of blessing, having three distinctive elements, does not reflect as accurately as possible the precise nature of the divine promises given to the patriarchs. Unfortunately, scholars differ somewhat in their assessment of the number and content of the divine promises (for a brief survey, see Hamilton, 4.666-67). Granted that some differences are of a relatively minor nature (e.g., where Westermann distinguishes between the promise of a son and the promise of increase, Clines speaks of "posterity"), it is still important to establish as clearly as possible the precise nature of the divine promises given to the patriarchs.

1.1. Nationhood and International Blessing. To address the issues of nationhood and international blessing, attention must be focused on the divine comments made to Abram (later renamed Abraham) in Genesis 12:1-3. The importance of these verses cannot be overstated. Although H. W. Wolff highlights their significance as regards the supposed work of the Yahwist, G. J. Wenham (271) underlines their importance for the final form of the book of Genesis: "By placing the promises to Abram right at the beginning of the patriarchal narratives the redactor is asserting their fundamental importance for the history of Israel and the world and indicating how the stories that follow ought to be understood." As we shall observe, God's remarks set the agenda for both Abraham's own lifetime and far beyond it.

God's words to Abraham may be translated as follows:

> Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you, so that I may make you into a great nation and bless you and make your name great. Be a blessing, so that I may bless those who bless you, and curse the one who disdains you, and so that all the families of the ground may be blessed through you. (Gen 12:1-3)

Two aspects of this translation require further comment. First, the imperative "Be a blessing" is preferred here in place of a consequence clause, "so that you will effect blessing." While the latter represents a possible rendering of the MT, there is no strong reason to avoid the normal imperative force of the Hebrew text. If one adopts this reading, Abraham receives two sets of instructions, which are distinctive but complementary. Second, the translation of the final clause adopted above is preferred over the alternative, "and by you shall all the families of the ground bless themselves." The arguments for and against these two readings, which have recently been set out by P. R. Williamson (223-28), involve subtle distinctions between the Niphal ("passive") and Hithpael ("reflexive") forms of the Hebrew root *brk*, "to bless."

At it stands, Genesis 12:1-3 falls naturally into two parts. The first focuses mainly on the concept of Abraham's becoming a "great nation," whereas the second comes to a climax in the idea that through Abraham all the families of the ground will be blessed. The two parts are closely connected, and it would be a mistake to consider one element as being more original than the other. As we shall see, the themes of nationhood and international blessing are placed side by side in the Abraham narrative, although the emphasis is not always shared equally between them. Moreover, it needs to be observed that in Genesis 12:1-3 the statement "so that all the families of the ground may be blessed through you" stands at the climax of the divine speech (Hamilton, 4.667). For this reason, and as we shall observe more fully below, the promise of international blessing ought to be viewed as more important than the promise of nationhood; the former builds on the latter, with both promises being linked through their close association with

Abraham's future descendants.

The divine promises of nationhood and international blessing that come in Genesis 12:1-3 not only set the agenda for the rest of Genesis and beyond but also are intimately connected to the opening chapters of Genesis. Whereas Genesis 3—11 is dominated by episodes that highlight the theme of divine cursing, resulting in humanity's alienation from the ground/earth, the call of Abraham holds out the prospect of blessing (note the repeated use of "bless" in Gen 12:1-3) associated with the provision of land. Although we must look beyond the patriarchal narratives to see the full significance of this, when God comes to dwell among the Israelites in the land of Canaan, we witness a partial return to the conditions that existed prior to *Adam and *Eve's expulsion from the Garden of *Eden. The call of Abraham marks, therefore, an important stage in the pentateuchal narrative, being a major turning point in the story.

The divine promises of nationhood and international blessing are closely linked, the fulfillment of the former being a necessary step toward the fulfillment of the latter. Significantly, the promise that Abraham will become a great nation is initially contradicted by Abraham's immediate circumstances. As Genesis 11:30 states, "Now Sarai [later renamed *Sarah] was barren; she had no child." Throughout Genesis 11—22, the question is constantly posed, Will Abraham have an heir through Sarah? Even when Sarah in old age conceives and gives birth to a son, Isaac (Gen 21:1-3), a further twist in the story threatens to bring Isaac's life to an untimely end. What thoughts must have gone through Abraham's mind when God instructed him to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:1-2)? While the immediate focus of the Abraham story is the birth of an heir (see Alexander 1997, 102-25), this must be viewed as an essential step toward the fulfillment of the divine promises of nationhood and international blessing.

Abraham, however, is not merely childless when God calls him. God demands that he leave the security of family and homeland in order to journey to a new land. Remarkably, it will be here that God creates of Abraham a "great nation." The initial challenge facing Abraham is enormous, yet clearly he is persuaded on account of the divine promises to venture forth.

When Abraham arrives in the land of Canaan, God affirms to him on several occasions that this will be the region where his descendants will be established as a nation (Gen 12:7; 13:14-17). Eventually these promises are confirmed to Abraham by a divine *covenant (Gen 15:18-21). Significantly, this covenant, which sets out in detail the *borders of the Promised Land, comes in a chapter that focuses on God's provision of both numerous descendants and land. These two elements, which are sometimes mentioned separately within the Abraham narrative, provide the essential components of a nation. Furthermore, Genesis 15 indicates that nationhood will not be established immediately. Abraham's descendants will be enslaved for four hundred years in a foreign country before returning to the Promised Land (Gen 15:13-16).

While the covenant in Genesis 15 guarantees for Abraham that the divine promise of nationhood will be fulfilled, a second covenant is introduced in Genesis 17. As Williamson (145-216) demonstrates, this covenant differs markedly from the covenant in Genesis 15, having as its focus the theme of divine blessing being mediated to the nations of the earth. This is highlighted in the statement, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen 17:4-5 ESV). The emphasis here is not on those nations that are descended biologically from Abraham (which in reality number only a few) but on the figurative use of the term *father,* as one who is a source of well-being for others. Such an understanding of *father* is not uncommon. Later, in Genesis 45:8, Joseph states, "He [God] has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt." As father of the nations, Abraham will be a source of blessing to them.

The promise of international blessing associated with the covenant in Genesis 17 is linked, however, with a unique line of Abraham's descendants. This is highlighted in Genesis 17:19, when Isaac is chosen in place of *Ishmael. Through Isaac, God establishes a lineage that will eventually lead to a monarchy. This monarchy will rule over the nation descended from Abraham and mediate God's blessing to all the nations of the earth (Alexander 2002, 101-28).

In the light of this, the patriarchal stories in

Genesis give special attention to the firstborn lineage. Yet the blessing of the firstborn is not always given to the one who is born first. Isaac takes precedence over his older brother, Ishmael. More remarkable, perhaps, is the way in which Jacob gains preeminence over his older twin brother, *Esau. In a situation of complex *family relationships, Esau, who foolishly sells his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew (Gen 25:31-34), fails to obtain his father's blessing when Jacob is persuaded by his mother to intervene. With words that echo Genesis 12:3, Isaac gives Jacob the blessing of the firstborn: "May God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!" (Gen 27:28-29 NRSV). While Jacob's actions initially alienate him from Esau and he is forced to flee to Paddan-aram, the brothers are reconciled years later when Jacob returns, having been richly blessed by God.

After focusing briefly on Esau's descendants (Gen 36), the Genesis narrative concentrates attention on *Joseph, Jacob's son born to Rachel. Although Joseph is chronologically the eleventh son of Jacob, his father treats him as the firstborn. For this reason, his older brothers are exceptionally jealous and eventually sell him into *slavery in *Egypt. Significantly, Joseph adds to his brothers' hatred of him by recounting to them *dreams in which they bow down before him. Not only does this echo one of the main themes in the blessing given by Isaac to Jacob, but it reinforces the idea that the firstborn lineage is associated with royalty.

Although Joseph is first a slave and then a prisoner in Egypt, through divine providence he is later placed by *Pharaoh in charge of the whole land (Gen 41:41-43). In this exalted position God uses Joseph to be a source of blessing not only for his own family, with whom he is eventually reconciled, but also for many nations. However, while Joseph partially fulfills the divine promise of blessing, the book of Genesis looks beyond him to the coming of another king.

Joseph's firstborn status is confirmed in Genesis when the elderly Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 48). Remarkably, once again the blessing of the firstborn is bestowed on the younger of the two boys. In spite of Joseph's protest, Jacob blesses Ephraim, stating that he will be the greater of the two (Gen 48:19). By doing this, the tradition is established that through Ephraim will come a royal lineage. Later, this is reflected in the prominence of the tribe of Ephraim, especially when the nation of Israel is under the leadership of *Joshua, an Ephraimite.

Although priority is given to the role played by Joseph, we should not overlook the way in which Genesis also anticipates the future rise to prominence of the line of *Judah. Several features point to this. First, the story of Joseph's journey into slavery is unexpectedly interrupted by the account of Judah's unusual dealings with his daughter-in-law, *Tamar (Gen 38). The location of this story, especially with its focus upon the continuation of the "seed" of Judah, suggests that the lineage descended from Judah will be important. Moreover, the description of the birth of twin boys to Hagar introduces another instance in which the birthright of the firstborn is challenged by a younger brother. Although the hand of Zerah emerges first, and the midwife carefully notes this by attaching a scarlet thread to it, Perez breaks through to be born before his brother (Gen 38:27-30). In a book that places so much importance on observing the unique lineage associated with those considered to be the "firstborn," this incident involving Perez should not be overlooked; it is through Perez that the later royal line of David traces its descent (Ruth 4:18-22). Significantly, according to Psalm 78:59-72, in the time of Samuel the line of Ephraim was rejected by God in favor of David. This also coincided with the rejection of Shiloh as the central sanctuary in favor of Jerusalem.

1.2. A Holy Nation. While Genesis concludes by observing the future importance of the lineages descended from Judah (cf. Gen 49:8-12) and Joseph (cf. Gen 49:22-26), the book of Exodus returns to the theme of nationhood. Although the Israelites now find themselves enslaved in Egypt, their remarkable growth causes Pharaoh to view them with hostility. In spite of his oppressive regime, the Israelites are rescued by God from Egypt following a series of *signs and wonders that climax in the death of the Egyptian firstborn. An integral part of this process is the renewing of the divine promise of

land. Thus, when God appears to *Moses, he says:

> Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.' " (Ex 3:16-17)

The process of creating a nation out of fleeing slaves took an important step forward when, under Moses' leadership, the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. Here they were invited by God to enter into a special covenant relationship with him, a covenant based on another divine promise: "If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:5-6).

The events associated with Mount Sinai introduced an important new development that set the Israelites apart from other nations. With the sealing of the covenant, which almost ended before it began because of the *golden calf incident, the Israelites eventually proceeded to construct the *tabernacle. Here God would dwell among the people and, by so doing, confer on them the status of "holy nation." By coming to live in their midst, God set the Israelites apart from every other nation; his presence made them unique among the nations. However, this privilege came at a cost, for the Israelites now had to ensure that their lifestyle was compatible with that of the Holy One. The importance of this is stressed through the instructions and regulations set out in the book of *Leviticus.

2. Obstacles to Fulfillment.

While the events at Mount Sinai are something of a climax within the Pentateuch itself, the divine promise of nationhood to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could be fulfilled only when the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan. As recounted in the book of *Numbers, the next stage began as the Israelites left Mount Sinai and moved toward the Promised Land. However, things did not proceed smoothly. When the spies returned from surveying the land, their reports fueled an open rebellion against God's plans for the people. Of the twelve spies, only *Caleb and *Joshua spoke positively about taking possession of the land.

The reaction of the people is presented as a rejection of God's ability to bring them safely into the land he had promised. Consequently, all the adult Israelites, apart from Caleb and Joshua, were condemned to die in the *wilderness. On account of this a hiatus of forty years occurred, marked by various other incidents that highlighted the inability of the Israelites to trust God fully.

When the census in Numbers 26 confirmed the death of the adult generation, the scene was set for the Israelites to move into the Promised Land. However, before the crossing of the River Jordan took place, Moses addressed the people at length, reminding them of their covenant obligations. His words were clearly directed to the future, anticipating their occupation of the land (cf., e.g., Deut 9:3; 11:25). In this context, a series of divine blessings and curses offered conditional promises to the people. In response to their obedience, God would prosper them in the land (Deut 28:1-14). Disobedience, however, would bring divine judgment, with the terrible prospect of being expelled from the land (Deut 28:15-68, esp. 28:63-68). The ominous nature of these curses is underlined in various ways at the end of Deuteronomy. The list of curses far exceeds the blessings in length. Moses instructed the *Levites to place the book of the law beside the ark of the covenant as a witness against the people, for they were "rebellious and stubborn" (Deut 31:26-27). The so-called Song of Moses was also given by the Lord to remind the Israelites of their sinfulness (Deut 32:1-40; cf. 31:19-21).

3. Beyond the Pentateuch.

As it stands, the Pentateuch ends by anticipating a variety of future developments. In spite of the emphasis placed on it, the land was yet to be possessed. Until this happened, Israel could not be viewed as a nation having its own land with borders. Although things advanced swiftly under the leadership of Joshua, the period of the judges was marked by stagnation and retreat regarding the Israelite occupation of the land. Only during the reigns of David and Solomon was the process brought successfully to completion (1 Kings 4:20-21; cf. 2 Sam 17:11; McComiskey, 42-55).

While the Israelites eventually possessed the land promised to the patriarchs, the promise of international blessing, which was specifically tied to the royal line descended from Abraham, remained unfulfilled. Although Solomon's great wisdom was praised by the rulers of other nations, his failure to remain faithful to the law of Moses resulted in his kingdom being divided between his own son Rehoboam and an Ephraimite, Jeroboam. As the book of Kings reveals, the moral and spiritual apostasy of both Israel and Judah led to two separate exiles, events previously anticipated in the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy.

The fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, the destruction of the temple, the exile of the people and the removal of the Davidic dynasty from its position of authority together stand in sharp contrast to the main divine promises of the Pentateuch. The expectations and hopes contained in the Pentateuch were shattered by the actions of the conquering Babylonians. Yet even in these grim circumstances, the divine promises remained a source of hope. While the exile was anticipated, restoration was also a possibility. For this reason the books of Genesis to Kings recount not merely past events, but by their emphasis on the divine promises, offer hope for the future.

4. Conclusion.

A promise by definition involves a commitment by one party to another. Through making a promise God not only commits himself to do something, but he creates an expectation or hope for the one who receives the promise. For this reason, divine promises are special because they come from One who has both the power to accomplish what he has said and the faithfulness to ensure that it will happen. Promises made by God stand apart from those made by fickle, finite human beings. Moreover, as we have observed, while divine promises throughout the Pentateuch cover a wide variety of issues, there are a small number that recur often and so dominate these books. At the heart of these major promises lies God's commitment to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning nationhood and international blessing. While the former of these came to fulfillment in the time of David and Solomon, the latter, although later associated with the lineage of David, remained unfulfilled by the time of the Babylonian exile. Nevertheless, the expectation still remained that one day God would bring it to fulfillment. For the writers of the NT, the promise of international blessing came to fulfillment in Jesus Christ (e.g., Mt 5:17; Lk 24:27, 44; Jn 1:45; Acts 3:25-26; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom 1:2; Gal 3:16).

To many twenty-first-century readers, the Pentateuch stands apart as a most unusual literary work. At one level it presents a remarkable account of human history, focusing particularly on the growth and development of one branch of humanity associated with the figures of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At another level—and this is where it differs from most contemporary literature—it is a theological narrative describing the interplay between the divine Creator and his creation. At the heart of this story lies the strained and difficult relationship that develops when the first human couple, Adam and Eve, rebel against their Maker. Expelled from God's presence and under his curse, human beings struggle to survive alienated from God, their environment and one another. Within this context the divine promises take on special significance because they are a witness to the unique relationship that exists between God and humanity. Through a series of promises, God initiates a process that will eventually lead to the reestablishment of a harmonious creation (Kaiser). In the outworking of this process the pentateuchal narrative lays the foundation on which the rest of Scripture builds.

See also ABRAHAM; COVENANT; GENESIS, BOOK OF; ISAAC; LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH; MESSIAH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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T. D. Alexander

PROPHECY. *See* PROPHETS, PROPHECY.

PROPHETS, PROPHECY

Biblical readers generally associate the phenomenon of prophecy with the second division of the Hebrew Bible, appropriately named the Prophets (Heb *Nevi'im;* also referred to as the Former Prophets [Joshua—2 Kings] and the Latter Prophets [Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea—Malachi]), rather than the Pentateuch, and with a period of history later than that described in the Pentateuch (the monarchical through the early postexilic periods). Valid though this association may be in general terms, it should not blind us to the key pentateuchal material that both describes several individuals performing a prophetic role and establishes a number of laws to regulate prophetic activity. Neither should we ignore the fact that prophecy per se was not unique to Israel but was part of a broader ancient Near Eastern reality. In order fully to understand the pentateuchal presentation of prophecy, we must begin with a clear definition of prophecy and an appreciation for prophecy within the ancient Near East, then read the pentateuchal narratives and laws to discover how Israel perceived God to be uniquely at work in its midst through the shared phenomenon of prophecy.

1. Prophecy as Intermediation
2. The Ancient Near Eastern Context
3. Individuals Functioning as Prophets
4. Laws Regulating Prophetic Activity

1. Prophecy as Intermediation.

1.1. Lexical Data. The relatively small number of terms associated with prophecy might suggest that prophecy is unimportant to and nearly nonexistent within the Pentateuch. For example, the common Hebrew word for "prophet, prophetess" *(nābî', nĕbî'â)* appears just fifteen times in the entire Pentateuch, only five times outside of Deuteronomy 13 and 18. The verb form of this root is even more conspicuous by its absence, being used only three times (Num 11:25, 26, 27). Other terms used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for the prophetic role or prophetic activity—the roots *ḥzh* and *r'h*—are similarly rare, being used only occasionally within a prophetic context. However, these meager results demonstrate only the shortcomings of taking a simplistic lexical approach, not the absence of prophecy within the Pentateuch.

1.2. *Social-Scientific Considerations. Much more fruitful is the tack taken by scholars such as R. Wilson, T. Overholt and D. Petersen, namely, defining prophecy in terms of the typical social role or function performed by individuals identified by their societies as "prophets," "seers" and the like. Working from this broader cross-cultural perspective, one can define prophecy as communication-based intermediation between the divine world and human society (see Wilson, 27-28; Petersen 2000, 37-38). Prophecy is distinguished from priestly activity by virtue of the former's focus on the conveyance of information rather than on cultic acts. Prophecy can also be differentiated from revelation per se or prayer, since prophecy assumes three parties (deity, intermediary and audience), while revelation and prayer require only two (deity, recipient of revelation/individual praying). Information can be conveyed from the divine to the human (most common) as well as from the human to the divine (consultation, intercession), while the form of communication between the deity and the intermediary varies (e.g., audible speech, vision, *divination in one form or another), as does the conveyance of information between intermediary and audience (e.g., oracular pro-

nouncement, symbolic act). Finally, intermediaries can authenticate their messages by performing divinely empowered acts, but the exercise of such power is not an essential element of intermediation.

With prophecy thus defined as intermediation (and prophets as intermediaries), one can easily explain why ancient Israel identified some persons (e.g., *Moses, *Balaam) as prophets but did not place all recipients of divine revelation (e.g., *Jacob) or religious functionaries (e.g., *Eleazar) in the same category. Such a definition also comports well with Yahweh's declaration to Moses, "I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet" (Ex 7:1). Moses (deity) is to reveal information to *Aaron (intermediary), who is then responsible to convey it to *Pharaoh (human audience). This definition also accounts for the presence of prophecy/intermediation within the other cultures of the day, a presence attested in ancient Near Eastern texts and in the biblical prohibitions of certain types of prophetic behavior (see 4 below).

2. The Ancient Near Eastern Context.

Space prevents a thorough discussion of prophecy within the ancient Near East (see Nissinen; Huffmon), but several points deserve mention. First, intermediation was a social reality throughout most of the ancient Near East during the entire biblical period and beyond. The most noteworthy examples are Mesopotamian in origin, including the various intermediaries of Mari (Middle Euphrates, c. 1750 B.C.) and the Neo-Assyrian Empire (seventh century B.C.), but textual remains make it clear that diviners, ecstatics and divinely authorized messengers also operated in the region of Syria-Palestine (e.g., Phoenicia, Hamath, Ugarit, Tell Deir ʿAlla in Jordan). The picture with regard to Egypt is less clear, though it seems that intermediation there was restricted to, or at least dominated by, divination.

Second, ancient Near Eastern prophecy was, as in Israel, a multifaceted phenomenon. For example, intermediaries received information through various means, including visions, dreams, direct revelation and divinatory-type activities (e.g., observing the flight of birds, the shape of a sacrificial animal's liver, the alignment and movement of the stars and planets, or the slant of the statue of a deity). Likewise, intermediaries could convey their messages orally or in writing (or both) and could do so in response to an inquiry or without any such request. Finally, intermediation in general was not a gender-specific role (though certain role labels seem to be associated more often with one gender than with another), as the evidence clearly attests the existence of both female and male prophets.

Third, the extant evidence generally associates ancient Near Eastern prophecy with the royal court or the ruling class (much as in Israel's later history), though not too much should be made of this. The evidence itself generally originates from the royal archives and thus tells us only what was taking place there, not what might have been happening throughout the rest of society. In addition, cross-cultural studies imply rather strongly that intermediaries operate at all levels of society (sometimes at the center of the power structures, sometimes on the periphery) and address matters as mundane as lost donkeys or as vital as a military campaign.

3. Individuals Functioning as Prophets.

Considering the widespread existence of prophecy/intermediation within the ancient Near East, it is no surprise to discover that the ancient Israelites identified certain persons as prophets. Sadly, little is known of the prophetic activity of some of these individuals. For example, *Miriam is labeled a prophetess (Ex 15:20), but the nature of her prophetic function remains entirely uncertain. Likewise, seventy of the elders of Israel are reported to have "prophesied" (or acted like prophets, meaning ecstatic or trance-like behavior? [see Parker, 275-77, 279-80]) when Yahweh took some of his spirit that was on Moses and put it on them. However, their prophetic activity was a one-time occurrence, never to take place again (Num 11:16-17, 24-30). Within the context, the author seems to be more interested in their divine enablement for service alongside Moses than in any particular prophetic behavior. In the midst of this uncertainty, the biblical description of three individuals—*Abraham, Balaam and Moses—helps us flesh out a bit the pentateuchal perspective on prophets and prophecy.

3.1. Abraham the Intercessor. If not for Genesis 20:7, few would consider labeling Abraham a prophet or intermediary. Still, the statement of

this one verse is clear. In it God tells Abimelech, "Return [Abraham's] wife; for he is a prophet *[nābîʾ]*, and he will pray for you and you shall live." Nothing else in the Abraham cycle betrays specifically prophetic activity, so what should one make of this single enigmatic reference? Clearly Abraham is not to speak on behalf of God, since God is already speaking directly to Abimelech without an intermediary. Only two other interpretations seem possible.

The first connects the designation of Abraham as a prophet with the preceding clause: "Return the man's wife *because* he is a prophet." In this view Abraham is a holy man, one so imbued with divine power that he poses a risk to any who offend or assault him (cf. 2 Kings 2:23-25). However, Abraham is never labeled a "man of God" or "holy man" (Heb *ʾîš hāʾĕlōhîm*), which lessens the likelihood of this explanation (contra Skinner, 317; Ps 105:15 is often cited in support of this view, but it presents the patriarchs as anointed ones/prophets whom *God* preserved, not as holy individuals whose inherent power protected them from assault).

The second interpretation links the designation of Abraham as prophet more closely with the following clause: "Indeed, he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live." In this view Abraham's prophetic role is to serve as intercessor (see Gen 18:17-33; Balentine, 170). If Abimelech returns Sarah, Abraham will pray to God and have God commute the death sentence currently standing over the heads of Abimelech and his household. Needless to say, this is not prophetic activity in its "classic" or defining sense, merely one possible manifestation of intermediation broadly defined.

3.2. Balaam the Seer. The picture is fuller but more complex with *Balaam, whom Balak, king of Moab, hires to pronounce curses on Israel (Num 22—24). Scholars often describe Balaam as a seer/diviner and exorcist (Moore), but it may be more helpful to eschew sometimes-unclear role labels and to describe the various aspects of Balaam's intermediary activity.

First, Balak clearly regards Balaam as an individual in contact with and control over spiritual powers (i.e., an exorcist or, to use anthropological terminology, a witch or sorcerer; see Wilson, 23-25). Consequently, Balak repeatedly asks Balaam to curse Israel (Num 22:6, 17; 23:11, 13, 27; 24:10), assuming that whomever this holy man blesses will be blessed and whomever he curses will be cursed (Num 22:6). In the end, Balak's assumption is proven wrong as other aspects of Balaam's intermediation come to the fore. (One might even argue that this type of activity is not, strictly speaking, prophetic intermediation, since the focus is on the use of spiritual power rather than on the communication of information. Still, most acknowledge a degree of overlap between the two activities.)

Second, both Balak and Balaam recognize that the latter engages in divination: the attempt to gain knowledge of the spiritual realm (e.g., the will of a god) through the observation of various phenomena or the performance of certain acts. For example, Balak sends envoys with "fees for divination" (Num 22:7) in order to enlist Balaam's services. In addition, both Balaam and the biblical author allude to Balaam's divinatory actions (Num 23:23; 24:1) during Balaam's first two oracles. As before, however, the assumed intermediatory behavior proves useless, as God restricts Balaam to two biblically authorized activities.

The third and fourth elements of Balaam's intermediation are closely related. On the one hand, Balaam operates as a seer, one who is given revelation during the course of a visionary experience (Heb *ḥzh* and *rʾh;* Num 23:3, 24:3-4, 15-17; for Balaam as a *ḥōzeh* in the Tell Deir ʿAlla texts, *see* Balaam §1.2). On the other hand, Balaam communicates the contents of his vision in a manner similar to Israel's "classic" prophets by proclaiming to his audience oracles (*nĕʾum;* Num 24:3-4, 15-16) or messages (*dābār;* Num 23:38; 23:5, 16) revealed to him or put in his mouth by God. In all likelihood, Balaam's visionary experience entails some sort of trance (note the reference to falling down with eyes uncovered), but the emphasis falls more on the content of Balaam's message than on the means by which it is gained. Thus, within the biblical context the fourth element of Balaam's intermediation receives the greatest interest: Balaam's announcement of God's immutable will to bless his people Israel.

3.3. Moses the Prophet Par Excellence. There can be little doubt that Moses is the prophet of most interest to those responsible for the Pentateuch. Like Abraham, Moses is explicitly labeled a prophet (*nābîʾ;* Deut 34:10). Fortunately, the biblical evidence provides a good deal more information about Moses' intermediation between Yahweh and the people of Israel. First,

Moses receives his prophetic messages directly from God and is instructed to deliver them to various audiences (e.g., Pharaoh in Ex 6:20-22; the Israelites in Ex 19:3; Lev 19:1-2; the Aaronide priests in Lev 21:1). Indeed, the manner in which Moses receives revelation ("face to face," Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:10) distinguishes him from all other intermediaries. Second, Moses' delivery of prophetic messages sets him apart from other intermediaries in the Pentateuch. Through Moses, God conveys both specific instructions (e.g., Ex 14:1-4; Num 9:1-5; 16:23-24) and enduring legislation (e.g., Ex 20:22—23:33; Lev 1:1—7:37) in both oral and written (e.g., Ex 24:4; 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:28) form.

In addition to performing the primary or defining intermediatory roles, Moses also engages in several activities secondarily associated with intermediation. Thus Moses intercedes with Yahweh on behalf of the Israelite people on several occasions (e.g., Ex 32:7-14; Num 14:10b-25). In addition, Moses performs divinely empowered miracles and mighty deeds (e.g., Ex 7:8-24; Deut 34:11-12).

When viewed in its entirety, the biblical presentation of Moses as a prophet addresses every aspect of intermediation. Thus it is no surprise that Moses serves as the standard against which other intermediaries are measured. Unlike other prophets, who receive revelation through visions *(mar'â,* from the root *r'h)* and dreams, Moses receives his divine messages directly from the mouth of God (Num 12:6-8). In this respect Moses clearly overshadows the other major prophetic figure in the Pentateuch, Balaam, who attempts to discern the divine will through divination and eventually relies on visionary experiences. As the prophet par excellence, Moses also serves as the model for prophets to come. According to Deuteronomy 18:18, God promises to raise a series of prophets (taking the verb as a customary or progressive imperfect implying a series of prophets, not merely one; see *IBHS* 31.3b§) to convey his will to his people but adds that these prophets will be "like" Moses. Little wonder, then, that one sees similarities between the OT depiction of Moses and the NT portrayal of Jesus in his prophetic role (see, e.g., Miller, 154-56; Merrill, 272).

4. Laws Regulating Prophetic Activity.

Within a context of such diverse prophetic behavior, the need to regulate intermediatory activity becomes acute. It is surprising, then, to note how little the Pentateuch says about legitimate and illegitimate behavior. Granted, certain types of intermediation are prohibited (*see* Divination, Magic; note, however, that use of the Urim and Thummin, a specific form of divination, is authorized [Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6]), and specific means of receiving revelation are valued more highly than others. However, apart from several fundamental restrictions, prophetic behavior is left to the leading of the spirit and the expectations of the audience.

4.1. Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The first legislation concerning prophets forms a part of a larger series of commandments prohibiting any Israelite from advocating the worship of a god other than Yahweh (Deut 12:32—13:18). The listing of prophets *(nābî)* or dream-diviners (lit. "a dreamer of dreams") is surely not comprehensive but is intended to offer both ends of the prophetic spectrum and thus include any type of intermediary. No matter what type of authenticating sign an intermediary might offer, the Israelites are not to listen to such a one if he or she "prophesies" that the people should follow other gods. Instead, such a one is to suffer the same fate as anyone promoting apostasy—death. In short, the defining characteristic of a genuine prophet of God is not the ability to perform awe-inspiring acts but rather faithful communication of God's word to his people, a function that is spelled out in greater detail in Deuteronomy 18.

4.2. Deuteronomy 18:15-22. This passage offers a more complete listing of illegitimate and legitimate prophetic activity and even provides a way for Israel to identify unauthorized prophets who are engaged in legitimate prophetic behavior. Verses 9-14 begin the section by prohibiting certain types of intermediation practiced by the Canaanites (and other ancient Near Eastern peoples). The list of proscribed activities is difficult to sort out, especially since some of the terms are obscure and others appear to overlap, but the text seems to have two general categories of prohibited activities in view. First, the biblical text outlaws divination in general as well as specific types of divinatory activity: child sacrifice, perhaps performed in conjunction with a specific divinatory rite (see Merrill, 270-71; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6); soothsaying (meaning of the Hebrew uncertain); and augury (divination from omens or portents). Second, the text prohibits

activity that seeks to exercise power or control over the spirit world. Such behavior includes sorcery (perhaps the exercise of malevolent power through the manipulation of objects), the casting of spells (i.e., witchcraft), and consultation of spirits, ghosts or the dead. That this categorization fairly represents the thrust of the passage is supported by the closing statement in verse 14, that the people the Israelites "are about to dispossess do give heed to soothsayers [the second category] and diviners [the first category]."

After outlining prohibited forms of intermediation, the biblical text turns its attention to an authorized form, namely, prophets after the pattern of Moses (see 3.3 above). Specifically, Yahweh will raise up a series of prophets "like" Moses (Deut 18:15, 18) and will place his words in each prophet's mouth. Of course, this presents Israel with a problem: How can one determine if a prophet speaking in Yahweh's name is lying, deluded or telling the truth? Verses 21-22 offer a solution: if a prophet's declaration of Yahweh's intent does not take place, the prophet has spoken on his or her own and should not be feared but rather killed. One should note that the prophetic message in view here is no mere prediction of the future but is, in fact, a statement of Yahweh's future plans. In addition, as simple as the "test" sounds, it is difficult to implement during moments of crisis. That is, it works only when people can wait to make a decision about the authenticity of a prophet's message. When, however, a prophet calls people to follow a certain course of behavior in order to avoid some future catastrophe, the audience must decide beforehand and then live with the consequences of their choice (see Jer 28). Fortunately, the larger biblical context consoles its readers with the assurance that those who doggedly seek the face of Yahweh and struggle to hear his voice will, in the end, not be disappointed.

See also BALAAM; DIVINATION, MAGIC.

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PROSTITUTION. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

PROTOEVANGELIUM. *See* FALL; MESSIAH.

PUNISHMENT, DIVINE. *See* SIN, GUILT.

PURIFICATION OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

PURITY. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

R

RAAMSES AND PITHOM. *See* EGYPT, EGYPTIANS.

RACHEL. *See* JACOB.

RAINBOW

A colorful rainbow in the sky is regarded by many as a symbol of beauty. Informed by modern science, we know a rainbow is the reflection and refraction of sunlight through a mist or curtain of falling rain, which produces an arc displaying a prism of colors. In the Bible the rainbow is mentioned in association with rain, clouds, storms and visions, but the most memorable instance is associated with the conclusion of the great flood narrative of Genesis 6—9.

In many ancient cultures (as in traditional cultures of today), a rainbow was regarded along with other natural phenomena—such as eclipses, earthquakes and comets—as a sign or portent of something good or bad. A rainbow was a symbol in the language of the gods, and its meaning might well be disclosed in an etiological tale imbued with myth. The ancient Roman writer Pliny, though offering an explanation of the phenomenon from nature, was still captive to this worldview, maintaining that the rainbow portended a cold winter or even war (Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 2.60). From within the context of these ancient worldviews we should seek to understand the rainbow of Genesis 9:13-16.

1. A Covenant Sign
2. Ancient Near Eastern Parallels
3. Later Interpretations

1. A Covenant Sign.

The rainbow first appears in the biblical text at the conclusion of the story of the *flood (Gen 9:1-17). It is the sign of the *covenant that God makes between himself and *Noah, the living creatures and the earth for generations to come (Gen 9:12-13). God declares his intention never again to allow the waters to become a flood in which all life is destroyed. God specifically claims the rainbow as his and emphasizes that it is he who sets it in the sky (Gen 9:13).

It is noteworthy that the rainbow serves in the first instance as a reminder to *God* of his *promise, an everlasting promise between himself and all creatures of the earth (Gen 9:16). The rainbow represents God's initiative, for it speaks from God to man. As D. J. A. Clines has noted (1978), the flood represents an "un-creation" of the original *creation, a rending of the firmament that held back the heavenly waters and an eruption of the fountains of the deep that were retained beneath the earth. The work of separation and distinction that so characterizes the Genesis 1 creation account is undone in an act of cosmic judgment. The conclusion of the flood evokes a theme of re-creation, accented in God's covenant and blessing of Noah, which echoes God's earlier blessing on the man and woman (cf. Gen 1:28; 9:1). It is significant that the sign of the covenant associated with this re-creation, the rainbow, is a unique and auspicious feature of the creation—and open for all to see. Intimately associated with the storm, rain and cloud of destruction, the "rainbow in the cloud" is now newly interpreted as a sign of God's commitment to his creation, a covenant that God is solely responsible to uphold.

As the first of God's covenant signs in the Bible, the rainbow provides a key to understanding many subsequent signs. A sign points to something larger and beyond itself. The rainbow, a divine covenant sign, joins other covenant signs like circumcision, sabbath, baptism and Lord's Supper, which are God-initiated. God both speaks to his covenant people in signs and

confirms his words with additional signs throughout the biblical corpus.

2. Ancient Near Eastern Parallels.
The extant flood myths of the ancient Near East do not have a direct parallel with the rainbow, but there is one correspondence that merits notice nonetheless. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, at the conclusion of the flood, the hero makes a sacrifice to the gods. When the great goddess arrives, she lifts up the magnificent lapis lazuli necklace from around her neck and announces, "You gods here, as surely as this lapis upon my neck, I will not forget, I will be mindful of these days, forgetting them never" (Gilgamesh 11.160). In this case a sign is given of the goddess's enduring remembrance of the event, and the lapis necklace provides a colorful counterpart to the rainbow.

The Hebrew *qešet* can mean either "rainbow" or "bow," a weapon for warfare or hunting, and we can readily see the resemblance (preserved in our English *rainbow*) between the two. In literature throughout the ancient Near East, the bow speaks of male strength (cf. Gen 49:22-25). The quiver full of arrows and the taut bow symbolize the virility of warriors in Mesopotamian literature. A Hittite curse on armies involved removing the warriors' bows and arrows—thereby emasculating them—and making them dress as women. Breaking the bow of a warrior came to symbolize the signing of a treaty between parties.

3. Later Interpretations.
Rabbinic commentators speculated regarding the rainbow. Nahmanides believed the rainbow existed before the flood but was not assigned as a symbol to serve as a promise to man and as a reminder to God until after the great deluge. But Ibn Ezra differed, saying the account in Genesis 9 chronicles the appearance of the first rainbow (*Encyclopedia Judaica* 13.1524-25).

By one rabbinic account, the rainbow was created on the eve of the sabbath at twilight (Pes. 54a). Elsewhere people are warned not to gaze directly at a rainbow since it reflects the glory of God (Ezek 1:28; Hag 16a). Some rabbis advocated falling down on one's face as Ezekiel did when he saw a rainbow (Ezek 1:28), but others discouraged this practice since it would appear as if one were worshiping a rainbow (*Encyclopedia Judaica* 13.1524-25).

The rabbis approve a blessing upon seeing a rainbow, however. People are encouraged to stop and say, "Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who remembers the covenant, is faithful to His Covenant, and keeps His promise" (Ber. 59a). They add that this blessing is to be recited even if a rainbow is seen twice within thirty days.

M. Luther linked God's promise that no future flood will cover the earth with "God's extraordinary affection for mankind." Luther writes that God is trying to persuade mankind via the rainbow not to fear a punishment like a flood but to hope for a blessing and for the utmost forbearance from the Lord (Luther, 2:145). J. Calvin agreed with Luther that the rainbow is a sign of "the wonderful kindness of God, who for the purpose of confirming our faith in his word does not disdain to use such helps" (Calvin, 1.298). T. E. Fretheim expands on these views when he states that the rainbow had existed before the flood "but was now filled with new significance for the future" (Fretheim, 400).

The rainbow itself lends itself to much figurative interpretation. It bridges heaven and earth and symbolizes peace. Writing on Genesis 9:12, Nahmanides says that the bow pointing downward, like a warrior lowering his bow, declares peace.

See also COVENANT; FLOOD; NOAH.

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RAPE. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

REBEKAH. *See* ISAAC; WOMEN.

RED HEIFER

The corpse-decontamination ritual performed by *Eleazer, *Aaron's son, involving the ashes of a red heifer (or cow) mixed with spring ("living") water and sprinkled upon persons or objects to be purified is described in Numbers 19:1-22 and applied in Numbers 31:19-24 in the case of soldiers and captives returning from war. This ritual allowed a corpse-contaminated layperson to be restored to a state of purity, enabling full participation in the religious life of the community. Nazirites and priests required separate purification offerings for corpse contamination (cf. Num 6:9-12; Ezek 44:26-27).

1. Description of Ritual
2. Significance
3. Critical Views

1. Description of Ritual.

1.1. Animal Requirements. The cow had to be without blemish and, being dedicated to God, never previously yoked for profane use (Num 19:2), evidently a young animal. "Red" presumably refers to the hair rather than the skin, although the latter has been suggested (cf. Brenner, 63). The exact shade of red and its significance is debated. A common interpretation is that red (Heb *ʾădumma*ʿ) is the color of blood (Heb *dām* ["blood"], possibly cognate) and anticipates the ritual use of blood (Num 19:4) essential for purification. Or red could anticipate its being burned in the reddish fire (Num 19:5-6). The Mishnah, which dedicates tractates *Parah* and *ʾOhalot* to the red heifer and corpse contamination, emphasizes the rareness of a totally red cow: "If it had two black or white hairs [growing] from within a single hole, it is invalid" (*m. Parah* 2:5). Accordingly, certain modern Jews interested in restoration of sacrificial worship are attempting to breed pure red cows (Schemann). A. Brenner (64-65), on the other hand, argues that the color here is bay or reddish brown, a more common color. She discounts the rabbinic sophistry on black and white hairs and, due to the text's silence, any symbolic connection with either blood or fire. Why then specify the color? Connecting the color with blood, symbolically adding more "blood" to the ashes (Milgrom 1990, 158), appears the more acceptable interpretation. The crimson yarn and the (red) cedar (Num 19:6) serve the same symbolic function (Milgrom 1981, 65), as well as adding bulk to the ashes. The blood in the ashes contains the cleansing power.

1.2. Nature of the Sacrifice. Is this a sacrifice or a profane slaughter, and if a sacrifice, what kind (Wright 1992, 3:115)? Milgrom argues that Numbers 19:9 should be rendered, "It is a *ḥaṭṭāʾt* [i.e., a purification offering]" (cf. NRSV, REB). Many English versions regularly render "for removal of sin" or the like (e.g., RSV, NIV, NASB). The translation "sin" is problematic, since contamination by removing a corpse from a tent (Num 19:14) involves no "sin." Therefore the *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offering is better rendered "purification offering" rather than "sin offering." Profane slaughter is problematic, since the ritual is supervised by Eleazer the priest. Part of the confusion lies in this *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offering being completely burned to ashes—skin, flesh, blood, dung—whereas elsewhere it is the *ʿōlâ* ("burnt offering") that is so burned. Moreover, unlike other sacrifices, it is slaughtered outside the camp (Num 19:3) rather than at the altar.

1.3. Why a Female? Why does this ritual specify a female cow? Milgrom (1981, 65) plausibly suggests that a bull could not be used because that was the purification offering for the high priests (Lev 4:1-12; 16:11) or the community (Lev 4:13-21) rather than individual Israelites.

1.4. How the Ashes Cleansed and Defiled. Like the Day of *Atonement *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offering, any priest who handled it became unclean (Num 19:7-10a, 21; cf. Lev 16:28), even as it purified its recipients, as if impurity being absorbed into the cow contaminated its handler (Milgrom 1990, 441). Touching or even being in the same room as a corpse (Num 19:11, 14), handling human bones (rearranging bones in a tomb was common practice) or touching a grave transmitted uncleanness. Being contaminated by war killings, the whole army (not just ones who actually touched corpses) and its war captives also required purification after battle (Num 31:19-24). The purification ritual took seven days in which the purifying waters mixed with ashes were sprinkled onto the contaminated person, using hyssop branches on the third and seventh days (Num 19:12, 19; 31:19). Hyssop, associated with other purification rituals, was also considered a purifying agent, burnt and mixed with ashes of other purifying agents: the cow, the cedar and the scarlet thread (Num 19:6). Ritual cleansing applied also to objects contaminated by a corpse: unsealed vessels in the same room, the tent, its furnishings (Num 19:15, 18), clothing, hides, goat's hair, wooden objects (Num 31:20).

All that would not be destroyed was cleansed with fire (Num 31:22-23), but the rest with the waters of purification. The ritual ended with washing clothes and bathing with water on the seventh day (Num 19:19; 31:24). Those who refused to undergo the rite were "cut off," or excommunicated, from the community and Yahweh's sanctuary, which their uncleanness defiled (Num 19:13, 20).

2. Significance.

2.1. Relationship with the Purity Laws. This regulation fits into the larger matrix of laws of purity and impurity that required anyone contracting uncleanness to avoid that which was holy and to take steps to return to a state of purity lest the sanctuary be defiled (Num 19:13; cf. Num 5:2-4; 31:19). This system symbolically conveyed the extreme holiness of God and the unavoidable contamination of human beings, probably symbolic of human sinfulness ("uncleanness" can be used metaphorically for sin), so those who approached God would be ritually and morally cleansed. It also showed Yahweh's association with life and separation from anything associated with death. Minor lessons included showing that war, even under Yahweh's command, nonetheless brought uncleanness and that necromancy and ancestor worship were incompatible with Yahweh worship (Sprinkle, 100-101).

2.2. Typology and New Testament. The NT often observes analogies or correspondences between OT persons, institutions or events and similar NT persons, institutions or events, as if the former (the "type") foreshadowed the latter (the "antitype"). Hebrews 9:13-14 in this manner connects the outward purification through the red-heifer ritual of those defiled by dead bodies that allowed renewed contact with the sanctuary with the blood of Christ that inwardly cleanses the Christian's conscience from "dead works," that is, from practices belonging to the way of death, and allows the Christian to serve the living God. Thus the writer of Hebrews uses the red-heifer ritual to illustrate the work of Christ. Similarly, though the NT makes no explicit connection, Dozeman (152) finds in the red-heifer ritual's purging of death-contamination from the camp a foreshadowing of the purging of death itself in the coming messianic kingdom (cf. Rev 20:14; 21:4).

3. Critical Views.

The Wellhausen school assigns this material to P and questions whether Numbers 19 is an original unity or has come about by a process of supplementation (see Budd, 209-12, for a summary of views; Dozeman, 150, for the view that Num 19:10b-13 are secondary; Wright for the view that Num 31 is a supplement to fill omissions in Num 19). Scholars speculate whether the pericope originated in pre-Israelite exorcism and magic (Milgrom 1990, 443) or pagan burnt offerings (Wefing, cited by Wright 1992, 116) or in opposition to pagan cults of the dead (Levine, 472), though direct evidence for any of these speculations is lacking.

See also LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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J. M. Sprinkle

RED SEA. *See* EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY.

REFUGE. *See* CITIES OF REFUGE.

RELIGION

In the Pentateuch, as throughout the OT, religion is attention to God, who is the one governing force outside the natural world with which humanity must deal. More precisely, it is every facet of the relationship between God and his human creation. For our purposes here, the particular focus will be the whole range of activity and ideas that shape the maintenance of the bond between God and his people. To study the religion of the Pentateuch as such, we must accept the biblical bounds of our object, which is by nature literary. This is not "the early religion of Israel" but the religious aspect of the first five

books of the Bible, which are framed by their final goal, the instruction given through *Moses for the life of God's people Israel in their Promised *Land. In recognition of this priority, we will begin with Moses and only then work backward in time to Genesis.

1. Writing a Religion of the Pentateuch
2. The Religion of Israel Under Moses
3. Before Moses: The Book of Genesis

1. Writing a Religion of the Pentateuch.

1.1. The Pentateuch. A review of "the early religion of Israel" would incorporate the Bible into a larger evaluation of independent evidence from *archaeological excavation and other writing. For these to be identified securely with Israel, however, we would require some confirmation, necessarily written, that any given site and time are Israelite. No such direct evidence exists for the world of the Pentateuch, before Israel settled in the land. Indeed, we do know quite a lot about the region in this period, so that the setting offered by the biblical books can be considered in light of an increasingly intelligible context. Nevertheless, the Bible's portrait of how Israel began, and how its religion first took form, must for the present stand on its own.

Because the Pentateuch's account of Israelite beginnings, with occasional echoes elsewhere in the Bible, still lacks any direct external check on them, it should not be surprising that their picture of earliest Israel is controversial. The biblical rendition is easily attributed to much later people, whose legends and legal traditions say much more about their own times than about the older setting they describe. Rather than attempt here a dogged and distracting defense of our solitary source, I have chosen to offer an alternative without proof. This exploration proceeds with constant reference to the ancient setting as we know it from other evidence, while asking at every point how this religion might be understood as part of earliest Israel if we try out the historical framework offered to us. The reader should recognize both the conscious choice to take seriously the ancient setting and the severe criticism of this approach in the larger scholarly community.

1.2. Religion. In general, the religion of the Pentateuch is the affair of an entire community, whether the extended households of the patriarchs or the entire people of Israel under Moses. Certainly it touches familiar categories such as worship or prayer and praise, but the spoken elements of religion are fairly peripheral to these books, and the remaining category of worship is terribly inadequate to the perspective of these books. Religion is not simply what the people bring to God but incorporates everything that relates to the bond itself. Religion here is a fabric of what is said and what is done, what is believed and how it is followed up concretely for maintaining an unbroken life with God. In its pentateuchal frame, Israel's religion involves both patterns for ongoing use, such as forms for offering or feasts, and a succession of changing circumstances, life with God unfolding through time.

One important development in study of ancient religion has been recognition of the fact that it never represented a uniform whole, the same for everyone. What was thought or practiced was rarely the same in a capital city and in a distant village, even under a single ruler. The first cut in discerning such variety has often been separation of "official" from "popular" religion, where the first sets certain norms according to the interest of the elite, and the second serves its own idiosyncratic needs, which often leads to a messier combination. The educated elite and those who hire them provide most texts, including the Bible, and so they present a rather one-sided view of the religious landscape. Popular religion may be carried into texts by vehicles such as personal names (e.g., Jonathan, "Yahweh has given"), or it may be discerned independently in excavation of private homes, by the religious artifacts found inside (e.g., figurines of deities, protective amulets).

While this sensitivity to variety advances greatly our understanding of Israel and the Bible, we need to avoid another oversimplification that may come with it. Actual experience would not have divided official from popular religion in absolute terms, as if they were mutually exclusive. Ancient people participated in religion in different spheres, as we do today. National *festivals united people into a larger community, with heightened influence for political leaders or professional clergy. Birth, *death and marriage revolved around the household, as it touched a more limited circle, and would involve only local *leadership, if that. Individual need would provoke prayer that might or might not be pursued in the institutions of the people at large.

Within this web of living religious practice, all authority will hope to influence the widest

possible range of social settings, including even the private affairs of individuals and households. The Torah or "instruction" of Moses is preoccupied with the collective business of the people with their God, but it makes many personal demands, epitomized in the Ten Commandments (*see* Decalogue), which are concerned with what takes place in each family. Even so, we must recognize that the Torah of the Pentateuch is still highly selective and leaves large swaths of Israelite life untouched. The ritual aspect of family transitions is almost ignored: birth, passage to adulthood, marriage and death, not to mention prayer for medical or other physical needs.

On the other side, we find no ritual to celebrate the state as such, no royal enthronement or the like. The Torah is satisfied to penetrate every level of Israelite society with certain nonnegotiable norms: especially the worship of Yahweh alone, without help of images. As the rest of the Bible shows, even this core was not at all easy to maintain, and the history of Israel is not one happy celebration of Mosaic instruction.

2. The Religion of Israel Under Moses.
At the center of the Pentateuch stands the bond between Israel and its God, established and nurtured under the *covenant and instruction communicated through Moses. The Pentateuch tells the story of how God brought Israel into being, but it also presents the instruction itself as a point of reference for the generations of Israelites who would live by it. This Torah defines Israel above all in religious terms, as a people under God, with little interest in what government may rule them. This is the best starting point for discussion of religion in these books.

2.1. The Religion of the Pentateuch as the Religion of Moses. The Pentateuch is constructed from its end point, as the books of Moses, with Genesis already anticipating Israel in the Promised *Land. The goal is to bring us there, to explain to us how this accomplished fact came to be. One reflection of this is the scheme of "lasting covenants" that proceed from *Noah after the *flood (Gen 9:16), to *Abraham as he waits for his *promised son (Gen 17:7) and at last to Israel's observance of the *sabbath (Ex 31:16). In Genesis, God promises the patriarchs a land of their own and children to fill it, with a steady gaze toward fulfillment in the books to follow.

The religion of the Pentateuch is the religion of Moses, both by authority and by setting in history. The Torah of Moses is not offered as an undisciplined collection but is built into the story of how God prepared Israel to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). By blending instruction and story, the Pentateuch insists that Israel has always been accountable to the commands of God contained in it, not merely that these instructions came through the authoritative lips of Moses. Given to Moses at the beginning, they are not presented as what Israel actually observed through its life in the land but as the measure of all that follows.

2.2. The Written Form. While the whole Pentateuch has come to be associated with Moses, the books of Moses more literally are Exodus through Deuteronomy, which open with his birth and conclude with his death. Genesis is almost completely devoted to the storyline, excepting various lists, but the books of Moses are dominated by the instruction that occupies a large fraction of all four. At the same time, none of the books escapes the narrative thread that traces the life of Moses.

Even Leviticus picks up the directions for ordination of the first *priests from Exodus 28—29 and describes the actual event in Leviticus 8. With each reminder of Israel in the *wilderness, the Torah is shown not to be timeless but to have been provided at a particular historical moment to prepare the people for life in the land. Of course, this priority of covenant instruction before Israelite history is widely discounted.

2.2.1. Sinai and Pisgah. The instruction of Moses is famously associated with Mount Sinai (or Horeb), where Israel first encounters Yahweh in the southern wilderness after their escape from *Egypt. Almost all of God's instruction to Israel in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers is placed at Sinai (Ex 19:1—Num 10:11). At the foot of the mountain, God and Israel enter a formal bond called a covenant (Ex 24:1-8). On Israel's side, this covenant requires obedience to all the commands given to govern their life together as the people of God. Interestingly, there are a few stragglers, clearly related to the Sinai *law (compare the festivals in Lev 23 and Num 28—29), but left as generic command. Also, the core instructions for the celebration of Passover are presented with the protection from death before the *exodus (Ex 12:1—13:16), not at Sinai.

The Torah of Moses includes a second body of instruction that is associated with the very end

of Moses' life, when Israel is camped in Moab, across from Jericho. The style of this instruction in Deuteronomy is fresh and different, gathered as a long farewell address from Moses to the people, presented in a form calculated to persuade future generations to keep faith with God. As at Sinai, the people are enjoined to enter a covenant with God, this time to be renewed as soon as they are established in the Promised Land (especially Deut 27—31).

The association of both Torah-giving episodes with the covenant is underlined by the blessings and curses set before the people with each, in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Unlike the Sinai Torah, the instruction of Deuteronomy is given entirely in Moses' own voice, and this contrast parallels the role of a second and much less famous mountain in Moses' farewell, called Pisgah. God's only direct words to Moses in Deuteronomy are also spoken to him on the mountain, this time Pisgah, where God shows Moses the whole land and renews his promise that it will be given to Israel (Deut 34:1-4; cf. 3:26-28). At Pisgah, God's business is with Moses alone, and this mountain facing Israel epitomizes the oddity of a national tradition with a founding leader who never set foot in Israel and who lacked even a burial site in the land he is said to have established.

Although the stay at Sinai overlaps the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, the definition of each book as such remains important, and each highlights a different feature. The Ten Commandments and the social code attached to the covenant ceremony take pride of place in Exodus (Ex 19—24), which then celebrates the manufacture of God's mobile sanctuary, the *tabernacle (Ex 25—31; 35—40). Leviticus is centered instead on the holiness of the people themselves, to be maintained by offerings to God and by the purity of each household at every level. This book shows a particular interest in the sons of *Aaron, the priests who oversee safe contact between the people and a *holy God. The long lists that begin the book of Numbers serve to order the people for travel to the Promised Land with God in their midst, in the tabernacle.

Deuteronomy stands apart, at the other end of the journey to the Promised Land, as Moses' last word to his charges. It consciously builds onto the Sinai law, but just as its mode of speech is different, so also is its entire interest. All the law anticipates life in the new land, but in Deuteronomy the land becomes the whole focus. The land was the intended goal from the first (Deut 1:8), when they turned back in fear; it is now to be *Joshua's immediate objective (Deut 3:28), and obedience in the land is the point of this last instruction (Deut 6:1-3). Moses' last act is to view the land from Pisgah, where God promises once again, "This is the land I pledged to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying, 'To your seed I will deliver it' " (Deut 34:4).

2.2.2. Moses and Authority. The teaching of the Pentateuch is dominated by the authority of one human voice, that of Moses. Moses represents something new in the progress of Israel. Through the time of the patriarchs, God approached those with whom he had business directly. Now that Israel has become a large people, they are no longer led by a father, as an extended *family, but by a leader selected from their midst. God chooses the first leader himself, and that intimate interchange with God becomes the identifying characteristic of Israel's first human ruler.

Moses is no mere king who governs by inherited authority or military prowess. He does not even govern because God assigned him the office but rather because God gave him a task: to lead Israel out of Egypt. In this role, he requires constant guidance, and with Moses God enters a relationship of unprecedented intimacy, based on regular communication that goes far beyond the occasional contact allowed the patriarchs. Moses needs no angel but speaks to God "face to face" (Num 12:8; Deut 34:10) and is given the privilege of a direct glimpse of God (Ex 33:18—34:7).

Based on his leadership in the exodus, Moses becomes the de facto ruler of Israel, as seen in his exercise of judgeship in Exodus 18. He supervises the covenant ritual of Exodus 24:1-8, but God has him appoint his brother Aaron as future priest in charge of such offerings. Because Moses brings to Israel the words of God, he is compared to a *prophet (Num 12:6-8; Deut 18:15, 18; 34:10), but this title does not account for his leadership. Also, the "instruction" (Torah, law) that Moses bears is more than God's response to one situation; it offers lasting guidance for life as his sacred people.

All this is unique to Moses, not a permanent role created in the Torah. Joshua inherits the responsibility to lead the people into the land, but without the intimate contact with God and the authority that accompanies it. Moses' special au-

thority suffuses the Torah, and with it the Pentateuch that takes its Hebrew name from this "instruction." No body of written divine ordinances is included in the Bible except under the aegis of Moses, and the lasting effect of pentateuchal instruction is founded on his relationship with God.

On their own terms, the books of Moses do not derive their authority from full attribution of the writing itself to Moses, but they seem to be built around his collected records. The written covenant itself is said to have been stored inside the ark (*ʿēdut* ["witness"], Ex 25:22; 40:20). Two shorter documents are incorporated with citation of Moses' role in recording them: the report of Israel's victory over Amalek at Rephidim (Ex 17:14-15), and the itinerary for Israel's full journey to the Promised Land (Num 33:1-2). Finally, the essential document for Deuteronomy, called "this instruction," is said to have been written by Moses and given to "the Levite priests" and the elders of Israel, to be read at the autumn feast of Sukkoth (Booths) every seventh year (Deut 31:9-10; cf. Deut 17:18, the king's copy). This last practice, while commonly dismissed as a postexilic invention, now matches exactly the calendar of the primary festival celebrated at the inland Syrian town of Emar around 1200 B.C. According to Deuteronomy 31:24-26, this final Torah is to be deposited not inside the ark but beside it.

Although early Jewish tradition already regarded the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy as a unit, linked especially by the centrality of Moses in the formation of Israel as a nation, this Pentateuch is built into a larger history of Israel that continues into the book of Joshua and on through Judges, Samuel and Kings. As a story of Israel's establishment in the land, the Pentateuch is incomplete without the invasion recounted in Joshua. Joshua then begins a long compilation of tales and records that trace God's dealings with Israel through its whole existence as a sovereign people, culminating in Babylon's final dismantling of the kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. Inclusion of the Pentateuch in a literary work that brings us to the dissolution of Israel means that, in the end, the instruction of Moses is to be read by Israel's descendants, people who must find their identity in a heritage that transcends political independence and occupation of the once-Promised Land. The religion of Israel under Moses, when the people encountered God outside that land, is to be a model for a new generation that must likewise find God beyond the borders of Israel.

2.3. The Tabernacle and Its Staff. At the center of Israel's practice of religion, as defined in the books of Moses, stands the tabernacle and its sacred personnel. This therefore represents the logical starting point for a closer look at religion in the Mosaic Torah.

2.3.1. A Mobile Shrine. The religion of Israel from Sinai to its entry into the Promised Land revolves around a single formal sanctuary and its affiliated institutions, which display one remarkable feature when compared to known ancient evidence. They are not attached to any sacred place, such as Sinai or Jerusalem. This sanctuary exists for life on the move. What is surprising is not simply the moveable tent but the establishment of a formal staff for its service and rites, otherwise known only for fixed temples and shrines.

The tabernacle was created specially for worship by a people on the move, and the use of a mobile tent shrine should not be considered a novelty to Israel as described in the Pentateuch, as if the mobile way of life was new to the people of the exodus, only occupying forty years in the desert. Before they settled in the Promised Land, Israel was a shepherd people, and we should not imagine their use of Egypt as a base to have changed this. Although Israel finds itself forced into sedentary slavery in the generation of its departure (Ex 1—2), the last thing we were told about *Jacob's family is that they continued to live as wide-ranging shepherds (Gen 46:31—47:6). The land of Goshen in Egypt should not be understood as the fixed pasture for Israelite flocks but as a new home base for shepherds who still travel seasonally in the eastern interior.

Moses' flight to Midian assumes this old pattern. Palace upbringing aside, Moses retreats to the shepherd life his people already know. In the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe, the hero likewise flees toward the land of Canaan (Retenu), but to circles that compare to his high position in the *pharaoh's court. Sinuhe becomes the powerful military commander for "the ruler of Upper Retenu," with a wealthy estate of his own. Moses, however, settles into life as a far-ranging shepherd, like his ancestors, and meets God at Sinai while grazing the flock in distant regions. For this style of pastoralism, we should remember the account of *Joseph traveling to find his distant brothers in Genesis 37:12-17. Responsibility for the flocks falls to the older brothers, as this is

the principal family wealth. In the story of David's anointing, by contrast, the older brothers are ready at hand near home, while the youngest is left with the inferior task of herding the sheep, relatively near the house (1 Sam 16:1-13). The family inheritance depends above all on the fields, where the primary heirs are found.

The exodus and the time in the wilderness appear to return Israel toward the east along their old routes, to shift their base once more. In having them build a tabernacle, God allows the people to maintain their old identity, defined by relationship to one another rather than by place. The tent itself belongs to mobile people who are accustomed to spending part of the year on the move. Its structure of hides, cloth and wooden poles reflects nomadic habits. The arrangements for carrying the ark, the table and the *altar with poles (Ex 25:12-14, 26-27; 27:6-7), as well as the teams of porters for the tabernacle frame and coverings (Num 1:50-53; etc.), show more than a vague idea of putting God in a desert tent. Transfer of the shrine from one camp to the next is part of its essential form.

All the key artifacts of the tabernacle shrine are portable as well, in practical terms. The ark, the table, the lamps and all other paraphernalia are constructed for genuine mobility. When the ark is in motion, the process of changing camps becomes a sacred procession, a common feature of ancient religion but known mainly by association with fixed towns and their temples. In these settings, processions represent the most accessible public element of religious celebrations, the one time when the gods emerge from their guarded space and invade the domains of everyday living. With Israel, God does not visit their neighborhoods, but he joins them in search of a whole new home.

2.3.2. Priests but No Kings. After he superintends the ritual for the covenant at Sinai in Exodus 24:1-8, Moses passes his priestly function on to his brother Aaron, in conjunction with the building of the tabernacle. The ruler of Israel has no role in leading its worship, even when Moses himself enjoys an unparalleled access to God. Israel's religious life with the tabernacle excludes the political ruler to a remarkable degree. Even though the later kings at Jerusalem are still kept at some distance from the center of worship, their influence is visible in David alone. David takes the initiative to move the ark of God to Jerusalem, his new capital city, where its religious authority can undergird his fledgling reign, and he leads the procession to and sacrifice at its new site (2 Sam 6). Such a ritual role is common to most kings of the ancient Near East.

According to the instruction of Moses, this centrality was not part of earliest Israel. It is commonly supposed that the prominence of Aaron in the tabernacle ordinances reflects the new political power of the high priest after the return from exile, under Persian rule. In fact, Aaron's role is purely ritual, and Moses' instruction will not explain any later period of wider influence.

2.3.3. The Sons of Aaron and the Levites. The core of the Pentateuch is the Sinai Torah, genuine "religious" writing, so why is it such difficult reading? It is not devotional but professional, and its primary audience was the group responsible to oversee the ritual maintenance of the bond between Israel and its God. In this aspect of the Pentateuch, we see the religion of priests, known by writing for priests, who are together established as a lasting institution. A community of sacred workers for permanent employment at a mobile shrine is otherwise unknown to us in the ancient Near East, though very little from such institutions would tend to survive for our perusal.

Two main groups are defined in the tabernacle ordinances. The Levites claim inheritance in Israel as a full tribe going back to Jacob himself. Moses and his brother were descended from *Levi, and the separation of Aaron's descendants for special service as priests produces a much smaller class.

The Levites are first of all given the physical care of the tabernacle, especially for its repeated dismantling and setting up, with portage in between (Num 3—4). Once in the land, however, it seems that this charge will no longer be necessary, and the Levites are to disperse to towns donated by the remaining tribes (Num 35:1-5; cf. Josh 21). After this, they become hard to track. Deuteronomy regards them as vulnerable, surely because they hold no tribal land of their own and are collectively in a weaker economic position (e.g., Deut 16:14, at festivals; 26:13, charity from tithes). At the same time, however, Deuteronomy doggedly reminds the reader that the higher-status priests who oversee the place of *sacrifice are still Levites themselves and must share the resulting wealth with indigent breth-

ren who come willing to work (Deut 18:1-8; cf. Deut 17:9, 18; 21:5; 27:9; 31:9).

It is difficult to know what became of the Levites after arrival in the land. With Joshua, the ark is carried by priests, only once identified as Levites (Josh 3:3). When the ark finally reappears at Shiloh with Eli the priest, Levites come on the scene only to move it after capture and return by the Philistines (1 Sam 6:15). They retain a religious authority, but not linked to service with the ark shrine, as evident in the renegade Levite who becomes the priest for Micah's images in Judges 17. The books of Chronicles show par-ticular interest in their Jerusalem service (e.g., 2 Chron 23, with Jehoiada).

The sons of Aaron are an entirely different matter, commissioned specifically to live with the ark and its tabernacle and to receive their income from the offerings made there (e.g., Lev 7:28-38). The law of Deuteronomy is not concerned with their lineage from Aaron but rather to remind them of their solidarity with their larger Levite kin, and the history that follows, from Joshua through Kings, continues to respect priests mainly for their current office, without interest in blood lines from Levi or Aaron. In the tabernacle law, the sons of Aaron function with small numbers. They oversee all sacrifice and offering (Lev 1—7) and make judgments about the purity of the people, their possessions and their dwellings, based on the condition of the surface in question (Lev 13—15). Once in the Promised Land, the second task would be much more difficult to carry out, because of distance, unless actual need was rare. There is no mention of it in Joshua through Kings.

2.3.4. The Fate of the Tabernacle. The existence of a real tabernacle is widely doubted. In the Pentateuch, it is mainly mentioned in the collection of ordinance associated with its building, in Exodus through Numbers. Deuteronomy speaks of the ark but never the tabernacle. One reason for doubt about the tabernacle's existence is the contrasting pictures encountered in the Bible's two histories of Israel. These are the works that run from the Pentateuch through Kings, and the account of David's dynasty in Chronicles, which was written during the Persian period and depends in part on the larger, earlier work. The problem is that only the later work explicitly carries the tabernacle of Moses forward to the transition of Solomon's temple. When David brings the ark to Jerusalem and sets up a tent for it (1 Chron 13:1-14; 15:1-2, 25-29; 16:1-6), following the story in 2 Samuel 6, the tabernacle is somehow left out of the entire picture, as if the ark had long been detached from it. Before the temple was built, the tabernacle itself is said to have been left by David and Solomon at Gibeon (1 Chron 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chron 1:3, 13), a place that is never associated with the ark in the Bible.

Chronicles treats the tabernacle as a regular part of Israelite worship during the time before kings (1 Chron 6:32 [MT 6:17]; 23:25-26), though the work does not cover this premonarchic period and has nothing specific to say about the tabernacle's whereabouts or use. In the history from Joshua through Kings, the ark plays an active role only in the stories of its movement into God's new home, first in its approach to the land as a whole (Josh 3—4; 6) and then through the events that dislodge it from Shiloh and lead it to Jerusalem (1 Sam 4:1—7:1; 2 Sam 6). The tabernacle is never mentioned in connection with any of these texts, and it receives only one passing mention in this entire presentation of Israel's history, without reference to location except as west of the Jordan River (Josh 22:19). Shiloh's shrine for the ark is rather called a "house" *(bayit)* or "temple" *(hêkāl)*, not a tent or tabernacle (1 Sam 1:7, 9; 3:3). Solomon's temple in Jerusalem takes over only the ark, adding huge copies of its cherubim for the inner sanctum (1 Kings 6:19-28). None of the remaining furnishings of the tent shrine is mentioned, and the new temple is equipped on a much grander scale (1 Kings 7:13-51). For the tale told in Exodus through Kings, at least, Moses' tabernacle is important for its service in accompanying Israel on its journey to the Promised Land, not for its use once arrived.

The Torah itself does not emphasize what purpose the tabernacle has after Israel enters the land. In the associated texts other ordinances include specific commands for lasting observance, such as the lamps before the ark (Ex 27:21; Lev 24:3), the vestments of the priests (Ex 28:43), the priestly office itself (Ex 29:9), the system of offerings and feasts (e.g., Ex 29:42; 30:10; Lev 16:34; 23:14; Num 15:14-15) and other details of their work and compensation (see Ex 30:21; Lev 3:17; 7:36; 17:7; 21:17). In general, the governance for the conduct of the community is permanent because it is the basis for successful life in the Promised Land: "You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and

observe them, so that the land to which I bring you to settle in may not vomit you out" (Lev 20:22 NRSV). While some version of the ark shrine is assumed to continue in the land, the specific tabernacle *(miškān)* is never called a "lasting ordinance." God tells Moses that the daily burnt offering is to be made for generations to come at the entry to the more generic "tent of meeting" (*'ōhel mô'ēd*, Ex 29:42).

In sum, the fate of the tabernacle is unclear. According to Chronicles, it was separated from the ark at an unknown time and ended up at Gibeon, in the territory of Benjamin, and went out of use with the construction of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. It is worth noting, in any case, that for the history of Israel from Genesis to Kings, the tabernacle performs its primary service in the journey from Sinai to the Promised Land. Throughout this journey, the tabernacle is the physical center of Israelite religion, and God's people are gathered as one just as they would be for celebration of the major festivals in the land. The journey thus becomes a sacred procession, with God's people gathered in his presence for a pilgrimage of forty years. God himself moves with Israel from Mount Sinai to a new home in the Promised Land, where he will take up residence with his people.

2.4. The Ark of a Solitary God. Of course, the Ten Commandments ban the use of images for worship of God, and many specific representations of divine presence are rejected throughout the Pentateuch and the rest of the Bible. It may be surprising, then, to realize that Israel was given one acceptable vehicle for the presence of God, the ark of the covenant. A closer look at the ark and its role provides a useful way to think about how Israel understood its God.

2.4.1. One Tabernacle, One People, One God. As they moved from Sinai to the Promised Land, Israel was instructed to build one shrine with one altar, for use as a gathered people. It may be that this initial unity of worship site was understood to have served the festival-like procession to the new home of God and his people.

The book of Judges shows no such convention, as can be seen in Gideon's freedom to make three different offering sites without reference to the ark. He brings an offering *(minḥâ)* when he first meets God's angel, who burns it up on a rock right at hand (Judg 6:18-21). In response to this encounter, Gideon builds a proper altar on the spot (Judg 6:24), and finally God orders him to construct a third one as a rival to his father's Baal altar (Judg 6:25-28). Gideon's worship follows the pattern indicated by the ordinance for building altars in Exodus 20:24-26, but this ordinance does not make clear whether such altars were envisioned for public assembly only, whether local or more inclusive.

Moses' instruction never overtly provides for sacrifice by Israel as a gathered whole at any location without the ark, but Israel accepted multiple sacred sites in actual practice. Faced with a war against Benjamin, the other tribes gather to "Yahweh" at Mizpah (Judg 20:1), a place for sacred oaths (Judg 21:1, 5). To decide whom to send into combat first, they proceed to Bethel to ask "God" (Judg 20:18), and after two setbacks they return to make offerings and try again (Judg 20:26). We are told that the ark is to be found here in Bethel (Judg 20:27), though later the people build a fresh altar for further sacrifices (Judg 21:4). At the same time, there is an annual "festival of Yahweh" at Shiloh (Judg 21:19), the town where we will find the ark at the beginning of 1 Samuel. This seems to be a local event only.

At least for the time of pilgrimage to the Promised Land itself, the tabernacle law insists that all sacrifice must be made at the tent of meeting (Lev 17:1-6). Deuteronomy 12 seems to require a single place for all sacrifice (Deut 12:13-14), the place God will set his name (Deut 12:5). This may anticipate the resting place for the ark in the Promised Land, though we know that in the end it wandered quite a bit. The exclusive location is underlined by careful provision for profane slaughter of animals at home, if the distance to God's chosen place is too great (Deut 12:20-21). This is a peculiar practice, proposed only for those who cannot manage to kill their animals as proper sacrifices.

The situation of the ark in the tabernacle ordinances reflects the setting described in all the books of Moses, where Israel is gathered as one people at one place to worship their one God. This congruence of worship belongs only to the Pentateuch and contrasts with actual life in the land in every period. Israel and the Jews never otherwise live as a gathered encampment around their God, except when they come together to celebrate him during festivals. This fact makes the whole religion of the tabernacle anticipate all the more strongly the later tradition of national festivals.

Even if the journey to the Promised Land represents a unique moment in the life of Israel, it underscores the centered coherence of pentateuchal Israelite religion in one God. Normal ancient Near Eastern religion, especially among settled peoples, recognized a diversity of gods for a diversity of needs, locations and assemblies. This does not mean that one god could not be the focus. Ancient peoples could gather under homage to a single god when one group joined to address one need under one divine power. Above all, this would occur with celebrations sponsored for a whole state, so that unified devotion to one deity follows unified political power.

When divine power came to be concentrated in one god on a more permanent basis, it tended likewise to follow political power, as with Ashur and Marduk of Assyria and Babylonia. Another logic was also possible, which concentrated divine power without excluding subordinate beings. At Ugarit, El's preeminence reflects simple paternity, in being father of all the other gods. During the first millennium B.C., the larger Near East shows some tendency to center power in a single god, especially to accompany the trend toward centralized political power in great empires, beginning with Assyria and continuing with Babylonia and especially Persia. The question is whether the family-based logic could also produce a tendency to favor one god. Evidence for the Transjordanian states of Edom, Moab and Ammon is scant but suggests some preference for a dominant national god, such as Chemosh of Moab. These peoples had tribal origins, like Israel, and the pattern would come from unity as kin rather than political dominance.

As a tribal people gathered as a single family from one father Jacob, Israel's worship of one God alone would represent the logical extreme of this principle of one god for one power to act for one clan. This would not otherwise be known for this early period, but neither would it be intrinsically foreign to ancient Near Eastern patterns of thought. Israel's uniqueness, I would argue, is never a matter of religion dropped from the sky without reference to existing patterns of life, as revelation disengaged from culture. Rather, it results from critical choices among existing possibilities, with dramatic effect.

2.4.2. The Ark and the Cherubim. The ark serves two essential functions at once. Literally, it is a "box" (*'ărôn*), so its role as container of the covenant text should not be dismissed as a secondary tradition. At the same time, however, God is "seated" there between its two cherubim, which mark his very presence with Israel (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2). The ark is the throne of an invisible God.

Although the ark is not a direct part of the Ten Commandments, it offers a concrete expression of the ban on images of God found there, and by this it gives us some idea of what that ban really involved. On one hand, the ark maintains the standard ancient Near Eastern framework for intimate encounter with deity, where the god makes himself or herself present in a single point, in order to enter active communion with those who serve the deity. The normal form for that physical vehicle of revelation and exchange is an image, whether human or of some other symbol. In the west, from Anatolia south through Syria and Palestine, a simple stone might be set up without any particular image. Texts for the renovation of small sanctuaries in the Hittite countryside, in Anatolia roughly contemporary with the early judges, often replace the stones with new statues, evidently understood by the empire to offer a more powerful expression of the deity's nature and force. The ark commanded through Moses is also new to Israel, likewise replacing among other things the simple stones of the type used by Jacob at Bethel (Gen 28:18-22).

On the other hand, instead of illuminating God by an image, the ark does so by a frame without a picture. The cherubim are heavenly beings, protective spirits often portrayed with mixed forms, such as the "living things" of Ezekiel 1:5. In the ancient Near East, these beings would have been classed as divine, and the cherubim offer one hint that God still keeps company in heaven, though company that is not to be worshiped—from the sons of God in Job 1:6 to the plural "we" of creation in Genesis 1:26 (cf. Gen 3:22-24, again with cherubim).

The ban against images in the Ten Commandments includes a precise list: "any form that is in the sky above, or that is on the earth below or that is in the waters below the earth" (Ex 20:4). This would target all the new-fangled images of created beings, from living things to heavenly objects. A simple stone such as Jacob's is not obviously excluded, though other law at-

tacks this very thing, not as an image but as a dangerous vehicle for worship of other gods (Deut 7:5; cf. Lev 26:1).

Dissociating God from images, then, does not change the way he is present at one point, nor does it change intrinsically how he receives offerings, which in the wider world could also have been made before a stone or other form that does not need food to eat.

2.5. A Holy People. Although the camp of each patriarchal father could be impressively large, with Abraham capable of assembling 318 warriors (Gen 14:14), in Genesis the focus religiously and otherwise remains the individual family and household. With the books of Moses, Israel is no longer one household, and with the move from Egypt to Canaan, the religious focus has changed from that of the household to that of the nation. With this journey, a new theme is introduced, the "holiness" of all the people. God is accompanying Israel to the Promised Land, and the retinue of God must be prepared physically and socially to be in his presence. Of course, the priests are consecrated to his special service, a standard ancient Near Eastern notion. Likewise, it is not strange for the common people to be purified for celebration of special events when they draw near to their gods. The Pentateuch's idea, however, of a nation continually in the presence of God, so continually holy, is striking. This "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation" is an odd thing (Ex 19:6).

2.5.1. How to Be Holy. To be "holy" *(qādôš)* is to belong wholly to God (or elsewhere, the gods), whose very being is different, intrinsically dangerous to created life. God is like fire or radioactivity, but more so; his being is power unbridled, though for every communication with his creation he must veil it to an unimaginable extent. The Bible's idea of holiness does not originate in accountability to a divine judge or even the need to keep a pure household but in the problem of coming into contact with the explosive being of God. Holiness is not just "set apart," which could be for any special purpose, but rather the unique preparation for this contact with God. All the Hebrew words derived from this root *(qdš)* have this narrow application.

Israel's holiness has two main aspects. First, a physical and ritual purity must characterize both the people's bodies and their homes. In this aspect, the operative word is *clean,* and that which is "unclean" is understood to be incapable of tolerating the burning presence of God. Physical purity is not just a matter of bathing but involves the food they consume (Lev 11) and the houses they inhabit (Lev 14:33-53). All excretions are experienced as sullying a clean body, from the bodily expressions of sexuality (Lev 15:16-24) to all the rashes and boils that might or might not prove to be permanent skin diseases (Lev 13:1-46).

At the same time, holiness to God requires consistent observance of larger standards of behavior, especially between people, that we would call moral. For Israel, limitation of sex to marriage between a man and a woman who are not too closely related by blood (Lev 18) is not a matter of individual ethics but of keeping the whole community healthy before God.

In sex, the crucial domains of physical and social holiness are inescapably joined. Likewise, justice and honesty are the essence of healthy life together in the presence of God (Lev 19:9-18). The holy people of God have to care for each other as if together they are one body that can be injured or defiled by the failure of one part, and God's call to justice concludes with the famous command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18). Naturally, holy life together requires also the proper remembrance of God, rooted in a novel Israelite division of time into seven-day intervals and marked by the sabbath.

2.5.2. The Presence of God Among a Holy People. The ark and the tabernacle result from an act of generosity and concern by a holy God, vehicles by which he not only meets his people but also reveals himself to them. All divine revelation by nature accommodates the Creator to a form less than himself, whether in human language or more concrete expressions. In the ark, God channels his raw power to one point, veiled by layers of protective space. Even with God's generous movement toward his people to make a direct meeting possible, it is impossible to tolerate or survive his presence without a matching movement on the human side toward the holy God. Together, the consecration of special priests and the consecration of the people to holy life are calculated to make it possible for Israel to remain in the presence of its God and by doing so to receive his unmixed blessing.

2.6. Pilgrimage. The entire religious life of Israel in the time of Moses is framed as a pilgrim-

age to the Promised Land with God in their midst. Gods are usually to be found at particular sacred locations, and pilgrimages go to places that are already recognized to be holy, where the gods may be encountered to greatest effect. When God is already at hand, why go on pilgrimage to a new sacred place? The answer is that God is taking up residence in the land he has chosen for his own people. Israel's hymn for Yahweh's victory at the Red Sea celebrates the Promised Land not as their happy home but as the very dwelling of God. "By your power you have guided [them] to your sacred estate" (*nĕwēh*, Ex 15:13). "You [God] will bring them and plant them on the mountain of your ancestral land *[naḥălâ]*; you have made a place for you to live; your hands have established a sanctuary *[miqdāš]*, O LORD" (Ex 15:17). Together Israel and its God are going home.

Once Israel is settled in the land, their assembly under Moses will be re-created in only one religious institution, the national festival. Under normal circumstances, Israel will be gathered before Yahweh only three times a year, for festivals that mark God's care for his people and their commitment to him. These festivals are so important to Israel's holy life together that a description of them is preserved in every main body of Mosaic Torah, with varying names and focus (Ex 23:14-17; 34:18-24; Lev 23; Num 28—29; Deut 16). Israel's year is marked by two axes, during the spring and the fall, and the two most important feasts occur then: Passover night and the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread in the spring, and the week-long Feast of Booths (Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) or Ingathering (Exodus) in autumn.

Whether or not the people succeeded in carrying out this ambitious program of full assemblies, imaginable only in a small country, the Torah envisions meetings at a single sacred place in a settled land, reflected especially in the strong agricultural element to the festivals. The various passages never propose a specific geographic location for the grand reunions, though the tabernacle instruction assumes the centrality of the ark, and Deuteronomy the place where God will set his name.

The festivals offer a direct complement to the tabernacle. Whereas the tabernacle is created for the pilgrimage to the Promised Land and is not directly commanded as a lasting ordinance for life there, the festivals serve only life in the land and are not to begin until Israel's settlement. The first Passover after the escape from Egypt is observed at Gilgal, with the end of *manna and the first bread made from the yield of the land (Josh 5:10-12). These three annual pilgrimages to meet God are to take the place of the first grand pilgrimage of the tabernacle and perhaps also to recall it.

3. Before Moses: The Book of Genesis.

Any discussion of religion in the Pentateuch must divide Genesis from the remaining books. This is true even if the patriarchs are considered legendary and the contents of Genesis relevant only to later Israelite religion. The setting in time before Israel existed as a people supposes a noticeably different religious world, with different rules of engagement. Space here allows only a basic orientation to the contrasting landscape.

3.1. Working Backward. As with the Pentateuch as a whole, we must keep in mind that strict study of Israel's ancestors is entirely a Bible affair. Both the period and the region are fairly well-documented by other texts and archaeological finds but without any mention of the patriarchs and their God. Behind Abraham, we disappear into a world before "history," in the sense of context to which we can attach any names at all, outside the Bible's. On the Bible's own terms, however, Genesis 1—11 is crucial to set the stage for all that follows, especially relating God to the world he has made.

For the purposes of this general essay, I have found it better not to talk about Genesis first, as if its religion could be disentangled from the whole package of the Pentateuch. Yahweh is already the name of a God identified uniquely with Israel, the nation that comes into being with entry into the land. To speak of "Yahweh" in biblical times is to call to mind this people. The sabbath introduced with creation is the sign of Israel's covenant as an established people (Ex 31:12-17). Genesis 1:1—2:4 does embed the sabbath in the created order, as for all humanity, but even more it places Israel itself back in the foundational plan of God. By its unique observance of sabbaths, the "holy nation" Israel keeps time for the whole world.

As we work backward to the beginning, Genesis finally gives us religion without history. That is, Genesis 1 describes events that only God himself could know, not even imagined to be reported by human witness. By going back to the

beginning, Genesis explains not only human *creation but also the first human awareness of God, in a world without religion. *Adam and *Eve live in the very garden of God (Gen 2:8) and chat with their Maker without concern for holy danger. Only after their expulsion do *Cain and *Abel make the first offerings (Gen 4:3-4), and only after Adam and Eve produce a new line through *Seth and Enosh do people first call on Yahweh's name (Gen 4:26).

3.2. Israel's Ancestors.

3.2.1. Religion Before Law. The Pentateuch puts a conscious distance between the patriarchs and the covenant and Torah of Moses. God tells Moses that his ancestors did not meet God as Yahweh but as El Shaddai (Ex 6:2-3). In coastal Syria-Palestine of the second millennium, especially as known at Ugarit, "El" is the god whose name is "The God," the father of all, the chief of the divine pantheon. In the Bible, "Elohim" is the normal name for Israel's "God," and Genesis presents us a series of distinct "El" titles by which the patriarchs worship their God (see Gen 14:18-22; 21:33; 31:13; 33:20; 35:7). Knowing that the Canaanites already made use of the same basic terminology to name their preeminent god, we must account for this strong continuity with Israelite religion, especially as associated with the early experiences of Abraham, *Isaac and Jacob.

According to the Bible, it was entirely appropriate to address Israel's deity by a title that would identify him with the ancient father of all, "The God" El. It was impossible, however, to call him "The Lord" or Baal, the standard title of the storm god, the other leading male deity of the Canaanites. Why not? It is clear that by the time of Elijah and Jehu in the ninth century (1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 9—10), Baal was linked to the influence of the great Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, with a fear that Israel would be swamped by a foreign power and culture. Because the Baal title had become so strongly associated with a god separate from El, perhaps it was simply not possible to align Yahweh's primary titulary with two separate deities, when the name "God" already had priority. There was nothing in the character of the storm god as such that excluded identification with Yahweh's powers (see Ps 29).

The book of Genesis identifies El with Yahweh, the name of God proclaimed at Sinai. It is not clear which name had historical priority, and it seems that we are meant in much of Genesis to accept this as an ancient equation that needs no explanation. If the name El had been foreign to earliest Israel, the association would have attributed to Yahweh the stature of the chief regional god. The question turns on whether the *ʿēl* in the name Israel (of uncertain meaning) refers to the proper name El or just means "(the) god," whether Yahweh or any other. Both are possible.

At Beer-sheba, Abraham plants a sacred tamarisk tree and calls "on the name of Yahweh, El Olam [Ancient El?]," using both names together (Gen 21:33). Though God introduces the name Yahweh to Moses as something new, Genesis unselfconsciously lets the true God go by his Israelite name. Exodus 6:2-3 would then offer a historical clarification that in the old days Yahweh made his appearances under another name. This passage seems to refer directly to Genesis 17:1, where Abraham is about to receive the covenant with *circumcision. There, using the same language as Exodus 6:2-3, we are told: "Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am El Shaddai.' "

Besides the different names by which the patriarchs knew God, they were noticeably free in their worship, using means common to people of their time that were later banned because they were too closely associated with other gods or with offensive forms of worship. Jacob pours oil on an upright stone at Bethel (Gen 28:18), but such *maṣṣēbôt* were outlawed for Israel (Lev 26:1; Deut 7:5). The tree planted by Abraham at Beer-sheba (Gen 21:33; cf. Gen 12:6; 13:18; 35:4) would later have been attacked as dangerous (Deut 12:2; Hos 4:13). Though God does not allow Abraham to go through with it, the command to sacrifice Isaac may make sense as a test only in this time before the giving of a Torah to govern Israel. It is less clear how sacrifice was limited in the earliest period of Israel's settlement, but the patriarchs' free use of many sacred sites, making sacrifice without priests, is certainly at home in a world without Moses' instruction.

These practices do not appear in Genesis as a kind of accident. They are based on the idea that God provided something new with Moses' Torah. The Torah thus gives Israel not an eternal blueprint for the only way to worship God truly but a plan for the particular people Israel to live as a people consecrated to himself.

3.2.2. Religion Without Nation. The religion of Genesis 12—50 is before Moses and before Israel as a nation. It is on a smaller scale, then, with a different purpose. Oddly, it is already a religion of the Promised Land, though with many shrines and no professional priesthood. No offering is ever made by the patriarchs outside the land that will belong to Israel. This is most visible with Jacob, who does so at Bethel with his departure (Gen 28:18-22) and at Mizpah in the Transjordan with his return (Gen 31:54, making peace with Laban), but never in Syria.

This pattern should not be surprising, because the theme that links the patriarchal stories to each other and to the books of Moses is the Promised Land. The land is God's chosen home, and it is no wonder that Israel's ancestors keep encountering him there.

The patriarchs are not yet governed by the religious system established for life as a nation, but they already worship one God, identified as Israel's by the name Yahweh. In fact, it is assumed that one family will have one god. Laban and Jacob call their two gods (not one) to witness their treaty at Mizpah: "May the God of Abraham and the god of Nahor, the gods of our fathers, judge between us" (Gen 31:53; the verb is plural). There is no ban on images, but none is used. The images found in Jacob's household in Genesis 35:2-4 are called "foreign gods," using an old term for those outside the family circle. Rachel steals her father's household gods (teraphim), but they are never identified with Jacob himself (e.g., Gen 31:19). Laban and Jacob share the same mode of living, as far-ranging shepherds working from a town base. If we allow Laban to model the religious norm for such people, he also worships one primary family god but keeps household gods as well, which may be related to veneration of ancestors. Images were freely used. In the terms of Genesis itself, the patriarchs do not merely imitate standard custom, though in worshiping one family God they are completely in step with their peers.

Finally, Israel's ancestors display a religion of the extended family rather than that of a nation or state. Only *Melchizedek appears as a priest, in a rare encounter (Gen 14:18), and there are no temples, no calendar of regular ritual and prayer only to have children, a need most relevant to the family. God provides his own intermediaries from the divine court in the form of "messengers" (later, "angels") who come with his words, or he addresses the patriarchs in *dreams (e.g., Jacob at Bethel, Gen 28:12).

3.2.3. Life Before Torah: Right and Wrong. The stories about the patriarchs often draw no judgment, and one should not jump to conclusions from their silence. Jacob's deceit is no model. The few explicit expressions of what is right or evil are therefore the more important.

Above all, Sodom and Gomorrah are declared to have sinned abominably (Gen 18:20), illustrated by their treatment of strangers who turn out to be God's messengers, with the sexual aspect offered as the ugliest expression (Gen 19:4-9). It can be no accident that Israel's pastoralist ancestors find the epitome of evil in the rich cities of the Jordan plain. A less direct expression of wrongdoing is found in the repeated threat that a married woman will be defiled by adultery, when the patriarchs keep offering up their wives in self-protection (Gen 12; 20; 26). As at Sodom, the worst crimes seem to be sexual. Such breaches subvert the family in a culture that defines itself entirely by bonds of kinship. A similar importance is assumed in Joseph's refusal of Potiphar's wife in urban Egypt (Gen 39:9).

The one direct approbation of what is "right" in Genesis is God's famous praise of Abraham: "He trusted Yahweh, (who) by it counted him in the right" (Gen 15:6). God shows off Abraham's trust again in asking for Isaac, saying afterward, "Now I know you are a God-fearing man" (Gen 22:12). As seen in Abraham, *faith is trust in a promise not yet received, which suits well the main theme of Genesis.

3.3. The Beginning: Genesis 1—11. Genesis 1—11 defines a religious framework for humanity as a whole while presenting a creation with echo, before and again after the flood. Out of the rich raw material, I have chosen to present the beginning in two main layers of thought: the *image of God in humanity, and *Eden with its aftermath.

3.3.1. The Image of God as Frame for Genesis 1—11. The frame for Genesis 1—11 is constructed by genealogies leading from Adam to Abraham, starting in Genesis 5. Genesis 1:1—2:4 is then shown to be part of that frame by Genesis 5:1-2, which picks up the "image of God" from the first creation of humanity (Gen 1:26), not from the story of Eden. God's image is invoked again as the basis for the death penalty in the guidelines for life after the flood (Gen 9:5-6). Other evidence for a second try at creation is found in the

new authorization of meat and the repetition of the old command to be fruitful and to multiply (Gen 9:1-3; cf. Gen 1:28-30).

Read in light of the Bible's abhorrence of images, Genesis 1:26 proposes that humanity itself, male and female, represent the only acceptable statues of God. The only legitimate representation of the Creator has been made by himself. Like ancient Near Eastern statues of gods more generally, this image does not exhaust the character of God but is a revelatory gift. If we want to know about God, we are to look at ourselves. No attempt to limit the search to "mind," "spirit" or the like has ever proved convincing.

At the start of the first genealogy, the "image" is repeated to define the family bond from parent to child. If the metaphor is to be applied consistently, this suggests that as God's *image,* the trite truism aside, all humanity are indeed God's children. Likewise, the idea of God as father is built into the first chapter of the Bible. Human responsibility for the world is also based in this image. We imitate God in caring for it as our own inheritance.

3.3.2. Eden and Its Aftermath. Before the first genealogy, we find one long story about the family of Adam. The tale begins in Eden, which should be in Turkey if the Tigris and Euphrates run out of it (Gen 2:14), and it moves eastward toward Babylon (see Gen 3:24; 4:16; cf. 11:2). Throughout, humanity is a rival to its Maker. In Eden, we take the fruit of the knowledge tree in order to be like God (Gen 3:5, 22). Lamech wants his vengeance to outdo that of God himself (Gen 4:24). Later, the marriage of human daughters to "*sons of God" invades this terrain by marrying into heaven, so to speak (Gen 6:1-4). The tower of *Babel has as its goal to reach heaven itself (Gen 11:4). This ambition seems to be the flip side of creation with God's own breath in us (Gen 2:7). Possession of this one link to God's being is the basis for the temptation to seize more.

At the same time, we see in these connected stories a silhouette of what is meant to be the sole right of God. God alone has the capacity not only to know what is good and evil but also to survive this knowledge without terror and shame. Life that lasts forever is only God's to give. Justice that is not simply self-serving belongs only to God. In spite of God's breath in us, humanity comes from the soil, and we are bound to it. Heaven and its glories are God's alone.

Finally, as we move back in the Bible's time from Moses to the patriarchs to the beginning, we see God in the fresh intimacy he first intended to have with the human beings he created. Eden is God's garden home on earth, where he walks at his leisure and converses freely with Adam and Eve. In such a place, even a snake cannot be quite dumb. No angel is found through Genesis 1—11; God speaks directly with Cain (Gen 4:6-15) and appears simply at Babel (Gen 11:5-7). The very possibility to intermarry with the inhabitants of heaven to produce a mixed race, like king Gilgamesh of Mesopotamia, suggests a time when heaven and earth were not so sharply separated.

See also ALTARS; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS; LEVI, LEVITES; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; TABERNACLE.

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REPARATION OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

REPENTANCE

The OT in general, and the Pentateuch in particular, employs two main terms to capture the concept of repentance. They are *niḥam* and *šûb. Niḥam* ("repentance" in the Niphal and Hithpael verb stems, but "comfort, console" in the Piel and Pual verb stems; our concern is with the Niphal and Hithpael) has the sense of lamenting or regretting one's own doings and is used almost exclusively with reference to God. It signifies a change in God's attitude and relationship to humanity because humanity has taken either a positive or negative change in regard to God. *Šûb,* on the other hand, is applied most often to human repentance and by strict definition means "to turn or return." One of the more expressive usages of the terms in tandem is found in Jeremiah 18:8, where God is portrayed as turning or responding to human response. Because the Hebrew prophets are primarily preachers of *šûb,* the term is fully developed and applied in full force at this later stage in Israel's history. Nonetheless, the concept of *šûb* has its moorings in the pentateuchal *covenant. In the OT there are more than one thousand occurrences of *šûb* and its associated forms, thus giving witness to its importance. It is an instructive word because it reflects the notion of a journey

or a pilgrimage that requires constant attention, vigilance and a sense of purpose. If Israel or an Israelite was to stray from the proper path, *šûb* is what would bring them back to the right way. It demanded the whole nature of the person (intellect, emotion, will, etc.) to respond to God, resulting in proper moral and ethical behavior relating to God's self-disclosure (covenant, *law, etc.). In the earlier part of Israel's history, *šûb* was less an individual activity and more a corporate activity involving entire communities and even the whole nation. When national calamities such as famine, drought, military defeat or insect plague occurred, the populace was more prone to blame the nation as a whole than they were to feel individually responsible. In fact, all of them shared responsibility and, consequently, the ritual of repentance.

1. Repentance in Genesis
2. Repentance in Exodus
3. Repentance in Leviticus
4. Repentance in Numbers
5. Repentance in Deuteronomy
6. Summary

1. Repentance in Genesis.

The strongest statement of repentance in Genesis is applied to God and his reaction to human sinfulness:

> The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry *[niḥam]* that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (Gen 6:5-6 NRSV)

These verses could well serve as a theme statement for the movement of the story line from the *fall in the garden of *Eden (Gen 3) until the call of *Abraham (Gen 12). The verses emphasize human rebellion and God's dissatisfaction with his creation. Even the animals, creeping things and birds are affected by God's response (Gen 6:7). Perhaps this is related to the notion that the serpent that tempted *Eve (Gen 3:1) falls within these categories. God repented of his creation, responding to the sinful actions of human beings by sending a flood. This can pose a problem in English terminology because of the rather restricted use of "repent" as meaning solely to turn from sin. However, the Hebrew can be understood as "to be sorry" or "to change one's mind." There is certainly an emotional dimension of remorse that connotes a grieving in changing one's mind. Yet in some sense, by "repenting" in this context, the creator God became the destroying God. His repentance is expressed in an action opposite to the action he had become pained over. Nonetheless, God's rescue of *Noah's family and the animals, along with his establishing a new covenant with them, reveals his gracious, redemptive nature.

2. Repentance in Exodus.

Exodus 32—24 contains an incident in the early covenant life of Israel that reveals a profound understanding of human and especially divine repentance. The Sinai covenant, having just been established (Ex 19), was almost immediately violated by Israel. The incident of the *golden calf (Ex 32:1-10) and the subsequent punishment, intercession of *Moses and covenant renewal serve paradigmatically for Israel's self-understanding of its relationship with God. The key issue is the exploration of how God will respond to this first covenant violation—a direct disregard of the first two commandments (Ex 20:3-6). His response will set the tone for how God will deal with the sinfulness of his people, made so by his choice and covenant commitment. In symbolic and practical terms, the question raised is, How will one member of a new and intimate relationship respond to the first act of unfaithfulness by the other member of the relationship? Thus we see in God's covenant renewal (Ex 34) that God is willing to extend forgiveness for covenant failure. However, it should not be overlooked that God was intensely angry over the sin of his people (Ex 32:9-10) and a terrible judgment would follow (Ex 32:28, 34-35).

The covenant renewal was granted only because of Moses' intercession (Ex 32:11-13; 33:12-17). The words of Moses' entreaty are that God would "turn" *(šûb)* from his burning anger and "repent" *(niḥam)* from the harm he was planning against Israel (Ex 32:12). The result is *niḥam* on the part of the God of Israel (Ex 32:14). It is interesting that the repentance is not that of Israel, but rather only of God. It is through Moses' expression of sorrow and taking action that Israel is spared (Ex 32:19-32; 33:12-16). One might wonder at this point in the narrative whether God has really forgiven Israel for the covenant violation. But this appears to be

the case in Exodus 34:7, where God himself pronounces that he is one who forgives. What is most striking in this and the preceding verse is the repetition of the name of the Lord associated with positive character attributes (e.g., compassionate, gracious, slow to anger) that far outweigh any negatives. Put more simply, God's mercy predominates, just as he had said when he first established the covenant (compare Ex 34:7 with Ex 20:5-6). The fact that the whole incident ends with the glory of God shining in the face of Moses might indicate that the true glory of God is related to his divine nature and forgiving, restorative character. In sum, the canonical position of this episode makes God's own repentance and his forgiveness a key to the rest of the OT. This first impression of Israel's God as a forgiving God in the context of their first national covenant violation speaks to his character beyond the scope of the Pentateuch, reaching to the Prophets, Writings and even the NT.

3. Repentance in Leviticus.

Jewish ideas of repentance have always been connected to the great sacrificial system detailed in the Pentateuch and centered especially in the *tabernacle cult. Community and national repentance rites were enacted on the Day of *Atonement. However, penitent individuals could make personal offerings at the sanctuary at any time to atone for personal transgressions. Such cultic ritual allowed repenting sinners to disassociate themselves from their impurity by allowing the sacrificial system to objectively remove it from themselves. When wrongdoing toward one's neighbor took place, the laws of Leviticus were especially concerned with a full definition of what human repentance entailed. This included confession, a public acknowledgment of wrongdoing indicated in the guilt offerings (Lev 5:5), restitution and a cessation of wrongdoing followed by restoration to the violated one in full along with an additional one-fifth of whatever the violation was (Lev 6:4-5). The year of Jubilee, recorded in Leviticus 25, did not constitute a repentance in the truest sense, even though the word *šûb* is consistently used in the explanation of what the Jubilee is (Lev 25:10, 27, 28, 41). However, it did envision a proclamation of liberty to all Israelites who were in bondage to any of their fellow citizens and the return *(šûb)* to their ancestral possession of any who had been compelled through poverty to sell them (*see* Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, Jubilee).

4. Repentance in Numbers.

Numbers 5:5-8 incorporates in one collective statement the levitical notions of repentance by confession and restitution. Three times in the passage, restitution/restoration is captured by the term *šûb*. Thus, repentance is responding with appropriate action to correct a wrong.

We find a somewhat surprising use of repentance *(niḥam)* in Numbers 23:19:

> God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind *[niḥam]*. Has he promised, and will he not do it? Has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (NRSV)

The contradiction appears to be with passages such as Genesis 6:6, which readily describes God as repenting *(niḥam)*. What, then, is the meaning of Numbers 23:19, which states that God does *not* repent *(niḥam)*? The passage is not a contradiction of Genesis 6:6 but rather shows that God is faithful in a way that human beings are not. Although God can and will change his mind (Gen 6:6, *niḥam*) about things relating to human beings and their particular attitudes and actions, there are some things about which God would never change his mind. For example, God is committed to the house of David (1 Sam 15:29; 2 Sam 7:8-17). Another example is God's commitment to Israel via his initial covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). It is God's nonnegotiable commitment to Israel that is in mind here. God may change his mind about other things, but to this issue he will not. The context of Numbers 23:19 is the speeches of *Balaam, who is attempting to curse Israel at the wish of Balak, king of the Moabites (Num 22:1-4). Balaam is unable to bring a curse and instead proclaims that he can only bless Israel (Num 23:20). God's blessing of Israel is therefore seen to be irrevocable, and this immediately following the wanderings and the rebellions in the wilderness recorded throughout the book of Numbers. In this way, God is shown to be faithful to his covenant in a way that Israel was not, as witnessed in the golden calf incident of Exodus 32—34. In other words, God will not repent of those things to which he has made covenant commitments.

5. Repentance in Deuteronomy.

The book of Deuteronomy summarizes the his-

tory of Israel as revealed in the first four books of the Pentateuch and concludes with exhortations and warnings to the new generation of Israelites about to enter the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy *šûb* appears more than thirty times and serves as its primary moral and responsive term. At one point the Israelites had repented *(šûb)* and wept before God, yet God would not listen (Deut 1:45). However, as the new generation of Israelites are being warned not to forget all that had transpired since the earlier departure from Egyptian slavery, there is a promise that if they seek him appropriately and repent *(šûb)*, God will listen this time (Deut 4:29-31). Some of the final charges of Moses, which lead to the conclusion of the Pentateuch, are concerned with Israel being willing to repent *(šûb)*. Deuteronomy 30 is especially enlightening because of its repetitive use of *šûb*. The chapter gives further definition to the blessings and curses discussed in preceding chapters of Deuteronomy. The "returning" of Israel (*šûb* in Deut 30:3) demonstrates that the function of the blessings is to serve as positive motivation and the function of the curses is to serve as negative motivation in stimulating repentance. Therefore God actively works, even using painful means, to bring about repentance—a repentance that has the aspects of love and obedience (Deut 30:30). Blessings of God are associated with repentance (Deut 30:9), along with a definition of what it means truly to repent—obedience to God's commandments, statutes and laws (Deut 30:10).

6. Summary.

To sum up, there are two primary terms used in the OT in association with "repentance." One of the words *(niham)* is most often used with God as its subject and generally means to be sorry or to change one's mind. The other *(šûb)* is used more in relation to humans and means to repent in the classical sense of turning to God and, more specifically in the Hebrew prophets, to respond appropriately to Torah. Human repentance, turning from an improper course of either attitude or action to an appropriate one directed by God, is usually met by divine repentance. Such divine repentance involves God changing his mind about someone or something to avoid a negative consequence. In a word, God responds to the response of human beings. Human repentance leads to divine repentance.

In the Pentateuch and the OT as a whole, repentance is primarily a national concern. There is more discussion of the nation repenting corporately than there is about individual repentance. This is in keeping with the community emphasis in Israel's Scripture. God's turning from his anger, repenting or changing his mind, in the golden calf episode (Ex 32—34) is a crucial canonical portrayal of God's redemptive nature. He is faithful in his repentance in a way that humans are not, illustrating his covenant commitments to both Israel as a whole and to the house of David. For Israel, corporate repentance is an appropriate response and a vital element in their covenant relationship with God.

See also FAITH; PROMISES, DIVINE; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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J. R. Soza

REST, PEACE

Rest and peace are overlapping ideas. Both are given to *Israel by Yahweh; both are enjoyed in Yahweh's presence; both require faithful obedience; both indicate more than an absence of hostility with enemies or nations but include positive relationships. Each idea has its own vocabulary, nuances and distinctives.

1. Rest
2. Peace

1. Rest

The idea of rest has to do with (1) ceasing from labor and activity or (2) ceasing from motion. G. von Rad argued that the former is the dominant motif, the notion reflecting the change

from *Unruhe* ("unrest, tumult") to *Ruhe* ("rest, calm"). Against von Rad, G. Robinson argued the latter is the dominant notion, reflecting the change from wandering to settlement, especially in the *land. Though it is often claimed that rest describes an objective state rather than an inner peace or state of mind, H. D. Preuss argues that its opposite is not just motion but restlessness. It thus often denotes cessation from strife, trouble or threat. Hence the state of rest is more than settlement and cessation from motion but also involves "satisfaction, joy, calm." This is reflected in the deuteronomic expression that rest is "from your enemies."

All these ideas cohere theologically. Cessation from activity or motion suggests the fulfillment and attainment of God's purposes. Thus the state of rest represents not only physical security and enjoyment but also harmony with God, being in God's presence, and freedom from the threat of enemies and *sin. In sum, the notion of rest sums up all of God's *promises and purposes.

The bulk of words associated with the idea of rest in the Pentateuch come from the roots *sbt* and, especially, *nûaḥ*.

1.1. Rest as Cessation of Activity. The first occurrence of the theme comes in Genesis 2:2-3 where God rested *(sbt)* on the seventh day from the work of *creation. While there is the sense that rest is a cessation of labor, the notion of rest is much richer than that. God's rest expresses the completion and goal of his purposes and the enjoyment of the perfection and harmony of creation. God declares in Genesis 1:31 that the creation is very good. There is no strife, enmity or sin in the creation, hence there is rest.

God's own rest on the seventh day becomes the paradigm for God's people having a *sabbath rest every seventh day according to the fourth commandment (Ex 20:11 [*nûaḥ*, cf. *sbt* in Gen 2]; cf. Deut 5:14, where the motivation to keep the sabbath is grounded in the exodus). The day itself is blessed and hallowed (Gen 2:3; Ex 20:11). There are also days of "complete rest" *(šabbātôn)* in special *festivals including the Day of *Atonement (Lev 16:31; 23:32), the Festival of Trumpets (Lev 23:24) and the Festival of Booths (Lev 23:39). The predominant idea here is rest from labor.

Not only God's people, but the land also is to "rest *[šmṭ]* and lie fallow" every seventh year (Ex 23:11 NRSV; also Lev 25:1-7; cf. Lev 26:34-35). Animals also are to rest on the sabbath (Ex 23:12).

1.2. Rest as Cessation from Movement and Trouble. Restless wandering is a result of sin and its punishment. Thus *Cain was sentenced to be a "restless wanderer" (Gen 4:14 NIV), no longer able to settle and facing the insecurity of threats from enemies. *Noah's ark floated until it settled *(nûaḥ)* on Mt Ararat (Gen 8:4). The forty-year wandering of Israel in the *wilderness was also a time of punishment for sin (Num 14:22-35). In a similar fashion, disobedient Israel will receive the *covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28, including the threat that it will find "no resting place for the sole of your foot" (Deut 28:65 NRSV).

The state of restlessness indicates that the state of rest includes, ultimately, a cessation not only of motion but also of strife from sin and its consequences. Rest is therefore about more than safety and settlement; it also concerns restored relationships with Yahweh. It is an objective reality and an inner state.

The *flood narrative resonates with words related to rest *(nûaḥ)*. After the floodwaters subsided, the dove sought a place to set its foot. The word *mānôaḥ* (Gen 8:9), a cognate of *nûaḥ*, is the same as used in Deuteronomy 28:65 for finding a resting place. Noah's name is derived from the verb *nûaḥ* ("to rest") and the ark came to rest *(nûaḥ)* on Mount Ararat (Gen 8:4). The goal of the flood is not to find rest on firm land but rest from the human problem of sin described in Genesis 6:5. What is being conveyed is that rest is found only in God and his work of salvation.

We find the theological dimension of rest more clearly later in the Pentateuch. In the following verses, rest is associated with God's own presence. To *Moses, God promises to give rest (Ex 33:14; hiphil of *nûaḥ*), a promise that parallels the promise of God's own presence. This is also the case in Numbers 10:33, 36, where the ark and cloud of God's presence accompany God's people in seeking a resting place *(mĕnûḥâ)*. In Moses' blessing on the tribe of Benjamin (Deut 33:12), the promise of rest *(škn)* in safety is paralleled with the promise of the presence of Yahweh.

Frequently the locus of rest is the land. Cessation of movement is clearly in mind. But again the theological dimension of being with God in his place and under his sovereignty is in mind. Jacob's blessing to *Issachar includes the promise of a resting place in the land (Gen 49:15). It

is clear that cessation from labor is not primary in this verse. Rest in the land is also anticipated for all Israel in Numbers 10:33-36.

The connection between the land and rest is most developed in Deuteronomy. A similar formula, "The Lord gave rest to . . . from . . . ," occurs three times in Deuteronomy and is found several other times in the Deuteronomistic History as well as in Chronicles. Thus Israel, anticipating entry into the land, is promised rest *(nûaḥ)* from its enemies (Deut 3:20; 25:19). The goal of the salvation of Israel through the exodus is not just land but the state of rest in the land. In Deuteronomy 12:9-10 the same anticipation is expressed, but here rest is associated with proper worship in the presence of Yahweh. These verses mention the place where God's name dwells, anticipating the building of the temple by Solomon (see 2 Sam 7:1, 11).

In all cases just mentioned, the hiphil of *nûaḥ* is used, with Yahweh as subject and Israel, or a subset of Israel, as the object. This is often regarded as a technical formula (see Roth). The hiphil indicates that rest is not Israel's achievement so much as God's gift. Yet rest demands a proper response from Israel, indicating that rest is not just freedom from enemies but has a positive intention associated with it, faithful obedience expressed in worship (Deut 12:9-10).

1.3. Rest of Death. At their deaths *Jacob (Gen 47:30) and Moses (Deut 31:16) are described as resting with forefathers *(škb)*. Elsewhere, this verb has the connotations of lie down, sleep, even sexual relations, as well as rest.

1.4. Rest as Summary of the Promises of God. Though rest is not specifically one of the patriarchal promises, there is a sense in which the term summarizes all of these *promises (see Josh 21:44-45). The notion of God giving rest "expresses the greatest, the ultimate gift which Jahweh bestowed upon Israel in granting the land. By this gift Jahweh redeemed his promises in full" (von Rad 1962, 304).

Theologically, rest as the cessation of activity implies the completion and fulfillment of the task, that is, the promises of God. Similarly, rest as the cessation of motion implies the arrival in God's Promised Land along with the fulfillment of all his other promises, including relationship with God, security and safety, and obedience. So the notion of rest is a return to the ideal of Genesis 1:31–2:4. This is further developed in instances such as Psalm 95:11; Isaiah 14:3; 28:12; and ultimately in Jesus' words of Matthew 11:28-30, and in Hebrews 3–4.

In summary, just as rest is the goal and culmination of the original creation, so it is also the goal and culmination of God's work of re-creation.

2. Peace

The Hebrew word-family *šlm* (115 times in Pentateuch), is the basis for expressing notions of peace, though issues concerning peace occur without *šlm* vocabulary. The English word "peace" often connotes inner calm and tranquility, as well as the absence of strife or hostility. However, the Hebrew notion is much richer, though there has been much debate about the precise meaning of *šlm*.

Von Rad *(TDNT)* argued that *šlm* has to do with material well-being, not inner peace, and was social, not individual. In contrast, it is commonly argued that the root meaning of *šlm* is "wholeness, completeness, health" (e.g., Westermann). So *šlm* describes a state, not a relationship, and thus notions of peace are an aberration. The more linguistically correct approach to determine meaning is not to find a basic and universal meaning, which can be a lowest common denominator, but to let context determine meaning in each case. So J. I. Durham finds that *šlm* can be material and relational, secular and theological. Similarly, G. Gerleman notes that the idea of restitution or recompense is frequent and significant in the establishment of peaceful relations or in the notion of a covenant of peace (e.g., Num 25:5-13).

2.1. Peace and Restitution. All but one occurrence of the verb in the Pentateuch are in the *piel*, which invariably denotes the idea of repayment, retribution. A wide variety of situations are envisaged (e.g., several times in Ex 21:34—22:14; Lev 5:16; 6:5; 24:18, 21; see also Gen 44:4; Deut 32:41). This indicates that an essential ingredient for peace is the payment of recompense for wrongs with the two parties being reconciled. The only other occurrence of the verb in the Pentateuch is the *hiphil* in Deuteronomy 20:12, in a section of laws for warfare, with the meaning "to cause peace" or "to reach an agreement" (see further below).

Probably from the same word family is *šĕlāmîm*, "fellowship offerings" (NIV) or "offerings of well-being" (NRSV). Though the precise significance of these *sacrifices is disputed, no-

tions of atonement, retribution and reconciliation are involved (see, e.g., Ex 20:24; 24:5; 29:28; Lev 6:5-7; Deut 27:7).

2.2. Peace as Well-being. The noun *šālôm* often denotes material well-being, sufficiency, prosperity or the inner sense of satisfaction. Often there is no theological content to this conception. So in Genesis 29:6 Jacob asks if things are "well" with his uncle Laban. Similarly, *Joseph asks about his brothers and father in Genesis 43:27-28 and receives the reply that his father is "well" (NRSV; see also Gen 37:14; Ex 18:7). Gerleman suggests that such questions are "weakened to a formula of greeting," though the context of the verses mentioned suggests much more is involved (Durham). The inquiries express a genuine concern for someone else regarding their health, wealth and general standard of life.

Abram is promised that he will go to his ancestors in peace when he dies (Gen 15:15). Though the parallelism of this verse explains this as dying at a good old age, long life per se does not guarantee peace in death. Behind this statement lies a contrast with both the unnamed Egypt, who will face God's judgment, and with Abram's descendants, who will be oppressed aliens (Gen 15:13-14). Therefore for Abram to die in peace means neither to be under judgment nor to have lived under oppression.

2.3. Peace as Friendly Relations. *Šālôm* also describes friendly relations between people (cf. Gen 37:4). The link between peace and retribution seen above is hinted at in Exodus 18:23, where the people can return home in peace only when justice has been done. Similarly, the dismissal "Go in peace" in Genesis 44:17 applies only to those brothers of Joseph in whose sacks the cup was not found. They are innocent and hence can continue in peace. The guilty one cannot.

Sometimes such friendly relationships are based on a treaty or agreement. So *Abimelech and *Isaac exchange oaths and make peace (Gen 26:29-31). The notion of restitution is not far away here. The expression "covenant of peace," *bĕrît šālôm*, occurs in Numbers 25:12, where a covenant of peace is made by Yahweh with Phinehas, who has made restitution for sin and turned back Yahweh's wrath. So relations between God and Israel are restored because restitution has been paid. In some instances *šlm* may of itself convey treaty terminology. For example, the Shechemites believed they were at peace with Jacob's family (Gen 34:21). The expression may connote an alliance. Similarly in Deuteronomy 23:6, Israel is warned never to promote the welfare *(šālôm)* of the Ammonites or Moabites. Again, treaty terminology may be in the background of this prohibition (McCarthy; cf. Wiseman).

Peace stands in contrast to war. So a treaty of peace or a friendly alliance precludes war between the two parties. Nonetheless, peace at any price is not God's aim, and the absence of war does not necessarily mean the existence of peace. In the course of its wilderness wanderings, Israel was instructed not to go to war against Edom, Moab and Ammon (Num 20:14—21:20; Deut 2:1-23). Yet it was to destroy Sihon (who rejected the terms of peace offered by Israel [Deut 2:26]) and Og, as well as all the inhabitants of the Promised Land (Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:24—3:11; 7:1-6). Also, Israel was instructed to offer terms of peace (Deut 20:12: hiphil *šlm*) to nations far off which, if refused, would be subjected to war. But for nations near, no such terms of peace were to be offered (Deut 20:10-18; *see* Nations of Canaan).

2.4. The Giver of Peace. Yahweh is the giver of peace. In this respect the Aaronic blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 is most important in the Pentateuch. This prayer shows that peace from God is linked with blessing, preservation or protection, and grace. Peace is enjoyed in Yahweh's presence (Durham). Similarly, in Genesis 28:19-22 Jacob's prayer for "peace" is based on his experience of God's presence. The Bible goes on to show that ultimately God's provision for restitution for sin makes such peace possible.

In summary, peace is more than the somewhat bland definition of "wholeness" or "totality." It is more than absence of warfare and hostility. It is a state of positive friendship and security between two parties, often the result of restitution and reconciliation. The Aaronic blessing directs us to the source of peace and the key relationship in which it is to be enjoyed. The Mosaic laws show that a necessary corollary of peace with God is peace between his people. Leviticus 26:6 promises peace to those obedient to Yahweh. Disobedience destroys the prospects of peace both with God and with each other.

Though in Deuteronomy 3:20 and elsewhere Yahweh promises rest "from all your enemies," the state of peace which that implies is tied up

with faithful obedient living in God's land in a covenant relationship with Yahweh and with restitution for sin made under the terms, of that covenant. To some extent, then, peace and rest are overlapping terms, though it is too simple to say that "rest" is the deuteronomic equivalent of "peace" (von Rad *TDNT*, 404).

See also EDEN, GARDEN OF; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

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RETRIBUTION, PRINCIPLE OF. *See* SIN, GUILT.

REUBEN

Reuben was the firstborn son of *Jacob and the ancestor of the Israelite tribe of the same name. The name Reuben means "See! A son!" and reflects the delight that his mother Leah felt in bearing a son before Rachel, Jacob's favored wife, could do so (Gen 29:31-32). The name is also similar in sound to the Hebrew phrase *rā'â . . . bĕ'onyî* ("[The LORD] has seen my affliction," Gen 29:32 NASB), which was uttered by Leah at Reuben's birth.

1. Reuben's Role in Genesis
2. Reuben's Role in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
3. Subsequent History

1. Reuben's Role in Genesis.

Reuben's role in Genesis reflects his position as the eldest son in a patriarchal society. His actions revolve around the theme of progenitorship that dominates much of the book (cf. Gen 12:2) and two important plot motifs related to that theme, namely, the barren matriarch and the apparent or threatened death of the heir.

1.1. Jacob Narratives. When his mother stopped bearing children, it was Reuben who brought her mandrakes, widely held to be an aphrodisiac, as a cure (Gen 30:14-15). Just after the death of Rachel and before the announcement of the death of *Isaac, the author of Genesis notes that Reuben slept with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine and handmaid of Rachel (Gen 35:22). By this act, Reuben apparently prematurely laid claim to the patriarchal rights and responsibilities of the firstborn (cf. 2 Sam 16:20-22; 1 Kings 2:19-25), an act later condemned by his father Jacob (Gen 49:3-4). Fittingly, Reuben appears first in the two lists of Jacob's sons found in Genesis (Gen 35:23; 46:8-9).

1.2. Joseph Narratives. Reuben talked his brothers out of killing *Joseph, the firstborn of Jacob's favored wife, and showed genuine grief when his brother was sold into slavery (Gen 37:12-30). Later, in an attempt to buy grain in Egypt to feed his extended family, Reuben offered Jacob the lives of his own two sons in exchange for that of *Benjamin (Gen 42:35-38). Toward the end of his life, Jacob announced that Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons, were to be considered as his own sons "just as Reuben and Simeon are mine" (Gen 48:5 NIV). Jacob thus adopted his grandsons while reaffirming the preeminence of his own firstborn. In his final blessing, however, Jacob subsequently removed Reuben's preeminence in response to Reuben's earlier attempt to seize the patriarchal headship (Gen 49:3-4; cf. Gen 35:22; 1 Chron 5:1).

2. Reuben's Role in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

As a tribal entity, Reuben's preeminence began to wane (cf. Gen 49:3-4) in the *wilderness wandering narratives. The tribe of Reuben continues to be listed first in various rosters related to tribal census (Ex 1:2; 6:14; Num 1:5, 20-21; 26:5-11) and in the list of men chosen to spy out the land of Canaan (Num 13:4). On the other hand, in matters related to the *tabernacle the tribe of Judah is listed first while Reuben slips to fourth place (Num 2:10-16; 7:30; 10:18), which is consistent with the later biblical focus on Israelite worship in Jerusalem. Between Moses' initial census (Num 1:20-21) and that taken after the plague of Baal Peor (Num 26:5-11), Reuben drops from seventh to ninth in size among the tribes. This shift in preeminence may be reflected in the episode of Korah's rebellion in which On, Dathan and Abiram, three men from the tribe of Reuben, joined with Korah, a Levite, to challenge the leadership of Moses (Num 16:1-35; cf. Deut 11:6). While uncertainty persists, it is likely that their actions involved an attempt to reassert the declining influence of Reuben among the tribes.

After Moses conquered the Amorite kingdom of Sihon and the kingdom of Og in Bashan (Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:26—3:17), he allowed the tribes of Reuben and Gad and a portion of Manasseh to settle in areas in Transjordan not already considered part of the homelands of Ammon, Moab or Edom (Num 32:1-42; 34:13-14; Deut 3:12-17; 29:7-8). Reuben claimed the Medeba Plateau, a chalky, rather arid tableland (*mîšōr;* cf. Deut 3:10; Josh 13:9, 16) particularly suitable for raising livestock and lying between the Arnon River (Wadi el-Mojib) and the city of Heshbon (Tell Hesban) (Num 32:1-5, 37-38; Deut 3:12, 16; cf. Josh 13:15-23; Judg 5:15-16). This land, wedged between Moab, Ammon and the Dead Sea and open to the vast eastern desert, was separated from the stronger Israelite tribes west of the Jordan River (cf. Josh 22:9-34). In addition, the King's Highway connecting the capitals of Ammon, Moab and Edom passed through this region (cf. Num 20:17; 21:22). These factors ensured the tribe of Reuben both the opportunity to reap the benefits of international trade but also the danger of being overrun by enemies. Moses designated the city of Bezer (possibly Umm el-ʿAmad) in the tribal inheritance of Reuben as a city of refuge (Deut 4:41-43; Josh 20:8). Archaeological remains to date attest to only meager remains from this region during the time of ancient Israel's settlement (Iron I).

3. Subsequent History.

Jacob's blessing of Reuben (Gen 49:3-4) foreshadowed the tenuous existence that faced the tribe once Israel began to settle the land of Canaan. Moses' blessing was more favorable (Deut 33:6) but presupposes difficult days ahead for the tribe. David's census—and hence royal Israelite control—included the region of Reuben, even though 2 Samuel 24:5 does not mention that tribe by name. Some believe that by this time Reuben had already been absorbed into the tribe of Gad. In any case, Reuben was eventually eclipsed by more powerful forces. Biblical records specifically mention conquests by the Syrians (2 Kings 10:32-33) and Assyrians (1 Chron 5:26). The annexation of lands held by Reuben by the Moabite king Mesha is known from both 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-5 and the Moabite Stone (mid-ninth century B.C.); the latter mentions Gad, the land of Medeba and cities within Reuben's inheritance (e.g., Dibon, Baal-meon, Nebo and Bezer) but not the tribe of Reuben itself. In spite of these and other threats, the Chronicler notes that the tribe of Reuben was able to curtail the encroachments of certain desert tribes and remain in its land until the exile (1 Chron 5:18-22).

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; ISRAELITES; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI, LEVITES; NAPHTALI; SIMEON; ZEBULUN.

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P. H. Wright

REUEL. *See* JETHRO.

RIGHTEOUSNESS. *See* ETHICS.

ROADS. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

ROBBERY. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

ROD, STAFF

In the ancient Near East a rod or staff was, among other things, a symbol of leadership and royal power. This usage is also found in the Pentateuch. Furthermore, a rod functioned in the vindication of *Aaron's priesthood. In a rather different context, we find *Jacob using rods in an enigmatic sheep-breeding practice.

1. Terminology
2. Ruler's Staff
3. Staff of God
4. Budding Rod of Aaron
5. Rods and Sheep Breeding

1. Terminology.

There are several Hebrew terms that translate into rod or staff. The most common is *maṭṭeh* (about 250 times in the OT) and its closest synonym *šēbeṭ* (190 times in the OT). Both terms mean rod and staff, and both developed from this basic meaning to denote scepter and tribe, a tribe being those under the command of one who holds the scepter (*HALOT*, 1388; cf. Johnstone, 311-13; for the view that *šēbeṭ*, "staff" and "ruler," come from two different roots, see Gevirtz). Also occurring in the Pentateuch are *maqqēl* (18 times in the OT) and *miśʿenet* (11 times in the OT), which both denote rod and staff, and *mĕḥōqēq* (4 times in the OT), meaning commander's staff.

Common uses of a staff or rod were for walking (*maṭṭeh*, Gen 38:18, 25; *maqqēl*, Gen 32:10 [MT 32:11]; *miśʿenet*, Ex 21:19), shepherding (*šēbeṭ*, cf. Lev 27:32), and beating a donkey (*maqqēl*, Num 22:27) or a person (*šēbeṭ*, Ex 21:20). A figurative use is "staff of bread" (Lev 26:26), although the metaphor may go back to a custom of hanging bread on a staff of wood (cf. *HALOT*, 573).

2. Ruler's Staff.

In ancient Near Eastern iconography, the ruler's staff (often with a scepter) is a feature of royalty (e.g., *ANEP*, nos. 379, 383, 414 [Egyptian]; cf. Ps 45:6 [MT 45:7]; 110:2; Jer 48:17; see further Propp, 228). Against this background Jacob's blessing of Judah refers to the ruler's staff and scepter: "The scepter *[šēbeṭ]* shall not depart from *Judah, nor the ruler's staff *[meḥōqēq]* from between his feet" (Gen 49:10 NRSV; cf. *ANEP*, no. 463, for the position between the feet; for the view that "from between his feet" refers to descendants, see Wenham 1994, 477). The hegemony here promised to Judah was realized in David's kingship, which was to represent Yahweh's rule, making Judah the divine scepter through which God reigned (Ps 60:7 [MT 60:9]; 108:8 [MT 108:9]; cf. 2 Sam 7).

*Balaam's prophecy that a star would come out of Jacob and a scepter *(šēbeṭ)* out of Israel that would crush the heads and skulls of his enemies (Num 24:17) suggests a mace-like scepter with which a victorious monarch would strike the enemy (e.g., *ANEP*, no. 296 [Egypt]; see Harrison, 322). In the song of the well (Num 21:17-18), the reference to the well being dug with scepters and staffs *(bimĕḥōqēq bĕmiśʿănōtām)* of the nobles is best taken literally (Milgrom, 178, 461).

3. Staff of God.

In response to *Moses' desire for assurance that his mission to lead Israel out of Egypt would be credible, God gave Moses the sign of changing his staff *(maṭṭeh)* into a snake and vice versa (Ex 4:2-5). When Aaron became the spokesperson for Moses (Ex 4:15-16; 7:1-2), this staff came to be referred to as Aaron's when the miracles were performed before *Pharaoh (Ex 7:10, 12), but it remained the rod of Moses (cf. Ex 7:15; cf. Propp, 227-29). The fact that it was called the staff of God (Ex 4:20; 17:9) indicates that it was not to be conceived magically but as an instrument of God's will (cf. Deut 18:10-12). However, when Moses used this staff in a manner that God had not commanded, by striking the rock with it to bring forth water, he treated the rod as

a power in itself. Then Moses sinned grievously in not recognizing God's place and holiness and was thus excluded from the Promised Land (Num 20:1-13; also see Jacob, 95-96, 201-6; Kok, 162-64).

The fact that God's will was being executed through the staff of God means that the turning of this staff into a snake (Ex 7:10) was of a fundamentally different nature from what the Egyptian magicians did by their secret arts (Ex 7:11; Sarna, 37), a fact demonstrated by their rods being swallowed up by Aaron's rod (Ex 7:12). The rod of God is mentioned in five of the ten plagues (Ex 7—10). Although the magicians could mimic the effects of the first two plagues (Ex 7:22; 8:7 [MT 8:3]), the irony is that they only contributed to Egypt's misery and could not undo the effects of Yahweh's judgment on Egypt and their gods.

In the victorious battle against Amalek at Rephidim, Moses took the staff of God with him to the top of the hill and apparently raised it. As long as he held his hands up, Israel was winning (Ex 17:9-13; for a survey of interpretations, Propp, 621).

4. Budding Rod of Aaron.

Aaron's (almond) rod *(maṭṭeh)* blossomed in divine vindication of the position of *Levi, and of Aaron in particular, as Yahweh's high priest (Num 17:8 [MT 17:23]; for contextual analysis, see Wenham 1981). This rod was then placed as a sign to the rebellious in front of "the testimony" *(ʿēdût)* in the *tabernacle (Num 17:10 [MT 17:25]), a placement that raises the question whether Jeremiah saw it when prophesying of the almond branch (Jer 1:11-12; cf. van der Toorn). The placement of a rod in the sanctuary was known in Egypt and Phoenicia (Milgrom, 145).

5. Rods and Sheep Breeding.

Jacob altered the breeding pattern of Laban's flocks to produce a maximum number of streaked, speckled or spotted young by placing sticks *(maqĕlôt)* near the watering troughs (Gen 30:37-41). The rods in this difficult passage have usually been explained as aphrodisiacs. The animals would have become stimulated by the mere sight of the rods and conceived young. Such an interpretation, however, raises more questions than it answers. The best interpretation seems to be that with the sticks or rods Jacob made mock phalluses and allowed only those animals that he did not want to produce offspring to become heated upon the rods (*ʾl hammaqĕlôt*, Gen 30:39). So he determined which animals would actually mate and thus maximized his wages at Laban's expense (Noegel).

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ROYAL GRANT COVENANT. *See* COVENANT; DECALOGUE.

S

SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE

Within the context of Yahweh's intention to create a *holy nation of the Israelites, the closely associated concepts of sabbath, sabbatical year and Jubilee play an important role. Their importance is underlined by the fact that the sabbath was designated the sign of the *covenant made at Mount Sinai.

1. Sabbath
2. Sabbatical Year
3. Jubilee
4. Theological Significance

1. Sabbath.

The sabbath day is the seventh day of the week, a day of rest. The two primary ideas are that no work is to be done on this day and that it is to be observed regularly on the seventh day of the week. The word *sabbath (šabbāt)* occurs forty-five times in the Pentateuch: fourteen in Exodus, twenty-five in Leviticus and three each in Numbers and Deuteronomy. It can refer either to the sabbath day or the sabbatical year. Likewise, the derivative *šabbātôn* occurs a number of times in the Pentateuch. It is used to refer to particular sabbath days or the sabbatical year. The word appears both on its own and in conjunction with *šabbāt,* where it denotes a sabbath of complete rest, perhaps having an intensifying function. In addition, the seventh day is also mentioned as a day on which to rest but without its being called the sabbath.

The precise relationship between the noun *šabbāt* and the verb *šābat* is disputed. Whether the noun derives from the verb or vice versa is unclear. The Qal verb means "to cease, stop." Quite possibly, therefore, the noun simply means "the day that stops," implying the cessation of work or regular activity. Other possible meanings include "to rest," "to celebrate" or even "to be complete." However, the basic meaning seems to be cessation (Dressler, 24). That there is a relationship between the two words is suggested by the absence of the noun *šabbāt* in Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 23:12; 34:21, where the seventh day is discussed and the verb *šābat* occurs (Andreasen 1978, 23-27). There is also conjecture that the noun *šabbāt* is related to the number seven, but that possibility has little scholarly consensus.

1.1. Usage.

1.1.1. Sabbath in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The first occurrence of the word *šabbāt* in the Hebrew Bible is in Exodus 16:23-30, where the word occurs four times in the context of instructions about collecting manna. On the sabbath, the seventh day, no manna was found, yet unlike on other days the manna collected the previous day had not turned foul. The sabbath day is described as a day of "solemn rest" (*šabbātôn,* Ex 16:23). This is the first time the seventh day is explicitly called the sabbath in the Pentateuch, and critical scholarship also usually regards this text as the earliest tradition in the OT referring to the sabbath. No reason is given for this day being special. This reference to the lack of manna on the sabbath day precedes the command to keep the sabbath in Exodus 20; in effect, the reference in Exodus 16 is part of the narrative and not part of the commandment. Yet this passage presupposes the knowledge and institution of the sabbath day (though some suggest that the passage allows the possibility that the sabbath was unknown to Israel at this stage). That might explain why the day is described in its full form, as a "day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath." There is no indication in Exodus 16 that the sabbath was a cultic celebration at this stage.

The command to keep the sabbath is the

fourth commandment of the *Decalogue. In Exodus 20:8-11, where the word occurs three times, the day is again the seventh day. No work is to be done on it by anyone, including animals. It is a holy day for remembering. Much of this parallels the instructions in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, where the word also occurs three times. On the different reasons given for keeping the sabbath law in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, see below.

The command to keep the "sabbaths" recurs in Exodus 31:12-17. Again it is the seventh day, a holy day on which work is proscribed. Yet another reiteration occurs in Exodus 35:2-3. A specific example of what is prohibited on the sabbath (kindling of fires) is given in verse 3. In both Exodus 31:15 and 35:2, *šabbātôn* occurs as well as *šabbāt*. An additional idea in both chapters is that any Israelite who infringes the sabbath law is to be put to death. These two passages are particularly solemn, highlighting the importance of the sabbath law.

The significance of the sabbath command can be seen in each of the passages mentioned thus far. That it is part of the Ten Commandments and its breach is punishable by death shows its importance. In particular, the way the commandments are written in Deuteronomy 5 makes the sabbath command central and thus in a position of great importance. The reiteration in Exodus 31 climaxes the lengthy instructions for building the *tabernacle and concludes all the laws given at Sinai in Exodus. Its position at the end of all these laws underlines its importance. Then, immediately after the *golden calf incident, the mention of the sabbath in Exodus 35 begins the section culminating in the building of the tabernacle. Structurally, therefore, the sabbath law is significant in Exodus. As will be discussed below, the sabbath is the sign of the Mosaic covenant.

1.1.2. Sabbath in Leviticus. In the second half of Leviticus, *šabbāt* occurs several times, often in association with feasts or *festivals. There is a general command to keep "my sabbaths" (Lev 19:3, 30; 23:38) as well as a command to keep the seventh day sabbath (also *šabbātôn,* Lev 23:3). These brief commandments are not elaborated on as in Exodus; here the sabbath day is Yahweh's ("my") day.

The Day of *Atonement is a sabbath of solemn rest (*šabbātôn*, Lev 16:31; 23:32). Sabbaths are also mentioned in conjunction with the offering of firstfruits (Lev 23:11) and the Festival of Weeks (Lev 23:15, 16). *Aaron is to set out the bread and frankincense as an offering "sabbath after sabbath" (Lev 24:8). In the section of covenant sanctions for obedience, one of the first mentioned is keeping "my sabbaths" (Lev 26:2).

The day of rest associated with the Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:24) and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:39) are all denoted by *šabbātôn*. The inclusion of the sabbath command in Leviticus 23 indicates that the day is not just about cessation of work but has a cultic dimension as well.

1.1.3. Sabbath in Numbers. In the book of Numbers the sabbath is mentioned just three times. Numbers 15:32 reports that a man found collecting sticks on the sabbath was sentenced to death, reinforcing the punishment stated in Exodus 31:14. His actions were a direct infringement of Exodus 35:3, which prohibits the kindling of a fire. Numbers 28:9-10 lists certain *sacrifices to be offered on the sabbath.

1.1.4. Rest on the Seventh Day. The seventh day is sometimes described as a time for rest without its being designated by the noun *šabbāt*. Genesis 2:2-3 states that God rested on the seventh day after the work of creation. The day is not called a sabbath day here, though the related verb *šābat* is used. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the description of God's rest in Genesis 2:2-3 is intended to portray a sabbath rest, since the account sets this day apart from the previous six. The symmetry and rhythm of the first six days changes abruptly. Whereas days one to three are balanced by days four to six, the seventh day stands alone. Only this day is blessed and holy. Three times it is said that this is the seventh day. It is also stressed by repetition that God completed his work (Gen 2:1-3; see van Gemeren, 46-48; Dumbrell, 18-19).

To what extent this description of the original seventh day is intended to be a *creation ordinance for all humans to follow has been the topic of much debate, a debate that has implications for Christian sabbath observance. Many who argue that the sabbath is a creation ordinance also argue that Christians are bound to keep Saturday as their sabbath. Those who argue that Genesis 2 is a creation ordinance for sabbath observance for all people sometimes appeal to similar ancient Near Eastern customs to argue that they are remnants of such an ordinance (see Swartley, 74). Some ancient Jewish sources, such as Philo, argued that sabbath observance is binding on all

humanity and not just Israel. However, many Jewish rabbinical texts argue the opposite, contending that the sabbath was given for Israel only (Dressler, 29-31; Lincoln, 348-58).

Modern commentators on Genesis 2 differ. On the one hand, G. von Rad (1963, 60) and J. Calvin (106-7) argue that this is not a creation ordinance; on the other hand, U. Cassuto (61-62) and C. Westermann (170) see implications here for universal sabbath observance. G. F. Hasel argues that because humankind is made in the *image of God and God rested on the seventh day, there is an implicit command for humanity also to rest on the seventh day. Though he disagrees that Genesis 2 is a creation ordinance, H. H. P. Dressler argues that the *blessing and sanctifying of the day in Genesis 2 is for the benefit of the people of God: "God's last creative act is not the making of man but the creation of a period of rest for mankind" (Dressler, 30). G. J. Wenham sees in the striking language of blessing and sanctifying used with reference to a day and the threefold emphasis on God's resting from his work "the clearest of hints of how man created in the divine image should conduct himself on the seventh day" (Wenham 1987, 36). Similarly, J. A. Pipa argues that God's resting on the seventh day is a model for how people are to act on the seventh day (Pipa, 25-41).

The Decalogue in Exodus makes God's resting after creation the paradigm for Israelite observance of the sabbath. However, on its own, Genesis 2 does not. Genesis 2:1-3 is part of a narrative and is not a legal text. There is no command to humanity to keep the sabbath here, though there are commands to humans in Genesis 1:26-28. The sabbath rest at the end of the first week makes a statement about the quality and completion of the creation rather than suggests a model of work and rest for humanity. In fact, humanity is not even mentioned in these verses. This seventh day is for God, who ceases work on it. Only in Exodus 20:11 does this seventh day become a sabbath day. Therefore, the sabbath is not a creation ordinance but rather part of the covenant laws applying to Israel (for a discussion of the various views, see Andreasen 1978, 71-81; Swartley, 65-95; Lincoln, 348-58).

Interestingly, the word *sabbath* is not used in conjunction with the Passover festival in any of the books of the Pentateuch. Instead, the day is called the seventh day. No work is to be done on it since it is a day of rest (see Ex 12:15-16; Lev 23:8; Num 28:25; Deut 16:8).

The same absence of the word *šabbāt* occurs in Exodus 23:12; 34:21, where the weekly seventh day is commanded to be a day of rest, especially in the latter case when it is the time for harvesting and plowing. No work is to be done on the eighth day at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles (Num 29:35).

H. L. Bosman, following N.-E. A. Andreasen, suggests that these references may imply a period when the weekly day of rest was not called "sabbath." However, the fact that both accounts of the Decalogue explicitly identify the seventh day as the sabbath makes this suggestion unlikely.

1.2. The Reasons for the Sabbath.

1.2.1. Theological Motivations in the Decalogue. Unusually for the Decalogue, the sabbath law carries a motivation or reason for observance. This differs in the two accounts of the Decalogue (Ex 20; Deut 5). The former appeals to creation and God's resting on the seventh day in Genesis 2, the latter to redemption and Yahweh's liberating Israel from slavery in *Egypt.

Exodus 20:11 gives as the reason the fact that Yahweh made everything in six days and rested on the seventh, blessing it and making the day holy (referring back to Gen 2:1-3). Unlike the previous six days, the seventh day has no "evening and morning" formula in the Genesis account. It is, in a sense, an endless day, anticipating the ideal for God's creation. It is to this that Exodus 20 appeals, inviting Israel to participate in a weekly sabbath modeled on the original, very good creation (so also Ex 31:12-17).

Unlike in Exodus 20 and 31, the reason for observing the sabbath in Deuteronomy 5:15 is that Yahweh has redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt. Consequently, Deuteronomy includes the expression "so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you," a clause that is not found in the Exodus 20 parallel but which reflects Deuteronomy's abiding concern for social fairness and justice. The association with redemption from Egypt contributes to the religious character of the sabbath day.

We ought not be too concerned with a bifocal reason for keeping the day, since "creation and salvation are two aspects of the one theological reality" (Childs, 70). The two reasons are complementary, not contradictory.

1.2.2. Sabbath as a Social Concern. An assumption often made is that the sabbath law is for the

benefit of humanity. People need rest and refreshment. Exodus 23:12 does indicate the need for rest and relief for animals and *aliens. The clearest expression of humanitarian concern as a reason for the sabbath is in Deuteronomy 5:14, where the observance of the sabbath is "so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you." However, this humanitarian concern is not dominant in the pentateuchal texts (see Andreasen 1972, 122-40). More is at stake in the observance of the sabbath than just a social concern for rest and refreshment. The death penalty indicates that.

1.2.3. Sabbath as a Covenant Sign. An additional reason for sabbath observance occurs in Exodus 31:12-17. Here the Sabbath is to be a "sign" of the covenant "between me and you" (Ex 31:13, 17). The expression "between me and you" occurs as covenant formula in the covenants with Noah and Abraham (Gen 9:12; 17:11). So the sabbath is the sign of the Mosaic covenant just as the *rainbow is the sign of the *Noahic covenant and *circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. Unlike the rainbow, this sign is primarily for the benefit of Israel. Its function is that Israel may know that Yahweh makes Israel holy (Ex 31:13). It is a sign of relationship between Yahweh and Israel (Andreasen 1972, 208-13). Thus as God originally declared the sabbath day itself holy, the sabbath command for Israel declared that they also were made holy by God. This is forward-looking, anticipating the goal of covenant history (Hasel).

1.3. The Character of the Sabbath. In one sense, the sabbath for the Pentateuch was not primarily a religious or cultic festival. Most of the texts that relate the sabbath to cultic activity occur outside the Pentateuch (see Andreasen 1972, 141-50). For the ordinary Israelite, no religious ceremony was commanded. Basically it was a day of rest. The dominant command or prohibition attached to the observance of the Sabbath day is "You shall do no work."

However, the sabbath day was hallowed and belonged to Yahweh, and that gave it a special character. The sabbath day was to be both solemn and joyful. It was to combine a celebration of God as Creator and Redeemer, being a foretaste of entering into the creation ideal, which was also the goal of redemption. The holiness of the day, and Israel's participation in it, indicated that the day was lived in the presence of God. Work was prohibited "from evening to evening" (Lev 23:32) and included harvesting (Ex 34:21) and collecting sticks (Num 15:32-36).

It is unclear, however, what cultic activity occurred on the sabbath day apart from special sabbaths associated with other feasts and festivals. The priests offered special sabbath sacrifices, an additional burnt offering of two male lambs and a cereal offering (Num 28—29), but no mention is made of ordinary Israelites in this connection.

Nonetheless, the day was not just a rest day. It was a religious day that belonged to Yahweh. Though more is made of the religious and cultic nature of the sabbath in texts outside the Pentateuch, there are indications in the Pentateuch that the day was a religious occasion. It was set apart or made holy to Yahweh. It was his day (Ex 16:23, 25; 20:10; 31:15). Yet it was also a day holy for Israel (Ex 31:13). The command for Israel to participate in this day is linked to Israel's being holy to the Lord, set apart to be his people. Thus in Exodus 31:12-17 the sabbath is a sign that Yahweh sanctifies Israel itself. Theologically, the day reminds Israel that Yahweh is Creator and Redeemer and Lord of all. Observance of the day at least implies an acknowledgment of the lordship of Yahweh (Andreasen 1978, 42, 60-70).

For an assessment of how, and if, Israel kept the sabbath day, texts outside the Pentateuch need to be consulted. For example, one can consult Psalm 92 and Ezekiel 46:1-3 regarding its celebration, Ezekiel 22 regarding the profaning of the sabbath as a factor leading to the exile, Nehemiah 10:31-33 for a commitment to keep the sabbath after the exile, and Judges 14:12-18; 1 Kings 8:65; 2 Kings 4:23; 11:5-9; 1 Chronicles 9:32; 23:31 for particular occurrences of the sabbath.

1.4. Other Ideas About the Sabbath's Origins. Over the course of the twentieth century, scholars have made proposals regarding extrabiblical origins for the Israelite sabbath. For example, a number of scholars proposed an origin of the sabbath day in Mesopotamia. Such a theory often argues that the etymology of the Hebrew word *šabbāt* is found in the Akkadian word *šapattu* (or *šabattu*), which probably means "full moon" or "the day of celebrating the full moon." In more recent years, G. Robinson has revived the theory that the Israelite sabbath was a relic of the Babylonian moon cult. He argues that only after the exile did the monthly festival become a weekly observance. But this is extremely unlikely. Hosea 2:11, a preexilic text, implies that sabbaths were

weekly and sets them apart from the new moon festival. The Babylonian moon festival had set days in the month, a pattern that is not found in the OT or in weekly sabbath observance. Weekly sabbaths do not coincide regularly with a lunar cycle of twenty-nine days. As L. L. Grabbe says, "No Old Testament texts connect the Sabbath with the lunar cycle in any way" (Grabbe, 89). Nonetheless, as Andreasen notes, it is intriguing that the Akkadian word is so similar to the Hebrew *šabbāt* and yet refers to something quite different (Andreasen 1978, 13). Similar theories have also purported to find the sabbath origin in Assyrian calendars or in Arabian moon festivals. In the end, however, such theories remain speculative. There is no evidence that clearly connects these with the Israelite sabbath (see Hasel, 5.850-51; Bosman, 4.1157-58; Kraus, 81-85; Andreasen 1978, 12-15).

E. Jenni proposed a sociological derivation for the sabbath, namely, that the sabbath might originally have been market day. However, although regular market days in the ancient world were observed, there is no evidence of weekly market days in any ancient Near Eastern literature.

Another theory is that the sabbath derives from the Kenites, with whom Moses and the Israelites had contact at Mount Sinai. Moses' Midianite family was Kenite (Num 10:29-32; Judg 4:11, 17). Supposedly the Kenites led the Israelites back to their ancestral worship of Yahweh, which was lost through the period of slavery in Egypt. Again, this theory is entirely speculative and inconsistent with the evidence of the book of Exodus. The linking of the prohibition of fire-making on the sabbath (Ex 35:3) with the argument that the Kenites were smiths (and hence worked with fire) is a flimsy argument for a Kenite origin of the sabbath law (Andreasen 1978, 15-16).

Finally, the number seven, it is argued, was significant in some ancient Near Eastern cultures, in particular, in Ugaritic texts and calendars. A variation on this is the claim of J. Morgenstern (4.136-37) that there is "abundant evidence" that Israel found the pattern of seven days in Canaan and adapted it for its own use. The original Canaanite seventh day was a taboo day, an evil day, and was associated with the pentecontad calendar in which the numbers seven and fifty were significant. However, despite his claim, Morgenstern's thesis lacks supporting evidence for such an origin of the sabbath or for its alleged transformation from an evil or taboo day into a day of gladness.

The quest for an extrabiblical origin of the Israelite sabbath has failed thus far at least. All of these theories remain speculative; none is convincing. The origin of the Israelite sabbath must be found within the biblical record: "Only the ancient Hebrew literature speaks definitely about a seven-day week and a Sabbath" (Dressler, 23). According to B. A. Levine, "the Sabbath is an original Israelite institution" (Levine, 261; see also Andreasen).

2. Sabbatical Year.

The sabbatical year is an extension of the weekly sabbath. The words *šabbāt* and *šabbātôn* are also applied to the sabbath year. This occurs in Leviticus 25:1-7, where *šabbāt* occurs four times in this sense in the expressions "sabbath of complete rest" and "sabbath for Yahweh." When Israel is exiled from the land, ironically enough, the land can enjoy its sabbath years of rest as part of the sanctions for Israel's disobedience (Lev 25:34-35, 43). The other Hebrew word used in reference to the sabbatical year is *šāmaṭ*. The verb can mean leaving land fallow for a year (Ex 23:11) or the cancellation of debts (Deut 15:1-2).

2.1. What the Sabbatical Year Entailed. Instructions regarding the sabbatical year occur in Exodus 21; 23; Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 15; 31. Four things are involved.

2.1.1. Fallow Land. During the sabbatical (or seventh) year the land lies fallow (Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:1-7). This law applies not only to fields but also to vineyards and olive orchards. Just as humans are to rest every seventh day, so the land is to rest every seventh year. Note that Exodus 23:10-12 juxtaposes the sabbath and sabbatical-year laws. Moreover, the purpose stated for this law is the benefit of the poor, who can eat whatever has grown in the field, vineyard or orchard on its own accord. Presumably the owner of the land eats from what has been set aside in the previous six years, though according to Leviticus 25 the owner and his family can eat of the wild growth along with slaves and, presumably but not explicitly, the poor. Nothing is mentioned about increasing the fertility of the land as a purpose for this law despite a number of scholars arguing that fertility must have been part of the law's intention, a carryover from Canaan (see Kraus, 70-71). Thus the force of this law is primarily humanitarian, though, as mentioned below, there were religious and cultic as-

sociations as well. The poor in these contexts are the landless, some categories of whom are listed in Leviticus 25:6, namely, the slaves and hired laborers or resident aliens. This is the same group who also benefit from the weekly sabbath in Exodus 23:12.

The sabbatical year law is just one of a number of laws that protect the landless Israelites (e.g., gleaning laws in Lev 19:9-10; Deut 24:19-21). Lying behind such laws is an appreciation of the importance of the *land as a gift from God and the obligation on Israel to share its bounty equitably, trusting that God will provide abundantly for all. The recognition that this is just one of a number of laws for the benefit of the poor makes us aware that other laws make provision for the landless during the other six years.

The thrust of the sabbatical year in Israel seems to have been the universal observance of the same year, rather than a rotation system. C. J. H. Wright (1984) suggests that the earlier Exodus text "must surely have" had in mind a rotation system and that later, in Leviticus, this became a single fallow year for the whole land. This would explain why in Leviticus 25:2 it is "the" land that will observe a sabbath and not "your" land, as in Exodus 23:10-11. The gleaning laws and other provisions for the poor are found in Leviticus and not in the *book of the covenant. However, G. C. Chirichigno (306-11) argues persuasively otherwise. The uniformity of the sabbath for all people and research into ancient practices and land fertility suggest that a universal fallow year was not in fact impractical.

No explicit theological motivation for observing this law is given in Exodus 23, though Leviticus 25:4 states that the sabbatical year is a "sabbath for Yahweh." It is unlikely, however, that the law in Exodus 23:10-11, in the book of the covenant, was without religious significance (Chirichigno, 304-6). Its very presence ties economic and religious concerns together. Leviticus 25 states explicitly what is implicit in Exodus 23. H.-J. Kraus includes discussion of the sabbatical-year fallow-land law in his book dealing with cultic practices in Israel, arguing that it was a religious occasion.

2.1.2. Freedom of Slaves. In the seventh year a slave was to go free (Ex 21:2; Deut 15:12-18). This regulation applies to Hebrew slaves, not foreign slaves (cf. Lev 25:44-46). There is some debate about whether the term *Hebrew* was synonymous with *Israelite* or whether it referred to a social class of landless people (Habiru or Apiru in ancient Near Eastern texts). The evidence is inconclusive. Certainly the legislation applied particularly to Israelite slaves. After release, the slave became a free person, though not necessarily with land. Thus the slave became a laborer. Recognizing that some slaves might prefer to remain slaves with their particular landowner, both Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 15 allow for the possibility of a slave wishing to remain in the employment of his master, which indicates that slavery was not intended to be harsh or cruel (*see* Slave, Slavery).

The case under which an Israelite might become a slave was bankruptcy. Thus the sabbatical year legislation sought to protect the poor and allow opportunity for them to become independent. The legislation was motivated by the remembrance that Israel was enslaved in Egypt but was redeemed by Yahweh (Deut 15:15). In addition, slave-owners were to provide liberally and generously for their released slaves in the sabbatical year, presumably to help a freed slave make a start as a free person (Deut 15:14). The ideal expressed is that there be no poor in the land (Deut 15:4), though at the same time there is an acknowledgment that there will always be poor (Deut 15:11). The legislation in Exodus 21:7-11 treats female slaves differently from male; in Deuteronomy 15:12-18 they are treated equally. Chirichigno comments that the latter does not abrogate the former but develops it (Chirichigno, 347-49). In Exodus, the perspective is that of the slave; in Deuteronomy it is that of the master.

The legislation for slave remission seems to imply the offer of release after six years of service and not in a universal sabbatical year. Nonetheless, as Wright (5.857-61) says, undergirding the law is the same sabbatical principle. This is reflected in the juxtaposition of the laws in Deuteronomy 15 (Chirichigno, 300). A difficult question to resolve is the relationship between this law and that of slave release in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:39-43), a matter that I will address later in this article (see 3.2.2 below).

2.1.3. Remission of Debts. The third activity to be conducted in the sabbatical year was the remission of debts (only in Deut 15:1-11). Though an issue of dispute, this text most probably is later in origin than the sabbatical year laws of Exodus 23 and Leviticus 25 (so Wright; Weinfeld). Certainly Deuteronomy 15 presupposes both of them. However, this does not necessarily

indicate that Deuteronomy 15:1-11 is no longer agricultural in nature (e.g., Kraus, 73; Baker, 45-46). The purpose of this law is, like the other stipulations for the sabbatical year, the restriction of poverty in the land. Again the poor are protected by sabbatical year legislation. As with slave release, the beneficiaries of this law are fellow Israelites, not foreigners (Deut 15:3). This law is linked to the fallow-land law by the use of the same verb (*šāmaṭ*, Deut 15:1; cf. Ex 23:11). Further, the context for most loans could be such things as borrowing seed for sowing with repayments made after harvest. Thus the context is extended from fallow land to remission of debts. So, typical of Deuteronomy, it presupposes earlier laws, extends them and continues or intensifies their humanitarian concern.

There is some debate about whether *šāmaṭ* in Deuteronomy 15 means remission or deferment. For example, S. R. Driver, P. C. Craigie and C. J. H. Wright opt for deferment or suspension for one year. However, ancient Near Eastern parallels, Josephus, rabbinical scholars and many modern exegetes (e.g., von Rad; M. Weinfeld) understand the word to mean cancellation. Weinfeld argues this on the grounds of parallels with Mesopotamian laws and a Second Temple document seeming to support cancellation. It is impossible to be certain. Logically a suspension of debt gives more substance to the Jubilee laws, for if debts are cancelled totally in the sabbatical year, then the Jubilee year loses some of its significance. Also, if debts were totally cancelled every seven years, there would be little incentive to loan anything to anyone. Certainly if a suspension of debt is intended, then the use of pledged land and possessions would be of great use for the debtor and alleviate the financial situation. A suspension ought not be regarded as a token gesture. It would be real relief.

In part, our understanding of whether *šāmaṭ* is cancellation or deferment depends on our understanding of *maššēh* in Deuteronomy 15:2. If *maššēh* is understood to be referring to the loan itself, then this law seems to indicate cancellation. If, however, *maššēh* is the pledge of the loan, then suspension or deferment for the sabbatical year may be in view. A debtor would normally have pledged something of value to a creditor, possibly even some land or, as a last resort (see Lev 25:35-55), a slave. The law restricts what could be used as a pledge, forbidding the retention of a cloak as pledge overnight (Ex 22:26-27; Deut 24:12-13, 17). Possibly the use by the creditor of this pledge for the duration of the debt would have helped to pay the debt. In the sabbatical year, debts were cancelled or suspended and pledges returned, if only for the duration of the sabbatical year.

In the end, we cannot be absolutely certain what was required in the sabbatical year. Cancellation and suspension are both textual possibilities. Logic, at least, favors the latter. On the whole, then, this law is about agricultural matters and not usually about slaves. It is an extension of the fallow-land law. At its heart is a humanitarian concern for poor Israelites. Where the fallow-land law protected the landless, this law extended that protection to landowners who faced poverty.

2.1.4. Reading the Law. Every sabbatical year, the book of Deuteronomy was to be read out loud at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:1-13). All Israel—men, women and children—were to hear it. The purpose was to teach subsequent generations what the *law entailed. This stipulation may be related to the command to observe all the ordinances and statutes (Lev 25:18).

2.2. Observance. It is not obvious how well this legislation was kept in OT times. Some critical scholarship assumes that only in Israel's early, seminomadic days would it have been possible to keep the fallow-land laws. Later, after settlement, Deuteronomy 15 and Leviticus 25 transformed the agricultural sabbatical year to a more social focus, reviving ancient cultic practices and adapting them to changed circumstances. This reading of the history of Israel is not convincing.

Outside the Pentateuch, Zedekiah decreed that Hebrew slaves be released. Though initially heeded by the people of Judah (Jer 34:8-10), this law was soon disobeyed (Jer 34:11). In response, Jeremiah rebuked the people for rejecting Zedekiah's decree and thus disobeying the law of slave release in the Pentateuch. The implication of this episode is that the sabbatical year was not being observed, though it has to be said that Zedekiah's decree seems to imply a universal year of slave release disregarding the length of service of slaves (Weinfeld, 39-40). After the exile, under Nehemiah the people pledged themselves to keep the sabbatical year laws of debt remission and fallow land (Neh 10:31), restoring the laws of both Exodus and Deuteronomy 15. There is evidence of sabbatical year observance

later on (1 Macc 6:49, 53; Josephus *Ant.* 13.7.4-8.1 §§228-34; 14.16.2 §475; as well as from some documents found in the Judean desert). None of these sources mentions the Jubilee law, though there is reference to it in *Jubilees* (see Grabbe, 97; Andreasen 1978, 53-54).

Within the Pentateuch, the covenant sanctions in Leviticus 26 seem to indicate an expectation that the sabbatical year legislation would not be kept and that only when Israel went into exile would the land find rest (Lev 26:34-35, 43; see also 2 Chron 36:21).

3. Jubilee.

3.1. Introduction. The instructions regarding the Jubilee are found primarily in Leviticus 25. The Jubilee year occurred every fifty years and involved a number of socioeconomic measures.

3.1.1. Terminology. Two key words are used in reference to the Jubilee year. The word *yôbēl* is probably related to the word for a trumpet made from a sheep's horn that was blown to announce the Jubilee year, in contrast to the *šôpār,* which was blown to announce every other new year. The word *yôbēl* occurs in this way in Exodus 19:13 and five times in Joshua 6:4-13, though there is dispute about this etymology (see Baker, 47; North [6.3] argues it is connected to *yābal,* "to bring back," hence "homecoming"). However, the main use of the word is to refer to the Jubilee year. Apart from the six occurrences mentioned above, *yôbēl* occurs only twenty-one other times, confined to Leviticus 25 and 27 (fourteen times, six times) and Numbers 36:4, with all these referring to the Jubilee year. On ten of those occasions *yôbēl* occurs with the word *šānâ* ("year").

The other key word is *dĕrôr,* meaning "liberation" or "freedom" (Lev 25:10) and possibly deriving from an Akkadian word (so North, 3.266; Baker, 47). So in the Jubilee year, liberty *(dĕrôr)* is proclaimed for those in the land with the exception of foreign slaves (Lev 25:10). Freedom or liberty is a central notion in the Jubilee year, and God's liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt is the critical theological background (Lev 25:38, 42, 55).

3.1.2. What Year Is Intended? The counting for the year was "seven sabbaths of years." Most probably the year after the seventh sabbatical year was the Jubilee year, though some scholars have argued that the Jubilee year coincided with the seventh sabbatical year counting the years inclusively (e.g., Chirichigno). However, the provisions for the Jubilee year do not totally coincide with those of the sabbatical year. Certainly Josephus, Philo and rabbinical scholars were unanimous in regarding the Jubilee as the fiftieth year. Also, Leviticus 25:21 seems to say that one year's harvest would suffice for three years, implying that the Jubilee year was successive to a sabbatical year. However, that verse does number the years as sixth, seventh and eighth and not forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth (North, 6.4). Some regard the Jubilee year as "a heightened and intensified Sabbath year" (Sloan, 7, agreeing with North; Chirichigno, 350: "no more than a seventh Sabbatical year in a 'heightened' form"). Others suggest that the Jubilee may have been a short year, perhaps of forty-nine days, functioning not unlike modern leap days. This suggestion translates Leviticus 25:8 as "The forty-nine days of the seven cycles of sabbatical years shall be for you a year" (see Wenham 1979, 302, 319; North, 6.4).

3.2. Provisions. The instructions for the Jubilee occur in Leviticus 25:8-55. Four main provisions applied.

3.2.1. Land Return. This is perhaps the main provision of the Jubilee year, without parallel in the sabbatical year. In the Jubilee year, any land that had been sold in the previous forty-nine years was to be returned to its original family of ownership according to the Mosaic land distribution (Lev 25:10b, 13). This law had implications for the sale of land in any year. The price of land was to be determined by the number of years or harvests before the next Jubilee year (Lev 25:14-17, 25-28). In addition, land could be redeemed before the Jubilee year by appropriate payment. The law did not apply to the sale of houses within a walled city except for cities of the *Levites. Houses originally belonging to Levites were returned to them in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:29-32). Consecrated land (i.e., land set apart for the *priests and the upkeep of the temple or *tabernacle) also came under the Jubilee legislation (Lev 27:16-24). The Jubilee law of land return also led to the command that a woman who inherited land had to marry into the tribe of her father. There was concern that if the daughters of *Zelophehad married into another tribe, then their father's land from the tribal territory of Manasseh would pass over to another tribe at the time of Jubilee (Num 36:1-12).

The theological motivation for the Jubilee law

of land return was that the land belonged to Yahweh, so the law regarded Israel as being "aliens and tenants" with Yahweh (Lev 25:23). Israelites technically were stewards of the land, not its owners. This theology of the land undergirds the whole Jubilee legislation. The land, of course, is crucial in the OT for the *promises and purposes of Yahweh as well as being an indicator of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

3.2.2. Release of Israelite Slaves. In addition, Israelite slaves were to be released (Lev 25:39-43). Presumably the return of land coinciding with slave release would give freed slaves the resources to make a new start. A distinction is made between Israelite slaves and foreign slaves; the provision of release did not apply to the latter (Lev 25:44-46). Even if an Israelite became a slave of a resident alien, the right of redemption still applied, so that Israelite slaves could redeem themselves if they prospered or a family member could redeem them. The redemption price was calculated in proportion to the original sale price dependent on the years remaining to the Jubilee. If redemption did not occur before the Jubilee year, release occurred in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:47-54).

The details in Leviticus 25 regarding slaves make it clear that slaves were to be treated generously and not harshly. The theological undergirding of this law is that the people of Israel are the servants of Yahweh who redeemed them from Egypt (Lev 25:55). This is not unlike the theological motivation regarding the sabbatical law of slave release (Deut 15:15). This theological expression also relates to the land-return law. Both land and Israel belong to Yahweh.

The slave-release aspect of the Jubilee provisions appears similar to that of the sabbatical year. An important question, therefore, is: In what ways do the laws of slave release in the sabbatical year differ from those in the Jubilee? Many of the difficulties that scholars perceive in this legislation arise because of the assumption that the Jubilee year prescribed the same measures as found in the sabbatical year legislation.

Usually attempts to resolve discrepancies between these two are based on a hypothesis of different periods of legislation. It is often argued that the original sabbatical year law, found in Exodus 23, was agrarian and was motivated by concern for the poor. Later, Deuteronomy modified this law and added the remission of debts, reflecting a more urban society. Later still, the Jubilee laws were added. One view is that the Jubilee laws in Leviticus represent a later attempt to modify or rescue an unworkable sabbatical year law. There are difficulties with this view. Such a modification would favor the wealthy, since a slave would often be one for life. If the law was unworkable for the sabbatical year cycle, it was not necessarily more workable for a Jubilee cycle. N. Lemche argues that the Jubilee laws reflect a long history of growth and development standardizing in a particular year the earlier provisions of Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Many scholars are skeptical that the Jubilee laws were ever practiced. Some have suggested that the laws are even purely theoretical (see Kraus, 73). Others have sought to harmonize the two, suggesting that slaves were released after six years or in the Jubilee if that was earlier. Yet such views in the end diminish the significance of the Jubilee year (for a summary of various views, see Hartley, 431-33).

Wright (1984) overcomes the apparent discrepancy between the texts by contending that in the sabbatical year the category of slave released was the landless "Hebrew," whereas in the Jubilee year any Israelite landowner who had fallen into poverty was released. Thus Leviticus 25 does not use the term *Hebrew* but "your brother," a much broader term including any Israelite. In the Jubilee text of Leviticus, Israelite slaves have more rights, and slavery is more restricted than in Exodus and Deuteronomy, further suggesting that the texts are dealing with different groups of people. In sum, according to Leviticus the poor Israelite was not to serve as a slave (Lev 25:39, 42), had the right of redemption (Lev 25:47-55) and did not have to forfeit wife and children acquired during the period of "slavery" (Lev 25:41, 54). Whereas the liberated "Hebrew" became a free laborer *(ḥopšî)* in Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12, in Leviticus 25 the freed Israelite "returned" to the family's original landholding.

Given these distinctions, Wright summarizes the difference between the sabbatical year and Jubilee year by saying that the former was concerned to protect the landless "Hebrews," whereas the Jubilee legislation was designed to maintain the distribution and ownership of land by Israelite families. J. E. Hartley responds to Wright's suggestion by saying that it faces "the formidable obstacle that a landed Israelite would usually be subject to a much longer period of bondage than would a class of landless

workers" (Hartley, 432). He rejects the notion of "Hebrew" as defined by Wright. Hartley (432-33) goes on to note that the laws of Exodus and Deuteronomy on the one hand and Leviticus on the other differ in their reference to time and land. Land is the central issue in Leviticus but not in the other texts. Exodus and Deuteronomy determine the maximum length of servitude for any slave, whereas Leviticus is concerned with the proclamation of liberty for all slaves at the one time.

Chirichigno also rejects that view that the Jubilee laws are a late abolition of the sabbatical year laws of Exodus and Deuteronomy. He argues that the laws of Leviticus 25:25-54 show three successive stages of destitution. First, an Israelite needed to sell or lease his land (Lev 25:25-28). The possibility of a redeemer existed in this situation. Second, an Israelite was unable to support himself and had to rely on interest-free charitable loans (Lev 25:35-38). This case existed when there was no redeemer as in the first stage. Finally, an Israelite, along with his family, was sold to a fellow Israelite (Lev 25:39-43) or, worse, a foreigner (Lev 25:47-54). No redeemer is mentioned in the case of slavery to a fellow Israelite, but in the second case a redeemer is mentioned. Presumably this casts the net wider than the redeemer in the first stage (Chirichigno, 352). Chirichigno argues that Exodus 21:2-6 and Deuteronomy 15:12-18 differ from Leviticus 25 in that the latter envisages the sale of the head of a family and not a dependent. In Leviticus 25, the case is not a defaulted loan but the need for protection for the man and his family. The man is regarded as a hired worker, for which Leviticus 25 uses terminology different from that in Exodus and Deuteronomy, not because it is abolishing those laws but because the cases differ. Leviticus 25 demands a longer period of debt-slavery than Exodus and Deuteronomy because it clearly envisages a different type of debt-slavery.

No attempt to relate the sabbatical year and Jubilee laws completely eases the apparent tensions between them. The arguments of Wright and Chirichigno certainly have appeal, though we must remain uncertain as to their precise working relationship. Certainly the view that Leviticus simply abolishes the earlier laws can be dismissed.

3.2.3. Cancellation of Debts. If, as has been suggested above, debt repayments were suspended during the sabbatical year, then in the Jubilee year they were cancelled entirely. Though Leviticus 25 does not explicitly discuss debt cancellation, the return of an Israelite to his land plus the release of slaves implies the cancellation of debts that led to slavery or the loss of land (see Sloan, 7-9). Related to this provision is the proscription of interest charged to fellow Israelites (Lev 25:36-37). This provision is also grounded in Yahweh's redemption of Israel from Egypt.

3.2.4. Fallow Land. As in the sabbatical year, the land was to lie fallow in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:11-12). Similar to God's provision of *manna in the wilderness, the year preceding the sabbatical and Jubilee years would produce sufficient for the fallow years (Lev 25:21).

3.3. Observance. Many scholars argue that the legislation of the Jubilee year, as well as that of the sabbatical year, is so idealistic as to be impractical. North calls it "hardly realistic" (North, 6.6). Wenham says that "as a social institution the jubilee year remained an ideal, which was rarely, if ever, realized" (Wenham 1979, 318). Admittedly the legislation is exacting, and there is no clear OT acknowledgment that the Jubilee year was ever fulfilled. However, the OT's silence on this practice need not imply lack of observance. Put simply, we do not know if and when it was observed.

3.4. Origins of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee. There is evidence from Ugarit of a seven-year cycle of fallow land for the purpose of agricultural productivity. This had religious overtones associated with the triumph of Baal. However, there is no evidence that Israel's practice derived from there. Weinfeld argues that the sabbatical year and Jubilee laws concerning slave release and remission of debts are both identical to Mesopotamian laws, though rewritten with "a utopic colouring" (Weinfeld, 43). The parallels claimed with Mesopotamia are used by Weinfeld to support the view that Deuteronomy 15 demands cancellation of debt and not only deferment of repayment. However, there are important differences between the two sets of laws. In Mesopotamia, the king declared liberty on his accession, often in his second year. In the OT, liberty recurred every seven years, a number Weinfeld concedes is distinct to Israel, and the Jubilee year was on a fixed cycle of fifty years. Such a pattern is without ancient Near Eastern precedent.

There is also scholarly debate about whether

these institutions were early, as the OT implies, or rather postexilic. Often the Jubilee law is regarded as a revision of earlier Deuteronomic laws or a supersession of the sabbatical year laws (Morgenstern, 4.142-43). It is also suggested that the Jubilee law was established to regain land lost during the exile. However, some rare Hebrew terms, including the word *yôbēl* itself, suggest an early origin. There may be allusions to the Jubilee in Isaiah 37:21-35, which presupposes the existence of Jubilee legislation. In addition, Jeremiah 34:8-22 seems to allude to earlier legislation. The similarity of other ancient Near Eastern practices (though not identical) indicates that the Jubilee law would not have been out of place in the second millennium. The association of the Jubilee law with old tribal and family land possession fits better in the preexilic period than later, when such a family land basis was looser. Of course, the absence of any mention of Jubilee in preexilic prophets and history books is inconclusive regarding its existence in the preexilic period. An event that occurred only every fifty years is unlikely to have been mentioned frequently. If it was postexilic, it is surprising that it is not mentioned as being inaugurated in the time of Ezra or Nehemiah. North suggests that in the time of *Moses, Israel was more likely to accept such idealism than in the times of Nehemiah (cf. Wenham 1979, 318). Hartley concludes, "Thus the sabbatical year and the visionary ideal of Jubilee were anchored in the ideology that gave birth to Israel, and the legislation was adapted to changing social conditions during Israel's history" (430). Wright states that "it makes sense to see the jubilee as a very ancient law which fell into neglect during Israel's history in the land, not so much because it was economically impossible, as because it became irrelevant to the scale of social disruption" (Wright, 3.1028; see further Hartley, 427-30).

4. Theological Significance.

Wright makes some helpful comments regarding the theological significance of the sabbath and Jubilee concepts. Because the sabbath days and sabbatical years are "holy to Yahweh," they express the conviction that time belongs to Yahweh, who is Lord over it. Furthermore, as we have seen, the *exodus release of Israel from Egypt forms a theological basis for these laws. Thus Yahweh as both Creator and Redeemer provides the theological background to these laws.

A theology of the land is also significant. The land is Yahweh's (Lev 25:23). It is the land of promise, and in this bountiful land there is more than sufficient for all, provided various economic laws are heeded and the bounty of the land is shared. Related to this is the ethical love of fellow people reflected in these laws. In particular, these laws command a concern for the landless classes.

Finally, there is an eschatological dimension to these sabbath laws. They anticipate the ideal life in God's place and under his rule. The emphasis on social concern looks forward to the harmony of God's people under him. The cancellation of debt and restoration looks forward to the full and final redemption of the people of God. Even the distinctive trumpet sound announcing the Jubilee year, compared to the usual *šôpār* announcing all other years, can be regarded eschatologically (e.g., Is 27:13). Certainly the eschatological implications of this legislation are developed in later writings, not least in Isaiah (see further Sloan, 12-18; Wright, 3.1025-29).

See also AGRICULTURE; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

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SABBATICAL YEAR. *See* SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE.

SACRED. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

SACRED ASSEMBLY. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

SACRIFICE OF ISAAC. *See* ISAAC; TESTING.

SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS

The core of the sacrificial system of ancient Israel consists of the five major kinds of sacrifices and offerings, the basic regulations for which are found in Leviticus 1—7 and the foundational applications of which are described in Leviticus 8—16. All of this is focused on the system as it functioned within the *tabernacle sanctuary (and later the temple), specifically in light of the fact that the Lord himself took up visibly manifest residence in the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35; Lev 1:1). The purpose of the sacrifices and offerings within the sanctuary system, therefore, was to provide a means of approaching the Lord in his place of manifest presence in Israel (e.g., Lev 1:2) and to maintain that presence by preserving the purity and holiness of the sanctuary (e.g., Lev 15:31). However, since the time of *Cain and *Abel (Gen 4) sacrifice and offering had already been a part of biblical history. According to the Bible, Noah presented "burnt offerings" on the solitary *altar he built after the flood (Gen 8:20-21), *Abraham and the other patriarchs built altars and presented offerings (e.g., Gen 12:7-8; 22:13), Jethro offered burnt and peace offerings on behalf of Israel (Ex 18:12), and *Moses ratified the *covenant at Sinai by means of burnt and peace offerings offered on a solitary altar constructed there (Ex 24:3-8). This use of solitary altars continued even after the tabernacle (and later the temple) had been constructed, in accordance with the regulations given in Exodus 20:24-26 (see, e.g., Deut 27:5-7 with Josh 8:30-35; Judg 6:24-27; 1 Sam 7:17; 2 Sam 24:18, 25; 1 Kings 18:30-35; 19:10, 14, etc.). The system of offerings at these solitary altars involved the presentation of burnt, grain and peace offerings (cf. Lev 1-3). The sin and guilt offerings were added to the sanctuary system specifically because of the need to maintain the purity and holiness of the tabernacle, its furniture, its vessels, its gifts and offerings, and to promote purity and holiness in

the community at large. The details of the terminology, history, theories, kinds, applications and historical-critical issues surrounding the sacrifices and offerings in the Pentateuch are treated in this article in the following sections:

1. General Terminology and Historical and Theoretical Foundations
2. The Five Major Kinds of Offerings in the Tabernacle (Lev 1—7)
3. Prescriptions for Tabernacle Offerings (Ex 29—30; Lev 8—16)
4. Historical Criticism and Sacrifices and Offerings
5. Sacrifices and Offerings in the New Testament

1. General Terminology and Historical and Theoretical Foundations.

The foreign, ancient, detailed and sometimes enigmatic nature of the ritual procedures stipulated in the Pentateuch has made them a subject of relatively little interest to both scholars and common readers of the Bible. Add to this the negative ideological and theological stance toward ritual found in the Protestant Reformation, in the Enlightenment and in historical-critical analysis of the history of Israelite religion, and we have a recipe for virtual neglect or at least a negative bias against the OT priestly ritual system (Gorman 1994, 14-20). Three specific features of Protestantism contributed to this neglect: (1) the emphasis on inner religious experience as opposed to physical (ritual) actions that are viewed as inhibitors of true spiritual religion; (2) a christological interpretation of the OT sacrifices and offerings that overrides any serious focus on or appreciation of the rituals themselves in their OT context, and (3) anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic biases that react against their legalism, priesthood and ritual sacramental systems. In addition, Enlightenment religion focused on reason, ethics and cognition in religion, none of which would lend themselves to appreciation of ritual performances, at least not as rituals were understood in the period of the Enlightenment and in supposedly "enlightened" culture since that time.

Within the field of biblical studies, the history-of-Israelite-religion approach to historical-critical examination of the Hebrew Bible was based on attempts to be objective about religious phenomena, was focused on textual analysis and was committed to searching out timeless religious principles. Rituals, on the other hand, are experiential (i.e., resistant to purely objective analysis), are focused on physical action (as opposed to textual analysis) and are performed according to local knowledge that is culturally and temporally specific (not given to the easy recognition of universal expressions of religion within them). Moreover, the romantic tendencies within eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German historicism brought with them a high regard for what was seen to be relatively simple, personal and dynamic religion as opposed to highly organized and institutionalized religious systems.

1.1. Ritual Theory. A rather large body of scholarly literature about ritual (and myth) emerged in the fields of cultural anthropology, philosophy and literary studies in the last half of the twentieth century, some of which scholars have begun to apply to the study of biblical ritual (Gorman 1994, 20-29). M. Douglas has provided a very helpful recent review of the field (Douglas, 15-65), explaining and illustrating the difference between "analogical" and "rational-instrumental" ways of thinking and writing. It is important to recognize that she actually begins her discussion with myth as analogical *thinking*, and moves from there to ritual as analogical *action*, by means of which the performer engages actively with that which is perceived as reality in the world of the gods or other supernatural beings. In both the ancient and the modern world there was and is both analogical and rational-instrumental thinking and acting.

According to Douglas, ritual actions (and the texts that describe or prescribe them) create cyclical patterns and, thus, various sets of analogical relationships between ritual rules, their performances, and the real and ritual world in which the ritual is enacted. One of the reasons ritual texts do not often explain the meaning of the various elements of the rituals is because in ritual activity meaning is primarily displayed rather than explained. One needs to engage with the world of the ritual performance not only cognitively but also experientially if there is going to be true understanding of the ritual and its internal worldview. Ritual texts create their own internal sets of analogies that organize the view of the world assumed and enacted. Simply reading the regulations in Leviticus 1—3, for example, will reveal a parallelism (with variation, not just repetition) of terminology and descrip-

tions of actions similar to one another. There is no explanation because the rituals create a world of analogical relationships that carries its own meaning and, therefore, its own internal explanation. Ritual procedures, in turn, carry the ritual performers and other participants along through a physically enacted process of engagement with and participation in the ritual world of the performance and its gods or God (in the case of religious ritual), all of which is embedded within the larger surrounding world and concerns of the people involved.

Rituals do not stand alone. They display a well-defined world of meaning that intersects with the conceptual world of the people who have ownership of the ritual on one level or another. The account of the construction of the tabernacle has been shown to have strong structural and other kinds of literary links to the account of *creation in Genesis 1:1—2:3. For example, the Lord's instructions to build the tabernacle in Exodus 25—31 are presented in seven sections (see the introductory formulas in Ex 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12), like the seven days of creation, and the last section is about the *sabbath, like the seventh day in the creation account (*see* Tabernacle). Moreover, J. D. Levenson and F. H. Gorman (1990) emphasize the importance of the rituals themselves in enabling and empowering the people involved to participate in founding, maintaining or restoring order in space, time and social relationships within the chaos of their world and their personal and communal life. The ritual system in ancient Israel, therefore, was intended to be a way of engaging actively and meaningfully with God, world and people in a way that was organized and helpful in maintaining proper order for all involved.

1.2. "Sacrifice" and "Offering." Although writers sometimes use words differently, in general the English term *offering* refers to the presentation of a gift (from Latin *offerre*, "to offer, present"). It is a broader term than *sacrifice*, which refers to making something sacred (from Latin *sacer*, "holy," + *facere*, "to make"). Similarly, in Hebrew the term for "offering" *(qorbān)* is a more general term than "sacrifice" *(zebaḥ)*. For example, in Leviticus 1—3 the expression "to present an offering" (the hiphil verb *hiqrîb* with its cognate noun *qorbān*) introduces the entire section of regulations for burnt, grain and peace offerings. The word *zebaḥ*, "sacrifice," does not occur until Leviticus 3:1 in the introduction to the "peace offering" section (see Lev 3:3, 6, 9), where "offering" continues to occur (Lev 3:1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14). A "peace offering" was a particular kind of offering that was also a "sacrifice," which involved the sacral slaughtering of an animal and eating part of it in a communal meal. The noun *sacrifice* and its cognate verb *to sacrifice* in the OT occur only in reference to "peace" offerings. Since the English term *sacrifice* has a broader meaning than the Hebrew word, scholars sometimes use it more loosely to refer to any kind of animal offering in contrast to "grain offerings" (for more detailed discussions of these terms see Averbeck, 1.1068-70, 3.979-81, 4.996-97). The English expression "sacrificial system" is even broader, encompassing the entire system of offerings and sacrifices, animal and vegetable.

1.3. Theories of Sacrifice. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries anthropologists, sociologists and historians of religion proposed a number of theories of sacrifice and offering. Unfortunately, the understanding and application of these theories have often been encumbered by tendencies toward reductionism (i.e., reducing all sacrifices to the same rationale) and evolutionary views of religious development (i.e., thinking that all sacrifices and offerings evolved from one primal form). However, if the reductionism can be eliminated and the various theories treated as complementary rather than exclusionary, three of them are especially helpful in understanding the underlying rationale of various dimensions of the ancient Israelite sacrificial system (see Averbeck, 4.997-1006 and the literature cited there for the details).

First, the "gift theory" views sacrifices and offerings as gifts that express homage, thanksgiving, etc. In general, they are a means of approaching God, bearing gifts that are pleasing to him. Several Hebrew terms carry this meaning explicitly. For example, *minḥâ* can be used as a technical term for "grain offering" (Lev 2), or it can mean "offering, present, tribute, gift," as it does in Genesis 4:3-5. Cain and Abel brought their gifts in order to do homage to God and gain his favor (for more on Gen 4 see 2.2 below). Similarly, as noted above, *qorbān* basically means "gift" and is used with its corresponding verb *(hiqrîb)* for the presentation of offerings before the Lord. Like *minḥâ*, it can refer to animal or vegetable offerings or a combination of

the two. In Numbers 6:14-15, for example, it refers to the whole set of offerings used in concluding the period of a Nazirite vow: a burnt offering, a sin offering, a peace offering, their associated grain offerings and libations, and additional bread offerings (Num 6:14-15). Clearly, on one level at least, all sacrifices and offerings could be conceived of as gifts to the Lord. There is also another term, *'iššeh* (often rendered "offering by fire"), that most probably means something like "(food) gift, present." It refers not only to offerings that were burned on the altar (e.g., the burnt offering in Lev 1:9) but also offerings that were not (e.g., the bread of presence, Lev 24:7, 9; see Averbeck, 1.540-41).

Second, although all sacrifices and offerings could be conceived of as gifts to the Lord, the "(sacrifice of) peace offering(s)" (Heb *[zebaḥ] šĕlāmîm*) reflects primarily another concern, communion with the Lord. Essentially, the fat, kidneys and liver of the peace offering constituted a food gift to the Lord burned on the altar (e.g., Lev 3:3-5; 7:22-25), but the eating of the meat in a communal meal was an expression of communion between the worshipers and their Lord, and sometimes between the worshipers themselves in covenant ratification or enactment (e.g., Gen 31:54). Even the term *šĕlāmîm* would seem to suggest this (cf. *šālôm*, "peace, well-being").

Third, there is the "consecration" theory of sacrifice. By the very nature of things, whenever someone brought a sacrifice or offering to the Lord he or she consecrated it to the Lord. This, it seems, was one of the reasons that the person who offered the offering laid their hand on the offering when presenting it to the Lord at the sanctuary (e.g., Lev 1:4; 3:2; 4:4). It identified the offerer with the offering (Wright) and consecrated the animal to the Lord to accomplish the purpose(s) for which the offering was being presented. It did not transfer sin or impurity to the animal, since it would be contrary to the central principles of the sacrificial system to offer something laden with sin or impurity on the altar (see, e.g., Lev 15:31). The high priest's laying both his hands on the head of the Day of *Atonement scapegoat and confessing the sins of the people is a distinctive act and a different matter, involving the actual transfer of the sins to the goat. In that instance, however, the goat was not offered on the altar but sent as far away as possible from the altar and the community (Lev 16:21-22).

On the one hand, the very nature of the presentation of a sacrifice or offering at the sanctuary involved consecration of it to the Lord. On the other hand, some kinds of offerings also had the specific purpose of consecrating something or someone else to the Lord. The consecrated offering, especially its *blood, was used to perform acts of consecration. For example, according to Leviticus 8:15, on the day of the erection of the tabernacle Moses "took the blood [of the sin offering] and put [it] all around on the horns of the altar with his finger and [thereby] de-sinned [piel of the verb *ḥṭ'*] the altar, and then poured out the [rest of the] blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it" (see 3.2 below). This was the initial "day of atonement" for the tabernacle altar. The same basic consecration procedure was to be repeated each annual Day of Atonement thereafter (Lev 16:18-19; see 3.5 below).

1.4. Atonement. This brings us to the issue of atonement, one of the central concerns of the tabernacle sacrificial system. Leviticus 16:20 concludes by summarizing the effect of the previous sin offering procedures and providing a transition to the scapegoat ritual that follows: "When he [Aaron] finishes atoning [*kipper*, i.e., "purging"] the *holy place, the tent of meeting and the altar, then he shall present the live goat" (Lev 16:20). The summary in the first part of the verse tells us that the previous sin offering rituals purged the sanctuary, but the second part tells us there is yet more to be done, namely, the scapegoat ritual, the purpose of which was to purge the people (i.e., the community that surrounded the sanctuary). Both the goat that was slaughtered and the scapegoat were "sin offerings," and both "made atonement" for the people (Lev 16:5, 10, 15, 21-22; *see* Atonement, Day of).

The English word *atonement* is a combination of "at" and Middle English "one(ment)," meaning "to be or make one." It is, therefore, a word for reconciliation. This is not a bad concept for understanding the end result of the Hebrew word *kipper*, "to make atonement," and its derivatives, but the conceptual and ritual mechanism by which this reconciliation was conceived to have been made is another matter altogether. Some have argued that *kipper* means "to cover," based primarily on the Arabic cognate *kafara*, but also on the fact that the lid on top of the ark of the covenant was the *kappōret*. Others say it

means "to ransom," since the derivative *kōper* IV means "ransom, bribe" (see, e.g., Ex 21:30; 30:12; 1 Sam 12:3). However, the basic meaning of Hebrew *kipper* is apparently "to purge," based on our knowledge of the Akkadian cognate *kuppuru*, "to wipe clean," and especially the use of *kipper* with the tabernacle and its altar as direct objects (see Lev 16:20 cited above and the further remarks on Lev 16:33 in 3.5 below). One makes atonement "on behalf of" (various Hebrew prepositions are used) the people and the priests by atoning (purging) the tabernacle and altar of impurities and sins (see more on atonement in the treatment of the various offerings in 2 below, and the thorough discussion in Averbeck, 2.689-705 and the literature cited there).

2. The Five Major Kinds of Offerings in the Tabernacle (Lev 1—7).

Leviticus 1—7 describes in some detail the proper procedures for the five major kinds of offerings and sacrifices (Lev 1—6:7 [MT 1—5:26]) and their priestly portions (Lev 6:8—7:36 [MT 6:1—7:36], note the initial colophon in Lev 7:35-36). Even though the "ordination offering" for the priests is not specifically mentioned in the sacrificial regulations themselves (Lev 1:1—7:34), the final colophon for these chapters inserts it (Lev 7:37-38, esp. v. 37). This connects Leviticus 1—7 directly to Leviticus 8, the ordination and consecration of the priests and the tabernacle (note also the mention of the day the priests were anointed in Lev 6:20 [MT 6:13] and presented to the Lord to serve as priests in Lev 7:35; see 3.2 below on Lev 8).

Leviticus 1—7 is explicitly linked not only to the following chapter (Lev 8) but also to the previous one (Ex 40), in that these chapters are presented as a set of regulations that were communicated to Moses as he stood outside the tabernacle tent on the day of its erection, after the Lord had manifested his presence there. This may be observed by comparing Exodus 40:35, "Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled over it and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle," with Leviticus 1:1, "So the LORD *called* to Moses and spoke to him *from* the tent of meeting" (not "in" the tent of meeting; contrast, e.g., Lev 9:23 and Num 1:1). In light of the Lord's command to Moses that he should anoint and consecrate the tabernacle and priesthood on the erection day (Ex 40:9-15), it seems that the call to do this in the sight of the congregation in Leviticus 8 (see Lev 8:1-5) must have taken place initially on that day, although the whole procedure lasted for seven days (Lev 8:33-35).

Thus Leviticus 1—7 not only stands between Exodus 40 and Leviticus 8 but also binds them together. Exodus 40 is concerned with the erection of the tabernacle, the initiation of its daily ritual regimen and the Lord's visible presence manifest in the tabernacle. Leviticus 8 includes the anointing, purification and consecration of the tabernacle, but the focus is on the anointing, purification, consecration and ordination of the *priests* who would be continually responsible for the ritual functions within the tabernacle sanctuary. The regulations outlined in Leviticus 1—7 were essential instructions for those priestly functions.

The general rules that the people needed to be aware of when they brought offerings to the Lord are presented in two major literary units: Leviticus 1—3 and 4:1—6:8 (MT 4:1—5:26). Both are addresses from the Lord to the people of Israel through Moses, as the introductory formulas show (Lev 1:1-2; 4:1-2). The first three chapters are one unit with no introductory formulas intervening between them: the whole burnt offering (Lev 1), the grain offering (Lev 2) and the peace (or fellowship or communion) offering (Lev 3). The sin (purification) offering unit extends over Leviticus 4:1—5:13 and is separated from the two guilt (reparation) offering units in Leviticus 5:14—6:8 (MT 5:14-26) by the abbreviated introductory formula in Leviticus 5:14. The latter is divided into two parts by the repetition of the same formula in Leviticus 6:1 (MT 5:20).

Leviticus 6:8—7:36 (MT 6:1—7:36) consists of regulations for the priests' handling and disposition of the offerings and their various parts, including the priestly prebends (i.e., their stipend or allotment for services rendered). In the first major part of this section the Lord addresses the priests, Aaron and his sons, through Moses regarding the burnt offering (Lev 6:8-13 [MT 6:1-6]), the grain offering of the people (Lev 6:14-18 [MT 6:7-11]), the grain offering of the priest (Lev 6:19-23 [MT 6:12-16]; see 3.1 below), the sin offering (Lev 6:24-30 [MT 6:17-23]) and the guilt offering (Lev 7:1-6). Leviticus 7:7-10 appears to be a summary of Leviticus 6:8—7:6 (MT 6:1—7:6) (re)emphasizing the fact that the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, the skin of the burnt

offering and certain kinds of grain offerings belonged to the priests.

This summary creates a point of literary transition to the peace offering section (Lev 7:11-36), the first part of which is still addressed to the priests (Lev 7:11-21). On the one hand, the priestly portions up through Leviticus 7:10 were "most holy," so only the priests themselves could eat them, and only in a holy place within the sanctuary area (Lev 10:12-13, 16-18; 21:22; Num 18:9-10). On the other hand, the meat of the peace offering and its associated grain offerings were "holy," but not "most holy," so they could be eaten in any clean place in the camp and all the people in the families of the priests could join in the feast (see Lev 10:14-15; 21:22; Num 18:11-20). However, since the food was "holy," they must not eat of it if they were unclean at the time (Lev 22:1-16).

Similarly, the person who brought the peace offering to the Lord would have a banquet with the bread and meat portions (Lev 7:11-13, 15-18; cf. Lev 22:17-33), that is, those parts that were not prebends for the priests (for the latter see Lev 7:14, 28-34). The whole family of the offerer could eat the meat and bread of the peace offering. But again, no one who was unclean at the time could partake of this "holy" food (Lev 7:19-21). If it was a thanksgiving peace offering, then it must all be eaten on the day the offering was presented to the Lord (Lev 7:15). Votive or free-will peace offerings, however, could also be eaten on the next day (Lev 7:16), but on the third day they must be incinerated, not eaten, lest the whole peace offering sacrifice be made unacceptable to the Lord and an offensive thing, and the person who eats it "bears his [punishment for] iniquity" (Lev 7:17-18).

The last two parts of this peace offering section are addressed not to the priests but to the people who brought the offerings (Lev 7:22-23, 28-29). This shift was necessary in the first place because, unlike the other offerings, the common people themselves would eat of the peace offering sacrifice, not just the priests (see 2.3 below). Therefore a warning was issued to them that no one should ever eat any of the fat or blood of the offerings, since these were the portions that were to be offered to the Lord on the altar (Lev 7:22-27; cf. Lev 17:11). A person who ate any part of these portions was subject to the penalty of being "cut off from his people" (Lev 7:25, 27).

In the second place, the shift to addressing the people and not just the priests was necessary because the offerer was the one who actually did the slaughtering of the animal (Lev 1:5, 11; 3:2; 4:29, etc.). Therefore, he or she needed to be aware that certain parts of the meat were to be presented to the Lord as food gifts that the priests and their families would then consume (Lev 7:28-34). Again, the fat and the blood were offered on the altar (Lev 7:31, 33), but the breast was to be presented as a "wave offering" to the Lord for all the priests and their families to share (Lev 7:29-31), and the right thigh was to be presented as a "contribution" to the Lord as the portion eaten by the particular officiating priest and his family (Lev 7:32-33; see 2.3 below).

Leviticus 7:35-36 is the colophon for the whole disposition, or allotment, section (Lev 6:8—7:34 [MT 6:1—7:34]). It places the emphasis on the portions that were designated for the priests and their families as a perpetual prebend due them. Leviticus 7:37-38, in turn, is the final colophon for all of Leviticus 1—7. It refers back to these chapters as "the law for the burnt offering, for the grain offering and for the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering and the sacrifice of the peace offerings" (Lev 7:37). It tells us that the Lord commanded Moses to command the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai to follow these stipulations when they presented their offerings to the Lord (Lev 7:38). As noted above, the "ordination offering" is not mentioned previously in Leviticus 1—7, although from the description of it in Leviticus 8:22-31 it is apparent that it was a kind of peace offering, which is probably why it is mentioned just before the peace offering in Leviticus 7:37. It was inserted to link Leviticus 1—7 to Leviticus 8 and the following chapters.

The following discussion will describe and explain the meaning of the five main types of offerings in Leviticus 1—7, the relationships between them and the ritual logic of the combinations in which they were offered (for more detailed discussion see Averbeck, 3.405-15 [burnt offering], 2.978-90 [grain offering], 4.135-43 [peace offering], 2.93-103 [sin offering] and 1.557-66 [guilt offering]; for a relatively comprehensive chart of the five sacrifices and offerings, see Averbeck, 4.1020-21). Along the way we will also make note of the major points of contact between the biblical sacrificial terminology and its ancient Near Eastern background, including

cognate linguistic parallels and noncognate semantic-range comparisons and contrasts (see the articles cited above for more complete references and comprehensive analysis). Some of the most helpful recent secondary sources for understanding this ancient Near Eastern dimension of the discussion are the overview articles by M. J. Selman (esp. Mesopotamia and Syria/Palestine), M. Weinfeld (esp. Mesopotamia, Hatti, Ugarit, Syria/Palestine and Egypt) and M. A. Katz (Mesopotamia and Greece). Also valuable are detailed treatments of certain points across the ancient Near East found in J. Quaegebeur; extensive treatments of Ugaritic ritual texts in D. M. Clemens, G. del Olmo Lete; and chapters by P. Merlo and P. Xella, and G. del Olmo Lete in W. G. E. Watson and N. Wyatt. For Mesopotamian cult image rituals of "washing the mouth" and the related sacrifices and offerings, see C. Walker and M. Dick.

***2.1. Burnt Offering* (ōlâ, *Lev 1; 6:8-13 [MT 6:1-6]; 7:8; Num 15:1-10*).**

2.1.1. Burnt Offerings in the Ancient Near East. Punic inscriptions from Marseilles and Carthage use the term *kll* for the whole burnt offering (Tomback, 143), but a later Neo-Punic inscription uses the cognate *ʿlh* with the hiphil verb form of the same root (Tomback, 244, 247; cf. Gen 8:20). The term *kll* occurs infrequently in the Hebrew Bible also for the "*whole* burnt offering": twice independently (Deut 13:16 [MT 13:17]; 33:10) and twice with *ʿōlâ* (1 Sam 7:9; Ps 51:19 [MT 51:21]). The latter term seems to reflect the manner of offering the animal by "offering it up" on the altar or "causing it to go up" in smoke on the altar (see the hiphil of the verb *ʿlh*). The term *kll*, however, derives from the root meaning "whole, complete" and, therefore, relates to the extent of the incineration of the animal on the altar.

Ugaritic sacrificial texts use *šrp* for the "burnt offering." This may be compared with Hebrew *śrp*, which is often used to refer to incineration outside the camp of the leftover portions of offerings that could not be consumed by the priests or burned on the altar (see, e.g., Lev 4:12). The Ugaritic term sometimes occurs alone as an isolated offering, but most often in the combination *šrp wšlmm*, "burnt offering and peace offering" (see Dijkstra, 71, lines 7-8 and comments on line 2; cf. the discussion in Weinfeld, 107-8, and now the discussions and tabulations in Olmo Lete, 36-37 passim, and Clemens, 1-2, 1133-35 passim). Hittite also uses a term for "burnt offering" paired with a term for "peace offering" (Weinfeld, 98-99 and n. 14, 106-7).

A few Neo-Assyrian texts use Akkadian *šarāpu*, "to burn" (cf. Ugaritic *šrp*), for the burning of humans as burnt offerings to the gods (*CAD* 17.2.52; cf. Weinfeld, *UF* 4, 1972, 144-49 for a complete discussion).

2.1.2. The Basic Regulations for Burnt Offerings. As noted previously, the rules for burnt, grain and peace offerings in Leviticus 1—3 form a unified literary whole since there is only one introduction for the whole set (Lev 1:1-2; cf. Lev 4:1-2, which separates the rules for sin and guilt offerings in Leviticus 4:1—6:7 [MT 4:1—5:26] from those in Leviticus 1—3). This literary fact reflects the historical reality that before and after the construction of the tabernacle the burnt offerings and peace offerings, along with their associated grain and drink offerings, constituted the core of the system of sacrifices and offerings that faithful Yahwists practiced at solitary altars outside the tabernacle (see 4.2 below).

A burnt offering (*ʿōlâ*, 287x in the Hebrew OT and 1x in biblical Aramaic as *ʿălāt*, Ezra 6:9) could be from the cattle (Lev 1:3-9), the sheep and goats (Lev 1:10-13), or the birds (Lev 1:14-17). The latter is usually limited to the poor (see, e.g., Lev 12:8; 14:22). According to Leviticus 1:4, "And he [the offerer] shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf." The laying on of the hand identified the offering with the one presenting it and consecrated it as a burnt offering to the Lord (see 1.3 above). With regard to the atonement made by the burnt offering, as explained above (see 1.4 above), the basic meaning of *kipper*, "to make atonement," is "to wipe clean, purge." However, the burnt offering with its associated grain and drink offerings was essentially a food "gift" to God (see 1.3 above). It carried an atoning effect as a "gift" rather than as a means of "cleansing." Essentially it "made atonement" not by means of blood manipulation but as a gift that would "wipe away" God's wrath, much like Jacob intended with his gifts to Laban: "For he [Jacob] said, 'I will wipe *[kipper]* his [angry] face clean with the gifts that go before me" (Gen 32:20 [MT 32:21], lit. trans.; cf. Gen 8:20-22; 33:20).

When the burnt offering was incorporated into the sanctuary system of offerings from the previously existing solitary altar system, this con-

cept of atoning efficacy came along with it (Lev 1:4). The burnt offering was the last atoning offering in all attested cases where it is combined with the sin or guilt offering in the making of atonement. As a gift, the burnt offering carried the effect of the sin or guilt offering's "cleansing" atonement one further step by also "appeasing" God's wrath (i.e., "wiping his face clean") against the person(s) who needed atonement (cf. Gen 32:20 [MT 32:21] cited above). It was "an aroma pleasing to the LORD" (Lev 1:9; cf. Noah's burnt offerings after the flood, Gen 8:20-22). The "acceptance" of the burnt offering (Lev 1:4) depended on the proper fulfillment of all the regulations (Milgrom 1991, 149-50; Hartley, 19). No mention is made of a special indication of the acceptability of the offering. The burnt offering animal was to be a male without defect (Lev 1:3).

The offerer normally slaughtered the animal (Lev 1:5, 6; contrast the bird, Lev 1:15-17), but the priests splashed its blood (Lev 1:5) and placed its various parts on the altar fire (Lev 1:7-9). The distinctive nature of the burnt offering was that the whole animal was offered on the altar, the only exceptions being the removal of the hide of the larger animals as part of the slaughtering process (Lev 1:6, 7:8) and the removal of "the crop" of the birds "with its contents" (Lev 1:16, "feathers" in some English versions is probably incorrect).

2.1.3. The Uses of Burnt Offerings. The burning of the offering made it "a pleasing aroma to the Lord" (Lev 1:9, 13, 17). As noted above, this was intended to have a good effect on the Lord and his relationship with the worshiper. At the solitary altars it was a means of calling on the Lord to pay attention to the prayers of his worshipers (see, e.g., Num 23:3; 1 Sam 7:9-10; Job 42:7-9; cf. Job 1:5), sometimes also in association with the peace offering (see, e.g., Judg 20:26-27; 21:3-5; 2 Sam 24:25). Within the tabernacle system, in addition to its association with atonement procedures, the burnt offering, like the peace offering, could be used to express various sentiments and concerns in worship (Lev 22:18-20; Num 15:3). Furthermore, with its accompanying grain offerings and drink offerings, the burnt offering was the foundation of the daily, weekly, monthly and annual festival system (e.g., Ex 29:38-45; Num 28:3-8, 10; see 3 below).

***2.2. Grain Offering* (minḥâ, *Lev 2; 6:14-23 [MT 6:7-16]*).** The term *minḥâ* (c. 211x in the Hebrew OT and 2x in biblical Aramaic: Ezra 7:17; Dan 2:46) has four basic meanings or uses (see esp. Anderson 1987, 27-36, 57-75). Its basic meaning appears to be "gift," but it can be a gift of people to God or between people. If the latter, it can refer either to a "gift, present" (e.g., Jacob's "gifts" to Esau in Gen 32:20-21[MT 32:21-22]; 33:10; cf. Gen 43:11, 15, 25-26), or in post-pentateuchal literature it can also have the nuance of "tribute" when offered to foreign kings or other superiors (e.g., the tribute that the Israelites sent to Eglon the Moabite by the hand of Ehud in Judg 3:15, 17, 18; discussed in Anderson 1987, 57-75).

When *minḥâ* refers to a gift to God, it sometimes means simply "offering" in the general ritual sense, but in Leviticus and almost always in other priestly literature it means "grain offering." The latter is the main focus of this section (see below), but with regard to the former see Genesis 4:3-5, the first sacrificial passage in the OT canon, where it is used for both Cain's vegetable offering (Gen 4:3, 5) and Abel's animal offering (Gen 4:4). Both were "offerings" to God, but God's response to Cain and his offering was quite different from his response to Abel and his offering: "The LORD gazed favorably at Abel and his offering, but at Cain and his offering he did not gaze favorably" (Gen 4:4-5; for several suggestions concerning the acceptance/rejection of these offerings, *see* Abel).

The word *minḥâ* as a general ritual term for "offerings" to the Lord can also refer to the offering of incense (Num 16:15), meat and bread offerings combined (Judg 6:18), meat offerings in particular (1 Sam 2:17) and "offerings" in general without any indication of the materials offered (cf. 1 Sam 26:19; 1 Chron 16:29; Ps 96:8; Zeph 3:10).

2.2.1. Grain Offerings in the Ancient Near East. Cognates of Hebrew *minḥâ* are known in several Northwest Semitic languages, including Ugaritic, Phoenician and Punic, as well as Southwest Semitic, Arabic and Ethiopic (see Anderson, 27-30). In some cases it is a cultic term, but as in the Hebrew Bible, it also has noncultic usages. For example, it occurs in Ugaritic administrative economic texts as a term for payment of obligations (see *CAT* 4.91.1-3; cf. Anderson, 1987, 28-29). As a term for tribute, in a sense, but also as an offering to a deity, it appears in the Baal epic when El states his intention to give Baal over to the arrogant aggressor Yam (*CAT* 1.2.2.36b-38a). Phoenician and Punic texts use *mnht* only for

cultic "gifts, offerings" (Tomback, 186).

2.2.2. The Basic Regulations for Grain Offerings. Leviticus 2 and 6:14-23 (MT 6:7-16) give the basic regulations for the "grain offering" as it was to be offered in the tabernacle (and later the temple, 1 Chron 23:29). There were various forms in which the grain offering could be brought to the Lord. They included sifted grain (not ground fine, Lev 2:1-3, which was by nature unleavened), baked cakes (Lev 2:4, unleavened), baked wafers (Lev 2:4, unleavened), cooked on a griddle (Lev 2:5, unleavened), fried in a pan (Lev 2:7, which was by nature unleavened) or crushed grits of the first ripe grain (Lev 2:14-16; see Milgrom 1991, 178-95 for details on these kinds of bread offerings). Depending on what was suitable for the particular kind of grain offering, it would have oil poured or spread on it or mixed into it. If it was raw grain (i.e., uncooked in any way), incense would be added to the memorial portion (see below) to give it a pleasing aroma as it burned on the altar (Lev 2:1-2, 15-16). If it was already cooked, the bread itself would have a naturally pleasing aroma.

The priest offered a "handful" of the grain offering on the altar of burnt offering (never on the incense altar, even if it included incense, Ex 30:9) as a "sign offering" or "memorial [portion]" (Lev 2:2, 9, 16; Heb *ʾazkārâ*) to the Lord along with the salt of the covenant (Lev 2:13; see below). The remainder of the grain offering was "most holy," so it was to be consumed only by the priests within the tabernacle precincts (Lev 2:3, 10; 6:16-18 [MT 6:9-11]; 10:12-13; Num 18:9). This included the new grain offering of Leviticus 23:15-21 (cf. Lev 23:9-11 and Deut 26:1-11). The only exceptions were grain offerings brought by the priests for themselves, which were to be completely consumed on the altar (Lev 6:19-23 [MT 6:12-16]; see 3.1 below for more on these daily grain offerings of the high priest as part of the regular daily cult).

The term *ʾazkāra*, "memorial portion," is probably an Aramaic *aphel* causative form (= Heb Hiphil) from the verb *zkr*, "to remember," meaning "to remind, call to remembrance." There are several possibilities regarding what it might have "called to remembrance." Perhaps it was the whole grain offering, since *ʾazkārâ* was only a token portion (Milgrom 1991, 182). Perhaps it called to remembrance the Lord and his blessings or was meant to remind the Lord of the one who brought the offering. There are several other possibilities, and perhaps a combination of them is what is intended. The grain offering for the law of the suspected adulteress is referred to as a "grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance *(zikkārôn)*, causing remembrance [*mazkeret*, Hiphil participle of *zkr*] of iniquity" (Num 5:15). Thus, in this instance at least, the concept of remembrance is associated with the reason the offering was brought, namely, for remembering iniquity. In light of this, the *ʾazkārâ* of the regular grain offering was probably meant to call to remembrance for everyone involved (the Lord, the priest and the offerer) the whole of the offering and especially the reason for which it had been brought, no matter what it might have been in the particular instance.

The importance of adding "the salt of the covenant of your God" to every grain offering is emphasized in Leviticus 2:13. This expression occurs in only two other places in the OT. It refers to the covenant commitment of the Lord to provide for the Aaronic priests (Num 18:19) and the Lord's covenant commitment to the dynasty of David and his descendants (2 Chron 13:5). The nature of salt as a preservative suggests that this stipulation was meant to emphasize the enduring nature of the covenant bond between the Lord and his people.

2.2.3. The Uses of Grain Offerings. The main text for grain offering regulations in Leviticus 2 stands between the burnt and peace offering chapters (Lev 1 and 3, respectively). This makes good literary and ritual sense because the grain offering was regularly presented to the Lord in association with "burnt" and "peace offerings" (e.g., Lev 9:4, 17; 14:10, 20, 21, 31; 23:13, 37; Num 8:8). Numbers 15:1-16 is especially important for its clarification of the required amounts of grain, oil and drink that should accompany each votive, freewill or regularly required burnt or peace offering, depending on the size of the animal offered: a bull of the herd, a ram, or a lamb or kid(-goat) (for other drink offering prescriptions see, e.g., Ex 29:40-41; Lev 23:18; Num 6:15, 17; 28:7, 10, etc.; 29:6, 11, etc). The thank offering is not included in Numbers 15, which could mean that it was exempt from these requirements as the most voluntary of the peace offerings. The regulations in Leviticus 7:11-18 treat the thank offering separately, and the grain offering with the thank offering is given there without designating specific amounts (Lev 7:12-

14). Moreover, the grain offerings in that case are largely for the banquet that the worshiper(s) would hold with the meat and grain (and presumably also the drink), and only one of each kind of grain offering was contributed to the priest who officiated over the offering.

With regard to the burnt or peace votive, or freewill offerings, for the smaller lamb or kid(-goat) one was supposed to bring one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour (c. 3 liters = 3 quarts) mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil (c. 1 liter = 1 quart) and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering (c. 1 liter = 1 quart). For a ram it was two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil and one-third of a hin of wine for a drink offering. For a bull of the herd, the requirement was three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-half hin of oil and one-half a hin of wine for the drink offering. Essentially the grain and drink offerings provided for the full, balanced meal of meat, bread and drink (see the remarks on food gifts to the Lord and the ancient Near Eastern practice of feeding the gods in section 3.1 below). Other bread and drink would also be brought to supply the needs of the worshipers who would share in eating the peace offering, but these particular grain offerings presented with the burnt and peace offerings (as called for in Numbers 15) were offered to the Lord. A "memorial portion" was offered on the altar (see above), but the remainder was "most holy," so it was eaten by the priests in the sanctuary and not by the worshipers.

The regular daily cult included a burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and drink offering both in the morning and in the evening (Num 28:3-8; see 3.1 below). Additions to the daily morning and evening burnt and grain offerings were standard procedure for the sabbath day (Num 28:10), the first day of the month (Num 28:15) and annual festival occasions (Num 28:24; 29:6, etc.).

***2.3. Peace Offering* (šĕlāmîm, *Lev 3; 7:11-34*).** Several different etymologies and foundational meanings have been proposed for the *šĕlāmîm* offering (sing. *šelem*, in Amos 5:22 only; see the convenient summaries in Milgrom 1991, 220-21, and Hartley, 38). The translation "peace offering" allows for the necessary flexibility in the meaning and purpose of the offering and, therefore, is retained here (cf. Heb *šālôm*, "peace"), but others translate it "well-being offering" (e.g., NRSV; from the Heb adjective *šālôm*, "whole, sound, well"; cf. both Milgrom and Hartley) or "fellowship" or "communion offering" (NIV).

In terms of the ritual practice, the peace offering was a "sacrifice" (Heb *zebaḥ*). Thus, although the term *šĕlāmîm* can stand alone in reference to this kind of offering, it is introduced in Leviticus 3:1 as a "sacrifice *(zebaḥ)* of peace offering *(šĕlāmîm)*." The term *zebaḥ* itself is widely used in the ancient Near East (see Averbeck, 1.1066-68) and is the underlying root of *mizbēaḥ*, "altar," a place of sacrifice. In the Hebrew Bible the basic verb *zābaḥ* and its primary noun *zebaḥ* both refer almost exclusively to the slaughter of animals in order to create a meal (but note, e.g., the verb *zābaḥ* with both burnt and peace offerings as the object in Ex 20:24). The noun *šelem/šĕlāmîm*, "peace offering," occurs for the first time in Exodus 20:24. Before that, *zābaḥ/zebaḥ*, "sacrifice," is used for what is later referred to as the "(sacrifice of) peace offering" (see Gen 31:54; 46:1; Ex 8:27-28 [MT 8:23-24]; 10:25; 12:27; 18:12). Even later, however, *zābaḥ/zebaḥ* alone continued to be used independently to refer to "sacrifice (of peace offering)" (see, e.g., Ex 23:18; 34:15, 25; Lev 17:7-8; Deut 12:6, 11, 27).

The distinctive nature of this offering was the communal celebration of the worshipers occasioned by the sharing in the meat of the offering. It was a "fellowship," or "communion," offering that indicated and enacted the fact that there was "peace" between God and his people and that the person, family or community was, therefore, in a state of "well-being." This is why the peace offering was always the last offered when it was presented in series with other kinds of offerings (see 2.6 below).

2.3.1. Peace Offerings in the Ancient Near East. The *šĕlāmîm* type of offerings are found in Semitic and non-Semitic cultic systems of the ancient Near East (see Weinfeld, 98-99, 107-8 for a good summary). The Ugaritic texts are especially pertinent to understanding the biblical peace offerings. (See Olmo Lete, 35-37 passim; Clemens, 47-48 passim, and the primary and secondary literature cited in those places for good summaries of occurrences and interpretive issues surrounding *zebaḥ* and *šĕlāmîm*. See 2.1.1 above for "burnt" and "peace offerings" occurring as a pair in Ugaritic.) B. Levine (1974) proposes a close connection between the *šlmm*, "tribute of-

fering," that King Pabil presents to Keret in order to cause him to break off his siege (*CAT* 1.14.iii.26-28) and the covenant ceremony with Saul at Gilgal when the Israelites "sacrificed there peace offering sacrifices before the LORD, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced there greatly" (1 Sam 11:15). Levine bases this on a comparison with the Akkadian *šulmānu*, "tribute." While there may be some connection, it should be remembered that according to the text the offerings in 1 Samuel 11:15 were presented to the Lord, not to Saul. Levine's proposal that the meaning of *šĕlāmîm* in the Hebrew Bible derives from this political use is unlikely.

2.3.2. The Basic Regulations for Peace Offerings. The peace offering could be of cattle (Lev 3:1), sheep (Lev 3:7) or goat (Lev 3:12). As with the other sacrifices and offerings, the animal was to have no defect, but in contrast with the burnt offering, it could be either male or female (Lev 3:1). As we shall see, in general the peace offering was used in various ways as a relatively free expression of worship, praise or thanksgiving, so in some ways it was less regulated than other kinds of offerings. As in the case of the burnt offering, therefore, the offerer laid a hand on the head of the animal and slaughtered it, and the priests administered the blood. In most instances the blood manipulation was of the same sort as that of a burnt offering (Lev 3:2b; cf. Lev 3:8, 13 and Lev 1:5).

The common people could eat the meat of only the peace offering (Lev 7:11-36). In addition, Leviticus 17:11 explains why no one in Israel was to eat the blood of any peace offering animal: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your lives on the altar, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the life" (cf. Lev 17:14 and Gen 9:4-5; *see* Blood). The eating of the fat of the peace offering was also prohibited (Lev 3:16-17; 7:22-27). Both the fat and the blood belonged to the Lord alone: the fat because it was reserved for making a "gift" to the Lord (see, e.g., Lev 3:11) and the blood because it was reserved solely for the purpose of "making atonement" (Lev 17:11).

It is significant that Leviticus 3 never mentions blood atonement in regulations for the peace offering. The sin and the guilt offerings, which functioned solely within the sanctuary, were the primary blood atonement offerings in the tabernacle ritual system. However, since the burnt and peace offerings were brought from the solitary altar system into the sanctuary system (see 2.1.2 above and 4.2 below), their effectiveness within that system became associated to some degree with issues of sanctuary atonement as well. Thus, for example, according to Exodus 29:33 the ordination peace offering and its accouterments are said to have made "atonement." This atonement was not limited to the blood and its manipulation but instead, as in the case of the burnt offering, it included all the things associated with the ordination peace offering from which parts were offered to produce "a pleasing aroma to the Lord, an offering made to the LORD by fire" (Ex 29:25; cf. Lev 8:28). Nevertheless, the blood manipulation was clearly a primary part of the ritual and its atoning efficacy. In this instance, therefore, as an ordination offering the peace offering was in essence made into an atoning offering even though it was not normally associated with atonement. The reason Leviticus 17:11 points out that "life is in the blood" in the context of the peace offering is because it was in the peace offering that a worshiper would most likely commit the violation of eating the blood, since that was the only kind of offering in which the worshiper ate the meat of the animal.

The fat was treated like the whole carcass of the burnt offering. It was offered on the altar as "an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD" (Lev 3:5; cf. Lev 3:11, 14, 16 and the whole carcass of the burnt offering in Lev 1:9, 13, 17). Apparently, the fat was viewed as a delicacy. The Lord fed the people the best of the land, which included the "fat" of lambs, rams, goats and even wheat, as well as the "blood" of grapes (Deut 32:14; cf. Gen 45:18; Num 18:12, 29-30, 32). The "fat of the kidneys of the wheat" (Deut 32:14) is a play on words indicating the best of the wheat. The combination with the parallel "blood of grapes" in the same verse seems to suggest a double play on words, with the twofold peace-offering prohibition in mind. In the peace offering it was the Lord who was to get the "fat," not the people or even the priests (1 Sam 2:12-17; for the libations and grain offerings that were to be offered with the peace offering and burnt offering, see 2.2.3 above).

2.3.3. The Uses of Peace Offerings. Aside from the importance of the ordination peace offering in the consecration and ordination of the tabernacle and the priesthood (see above), peace of-

ferings were also important in the inauguration of the tabernacle (Lev 9:4, 18, 22)

In addition to the prohibition against eating blood or fat in Leviticus 7:22-27, there are two major sections in the peace-offering regulations of Leviticus 7:11-34. First, Leviticus 7:11-21 distinguishes between the various kinds of peace offerings and rules for worshipers' eating of the meat. Second, Leviticus 7:28-34 gives the regulations for the portions designated for the priests from every peace offering. With regard to the former, there were three kinds of peace offerings. The thanksgiving *(tôdâ)* peace offering was to be eaten on the first day, but the votive *(neder)* and freewill *(nĕdābâ)* peace offerings could be eaten on the first and second day (Lev 7:11-18). If the meat touched anything unclean, it was to be burned, and any unclean person who ate of a peace offering was to be "cut off from his people" (Lev 7:19-21).

The votive offering was associated with the regular practice of making a promissory vow to the Lord in order to gain his help in a difficult or troubling situation (see, e.g., Gen 28:20; 31:13; Lev 22:18, 21-23; Num 15:8; 21:2; 30:2-15; Deut 23:18). The one who made the vow was responsible before the Lord to pay it (Lev 27:2-13; Deut 23:21-23). Actually, one could make a vow of either a burnt or a peace offering (Lev 22:18-23), and freewill offerings were sometimes offered voluntarily with votive offerings (Lev 22:18-25; 23:38). Apparently, the freewill offering could be made to fit any occasion of worship before the Lord (see, e.g., Ezek 46:12).

With regard to the priestly portion designated in Leviticus 7:28-34, the breast of the animal was the "wave offering" *(tĕnûpâ)* portion of the peace offering that would go to the priests and their families for their consumption. On the one hand, the use of the verb "to wave" (Hiphil of *nûp*) for the presentation of the "wave offering" (e.g., Lev 10:14-15) suggests that the priest literally "waved" the breast back and forth before the Lord (Milgrom 1991, 470). It would have been a conspicuous act that drew attention to this part of the peace-offering ritual procedure. On the other hand, the fact that Aaron was to "wave the Levites as a wave offering before the LORD" as a gift to the priests (Num 8:11) seems to preclude the raising and waving procedure. The heart of the matter was the presentation of the gift to the priests before the Lord, not the ritual gesture itself.

The second portion that went to the priests was the right thigh, known as the "tribute" or "contribution offering" *(tĕrûmâ)*, but this portion went to the specific priest (and his family) who officiated in the presentation of the particular peace offering to the Lord, not to all the priests as a group. In the past it has been translated "heave offering" because of its association with the hiphil form of the verb *rûm*, "to lift, raise," as in the English verb "to heave," for lifting something with effort. However, in the context of offerings the verb means "to set aside as a special gift" (see, e.g., Lev 4:8-10, 31, 35; 22:15; Num 15:19-21). Thus, the term *tĕrûmâ* is used for various offerings that were contributed to the Lord for the use of the priests (Num 5:9; 15:19-21; 18:8, 19; Deut 12:6, 11, 17; 2 Chron 31:10, 12, 14). Specifically, for example, it is used to refer to the grain-offering portions that accompanied the peace offering and that were contributed to the priests (Lev 7:14), the wave offering for the priests (Num 18:11-19), the tithe to the Levites and the priests (Num 24-29), and the booty that went to the priests (Num 31:29, 41, 52).

***2.4. Sin (Purification) Offering* (ḥaṭṭā't, *Lev 4:1—5:1; 6:24-30 [MT 6:17-23]*).** The translation of *ḥaṭṭā't* as "sin offering" is problematic, but so is "purification offering," depending on what one means by it. On the one hand, the fact of the matter is that *ḥaṭṭā't* can mean either "sin" or "sin offering," depending on its usage in context. According to Leviticus 4:3, for example, "If the anointed priest sins [qal verb *ḥṭ'*], bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the Lord a young bull without defect as a sin offering *[ḥaṭṭā't]* for the sin *[ḥaṭṭā't]* he has committed." In Leviticus 5:6 the situation is even more complicated because *'āšām* (meaning either "guilt," "penalty [for guilt]" or "guilt offering") occurs along with *ḥaṭṭā't* in its two different usages: "He [the offerer] shall bring his penalty *['āšām]* to the LORD for his sin *[ḥaṭṭā't]* which he has committed [lit. "which he has sinned," the qal verb *ḥṭ'*], a female of the flock of either lamb or goat, for a sin offering *[ḥaṭṭā't]*, and the priest shall make atonement for him on account of his sin *[ḥaṭṭā't]*" (cf. NIV text and margin of Rom 8:3 for the same problem in the NT; consider also 2 Cor 5:21: did Jesus become "sin" or a "sin offering" according to this verse?). Therefore, the rendering "sin offering" makes a lot of sense.

On the other hand, the doubled middle radical of *ḥaṭṭā't* suggests a derivation from the piel

form of the verb *ḥṭ'*, "to de-sin, decontaminate," that is, "to purify," and thus rendering a noun "purification offering" (see Hartley, 55-57, and Milgrom 1991, 253-54). *Ḥaṭṭā't* does not derive from the qal form (i.e., "to sin"; see Lev 4:3 and 5:6 above). In some instances, the "sin offering" was used to deal with moral sin (see below), but it could also be brought for physical impurities that had nothing to do with moral failure. For example, Leviticus 5:2-3, 6 prescribes the sin offering for physical defilement resulting from touching a corpse or some other kind of human uncleanness, and Leviticus 12:6-8 prescribes it for the cleansing of a woman after bearing a child (cf. Lk 2:22-24). Therefore, the rendering "purification offering" makes as good sense as "sin offering," but it should not be taken to mean that the sin offering only applied to issues of physical (amoral) uncleanness. According to Leviticus 4:2, for example, it applied to "any of the LORD's commandments."

2.4.1. Sin Offerings in the Ancient Near East. Although the root *ḥṭ'*, meaning "to miss, to sin," occurs in virtually all the Semitic languages, there are apparently no examples in which the root or any of its derivatives is used for ritual purification. Nevertheless, the concepts associated with the "sin offering" were well known in other ancient Near Eastern ritual literature (see Weinfeld, 105-11; esp. Wright 1987, passim). For example, we know from Hittite and other ritual texts that purity of the sacred precincts of sanctuaries was a most serious concern (see, e.g., *ANET*[3] 207-10). Also, there were various kinds of scapegoat rituals that, to one degree or another, correspond to the Leviticus 16 scapegoat purposes and procedures for purification of the sanctuary.

2.4.2. The Basic Regulations for Sin Offerings. The main section of sin offering regulations (Lev 4:1—5:13) is given a new superscription and introductory formula (Lev 4:1-2a) that sets it off literarily from the previous burnt-, grain- and peace-offering regulations in Leviticus 1—3. This is probably reflective of the ritual historical background of the sin offering itself, in that it was not incorporated into Leviticus from the earlier ritual system at the solitary altars as were the burnt, grain and peace offerings. Unlike the previous sections, virtually every paragraph in Leviticus 4:1—5:13 either begins or ends with a statement of "sin" committed (Lev 4:2 overall, then Lev 4:3, 13-14, 22-23, 26, 27-28, 35; 5:1, 5-7, 10-11, 13) and its associated "guilt" (Lev 4:3, 13, 22, 27; 5:2, 3, 4, 5-7). There are four major divisions: the sin offering of the priest (Lev 4:3-12), of the whole congregation (Lev 4:13-21), of the leader (Lev 4:22-26) and of the common person (Lev 4:27-5:13). In turn, the latter section divides into three subdivisions: the basic sin offering regulations for the common person (Lev 4:27-35), special regulations for "hidden" sins (Lev 5:1-6) and concessions to the poor (Lev 5:7-13).

If the blood of the sin offering animal was not applied to the incense altar, the priests would have the meat to eat (Lev 6:24-30 [MT 6:17-22]). Also, the fat parts of the animal were offered up in smoke on the burnt-offering altar just like those of the peace offering (Lev 4:8-10 etc.), and in one place this smoke is even referred to as "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (Lev 4:31). The latter should also be assumed elsewhere. It is not explicitly stated in other places, but it is assumed throughout. Moreover, it was not central to the sin-offering ritual as it was for the burnt, grain and peace offerings (cf. Lev 1:9; 2:2; 3:5, etc.). The main focus of the sin offering procedure was the blood manipulation, not the offering of a pleasing aroma and certainly not the priests' eating of the meat.

Some have taken Leviticus 10:17 to mean that part of the sin-offering ritual for making atonement was the eating of the meat of the sin offering by the priests: "He [the Lord] gave it [the sin offering] to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement on their behalf before the LORD." According to this view, the eating was part of the means by which the priests bore and eliminated the sins of the people (see Schwartz, 15-17). This is not the place to enter into all the details of this discussion, but in its context the eating of the sin offering appears to belong to the priestly prebend regulations beginning in Leviticus 10:12, not to the atoning procedure, which had already been fully accomplished on the inauguration day and graphically approved by the Lord earlier in Leviticus 9:15-24.

For any other violation of the Lord's commands (Lev 4:2; 5:1-4) the stipulations for the parties concerned were: for the priest, a bull (Lev 4:3-12); for the whole congregation, a bull (Lev 4:13-21); for a leader of the congregation, a male goat (Lev 4:22-26); for a common Israelite, a female goat (Lev 4:28; 5:6) or a female lamb (Lev 4:32, 5:6) or, as a concession to the poor, ei-

ther two doves/pigeons (Lev 5:7) or a simple grain offering with no oil or incense (Lev 5:11-13). Clearly the relative value of the required offering corresponded to the relative status of the person who brought it and, in the case of the common person, their economic means. Also, the place of the blood-manipulation procedures of the sin offering for the priest and whole congregation was different from that of the leader and the common people. On the one hand, for the priest or the whole congregation, the priest sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times in front of the veil of the sanctuary (i.e., the veil that separated the holy place inside the tent of meeting from the most holy place where the ark of the testimony was located), put some of the blood on the horns of the incense altar within the holy place, and then poured out the remainder of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering located near the gate of the tabernacle complex (Lev 4:6-7, 17-18). On the other hand, the priest applied the blood of the leader and the common Israelite to the horns of the altar of burnt offering (Lev 4:30, 34; 5:9), which was the boundary of a nonpriestly Israelite's access to the tabernacle.

The point is that the blood penetrated into the tabernacle complex as far as the contamination did. The priest could enter the holy place, and the priest represented the congregation, so the blood of the sin offering for the priest and whole congregation was administered inside the holy place. Since the (nonlevitical) leader of Israel and the common person could only go into the tabernacle court, and then not beyond the altar of burnt offering, the atoning blood ritual of their sin offerings was performed at the altar of burnt offering. In both cases, the blood went as far as the particular person or collective group of persons could proceed into the tabernacle complex and, therefore, purified (cleansed) the tabernacle up to that point. This was the main purpose of the sin offering: to purify or, one might say, to decontaminate the tabernacle itself (see Hartley, 70; Kiuchi, 124; and a variation on the same basic principle in Milgrom 1991, 254-58).

2.4.3. The Uses of Sin Offerings. The sin offering was, therefore, the central blood-atonement offering in the sanctuary system of offerings. In some instances the result of bringing a sin offering was that the worshiper(s) could "be forgiven" for their sin (e.g., Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35, etc.) by dealing with the contamination of the tabernacle that it caused. In other cases, the issue was physical impurity, which also contaminated the tabernacle, but the result in such instances was that the worshiper would "become clean" (i.e., purified; see, e.g., the Lev 12:7-8 regulations for the purification of the woman after childbirth, and esp. Lev 15:31). In other words, through the sin offering's blood-manipulation ritual the violator of the law could gain forgiveness before God, while the unclean person could be brought back into the condition of being ritually clean as opposed to unclean. Uncleanness did not (necessarily) come from violation of the law, but it could nevertheless defile (i.e., contaminate) the tabernacle presence of God (Lev 15:31). The purpose of the slaughtered sin offerings on the Day of Atonement was specifically to purify the tabernacle of all defilement, whether it was caused by violations of the law or by physical impurities (see 3.5 below).

According to Leviticus 4:2-3, "When anyone sins unintentionally *[bišgāgâ]*" (NRSV), he was to bring a sin offering to the Lord (cf. Lev 4:13, 22, 27; 5:15, 18; 22:14, Num 15:22, 24-29). Some scholars have concluded from this that the sin offering only treated inadvertent sin, that is, sins committed by mistake or sins that were committed not knowing that the particular act was sinful (Milgrom 1991, 228-29). The term translated "unintentionally," however, means basically "in error" (the verb *šgg* means "to commit an error, go astray"), not necessarily unintentional or inadvertent (e.g., 1 Sam 26:21; Eccles 5:6), although it could be so (e.g., Num 35:11, 15, 22-23; Josh 20:3, 9). In Leviticus 4—5 it has the sense of someone straying from the commands of the Lord (Lev 4:2), whether unintentionally or intentionally due to temptation. According to Numbers 15 this kind of sin (Num 15:22-29) stands in contrast to sin done "defiantly" (Num 15:30-31; lit. "with a raised hand"). No sin offering would make atonement for the latter kind of sin because it amounted to blaspheming the Lord (Num 15:30) and despising his word (Num 15:31). Such a person should be "cut off from among his people" (Num 15:30-31). However, for "going astray" there was forgiveness available through the sin and guilt offerings (Hartley, 55).

The sin offering was used on various occasions. For example, we see it employed at the consecration of the priests (Ex 29:14, 36; Lev 8:2,

14), the inauguration of altar worship (Lev 9:2-7, 8-11, 15-17), the tribe-by-tribe dedication of the altar (Num 7:16 etc.) and the consecration of the Levites (Num 8:8, 12). It was also employed on regular monthly occasions (Num 28:15), at annual festivals (see Lev 23:19; Num 28:22; 29:5, 16-38) and especially on the annual Day of Atonement (Ex 30:10; Lev 16; Num 29:11). Other specific situations that could occur anytime during year would also require a sin offering, for example, the cleansing of a woman after childbirth (Lev 12:6-8), the cleansing of a leper (Lev 14:19, 22, 31) and the cleansing from unclean discharges (Lev 15:15, 30).

***2.5. Guilt (Reparation) Offering* (*ʾāšām*, *5:14—6:7 [MT 5:14—5:26]; 7:1-7*).** The term for "guilt offering" is *ʾāšām* (also *ʾāšĕmâ*, fem. 3x, Lev 6:5 [MT 5:24], 7 [MT 5:26]; 22:16). The sin and guilt offerings are widely regarded as the primary expiatory offerings in the levitical system of offerings. Over the centuries there have been a number of attempts to clarify the primary distinction(s) between them (e.g.): (1) the sin offering was for unintentional sins against fellow humans and the guilt offering for unintentional sins against God and intentional sins against people (Philo); (2) the sin offering was for sins of ignorance and the guilt offering was for all intentional sins when their were no witnesses (Josephus); (3) the sin offering was for mortal sins and the guilt offering for venial sins (Origen); and (4) the sin offering was for intentional sins and the guilt offering was for unintentional sins (Augustine). Various modern scholars have taken up these views in various forms and combinations. Some scholars have concluded that the precise ancient distinction between the sin and guilt offerings has been lost (see summaries in Hartley, 78; Kellermann, 431-32).

J. Milgrom has convincingly demonstrated that the primary purpose of the guilt offering was to make atonement for *desecration* of "sancta," the mishandling of holy (sacred) things, as opposed to the sin offering, which made atonement for *contamination* of sancta (for the latter, see 2.4.2 above; for extensive explanation, see Milgrom 1991, 49-50, 339-78). Leviticus 10:10 sets forth two major dichotomies with which the priests were to be especially concerned: "You must distinguish between the holy and the common [or 'profane'], between the unclean and the clean" (see section 3.4 below). *Consecration* changes the *status* of someone or something by shifting them from the realm of the common to the realm of the holy (Lev 10:10a). *Purification* changes their *condition* from unclean to clean (Lev 10:10b). The main focus of the sin offering was to make atonement for the *defilement* of sancta. So it *purified* sancta, but it could also *consecrate* (i.e., make holy) sacred objects (but not people) in connection with this purification (see, e.g., Lev 8:15; 16:19). The main focus of the guilt offering was to make atonement for *desecration* of sancta. So it (re-)*consecrated* sancta, including people (see, e.g., Lev 14:12-18; Num 6:9-12; see 2.6 and 3.4 below on the leper and the Nazirite regulations), but it also included making reparation for the sancta that had been violated where that was possible (see, e.g., Lev 5:16; 6:5 [MT 5:24]).

Leviticus 22:10-16 is a helpful example. The holy food gifts were to be eaten by the priests and those in their household, not by the common people. "If anyone [i.e., a common person] eats a sacred offering in error [*bišgāgâ*, see 2.4.3 above], he must make restitution to the priest for the offering and add a fifth of the value to it" (Lev 22:14). Such a person has violated the commands of the Lord, specifically the commands about "the Lord's holy things" (i.e., the things dedicated to the Lord for the tabernacle or priesthood). For a common person to eat such gifts would be to "desecrate" the "sacred gifts." Accordingly, it is prohibited (Lev 22:15-16).

2.5.1. Guilt Offerings in the Ancient Near East. The incident of the Philistines and the ark of the Lord in 1 Samuel 6 (see *ʾāšām* in 1 Sam 6:3, 4, 8, 17) suggests that the concept of the guilt offering for desecration of sancta was not limited to Israelite religion but was certainly known elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Conceptually there are certain parallels that have been proposed for ritual terms and procedures in Hittite and Hurrian texts, and even in ancient Greece (Weinfeld, 106-7, 109, 111).

Semitic cognates have been proposed from Ugaritic, Arabic and Ethiopic (*KBL*^{3}, 95-96). Some have been questioned (see, e.g., Kellermann, 429-30; Milgrom 1991, 339), but there are those who maintain the legitimacy of some of this proposed cognate evidence (see Wansbrough). In Arabic the parallel verb means "to transgress, be guilty" and the noun means "sin, transgression, outrage, guilt." This is not debated.

2.5.2. The Basic Regulations for Guilt Offerings.

The flesh of the guilt offering was handled in the same manner as that of the sin offering (see 2.4.2 above), but the blood-manipulation ritual was like that of the burnt or peace offering, since its primary focus was not purification of the sanctuary (Lev 7:1-7). The main guilt-offering section begins with a person acting unfaithfully against God by somehow violating the distinction between the common and the holy (Lev 5:15; Milgrom 1991, 345-56). Thus he or she has "committed a sacrilege" (see, e.g., Achan's violation of the "ban" in Josh 7:1). The same words can refer to a violation of one's relationship with the Lord through idolatry (e.g., Num 31:16) or rejection of his commands (e.g., Lev 26:40; note esp. Deut 32:51).

The restoration plus a fine of one-fifth referred to in Leviticus 5:16 corresponds to a regular legal pattern in Israel. It was transferred from there to cases in which the violated property belonged to the Lord (i.e., the things that were holy to the Lord). The restitution made it possible for the offender to make atonement and receive forgiveness from the Lord (Lev 5:15, 16). The expression "convertible into silver by the sanctuary shekel" (Lev 5:15) is difficult. It probably means that one could substitute monetary payment for the offering of a ram, perhaps at the discretion of the priests (cf. Ex 30:11-16 for money as a means of making atonement; see Milgrom 1991, 319, 326-27).

The shift from Leviticus 5:14-16 to 5:17-19 in the guilt offering pericope is a shift from known violation to an unknown violation that later became known (see Schenker, 697-98). Milgrom suggests that this refers to a case in which the violator suspects that he has violated sancta but does not know what and how (Milgrom 1991, 331-34, 361-63). Another interpretation seems more likely, or perhaps a combination of Milgrom's approach with the one that follows is possible; they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. According to Leviticus 5:17, "If a person sins and does something that violates the LORD's commands [regarding *sancta*], although he did not know [it], he is guilty and will bear his punishment." This is not a tautology (contra Milgrom 1991, 343-44). The expression "he is guilty" refers to the offerer's legal status as a guilty person, while "he will bear his punishment" means that he must bear the consequences of being guilty even though he did not know he had committed a violation (Hartley, 76-77; Schenker). The one who committed the violation might come to know his error either through remembering after the fact or being informed by another person that, for example, the meat he had eaten was from the "holy" portion that belonged to a priest and his family (cf. the remarks on Lev 22:14-16 above). It was done in ignorance (Lev 5:17-18), but if he came to know about it, he was still responsible for bringing a guilt offering to make atonement and obtain forgiveness (Lev 5:18-19).

Some scholars have argued that the guilt offering was brought in cases of violation of another person's property only because there had been an associated violation of God's name by swearing a false oath regarding the matter (Lev 6:3, 5 [MT 5:22, 24]; see, e.g., Milgrom 1991, 365-73; Knohl, 139-40). According to Leviticus 6:3 (MT 5:22), 7 (MT 5:26), however, the atonement and forgiveness brought by the guilt offering rectified the violation of "any of the things he had done that made him guilty," not violation of God's name through false oath. Leviticus 6:1-7 (MT 5:20-26) refers to matters that come to the official law court because the culprit has denied his violation of the other person's property (Lev 6:2-3), and the false oath is part of that denial. A false oath would normally involve the invocation of the Lord in the oath and possibly even in his presence (i.e., at a Yahwistic altar associated with a city, Deut 16:21-22, or at the central sanctuary, Deut 17:8-13). Of course, cases could be settled out of court by following the regulations found elsewhere in the collections of laws in Exodus—Deuteronomy. If a case became a matter for the official court, however, it also became a matter for the official cult.

Numbers 5:5-10 relates to the same kind of violation, except that in Numbers 5 there is no mention of a false oath (contra Milgrom 1990, 34-35; Ashley, 112-15) and there was no kinsman to which the reparation could be made. Therefore, if a person was confronted with his violation and was convicted of the crime (i.e., he became legally "guilty," Num 5:6), he was required to confess his violation openly (Num 5:7; cf. Lev 5:5), restore that which he violated plus one-fifth (Num 5:7-8; if the person to whom restitution was to be made was no longer alive and there was no kinsmen, then the payment went to the priests) and then bring his guilt offering to make atonement.

2.5.3. The Uses of Guilt Offerings. Aside from

the general regulations and scenarios in Leviticus 5—6 and Numbers 5, the guilt offering was applied in the cleansing of the leper (Lev 14:12-28), in the case of pre-marital sex with a slave woman (Lev 19:20-22; note the link to the violation of a person's property discussed above) and in the defilement of a Nazirite vow (Num 6:12).

2.6. The Order of Sacrifices and Offerings in Ritual Texts. Overall there are two different kinds of sacrificial texts: those that give *general rules* for the performance of ritual procedures, such as the five major kinds of offerings treated above (e.g., Lev 1—7), and those that outline *particular applications* of the various rituals to specific occasions or various kinds of situations (e.g., Lev 8—16; consecration of the priests, inauguration of the tabernacle and priesthood, cleansing a woman after childbirth, or a skin-diseased person, Day of Atonement, etc.). In turn, the texts that outline *particular applications* divide into two groups: *prescriptive* ritual texts that prescribe the number and various kinds of offerings to be used for a particular occasion or situation (e.g., the list of offerings for the fulfillment of the Nazirite vow, Num 6:14-15) and *descriptive* ritual texts that describe (sometimes even narrate) the actual performance of the ritual procedures in sequence (e.g., the description of the ritual procedures for fulfilling the Nazirite vow, Num 6:16-20; Anderson, 5.876-77).

As in the case of the application of rituals for the fulfillment of the Nazirite vow (Num 6:14-20), the prescriptive and descriptive texts for a particular ritual procedure sometimes appear side by side. Of course, the descriptive text follows the order of the procedure. The prescriptive text, however, is at least sometimes arranged according to the value of the offering being presented. For example, the prescriptive text for the cleansing of one with a skin disease lists the offerings in this order (Lev 14:10): two male lambs, one year-old ewe lamb, three-tenths of an ephah of fine choice flour mixed with oil (c. ten liters = one-third of a bushel) and one log of oil (c. one-third of a liter = two-thirds of a pint).

The corresponding descriptive text recounts the presentation and manipulation of these offerings in the following order: (1) one male lamb for a guilt offering with the log of oil, the blood and the oil both applied to the right ear, thumb and big toe of the formerly diseased person (the oil is also sprinkled seven times "before the Lord" and applied to the head of the healed person); (2) the sin offering; and, finally, (3) the burnt offering (Lev 14:12-20). If a peace offering was prescribed as part of the ritual procedure, it would come at the very end of the process, after the burnt offering (see, e.g., the offerings for the fulfillment of the Nazirite vow, Num 6:16-17). In general, therefore, when the particular ritual procedure calls for the performance of several different kinds of offerings and other rituals, the order leads the worshiper along a ritual path from one stage to the next. It begins with expiatory atonement for sin, impurity or trespass (usually the sin or guilt offering, depending on what is required; sometimes other procedures were also added, e.g., the oil in Lev 14:15-18), which leads to the person's presentation of him- or herself to the Lord (usually the burnt and grain offerings combined; a kind of "atonement" is accomplished here too, Lev 1:4; 16:24, etc.) and eventually to a celebration of sacrificial communion (the peace offering and its associated banquet).

This order makes perfectly good sense. In one's approach to the holy God, one first needs to deal properly with whatever may stand in the way of approaching the Lord by offering the appropriate offering. Next one needs to present oneself to the Lord. After that, celebration is appropriate. However, some occasions, such as the Day of Atonement (the sequence in Lev 16 ends with burnt offerings, Lev 16:23-24), carry such a weight of solemnity and personal or communal affliction that celebration of communion is really out of the question (Lev 16:31). On other occasions, for example, the day the skin-diseased person was cleansed (Lev 14, see above), the peace offering may have been voluntary (as a freewill or thank offering) and, therefore, not mentioned in the prescriptive regulations or the descriptive account of the ritual procedures. These are some of the major factors that contribute to an understanding of the rationale of the ritual procedures in Leviticus 8—16, which is the central core of descriptive sacrificial texts in Leviticus and in the entire Hebrew Bible.

3. Prescriptions for Tabernacle Offerings (Ex 29—30; Lev 8—16).

The tabernacle construction account in Exodus 25—40 concludes with its erection in Exodus 40, which took place "on the first day of the first month" in the second year after they came out

of Egypt (i.e., one year less two weeks since the exodus, Ex 12:2, 6-8, 12-13, and ten months after they arrived at Sinai, Ex 19:1). Of course, with the erection of the tabernacle comes the beginning of sacrificial and other ritual functions in the tabernacle, so Exodus 40 also opens up onto Leviticus and Numbers, binding Exodus 25—40 with the sacrifices and other ritual procedures inside the tabernacle (Lev 1—16) and eventually the prescriptions and descriptions of its religious, moral and physical centrality to the wilderness community that surrounded it (Lev 17—Num 10; *see* Tabernacle).

With regard to Leviticus 1—16, in particular, the Lord's instructions to erect the tabernacle (Ex 40:1-16) included instructions to anoint and consecrate the tabernacle, the altar, the water basin and the priests (Ex 40:9-15). Between the Lord's instructions and the report of Moses' compliance (Ex 40:17-33), we read: "Moses did everything exactly as the LORD had commanded him" (Ex 40:16). However, there is no mention in this chapter of the anointing or consecration of the priests, the tabernacle or any part thereof. The focus in Exodus 40 is the actual physical erection of the tabernacle and the initiation of the regular daily cultic rituals in the tabernacle, both at the hands of Moses. The goal and result was the Lord's manifest occupation of the tabernacle in cloud and glory (Ex 40:34-35).

3.1. Regular Daily Offerings. Moses initiated the regular ritual cult of the tabernacle (i.e., the *tāmîd*, "continual, regular," Ex 29:38.; see Haran, 205-10) on the erection day, which included arranging the "bread of presence" on the table (Ex 40:22; cf. Ex 25:30 and Lev 24:5-9, a weekly ritual), perhaps pouring a daily libation of strong drink (*šēkār*, Num 28:7) into the libation vessel on the table (Ex 25:29; see Gane, 183-92), lighting the lamps on the lampstand (Ex 40:25; cf. Ex 25:37; Lev 24:1-4; Num 8:1-4) and burning incense on the golden incense altar (Ex 40:27; cf. Ex 30:7-8), all in the holy place inside the tent. It also included the daily offerings on the bronze altar in the tabernacle court (Ex 40:29), which included a two-year-old lamb as a burnt offering, one every morning and one every evening, and their associated grain and libation offerings (cf. Ex 29:38-46).

In addition to the regular daily cult that Moses initiated on the erection day, he also installed the water basin between the altar and the tent and put water in it (Ex 40:30) so that he and Aaron and his sons could wash their hands and feet when they entered the tent or approached the altar (Ex 40:31-32; cf. Ex 30:17-21). Thus, according to Exodus 40:33, "Moses finished the work." There is, however, an interesting shift from the past tense narrative verb forms of Exodus 40:18-30 (cf. Ex 40:33) to future continuous forms in Exodus 40:31-32: "Moses and Aaron and his sons *would* wash. . . . When they entered the tent of meeting and when they approached the altar they *would* wash." The most likely reason for this verb shift is the inclusion of Aaron and his sons with Moses in this explanatory remark, even though Aaron and his sons had not yet begun to function as priests on the tabernacle erection day. Yet it appears that there was one other element of the daily ritual cult that was initiated by Aaron (not Moses) on that day. It was the high priest's daily morning and evening grain offering (Lev 6:19-23 [MT 6:12-16], note *tāmîd* in Lev 6:20 [MT 6:13]; cf. Num 4:16 and see the careful discussion in Milgrom 1991, 396-99). It began on the day the priests were anointed (see Ex 40:12-15; Lev 8:12, 30) and, in this case, like the other rituals that were performed on that day (note, e.g., Lev 8:14-15, 18-19), the priests were the offerers and Moses was functioning as the priest (see 3.2 below on Lev 8).

This initiation of the regular daily cult was an essential part of setting up the tabernacle, the goal of which was to have the Lord manifest his presence and take up residence there. Any tent that is occupied, including the Lord's tent, has certain functions taking place in it. Here there is a table with bread on it, a lamp burning to provide light, incense for a pleasant smell, water for washing and regular meals served, including meat, bread and drink. The fact that all these were made functional immediately in the tabernacle was an invitation to the Lord to take up his manifest residence there, as he did in Exodus 40:34-35.

Of course, this could all easily be misunderstood. The ancient Israelites, or at least some of them, might think that the Lord needed to eat and was, in fact, dependent on their offerings for his food (see, e.g., the rebuke in Ps 50:12-13). This was a common notion in the ancient Near East (see Oppenheim, 183-98; Selman, 89-92; Katz, 101-117; Walker and Dick, 14, 18-20 for the "mouth washing" ritual for cult statues in Mesopotamia and Egypt, 151 lines 68-71, 184 line 19,

187 lines 35-39 for cult statue of god eating, 185 lines 58-64 for deity taking up residence in the sanctuary; Gane, 190-91, 194-95, for Hittites).

This notion of divine eating was vigorously resisted in Israel on several counts. It is true that the offerings could be referred to as the Lord's "food, bread" (Heb *leḥem;* Lev 3:11, 16; 21:6, 8, 17, 21-22; 22:25; Num 28:2, 24), the burning of offerings sometimes produced "an aroma pleasing to the LORD" (e.g., Gen 8:21; Lev 1:9; 2:2; 3:5; 4:31), the burnt-offering altar was sometimes called "the LORD's table" (Mal 1:7, 12; cf. Ezek 44:16), and the daily burnt, grain and libation offerings were presented each morning and evening (like breakfast and dinner?). Nevertheless, the "bread of presence" was placed on the table in the holy place only once a week (on the sabbath day), no libation accompanied it, and only the incense that came with the bread was presented in fire to the Lord. The latter points stand in contrast to the standard daily practice in ancient Near Eastern ritual cult in which the placing of bread and pouring out of libation before the cult statue of the deity was conceived of as feeding the deity and took place daily (see Gane, 184-99).

The fact that food and drink were used as offerings suggests the active occupation of the tabernacle by the Lord of the altar and table. He really was present there continually, so there needed to be continual offerings to represent that. However, several features of the cult make it clear that the Lord was not thought to be physically eating the offerings. Especially significant is the fact that, in contrast to the ritual systems known from elsewhere in the Fertile Crescent, there was no cult statue of the deity to feed.

3.2. Dedicating and Consecrating the Priests, the Tabernacle and the Altar. Although the anointing and consecration of the tabernacle and priests evidently began on the tabernacle erection day, the whole process lasted seven days (Lev 8:33-35). Exodus 40 tells us only part of what happened on the first of those seven days. Moses' full compliance to the Lord's commands in Exodus 40:9-15 awaits the report of the anointing and consecration procedures in Leviticus 8. Leviticus 8 ties in with Leviticus 1—7 (see the reference to the ordination offering in Lev 7:37), but its main connection is back further, with Exodus 40, the day the tabernacle was erected. That inaugural day was momentous for the people and priests in a number of ways. Of course, the most important was the Lord's occupation of the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35), but there was also the full activation of the daily ritual cult as well as the consecration of the tabernacle and the priests (regulations in Ex 29; compliance narrative in Lev 8), the offering of carts for the levitical work of transporting the tabernacle (Num 7:2-9) and the first of twelve offerings for the dedication of the altar by the leaders of the twelve tribes (Num 7:10-88).

The ritual procedures for the consecration of the tabernacle, altar and priests began with Moses washing the priests and clothing them in the *priestly garments (*see* Priestly Clothing), followed by the anointing of the tabernacle tent and its furniture, then the altar in the courtyard and then the high priest, Aaron, in that order (Lev 8:6-12; cf. the regulations for making the anointing oil in Ex 30:22-33). As the text puts it, the anointing was an act of consecration. After that came the sin offering for the purification and consecration of the altar (Lev 8:14-17), the burnt offering for a pleasing aroma to the Lord (Lev 8:18-21) and the ordination offering and its associated grain offering for the consecration of the priests (Lev 8:22-32). The latter was a kind of peace offering, since the ones bringing the offering on their own behalf, in this case the priests, ate the meat of the animal offered (see 2.3 above). This, of course, corresponds to the natural order of offerings and sacrifices outlined above (see 2.6 above). Although not every detail is certain, it appears that these anointings, offerings and sacrifices were repeated each day of the seven-day period of consecration (Lev 8:33-35; Ex 29:30, 35-37; see Milgrom 1991, 536-41), beginning on the day Moses erected the tabernacle and initiated the regular ritual cult therein, and the Lord visibly manifested his occupation of the tabernacle (Ex 40).

The ritual manipulation of the blood of the ordination offering is of particular importance. There are only three places in the Hebrew Bible where sacrificial blood is applied to the bodies of people rather than to one of the altars in the tabernacle. These are the covenant ratification ritual in Exodus 24:6-8, the consecration of the priests in Leviticus 8, and the cleansing of the skin-diseased person in Leviticus 14:14-18 (for the latter, see 2.6 above and 3.4 below). The former two instances involve the blood of a peace offering, and in Exodus 24 the blood of the burnt offerings was also included in the spe-

cial procedure. In both cases, the blood had the effect of consecrating the people involved to the Lord. In Exodus 24:6-8 the blood was first splashed on the altar, then the people swore an oath to keep the covenant, and finally Moses splashed the blood on the people pronouncing, "See now the blood of the covenant the LORD has made with you based on all these words" (Ex 24:8). Thus the whole nation of Israel was consecrated to the Lord as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6) through the application of blood.

In a similar way, but also with significant differences, Moses first applied the blood of the ordination offering to the right earlobe, thumb and big toe of Aaron and his sons, and then splashed the remainder of the blood around on the altar (Lev 8:23-24). Then Moses put the fat, the liver, the kidneys, the right thigh (cf. Lev 7:32-33) and part of the grain-offering bread in the hands of the priests so that they could present it to the Lord as a "wave offering" (see 2.3 above), and afterward took these offerings from them and burned them on the altar to the Lord (Lev 8:25-28). He then took the breast and presented it as a wave offering to the Lord (cf. Lev 7:29-31). This was Moses' portion of the offering for having officiated in the consecration procedures (Lev 8:29). The rest of the meat and bread was to be eaten by Aaron and his sons that day and anything left over was to be burned in the fire (Lev 8:31-32). Moses also took some of the blood and anointing oil mixed on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his sons, and on their garments, to consecrate them—garments and all—to the Lord and his service at the altar (Lev 8:30).

Whenever an offering was presented to the Lord it was by definition consecrated to him, so at least all the blood and fat were to be offered on the altar (Lev 7:22-27). If the intent of the offering was to consecrate something or someone else to the Lord, then there was a special way of manipulating the blood that signaled that (e.g., Lev 8:15 for the purification and consecration of the altar, Lev 8:24, 30 for the purification and consecration of the priests, and Lev 16:19 for the purification and consecration of the altar on the Day of Atonement). It is significant that the blood of the sin offering was never applied directly on people but always on the tabernacle or its furniture for their purification and consecration. Purification and consecration of people was accomplished in Leviticus 8 with the blood of the ordination peace offering (cf. Lev 14 for the guilt-offering blood used in a similar manner to purify and consecrate the person who has been healed from their skin disease; see 2.6 above and 3.4 below). Thus in the offering and manipulation of the blood, which naturally belonged to the Lord alone (e.g., Gen 9:4-5; Lev 17:11), the blood could be used to make an explicit ritual connection between the Lord and the person or object that was to be purified and consecrated to the Lord (see Averbeck, 4.1002-4).

Numbers 7:1 recalls that on the day Moses set up the tabernacle he also anointed and consecrated it, including all its furnishings and the altar with all its vessels and utensils. Also, on that day the "leaders" *(nĕśî'îm)* of the twelve tribes (Num 1:4-16) brought a joint offering of six carts and twelve oxen (two for each cart) and presented them at the tabernacle for the Levites, who were responsible for transporting the tabernacle (Num 7:2-9). Furthermore, again beginning on that same day, each of the twelve leaders brought dedication offerings (Num 7:12-88). With regard to the latter, the Lord instructed Moses that they should bring their dedication offerings for the altar over a period of twelve days, one leader each day, beginning with the day the tabernacle was erected (Num 7:10-12).

Numbers 9:1-3 tells us that Moses called for the first postexodus celebration of the Passover festival on the fourteenth day of the second year after they came out of Egypt. This fits well with the twelve days of offerings from the leaders, beginning with the erection of the tabernacle on the first day of the year (Num 7). According to Numbers 8, apparently sometime during this same twelve- to fourteen-day period, probably after the seven-day consecration of the priests (note Num 8:21, "and Aaron made atonement for them to purify them"), the Levites were cleansed and presented to the Lord as a "wave offering" (see 2.3 above) so they could function as assistants to Aaron and his sons in the work of the tabernacle (Num 8:5-26).

This involved sprinkling the Levites with "water of purification" (Num 8:7 NRSV; Heb *mê haṭṭā't*, lit. "water of sin/purification [offering])," shaving their whole body, washing their clothes and offering two young bulls, one as a burnt offering with its grain offering and the other as a sin (i.e., purification) offering. The term "water

of purification" occurs only here. Some take it to be the *red heifer "water of (purification from) pollution" *(mê niddâ)*, which was a "sin/purification offering" (Num 19:9; e.g., Milgrom 1990, 61), but others dispute this (e.g., Levine 1993, 274-75).

3.3. The Inauguration Day. The consecration of the priests and the tabernacle leads naturally into the inaugural day in Leviticus 9—10. The consecration was a seven-day procedure (Lev 8:35), and the eighth day was inauguration day for the tabernacle and the priests (Lev 9:1). Up to this point, Moses had been functioning as the priest. He was the one who had officiated, for example, at the erection of the tabernacle (note the burnt and grain offerings in Ex 40:29, cf. Ex 29:38-46) and the consecration of the tabernacle, the altar and the priests (Aaron and his sons) in Leviticus 8. The inauguration day was the first time Aaron and his sons actually officiated as priests on behalf of the people in the newly erected and duly consecrated tabernacle. They offered sin and burnt offerings first for themselves (Lev 9:2, 7-14), and then the sin, burnt, grain and peace offerings for the people (Lev 9:3-4, 7, 15-21). Again, we should note that the order of the performance of the offerings was according to standard procedure (see 2.6 above). The goal of the whole procedure was to have "the glory of the LORD appear unto you" (i.e., the people, Lev 9:6), which, in fact, happened in an awe-inspiring way when the Lord appeared and burned the offerings (Lev 9:23-24).

The reference back to the inauguration day at the beginning of the instructions for the Day of Atonement binds Leviticus 8—10 to 16 (Lev 16:1). The consecration of the tabernacle and the priests (Lev 8) leads directly into the inauguration of the tabernacle (Lev 9—10), which, in turn, leads to the regulations for the annual purging of both the tabernacle (with the blood of the slaughtered sin offerings, Lev 16:11-19) and the community (with the scapegoat, Lev 16:20-22) from all forms of sin and impurity on the Day of Atonement—a kind of reconsecration and reinauguration of the tabernacle complex and priesthood for another year (cf. Lev 9). It is significant that on both the inauguration day and on the Day of Atonement the priests presented offerings first for themselves and then afterward for the people (cf. Lev 9:8-21 with Lev 16:11-19). This was not a common occurrence.

3.4. Offerings and Sacrifices for Purity and Holiness. On the occasion of the death of Aaron's two sons Nadab and Abihu, the Lord spoke directly and emphatically to him (Lev 10:8) regarding the central concerns of his tabernacle presence in Israel: "distinguish between the *holy* and the *common* [or 'profane'], and between the *unclean* [or 'impure'] and the *clean* [or 'pure'], and . . . teach the Israelites all *the statutes* that the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses" (Lev 10:10-11). The "statutes" in Leviticus 10:11 were undoubtedly the specifics about holiness and purity highlighted in Leviticus 10:10, the core of which are outlined in Leviticus 11—15. On the one hand, the distinction between holy and common has to do with "consecration" (i.e., "to make holy [sacred]," usually the piel stem of the Heb verb *qdš*). To treat something or someone that is holy (sacred) as if he, she or it were "common" would be to "desecrate" them. On the other hand, the distinction between clean and unclean has to do with "purification" (i.e., "to cleanse, purify," usually the piel stem of the Heb verb *ṭhr*). If something or someone is clean (pure), to make it or them unclean (impure) is to commit an act of "defilement" (i.e., "to make unclean, impure," usually the piel stem of the Hebrew verb *ṭm'*).

Nadab and Abihu had violated these principles on the priestly level (Lev 10:1, 3), so the Lord consumed them with fire. The same could happen to any priest who violated the Lord's tabernacle presence in such a way (note Lev 10:9, "so that you may not die"). Similarly, just before the Day of Atonement instructions (Lev 16), at the end of the intervening purity regulations (Lev 11—15), the Lord pronounced the same essential warning against all the people of Israel (Lev 15:31). This was one of the major concerns of the Aaronic priests: maintaining tabernacle purity and holiness in Israel, which was to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6).

There are three units of sacrificial prescriptions and descriptions in Leviticus 12—15: the woman after childbirth (Lev 12), the skin-diseased person after he or she is healed or a house that has a diseased mark on it (Lev 14), and the one who has been healed from an abnormal discharge of blood or other fluids from his or her body (Lev 15). The sacrificial regulations for the woman who has borne a child is given as a prescription, without a narrative de-

scription in the order of the ritual performances (Lev 12:6-8), but it includes a sin offering and then a burnt offering to follow.

The ritual cleansing of the skin-diseased person who had become well again was much more elaborate. First, the priest had to inspect the person outside the camp to make sure he or she was truly healed. Second, he performed a ritual with two birds, one of which he slaughtered so its blood ran into a clay vessel containing "living water" (water taken from a flowing source, not, e.g., a cistern), with which he would sprinkle the healed person seven times by taking the live bird, a piece of cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop, and dipping them in the blood and water mixture. The priest would then pronounce the person clean and let the live bird go free. The similarities with the rituals of Leviticus 16:15-22 are significant: the healed person was cleansed and all impurity was sent away.

Third, the priest performed a ritual like that of the ordination blood and oil ritual in Leviticus 8:22-24 (see 3.2 above; cf. description of pattern of Lev 14 in 2.6 above). The point of significance here is that the ritual of applying the blood and the oil to the right earlobe, thumb and big toe of the healed person was that of a "guilt" offering. Why a guilt offering rather than some kind of peace offering? The answer seems to be that since the diseased person had been expelled from the "kingdom of priests and holy nation" (Ex 19:6), he or she had virtually been "desecrated." Formerly a holy part of a holy nation, they had been removed from the realm of the holy to live outside the camp (Lev 13:46). The main purpose of the guilt offering was specifically to make atonement for desecration of holy things devoted to the Lord (see 2.5 above). The guilt offering was therefore necessary for reconsecrating the healed person and reincorporating them into the holy community, which, to come full circle, had been consecrated to the Lord in the Exodus 24 ritual.

On the one hand, Leviticus 15 describes symptoms and ritual procedures for regular but unclean flows from the body that could be dealt with by remaining unclean for the day (for a woman's menstrual impurity it was seven days, Lev 15:19) and being forbidden from entering the tabernacle (lest they contaminate it) and from eating a peace offering (Lev 7:19-21), then washing the person's whole body in water and being clean once again when evening came (Lev 15:16-18). This kind of uncleanness did not require a sacrificial offering. On the other hand, if the flow was abnormal and extended, then the uncleanness would last for the duration of the flow plus seven days, and on the eighth day the person washed his or her clothes and body in water and offered two doves or pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a guilt offering (Lev 15:13-15, 25-30).

3.5. The Day of Atonement. During the seven-day period of consecration (Lev 8), some of the anointing and sin-offering rituals were performed with the specific purpose of purifying and consecrating the tabernacle (Lev 8:10), and especially the altar of burnt offering (Lev 8:11, 15). Similarly, on the Day of Atonement (*see* Atonement, Day of), Aaron was to use the blood of the sin offering to purify and consecrate the same altar once again (Lev 16:19; cf. all the sin-offering procedures in the most holy place and in the holy place, Lev 16:11-17, 20). The scapegoat ritual followed immediately, the goal of which was to have the goat "carry away on itself all their [i.e., the whole nation's] iniquities into a solitary land" (Lev 16:22). The scapegoat was also a "sin offering" and "made atonement" (Lev 16:5, 9-10), but of a different kind. The blood rituals of the sin offering purified the tabernacle and altar. The scapegoat ritual purified the people, the community.

The summary at the end of Leviticus 16 maintains this correspondence. The goal was to make atonement on behalf of the priests and the people in order to purify (cleanse) them (Lev 16:30, 33) as well as to atone (i.e., purge sin and impurity from) the tabernacle itself (Lev 16:33). There is a problem in the English translations when they translate, for example, "He shall make atonement *for* the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement *for* the tent of meeting and *for* the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" (Lev 16:33 NRSV, italics added). Milgrom has observed that in this and some other passages the verb "to atone" (Heb *kipper*) takes a prepositional object when referring to people (i.e., "he [Aaron] shall make atonement *for* [Heb *ʿal*]" the priests and the people in Lev 16:33, cf. 16:30), but the tabernacle and the altar are construed as direct objects (i.e., "he shall atone [purge] the holy sanctuary, the tent of meeting and the altar," Lev 16:33a, not "*for* the holy sanctuary, . . ."). The point is that the goal was to

purge the tabernacle and its furniture from all defilement on behalf of the priests and the people, and to cleanse the people as well. This was absolutely necessary for maintaining God's tabernacle habitation among them in good condition and, thus, for their very survival in his presence (recall Lev 15:31).

The process involved, once again, performing the ritual offering procedures in the standard order (see 2.6 above): sin offerings (Lev 16:11-22) and then burnt offerings (Lev 16:23-24). As noted above, the reference back to the catastrophe of Nadab and Abihu on the inauguration day (Lev 10:1-2) in Leviticus 16:1-2 binds these two days together. It is significant that, as on that first inauguration day, on the annual Day of Atonement the priests presented offerings first for themselves and then afterward for the people (cf. Lev 9:8-21 with Lev 16:11-19). The Day of Atonement was actually an annual repurification, reconsecration and reinauguration day for the tabernacle. In a sense, it was the "fall house- (tent-)cleaning day" for the tabernacle that reset the tabernacle system for another year.

4. Historical Criticism and Sacrifices and Offerings.

The most influential treatment of the history of Israel's religion and its significance for the study of the composition of the Pentateuch over the last two centuries is undoubtedly Julius Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (first published in 1878 as *History of Israel*, then under the *Prolegomena* title in 1883; English edition reprinted 1994). Wellhausen began his study of the Hebrew Bible with the preexilic historical books and prophets and was quite taken with the religion reflected in them. He knew that the Torah (specifically, the law within the Torah) was considered to be antecedent, but he testifies that when he took to the study of the Torah, he found no evidence of any impact of it upon the historical and prophetic books (Wellhausen, 3-4). With regard to the sacrifices and offerings, he argued that the priestly system of Leviticus 1—16 was an invention of the *post*exilic priestly institution. So P (i.e., the Priestly Source) was not the earliest pentateuchal source, as most scholars had previously thought, but actually the last in his proposed JEDP sequence of sources (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of; Source Criticism).

4.1. The Historical-Critical "Scholarly Consensus" Regarding Altars and Offerings. Wellhausen's method was quite simple. He compared the religious institutions as set forth in the priestly material of the Pentateuch with the practices of the ancient Israelites as recounted in the preexilic historical books and the references to those practices in the corresponding prophetic books. The fact of the matter is that the preexilic historical books and prophets frequently refer to the burnt and peace offerings, but not to the sin and guilt offerings (for the latter see only 1 Sam 6:3-8, 17 and 2 Kings 12:16 [MT 12:17]; see also Is 53:10, though this is also generally taken to be postexilic by critical scholars). Wellhausen (69-75) argued that historically, therefore, the sin and guilt offerings were not introduced into the Israelite repertoire until the time of Ezekiel (see esp. Ezek 40:39; 42:13, 19-25; 44:27-29; 45:17-25; 46:20; cf. also 2 Chron 29:21-24; Ezra 8:35; Neh 10:33 [MT 10:34]). The priestly institution of the postexilic period created a historical fiction that placed the full ritual system of Leviticus 1—16, with which they were occupied in their day, back into the days of Moses, thus promoting their own religious and political agenda in postexilic Judah.

Wellhausen was fully aware that "belief in the dependence of sacrifices and other sacred acts upon a laboriously strict compliance with traditional and prescriptive rites occurs in the case of certain peoples, even in the remotest antiquity" (Wellhausen, 79, n. 1). Despite this common knowledge, he argued that the disparity between the two presentations of religious life in ancient Israel (i.e., the Torah versus the preexilic historical and prophetic books) showed that this was not the case in preexilic Israel. It is true that the fully developed system of offerings and sacrifices is conspicuous for its almost complete absence in Joshua through Kings and in Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Micah and elsewhere. The real question, however, is whether or not this requires the kind of diachronic explanation and rearrangement of ancient Israel's religious history worked out by Wellhausen.

Of course, since his day there have been various exceptions taken to some elements of his theory. Many have taken P to be a redaction, not a full-fledged literary source that was first compiled separately and then later formed the basis and perspective of the final major redaction or composition of the Pentateuch. The various the-

ories of the composition of the Pentateuch current today articulate such issues differently, but P is still most often taken to be postexilic by most critical scholars (see the fuller discussion in Averbeck, 4.1011-12).

Conservative scholars have always objected to such theories (see below), but even among scholars committed to the historical-critical consensus in general, there has arisen a distinctively different approach. Some have argued forcefully that P is preexilic. Y. Kaufmann was convinced that the logic of Wellhausen's argument actually runs in another direction and leads to a different conclusion (Kaufmann, 153-211). To put it simply, since the prophets considered morality to have priority over any focus on detailed priestly rites and made much of this issue (see, e.g., the prophetic critique of the cult in Hos 6:6; Is 1; Amos 5; Mic 6), it would seem that they were reacting *against* an earlier priestly notion that the priestly rites could be sufficient apart from moral considerations. For Kaufmann, this priestly focus on ritual ceremony aside from morality, therefore, reflects a stage *earlier*, not later, than the preexilic prophetic books.

Others agree with Kaufmann's position in general, but some come at it differently. For example, M. Haran argues that the conditions of the writing and demands of P do not suit the postexilic period. For instance, the ark, the cherubim, the Urim and Thummim and so forth are indispensable to P's view of a legitimate cult, but the postexilic priesthood had no way of instituting them. It would have undermined their agenda to require things that they themselves could not match up to (Haran, 3-8). A. Hurvitz has argued that the language of P in some parts of the Pentateuch is earlier than Ezekiel. The latter carries special weight with J. Milgrom, who therefore accepts the earlier dating of P (Milgrom 1991, 3-13) and also accepts I. Knohl's view that the "Holiness Code" (H) of Leviticus 17—26 is actually later than P of Leviticus 1—16. However, Milgrom rejects Knohl's view that P's inner circle of priestly rituals was practiced in complete silence—without speech, singing or praying out loud (*see* Tabernacle, §4.1 for a summary and critique of Knohl's "sanctuary of silence" view; see esp. Knohl, 225-30).

The history of sacrifices and offerings in the Bible is tied up with that of the *altars on which they were offered. As noted above, the central issue is the relationship between the five different kinds of offerings on the bronze altar of the tabernacle (and later the temple; see discussion of Lev 1—16 above) and the solitary altars on which only burnt and peace offerings were made during the preexilic period (according to the preexilic historians and prophets) as well as those during the period covered by Genesis through Exodus 24. The overall historical-critical consensus is that there never was a tabernacle in the first place, much less a bronze altar of the sort described in Exodus 27:1-8 on which one would make the offerings the Pentateuch describes.

P. Heger has attempted a reconstruction of the history of altar sacrifice in ancient Israel in accordance with this general scholarly consensus and based on comparisons between the three altar laws in the Pentateuch: the nontabernacle earthen altar law in Exodus 20:24-26, its reflection in Deuteronomy 27:5-7 and the tabernacle's bronze altar in Exodus 27:1-8. Without presenting Heger's argument in detail, I would point out that there are serious problems with this kind of reconstruction and rewriting of the history of ancient Israelite altars, sacrifices and offerings. It is rooted in modern skepticism about the biblically attested historical reality of Moses, the tabernacle, the bronze altar in the tabernacle complex and, most important for us here, the scriptural depiction of the incineration of (portions of) animal and grain offerings on the bronze altar inside the tabernacle from the beginning of Israel's history as a nation (for data and remarks on the historical plausibility and reality of the tabernacle, *see* Tabernacle §3.3).

4.2. The Religious Sociology and Politics of Sacrifices, Offerings and Altars. The fact that Exodus 20:24-26 gives regulations for the construction of acceptable earthen altars apart from the bronze altar fabricated for the tabernacle court calls for explanation. The answer, however, lies primarily in the sociology of ancient Israelite *religion rather than in its chronological development. Wellhausen's approach was based on taking the apparent lack of evidence for a full levitical system of offerings in the preexilic historical and prophetic books to mean that the levitical system was not in place at that time. Heger takes this approach further in the same direction, to the point where the priestly levitical system undoes itself.

Others have resisted this largely diachronic approach and explanation in favor of one that recognizes and takes seriously the sociological separation between the world of the preexilic historians, prophets and common people, and the priestly world of the tabernacle and later the temple. The priests and priestly system look out at Israel from a standpoint situated within the sanctuary complex. The preexilic historians, prophets and common people look from the outside in toward the sanctuary, from the perspective of outsiders who performed their own religious practices outside the tabernacle, whether they were loyal to Yahweh or the priestly system in the tabernacle or not. These systems were not mutually exclusive chronologically, theologically or sociologically (see, e.g., Haran, 7-8; Anderson 1987, 34-55; Averbeck, 4.1010-13 and the literature cited there). There is a diachronic fallacy in Wellhausen's basic method and in that of those who have followed him.

According to the biblical text, the solitary-altar law in Exodus 20:24-26 was given before the tabernacle was constructed (see the more thorough treatment in Averbeck, 2.889-98). It was, in fact, this kind of altar that Moses built to ratify the covenant at Sinai (Ex 24:3-8). However, even after the construction of the tabernacle and its altar, the Lord commanded through Moses (Deut 27:5-7; Joshua later obeyed the command, Josh 8:30-35) to construct such a solitary altar and to offer up burnt offerings and the fat of peace offerings on it when they had taken possession of the land he had promised to Abraham (Gen 12:6-7; Heger, 4-6, 14-87, exaggerates the differences between the altar regulations in Ex 20 and Deut 27). Interestingly, even though the tabernacle altar was available, God commanded them to build and offer their offerings on the same kind of altar that Abraham had built in the same location centuries earlier. Thus, they laid claim to the land based on the *promise and enacted it in a way that connected them in the moment directly to the original promise and its place of origin.

The earth-and-stone-altar law in Exodus 20:24-26 regulates the nature and construction of solitary altars on which one could offer "burnt offerings" and the fat portions of "peace offerings" in ancient Israel, along with the grain offerings and libations that were often associated with them (see Num 15:1-13). There is no mention of sin and guilt offerings associated with these because offering them on such altars would have made no sense. The purpose of these latter sacrifices was to maintain the purity and sanctity of the community and of the tabernacle in light of the tabernacle presence of God in their midst (see Lev 15:31 and Lev 16; see 2.4-5 and 3.4-5 above). Solitary altars were not sanctuaries but places of "calling upon the name of the Lord" as one offered a sacrificial gift to the Lord wherever one was at the time (see, e.g., Gen 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; cf. foundation in Gen 4:26). The offerings presented on the solitary altars constituted (part of) the *action* of worship to the Lord, while calling on the name of the Lord was the vocal expression of worship, a petition and proclamation in *word* to the Lord.

It is true that many of the solitary-altar passages do not specify that offerings were presented on them. However, some do, and it seems that this was the most natural reason for building an altar to begin with (e.g., Isaac's assumption in Gen 22:7-9). No altar is mentioned in the Cain and Abel offering passage in Genesis 4:3-5. The first instance of an explicit offering on an altar is found in Genesis 8:20, when after the flood, "Noah built an altar to the LORD and took from every clean [species of] land animal and from every clean [species of] bird and offered up burnt offerings on the altar." As a result, the Lord "smelled the pleasing aroma" of the offerings and resolved to never again curse the ground or destroy every living thing (Gen 8:21). Only burnt offerings and peace offering sacrifices are referred to between Genesis 8 and Exodus 20 (see Gen 22:2-8, 13; 31:54; 46:1; Ex 3:18; 5:3, 8, 17; 8:8 [MT 8:4], 25-29 [MT 8:21-25]; 10:25-26; 12:25; 13:15; 18:12), where the altar law specifies burnt offerings and sacrifices for the earthen and stone altars. None of these passages until Exodus 20:24-26 specifies the material or manner of altar construction, but one should probably assume that it generally followed the pattern of Exodus 20.

The pre-Mosaic and Mosaic offerings at solitary altars, however, are not the real issue here. The problem is the continued legitimate construction of solitary altars and the practice of offering burnt and peace offerings to the Lord on such altars in multiple places after the death of Moses and the conquest of the land—despite the Deuteronomic call for centralized altar worship at the sole and central sanctuary residence of God in the land (Deut 12:5-14; see, e.g., Judg

6:24-28; 13:19-23; 21:3-4; 1 Sam 7:8-10; 1 Sam 7:17; 2 Sam 24:25; 1 Kings 18:23-24, 30-38; 19:10, 14). According to Deuteronomy 12:10, however, the centralization of worship was to be associated with the Lord giving Israel *"rest" from all its "enemies" in the *land. Joshua's conquest gave Israel a foothold in the land and rest to a point, but it is clear from Judges 1—2 that there were still enemies to be conquered in the Promised Land after the death of Joshua. It was not until the time of David that this rest was achieved in full (2 Sam 7:1). David's son Solomon, therefore, built the temple in Jerusalem as the central sanctuary in place of the tabernacle, which was located at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4; 2 Chron 1:5-6). Up until then (and after the disruption of the divided kingdom), burnt and peace offerings along with their associated grain offerings and libations served as an acceptable means of worship at solitary Yahwistic altars.

In the meantime, the priests were responsible for the maintenance of the central sanctuary of the tabernacle (and later the temple) and its worship, wherever it may have been located. Moreover, the ideal of a centralized sanctuary was maintained, even if not always acceptably realized, for example, in the practice of some of the pious who would go once a year to the tabernacle sanctuary—wherever it was located—to worship the Lord (see, e.g., 1 Sam 1:3). Unfortunately, the priests and worship even at the central sanctuary were often less than ideal (1 Sam 2:12-17; Ezek 8—11), much less the worship at the relatively unsupervised solitary altars throughout the land. Of course, altars dedicated to other gods and their ritual accouterments were to be eradicated from the land (see, e.g., Deut 12:2-4), and according to Deuteronomy 16:21-22, for example, legitimate Yahwistic solitary altars were to be absolutely unencumbered by fertility symbols such as Asherah poles (or trees) and sacred pillars.

In the southern kingdom, for example, in order to centralize worship in the Jerusalem temple, Asa (c. 908-867 B.C.) eliminated foreign altars, high places, their sacred pillars and Asherahs, and all high places and incense altars from all Judah (2 Chron 14:2-5). In the time of Joash (c. 836-798 B.C.), Jehoiada the priest instigated the destruction of the Baal temple, priests and altars in Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:17-18). Hezekiah (c. 727-698 B.C.) instituted reforms that eliminated worship at solitary "high place" altars where there were sacred pillars and Asherahs in favor of centralized worship at the Jerusalem temple. Finally, among other things, Josiah (c. 639-609 B.C.) implemented thorough reforms within the Jerusalem temple worship itself (2 Kings 23:4; note also the Asherahs in the temple, 2 Kings 23:6), did away with idolatrous priests, high places, altars (2 Kings 23:5, 12-14) and houses of the cult prostitutes of Asherah (2 Kings 23:7), and eliminated even the Yahwistic high places in Judah and Jerusalem at which even some of the Aaronic priests had been ministering. He brought these priests to Jerusalem where they could be provided for, although they were not allowed to minister in the temple (2 Kings 23:8-9).

It appears that although there was a centralized worship in place during the wilderness period, with the tabernacle in Israel's midst (Lev 17:1-7), and a centralized worship ideal existed even from the start of Israel's occupation of the holy land (Deut 12), it was also legitimate to offer burnt and peace offerings to the Lord on earthen and stone solitary altars "in any place" where the Lord caused his name to be remembered (Ex 20:24, 25) until there was "rest" within the boundaries of the land of Israel (Deut 12:10). Before the time of David such rest was precarious at best, so worship at such solitary altars was common among faithful Yahwists and pleasing to the Lord. Moreover, during the time of the northern kingdom, faithful Yahwists who lived in the north were not allowed to travel to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, so worship at solitary Yahwistic altars was the practice (1 Kings 9:10, 14).

When the political and military situation became relatively stable, at least for a time in preexilic Judah, however, the centralization ideal took over and some of the faithful kings pursued it. The ideal of centralized worship expressed in Deuteronomy 12 was not new with Josiah (or even Hezekiah), although its implementation during the days of Josiah was certainly an expression of good faith toward the Lord. The notion that the Exodus 20:24-26 law of the solitary altar contradicts the Deuteronomy 12 centralization law is based on a misunderstanding of the intent of Deuteronomy 12 and a diachronic fallacy. The priestly system of five main kinds of sacrifices and offerings in the tabernacle (and later the temple) was different from that of solitary altars, which were limited to burnt and peace offerings only. Both systems could and, in

fact, did legitimately function side by side during many periods of preexilic Israelite history. Wellhausen's "two wholly distinct worlds" were not really wholly distinct, but to the degree that they were, their distinctiveness was sociological, not chronological.

5. Sacrifices and Offerings in the New Testament.

The NT often refers to the OT sacrifices and offerings. We find Mary bringing two birds to the temple as a sin and burnt offering to the Lord for sacrificial purification from the impurity of her blood flow due to her giving birth to Jesus (Lk 2:21-24; cf. Lev 12). Jesus himself followed the sacrificial rules and advised others to do so as well (e.g., Mt 8:4), although he was distressed by the rabbinic practices of his day that sometimes undermined the purpose of these laws in the first place (e.g., corban in Mk 7).

The theology of Jesus as a sacrifice who made atonement for sins is both basic and profound for the Christian faith. Of course, the background for understanding the various dimensions of the sacrifice of Christ is the OT sacrificial system. Hebrew 9—10 is a central NT passage, but there are many others (*see DPL* and *DLNTD*, Death of Christ). Moreover, since Jesus offered himself on behalf of sinners, and his disciples are called to follow him, Christians are called to offer themselves completely to the Lord as acceptable offerings (Rom 12:1; *see DPL*, Sacrifice, Offering; *DLNTD*, Sacrifice, Offering, Gifts). The potential these sacrificial images hold for theology and for instruction in Christian discipleship is rich (see Averbeck, 4.1015-19 and the literature cited for details; cf. Goldingay and literature cited).

See also AARON; ALTARS; ATONEMENT, DAY OF; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; FIRSTFRUITS; FOODS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LEVI, LEVITES; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; RED HEIFER; SIN, GUILT; TABERNACLE; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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SAGA. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

SALVATION. *See* THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

SANCTUARY. *See* TABERNACLE.

SARAH

Alongside the more widely recognized Israelite patriarchs stand the equally significant matriarchs of God's people. Among these, none plays a greater role in the history of Israel and God's dealings with humanity than Sarah. Her husband, *Abraham, is rightly known as the father of the faith; Sarah, a pivotal character in Genesis, equally can be seen as a mother of the faith. Indeed, many of the struggles and successes that Sarah experienced provided a pattern for the experiences of future biblical characters. It is no wonder, then, that Sarah continued to play a key role within the biblical traditions and even beyond.

1. Sarah in the Ancestral Narratives
2. Sarah in Later Tradition

1. Sarah in the Ancestral Narratives.

Sarai, as Sarah is known when she is first mentioned, was the wife of Abram. He was the first patriarch and she the first matriarch in the biblical text. When introduced in the biblical text, Abram is about seventy-five years old and Sarai is about sixty-five years old. Although her lineage is not initially recorded, the fact that she was childless receives double mention in Genesis 11:30: "Now Sarai was barren; she had no children." The couple's childlessness sets the tone for the stories about them that follow. Later God changed their names to the more familiar ones of Sarah and Abraham that are known throughout the biblical text (Gen 17:5, 15). Her name (in both forms) means "princess" or "chieftainess." It also may be related to the Akkadian word *šarrat*, a designation of the moon-goddess Ishtar.

Sarai is identified as *Terah's daughter-in-law in Genesis 11:31, but the issue of her genealogy remains complicated, for in Genesis 20:12 Abraham calls her his half-sister and explains to *Abimelech that she is the daughter of his father but not his mother.

After the death of Terah, God told Abram to leave his homeland and to go to a place that God would later disclose to him. God promised to make Abram a great nation, to bless him and to make his name great. God also promised that those who blessed Abram, God himself would bless, while those who cursed Abram, God himself would curse (Gen 12:1-3). Later God prom-

ised Abram descendants and land (Gen 15:4-7). Many of the issues in the stories about the couple can be understood as their struggle to come to terms with God's promises of land, offspring, greatness and *blessings. Thus the couple's yearning for a child draws in other characters: *Lot, Abram's nephew and apparent heir; *Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian handmaid; and Eliezer of Damascus, a servant and possible heir.

Sarai figures prominently in two accounts of marital deception: Genesis 12:10-20, the text regarding the couple's descent to *Egypt during a famine; and Genesis 20:1-18, a similar story taking place years later in Gerar. In both cases Abram feared for his life because of his wife's great beauty. In the first instance, Abram instructed her to say that she was his sister, and she obeyed. Consequently, *Pharaoh took her to his palace and rewarded Abram materially because of Sarai with sheep, cattle, donkeys, and male and female servants (Gen 12:16). The Lord, however, afflicted Pharaoh's household with serious diseases because of this situation. Realizing the couple's ruse, Pharaoh expelled them from the kingdom (Gen 12:17-20). In Genesis 20, Abimelech, king of Gerar, warned in a dream by God not to touch the still-beautiful Sarah, also expelled the couple and gave Abraham one of the strongest rebukes recorded in the biblical text.

The Nuzi documents have been thought by some to shed light on both incidents in Egypt and Gerar. It is claimed that Hurrian society honored a wife-sister relationship so much so that a woman in that society who became a man's wife and was then adopted by him as his sister enjoyed a higher status and more privileges than an ordinary wife. However, this interpretation is now questioned (Greengus; Walton, 396).

The Nuzi documents have also been used to enlighten the legal aspects of the triangular relationship of Sarai, Hagar and Abram. According to a custom prevalent during that time, a wife could give her handmaid to her husband and any child born to a handmaid would be the child of the mistress. Nuzi documents stipulate that if a wife is childless, it is her duty to provide her husband with a female *slave as a concubine. Thus Sarai herself suggested to Abram that he take Hagar and get a child through her so that Sarai could build her own family (Gen 16:2); two generations later, Leah and Rachel gave their handmaids to Jacob (Gen 30:1-8). However, instead of dwelling on the Nuzi parallels, recent scholarship tends to emphasize Sarai's need for a son in her own right. A son would secure Sarai's status in the family and her place in the society; a son from the lawful wife not only would be the means of verifying God's promise of descendants to Abram but also would be a caretaker for Sarai and Abram in their old age.

The women in Abram's household, however, did not get along. Hagar's arrogance after she successfully conceived led to her harsh treatment by Sarai. Hagar fled, but God told her to return to her mistress and to submit to her (Gen 16:4-15). The story of the rivals Sarai and Hagar becomes a pattern in the biblical text for acrimony between wives. Rachel and Leah competed for Jacob's sexual favors (Gen 30:14-24), and Hannah mourned her childlessness while her rival, the fecund Peninnah, gloated (1 Sam 1:1-6). Sarah's long period of waiting for a child also presents a pattern in Genesis: Rebekah was barren for years before the birth of twins (Gen 25:21); Rachel finally conceived *Joseph and then *Benjamin after Leah had given birth to six sons (Gen 30:23-24; 35:16-26); and *Tamar, who outlived two husbands, waited many years for a child (Gen 38).

When God inaugurated the *covenant sign of *circumcision with Abram, he changed the couple's names and announced that Sarah would conceive a son who would be named Isaac (Gen 17:17-22). The promise of a son was reaffirmed when the Lord visited Abraham before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:10). Although Abraham and Sarah greeted the prophecies of an upcoming child with incredulous laughter (Gen 17:17; 18:12), Sarah indeed conceived and bore a child at approximately age ninety; her husband was approximately one hundred. Through these struggles, the biblical text emphasizes that it is through the lawful wife that God's promise of progeny, land, greatness and blessings comes.

The story of a couple's anguish for a child repeats itself in Genesis and throughout the biblical text. A delayed child such as Isaac, the second patriarch, often signals a child marked for a special purpose. Joseph, the long-awaited son of Rachel, became the agent through whom the family was saved during a famine. Samuel, Hannah's son, became a prophet and kingmaker. In the NT, Elizabeth and Zechariah re-

semble Abraham and Sarah because they, too, were well past child-bearing years when their son John was born (Lk 1).

The biblical text gives little information about Sarah after Isaac's birth except that she persuaded Abraham to expel Hagar and Ishmael permanently from the camp (Gen 21:8-21). Sarah died at age 127 in Kiriath-arba and was buried in the cave at Machpelah, which Abraham purchased from Ephron (Gen 23:3-20).

2. Sarah in Later Tradition.

Sarah and Abraham are mentioned again in Isaiah 51:2, where God calls Israel to remember its roots—Abraham and Sarah—and the miracle of the many descendants who came from these two ancestors. Later Jewish tradition surrounding Sarah adds much to the details of the biblical text. Regarding genealogy, Sarah is identified as Iscah, the daughter of Abraham's brother Haran (Gen 11:29). That would make her Abraham's niece. The name Iscah is related to the word *sākâ* ("to look"), for all looked on her beauty (*b. Meg.* 14a). It is also said that her beauty lasted through journeys and wanderings and continued through to old age (*Gen. Rab.* 40:4), that her beauty made all other people look like monkeys (*b. B. Bat.* 58a), and that Abishag, a great beauty in her own right who sought to cheer David in his old age (1 Kings 1), was only half as beautiful as Sarah (*b. Sanh.* 39b).

The name Iscah also refers to Sarah's ability to prophesy, according to Jewish tradition, and to see with the eyes of vision (*b. Meg.* 14a). She is named as one of the seven prophetesses in the Hebrew Bible, and her prophetic gift is reputed to have excelled that of her husband (*Ex. Rab.* 1:1). In addition, when her name was changed from Sarai, Sarah became a princess for all humanity as well as a princess for her own people (*Gen. Rab.* 40:5).

According to Jewish tradition, Pharaoh loved her and gave her Goshen. It is for this reason that the Israelites settled there in Joseph's time (*Pirqe R. El.* 36). She retained her virtue with Pharaoh by praying to God, who sent an angel to whip Pharaoh at her command (*Gen. Rab.* 41:2).

In order to quell the rumor that Abraham and Sarah had adopted a foundling and that Isaac was not their natural son, Jewish tradition says that Abraham held a party for the neighborhood the day Isaac was weaned. Sarah suckled all the neighborhood infants, thereby proving her motherhood of Isaac (*Gen. Rab.* 53:9; *b. Baba Meṣi'a* 87a). Isaac further proved his parentage by his striking resemblance to Abraham (*Gen. Rab.* 53:6; *b. Baba Meṣi'* 87a).

Miracles surrounded Sarah during her lifetime, according to Jewish tradition. Her dough miraculously increased, a light burned from Friday through Friday, and a pillar of cloud rested above her tent (*Gen. Rab.* 60:16). Her expulsion of Ishmael was justified because she saw him commit idolatry, rape and murder (*t. Soṭah* 6:6; *Gen. Rab.* 53:11).

Jewish tradition says that Sarah died suddenly over the shock of hearing that Abraham intended to slay Isaac. One account says that Satan appeared to her and told her that Abraham had slaughtered or was about to slaughter Isaac (*Pirqe R. El.* 32); another account says that Isaac himself returned and told her of the event (*Lev. Rab.* 20:2). Upon her death, the Hebronites closed their places of business out of respect for her (*Gen. Rab.* 58:7; 62:3).

See also ABRAHAM; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; HAGAR; ISAAC; WOMEN.

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SATAN. *See* SERPENT.

SCAPEGOAT. *See* ATONEMENT, DAY OF.

SEA. *See* CREATION.

SEA CREATURES. *See* CREATION.

SEA OF REEDS. *See* EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY.

SEA TRAVEL. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

SEASONS. *See* CREATION.

SEDUCTION. *See* SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS.

SEERS. *See* PROPHETS, PROPHECY.

SEGMENTED GENEALOGY. *See* GENEALOGIES.

SEMITIC LANGUAGES. *See* LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

SEPTUAGINT. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

SERPENT

The cultural significance of serpent imagery in the ancient Near East combines with the pivotal role of the serpent in the text of Genesis to create an intriguing theological study. Somewhere between Leviathan and Satan we need to understand the Israelite perception of the serpent of the garden.

1. Serpents in the Ancient Near East
2. The Serpent in Israelite Theology
3. The Serpent and Satan
4. Curse of the Serpent

1. Serpents in the Ancient Near East.

From the very earliest evidence we have in ancient Near Eastern art and literature, the serpent is presented as a significant character. Perhaps because serpents' poison was a threat to life and their lidless eyes provided an enigmatic image, serpents have been associated with both death and with wisdom. The Genesis account draws on both aspects through the wisdom dialogue between the serpent and *Eve, on the one hand, and through the introduction of death after the expulsion from *Eden, on the other. Similarly, Gilgamesh, the legendary Mesopotamian king, is cheated out of perpetual youth when a serpent consumes a magical plant the hero had retrieved from the sea bottom (*ANET*, 96, lines 258-89). The sinister image of the serpent is graphically displayed by the intertwining coils of a snake encompassing a cult stand found at Beth-shean. Whether as a representative of primeval chaos (Tiamat or Leviathan) or a symbol of sexuality, the serpent harbors mystery for humans.

Of particular interest is the Sumerian god Ningishzida, who is portrayed in serpent shape and whose name means "Lord of the Productive/Steadfast Tree." He was considered a ruler in the netherworld and "throne-bearer of the earth." He was one of the deities who offered the bread of life to Adapa. A serpent is often portrayed entwined in the roots of the World Tree, the tree at the center of the cosmos (e.g., in Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld; see George, 180-81). In Egypt, where Israel spent several centuries, the serpent was considered a wise and magical creature. Wadjet, the patron goddess of Lower Egypt, is represented as a snake (uraeus) on the pharaoh's crown. This came to symbolize the power of pharaoh. But additionally, Apophis, the enemy of the gods, represented the forces of chaos in the form of a snake (*ANET*, 6-7). Even when not related to a god, the serpent represented wisdom (occult), fertility, health, chaos and immortality and was often worshiped. In summary, then, in the ancient world the serpent was viewed as possessing mystical wisdom and as a demonic and hostile creature. Though the Genesis creation account contained no serpentine sea monster to threaten God's establishment of cosmic order, here we find a serpent who begins to work against the order that exists in the human realm.

2. The Serpent in Israelite Theology.

Genesis 3 brings the serpent on the scene with little introduction and no strategic identification. When the Israelite audience considered the serpent, the ideas mentioned above that were current in the ancient world would un-

doubtedly have been associated with it in their minds. Yet in the context of Genesis, the serpent is described in the NIV and NRSV as "crafty" (*ʿārûm*) but not sinister or magical. Other translations have rendered this word "shrewd" (NJPS) or "cunning" (NKJV). That this description is neutral with regard to good and evil can be seen from the fact it is a quality considered worthy of pursuit elsewhere (e.g., the same Hebrew root in Prov 1:4; 8:5; 15:5) as well as an attribute of Dame Wisdom (Prov 8:12). It is often seen as the remedy for naiveté, which is especially significant in Genesis 3 as the serpent's shrewdness is contrasted to the nakedness of the man and woman through a similar-sounding word (Gen 2:25). Nonetheless, the term can carry negative connotations, as in passages such as Job 5:12, where the shrewd are plotting against God, and Job 15:5 where shrewd words are used to devious ends. In Exodus 21:14 the murderer acts in this way to snare a victim. If tempered and controlled in the context of the fear of the Lord, this can be a very positive quality, but if it is used as an instrument for the schemes of our human fallenness, it can be very dangerous.

In addition, it is important to recognize that the serpent is simply classified as one of the wild animals. This classification mitigates against any speculation concerning an Israelite understanding of a hidden identity of the serpent. Neither god nor demon nor genie is indicated as lurking beneath the guise of the serpent. It comes with nothing out of the ordinary that would alert the woman's suspicions. Of course, we cannot help but wonder what she thought when the serpent talked.

Unlike Christian theology, in Israel there was no inclination to embody all evil in a central figure or trace its cause to a single historical event, such as Satan's fall. Therefore, the Israelites were quite willing to recognize the serpent as representing an evil influence without any attempt to associate it with a being who was the ultimate source or cause of evil. In fact, it would appear that the author of Genesis is intentionally underplaying the role or identification of the serpent. This would correlate with the other polemical elements of the early chapters of Genesis. It is important to remember that in the ancient world most cosmological models were built around a god taming or defeating the chaotic forces, often represented in the sea (see Day). In Canaanite literature this role of chaos was played by the serpentine Leviathan/Lotan. In contrast, the biblical narrative states that the great sea creatures were simply beasts God created (Gen 1:21). This demythologizing polemic may also be responsible for avoiding any theory of conspiratorial uprisings for the existence of evil.

3. The Serpent and Satan.

In ancient belief the world was full of supernatural powers, known and unknown, good and evil, active and passive, chthonic (connected to the netherworld) and celestial. Despite Israel's theological distinctness from its neighbors, the people shared in much of this belief. Today we live in a modern world that scorns those who believe in the supernatural, yet Christianity has historically affirmed the existence of demons, angels and the archenemy, Satan. We have therefore traditionally adopted an approach to the OT that posits a significant degree of continuity between their beliefs and ours. Indeed, a substantial amount of our information about Satan is derived from OT texts. Before we glibly equate Israel's beliefs with our own, however, we must examine the texts on their own merit and within their own contexts. Before we could commend an exegetical identification of the serpent as Satan in Genesis itself, we have to ask: What did the Israelites know about Satan? If we were to build a profile of Satan, a composite sketch, solely from the OT, what would emerge?

"Satan" is one of the few English words that has a Hebrew origin. In the OT it finds usage both as a verb and as a noun. As a verb it means "to oppose as an adversary" (Ps 38:20 [MT 38:21]; 71:13; 109:4, 20, 29; Zech 3:1). As a noun it can be applied to a human being, thus designating one an adversary (1 Sam 29:4; 2 Sam 19:22 [MT 19:23]; 1 Kings 5:4 [MT 5:18]; 11:14, 23, 25; Ps 109:6). Finally, in the category of most interest to this study, the noun is applied to supernatural beings (fourteen times in Job 1—2; three times in Zech 3:1-2; Num 22:22, 32; 1 Chron 21:1).

There are no cognates to the Hebrew term in the related Semitic languages Ugaritic or Akkadian, though the root does occur in Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic and a number of other distant relations. If the technical usage (noun applied to supernatural being) is original and the other usages developed from it, we would have to conclude, judging from the nuances of those other usages, that there was little of a sinister nature in

the being, for these other uses evidence none of that element. In contrast, however, the broadly generic sense of the common noun and verb use suggests that the technical usage is a secondary development. If this is indeed the case, it would be logical to assume that a supernatural being would have been given this designation as a description of his function (i.e., a heavenly adversary). This finds confirmation in the fact that in most of the cases where the noun is applied to a supernatural being, the definite article is attached to it. In English when we refer to someone by means of a proper name, we do not use a definite article (e.g., Sarah, not "the" Sarah). In this practice Hebrew behaves identically. Therefore, we must conclude that the individual in Job 1—2 and Zechariah 3:1-2 should be identified as "the accuser" (description of function) rather than as "Satan" (proper name). Based on the use of "satan" in the OT, we would have to conclude that Israel had little knowledge of a being named Satan or of a chief of demons, the devil, during the OT period.

There is no hint in the OT that the serpent of Genesis 2—3 was either identified as Satan or was thought to be inspired by Satan. The earliest extant reference to any association is found in Wisdom of Solomon 2:23-24 (first century B.C.):

> For God created us for incorruption,
> and made us in the image of his own eternity,
> but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
> and those who belong to his company experience it.

But even here, the devil is not given the name Satan and, in fact, was variously named in early literature. "This figure normally became Sammael in the Targum and in rabbinic tradition, but in a text known as the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, preserved only in Slavonic translation but datable to the same period that inspired the Syriac *Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Ezra*, the seductive angel is called Azazel" (Forsyth, 224). Perhaps the earliest reference to Satan as the tempter (through the serpent) is in *Apocalypse of Moses* 16—19 (properly titled *Life of Adam and Eve*), contemporary to the NT. This text also links Isaiah 14 to Satan's fall (Forsyth, 232-38). In the writings of the church fathers, one of the earliest to associate the serpent with Satan was Justin Martyr (*1 Apol.* 28.1; Forsyth, 351). From the NT material (esp. Rom 16:20; Rev 12:9), it is easy for us to draw a connection between the serpent and Satan. This theological conclusion, however, comes as a benefit from progressive revelation.

In conclusion, the NT views the serpent as related to Satan, and so might we, but it offers few details about how close an identification should be made or how the two were related. We do well to cite the treatment of this issue by E. J. Young. While he recognizes that Satan is not mentioned in the passage, he contends that "it is perfectly clear that Satan is here at work" (Young, 22). For those who might wonder to whom it is "perfectly clear," Young clarifies his remark:

> In the light of the plain statements of the New Testament [Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9; 20:2] we have every right to say that Eve was tempted of the devil. The evil thoughts which issued from the mouth of an actual snake found their origin in the devil himself. In some sense that we cannot understand, for God has not revealed it unto us, the snake was an instrument used of the devil. To attempt to explain how the devil employed the snake is a task of which we are not capable, nor is it particularly profitable that we should know how this was done. That it was done, however, the data of the Bible compel us to believe. *We are far from saying that Eve herself understood this when the words issued from the serpent's mouth; even Moses, the writer of Genesis, may not have had the full knowledge of the subject that is possessed by New Testament believers.* (Young, 22-23; italics added).

Here Young appropriately differentiates between our theological beliefs and the findings that can be exegetically derived from Genesis. We should also be reluctant to impart to the OT texts the information that Satan was to be equated with the serpent. Nonetheless, on the strength of allusions such as Romans 16:20, we are justified in accepting that the NT authors identified the serpent with Satan and therefore can be comfortable with that identification from a theological standpoint, even if the association would not have been recognized by OT Israel.

4. Curse of the Serpent.

The Egyptian Pyramid Texts (second half of the third millennium) contain a number of spells against serpents but likewise include spells against other creatures considered dangers or

pests. The serpent enjoys some prominence, however, since it is represented on the crown of the pharaoh. Some spells enjoin the serpent to crawl on its belly (keep its face on the path). This is in contrast to raising its head up to strike. A serpent on its belly is nonthreatening, while one reared up is protecting or attacking. Treading on the serpent is used in these texts as a means of overcoming or defeating it.

The depiction of dust or dirt for food is typical of descriptions of the netherworld in ancient literature. In the Gilgamesh Epic, Enkidu on his deathbed dreams of the netherworld and describes it as a place with no light and where "dust is their food, clay their bread," a description also known from the Descent of Ishtar. These are most likely considered characteristic of the netherworld because they describe the grave. Dust fills the mouth of the corpse, but dust will also fill the mouth of the serpent as it crawls along the ground.

See also EDEN, GARDEN OF.

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SETH

The third son of *Adam and *Eve, following *Cain (Gen 4:1) and *Abel (4:2), Seth is the "replacement" of Abel, who was murdered by his brother (Gen 4:8), and also the father of Enosh (Gen 5:6). That Seth replaces Abel may realize the connection of Adam and the ground: observe that Adam was taken from the ground (Gen 2:7), and Seth replaces Abel, whose blood cried out for revenge from that same ground (Gen 4:10). Seth is said to have lived 912 years (Gen 5:8) and is also the source of speculation in later Jewish (e.g., *1 En.* 37:1; *2 En.* 33:10; 71:32; *T. Benj.* 10:6; *T. Isaac* 3:15; *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 9:28), Christian (e.g., *Apos. Con.* 7.39.2-4; 8.5.3; 8.12.21; *Life of Adam and Eve*; *T. Adam*) and gnostic (e.g., *Apoc. Adam*) midrash.

1. Seth's Etymology
2. Seth as Righteous
3. Seth's Line
4. Seth as Source of Speculation: A Sampling

1. Seth's Etymology.

Eve explains the name she gives to her third son, Seth *(šēt)*, as "God has provided me [*šātlî*] with another offspring in place of Abel" (Gen 4:25 NJPS). The connection may be simple paronomasia rather than etymological derivation of the former from the latter, though most have agreed with Eve's account. Clearly, a connection is made here to Genesis 3:15 and God's concern with the propagation of a righteous seed that will eventually crush the *serpent's head (cf. Num 24:17). Genesis is concerned with this seed, a seed based here on divine replacement. This seed follows an *election based on God's *grace and the human who responds in faith (cf. Gen 10:2-20; 11:29; 17:20; 19:19-38; 36). Cain cannot be that seed; he is the murderer of God's favored one (Gen 4:4). The meaning "substitution," then, evokes the plan of the narrator. That the term *šāt* can also mean "foundation" is suggestive of Seth's future role in establishing the line of the seed that will crush the serpent's head.

2. Seth as Righteous.

2.1. The Image of Adam, the Image of God. Genesis 5:3, in the "family story" of Adam, states that Adam "became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image," and this gives emphasis to the ontic identity of Seth to Adam. That it is here that the father first names the child (cf. Gen 4:25; 5:3) may provoke the comment about the *image of God. Even more, it connects Seth to the creation of humans (Gen 1:26-27). The observation is not made about either Cain (or Abel), though we might assume it for them. Perhaps the likeness here, however, moves more in the direction of the seed of Genesis 3:15. That Cain is ignored in Genesis 5:3 supports the likeness-as-seed and shows the irrelevance of Cain to the seed of Adam. The narrator reveals that God is capable of creating new life to accomplish his purpose of defeating the serpent, even if the serpent's bite is seen in the murder of Abel.

2.2. The Fount of the Righteous Seed. Even

though a replacement, Seth and his descendants are the seed and the ones with whom true worship of the Creator God continues. Seth is the father of Enosh (lit. "man" and virtually synonymous with "Adam"), and "at that time people began to invoke the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26: *hûḥal liqrō' bĕšēm yhwh*). Since this contrasts with the later Exodus 3:15 and 6:3, some interpreters find here a historical anachronism. Further, the targumists found a similar tension and so understood *hûḥal* as indicative of the "beginning" and then also as derived from *ḥll* ("profane"), so that it was in the generation of Enosh that humans began to profane the name of the Yahweh. Thus, they began to make *idols and to call them by the name of Yahweh (so *Tg. Ps.-J.* 4:26 ["by the name of the Memra of the LORD"]; *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 4:26). The narrator of Genesis 4, however, sees true worship deriving from Adam and Enosh, the son of Seth. It should also be said that some think the narrator may have the tetragrammaton less in mind than he does the beginning of true worship, a worship that will find its purest expression under the Mosaic legislation when the sacred name will become the focus of Israel's worship and identity (Ex 3:15; 6:3; 19—24). That other patriarchs are described similarly confirms the focus of the author on true worship rather than on the patriarchs specifically using the name of Yahweh (cf. Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25). Further, the narrator uses the same sacred name in Eve's naming of Cain in Genesis 4:1. Nonetheless, there remains tension between this text and Exodus 6:3.

Perhaps no Jewish writer left a more accurate record of the impact of the image of Seth in the Pentateuch than Josephus: "He, after being brought up and attaining to years of discretion, cultivated virtue, excelled in it himself, and left descendants who imitated his ways" (*Ant.* 1.2.3 §68).

3. Seth's Line.

Seth's son, Enosh, is but the first of a series of links that conclude with *Abraham. The names in Genesis 1—11 in general reflect well-attested, second millennium B.C. evidence where we find West Semitic, Amorite and Hurrian names, while some names can be connected to place names of West Syria (*see* Language of the Pentateuch). Thus, we have Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methusaleh, Lamech, *Noah (Gen 5:6-28), *Shem (Gen 11:10) and others until *Terah and Abram (Gen 11:24, 26). There are no successful attempts at explaining the ages of the antediluvians other than that each one met the same end. Nor is there an explanation for their wives, though *Jubilees* 4:11 tells us that Seth took Azura, his sister, as his wife. Seth's line becomes the story of God's divine action in history as a result of replacing Abel after his murder at the hand of Cain. When the seed was threatened with extinction, Seth is raised to life to further the work of God.

4. Seth as Source of Speculation: A Sampling.

If the targumists find the origins of idolatry at the time of Enosh, Seth's son (see above), others discover enough room to create further typologies and paradigms. Seth becomes a prototypical man of righteousness and obedience in the Enochian literature of Jewish apocalypses (e.g., *1 En.* 37:1; *2 En.* 33:10; 71:32) and in the testamentary literature (cf. *T. Benj.* 10:6, where he is classed with Enoch, Abraham, *Isaac and *Jacob; *T. Isaac* 3:15, where he is classed with Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch and so on until Abraham). He is seen, probably in connection with a positive understanding of Genesis 4:26, as a righteous worshiper with Adam and Abel in *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 9:28 and so becomes a priest with dominion over the people in an early Christian text (*Apos. Con.* 8.5.3). Here also he is the prototypical holy one surrounded by other saints who thwarted sinfulness in their generation to preserve the seed of Adam (*Apos. Con.* 7.39.3-4; 8.12.21). Pseudo-Philo finds a special spot for Seth in the generation of the people of God (cf. *L.A.B.* 1.1-6). This is an early and deuterocanonical perception of Seth, even though nothing in Genesis speaks of Seth's own righteousness. Thus, Sirach 49:16 includes Seth, between Shem and Enosh, in a hymn to noble, righteous ancestors in Jewish history, including a focus on *Moses, *Aaron, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Enoch and Adam (Sir 44:1—50:24). Both 1 Chronicles 1:1 and Luke 3:38 anchor the heritage of Israel's *covenant blessings in Seth. Some rabbis thought he was born *circumcised (*'Abot R. Nat.* 2.12).

Probably because so little is known about Seth, later interpreters found their own secrets as originally given to Seth, sometimes directly from Adam himself. This theme is found especially among texts of a gnostic nature. Thus, *Life of Adam and Eve* tells the story of Adam's testa-

ment to Seth and enjoins upon him to tell the story of the *Fall to his (now sixty-two!) brothers and sisters (*L.A.E.* 24:1-3). This theme of revelatory secrets is prominent in other gnostic texts (e.g., *T. Adam* 3; *Apoc. Adam; Gospel of the Egyptians; Three Steles of Seth).* Saint Epiphanius of Salamis, in his *Refutation of All Heresies,* provides clarity on the "Sethians" who were evidently from Egypt and called "Seth" the "Christ" who was incarnated in Jesus (*Pan.* 39.1.3; 39.3.5). His descendants were the elect.

See also ABEL; ADAM; CAIN; EVE.

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S. McKnight

SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS

Sexuality and sexual ethics form a very prominent theme in the Pentateuch. Its teachings show a frankness, a remarkable comprehensiveness and an unprudish celebration of sex, balanced by reserve in language and acknowledgment of strict boundaries for sexual expression.

1. Sexual Terminology
2. Theology of Sex in the Pentateuch
3. Marriage Customs, Mores and Laws
4. Deviant Sexual Practices
5. Conclusion

1. Sexual Terminology.

Pentateuchal sexual vocabulary, though comprehensive, is mostly euphemistic.

1.1. Male Terms. The Pentateuch contains terms for testicles (*ʾešek;* Lev 21:20), penis (*šopkâ,* lit. "fluid duct"; Deut 23:1 [MT 23:2]), genitals (*mĕbūšîm,* "privates," related to the root *bôš,* "be ashamed"; Deut 25:11; cf. *ʿerwâ* and *bāśar* at 1.2 below), sperm (*zeraʿ,* lit. "seed"; Gen 38:9; Lev 15:16; 22:4; cf. Num 5:13: *šikbat zeraʿ,* "lying/discharge of seed"), generative power or virility (*ʾôn;* Gen 49:3; Deut 21:17), abnormal discharge (*zûb, zôb;* see 1.2 below), castration (lit. "wounded by crushing"; Deut 23:1 [MT 23:2]), foreskin (*ʿorlâ;* Gen 17:11) and circumcision (*mûl; mûlōt;* Gen 17:10-27). Loins (*ḥălāṣayim;* Gen 35:11) are from where descendants come. Thigh *(yārēk)* is used euphemistically for the male loins (Gen 46:26; Ex 1:5), which in the patriarchal narratives are sometimes held by a person while swearing solemn oaths (Gen 24:2-9; 47:29). The term for "intestines, internal organs" *(mēʿîm)* can be used either for the male loins (Gen 15:4) or the female womb (Gen 25:23).

1.2. Female Terms. The Pentateuch refers to breasts (*šad;* Gen 49:25) and the womb (*reḥem;* Gen 20:18; 29:31; 30:22; Ex 13:2; cf. *mēʿîm* above). The general word for belly (of either gender) can also be used for the womb (*beṭen;* Gen 25:23-24; 38:27; Num 5:21-22, 27). Genitals are euphemistically the region "between [a woman's] feet" (Deut 28:57) and are labeled "nakedness" (*ʿerwâ,* Lev 18 passim), a term also for male genitalia (Gen 9:22-23) and cognate with the word "naked" *(ʿārôm),* which *Adam and *Eve were in the garden without shame before the *fall (Gen 2:25). Genitals of either sex can also be labeled "flesh" (*bāśar;* Lev 15:2, 19).

The term for [a] menstruating [woman] (*nidda=;* Lev 12:2-5; 15:19-33) has as its root meaning "elimination [of blood]" but also means by extension "defilement, contamination, exclusion" (Lev 20:21; Num 19:9, 13, 20-21; 31:23; cf. Milgrom 1991, 745). Menstruation is called the woman's "flow, discharge" (*zûb, zôb;* Lev 15:19-25), a term that can also refer to male or female abnormal discharges due, for example, to gonorrhea or urinary infections (Lev 15:2-15, 25-30). The woman's period is also "the way *[derek]* of women" (Gen 31:35).

Barrenness is described as God's "restraining/holding back" the womb (*ʿāṣar;* Gen 16:2; 20:18). An "infertile" person (*ʿāqār;* Gen 11:30; 25:21; Deut 7:14 [sterile male or female]) is from a root also meaning "uproot, hamstring."

1.3. Terms Relating to Male and Female. Pentateuchal references to male-female relationships include betrothal of free women with dowry (*ʾāraś;* Ex 22:16 [MT 22:15]; Deut 20:7; 22:23, 25, 27-28; 28:30), designation of bondwomen to someone for marriage (*yāʿad;* Ex 21:8-9; cf. Neufeld, 69), marriage of a deceased brother's wife in levirate marriage (*yābam;* Gen

38:8; Deut 25:5, 7) and intermarriage between distinct kindred groups (*ḥātan;* Gen 34:9), a practice forbidden Israel with Canaanites (Deut 7:3). To "marry" is idiomatically "to take a woman/wife" (Gen 6:2; 24:3; Lev 18:18) but is also expressed by a verb meaning literally "to be husband, lord, owner" (*bāʿal,* Deut 21:13; also used with the noun *baʿal* ["lord, husband, owner, Baal"] in the idiom *bĕʿūlat baʿal* ["husbanded/possessed by a husband"] in Gen 20:3; Deut 22:22), implying the notion that a man had exclusive claim to his wife's sexuality and fertility (Wright, 196; pace Phillips, 15; Falk, 123, who assert that a wife's person, not merely her sexuality, was the husband's property).

When *Isaac "fondles" or "dallies with" Rebekah (Piel of *ṣāḥaq;* lit. "plays/has fun with"; Gen 26:8; cf. English "foreplay"), it is clear they are husband and wife, not brother and sister. The "desire" *(tĕšûqâ)* a woman has for her husband (Gen 3:16) is probably sexual attraction or urge (as in Song 7:10 [MT 7:11]) that leads her to marry despite its consequences of painful labor and male domination (pace Foh, 376-83, who interprets as "woman's desire to dominate" her husband based on the use of *tĕšûqâ* in Gen 4:7). To "know, experience" someone *(yādaʿ)* can mean to experience sex with that person (Gen 4:1; 19:8; Num 31:17; cf. Gen 19:5 [homosexual]). Synonymous expressions for copulation include to "lie with" a person (generally of illicit acts) (*šākab,* Gen 19:32-33; 30:15; cf. Lev 18:22 [homosexual]; Ex 22:19 [MT 22:18] [male bestiality]; cf. *šĕkōbet,* "lying, copulation, outpouring [of semen]" [lit. "give your lying (of seed)"], in Lev 18:20, 23 [male bestiality]; 20:15 [male bestiality]; Num 5:20; *miškāb,* "bed, act of lying, sex," in Lev 20:13), to "recline with" (*rābaʿ;* Lev 18:23; 20:16 [both of female bestiality]), to "go into, penetrate [sexually]" (*bôʾ;* Gen 6:4; 16:2, 4; 38:16; Deut 21:13), and "to uncover the nakedness *[ʿerwâ]* of" (Lev 18) and "approach" a person (*qārab;* Lev 18:14). "Cleaving" and "one flesh" (Gen 2:24) encompass, though are not limited to, physical, sexual union. There is "begetting" (Qal of *yālad,*"beget" [of men], "bear child" [of women]; Gen 4:18; 10:8; Hiphil, "cause to bear child," Gen 5:3-32) and "conceiving" (*hārâ;* Gen 16:4; 25:21). The word meaning to ravish or sexually violate (*šāgal;* Deut 28:30 + 3x in the Prophets) was so offensive that the Masoretes always substituted in the Qere (marginal reading) the euphemistic "lie with" *(šākab)* to avoid crude language in the synagogue. In Exodus 21:10 *ʿônâ* possibly means "conjugal rights" (others "cosmetics"; cf. Sprinkle 1994, 54 n. 1).

2. Theology of Sex in the Pentateuch.

2.1. Sex as Divine Blessing. Procreation is viewed positively in the *creation account as part of God's blessing to humankind (Gen 1:28), so that the world, including sexuality, is pronounced "very good" (Gen 1:31). Only Eve (Heb *ḥawwâ* ["producer of life"]; Gen 3:20) through childbearing (Gen 3:16, 20) could "help" (Gen 2:18, 20) Adam fulfill the divine commission to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). Moreover, marriage is a cure for loneliness (Gen 2:18) irrespective of whether children ensue. Woman, coming from the man's rib/side (Gen 2:21), was made for man of the same bone and flesh as man (Gen 2:23), shares the divine *image with man (Gen 1:27) and in marital union substantially restores the primordial "oneness" with him (Gen 2:24). Love between spouses and other family members is the expected norm (cf. Deut 28:54-56).

Sex is also central to the patriarchal narratives. God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob countless "descendants" (lit. "seed"; Gen 13:16; 26:4; 28:14; 32:12 [MT 32:13]), and Israel multiplied prolifically in Egypt (Ex 1:7; the censuses list over 600,000 adult males in the wilderness, Numbers 1—3; 26). Thus God fulfilled his promise of making them as numerous as the stars of heaven (Deut 1:10; cf. Gen 15:5; 22:17).

*Circumcision, the symbol of the Abrahamic covenant, was a reminder of the seed promise (Gen 17:7-14) and was associated with the covenant obligations to walk blamelessly before Yahweh (Gen 17:1), making the Israelite male sexual organ a symbol of dedication to God.

2.2. Sex as Symbol of Uncleanness. The ideal sexuality of *Eden changed with the fall. In place of openness came shame; joy and love were marred by pain, lust and domination (Gen 3:7, 16). This warping of sexuality is perhaps one reason why the Pentateuch makes sexual expressions a source of ceremonial uncleanness, whether by abnormal male discharges or even normal ejaculation during intercourse (Lev 15:1-18), or for women during their periods or any abnormal vaginal bleeding (Lev 15:19-30) and forty or eighty days after the release of the bloody placenta in childbirth (Lev 12:1-8). These all, arguably, symbolized loss of potential

life (blood) and vitality (the fatigue of men after ejaculation) and hence movement toward death in contrast with God, who is associated with life (cf. Milgrom 1991, 766-68). The rule on childbirth additionally ensured that the woman had time to heal before renewing sexual activity.

An Israelite had to refrain from sex before entering the presence of God, for sexual propriety was absolutely mandatory in worship (Ex 19:15; 20:26; 28:42-43). Thus, unlike certain ancient pagan cults in which sexual acts were performed, Israel totally separated sexuality from worship.

3. Marriage Customs, Mores and Laws.

3.1. Marriage.

3.1.1. Ordinary Marriage. Marriage in the OT and the ancient Near East was a contractual arrangement, arranged by the girl's father (or other male guardian), who could veto any decision to marry made without him (Ex 22:16-17 [MT 22:15-16]; similarly Laws of Eshnunna §27), though a considerate guardian would at least consult the girl before concluding the deal (Gen 24:58). Presents might be given the girl (Gen 24:53), but it was essential to give the girl's family a brideprice *(mōhar)*: for Rebekah (Gen 24:53), for Dinah (Gen 34:12) and for Rachel and Leah (Gen 29:18, 28-30). The exact amount of the brideprice was subject to negotiation except when set high as a penal sanction (Deut 22:28-29).

The father, in turn, was expected to give his daughter a dowry (mentioned only in 1 Kings 9:16 and Mic 1:14, but well known from second-millennium Mesopotamia and fifth-century and later Jewish marriage contracts). Laban gave Rebekah, Rachel and Leah female slaves as dowries (Gen 24:59-61; 29:24-29), though the latter two complained that this was inadequate in return for Jacob's years of service (Gen 31:15). The dowry belonged to the woman and in case of her death before bearing children went back to her father (cf. Code of Hammurabi §§162-164) and in case of divorce ordinarily left with the woman unless forfeited though her bad behavior (cf. Code of Hammurabi §§138, 141-142, 149), a fact that would discourage divorce.

3.1.2. Slave Wives. Money was paid both for a slave wife *('āmâ)* and a free wife, but only the free wife brought dowry into the marriage, giving her higher social status. Mosaic law demands that slave wives be treated like freeborn daughters and given full wifely privileges (Ex 21:7-11). Hagar was a slave wife to Abraham, Zilpah and Bilhah to Jacob (Gen 16:3; 30:3-8).

3.1.3. Polygamy. Although polygamy (more specifically, polygyny) was allowed, Genesis 2:24 assumes that the ordinary pattern of marriage is of the "two" becoming one. Only the wealthy could afford to pay multiple brideprices, and even wealthy kings were adjured not to multiply wives to excess (Deut 17:17). Narratives describe, and laws regulate, the family strife polygamous marriages created (Gen 16:5; 21:10; 29:30-33; Ex 21:10-11; Lev 18:18; Deut 21:15-16). That Lamech, the Bible's first polygamist, was also a murderer (Gen 4:23) of the lineage of *Cain hints at a negative evaluation of the practice.

Although polygamy seems alien to those in Western cultures, the modern practice of serial marriages is, anthropologically speaking, akin to polygamy. Polygamy did serve a useful social function whenever the male population was decimated by war (cf. Is 4:1).

3.2. Children. Childbearing, as opposed to barrenness and miscarriage, was considered God's blessing (Gen 1:28; Ex 23:26) and fulfillment of the patriarchal promise (see 2.1 above). Barrenness was thought a divine closing of the womb (Gen 16:2; 30:2) and was a social blemish and source of anguish for women (Gen 30:1), so every effort was made to conceive, including prayer (Gen 25:21) and the use of mandrakes, considered a fertility herb (Gen 30:14-16).

3.3. Divorce. The pentateuchal laws permit divorce under certain circumstances, though that right to divorce could be removed (Deut 22:19, 28-29; also in Egyptian law; cf. Lorton, 42).

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 precludes a divorcée from remarrying her first husband if she subsequently married a second husband, a rule that applies regardless of whether the second husband divorced her or died. The case presupposes that a woman could be divorced through a process involving issue of a certificate of divorce, a document allowing the woman to remarry without accusation of adultery. (The Bible never mentions marriage contracts, though they were common in contemporary Mesopotamia.) The Pentateuch is silent about the possibility of a woman's divorcing a man, though fifth-century B.C. Jewish marriage contracts from Elephantine, Egypt, indicate that a woman could divorce her husband, a liberty that perhaps goes back to pentateuchal times (Sprinkle 1997, 544).

A man could not divorce his wife unless there was some sort of unseemly wifely behavior, literally a "nakedness of a thing" (*ʿerwat dābār*, Deut 24:1). This limitation on the husband's prerogatives served to elevate the wife's dignity and standing in Israel's society (Neufeld, 176).

The precise meaning of "nakedness of a thing" is disputed. Many interpreters believe that this term excludes adultery, since adultery was a grounds for execution, not divorce (e.g., Phillips, 112; see 4.1 below). However, the matter is complicated. The word "nakedness" (*ʿerwâ*) is used frequently in an idiom for sexual intercourse (see 1.3 above), so sexual connotations seem likely. Since execution required two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6-7), a man could know his wife had committed adultery but be unable to prove it. Cases of adultery not proven in court could be a matter of divorce (Otto, 138). Moreover, a man, out of compassion, might choose not to press capital charges but divorce instead (cf. Joseph and Mary, Mt 1:19).

Several arguments (marshaled by Wells) suggest that "nakedness of a thing" might include adultery as grounds for divorce. First, Jeremiah 3:1-8 cites the law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and applies it by analogy to the relationship between God and Israel. Rather than executing Israel for her adulteries, God sent her away into Assyrian exile with a "certificate of divorce" (Jer 3:8). Hence, Jeremiah understood "nakedness of a thing" in Deuteronomy 24:1 to be applicable to cases of adultery. Second, Proverbs 6:32-35 says that adultery will destroy a man since the woman's husband will accept no ransom *(kōper)* nor gift *(šōḥad)*. This statement suggests that the husband might accept money in lieu of the execution of his wife's paramour. The option of ransom in lieu of execution is sometimes explicit (Ex 21:29-30; 1 Kings 20:39) and arguably was assumed to be possible unless explicitly disallowed (Num 35:31). If so, the paramour might ransom his life with money, while the woman might save herself by forfeiting her dowry. Third, Mesopotamian and Egyptian laws allowed husbands the choice of having both wife and paramour executed, or else neither (Code of Hammurabi §129; Middle Assyrian Laws §§A14-16, 22-23; Hittite Laws §198; Lorton, 14-15, 38-39). If acceptance of ransom in lieu of execution were possible with adultery, biblical law would be consistent with its ancient Near Eastern milieu, as it often is. Fourth, the false-witness law of Deuteronomy 19:15-19 ("you will do to him just as he intended to do to his brother," Deut 19:19) suggests that the man who falsely accused his wife of adultery (Deut 22:13-21) should be executed as she would have been. Instead he was flogged, fined and prohibited from ever divorcing her. If a typical outcome of adultery were divorce with forfeiture of the woman's dowry, then this man's penalty would be comparable. These arguments suggest that a woman's adultery was punishable either by execution or divorce with loss of dowry; hence, adultery was a major reason for divorce.

Other fundamental breaches of the marriage covenant also served as grounds for divorce (see Sprinkle 1997, 543-47). Sometimes divorce appears to be mandated by God's command: A slave wife must be set free if the husband (having taken a second wife) refuses to keep his obligation to provide her appropriate food, clothes and *ʿônâ* (conjugal rights?; see 1.3 above; Ex 21:10-11). A woman married to an Israelite after being captured in war must likewise be set free if the man is no longer willing to live with her as husband and wife, for she cannot remain as a slave (Deut 21:10-14). A woman who is "set free" after marriage is by implication given a divorce. Similarly, God tells Abraham to send away his slave wife Hagar (Gen 21:8-14), perhaps because the row between her and Sarah made performing spousal duties impossible, and perhaps because of her own unruliness against husbandly authority. As Wenham (1994, 82) observes, the verb used when Abraham "sends [Hagar] off" (Gen 21:14; Piel of *šālaḥ*) is the same verb used elsewhere for divorce (Deut 22:19; 24:1, 3), and the verb used when Sarah asks him to "drive her out" (Gen 21:10; Piel of *gāraš*) is also used for divorce (Lev 21:7, 14; 22:13). Divorce is clearly implied here as well.

In Ezra 9—10, divorce of pagan wives is demanded "in accord with the law" (Ezra 10:3), which forbade marriage to Canaanites (Deut 7:1-5) lest they lead Israel into idolatry and sin. Not all of these women were Canaanites (Ezra 9:1-2), but perhaps the "nakedness of a thing" (Deut 24:1) in this case was a breach of the wife's duty to rear Jewish children in the Jewish faith.

Returning to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, why is remarriage to a first husband after a second marriage forbidden even if the second husband

dies? A number of views have been offered (see Sprinkle 1997, 531 n. 4; Otto, 138), none of which are certain. But among the more plausible ideas are that this A-B-A pattern of marriage to the first husband, then to the second, then back to the first was disruptive of the boundaries that define a family (Pressler 1991, 60-62), being akin to incest (Wenham 1979, 36-40). The husband having declared the first wife "unclean" so as to claim her dowry (Westbrook, 404-5) could not repeat the process but had to abide by his original declaration. This provision, by restricting male titles of disposal over women, bestowed to women an elevated legal status (Otto, 138).

4. Deviant Sexual Practices.

4.1. Adultery. The *Decalogue unconditionally prohibits adultery *(nā'ap)* as a sin fundamentally incompatible with a covenant relationship with God (Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18). Mesopotamia also considered adultery a religious sin (Loewenstamm, 147-48). The term *adultery* in the Pentateuch refers to intercourse with a woman who is married (Deut 22:22) or inchoately married (betrothed; Deut 22:23-27; similarly Laws of Ur-Nammu §6 [numbering per Roth, 17]; Laws of Eshnunna §26) and is condemned as a violation of the husband's prerogatives. The marital status of the woman is especially relevant, for a married man who had sex with a single woman would not have been said to have committed *nā'ap* (but see 4.2 and 4.6 below).

Both the adulterer and the adulteress were subject to capital punishment (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:24 [stoning]; contrast Laws of Ur-Nammu §7, which exonerates the man if the woman initiates the adultery). An exception is the case of an inchoately married slave girl (Lev 19:20-22), where the girl is not executed because she was not free to refuse or the betrothal was not fully established by money, but the man was required to offer a guilt/reparation offering to God (implying also restitution to the master) for his offense.

Execution for adultery depended upon several factors. The woman would escape culpability if she cried out, indicating that she was an unwilling participant (Deut 22:24; cf. Code of Hammurabi §130, Middle Assyrian Laws §A12), and she is given the benefit of the doubt if she is violated where no one could hear her cries (Deut 22:25-27). The requirement of two or three witnesses for capital cases (Deut 17:6-7) precluded most executions for sexual offenses, and divorce or ransoming rather than execution was probably an option (see 3.3 above).

Given the severity of the potential penalty, accusations of adultery were not to be made lightly. In Deuteronomy 22:13-21 a man after first intercourse defames his bride, claiming she was not a virgin. The accusation is not merely one of premarital sex (pace Tigay, 477-78; Pressler 1994, 105), since premarital sex was not a capital crime (see 4.2 below). Rather, she had committed adultery during the betrothal (inchoate marriage) period, for which she could be stoned (Deut 22:20-21), though the man's real motive may be monetary: divorce with forfeiture of dowry (see 3.3 above). A falsely accused bride could exonerate herself by producing "evidence of virginity" *(bĕtûlîm)*, usually taken as the bloody bedcloth after the rupture of the woman's hymen during her first intercourse (Deut 22:14, 20), though Wenham (1972, 326-48), noting that bleeding at first intercourse is an unreliable indicator of a woman's virginity and rejecting the view that *bĕtûlîm* denotes "virginity" per se, takes *bĕtûlîm* as a term of marriageability, contextually "evidence of nubility," that is, a menstrual cloth worn recently by the girl proving she was not pregnant before the consummation of the marriage. If the girl is exonerated, the man is flogged and pays an extremely large, one-hundred-shekel fine—the value of two prime adult male or three prime female slaves (Lev 27:3-4)—to the girl's father, twice the amount charged for rape (Deut 22:28-29). This "double" amount might be taken as a penalty for attempted theft of the woman's dowry (*see* Theft and Deprivation of Property). Additionally, he is prohibited from ever divorcing her (on why his false testimony is not a capital crime, see 3.3 above). If "evidence of virginity/nubility" is not found—presumably also collaborated with other evidence (cf. Deut 17:6; 19:15)—then punishment was death by stoning at the doorstep of her father's house (Deut 22:21), since she acted immorally while still under her father's jurisdiction. The purpose of this law was primarily to protect a woman against a husband's frivolous accusations of unfaithfulness (cf. Code of Hammurabi §127, which prescribes flogging for defaming another's wife).

The Pentateuch indicates adultery could also be punished by God through such things as

plagues (Gen 12:17; 20:7). Numbers 5:11-31 gives a case where a husband, in a fit of jealousy, accuses his wife of adultery. To resolve the issue, the woman must undergo a self-curse ritual at the *tabernacle with a *priest. She drinks water mixed with tabernacle soil, the "waters of bitterness." The curse states that if she is innocent, no harm will befall her, but if not, "let her thigh fall and her belly swell" (Num 5:20-22). The exact meaning of this curse is unclear, but thigh and belly probably refer to the woman's external and internal sexual organs (see 1 above), so the curse may be sterility (cf. Num 5:28; Milgrom 1990, 41, 303) or the appearance of a false pregnancy (Brichto, 55-70). The result is that a guilty woman would live under the threat of divine curse, but an innocent woman would be exonerated by the oath-taking (similarly Code of Hammurabi §131) and her husband precluded from further expressions of irrational jealousy.

4.2. Seduction and Rape. Adulteresses and prostitutes seduce men (Tamar and Potiphar's wife; Gen 38:14-15; 39:7, 12), and Balaam apparently used Moabite/Midianite women's sexuality to seduce Israelites into idolatry and bring on them a curse (Num 31:15-18; cf. 25:1-2, 6-7). If a man seduced and deflowered an unbetrothed maiden—were she betrothed, it would be adultery—then he had to pay the father the brideprice for maidens and marry her unless the father refused, in which case he still lost the brideprice (Ex 22:16-17 [MT 22:15-16]). Such a regulation served to discourage irresponsible sexual behavior, for the man might suffer economic loss and still not get the girl he wanted, or he might end up with a wife he did not want. It also compensated the girl's family for economic loss, since a deflowered maiden would command less dowry.

This law may be compared with several ancient Near Eastern laws: Sumerian Law Exercise Tablet §7'-8', which perhaps prescribes "marriage" as penalty for deflowering a maiden, though if identification could not be proven, the suspect was still required to swear an oath; Laws of Ur-Nammu §§6 and 8, where deflowering a "virgin" wife was punishable by death but deflowering a man's virgin slave resulted in a fine of five shekels; and Laws of Eshnunna §31 where a fine of twenty shekels is prescribed for deflowering a slave girl.

Rape of an unbetrothed maiden carried a stronger penalty. In this case the guilty man had to pay a brideprice specified at fifty shekels, a very high price, that of a prime adult male slave (Lev 27:3)—a day laborer earned only about a shekel per month (Sprinkle 1997, 544). Furthermore, he was prohibited from ever divorcing her (Deut 22:28-29). That the father could veto the match is not stated, though it may be assumed.

In the narratives, the rape (or possibly seduction) of Dinah (Gen 34:1-31) outraged her brothers. Shechem had "humiliated her" (Gen 34:2; Heb *ʿānâ* ["humiliate, violate"] is used of enforced marriages, simple adultery and rape; cf. Deut 21:14; 22:24, 29) and "treated her like a whore" (Gen 34:31) in indulging in sex without permission of her family, though Simeon and Levi's treacherous murder of Shechem's clan for a noncapital offense and profaning of the sacred covenant rite of circumcision in the process was even more reprehensible (cf. Gen 49:6-7).

Assyrian laws were harsh: Middle Assyrian Laws §A55-56 say that if one rapes a man's unbetrothed maiden, they will rape the rapist's wife, or else he pays triple the value of the maiden (a triple brideprice) and is forced to marry her (cf. Deut 22:28-29), though, as in Exodus 22:16-17 (MT 22:15-16), the father can keep the money but refuse the daughter. Middle Assyrian Laws §A9 states that if a man grabs a woman or kisses her, his finger could be cut off for the grab and his lip cut with the blade of an ax for the kiss (cf. Deut 25:12, where a woman's hand could be amputated for grabbing a man's genitals; see 4.10 below).

4.3. Incest. The laws prohibit conjugal relations between close relatives, many of which were violated by the patriarchs who lived before these laws were given. Prohibitions include sex with a father's wife whether or not she was one's biological mother (Lev 18:7-8; 20:11; Deut 22:30 [MT 23:1]; 27:20; violated by Reuben, who slept with Bilhah, Gen 35:22; 49:4; applied to Christians by Paul, 1 Cor 5:1), with sisters or stepsisters (Lev 18:9, 11; 20:17; Deut 27:22; violated by Abraham, Gen 20:12; cf. 2 Sam 13:7-14), with granddaughters (Lev 18:10), with paternal or maternal aunts (Lev 18:12-14; 20:19-20), with daughters- or sisters-in-law (Lev 18:15-16; 20:12, 21; violated by Judah with Tamar, Gen 38:11-19), with stepdaughters, step-granddaughters and mothers-in-law (Lev 18:17; 20:14; Deut 27:23) and with two sisters at the same time (Lev 18:18; violated by Jacob, Gen 29:21-28). Exception is

made for levirate marriage, in which a man could (and is subject to shaming if he does not) marry a childless, widowed sister-in-law to raise up an heir for the deceased (Deut 25:5-10; cf. Gen 38), a custom that served a social need to care for childless widows.

Strangely, there is no explicit statement about incest with one's daughter, though the narrative about Lot's daughters (Gen 19:31-38) clearly implies that such Sodom-like behavior was reprehensible. Nor is there explicit prohibition of incest with a full sister. Leviticus 18 perhaps omits the most obvious cases to concentrate on those that are more doubtful. However, even the most obvious cases are covered in the general prohibition against sex with close relatives (*śĕʾēr bĕśārô;* Lev 18:6), an expression that is defined elsewhere (Lev 21:2-3) as including one's mother, sister and daughter (Milgrom 2000, 1527).

Where incest was provable, it was a capital offense (Lev 20:11-12, 14), but other punishments are mentioned: divine curse (Deut 27:20-23), "bearing guilt" (Lev 20:19, perhaps explained by Lev 20:20-21), dying childless (Lev 20:20-21) and being "cut off from one's people" (Lev 18:27-29; 20:17). This last expression may denote neither banishment nor human execution, but death and extirpation of descendants by divine intervention or separation from the relatives in the afterlife. The afterlife view explains why some cases involved both "execution" and divine "cutting off" (Ex 31:14; Lev 20:2-3; cf. Milgrom 1991, 457-60 for a full discussion). Threat of divine punishment in the case of incest was important since incest was, and is, a sin done in private and so difficult to prosecute in court.

Code of Hammurabi §§154-158 condemns and prescribes punishment for incest with a daughter (banishment), a son's wife (water ordeal) or a son's betrothed (thirty shekels to girl and marriage annulled), one's mother (both burned) and being found in a deceased father's wife's lap (disinherited). Hittite Laws §§189-198 allow marriage with a widowed stepmother, with sisters and their mother (if not at the same location), with one's deceased wife's sister and levirate marriage, but prohibits sex with one's mother, daughter, son, stepdaughter, mother-in-law or sister-in-law (for Hittite ideology, see 4.5 below).

Inbreeding can produce genetic deformities in children, and this may be one reason for these prohibitions. However, such an explanation does not account for the prohibitions against marrying biologically unrelated in-laws. Instead, the primary motivation appears to be to define and protect the integrity of the family, the basic building block of society, from socially destructive forces that promiscuousness within families would unleash, and to protect widows from the abuse of being reduced to concubinage for other male family members.

4.4. Homosexual Acts. Homosexual copulation was practiced with other sexual sins among the Canaanites (Lev 20:23). Mesopotamian laws leave homosexuality unregulated except Middle Assyrian Laws §§A19-20, one of falsely accusing a man of being a "female" partner for homosexuals for which the penalty included fifty blows with a rod, one month of servitude and a fine, and the other of sodomizing (raping?) another man, for which the penalty is to be sodomized, then castrated. Hittite Laws, while condemning bestiality, did not consider homosexual acts as sins (Hoffner, 81-90), except when it involved incest with one's own son (Hittite Laws §189). In contrast, Leviticus 18:22 unequivocally prohibits sex between men, and Leviticus 20:13 states it was punishable by death. That Canaanites practiced it does not sufficiently explain the prohibition. Rather, at issue in context (Lev 18:6-23) is the integrity of the family.

This regulation presupposes that in creating humankind as "male and female" and decreeing that sex is to occur "according to its kind" (Gen 1), God established a design for sexuality, disruption of which is both a revolt against the divine word and damage to social life.

Although the OT generally speaks of "acts" and had no vocabulary for "sexual orientation," this reasoning suggests biblical authors would consider homosexual orientation a form of sexuality gone awry. Sexuality's purpose from creation was to drive humans to heterosexual union, which in turn produces the "blessing" of procreation (Gen 1:27-28), in contrast to homosexual sterility. The prohibition against women wearing men's clothing and vice versa (Deut 22:5) supports this thesis. This law, akin to other rules of forbidden mixtures (Deut 22:9-11), prohibits blurring of sexual identities (Harland, 73-75). Transvestite behavior confuses the God-intended differences between male and female (cf. Lev 18:22).

No mention is made in the OT of lesbian ho-

moerotic behavior, perhaps because it was less common (but see Rom 1:26), though there is little doubt that it too would be considered an "unlawful mixture."

The Sodom and Gomorrah narrative (Gen 19; cf. the English word "sodomy") tells how the men of Sodom demanded homosexual relations with the two men (actually angels) who had come to visit Lot (Gen 19:5), but he dissuaded them, and in a concession showing that he had been influenced by Sodom's ethical standards, Lot offered the mob his virgin daughters instead (Gen 19:8; contrast Lev 19:29). Read in the light of the Pentateuch's sex laws, the request by the men of Sodom was doubly offensive: not only a homosexual act, but also gang rape.

J. Boswell's influential work, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Boswell, 91-117), argues that the Sodom narrative has been fundamentally misunderstood and that the essential sin at Sodom was not homosexuality but a lack of hospitality, a virtue valued more then than now. Lot violated custom at Sodom by entertaining foreign guests without permission of the city elders, and so they came, not wanting to "know" (Heb *yāda*ʿ) the guests sexually, but to "know" who they were (similarly, Calvin's commentary). Elsewhere when the sins of Sodom are listed, injustice, adultery, pride, indifference to the poor and general wickedness are mentioned, but not homosexuality (Is 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Ezek 16:46-48). Boswell claims that Jesus, who mentions Sodom in conjunction with the failure of cities to receive his disciples (Mt 10:14-15; Lk 10:10-12), also interpreted this narrative as a lack of hospitality and that this story is at most tangentially related to sexuality. It follows that those who show lack of hospitality toward homosexuals are the real sodomites.

Such a reconstruction is hardly sufficient, however. What the men of Sodom wanted to do to the angels was, to be sure, an act of inhospitality, but the homosexual element cannot easily be eliminated. That "know" *(yāda*ʿ*)* can be used for copulation is well-established (see 1.3 above) both in Genesis 4:1 and the immediate context where Lot offers to the men his two daughters "who have not known a man" (Gen 19:8). Lot's offering the men sexual gratification with his daughters as a substitute clearly indicates that the men wanted to "know" Lot's guests in the sexual sense. In Judges 19:22-26, a narrative clearly modeled after Genesis 19, the Benjaminites of Gibeah who want to "know" a Levite guest, accepted as substitute his concubine whom they proceeded to rape and abuse all night. Boswell's reading of Genesis 19 involves wrenching it from its canonical context, ignoring that the Sodom narrative is woven into a literary work, the Pentateuch, which includes laws. In such a context, narratives were meant to be read by a person informed by these laws, and the laws condemn all homosexual intercourse.

As for the other passages, the sins of Sodom were not limited to homosexual acts. Genesis 18:20 and 19:13 speak of the "outcry" *(zaʿăqâ/ṣaʿaqâ)* of Sodom and Gomorrah, a term that can refer to the outcry of those who are oppressed, and this justifies the prophetic usage of Sodom as a symbol against Judah, whose sins were not primarily homosexual. Nevertheless, scriptural repugnancy toward homosexual acts, and that such an act was, as it were, the last straw before Sodom's destruction, contributed to Sodom's becoming proverbial for wickedness. According to Ezekiel 16:47-50, the richness of Sodom ("like a garden of the LORD," Gen 13:10) led to pride and callousness in committing "abominations" *(tôʿēbâ;* probably an allusion to the "abomination" of homosexual sex in Lev 18:22 and 20:13) and injustice to the poor. There was no need, contrary to biblical preference for euphemism in sexual matters, to spell out the homosexual element of Sodom's sins in subsequent texts: the name Sodom itself sufficed. Moreover, contrary to Boswell's thesis, no prophetic text that mentions Sodom specifies its sin as "lack of hospitality" to strangers. In Matthew 10:14-15 and Luke 10:10-12, associating Sodom with lack of hospitality is a possible inference, but an alternative is that failure to receive God's (angelic or apostolic) messengers brings judgment (Carson, 246). On the other hand, Jude 7 does refer to certain angels who, similarly to Sodom and Gomorrah, "likewise" acted immorally and "went after strange flesh" *(sarkos heteras);* thus, Jude compares pejoratively what is probably the angel-to-women unions of Genesis 6:1-4 with the male-to-male lusts at Sodom (*see* Sons of God, Daughters of Man).

In terms of Christian ethics it has been argued that the law of Leviticus 18:22, like the nearby prohibition against sex with a menstruating woman (Lev 18:19; see 4.8 below), is ceremonial rather than moral and so is no longer binding on Christians under the new covenant

(so Thurston, 13). Sometimes it is claimed that *tôʿēba* ("abomination") is specific to ceremonial matters.

This line of reasoning is problematic, however, for several reasons. If accepted, this argument would also undermine the applicability of the incest and bestiality laws of Leviticus 18 that are more obviously moral in nature. Second, in the OT, ceremonial laws were binding on Israel but not on the nations, who instead were held responsible only for more purely moral obligations (cf. Is 13—23; Amos 1—2). Yet Leviticus 18:27 and 20:23 indicate that the failure to keep these laws of incest and homosexuality was the reason God would drive the Canaanite nations from the land, suggesting that they are more than merely ceremonial laws. An attempt to limit the moral obligation of the homosexual command solely to the Israelites and other residents of the holy land appears forced (pace Milgrom 2000, 1786-90). Third, the LXX of Leviticus 20:13 states, "Whoever sleeps with a male in the manner of bedding (intercourse with) a woman *[meta arsenos koitēn gynaikos]*, they have both committed an abomination." The second of Paul's words for homosexuals in 1 Corinthians 6:9, *arsenokoitai*, combines elements of the "male" *(arsēn)* and the word "bed/intercourse" *(koitē)*. This compound word, not found in any extant Greek text earlier than 1 Corinthians, is probably derived directly from the LXX of Leviticus 20:13; thus, Paul's use of the term presupposes and reaffirms Leviticus's condemnation of homosexual acts for the Christian (Hays, 382-83).

On homosexual prostitutes (*qādēš, keleb;* Deut 23:17-18 [MT 23:18-19]), see 4.6 below.

4.5. Bestiality. A man or a woman who copulated with an animal was subject to execution along with the animal (Ex 22:19 [MT 22:18]; Lev 18:23; 20:15-16; Deut 27:21). This prohibition is based on the perception that such acts violated the divinely prescribed hierarchy and division between humankind in the image of God and the beasts, and the rule that mating be "according to their kind" (Gen 1:24-31). Bestiality is an unlawful "confusion/mixture/perversion" (Heb *tebel*, from *bālal*, "to mix, tangle up") between the species (Lev 18:23). That no animal was a suitable "helper" for Adam implies a rejection of bestiality (Gen 2:18-22). Transgression of this results in punishment not only of the person but also of the beast (similarly, a human-goring ox is "executed," Ex 21:28-30). For Israel such acts brought defilement that could, ultimately, expel the whole nation from the land (Lev 18:23-25).

Ancient near Eastern secular law collections did not regulate bestiality, and its gods sometimes engaged in bestial acts: Innana in a Sumerian hymn copulates with horses; Babylonian Ishtar with a bird, a lion and a stallion in the Gilgamesh Epic (Tablet VI, lines 48-56); Ugaritic Baal with a heifer (Eichler, 96-97). Whether these gods took the form of animals during these acts is unclear. The Hittites, like Israel, viewed both incest and bestiality as sins of impurity (Hittite Laws §§187-188, 199) that could provoke the gods to wrath, were punishable by death and required sacrificial cleansing rituals (Hoffner, 85-86), though bestiality with horses and mules was only mildly punished: the offender could not approach the king or become a priest (Hittite Laws §200a).

4.6. Prostitution/Harlotry. The verb *zānâ* and its related cognates (*zônâ*, "harlot"; *zĕnûnîm, zĕnût*, "harlotry") refer to all forms of illicit sex between a man and a woman, whether that be professional prostitution (Tamar; Gen 38:15), freely offered sex outside of marriage (Moabite women; Num 25:1) or marital unfaithfulness as in the metaphorical usage of Israel "whoring after" other gods though betrothed to Yahweh (Ex 34:15-16; Lev 20:5-6; Deut 31:16).

Harlotry is a term of contempt in the Pentateuch. Fathers are admonished not to give their daughters into prostitution since that fosters further debauchery in the land (Lev 19:29), but no penalty is stated for violation. Israelites were not to be either female or male prostitutes, and money acquired through prostitution could not be given to the sanctuary (Deut 23:17-18 [MT 23:18-19]). When Dinah was violated by Shechem, her brothers were outraged because their sister was "treated like a harlot" (Gen 34:31). Tamar was in threat of execution for becoming pregnant through "harlotry" (Gen 38:24), though not because she gave sex in exchange for money—only the daughters of priests were subject to legal sanction for simple harlotry (Lev 21:9; see 4.9 below)—but because being in effect betrothed to Shelah, her illicit sex amounted to adultery (Wenham 1994, 369).

Does the Pentateuch refer to "sacred prostitution," that is, ritualized sexual intercourse at a temple? There was in Corinth the famous brothel of Aphrodite. At Babylon (and similarly

at Cyprus) according to Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.199), though not confirmed by cuneiform sources, every woman was obligated to prostitute herself once at the temple of a goddess (Ishtar?). These practices have often been associated with Deuteronomy 23:17-18 (MT 23:18-19) that prohibits any female from being a *qĕdēšâ* ("holy one [fem.]"), seemingly defined in the next verse as a "prostitute" *(zônâ)*, and any male from being a *qādēš* ("holy one [masc.]"), seemingly defined as the "dog" of the next verse, and prohibits their wages from being given to the sanctuary.

The exact meaning of "dog" *(keleb)* is uncertain. Though literal dogs are mentioned in association with prostitutes (1 Kings 22:38), and halakic exegesis took the verse as referring to money obtained by selling a literal dog (*m. Tem.* 6:3), probably it is a term for male prostitutes rather than canines (pace Goodfriend 1995, 381-97), though the reason for this metaphor is conjectural: Did he take the stance of a dog during sex? Is this some sort of title for a "faithful" cult official (a fourth-century B.C. inscription at Kition lists "dog" as a minor cult official; Goodfriend 1992, 5:507)? Is it pejorative slang for male prostitutes? Did he service only men, or possibly women also? Moreover, did the *qĕdēšâ* and the *qādēš* engage in sex with each other in a form of sympathetic magic to induce the gods to give fertility to the land? The present state of knowledge allows no certain answers to such questions.

That "sacred prostitution" was part of a rite to give fertility to the land has been widely speculated, but no solid evidence supports it, and recent scholarship radically questions whether the OT refers to "sacred prostitution" at all (Tigay, 480-81; van der Toorn, 5:510-12). Tamar becomes a *qĕdēšâ* (Gen 38:21-22), but she seems to be an ordinary harlot, not a cult prostitute. The basic idea of "holiness" (root *qdš*) has to do with the "separation" and could refer to the *qĕdēšâ*-harlot in the sense that prostitutes are separated or alienated from the larger community (Goodfriend 1995, 385). Hosea 4:14 speaks of men offering sacrifice with the *qĕdēšâ* (parallel with *zônâ*), which could be a part of sacred prostitution, but the offense could be that of bringing the ceremonially unclean (secular) prostitute into the sanctuary. On the other hand, in Kings the masculine *qādēš* is regularly mentioned in conjunction with cultic offenses (1 Kings 14:23-24; 15:12; 2 Kings 23:6-16), so the idea of cultic prostitution cannot be altogether ruled out.

4.7. Indecency. In Genesis 9:20-27, Noah, having become drunk, lay down in his tent naked. Ham, his son, came in and "saw the nakedness" of his father, but his brothers Shem and Japheth instead took a garment on their shoulders and, walking "backward," covered their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke to learn what had happened, he cursed Canaan, Ham's son, for the act. The brothers' exaggerated modesty indicates, at the very least, that they considered Ham's behavior indecent and disrespectful to their father. Modesty, especially in worship, was important in the Pentateuch (cf. Ex 20:26). However, that the act resulted in a curse has suggested to many commentators that something more serious had occurred, perhaps a homosexual act. Leviticus 20:17 condemns siblings "looking on the nakedness" of each other in the context of incest.

4.8. Intercourse with a Menstruant. Menstruation (the "way" of a woman, Gen 31:35) rendered a woman ceremonially unclean for seven days (Lev 15:19-20). If her husband touched her bed, he was unclean till evening, though if he "lay with her," he too was unclean seven days (Lev 15:21-24). Accordingly, couples were not to engage in sex during menstruation (Lev 18:19). Leviticus 20:18 adds that whoever "uncovers the nakedness" and "lays bare the flow" of a woman was subject to being "cut off from their people." The discrepancy between these rules is sometimes explained by source-critical scholarship as conflicting viewpoints between P and the harsher H, though it is preferable to say that "lying with" in Leviticus 15:24 is either literal (not a euphemism for sex) or refers to inappropriate sex, the man not realizing the woman's period had begun, whereas Leviticus 20:18 describes a flagrant, deliberate act. In both cases the quality of penalty is similar: danger of sudden death from God for defiling the sanctuary (Lev 15:31) versus being "cut off" (Lev 20:18), probably another case of divine punishment (see 4.3 above).

Menstruation was much less frequent before the twentieth century because women were more often pregnant, breast-fed longer (children through age three) and had a poorer diet that delayed onset of their first menses to age fourteen and brought on menopause around thirty-five to forty, as compared with ages twelve to fifty today (Milgrom 1991, 953). Thus these rules were less a practical problem

then than they would be today.

The rationale for these rules is probably unrelated to the fact that conception is less likely during menstruation (pace Melcher, 99), for if that were the reasoning one would also expect laws prohibiting sex with a pregnant or a postmenopausal woman, but no such prohibitions are given (Milgrom 2000, 1790). Nor does it relate primarily to a woman's discomfort with sex during her period, though prohibiting sex during a woman's menstrual "infirmity" may imply a broader prohibition of unwanted advances during times of "weakness" (Milgrom 2000, 1755). Primarily, however, this regulation has to do with the sacredness and symbolism of blood within priestly theology (Milgrom 1991, 941, etc.). Menstrual bleeding represents movement toward death, an uninhabitable womb undergoing self destruction, whereas intercourse and its life-giving semen represents potential for life, and the mixture of these contradictory symbols is incongruous. Additionally these rules teach the virtue of sexual self-control and that men do not have absolute ownership of their wife's sexuality.

4.9. Special Restrictions for Priests. Priests were more restricted than the general population in marriage. They were not to marry widows, divorced women or any who had been sexually immoral (Lev 21:7, 13-15). Such women, because of previous sexual activity, brought elevated levels of ceremonial impurity that would contaminate the priest, who in turn would profane the sanctuary and threaten the community with divine wrath (Lev 15:31). Similarly, a sexually loose daughter of a priest was subject to being "burned with fire," possibly cremation after execution (cf. Gen 38:24; Judg 15:6; though Lorton takes a similar "burning" in Egyptian law as "branding" [15]), because her uncleanness defiled her father (Lev 21:9).

4.10. Other. After the death of Er, Onan his brother was expected to act as *levir* (cf. Deut 25:5-10) to Tamar, but Onan "corrupted [the seed] to the ground, not giving seed/posterity to his brother." This displeased God, who caused him to die (Gen 38:9-10). The exact nature of Onan's sin is debated: Was the sexual act masturbation (cf. English "onanism") or *coitus interruptus* (withdrawal before ejaculation)? In either case, was it the sexual act that was sinful or the breech of duty as *levir* to his sister-in-law? Does this text condemn birth control generally as a wasting of seed? Or was the spilling of seed a pagan fertility rite, giving semen to some deity (Grelot, 143-55)? The questions are more easily raised than answered.

Giving one's "seed" to the Ammonite god Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5) is usually understood as human sacrifice (cf. 2 Kings 23:10; Jer 32:35, where "sons and daughters" pass through "fire" to Molech), yet in Leviticus 18 the expression is in a context of illicit copulations—incest and adultery before, homosexuality and bestiality after—where "seed" (*zeraʿ*) means "semen" (Lev 18:20), not "children." It has been taken as reference to mixed marriages with pagans, as sacred prostitution or as dedication (rather than sacrifice) of children to a pagan deity (Hartley, 333-37). But if *zeraʿ* means "semen," it could refer to some sort of ritual involving semen dedicated to this pagan god (compare Grelot's view of Onan above).

Deuteronomy 23:1-2 [MT 23:2-3] states that men with crushed testicles or severed penis, as well as the *mamzēr,* were ineligible to enter the "assembly of Yahweh." This assembly is perhaps a governing body (Tigay, 210), certainly not the whole national throng. If so, ineligibility to serve in this assembly that represented the rule of God to the people politically is similar to the ineligibility of priests with genital or other defects to conduct services representing the people to God religiously (Lev 21:18-20). Both groups required elevated levels of holiness symbolized by being "without blemish." The *mamzēr* (Deut 23:2 [MT 23:3]), whose descendants are excluded to the tenth generation, is unclear in meaning. "Bastard" (KJV, modern Hebrew), child of a prostitute (LXX), offspring of incest (Talmud; cf. Deut 22:30 [MT 23:1]) and half-breed *(HALOT)* are guesses.

A woman who seized the genitals of a man fighting with her husband was subject to having her hand amputated (Deut 25:12). Not only a breech of modesty and an unfair "blow below the belt," this act threatened the man's ability to father children. She could probably ransom her hand (see 3.3 above).

5. Conclusion.

The Pentateuch sees sexuality as a good thing when lawfully expressed but destructive if uncontrolled. Sexual gratification is not its highest value. Its theology of sex is incompatible with certain modern theologies that see sexual activ-

ity as one's "birthright." When homosexual sex is approved because it is a "right" to act according to one's desires, the default morality of sexual conduct becomes whatever "consenting adults" decide to do together. The Pentateuch, in contrast, bases its view of sex on the creation ordinances and divine instruction. The Creator provides instructions by which Israelites would be set apart from the nations (Lev 18:1-5; 20:22-26) and would know how to express their sexuality within their covenant relationship with God. Failure to control one's sexual expression according to those standards was detrimental to that relationship, to the integrity of the family, to social identity and societal order and to the individual's felicity.

Christians seeking moral guidance in sexual matters from the Pentateuch must make certain adjustments. There are culturally bound elements: slavery, arranged marriages, brideprice, ransoming and polygamy, to name a few. Some of the rules are specific to priests or to the OT ceremonial setting; some apply to Israel as a nation but not directly to the church, such as specific punishments for sexual offenses that were so severe, in part, because of the special holiness required of a people having God's tabernacle in their midst. Interpreters may differ as to which elements are culture-bound and which are universally applicable. Nonetheless, the several cases of NT use of these regulations suggest that abiding moral principles can and should be deduced by Christians from them.

See also ETHICS; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LAW; SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN; TAMAR; WOMEN.

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SHALOM. *See* REST, PEACE.

SHAME. *See* HONOR AND SHAME.

SHEEP. *See* AGRICULTURE.

SHEM

Shem, the firstborn son of *Noah, receives only brief mention in the pentateuchal stories and genealogies. However, this insignificant narrative role belies the historical and theological significance attributed to him by the author of Genesis and later commentators on the sacred text. For example, Shem is named as the founding ancestor of various peoples and even numbers *Abraham, *Isaac, *Jacob and the entire Israelite nation among his descendants. Moreover, Shem is presented as a priest and a model of learned piety by Jewish scholars of the post-OT period and as a revealer of hidden truths by two documents attributed to him. In order to appreciate Shem's role in the Pentateuch and his importance in later theological developments, one must consider the biblical data regarding Shem as an individual and as ancestor of various peoples, the supplementation of that data in later Jewish traditions, and the attribution of several extrabiblical writings to this obscure but significant figure.

1. Shem in the Biblical Text
2. Shem in Later Traditions

1. Shem in the Biblical Text.

Shem is mentioned thirteen times in the Pentateuch: three times in connection with the *flood (Gen 6:10; 7:13; 9:18), three times in the account of the cursing of Canaan (Gen 9:20-27), and seven times in various genealogical notations (Gen 5:32; 10:1, 21, 22, 31; 11:10, 11).

It seems best to regard Shem as Noah's oldest son, though one cannot be completely certain of this. The order in which Noah's sons are listed (Gen 5:32; 6:10; 7:13; 9:18; 10:1) is of no help, since Ham, the youngest (Gen 9:24), is consistently named second. However, the most likely interpretation of Genesis 10:21b (*ʾăḥî yepet haggādôl,* lit. "the brother of Japheth the greater [older]") identifies Shem as the oldest. Although the adjective *haggādôl* might be construed as modifying either *Japheth* (i.e., "the brother of Japheth the older") or *brother* (i.e., "the older brother of Japheth"), the fact that an adjective in Hebrew typically cannot modify a name directly (*IBHS* §14.2e) favors the latter option (so Westermann, 525; Hamilton, 343; Wenham, 228; NRSV; contra NIV).

1.1. Name. Shem is introduced without comment in Genesis 5:32 as one of Noah's three sons. The biblical writer attaches no special significance to Shem's name *(šēm)*—which is, in fact, the common Hebrew word meaning "name"—but that has not prevented scholars from attempting to fill in the gaps. Some propose that *Shem* is a shortened form of a theophoric name (e.g., *šĕmûʾēl* = "son of El," "[his] name is El" or possibly "Shem [regarded as a divine name] is god"), while others argue that *Shem* ("The Name") signifies this individual's honored or exalted status. It seems best, however, to connect Shem's name with the cognate Akkadian word *šumu,* which means "name, reputation, son" (*CAD* Š/3, 284-97), and to explain how these various meanings might be reflected within the biblical context.

First, although it might seem odd to name one's son "son," the designation of the first man (Heb *ʾādām* means "man"; Gen 2:7; 3:22) offers a comparable parallel. One might even suggest that the identification of Shem as "son" hints at

his later role as the one through whom the elect line of Abraham descends. Second, the juxtaposition of *šēm* ("name") in Genesis 11:1-9 and 11:10-11 offers an ironic contrast between the builders of the tower of Babel and God's chosen line. When the builders seek to make a "name" (*šēm;* Gen 11:4) for themselves, God intervenes to thwart their plans (Gen 11:8-9) and then promises to make a "name" for Abraham, whose ancestor is, appropriately enough, named "Name" (Gen 11:10-11; 12:2; see also Robinson, 603). In the end, the significance of Shem's name remains uncertain, so it is best to focus attention on the interests of the biblical author: Shem's praiseworthy character and genealogical significance.

1.2. Character. Slightly more is known of Shem's character, though the biblical evidence is still sketchy. One might infer that God delivered Shem and the rest of Noah's family through the flood because of their own personal piety, but the biblical writer says nothing of the sort, noting only that Noah found favor on account of *his* righteousness (Gen 6:8-9). Presumably the benefits of Noah's obedience were extended to his family members.

The most revealing account of Shem's character is found in Genesis 9:20-27. Here Shem and Japheth show themselves morally superior to their brother Ham by maintaining as best they can the *honor of their drunken and naked father, taking great pains to cover Noah without looking upon him. Although the exact nature of Ham's sin remains uncertain (*see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics §4.7), the contrast between Ham and his brothers could not be more striking. As a result of this incident, Noah pronounces a curse on Canaan (Ham's son and the eponymous ancestor of the Canaanites; the connection between Ham's sin and the cursing of Canaan remains problematic) and a *blessing over both Shem and Japheth. The single element binding the curse and blessings together is the declaration that Canaan (and his descendants) will be a slave to Shem and Japheth (and their descendants). A cursory reading of the other elements of the blessings might imply that Japheth receives the greater good, but the biblical writer clearly holds a different view. Granted, Japheth will have his territory extended and will reside in the "tents of Shem" (perhaps through encroachment on Shem's territory or peaceful cohabitation). However, the biblical writer identifies Yahweh as the God of Shem, which is in itself the highest good from a biblical perspective and a portent of even better things to come, as the following genealogies make clear.

1.3. Significance. Two separate genealogies delineate Shem's significance, each focusing on a particular aspect of his legacy. Genesis 10:21-31 identifies Shem as the ancestor of a number of peoples and nations. Not all the names mentioned can be identified, but the list appears to reflect primarily a geographical, as opposed to an ethnic or linguistic, grouping (but cf. Obed). To consider Shem's immediate descendants, Elam, Asshur (or Ashur) and Aram can be associated with regions to the north and east of Palestine; in all likelihood the other names could be similarly located, if one had access to sufficient data. Recognition that the Elamites did not speak a Semitic language and that Elam and Aram were not ethnically related argues against a linguistic or ethnic grouping. Moreover, these groups should not be regarded as "Semites" (or "Shemites" or "Semitic" peoples), since this modern label applies only to speakers of a Semitic language (e.g., Hebrew, Akkadian, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Arabic, Moabite, Edomite). Rather, Shem is here presented as the ancestor of all the peoples of the known world to the east and north of Palestine, as distinguished from the descendants of Ham (Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya and Canaan) and Japheth (the region of the Mediterranean).

In addition to being the progenitor of numerous people-groups, Shem is named as the ancestor of a specific people. Shem's role as such is hinted at in Genesis 10:21, which links him closely with Eber (from whom the Hebrews take their name), but it is spelled out fully in Genesis 11:10-26. The different forms of the two genealogies reveal their specific interests. Genesis 10 provides a quasi-segmented genealogy, listing Shem's sons and a number of his grandsons, great-grandsons, and so on to the sixth generation. Here the goal is to present Shem as the father of many peoples. The linear genealogy of Genesis 11, on the other hand, lists the descendants of Shem in a straight line, naming only one individual per generation, until it reaches the tenth generation, where the pattern is broken by the naming of Terah's three sons: Abram, Nahor and Haran (Gen 11:26). Clearly the interest here is with the first-named member of that generation, Abram, and with the Israelite

people who descend from him.

Apart from the preceding material, the Bible has little to say about Shem. He is mentioned three times in the Chronicler's genealogy (1 Chron 1:4, 17, 24), but nothing new is added to the Genesis material. Shem is also named once in the NT, again in a genealogy (Lk 3:36), but no additional details of his life and character are provided. Of course, biblical silence has never discouraged interpretive speculation, a matter to which we now turn our attention.

2. Shem in Later Traditions.

Space does not permit a full review of later Jewish traditions about Shem (see Hayward; Isaac, 5.1195), but two strands seem worthy of special note. First, "Shem the Great" (*b. Sanh.* 108b) is often described as a priest of God and even identified in some circles with *Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-24), the priest-king of Salem (*Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 14:18). Some elements of this tradition go so far as to state that Shem, rather than Noah, offered the sacrifices after the flood (Gen 8:20). Second, Shem is also presented as a model of learned piety. In this view the "tents" of Shem are understood to be houses of study in which Torah is taught to many, including, in one tradition, Gentiles (descendants of Japheth) who convert to Judaism (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 9:27).

Finally, one must note briefly that at least two extrabiblical writings are attributed to Shem. The first, *Paraphrase of Shem,* is an apocalyptic account of Shem's journey to "top of the world," where Derdekeas (the son of Light) reveals to him the workings of the three primeval powers: Light, Darkness and Spirit. Little in this gnostic apocalypse resembles the biblical account of Shem, although the description of Shem as being "from an unmixed power" and as "the first being upon the earth" does remind one of the Jewish exaltation of Shem the Great. The second work, *Treatise of Shem,* is a short astronomical/calendrical text that predicts the characteristics of a year based upon the sign of the zodiac in place when the year begins. It is unclear why this work was attributed to Shem, though the clear veneration of Shem in various traditions makes him as likely a candidate as any.

See also NATIONS, TABLE OF; NOAH.

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B. Buller

SICKNESS. *See* LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

SIGNS AND WONDERS

The cultural divide between ancient Israel and the twenty-first century is sharply drawn: we bring destruction from the sky, can destroy the likes of Sodom and Gomorrah with a single stroke, turn rivers into conduits of death at will, and unleash biological and chemical elements that wipe out populations with an invisible death. Such wonders were once perceived in the ancient world as signs of divine activity, meaningful pointers to a reality beyond human sight. Now that humans can duplicate the signs and wonders of the gods of the ancient world, not unlike Pharaoh's magicians duplicating Yahweh's wonders displayed through *Moses, it requires an extra effort to see the world through the eyes of men and women millennia ago.

1. Distribution
2. Meaning
3. Differing Worldviews
4. History of Interpretation
5. Conclusion

1. Distribution.

The phrase "sign(s) and/or wonder(s)" appears

ten times in the Pentateuch, where it refers to extraordinary events that God performs on behalf of Israel. All but one of these appear in Deuteronomy, where most (six) refer to God's activity in bringing Israel out of *Egypt (Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3 [MT 29:2]; 34:11). These "signs and wonders" from Yahweh in Egypt can be depicted as "great" (*gĕdōlîm,* Deut 6:22; 29:3 [MT 29:2]), "disastrous" (*rāʿîm,* Deut 6:22), "great trials" (*hammassōt haggĕdōlōt,* Deut 7:19; 29:3 [MT 29:2]; in 4:34 simply *massōt*), "great terrors" (*môrāʾîm gĕdōlîm,* Deut 4:34; cf. 26:8; 34:12), "war" (*milḥāmâ,* Deut 4:34) and accompanied by God's "strong hand" (*yād ḥăzāqâ,* Deut 4:34; 6:21-22; 7:19; 26:8; 34:11-12) and "outstretched arm" (*zĕrôʿa nĕtûyâ,* Deut 4:34; 7:19; 26:8), with eyewitness authentication (e.g., "before your eyes") being a noteworthy emphasis (Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 29:3 [MT 29:2]; 34:11-12).

The remaining three occurrences of the phrase "signs and wonders" in Deuteronomy do not refer to the events of the *exodus. Instead, they refer to hypothetical occurrences in the future, a "sign or wonder" that a false *prophet might perform in order to lure Israel into *idolatry (Deut 13:1-2 [MT 13:2-3]) or horrible curses that could serve as "signs and wonders" on a covenant-breaking Israel (Deut 28:46). Even when referring to the signs and wonders performed in Egypt, Deuteronomy uses them to encourage Israel to expect a similar display in the conquest of Canaan (Deut 7:19). Therefore, although the events of the exodus are for Deuteronomy a frequent example of what constitutes "signs and wonders," they are not phenomena confined to the past or only one event.

This repeated clustering of similar vocabulary in a number of texts suggests a stereotypical focus that one associates with Deuteronomy, for it is found nowhere else in the Bible with such insistence. The phrase "sign(s) and wonder(s)" does surface sporadically elsewhere in the Bible, sometimes referring to the exodus events (Neh 9:10; Ps 78:43; 105:27; 135:9; Jer 32:20-21), but it also identifies the role-playing performed by prophets (Is 8:18; 20:3). The phrase "signs and wonders" is also at home as a Greek idiom widely used by Hellenistic writers (McCasland).

The exhortation format of much of Deuteronomy may account for the repetition of the phrase, but it remains curious that the phrase appears in only one other place in the Pentateuch. The very prodigies of the flight from Egypt themselves, when they are actually described, do not attract this phrase in the book of Exodus. Only in Exodus 7:3, when God speaks to Moses in advance of the performance of any wonder before the Egyptians, does God note that he intends to make *Pharaoh belligerently stubborn (*see* Hardness of Heart) so that "my signs and my wonders" can be multiplied. Each of the plagues is usually identified simply by its own features, without a generic classification. Six times one of the two words (three times each) in the phrase "signs and wonders" will appear by itself to describe the extraordinary phenomena that vex Pharaoh: "a wonder" (*môpēt,* Ex 7:9), "my wonders" (*môpĕtay,* Ex 11:9), "these wonders" (*môpĕtîm hāʾēlleh,* Ex 11:10), "this sign" (*hāʾōt hazzeh,* Ex 8:23 [MT 8:19]), "my signs" (*ʾōtōtay,* Ex 10:1, 2). The only other generic descriptions are "this thing" (*haddābar hazzeh,* Ex 9:5, 6), "one more plague" (*negaʿ ʾeḥād,* Ex 11:1) or "all my plagues" (*kol maggēpōtay,* Ex 9:14; a word occurring elsewhere in the Pentateuch only when it refers to divine discipline in the wilderness wanderings: Num 14:37; 16:48, 49, 50 [MT 17:13, 14, 15]; 25:8, 9, 18; 26:1 [MT 25:19]; 31:16). The popular designation "ten plagues" thus does not reflect the biblical terminology, which, if it provides a summary rubric at all, prefers the terms *sign* or *wonder.* An actual tally of ten wonders is not attested until *Jubilees* 48:7.

2. Meaning.

2.1. "Sign." Is there a meaningful distinction between a "sign" *(ʾôt)* and a "wonder" *(môpēt)*? The etymologies of both words are perplexing, but usage underscores that "a sign" *(ʾôt)* is any aspect of the physical world that is deliberately selected to inform, instruct or remind someone. F. J. Helfmeyer's functional classification clarifies that a sign may be used to impart information (astral bodies, Gen 1:14; plagues in Egypt, Ex 7:3-5) to protect (Cain, Gen 4:15; Passover blood, Ex 12:13), to motivate people to believe in Yahweh (Num 14:11, 22-24), to bring to remembrance (unleavened bread, Ex 13:9; dedication of firstborn, Ex 13:16; *altar covering, Num 17:3 [MT 16:38]; preservation of *Aaron's rod, Num 17:1-11 [MT 17:16-26]), to recall a *covenant in particular (*rainbow, Gen 9:12-17; *circumcision, Gen 17:11; *sabbath, Ex 31:13, 17), to con-

firm or corroborate (transformations for Moses, Ex 4:1-9, 30-31), or to symbolize a message (Isaiah and his children, Is 8:18; 20:3; cf. Ezek 4:3; cf. *môpēt* in Ezek 24:24).

As many of these examples indicate, a "sign" *('ôt)* need not be extraordinary, and indeed it can be a predictable phenomenon that one expects with regularity (e.g., astral bodies, sabbath, rainbow). What transforms the ordinary into an *'ôt* is that it has been intentionally given a significance that points to a larger reality (cf. 1 Sam 10:2-9). The primacy of the exodus as a locus for signs is confirmed from the fact that half (thirty-nine) of the OT occurrences (seventy-nine) of *'ôt* are found in the Pentateuch, and one-third of all occurrences in the Bible relate to the events of the exodus from Egypt.

2.2. "Wonder." A *môpēt,* "wonder," on the other hand, is explicitly an unusual omen, warning sign or portent associated with the disruption of the status quo and usually calamitous. In Deuteronomy *môpēt* is always a part of the phrase "sign(s) and/or wonder(s)" (nine times; see above). Exodus is the only other book in the Pentateuch in which *môpēt* appears (five times). There, in addition to the single occurrence of the phrase "signs and wonders" (Ex 7:3), it always refers to the events that accompany the exodus (Ex 4:21; 7:9; 11:9, 10). These *môpĕtîm* are "my [God's] wonders" that proliferate in response to Pharaoh's resistance (Ex 11:10), performed by Moses and Aaron (Ex 7:9; 11:10), even though at first entrusted by God only to Moses (Ex 4:21), and performed in response to Pharaoh's specific request to see one (Ex 7:9).

The stereotypical use of *môpēt* in the Pentateuch does not provide sufficient leverage for grasping its significance. Elsewhere in the Bible, however, one finds that disasters that have overtaken an individual can prompt the identification of the afflicted one as a *môpēt* ("marvel") to others (Ps 71:7), just as Ezekiel becomes a *môpēt* ("omen, warning sign") of calamities that will overtake Israel when he acts out bizarre charades to illustrate Israel's condition (Ezek 12:6, 11; cf. Is 8:18; 20:3). There is no question that *môpēt* can refer to what might be termed from a modern perspective a "miracle," but these instances indicate that this is not its only or even its primary focus. Instead, a "wonder" *(môpēt)* remains primarily an unusual portent accompanying the disruption of the status quo.

2.3. "Marvel." It is possible that the meanings of the two terms *'ôt* and *môpēt* merged and became synonymous (2 Chron 32:24 identifies as a *môpēt* what 2 Kings 20:8-9 calls an *'ôt),* and some argue for a change of meaning even within the Exodus accounts. There is yet a third term, *niplē'ṯ* ("wonder, marvel") that exhibits some overlap in meaning with *'ôt* and *môpēt,* but it is used only twice in the Pentateuch, once in an anticipatory description of the Exodus marvels (Ex 3:20) and once anticipating the unique phenomena that will accompany the conquest of the land of Canaan (Ex 34:10). This term is particularly prominent in Psalms and hymnic texts, where the particular focus of the word is on an observer's astonished reaction to an occurrence that is unexpected and that takes one's breath away, something "wondrous," a fact that may account for its curious selective distribution in biblical texts. As with *sign ('ôt)* and *wonder (môpēt),* the word *niplē'ṯ* can describe the actions of Yahweh in the exodus (e.g., Ps 78:32; Mic 7:15) as well as in his orchestration of the—from a modern perspective—ordinary workings of nature that are nevertheless breathtaking (Job 5:9; 37:5, 14; Ps 107:24; 139:14). The cognate term *pele'* appears in the Pentateuch only in Exodus 15:11, where, in the context of the crossing of the Red Sea, it describes Yahweh as one who characteristically does wonders.

3. Differing Worldviews.

A significant problem results from two disjunctures, philosophical and linguistic, between ancient Hebrew writers and their modern interpreters. From a philosophical perspective, God, to an ancient Israelite, was behind all activities and caused all things to be. Events that appear to be a part of the matrix of the natural order—from a modern perspective—are consistently attributed to divine action: Pharaoh appointed *Joseph over Egypt (Gen 41:41), even as Joseph claimed that it was God who had appointed him over Egypt (Gen 45:8-9). The modern conundrum of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart results from this worldview: Pharaoh hardened his heart (Ex 8:15, 32 [MT 8:11, 28]), even as it was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex 7:3; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10). All that took place reflected the work of God: conquering one's enemies (Gen 14:20), finding what one sought (Gen 21:19; 24:27, 48), the provision of rain and ground water (Gen 49:25), an individual's premature death (Gen 38:7, 10; Ex 21:13), the multi-

plication of flocks and herds (Gen 24:35; 26:12-14; 31:5-9), the mockery of one's peers (Gen 21:6) and the ability of a woman to have children (Gen 16:2; 17:16; 20:17-18; 21:1-2; 25:21; 29:31; 30:2, 17, 22). From a modern perspective, such events do not require the intervention of the divine but are a part of the cause-and-effect nexus of the physical world. From the Israelite perspective, the ordinary was always extraordinary because God was at work everywhere.

The lack of congruence between modern and Israelite worldviews results in a disjuncture between the vocabulary by which the ordinary and extraordinary are described. Because of a different philosophical perspective, it is no surprise that no Hebrew word unequivocally corresponds to the English word *miracle.* Should a miracle occur in the modern sense, it would necessarily have been to an ancient Israelite a "sign" *(ʾôt)* of the activity of God. However, the reverse is not true, for to an ancient Israelite an *ʾôt,* as noted above, did not have to be a miracle in the modern sense. Similarly, a "miracle" in the modern sense is by definition a *môpēt* ("omen, portent") or a *niplēʾt* ("wonder"), but the reverse does not hold true: every *môpēt* or *niplēʾt* is not a "miracle" in the modern sense.

4. History of Interpretation.

Much of the discussion over the past two thousand years surrounding the "signs and wonders" of the Pentateuch has resulted from attempts to differentiate the miraculous "signs and wonders" from those that are not miraculous, or at least to refine the distinctions among the types of signs and wonders. Such an analysis has introduced into the Hebrew text distinctions that would not have been self-evident to an Israelite and has resulted in some awkward formulations.

4.1. Pre-Enlightenment. Already in the first century one witnesses the bifurcation with Josephus, who is of two minds, attempting to link a rational explanation with the miraculous. He affirms that the events of the exodus were unprecedented in human history (*Ant* 2.14.1 §293), but nevertheless Josephus invokes historical parallels to justify their credibility, the latter being something he nevertheless does not insist on in accord with Hellenistic historiographic convention (*Ant* 2.16.5 §§347-48; 3.1.6 §§26-32).

In the book of Acts, the "wonders and signs" (the same Greek words used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew phrase) performed by Moses explicitly encompass the disasters in Egypt along with the crossing of the Red Sea and the marvels of the *wilderness wanderings (Acts 7:36; cf. God's "uplifted arm" in Acts 13:17), but these words also are applied to the deeds of Jesus and the apostles (Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 7:36; see *DLNTD,* "Signs and Wonders").

For the Gnostics, the signs and wonders of the Pentateuch were irrelevant, for Gnostics understood the God of the OT to be an arrogant demiurge responsible for the creation of evil matter, someone who used Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt so that they would be enslaved to him (Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.30.10). The early church fathers, on the other hand, in addition to underscoring that Jesus' miracles were greater than Moses' (e.g., Chrysostom *Hom. Jo.* 43), applied Moses' wonders allegorically to events in the life of Jesus and the church (see esp. Origen *Hom. Exod.*; cf. Brottier): the transformation of Moses' hand could signify the resurrection (Tertullian *Res.* 28), the dual sense of Scripture (Hilary *Mysteries* 16) or the incarnation itself (God becoming man and subsequently restored to his glory; Gregory of Nyssa *Life of Moses* 2.26-30). The church fathers were aware of a natural order that was diverted from its customary workings, but some also attempted to provide reasons or connections with natural phenomena for the developments that accompanied the wonders, without finding either stance problematic. Thus Gregory of Nyssa *(Life of Moses)* could move easily from one perspective to another: the breeding of the frogs was a normal activity that was simply intensified under Moses' command; *manna was dew that became food when it was gathered; the intense darkness of Exodus 10:23 was nothing physical but a spiritual defect in the Egyptians. Because the church fathers could call on their readers to observe miracles all around them as a part of the experience of the early church, seeing miracles in the Pentateuch was in no way problematic (Irenaeus *Haer.* 2.32.4).

Similarly, there was no question for the early rabbis that God could perform miracles, nor did early rabbinic interpretation confine these wonders to the past: one interpretation of Exodus 15:11 was that God "did wonders *[peleʾ]* for us and still does wonders for us in every generation" (*Mek. Shirata* 8, citing Ps 139:14; 40:5 [MT 40:6] in support). There was nevertheless a concern to minimize the disruption of the usual workings of the world. This resulted in the claim

on the part of some that miracles were preordained as an integral part of the matrix of creation, so that the Red Sea would split at the appropriate time when the Israelites were in need (*Gen. Rab.* 5:5). This concept resulted in a flexible list of ten miraculous things that were created on the evening of the first sabbath to be manifested when the appropriate time arrived, among which could be found the miraculous rod, the manna, the rainbow, the miraculous well of water in the wilderness, the mouth of the earth that swallowed the rebellious followers of Korah (Num 16:31) and *Balaam's talking donkey (*m. ʾAbot* 5:6; *Mek.* on Ex 16:32; *Sipre* 355; *b. Pesaḥ.* 54a).

The problem of distinguishing true "miracles" from mere "signs" became over time a particularly acute problem with respect to the ability of the Egyptian magicians (Ex 7—9). Although the Egyptian magicians duplicated some of the wonders brought on by Moses, the key issue in Exodus is that they are incapable of duplicating all the wonders. The text represents their vacillating ability as no more problematic than false prophets who can be expected to do a sign or wonder in Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (MT 13:2-4). But later readers were perplexed and sought an explanation for the Egyptian magicians' abilities, with the main alternatives established early. Their success could be attributed to simple magic tricks or spells (Artapanus), while others saw demonic powers at work (*Jub.* 48:9) or only apparent wonders that did not really take place (Pseudo-Clementines *Recogn.* 3.55-57, 60). When the Egyptian priests failed and asserted that the wonders pointed to the "finger of God" (Ex 8:19 [MT 8:15]), one usually understands this as an acknowledgment of their inadequacy before a superior power, but Rashbam understood them to be making the claim that the disasters were all natural events that did not need to cause concern (a view found much earlier in order to account for Pharaoh's strange obduracy; e.g., Irenaeus *Haer.* 4.29.2).

In the medieval period, under the influence of Aristotle, Maimonides (twelfth century) was careful to insist on the integrity of creation that continues without change after the signs and wonders of the exodus occurred. Maimonides also placed the Mosaic signs and wonders in a distinct class, in contrast to all other wonders performed by humans, underscoring the biblical perspective that even when cause and effect seem to be apparent, God nevertheless remains the ultimate cause of everything (*Guide for the Perplexed* 2.29, 35, 48).

Also indebted to Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas's landmark observations in the thirteenth century about signs and wonders included an emphasis that wonders are relative to the beholder, thus implying that apparent miracles may not in fact be so (*Summa contra Gentiles* 3.101.1; cf. 103.9). He ranked miracles in a hierarchy, placing the crossing of the Red Sea in the highest category (something God did that nature never could do). Unlike Maimonides, Aquinas still considered this miracle to be a lesser marvel than deeds performed by some later prophets, such as the reversal of the sun's movement that occurred for Isaiah (2 Kings 20:9-11; *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.101.2).

4.2. The Enlightenment to the Present. It was not until the seventeenth century that rationalistic interpretations began to enter the mainstream of scholarly approaches to the Bible, driving a wedge between the natural and the supernatural and challenging the credibility of the text. What had earlier been a virtue now became a liability: if events recounted in Exodus were contrary to nature, they now were no longer a sign of God's work but a sign of naive storytelling. Earlier generations had found signs and wonders to be a legitimate means of authenticating God and his envoys, and even Pharaoh was not necessarily to be faulted for asking for a wonder or portent *(môpēt)* from Moses in order to authenticate his credentials (Ex 7:9; *Tanh. Yelamdenu* 2:3; cf. Judg 6:17; 1 Sam 10:2-9; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Is 7:10-14). Even T. Hobbes admitted that the works of God in Egypt were properly miracles "because they were done with intention to make the people of Israel believe," in contrast to the Egyptian magicians, who simply manipulated the minds of observers (*Leviathan* [1651], chap. 37).

B. Spinoza, however (*Theologico-Political Treatise* [1670], chap. 6), stood this argument on its head when he affirmed that miracles logically lead to atheism, for only an unchangeable natural order can give confidence that there is a God. Consequently, natural phenomena accompanying the apparent miracles accomplished by Moses provided the hint for Spinoza that it was these phenomena that had achieved the deed: the locusts were blown in and out of Egypt by natural winds (Ex 10:13, 19) and similarly made the Red Sea passable (Ex 14:21); the ashes

Moses threw into the air in some way spread the skin disease that infected the Egyptians (Ex 9:10).

When G. Berkeley called into question the reality of physical phenomena by arguing that it was a mental construct, in the very year that he was ordained a priest in the Church of England (1710), he felt it appropriate to address the signs and wonders of the Pentateuch (*The Principles of Human Knowledge,* #84): "It will be urged that miracles do, at least, lose much of their stress and import by our principles. What must we think of Moses' rod? was it not really turned into a serpent? or was there only a change of ideas in the minds of the spectators?" For Berkeley, the mind of God that makes all sensations possible actually turned all sensations into miracles, and only in this sense "the rod was changed into a real serpent."

The notion that there are no miracles—because everything is a miracle (a subtle twist on an old perspective) when properly understood as the expression of God—was elaborated by notable proponents such as T. Paine (*Age of Reason* [1794-1795]) and F. Schleiermacher (*On Religion* [1799]). Like Spinoza, Paine also turned an argument on its head: since appearances deceive, God would not likely employ miracles that would subject his messengers to the suspicion of being impostors, and it is a weak doctrine indeed that requires the support of a miracle.

D. Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1758, revising earlier publications of 1739 and 1748) became the classic articulation of the rationalist's conclusion that miracles in general are impossible when one's ultimate arbitrator is "experience and observation" (Hume, §10). He examined the wonders in the Pentateuch specifically and concluded that they were impossible, found in "a book, presented to us by a barbarous and ignorant people, written in an age when they were still more barbarous, and in all probability long after the facts which it relates, corroborated by no concurring testimony, and resembling those fabulous accounts, which every nation gives of its origin."

G. E. Lessing posthumously published H. S. Reimarus's ruminations, among them *The Passage of the Israelites Through the Red Sea* (1777), which included a general rejection of miracles and specifically the miraculous nature of events such as the crossing of the Red Sea. Those who resisted the developing materialistic and rationalistic assault on the supernatural responded with increasing attention to careful chronological and scientific analyses of the plagues associated with the exodus (e.g., J. Lightfoot).

In the nineteenth century, J. Wellhausen accompanied his Documentary Hypothesis with a synthesis that continued to build on the momentum of Enlightenment notions that natural explanations lay behind apparent miracles: a fortuitous wind at night caused a shallow sea to be fordable for some Hebrews who, returning home from Egypt at a time of plague, were pursued by Egyptian forces who were annihilated when the wind changed. Variations of this type of explanation have continued to the present among those who discern at least a kernel of historical reality in the narratives (Hort). Wellhausen took a further and decisive step, however, for in defending in his *Prolegemenon* a series of written documents lying behind the present form of the Pentateuch, he was able to propose different versions of the same events and relate these versions chronologically to each other. For Wellhausen, the Passover story came into existence over time, based on an ancient Israelite custom of offering the firstlings. The J document that Wellhausen proposed reported that God had killed the Egyptian firstborn because Pharaoh was preventing the Israelites from offering their firstborn at the regular festival (Ex 8:27 [MT 8:23]). Wellhausen's later P document, however, reversed the sequence, making it appear that the death of the firstborn was the cause of the sacrifice of the firstborn in Israel from that time onward (Ex 13:15).

In spite of voices raised in support of an essentially unified plague narrative (Winnett; Cassuto; Fischer), refinements and revisions of Wellhausen's hypothesis continued throughout the twentieth century (e.g., Schmidt), resulting in the following features generally being accepted as signals of a distinct tradition associated with a Priestly (P) focus in the narratives of the exodus wonders: Aaron and his staff, Egyptian magicians, short descriptions with much repetition, the plagues not said to be reversed, Pharaoh not directly addressed before the disaster strikes, the passage of time not explicitly noted, and a distinctive vocabulary (e.g., *tannîn* ["serpent"], *yĕʾōrîm* ["rivers"], "and so they did" [with variations]). Therefore, the disasters most clearly associated by scholars with P tend to be the lice

and skin disease (many would add darkness). When some of these features appear here and there in the other catastrophes, they are generally recognized as evidence of Priestly perspectives that have been added or merged with these accounts.

The non-P wonders are typically ascribed to a writer who preferred the divine name Yahweh (J). Since one of the primary distinctions between J and the writer who preferred the divine designation Elohim (E) disappears just before the exodus catastrophes, when E begins to use the divine name Yahweh (revealed at the burning bush), scholars are not in agreement as to how much of the non-P material can be confidently ascribed to E, if any at all. There is a general consensus that J is the primary contributor to the accounts of the bloody Nile, frogs, insect swarms, murrain, hail and locusts. Depending on the degree of precision an analyst requires for a coherent literary tradition, one may find the literary strata subdivided even further.

Some analysts have sought coherence in narrative structure (Galbiati), a tradition reaching back to Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 1.17-26 §§97-146) and Rashbam (i.e., Rabbi Samuel ben Meir; commentary on Ex 8:1 [MT 7:26]). But the narratives of the wonders in Egypt contain so many features that apply to two or more marvels that any mixing and matching of features that correspond or contrast can be made to provide an apparent coherence for almost any arrangement, making this criterion ultimately valueless for determining an original structure. Aesthetics is one of the more easily manipulated and subjective criteria, for structure has been argued to support an original cycle of seven plagues or to argue that one has the artistry of a single author for all the wonders. Or is it simply the unity of a redactor of nine plagues (or perhaps ten, or eleven, if one includes Ex 7:8-13)? With so much proved it is clear that nothing is proved, and the exercise must be deemed interesting but indecisive.

With the breakdown of a consensus with respect to the Documentary Hypothesis at the end of the twentieth century, it is no longer clear among analysts that J precedes P or that D follows J. Even the phrase "signs and wonders" is severed from having a specific reference to the accounts of the wonders that appear in Exodus 7—10, accounts that become from this perspective a literary fiction for which there is no need to assume even a historical kernel (Van Seters). The wonder is that scholars claim to speak with any confidence on a subject that becomes increasingly an exercise in personal ingenuity that rarely stands the test of time for more than a generation or two.

5. Conclusion.

Semiotic theory has affirmed the problematic nature of signs, which convey both less and more than intended by those who employ them. Thus, when God is depicted transforming a staff into a serpent (and vice versa), is there meaning attached to the fact that it is specifically a serpent (Rashi)? that the transformation is undone (Ishodad of Merwe)? that Moses fled from it (Nahmanides)? that it is made of wood (Cyril of Jerusalem *Cat.* 13.20)? that it is specifically a rod reminiscent of authority (Sarna, 60)? Moreover, what features of such a sign do observers miss? Both overinterpretation and underinterpretation always occur, despite Philo's claim regarding the staff that was transformed into a serpent: "God himself had declared his will to them by demonstrations clearer than any verbal command, namely, by signs and wonders" (*Vit. Mos.* 1.16 §95).

This polyvalent perspective is reflected in the fluctuating persuasive power of signs. On the one hand, the biblical texts affirm that wondrous signs can be deceptive, for they can be performed by people to whom one should pay no heed. Not only is this notion embedded in the Egyptian wonders, where the Egyptian magicians can imitate some of Moses' wonders (Ex 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; note 9:11), but Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (MT 13:2-4) warns of misleading prophets who can do "a sign or a wonder" that actually comes to pass. Since the text counsels, "You shall not listen to the words of that prophet" (Deut 13:3 [MT 13:2]), it is clear that "a sign or wonder" is not intended to be sufficiently compelling. On the other hand, signs that come from God also are not universally compelling: Pharaoh remained unpersuaded after the barrage of wonders that Moses performed, and Israel itself was sometimes convinced (Ex 4:30-31) and at other times was not (Num 14:11, 22; Ps 78:11-32). Caleb is portrayed in Numbers 14 as one who saw the same signs that Yahweh had performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, but Israel was not persuaded while Caleb was (Num 14:6-11, 22-24). The multiplication of signs was a partial

antidote (Ex 4:8-9; cf. 1 Sam 10:2-9) and seems to have been a rationale for the many plagues that God brought on Pharaoh.

This tension regarding the persuasive power of signs and wonders results in two opposed positions. On the one hand, the twelfth-century scholastic Richard of Saint Victor insisted that these wondrous signs lead to faith, even to the point where one can use "signs in place of arguments, and portents instead of experiments" (*On the Trinity* 1.2). This position is a continuation of the notion that should all humanity believe God in an ideal world, "all the power of signs will thenceforwards be superfluous" (*Const. ap.* 8.1.1). The opposing stance—that miracles make sense only if one is already a Christian—is articulated succinctly by the nineteenth-century New England transcendentalist George Ripley: "the evidence of miracles depends on a previous belief in Christianity, rather than the evidence of Christianity on a previous belief in miracles" (*Boston Daily Advertiser* [Nov. 9, 1836]). That the positions are not mutually exclusive is already indicated by Paul: "Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers" (1 Cor 14:22 NRSV).

See also DIVINATION, MAGIC; FAITH; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; MANNA; SERPENT.

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SIMEON

Simeon was the second-oldest son of *Jacob and ancestor of the Israelite tribe of the same name. The name Simeon is derived from the Hebrew verbal root *šmʿ* ("to hear") and reflects the relief that his mother Leah felt at Simeon's birth, knowing that God had heard that she was unloved by Jacob and responded by granting her a son (Gen 29:33). In a clear instance of divine recompense, Leah bore half of Jacob's sons: *Reuben, Simeon, *Levi, *Judah (Gen 29:31-35), *Issachar and *Zebulun (Gen 30:14-20), as well as his only daughter, Dinah (Gen 30:21), all before Rachel bore any children (cf. Gen 30:22-24).

1. Simeon's Role in Genesis
2. Simeon's Role in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
3. Subsequent History

1. Simeon's Role in Genesis.

The exploits of Simeon in Genesis anticipate the eclipse of Simeon as a distinct tribal entity in the later history of ancient Israel. Like his brothers Reuben and Levi, Simeon's role in Genesis fits the important plot motif of an older sibling being overshadowed by a younger.

1.1. Jacob Narratives. Simeon and Levi avenged the forcible rape of their sister Dinah by deceiving the men of Shechem into believing the two family groups could live together in

peace, then killing them and destroying their city (Gen 34:1-29). Jacob's response ("You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land.... I shall be destroyed, both I and my household" Gen 34:30 NRSV) anticipates the conflicts that Israel would face once they began to settle the land of Canaan. Jacob later characterized Simeon and Levi as men prone to violence and, as tribes, destined their descendants to be scattered among Israel (Gen 49:5-7). The note in Genesis 46:10 (cf. Ex 6:15) that one of Simeon's sons, Shaul, was born to a Canaanite woman, provides early evidence of the gradual loss of Simeon's tribal identity.

1.2. Joseph Narratives. Joseph held Simeon as a hostage in Egypt to test his brothers' integrity when they approached him to buy grain (Gen 42:8-24). This imprisonment fell to Jacob's second-eldest son rather than to Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, because Joseph allowed the latter to return home as spokesperson to his father. Jacob bewailed another son lost (Gen 42:36) yet eventually bowed to Joseph's wishes and Simeon was freed (Gen 43:23). Toward the end of his life Jacob elevated Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh to a position equal to his own firstborn, "just as Reuben and Simeon are mine" (Gen 48:5 NIV). In doing so Jacob reaffirmed the preeminence of his two eldest sons yet opened the door for their eventual displacement by others (cf. Gen 49:5-7).

2. Simeon's Role in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The fortunes of the tribe of Simeon began to wane in the *wilderness wandering narratives. The tribe appears in birth order (i.e., second) in various rosters related to tribal census (Ex 1:2; 6:15; Num 1:6, 22-23; 26:12-14), as well as in the list of men chosen by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan (Num 13:5), and in the list of men appointed by Moses to divide Israel's inheritance in Canaan (Num 34:20, where Judah naturally appears first instead of Reuben, who received his inheritance in Transjordan). Yet in matters related to the *tabernacle, Reuben and Simeon slip to fourth and fifth place, respectively (Num 2:12; 7:36-41; 10:19).

Between Moses' initial census (Num 1:22-23) and that taken after the incident at Baal Peor (Num 26:12-14), the tribe of Simeon dropped from third to last in size among the tribes and was the only tribe whose total numbers plummeted (from 59,300 to 22,200 men of war). The writer of Numbers evidently intended to connect the decimation of the tribe of Simeon with the apostasy and subsequent plague of Baal Peor, which was stayed only when the Simeonite elder Zimri and a Midianite woman were executed by Phinehas (Num 25:1-14; cf. Ps 106:28-31). Yet because the total number of persons who died in the plague (Num 25:9) was substantially less than the corresponding drop in Simeon's numbers, it appears as though Simeon's tribal integrity was already in doubt by that time. This is confirmed by Moses' blessing on the tribes in Deuteronomy 33, in which Simeon fails to appear. Some MSS of the LXX mention Simeon as the subject of the "b" line of Deuteronomy 33:6, but this should be seen as an emendation attempting to solve what some hold to be a textual problem.

3. Subsequent History.

All biblical evidence subsequent to the Pentateuch points to the absorption of Simeon into the larger tribe of Judah. Simeon's tribal inheritance lay within that of Judah (Josh 19:1-9). At least half of the seventeen cities allotted to Simeon also appear in the city list of Judah (cf. Josh 15:21-32); the exact number is unclear due to textual difficulties in the lists. Judges 1:3, 17 notes that Simeon fought with Judah at the latter's behest against the Canaanites. This is the last explicit mention of Simeon in the biblical text until the work of the Chronicler.

The Simeonite cities that lay within Judah's tribal boundary had essentially been absorbed into Judah by the time of David, as seen by 1 Chronicles 4:24-31, and the list of Simeonite cities to whom David gave spoil that were now linked to various elders of Judah (1 Sam 30:26-31). This process should be seen as analogous to that by which Judah absorbed other non-Israelite clans and tribes such as the Jerahmeelites and Kenites (cf. 1 Sam 27:10; 30:29). Nevertheless, some individuals from Simeon maintained their tribal identity at least to the days of Hezekiah (1 Chron 4:24-43).

Of the cities mentioned within the tribal inheritance of Simeon, only the location of Beersheba (Tell es-Seba^{c}) can be identified with certainty. The rest were located in or adjacent to the Negev Basin, a broad geological depression filled with fine wind-blown soil lying immedi-

ately south of the hill country of Judah. Although arid (cf. Gen 26:18-25), this region carries important natural routes that guard the southern approaches to Judah. For this reason, incorporating Simeon into Judah made good political sense for a kingdom emerging in the southern hill country of Israel.

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; ISRAELITES; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI, LEVITES; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; ZEBULUN.

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P. H. Wright

SIN, GUILT

Sin is action and attitude in opposition to God and his purposes. In the worldview represented in the Pentateuch, God is characterized by power, *holiness and concern for the good for human beings. God's purposes are purposes of shalom; the Pentateuch, however, chronicles human actions contrary to God's intentions. Sin is the violation of God's will and righteousness. It is disloyalty, disobedience, the breaching of a harmonious and just relationship with God, others, self and nature.

Sin is first against God and not, as in the ancient Near East and as often understood in the modern world, against a set of social taboos. By giving attention to biblical narrative, to "sin" vocabulary and to metaphors, the scriptural view of sin comes into focus. All three approaches bring to the surface issues that need sorting out.

1. Narratives of Sin
2. Vocabulary for Sin/Guilt
3. Metaphors for Sin
4. Consequences of Sin
5. Theological Issues Related to Sin
6. A Theological Summary of Sin

1. Narratives of Sin.

1.1. Genesis 1—11. Four major stories of sin dominate Genesis 1—11. The first is the account of *Adam and *Eve, who disobeyed God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden (Gen 3). Though the story does not employ the usual words for "sin," the NT labels the action sinful (Rom 5:12; 1 Tim 2:13-14). The terms for sin (*ḥaṭṭā't* and *ʿāwōn*) occur first in the second story, *Cain murdering his brother *Abel (Gen 4:7, 13). The third major story involves social violence (*ḥāmās*) and sexual perversion (Gen 6:1-5). However the cohabiting of *sons of God with human women is to be explained, the sin is against God's prescribed ordering. The fourth story is about God's displeasure incurred by the tower-building activity at *Babel, a sinful activity not because it involved newer technology (brick-making) but, so it might be inferred, because of a people's refusal to fill the earth as God commanded and also because of humans' invading the divine realm and so exceeding set limits (Gen 11:1-9).

All four incidents indicate an offensive act (against God, humanity, God's order, culture); all four clearly depict God's displeasure; and all specify resulting punishment. But in each case the punishment is ameliorated, even if only slightly, by an act of God's mercy (e.g., expulsion from the garden rather than immediate death; a mark on Cain). In the Cain and Abel story, sin is pictured as a crouching animal: humans can withstand it and master it, but the possibility exists that it will master them (Gen 4:7).

C. Westermann (1976, 50) stressed the diversification of sin in human social structures: the sin of married partners (Gen 2—3), of brothers (Gen 4:1-16), of the preflood generation (Gen 6—9) and of humankind generally (Gen 11:1-9). He noted in each the recurring pattern: sin, speech, punishment (cf. summary in Clines, 68). D. J. A. Clines's proposal of a sin-speech-mitigation-punishment pattern was further amplified by M. D. Bratcher (244), who noted a "discovery of sin" component either through divine inquiry (Gen 3:9-13; 4:9-10) or through divine observation (Gen 6:5, 12; 11:5-6). The thesis that sin is the main theme has been challenged by H. Shank, who investigated other sin stories (e.g., Lamech, Gen 4:23-24; Noah's sons, Gen 9:20-29) and sees the sin theme subordinate to the theme of divine self-limitation and human freedom.

1.2. Genesis 12—50. The patriarchs also contend with sin. The sin *(ḥaṭṭāʾt)* of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities for whom *Abraham intercedes, is described as grave (*rābbâ* and *kobdâ*, Gen 18:20). The language of sin is also on the lips of *Abimelech the Philistine when he asks Abraham, who has misrepresented *Sarah, "How have I sinned *[ḥāṭāʾ]* against you?" (Gen 20:9; cf. Abimelech's response to Isaac, using *ʾāšām* ["guilt"] in Gen 26:10). *Jacob asks of Laban, "What is my offense *[peša*ʿ*]*? What is my sin *[ḥaṭṭāʾt]*?" (Gen 31:36). *Joseph asks, when tempted by Potiphar's wife, "How can I do wickedness and sin *[ḥāṭāʾ]* against God?" (Gen 39:9). Each of these incidents assumes a standard that, when violated, precipitates evil consequences. The Sodom and Gomorrah story, while about God dealing with excessive corruption, may be read inferentially as making another point: a new possibility—namely, intercession with God—for arresting the consequences of sin (Gen 18:22-33).

Other stories of wrongdoing within the patriarchal narrative revolve around deception. For example, Jacob deceives *Esau (Gen 27). Laban in turn deceives Jacob (Gen 29:21-30). After marketing Joseph to the passing merchants, Joseph's brothers deceive their father (Gen 37:29-35). Deceit is also the subject of the *Tamar-*Judah story (Gen 38:11-23), which interrupts the Joseph narrative but which functions as a commentary on the Joseph story (Alter, 5-12). Deception, one result of which is *family dysfunction, is the ubiquitous sin. R. W. L. Moberly (1992, 97-104) observes that the patriarchal stories lack warnings for disobedience and are not set against the backdrop of God's holiness, as in Mosaic legislation and narrative.

1.3. Exodus—Deuteronomy. Several narratives in Exodus—Deuteronomy recount sin by the community; a few stories deal with sinful acts by individuals. Of one of the corporate sinful acts, the construction of a *golden calf as a surrogate for God the deliverer, *Moses says, "You have sinned a great sin" (*ḥāṭāʾâ gĕdōlâ*, Ex 32:30). Later at Kadesh, an initial refusal to trust God because of the spies' report is followed by the presumption of engaging in battle despite God's prohibition, leading the larger community eventually to acknowledge, "We have sinned" (*ḥāṭāʾnû*, Num 14:40). Similarly, when God's displeasure at Israel's disgruntled behavior and constant murmuring brings on the plague of serpent bites, the corporate body admits, "We have sinned" (*ḥāṭāʾnû*, Num 21:7).

Individuals also, Egyptian as well as Israelite, leader types all, engage in sinful behavior. *Pharaoh sins repeatedly in refusing to comply with God's directives; he admits as much in response to a devastating plague (Ex 9:27; 10:16). Moses strikes the rock instead of speaking to it (Num 20:11-12). *Balaam, who is on his way to meet Balak but is stopped by an angel, admits, "I have sinned" (*ḥāṭāʾtî*, Num 22:34). Korah and his colleagues Dathan and Abiram sinfully challenge the authority of their superior (Num 16:1-3, 12-14). These individuals either stubbornly resist God's commands, only partially obey God's instructions or trivialize them. A notable feature of these accounts is God's response of anger and fierce displeasure.

2. Vocabulary for Sin/Guilt.

The terminology for *sin* is extensive, numbering more than forty words (Knierim 1995, 425). The large number of terms also points to the importance of this subject, since in any culture that which is valued or eschewed is differentiated (cf. the extensive vocabulary for edible worms in a jungle culture or the various words for modes of transport in industrialized countries). Of the many words for sin, three significant ones occur together in Leviticus 16:21: "Then Aaron shall . . . confess over it [the live goat] all the iniquities *[*ʿ*āwōn]* of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions *[peša*ʿ*]*, all their sins *[ḥaṭṭāʾt]*" (cf. Ex 34:7; Ps 32:1-2). To these basic words for sin may be added, for purposes of closer examination, the terms *raʿ*, *rāšāʿ* and *ʾāšām*.

2.1. Missing the Mark (**ḥaṭṭāʾt**). Of the various OT words for sin, *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is the most frequent, occurring, along with its derivatives, nearly six hundred times. Of these occurrences, approximately one-third are in the Pentateuch. The meaning of this term, "missing the mark," is clarified by its nontheological use regarding slingers hitting a target: they did not miss *(ḥāṭaʾ*, Judg 20:16; cf. "miss *[ḥāṭaʾ]* the way" in Prov 19:2). The term also denotes being at fault, failure to perform a duty or "to be lacking." Used in a moral and ethical sense, *ḥaṭṭāʾt* points to failure in meeting the demands of a law or statute, intentionally or unintentionally, but it can also signify falling short of the expectations inherent in certain relationships. The term is formal and

generic for overt evil actions (e.g., Lev 16:21; cf. Deut 9:18, where it sums up various wrongful actions). Frequently it is paired with other words for sin: *peša*ʿ (Gen 31:36; 50:17), *ʿāwōn* (Ex 34:9); *rāšāʿ* (Num 16:26) and *raʿ* (Deut 9:18).

The term occurs in various literary genres: narrative (e.g., Gen 4:7; 18:20; 20:9; 40:1; Ex 9:27), law, prayer and paraenesis. In Israel's story, the root appears in the episode of the golden calf (Ex 32:21, 30; cf. Deut. 9:16, 18), and in the accounts of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num 16:26, 38 [MT 17:3]).

Within legal material, behaviors classified as sinful include lying to a neighbor and stealing (Lev 6:2-4 [MT 5:21-23]), failure to pay vows or wages (Deut 23:21 [MT 22]); 24:15) and cursing God (Lev 24:15). Distinctions are also made in legal material, such as sinning unintentionally or inadvertently (*šĕgāgâ*, Lev 4:2-31; Num 15:28) and sinning in defiance, blatantly or with contempt ("high-handedly," *bĕyād rāmâ*, Num 15:30). The former, which are sins without malicious intent (e.g., an act that one did not know was wrong or about which there was uncertainty) can be forgiven through sacrifice, but not so the high-handed sins. Scripture also acknowledges failure as when, in making a promise, "it slips one's memory" (Lev 5:4; Wenham, 86, 93). The casuistic laws, "If so and so sins . . ." followed by prescriptive action (e.g., Lev 4:3, 22, 27), also belong in this legal category.

Not surprisingly, the word *ḥaṭṭāʾt* ("sin") and its derivatives occur in prayers—sometimes, as in the prayer of Moses, in pleas for God to forgive sin (Ex 32:31). Statements on the formulaic order of "I have sinned," which identify culpability and personal responsibility, are found thirty times in the OT, including seven (not all confessions of sin) in the Pentateuch (cf. tabulations in Knierim 1965, 20, 28; e.g., Pharaoh in Ex 9:27; 10:16, Balaam in Num 22:34, and other first-person singular Qal forms of the verb: Gen 20:9; 39:9; 43:9; 44:32). The formula "We have sinned" *(ḥāṭāʾnû)* occurs twenty-four times in the OT; only four are from the Pentateuch (*Aaron and *Miriam in Num 12:11; Israel at Kadesh in Num 14:40; Deut 1:41; and Israel murmuring in Num 21:7). Instructions and especially warnings against sin and the incurring of guilt appear in paraenetic material (Ex 23:33; Lev 19:17; cf. Gen 4:7).

The word occurs with the verb *nāśāʾ* ("to carry"), especially in the formula "to bear [one's] sin" (e.g., Lev. 19:17; 20:20; 22:9; 24:15; see below). Because *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is sometimes found in conjunction with *ʾāšām* ("guilt, punishment"), as well as for other reasons, R. Knierim (1965, 55) concludes that the term *ḥaṭṭāʾt* functions in a judicial setting or at least within an adjudicative semantic field. Already in the Pentateuch the warning about sin resulting in exile is sometimes sounded (Deut 29:28). The noun form occurs with considerable frequency linked with words for death (*mwt*, e.g., Deut 24:16).

***2.2. Breach of Law/Relationships* (peša^ʿ).** Earlier lexical definitions stressed the notion of rebellion inherent in *peša*ʿ, a conclusion deduced from the political context in which the term is at home (DeVries, 4.361; Quell, 1.270, 273). For example, a vassal nation would rebel against its overlord *(pāša*ʿ; e.g., 2 Kings 3:5; 8:20). While the meaning "rebellion" is not amiss, Knierim (1965, 178, 181) has shown that the term has to do with "breach" (German *verbrechen* or *brechen mit*). In this understanding of the word, there is the notion of taking something away, as in asserting ownership rights over that which belongs to another (e.g., kidnapping, Gen 50:17; cf. Ex 22:9 [MT 22:8]; 2 Kings 8:20, 22). So while there remains a juridical, or at least political, aspect to the term, once this legal sphere for the term is acknowledged, a secondary nuance of the term comes into play, namely, the straining of relationships. The notion of *peša*ʿ as breach of law and of brotherhood is especially poignant in the words of Joseph's brothers, purportedly quoting their father when they ask for Joseph to forgive their *peša*ʿ (Gen 50:17: "crime," NRSV; "trespass," KJV). Theologically, "whoever commits *peša*ʿ does not merely rebel or protest against Yahweh, but breaks with him, takes away what is his, robs, embezzles, misappropriates it" (Knierim, 2.1036). Actions of *peša*ʿ rupture solidarity and shatter harmony.

Out of a total of over 130 occurrences for the root *peša*ʿ in the OT, nine are found in eight verses of the Pentateuch. The word is used in the genre of narratives, such as that of Laban and Jacob (Gen 31:36) and in connection with Joseph and his brothers (Gen 50:17). On the Day of *Atonement the priest is directed to confess the sins *(peša*ʿ*)* of the people of Israel when he lays his hand on the scapegoat (Lev 16:16, 21). The term also appears in the Pentateuch in conjunction with the doxology of forgiveness (Ex 34:7; Num 14:18).

The term *peša*ʿ appears together with its synonym *ḥaṭṭāʾt* (e.g., Gen 31:36) and so serves as an umbrella word for wrongdoing. Still, the two terms have distinctive nuances. If *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is all about failure, especially the failure of achieving or reaching a goal, *peša*ʿ is about breaching a relationship. Some actions described as *ḥaṭṭāʾt* may be unintentional, but actions of *peša*ʿ are clearly deliberate.

***2.3. Iniquity* (ʿāwōn).** The word *ʿāwōn* occurs 231 times in the OT (Knierim, 2.863) and about forty times in the Pentateuch, where it describes the evils of the Amorites (Gen 15:16), the sins of the cities Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:15), the wicked dealings of Joseph's brothers (Gen 44:16), the sin of erecting a golden calf (Ex 34:9) and the sin of bowing to *idols (Ex 20:5; Deut 5:9). The word occurs in the formula "bear iniquities" (see 3.2 below).

Lexical definitions employ such terms as "crookedness," "perversity" and "iniquity." The informing image is of a bent, twisted or crimped item laid alongside a standard straight edge. Knierim (1965, 238) emphasizes that the term *ʿāwōn* denotes a concrete action, but within Israelite holistic thinking it also entails consequences such as guilt (Gen 15:16) and punishment (Gen 19:15).

Scholars have tried to distinguish the meaning of *ʿāwōn* from the two other primary words for sin, *ḥaṭṭāʾt* and *peša*ʿ. T. C. Vriezen (6.479) sees *ḥaṭṭāʾt* as pointing to general failure and shortcoming; *ʿāwōn,* a more weighty term, as having an ethical component; and *peša*ʿ, the weightiest term of all, referring to the religious dimension. W. Eichrodt sets up a distinction in which *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is a general, more formal word designating sinful conduct, essentially a failure with regard to norm, whereas implicit in *ʿāwōn* is the "agent's awareness of the culpability of his action, so that the formal aspect is here already supplemented by one of moral content" (Eichrodt, 2.380-81). For Eichrodt the root *peša*ʿ in both verb and noun forms denotes "rebellion" and "revolt" (contrast Knierim). Eichrodt concludes that for all these terms there is a "unifying basic conception of action contrary to the norm."

2.4. Evil (raʿ). The term *raʿ* describes what is morally defective in character and action, such as the sin of Sodom (Gen 13:13). The term *raʿ* is opposite to good *(ṭôb)* in the expression "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:9, 17; 3:5, 22). An entire community, unbelieving and reneging at the threshold of the Promised Land, is described as wicked (*raʿ*, Num 14:27; cf. the same word for the same event in Deut 1:35). The Israelite army is to be free from an evil thing (*raʿ*, Deut 23:9 [MT 23:10]). A congregation must purge *raʿ* from its ranks (Deut 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21).

The feminine noun *rāʿâ* as well as the adjective *raʿ* can refer either to moral/ethical wrongdoing or to bad things generally (misfortune, calamity). An instance of the first is in Joseph's question to Potiphar's wife regarding her efforts to seduce him sexually: "How can I do this great evil?" (*rāʿâ,* Gen 39:9). Other actions that are characterized as *rāʿâ* are Joseph's brothers' devious ways with him (Gen 50:17, 20; cf. Saul in 1 Sam 20:7, 9, 13) and a people's turning to idolatry (Deut 31:18). Evil behavior is also contrasted with good behavior (Gen 44:4; cf. Num 24:13). The verb *rʿʿ* can refer to perpetrating evil, as in the proposed actions of the Sodomites (Gen 19:9) or theft (Gen 44:5); homosexuality (Gen 19:7); or Onan's *coitus interruptus* (Gen 38:10). The collocation of terms from this root when used in the moral sphere points to a generic meaning, "evil," "wickedness."

***2.5. Guilty* (rāšāʿ).** The term *rāšāʿ* ("guilty"), along with its derivatives, occurs in the Pentateuch more than a dozen times. This word denotes behavior that is destructive and disruptive of harmony in the community and serves as a more generalized term for evil understood as the opposite of what is morally good. The antonym of *rāšāʿ* is righteousness, as illustrated in the classic story of Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah where both terms *rāšāʿ* and *ṣaddîq* ("righteous") are decisive (Gen 18:23, 25; cf. Ex 9:27). The judicial dimension of *rāšāʿ* is transparent in Deuteronomy 25:1, where a court ruling involves being "righteous" or *rāšāʿ* (cf. Ex 23:1, 7). The Hiphil form of the verb means "to pronounce guilty," as when ruling on property rights (Ex 22:9 [MT 22:8]).

The nominative (i.e., adjective or noun) forms are *rāšāʿ* (265 times in the OT) or *risʿâ* (fifteen times), both denoting wickedness/guilt in a more general sense. While most of the occurrences are in Wisdom literature, some instances occur in the Pentateuch, as in Abraham's intercession (Gen 18:23, 25), Pharaoh's confession (Ex 9:27), Moses' description of Korah, Dathan and Abiram as wicked (Num

16:26) and reference to wicked Canaanites (Deut 9:4-5) and Israelites (Deut 9:27). The masculine noun form, *rešaʿ*, occurs once in the Pentateuch (Deut 9:27). In brief, *rāšāʿ* is criminal wrongdoing.

***2.6. Guilt* (ʾāšām).** The root in its various forms—the verb *ʾāšam,* "to incur or become guilty"; the noun, *ʾāšām,* "guilt, wrong, guilt-offering"; and the adjective *ʾāšēm,* "guilty"—appears more than forty times in the Pentateuch, mostly in Leviticus and Numbers. Guilt is to be understood as moral or legal culpability, so it has an objective dimension. Guilt designates the condition or state of a person who has acted wrongfully; it stands between the act of sin and the punishment. Some hold that the subjective, psychological notion of feeling guilty is scarcely, if at all, a component of the biblical concept. Guilt is incurred through action not in accord with the law (Lev 4:13, 22) even if the individual is unaware of his or her wrongdoing (Lev 5:2-4). The nominative form often denotes "guilt offering."

Most of the occurrences of the verb *ʾāšam* entail actions that infringe on cultic purity, such as touching an unclean animal (Lev 5:2-3) or sinning inadvertently (Lev 4:22, 27; 5:17). But careless swearing of an oath also incurs guilt (Lev 5:4), as do theft and breach of trust in the stewardship of property (Lev 6:4 [MT 5:23]). The condition of being guilty (hence liable for punishment) follows upon committing sin (Lev 5:17).

Taking issue with the broadly accepted understanding of *ʾāšām* as guilt or culpability, J. Milgrom (1976, 11-12; 1991, 340-45) has identified four uses of the word, one of which he calls "consequential *ʾāšām*" especially in cultic texts. In his view the word denotes the wrong *and* the retribution, as underscored, for example, in Hosea 5:15 (cf. Gen 26:10). Milgrom (1991, 343-45) also includes a "feeling dimension" for the term, since when someone willfully appropriates something, it is already clear that guilt has been incurred (Lev 6:4 [MT 5:23]).

2.7. Other Terms in the Semantic Field. The remaining pentateuchal terms for wrongful behavior can be clustered around the main terms described above: *ḥaṭṭāʾt, pešaʿ, ʿāwōn, raʿ* and *rāšāʿ*.

2.7.1. Words Related to ḥaṭṭāʾt. One of the words that falls under the rubric of *ḥaṭṭāʾt* ("missing the mark") is *sûr* ("to turn aside"). To defect from God is to become open to idolatry (Deut 11:16, 28). Wrongdoing also consists of turning aside, deviating from the commandment (Deut 17:20; 28:14; see 3.3 below). Two other terms, *šgh* and *šgg,* carry the meaning "to err." The noun *šĕgāgâ* is found closely allied with *ḥaṭṭāʾt* in Leviticus 4:2; 5:15. The noun *šĕgāgâ* refers to inadvertent or unintentional sin, which, as Milgrom (1967, 118) explains, comes about in two ways. The offender knows the law but accidentally violates it (e.g., Num 35:22-23; Deut 19:5-6), or one acts deliberately but did not know that it was wrong (Ezek 45:20). The verb *šgh* means "to act in error," unaware of the consequence of an action. Its use in moral contexts underscores the fact that judicially there is an objective wrong, whether the agent (individual, priest or community) was specifically aware of the failure or not (Lev 4:13; Num 15:22; cf. Deut 27:18). In sum, *šgh* and *šgg,* like *ḥaṭṭāʾt,* signify moral failure of some sort.

2.7.2. Words Related to pešaʿ. Certain terms for sin are generally in the word field of *rebel (pešaʿ).* One of these, *mārâ* ("resist, rebel"), is illustrated in the noncompliant behavior of Israel (Num 20:10) and Moses (Num 20:24; 27:14). The root *mrh* is relatively frequent in Deuteronomy, where, mostly from the mouth of Moses, the word characterizes Israel as contentious and rebellious (Deut 1:43; 9:7, 23-24; 31:27). The word is coupled with the verb *srr* ("to be stubborn, rebellious," Deut 21:18, 20) and also with *qšh* ("stiff[-necked]"; Deut 31:27).

The closely related verb *mārad* ("to rebel, act with insolence") appears in a plea for obedience that Joshua makes to the people (Num 14:9). Rebellion is also at the heart of the term *sārâ.* The noun *sāra* ("rebellion, treason") is applied to prophets who by dreams mislead the people (Deut 13:5 [MT 13:6]) and once in the Pentateuch to wrongdoing in general (Deut 19:16). Also within the category of *pešaʿ* is the idiom of sinning "high-handedly," or presumptuously, behavior against which Moses warns (Num 15:30; Deut 8:14).

To the extent that *pešaʿ* is construed as breaching a relationship, the verb *māʿal* ("to be unfaithful, disloyal") is a close synonym (Lev 5:15). The word is apropos to a woman's faithlessness in marriage (Num 5:12, 27). An instance of *māʿal* is deception of a neighbor, which is a breach of trust not only against the neighbor but also against God, since to make things right it is

necessary to make reparations to the neighbor *and* to bring a guilt offering to God (Lev 6:2-7 [MT 5:21-26]). Moses broke faith with God at Meribah (*māʿal*, Deut 32:51).

2.7.3. Words Related to ʿāwōn. A word that is akin to the concept of "crooked" *(ʿāwōn)* is the noun *hepek*, which in its abstract form *tahpūkâ* ("perversity") occurs in a song highlighting Israelite wrongdoing over against God's faithfulness (Deut 32:20). Another root in this world field is *slp* ("distort"), which occurs in didactic texts warning against twisting justice through bribery (Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19).

2.7.4. Words Related to raʿ. A term that refers more generally to wickedness, as *raʿ* does, is *ʿāwel* ("to act wrongly"). Showing partiality and cheating are wrong. Adjudication in court is not to be tainted with evil such as partiality: "You shall not render an unjust *[ʿāwel]* judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great" (Lev 19:15 NRSV; cf. Lev 19:35; Deut 25:16; 32:4).

2.7.5. Words Related to rāšāʿ. The lexeme *ḥāmās* ("violence") is used alongside the word *rāšāʿ* ("wicked") in Exodus 23:1. In addition, violence and ruthless, outrageous cruelty characterized human action prior to the flood (Gen 6:11, 13). Cruelty was in view in the words spoken by Jacob: "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords" (Gen 49:5 NRSV). Such action tears at the social fabric of communal relations. In the Pentateuch's other two references, the term is employed in the more general sense of wrong (Gen 16:5; Deut 19:16). Here should be included *nābāl*, which describes a person "who 'commits an act of crass disorder or unruliness' or acts 'in an utterly disorderly or unruly fashion' " (Pan, 3.11). Examples in the Pentateuch have to do with sex-related actions *(nĕbālâ;* e.g., Shechem's sexual act against Dinah, Gen 34:7; cf. Deut 22:21). Moses also characterizes Israel with this epithet (Deut 32:6, 21).

Into this more general category of "wicked" *(rāšāʿ* and *raʿ)* are to be placed at least two other terms, also of a general nature, with the roots *tʿb* and *šqṣ*. The noun *tôʿēbâ* refers to that which is offensive or loathsome. The word can pertain to a cultural value (e.g., shepherding was loathsome in the view of Egyptians; Gen 46:34). Often, however, *tôʿēbâ* ("abomination") represents a divine estimate on activity that is evil and so, like sin, defiles the land (Lev 18:27). Concentration of the term is in Leviticus 18 (five times) and in Deuteronomy (sixteen times). Israel is warned against certain actions typical of, or at least prevalent in, Canaanite and surrounding cultures, which are described as abhorrent and which are taboo (*tôʿēbâ*; cf. Deut 20:15-18). These actions as listed in the Pentateuch can be grouped in five categories: (1) idolatries (Deut 27:15; cf. the mention of strange *[zār]* gods in Deut 32:16; cult prostitution in Deut 23:17-18 [MT 23:18-19]; and offering second-class animals for offerings in Deut 17:1); (2) human sacrifice (Deut 12:31); (3) sexual perversions such as homosexuality (Lev 20:13), incest and other illicit sexual activities apparently common in Egypt and Canaan (Lev 18:1-30); (4) illicit business practices involving deception (Deut 25:13-16); and (5) dietary and clothing taboos (Deut 14:3; 22:5).

Still in the category of what is bad *(raʿ)* is the word *šeqeṣ* ("detestable, repugnant"), a synonym for *tôʿēbâ* (cf. Jer 16:18), as is evident in the fact that unacceptable foods can be designated by either term (Lev 11:10; Deut 14:3). The word predominates in the *food laws (Lev 11:11-23), although the language of *šeqeṣ* is also applied to idolatry (Deut 7:25-26).

3. Metaphors for Sin.

Three metaphors within the Pentateuch aid in clarifying what is meant by sin.

3.1. Sin as Blemish. Language about the removal of sin on the Day of *Atonement evokes the picture of sin as an impurity, a blemish: "From all your sins you shall be clean *[ṭhr]* before the LORD" (Lev 16:30). The terms *ṭhr* ("clean") and *ṭmʾ* ("unclean") often refer to physical ritual purity and uncleanness (e.g., contact with a carcass, Lev 5:2-3), to contracting an infectious disease (Lev 13:13, 14) or to foods (Lev 11:1-23). But sin also defiles and makes unclean, and so renders a person unfit (cf. Is 6:5). Sexual relations outside marriage, for example, were defiling *(ṭmʾ;* Lev 18:20), as was involvement with mediums (Lev 19:31) and sacrificing of one's offspring to Molech (Lev 20:1-8).

The idea of blemish is also captured in the root *ḥnp* ("pollute"), a synonym to *ṭmʾ* (Num 35:33-34). Land is polluted *(ḥnp)* through bloodshed (Num 35:33; cf. prophetic material where idolatry is said to pollute the land, Jer 3:2, 9). In some instances *ḥll* ("profane"), when coupled with *ṭmʾ*, includes the nuance of defiling (e.g., Lev 20:3). Sin must be understood as the opposite of *holiness, cleanness.

3.2. Sin as Burden. An important metaphor about sin occurs within an idiomatic, formulaic saying: "carry iniquity" *(nś' ʿāwōn; cf. nś' plus ḥaṭṭā't or peša')*, a phrase that occurs twenty-nine times in the OT. On the one hand the idiom with the sense of "carrying off" points to forgiveness. When God is the subject, the sense is of God's lifting off or removing the sin (Ex 32:32; 34:7; Num 14:18; cf. Ps 32:5; Mic 7:18). However, persons may also forgive (e.g., Joseph forgiving his brothers in Gen 50:17; cf. Pharaoh, Ex 10:17).

On the other hand, the phrase "carry the iniquity" is also to be understood as bearing the load of guilt, punishment or both. R. Knierim (1965, 73-91) has stressed retribution as the focus of the metaphor. The sinner must bear the consequences of his or her sin. So also Milgrom (1991, 295): "The expression *nāśā' ʿāwōn* always implies that the punishment will be meted out by God, not by man." Cain asserts that his iniquity *(ʿāwōn)*, understood now as "punishment," is more than he can bear *(nś')*, Gen 4:13). In the case of someone who fails to come forward with evidence in a court case, the verdict is "you shall be subject to punishment" (Lev 5:1). V. Hamilton (3.162-63) notes that where persons are the subject of *nāśā' ʿāwōn*, the sense is that of incurring guilt or bearing responsibility or punishment, possibly capital punishment (Ex 28:43; Lev 5:1, 17; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; Num 5:31; 18:1), though even then forgiveness is possible (cf. Lev. 5:1-13). For a woman proven culpable, her burden is that she must "bear her iniquity" (Num 5:31). The burden is both her act and her punishment, claims B. A. Milne. B. J. Schwartz, however, moves against the grain of scholarly consensus to argue that the load the sinner carries is not the load of punishment but rather that of guilt. Those who understand the Hebrew idiom to point essentially to culpability or accountability will adopt a translation such as "he will be held responsible" (Lev 5:1 NIV).

Whether then the sinner is burdened with a sinful act, the guilt of that act or the consequences of that act, the formulaic phrase "carry iniquity" presents the image of sin as a load or burden. Sin weighs a person down and is wearisome to deal with. Sin constitutes a burden, a load that is carried but that can also be "carried off" or "carried away," that is, forgiven.

3.3. Sin as Swerving from the Path. The term *sûr*, although it means to remove or take away (e.g., animal parts in an offering, Lev 4:9), is frequently used in the sense of turning aside, as in leaving the path (e.g., Abraham's visitors, Gen 19:3; Moses at the burning bush, Ex 3:3). The word is also used in a moral sense of someone leaving the right path. The informing image is of right living as a matter of walking in God's ways (Gen 5:22; 6:9; cf. Gen 6:12). To sin is to stray or swerve from that right way. Thus the word *sûr* serves alongside *ḥātā'* ("to sin") to describe what really transpired in the story of the golden calf: Israel turned aside *(sûr)* from the way God had commanded (Ex 32:8; cf. Deut 9:16). To sin is to get off (God's) track, to stray from the good path.

4. Consequences of Sin.

A fundamental assumption throughout the Scripture is that persons are accountable to God for their actions (Gen 19:13; Lev 18:25). The consequences of sinful behavior can be delineated in two primary directions: (1) the effects of human sin on the offended person, God; and (2) the effects of human sin on the sinner, the human community and nature.

4.1. The Effect of Human Sin on God.

4.1.1. Grief and Disgust. Sinful actions bring pain to God, for he is not impassive or without emotion. The preflood widespread evil of sexual perversion and violence evoked in God a response of sorrow: "it grieved him to his heart" (Gen 6:6; cf. God's passionate responses to Israel's defection in Jer 2:5; 3:19). Another emotional reaction is caught up in the words *abhorrent (tôʿēbâ)* and *detestable (šeqeṣ)*. The pagan practices of the Canaanite and Egyptian religions of idolatry, deceit, corruption and sexual perversion are reprehensible and repugnant in the sight of God (see 2.7.5 above). God is a God of passion, sensitivity and emotion who can be "hurt" by sin.

4.1.2. Profaning of God's Name. The OT functions with categories such as clean and unclean, *blessings and curses, holy and profane. To profane *(ḥll)* is to treat someone or something as common or ordinary. In the words of S. H. Blank, "To profane the name of God is to do damage to God's reputation, to defame him, to lessen his prestige, to retard the process by which he achieves recognition, to put off the day of which it shall be known that he is God" (quoted in O'Kennedy, 2.147). Pentateuchal legislation warns against profaning the name of

Yahweh, degrading it from a status of holy to something other (Lev 22:32). For example, when priests whose calling it is to be holy engage in pagan mourning customs, they "damage" *(ḥll)* the name (reputation) of Yahweh (Lev 21:6). Similarly, priests are warned not to mishandle sacred donations, for that would profane *(ḥll)* Yahweh's holy name (Lev 22:2; cf. Lev 19:8). When common people sacrifice their children to Molech, they incur Yahweh's displeasure because they have defiled the sanctuary and profaned Yahweh's name (Lev 20:3). Ezekiel especially will have much else to say on the subject (e.g., Ezek 36:21-22). However nuanced, sin is an insult to God.

4.1.3. Wrath. God's wrath, as well as the wrath of Moses, punctuates the narrative of Israel and the golden calf (Ex 32:11, 12, 19, 22). God's initial response to this idolatry is "Now let me alone, so that my wrath *[ʾap]* may burn hot against them and I may consume them" (Ex 32:10 NRSV). An angry response to sin by an offended God is recorded against Aaron and Miriam (Num 12:9), against Israel when it joined itself to Baal of Peor (Num 25:3-4) and against Israel for their refusal to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea (Num 32:10, 13). God also threatens anger against oppression of the resident alien, abuse of widows and orphans (Ex 22:21-24), and idolatry (Deut 6:15, 7:4; 11:16-17; 31:16-17). God threatens anger against those who sin through hostility against him. To such God announces that he in turn will be hostile against them in fury (*ḥēmâ*, Lev 26:28). God's anger against Balaam, who acts in compliance with God's word, is difficult to explain (Num 22:20-22).

4.1.4. Retribution: The Principle. In the OT worldview, sin in any form is punishable, but the way in which the principle of God's punishment for sin operates has received different answers. K. Koch has argued that there is not a doctrine of retribution in the OT, if retribution is understood as a judge's handing out sentences according to prescribed norms. Rather, so he holds, the link between an act and its consequence is so tight that whatever follows from an evil act is an implementation of what is implicit already in the act itself. The result of an act is embedded in the act just as the fruit is embedded in the seed (Hos 8:7; 10:12-13). That connection between wrongdoing and its consequence is already captured in the very vocabulary, so that terms such as *raʿ and ʿāwōn* can mean both the wrongdoing and the punishment that follows (cf. Gen 4:13, where *ʿāwōn* may refer to all three: the sinful act, guilt and punishment). The judgment is not separate from the crime, Koch argues. To be sure, it is God who superintends the process, but in point of fact there is an inevitability enshrined in actions such that evil actions reap evil harvests just as good actions reap good harvests.

According to C. Westermann (1967), God's role within the sin-punishment continuum is more intrusive than only to superintend an inbuilt process. The prophetic judgment speech has a legal background such that the punishment is not apart from a personal judge who passes sentence. At least for humans, a principle known as *lex talionis* ("an eye for an eye") is in place (Ex 21:23-24; Lev 24:19-20; Deut 19:21).

P. D. Miller Jr. also raises questions about Koch's conclusions. Miller shows that in the prophetic material there is a correspondence between sin and judgment. As a rule, though there are exceptions, the punishment not only follows the crime but is equal to the crime. In the Pentateuch this correspondence is exemplified in the Song of Moses: "They made me jealous with what is no god, provoked me with their idols. So I will make them jealous with what is no people" (Deut 32:21 NRSV; cf. Miller, 76-79). Because Israel did not serve *(ʿbd)* Yahweh their God, they will now serve *(ʿbd)* the enemies God will send against them (Deut 28:47-48; for other repetition of terms, see Deut 31:16-18). From these and other examples Miller deduces that a possible source for the correspondence of sin and judgment in the Prophets is found in the *covenant curses. Yahweh has an active role in the punishment process. Moreover, there is a "universal pattern of speech and style wherein poetic justice is a common literary device" (Miller, 98). While the inexorable connection between sin and punishment is strongly emphasized in the Pentateuch, there is also frequently the mitigation of an announced punishment (Bratcher, 249; see 1.1 above). So, for example, in the flood story the destruction is not total: Noah and his family are saved. While such mitigation comes by the free will of Yahweh, mitigation in other instances can come through intercessory prayer (Num 11:1-3; 12:1-15).

4.2. The Effect of Human Sin on the Sinner.

4.2.1. Alienation. Adam and Eve, following

their transgression, were driven from the garden and from the presence of God (*see* Eden, Garden of). The expression "east of Eden" notes the increasing distance from deity (Gen 3:24; 4:16; 11:2). Similarly, the theme of alienation is captured in God's verdict on Cain: "you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen 4:12). The motif of migration is registered also in connection with the tower of *Babel. Wandering in the *wilderness follows on Israel's lack of trust and obedience, and hence failure to occupy the Promised Land (Num 14:32-35). God's reaction at the earlier incident of the golden calf is "Go up ... but I will not go up among you" (Ex 33:3). Through sin the sinner is distanced from God and, for that matter, from others.

4.2.2. Guilt. Guilt, as explained in 2.6 above, is the state of culpability into which a person comes when acting wrongfully. The sinning agent (whether individual or community) stands under God's indictment. Confessions such as "I have sinned" (Num 14:40; 21:7; 22:34) are acknowledgments that sin has placed one into the category of the guilty. It must be stressed that while such confessions may entail sorrow over sin, for biblical writers the idea of guilt is not so much a subjective feeling of anguish as it is an objective condition into which one has entered because of sin. It is fair to say that guilt may not be so much an agitation of conscience as the sense that punishment is inevitable. When Joseph's brothers acknowledge that guilt (*'āšēm*) attaches to their wrongful action against Joseph, their further statement makes a close connection between the condition of guiltiness and subsequent negative consequences (Gen 42:21). Guilt may be collective (Ex 20:5-6) or individual (Deut 24:16).

Several of the words for sin incorporate the notion of consequence (e.g., the land becomes guilty; Hiphil of *ḥāṭā'*, Deut 24:4). The phrase "bear iniquity," at least according to some, signifies the guilty status that results from committing sin (see 3.2 above).

4.2.3. Shame. Although little is said in the Pentateuch about shame as a consequence of sin, the opening narrative of human transgression points to it. Adam and Eve hide themselves from God, for as they explain, they are naked (Gen 3:10). Taken together with the earlier statement that they "were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25), the conclusion follows that one of the consequences of sin is shame. In the garden, shame—a sense of dishonor—replaces innocence. In the words of H. Shank (224), "Sin leads to shame, hiding, fear, pain, hardship, expulsion, and alienation in the garden."

Disgrace was surely attached to a person who was publicly punished (e.g., the one flogged, Deut 25:1-3; cf. use of *qlh* II "to dishonor") and to one who refused levirate responsibilities (Deut 25:5-10). However, the motif of shame is much more pronounced in other books (e.g., Ezekiel) than in the Pentateuch (*see* Honor and Shame).

4.2.4. Divine Punishment. Punishment for sin can take a variety of forms. To the extent that sin may be viewed against the backdrop of covenant, punishment consists in the implementation of covenant curses as a consequence of God's anger (Deut 29:19, 27 [MT 29:18, 26]). These curses are listed at length (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:16-68) and include plagues (Lev 26:21; Deut 28:21), illness (Deut 28:22, 27-29, 35), loss of children and livestock (Lev 26:22), food shortages (Lev 26:26), famine (Deut 28:24, 38-40), defeat before enemies (Deut 28:25), death (Deut 28:26), devastation of cities and land (Lev 26:31-33), and diminishing of Israel's status so that she becomes a byword among the nations and a nation of low status (Deut 28:37, 43-44).

A frequent formula that pertains to punishment for sin is the literal expression "That soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel" (cf. "from her people," "from my presence"). The formula, it is commonly thought, refers to ostracism, expulsion from the community. Reasons for expulsion from the community often have to do with disregard of cultic regulations such as the "desecration of sacred time, sacred substance, sacred place, and God's holy name as well as the people of Israel themselves" (Wold, 1.24; see Lev 7:20, 25, 27; cf. Ex 12:15; 30:33, 38). The formula occurs first in the story of Abraham: one who refuses circumcision is to be cut off from his people (Gen 17:14). However, other evil actions such as sacrifice of children also call for this punishment, but with Israel and God as agents the penalty represents being cut off from life (Lev 20:2-3).

Ultimately, as announced in the first transgression story, the punishment for violating God's purpose is physical death (Gen 2:17), though it does not come immediately either to

Adam or to Eve, nor even to Cain. God does not strike Cain down; divine mercy is extended. "Penance and punishment are God's method of preparing the way for forgiveness" (Krasovec, 14). The nature of the punishment, especially in the four stories of the primeval cycle, is related to diminishing life or an approach to the sphere of death (e.g., expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden). Death can be understood as separation from God and also as cessation of physical life. The verdict of physical death is both written over the sinful preflood generation and brought about through the deluge. Sin's negative consequence is graphically illustrated in the life of Moses, who because of disobedience forfeited entry into the Promised Land (Deut 32:48-52).

For outrageous sins, the Mosaic law prescribed the physical penalty of death (Ex 21:15-17; Lev 20:10-16; 24:10-17; Deut 21:18-21); the link between sin and death is also noted elsewhere (Num 18:22; 27:3; Deut 24:16). Most of the sixty occurrences of the combination *ḥṭ'* ("sin") and *māwet* ("death") are found in the Pentateuch (e.g., Ex 10:17; Num 18:22; cf. Luc, 2.89). A striking example of the punishment following at once on sinful action occurs in the story of Israel's yoking itself to the Baal of Peor, for at the Lord's command the perpetrators were impaled and killed (Num 25:1-5; cf. Phinehas's execution of a sinning couple, Num 25:6-9).

4.3. The Effect of Sin on Human Community. Sin disrupts family and community harmony *(šālôm).* Thus Scripture records blame-shifting between spouses (Gen 3:12). The anger of those sinned against must be factored into a sin's consequence (e.g., Esau, Gen 27:45; Potiphar, Gen 39:19, Joseph, Gen 44:18). Sin can bring fractures into the family and clan, as in the story of Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37—50). Knierim (1965, 57-58) expands on the notion that *ḥṭ'* has an adverse effect on community bondedness (cf. Gen 42:22). Some see hierarchy and patriarchy resulting from human sin. Sin destroyed the collegiality of sibling leaders (Num 12:1-15). The effect of one person's evil, especially that of a leader, can bring havoc to large numbers (e.g., Pharaoh's sin of resisting God and the resulting death of the firstborn in Egyptian families, Ex 11:4-10). The sin of unbelief, triggered by the evil report of the spies, sent an entire community into a spiral of discontent and eventually into a desert trek of forty years (Num 14:32-35). Likewise, violations of the Ten Commandments resulted in Israel being exiled (cf. Freedman, Geoghegan and Holman). Sin destroys family and communal solidarity. In the words of C. Plantinga (7-27) sin is the "vandalization of shalom."

4.4. The Effect of Human Sin on Nature. The first biblical narrative of sin already plots the effects of sin on creation. As falling dominoes or bowling pins bring down others, so the sin of Adam and Eve spills over to affect the environment. "Sin was an event in the realm of the human spirit, but it has its repercussions in the whole of creation" (Milne, 3.1457). Now the earth is disempowered from bearing food in abundance; a divine curse on it makes food-gathering laborious (Gen 3:17-19). Pharaoh's resistance to God's command brings on the plagues, almost all of them within the realm of nature. Sinful actions such as disregard for divorce regulations defile the land (Deut 24:4). As Knierim (1995, 452) notes: "It [creation] is also the criterion by which sin can be diagnosed in the deepest sense of the word; it is the violation of the totality of creation and the presence of God in this totality." Prophetic literature reinforces the understanding that human sin brings negative effects on the natural environment (e.g., Hos 4:1-3).

5. Theological Issues Related to Sin.

5.1. The Origin of Evil. While the question of the origin of *evil is often asked, answers from Scripture are not readily available beyond the narrative of how sin entered the human race (Gen 3). As for Adam and Eve, sin entered from the outside: the incentive to do wrong was injected from the external world. The story of Genesis 3 in which a contrary action to God's command is proposed by the serpent seems almost deliberately to put the answer to the question of sin's origin out of reach. The *serpent, as a biological snake, is almost certainly the mouthpiece of "another." That Satan is later known as the "serpent" is telling (Rev 12:9; 20:2), but D. Bonhoeffer's (70) comment on Genesis 3:1-3 bears pondering: "We would be simplifying and completely distorting the biblical narrative if we were simply to involve the devil, who, as God's enemy, caused all this. This is just what the Bible does not say, for very definite reasons." Clearly matters stand quite differently on this question for Cain, for whom sin is not an encroachment from without but an impulse to be mastered.

The expression "sin lurks at the door" (Gen 4:7) is not to be taken as a reference to a demon. Humans were not created as sinful beings; they became sinful. Their freedom of choice must be acknowledged; there is no indication of compulsion other than that of personal desire.

From later writings, especially the intertestamental ones, where the predeluvian story of Genesis 6:1-8 takes center stage, the answer to the origin of sin points to heavenly realms. Some exegetes, by interpreting Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 mythically rather than historically, then posit the origin of evil to be with the angel Lucifer, or Satan. Gnostics in the early Christian centuries speculated about a god whose lesser emanations resulted eventually in an evil deity. To the extent that any such explanations for the origin of evil champion the view that evil has its origin outside human persons, they are in agreement with the Pentateuch. But either of the above views are specious. The first five books give no answer to the question of the origin of evil other than it is an invasion from without.

5.2. The Pervasiveness of Sin. "That a bent towards sinning does affect all humankind, and that it cannot be isolated as belonging to any one part of the person, has been agreed on all sides, or nearly so, in the twentieth century" (Blocher, 19-20). The gist of the biblical material is that laterally sin extends to all human beings and that it has contaminated every possible relationship in which humans express themselves.

That sin so pervaded human experience as to make no one exempt was the assumption of ancient Middle Eastern peoples. In this vein an Akkadian incantation asks: "Who is there who has not sinned against his god? Who that has kept the commandment for ever? All humans who exist are sinful." A similar refrain is heard in the following: "Mankind, as many as there are, which one of them comprehends his faults? Who has not transgressed, and who has not committed sin? Which one understands the way of the god?" (quoted in Cover, 6.32, 33).

Echoes of the same sentiment can be found in Scripture (Prov 20:9; Eccles 7:20). The person, represented in the ancient worldview by the "heart," is shot through with evil (Jer 9:17). Sin is endemic to humanness (Jer 13:23). Sin is a universal phenomenon. It has become part of human experience. The same assumption is found in Genesis when God declares that humans are characteristically sinful (Gen 6:5, 12; 8:21; cf. 1 Kings 8:46; Ps 143:2). Desires may be evil (Ex 20:17); actions can readily be so identified. The reach of sin extends to thoughts, words and deeds. Sin, with its resulting confusion and discord, is pervasive.

Seen another way, sin potentially damages every conceivable relationship into which humans enter or have been placed. The primeval history bears out this conclusion. Sin is against God (so Adam and Eve, Gen 3); sin affects relationships within the family and others generally (so Cain, Gen 4); sin wreaks havoc in the realm of nature's order (so the preflood generation in their sexual deviations, Gen 6:1-3); and sin mars cultural advances (illustrated in the misuse to which the technology of brick-making was put, Gen 11:1-9). To speak of depravity does not mean that every relationship is necessarily totally depraved, but it does mean that sin has the potential to rupture every significant relationship.

5.3. Gradations of Sin. There are gradations of sin, as indicated by the kinds of threatened punishments. For some sins the consequences are material calamities (e.g., Deut 28:30-31); for others a person is cut off from the community (Ex 12:15); for still others the result is death (Num 16:23-33). Certain sins, such as those in full contempt of God ("sins with a high hand," Num 15:29-31) are punished more severely than others. Just as there are gradations of holiness (e.g., the gradations of holy places in the tabernacle), so some sins are more grievous than others (cf. "great sin" in Ex 32:30). The distinction between ethics and etiquette (so van der Toorn) is only partly helpful, since violation of purity and food laws are not necessarily less serious than ethical violations. That the criteria for kinds of sin are not readily discerned does not gainsay the distinctions the Bible makes (cf. Wright, 152-53, whose terms for graded affinities of impurity are "tolerated impurities" and "prohibited impurities").

5.4. Original Sin. "Original sin means that a nexus of sin embraces all people without exception" (Bromiley, 4.519). The teaching about original sin is not about the origin of sin as such but about inherited sinfulness. Discussion of the issue is often more philosophically and psychologically oriented than biblically oriented. The Scripture makes assertions but does not explain how it is that after Adam and Eve all have

sinned. Cain and all those subsequent to him—the entire human race—have a bent toward evil, to use the words of Luther, or an "evil impulse" (*yēṣer raʿ*; cf. Gen 6:5), according to Judaism. Christian teaching on this subject has drawn on the Psalms (e.g., Ps 51:5 [MT 51:7]; 58:3 [MT 58:4]). Some have inferred from the sacrifice ritual required for the mother after the birth of a child that from the first the human newborn is tainted with sin, "a sinfulness that adheres to nature as it is transmitted" (Blocher, 27; Lev 12). Amplification of that teaching belongs to the province of a systematic/dogmatic theology (see Blocher, 17: "This book [on original sin] will be an exercise in dogmatics"; for other "systematic" discussions, see Murray; Berkouwer).

5.5. Process of Temptation to Sin. Bonhoeffer (115) claims that there are strictly speaking only two temptation stories in the Bible: one about the first human and the other about Christ. A sketch of the temptation process using the story of Adam and Eve as prototypical would include the following elements. (1) A circumstance arises whether through a tempter or otherwise that challenges one's commitment to do the right. The serpent planted an idea by raising a "religious question" (Bonhoeffer, 72) and insinuating that God was withholding something good. The enticements to do wrong may come from without, or they may be generated from within. (2) A desire is aroused; rationalization ensues. Eve was enticed; the serpent not only denied that wrongful action would have bad consequences but suggested that something was to be gained by acting on what was prohibited. The proposal prompted calculation and rationalization. (3) The person entertains the possibility of transgression. For Eve this consid-eration focused on what might be beneficial in the short run without giving thought to long-term consequences. (4) The individual acts in disobedience to the command.

If one asks where in this sequence the sin was committed, the common answer is that it lies in the overt action. Even if the act of eating constituted observable disobedience, one cannot fail to notice that the mooring of Eve's commitment was already loosened earlier, certainly by stage 2, where rationalization left an opening for further considerations. Sharp issue must be taken with H. S. Kushner (31), who writes of Eve's act: "Eating from the Tree of Knowledge . . . was one of the bravest and most liberating events in the history of the human race."

Situations teasing or plummeting persons into wrong behavior vary. For Cain, the trigger toward sinful action was personal hurt when slighted. The story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) lends some support to a sage's observation that "civilization is built and destroyed by discontent." Impatience and a longing for visible security led Israel to make a calf, a substitute for God. Promptings to do the wrong thing can come from within the person or group; sometimes a confluence of circumstances galvanizes the will for evil action, as with passing merchants in the story of Joseph's brothers (Gen 37:25-28). Numerous are the paths by which one is led to the precipice of doing evil: "The serpent is *with* us in the world, *without* us in the world, and *within* us in the world" (Fishbane, 23, italics his).

5.6. Dealing with Sin and Guilt. The Pentateuch, if not the entire Bible, can be conceptualized around the problem of sin and how God deals with it and its consequences. Much of Deuteronomy is a warning against sin, which is to be avoided. When wrongdoing occurred, the Israelite congregation could acknowledge and confess its guilt. When evil was discovered within the community, God's instruction was for it to be removed (Deut 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21). Though God administered punishment, he would at least sometimes, as with the raised bronze serpent, provide a way of escape (Num 21:8).

An individual had several choices once a sin had been committed. One could resort to further sin, such as deceit or cover-up (the course of action taken by Joseph's brothers, Gen 37:31-35), or one could offer excuses (Aaron, Ex 32:23), shrug it off or deny knowledge of it (Cain, Gen 4:9). God prescribed repentance (Deut 30:1-3) and also restitution (Num 5:5-7). Reconciliation between offenders and victims was possible (cf. Jacob and Esau; also Joseph's brothers and Joseph). Failure to avail oneself of the means for removing sin, however, meant bearing the full weight of sin's punishment (Deut 28:20-68; 30:17-18).

But God also forgives, as enunciated by God himself (Ex 34:7) and as illustrated in his forgiving Israel in response to Moses' prayer (Deut 33:17). Accessibility to that forgiveness came through prescribed rituals of purification and compensation offerings (Lev 4:1—6:7). The

word *ḥaṭṭāʾt* can mean both "offense" and "purification offering." Thus Leviticus 4:3 states, "If it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, he shall offer for the sin *[ḥaṭṭāʾt]* that he has committed a bull of the herd without blemish as a sin offering *[ḥaṭṭāʾt]* to the LORD" (NRSV). The sense is that purification results in "desinning" (cf. the English "deice," "decontaminate," "detoxify"), by which the condition described is negated. Even more pertinent to the double use of *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is the English idiom "to dust" the furniture, which means not to place dust but "to remove" the dust. That the meaning of *ḥaṭṭāʾt* has both to do with sin and the removal of sin through sacrifice (*ḥṭʾ* in the Piel) connects closely the action and the possibility of its forgiveness.

6. A Theological Summary of Sin.

6.1. Core Notions. Core notions about sin crystallize in the story of the golden calf (Ex 32—34) more so than in the Adam and Eve story. The latter is not mentioned elsewhere in the OT, unless one reads Hosea 6:7 as referring to a person rather than a place. Blocher (42-48), however, finds several OT texts that he regards to be echoes of "the fall." By contrast, the golden calf story is referred to in both Testaments (Deut 9:8-14; Neh 9:16-21; Ps 106:19-25; Acts 7:39-42; 1 Cor 10:7). W. Janzen (410) notes, "The golden calf story is not simply one of the many biblical accounts of human sin. It is in the story of Israel as a covenant people what the Fall (Gen 3) is in the story of humankind: an act that defines Israel's character as rebellious, just as the Fall defined humanity's persistent tendency as rebellious." The Tannaitic writers regarded the incident of the calf as a "model for a study of sin and atonement" (Mandelbaum, 219). The two incidents are alike in that in each case (creation; exodus and covenant) God acted in grace and then gave a command. In both cases the command was disregarded. Each was a sin of idolatry, a replacement of God, whether by an object or by oneself.

From these stories, as well as from vocabulary and metaphors (see 3 above), one may observe sin in two dimensions. First and quite obvious, sin is disobedience to the express command of God (i.e., not to eat of the tree; not to make images). Those who sin defy set boundaries. Humans are made in the *image of God but chafe at the boundaries this sets for them and want to be more than or "other than." They overreach, as did Eve and the tower-builders. As M. Fishbane (32-33) suggests, the preflood generation also reached for divinity, but through sexual intercourse (Gen 6:4). The vocabulary for sin, especially the terms *ḥaṭṭāʾt* and *raʿ*, reinforce the understanding of sin as flagrant disobedience to an instruction that sets limits.

A second dimension of sinful behavior, even more fundamental than commandment breaking, consists in affronting a personal God, as illustrated in the calf story. God is offended and reacts in wrath and outrage, symptomatic of deep hurt. God's displeasure is fierce, indeed so intense as to bring on a resolve to destroy the very people whom he has redeemed and with whom he has just concluded covenant (Ex 32:10). Such expressive, emotional reaction is to be explained not by someone's disobedience of some impersonal statute but by the insult of in-your-face rejection. Entwined in this set of behaviors is ingratitude, suspicion of God's capacity to deliver and basic distrust. Sin is indeed tied to law, but it is more closely tied with the lawgiver. Sinful actions at their core represent rebellion against God, as represented by the terms *pešaʿ* ("breach, rebel") and *rāšāʿ* ("wicked"). Sin is an offense against God's lordship. "Sin is the revolt of the human will against the divine will" (Koehler, 170). Unbelief is sometimes said to be the root of sin, but D. Doriani pointedly remarks that sin is a "relationship of opposition. . . . [Sin] has no program, no thesis; it only has an antithesis, an opposition" (Doriani, 738-39).

6.2. Consequences. The calf-idol incident, like the garden story, demonstrates that sin has dire consequences. In the former, God is offended, even outraged (Ex 32:10). Though in the Eden story the reaction of the Deity is at first more benign, the story ends with God banishing the first couple from Eden and cherubim brandishing flaming swords. Sin strikes at the Deity and inflicts hurt and arouses anger; retribution follows.

As for the sinning agents, an initial consequence is that they are severely alienated from God and others, and placed at once into the status of "guilty." Since it is a given that sin cannot go unpunished, a devastating plague follows the calf incident (Ex 32:35). In the garden also, alienation occurs: there is blame-passing between spouses, soon there is fratricide, and before long dispersion and confusion of lang-

uages (Gen 11). Sin is subversive of the relationships that God intended for family and for society. Sin's consequences also extend to the world of nature. Sin confuses, sin disrupts and sin destroys.

6.3. Solution. In the Pentateuch penalty and punishment are not the last words. There is a divinely appointed solution to the human predicament of sin. Following the calf-idol incident, Moses becomes the intermediary asking that God relent and not take extreme measures of punishment (Ex 32:14). Intercession, like sacrifice later, bridges the distance brought on by sin. God's readiness to forgive is emphasized in the doxology of forgiveness (Ex 34:6-7; cf. Moberly 1983). God's provision of forgiveness through sacrifice is elaborated in Leviticus. Atonement arrests the consequences sin brings (Num 16:46). The outworking of the solution to the human predicament of sin is the subject of salvation history, which culminates in Jesus and his redemptive act of atonement.

See also ATONEMENT, DAY OF; BLASPHEMY; BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; EVIL; EXILE; GOLDEN CALF; HARDNESS OF HEART; HONOR AND SHAME; MURMURING; REPENTANCE; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; SERPENT; SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN; TESTING; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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SIN OFFERING. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

SINAI. *See* EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; WILDERNESS, DESERT.

SINAI THEOPHANY. *See* THEOPHANY.

SINAITIC COVENANT. *See* COVENANT.

SITZ IM LEBEN. *See* FORM CRITICISM.

SKIN DISEASES. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH.

SLAVE, SLAVERY

Slavery is a condition acknowledged in the Pentateuch in which a person is deprived of freedom, at least for a period of time, by being in subjection to a master in order that the master may benefit from the labor of the slave. Slavery may be involuntary, in which case the slave is generally considered the property of the owner and, as such, may be bought and sold. In pentateuchal legislation, involuntary permanent slavery applies only to non-Israelites. Slavery may also be voluntary for Israelites, such as when they agree to work for fellow Israelites for a limited period of time to pay off debts or to survive poverty and destitution. But, because God brought the Israelites out of slavery in *Egypt to serve him alone as master, they are forbidden to bring fellow Israelites into a condition of permanent slavery, as was the case in the rest of the ancient Near East. Permanent slavery is permitted only for a Gentile in subjection to a Hebrew. The Israelites' identity as people redeemed from slavery has direct implications for the forms of slavery that existed in Israel and their treatment of their slaves, both Gentile chattel slaves and Hebrew bondservants.

1. Slavery in the Ancient Near East
2. Slavery as a Historical Condition in the Pentateuch
3. Slavery Within Israel

1. Slavery in the Ancient Near East.

Slavery was a common feature of ancient Near Eastern societies. Generally all subjects of the ruler, including his important officials, were considered his slaves or servants. The social condition of slavery, in which a person's labor was bound to a master, consisted in two main social groups. Chattel slaves were considered under law moveable property of their masters, to whom the slaves had only duties and before whom they had no rights. Because such slaves required a great deal of supervision and were costly to maintain, they were used primarily for domestic work. Such slaves could attain some degree of social improvement. With their masters' approval, they could possess their own property, engage in economic activity, purchase other slaves, hire free persons and marry free individuals. They could even attain their freedom if their masters agreed to this possibility. All such attainments could be withdrawn by the decision of their masters.

The most common kind of servitude was forced labor, or tenant farmers. People in this condition required much less supervision and training. Their labor consisted of farming the land that belonged to the ruler and the religious institutions and performing other forced labor for the authorities. They were required to give most of the harvest of their crops to the palace or the temple to provide labor for building projects and to produce other products for their masters. The slavery of the Israelites in Egypt consisted of this kind of servitude (Ex 1:11-14).

2. Slavery as a Historical Condition in the Pentateuch.

The historical narratives of the Pentateuch contain a number of references to slaves. *Abraham (Gen 12:16), *Isaac (Gen 26:19) and *Jacob (Gen 30:43) have slaves. Their wives have female slaves (Gen 16:1; 30:3). Abraham sends his chief servant to Abraham's relatives to get a wife for Isaac (Gen 24). *Abimelech, a Philistine, has slaves (Gen 20:14), as does *Pharaoh and his daughter (Ex 2:5; 9:20). *Joseph is sold by his brothers as a slave to Midianite traders (Gen 37:28) and is bought by Potiphar in *Egypt (Gen 39:1). The existence of slaves in the ancient Near Eastern nations is mentioned in a number of passages in the Pentateuch, indicating that slavery was a common occurrence (Ex 11:5; Lev 25:44-45; Deut 23:15-16). The condition of the Israelites in Egypt is described in the early chapters of Exodus as slavery (Ex 2:23), and God reminds the Israelites on numerous occasions that he brought them "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2; Deut 5:6; 8:14).

Several of the characteristics of slavery in the ancient Near East are reflected in the history and legislation of the Pentateuch. First, slaves are usually foreigners, mainly prisoners of *war. If a town surrenders to the Israelite army, its people are to serve the Israelites as forced labor; if not, the Israelites are allowed to take the women and children as booty—that is, as slaves—from its vanquished inhabitants (Deut 20:10-14). Laws in Leviticus indicate that the Hebrews are only to have male and female slaves from the nations around them or from the *aliens residing among them. Their slaves are not to consist of their fellow Israelites (Lev 25:44-46).

This may appear to be contradicted by the fact that the Hebrew terms for "slave," whether male (*ʿebed*) or female (*ʾāmâ*), are used for Hebrew slaves (Ex 21:2; 21:7) and for non-Hebrew slaves (Lev 25:44), but these terms have a wide range of meaning in the Pentateuch and should not always be understood in the specific sense of a chattel slave. For example, the term *ʿebed* is used to designate people as servants of the Lord (Ex 32:13), to refer to rulers' subjects and officials (Gen 21:25; 40:20), to designate oneself in humility before fellow humans (Gen 33:5) and to refer to oneself when addressing God (Ex 4:10). Thus, the meaning of the word must be determined by the context in the light of the term's range of denotations. It is clear in the various contexts in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy that there is a distinction between the "slavery" to which Hebrews and non-Hebrews are subjected. The use of the terms *ʿebed* and *ʾāmâ* for Israelites should not be cause for interpretive confusion.

A second characteristic of ancient Near Eastern slavery reflected in the Pentateuch is that a slave does not have the rights of a free person; he or she is "the owner's property" (Ex 21:21). As such, slaves may be left to one's children as an inheritance (Lev 25:46). If a male slave gains

his freedom but has married a female slave while serving his master, he cannot take his wife and children with him into freedom; the woman and her children remain as the master's property (Ex 21:2-4). If one's ox gores a slave to death, one is required to pay the slave's master an amount of money, likely the value of the slave (Ex 21:32). In contrast, if one's ox gores a free Hebrew to death, the penalty is death (Ex 21:28-31). Third, slaves can be granted considerable responsibility by their masters, overseeing their masters' wealth, business and other slaves. Two examples of this are Joseph in Potiphar's household (Gen 39) and Abraham's chief servant, likely Eliezer (Gen 15:2; 24:2), both of whom are placed in charge of all of their masters' possessions. In Genesis 24 Abraham sends his chief servant to his relatives to find Isaac a wife. Although the slave is the servant of Abraham, he is the full representative of Abraham in this task. He is granted responsibility to use Abraham's riches for gifts, to discern God's guidance in pursuing his task and to make the final decision on Isaac's wife.

3. Slavery Within Israel.

Even as the Pentateuch reflects many common features of slavery as found in the ancient Near East, it also presents some unique features of Israelite slavery.

3.1. Israel's Identity as Freed Slaves. The people of Israel are portrayed in the early chapters of Exodus as oppressed "with forced labor" (Ex 1:11) by the taskmasters whom Pharaoh sets over them to build supply cities for Pharaoh. Their lives are made bitter "with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor" (Ex 1:14). God hears their cries of suffering and responds with mighty acts to bring them out of Egypt (Ex 3:7-10), so that they may serve him as their divine master.

Consequently, the Israelite identity is constantly described in the Pentateuch as those who have been delivered from slavery so that they are free to serve God. This stands in contrast to many other ancient Near Eastern nations, where the people were defined as subjects of their king whose rule was mythologically grounded in the gods or who had some political right to lord it over them (e.g., in Gen 47:13-26 the Egyptian people became slaves of Pharaoh in exchange for food during the famine). God defines the Hebrew identity by his mighty acts of redeeming them out of slavery in Egypt and bringing them into a relationship with him: "For to me the people of Israel are servants; they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Lev 25:55).

The Israelites' identity—consisting of their redemption by God from slavery in order to serve him—has direct implications for the condition of slavery permitted in Israelite society. First, it means that they are never again to become slaves of fellow humans. Israelite society must consist of free men and women. Although an Israelite may be temporarily forced to take on the status of a slave, he or she must not be treated as one. Impoverished Hebrews who have to sell themselves into service to fellow Israelites for survival must not be made to serve as a slave (*ʿebed*), but as a hired servant (*śākîr*) or bound laborer (*tôšāb;* Lev 25:39-40). The same position is understood for a Hebrew sold into service to a resident alien (Lev 25:47-55). This is why kidnapping a Hebrew for the purpose of selling him or her into slavery is a serious crime, punishable by death (Ex 21:16).

Second, the Israelites' bondservice to others shall only be for limited duration; it must end after six years, or in the Jubilee Year. Israelites can become permanent bondservants of other Israelites only if they make the decision themselves. The two situations described where this occurs are: (1) after six years of service a man does not want to leave behind the slave woman he has married and their children because he loves them and his master (Ex 21:2-6); and (2) the Hebrew loves his or her master and the master's household, with whom he or she has prospered (Deut 15:16-17). The expression of love for the master in both cases indicates good treatment of the slave by the master. In these instances the slave is designated as a slave for life by the master's piercing of the slave's earlobe with an awl.

If a Hebrew man has to sell himself as a bondsman to an alien living in Israel, family members have the right to pay for his freedom at any time during his service. Alternatively, if he prospers he has the right to purchase his own freedom. If he is not redeemed, he and his family must go free in the Jubilee Year (Lev 25:47-55). There is no mention of the possibility for a Hebrew to choose permanent service to resident aliens.

Third, Israel's identity as liberated slaves means that the Israelites should show generosity

toward the poor and unfortunate among them so that they can provide for their own needs and not have to sell themselves into slavery to survive. In the three main passages where instructions are given for Hebrews' entering into slavery to another (Ex 21:2-11; Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-18) the causes of this decision are personal impoverishment, often evident in the inability to pay back debts. Pentateuchal prescriptions are meant to mitigate the causes of and need for such bondservice. Resident aliens, *orphans and *widows are not to be abused, oppressed or deprived of justice. When money is lent to the poor, they are not to be charged interest. (Elsewhere in the ancient Near East exorbitant interest rates on loans were the chief cause of people being sold into slavery; *see* Wealth and Poverty.) Food or other necessities are not to be provided for the poor at profit (Ex 22:21-27; Lev 25:35-38). The Israelites are to leave the gleanings of their harvest for the aliens, orphans and widows among them (Deut 24:17-22). In addition, when Hebrew bondservants are freed after six years, their masters are to send them out with abundant provisions from the bounty of livestock and harvests with which God has blessed them. This not only provides the newly freed persons with the provisions that will keep them from future enslavement but also makes their choice of the option of permanent slavery under their existing master less likely (Deut 15:12-15). In all of these exhortations we find appeals to the Israelites to remember that they were slaves in Egypt and that God redeemed them from that condition of bondage. God promises blessings for those who help the weak and poor among them (Deut 15:18).

3.2. Israel's Treatment of Slaves. Israel's identity as slaves freed to serve God has a direct bearing on their treatment of slaves, both permanent chattel slaves and fellow Hebrews in bondservice. The treatment of chattel slaves indicates that these slaves are considered human beings. Male slaves are to be *circumcised so that they, along with the female slaves, may participate in the Passover meals (Gen 17:13; Ex 12:44), and in the other ceremonial expressions of worship (Deut 12:18; 16:10; Lev 22:11). Slaves must be given rest on the *sabbath (Ex 20:10; Deut 5:14). In contrast to the laws of other ancient Near Eastern nations, slaves who flee their owners and come to Israel are not to be returned to their masters, nor are they to be oppressed, but they are to be allowed to live wherever they please (Deut 23:15-16). If an Israelite man desires to take a non-Israelite captive woman as his wife, he has to allow her a month of preparation and mourning for her parents before he marries her. Subsequently, if he becomes dissatisfied with her, he may not sell her as a slave but must allow her to go free (Deut 21:10-14).

The slave's personal dignity is also evident in the prescriptions concerning personal injury (Ex 21:20-27), since the punishments for mistreatment are meant to restrain the abuse of slaves. When a master's discipline of a slave results in the latter's death, the owner is subject to punishment. If the slave survives the discipline, even if incapacitated for a day or two, there is no punishment to the master. If the discipline results in permanent injury to the slave, such as the loss of an eye or a tooth, the slave must be set free. Clearly, the personal rights of slaves override their master's property rights over them.

As previously noted, Israelites who must sell themselves into bondservice (because of personal impoverishment or inability to pay a debt or a fine) are not permitted to be treated like foreign slaves. They may not be sold as chattel slaves to other masters. Their time of service to fellow Israelites is limited to six years, and to resident aliens it is limited to the Jubilee Year. In the latter case, they may be redeemed by a relative at any time during their servitude. Israelites may enter into a condition of permanent servitude only if they choose so because of love for the master or for a slave wife and children.

In the situation where a father sells his daughter to another man (Ex 21:7-11), concern for the *woman's rights and dignity predominates. This transaction is best understood not as the purchase of a concubine but as the purchase of a wife for either the master or his son, where the woman's father cannot afford a proper dowry. It may well be that the woman is "bought" at an age several years before she is to be married, allowing for a lower purchase price and for her integration into her new household "as a daughter" (Ex 21:9). This establishes a permanent husband-wife relationship characterized by love and intimacy. This also explains why such a woman does not go free after six years. The master must retain her as a wife or allow her to be redeemed by her family; she may

not be sold to foreigners. If her husband takes another wife, he must not reduce his provision of food, clothing or marital rights for his first wife. If such reduction occurs, he must let her go without any debt, that is, without any requirement that she or her family repay the purchase price.

There is some uncertainly about how to reconcile the differences in details between the three prescriptive passages concerning the bondservice that impoverished Israelites enter (Ex 21:2-11; Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-18). The Leviticus passage refers to a Hebrew working for the resident alien until the Jubilee Year, whereas the Exodus and Deuteronomy passages refer to the Hebrew working only six years. Exodus mentions only a male Hebrew entering service and his inability to take his servant wife and their children with him when freed, whereas Deuteronomy mentions both male and female Hebrews entering six years of service, and Leviticus indicates that bondservants and their families are set free in the Jubilee Year. A number of solutions have been proposed by scholars, none of which is without its problems. Perhaps the best solution is to view these civil prescriptions as having been drawn up to address peoples' difficulties in different situations. Depending on the problems that Israelites faced in these varied situations, one of these three civil prescriptions would take precedence over the others. It is certainly not problematic to allow for a range of civil legislation dealing with a diversity of social circumstances. Every code of civil legislation has some degree of variety that calls for legal interpretation and application to specific cases.

What is clear in the various pentateuchal passages on slavery is the following three principles. (1) All humans, even slaves and bondservants, have rights and privileges under the *law and before God. (2) Slavery and bondservice are preferable to poverty and destitution, especially when one has a good master. Pentateuchal prescriptions allow men and women to escape poverty and provide means of recovery of economic prosperity. (3) *Family is important and must be maintained even in the condition of poverty and bondservice. One remains properly related to the broader society by being part of a family. Bondservice can provide a new family for the male servant and the purchased female bride. If it is a loving and caring family, it not only ensures economic security for male and female servants but also integrates them into a new household in a life of service to and fellowship with the God who has redeemed his people out of the house of slavery.

See also ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

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SLAVERY. *See* SLAVE, SLAVERY.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. *See* SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Thanks to the recent increase of multidisciplinary approaches to the study of biblical archaeology and history, scholars have come to realize that biblical history took place in a social as well as a political context. Therefore, a full understanding of what was going on historically in the biblical world requires some awareness of the ancient social structures that provided the framework for the activities that were undertaken by biblical peoples.

1. Terminology
2. Types of Social Structure

1. Terminology.

The first step toward a better understanding of the nature and development of social structure in the OT is to determine what terminology is appropriate for describing ancient social structures and their development. For example, what is meant when ancient Israel's social organization is described as a "tribe," "state" or "nation"? Are these terms even appropriate? Anthropologist A. Kingsnorth helps focus the problem by explaining:

> Certain common words in English, along with their Latinized or Greek origin, explicitly coined forms, have been adopted by anthropology as technical terms to describe specialized phenomena. . . . While anthropology can claim no monopoly on the words: rank, lineage, segmentary, tribe, class, state, stratified, prestige, integration, acephalous, intensive agriculture, etc., when those words come to be used loosely or in a private, personal sense by archaeologists from the nonanthropological traditions for issues related to anthropological ones, they unwittingly introduce a source of confusion. (Kingsnorth, 108)

Kingsnorth's comments accurately portray the situation that has developed among many biblical scholars. While many such scholars are interested in the origin and development of the social structures of biblical peoples, most have been trained in nonanthropological disciplines and have thus appropriated different understandings about what certain sociological terms mean.

This is not to say that a biblical scholar's understanding of these terms is necessarily wrong and that they should not be used. It is certainly the prerogative of any scholar to use the terminology they feel best conveys their ideas. However, if effective, meaningful communication with scholars from other disciplines is desired, it is—at the least—helpful to explain what is meant by the terms biblical scholars use and why these terms were chosen.

As is evident from Kingsnorth's statement, quoted above, most of the words biblical scholars have employed to discuss ancient biblical societies have been assigned fairly specific meanings by disciplines such as sociology and anthropology that are specifically interested in studying social organizations. This includes terms such as *tribe* and *state*. Although different academic disciplines, such as political science, have different ideas about what these terms mean (Tapper), it might be useful for biblical scholars to find out what social scientists and anthropologists mean when they use these terms. Then they can choose to either adopt these meanings or to explain why they don't.

2. Types of Social Structure.

2.1. Anthropological Categories of Social Structure. In anthropological usage, "tribe" and "state" are generally understood as two of the four basic categories by which anthropologists attempt to classify all societies. Originally proposed by E. Service (who built on earlier ideas), the four categories are "band," "tribe," "chiefdom" and "state." Although the use of these categories has recently been criticized and should not be understood as depicting a simplistic, four-step social evolutionary trajectory through which all societies pass (cf. Yoffee; Kingsnorth), most anthropologists appear to believe that these terms still "provide a useful vocabulary for variations in [social] organizational form and in trajectories of developmental change" (Rothman, 4; see also Earle, 280). That is, these terms can provide a useful framework or control when attempting to describe and compare the nature

and development of social structures crossculturally. As Kuhn points out, most anthropology and archaeology textbooks tend to reflect the state of the field as the conservative majority view it and still prefer to categorize societies according to this scheme (e.g., Ember and Ember, 369-76; Thomas, 356-57; Wenke, 282-85; Renfrew and Bahn, 154-57). For convenience, the descriptions of these four categories provided by Renfrew and Bahn (154-57) will be followed.

Bands are generally understood to be small-scale societies of related individuals (less than 100 people) who are usually semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers. They are egalitarian and lack leaders (Renfrew and Bahn, 154).

Tribes are egalitarian, multi-community societies integrated through kinship. Economy is usually based on agriculture and pastoralism rather than hunting and gathering.

Chiefdom societies are still organized around kinship, but people have unequal or "ranked" positions within the sociopolitical organization. That is, people obtain their position by ascription (birth). A common component of a chiefdom economy is the accumulation and redistribution of goods by the chief.

States typically display a significant amount of ethnic plurality or social differentiation (Kamp and Yoffee, 87); there is a diminished to nonexistent role for kinship relations within the central political bureaucracy; often religious and political authorities are separate; they may maintain a standing army; and a significant amount of the population is usually settled in urban centers which function within a pronounced settlement hierarchy, usually three-tiered (cf. Renfrew and Bahn, 156, 157). All in all, state-level societies are understood to represent the most complex level of social organization.

One danger in using this four-stage terminology is that it can create the impression that the boundaries between these four categories of social organization are easily discernible, mutually exclusive and that all societies can be classified as one of these four. However, recent ethnographic work shows that not all societies can be so neatly pigeonholed into one of these four categories, nor is it impossible that within a given complex society more than one of these structures may be discerned at the same time. Indeed, there are many modern state-level societies that not only exhibit the main characteristics of a state as listed above, but within which also exist parallel social structures that are more typical of chiefdoms or tribal societies. For example, the present Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which can be classified as a modern state in a sociopolitical sense, also maintains strong tribal structures that exist parallel to, within or "under" the state-level sociopolitical structures. Recent research into ancient polities suggests that similar complexity existed in ancient societies as well.

From the above discussion of social structures and typology one can see that terms such as *nomadic, pastoral society, kingdom* or *nation* are not really adequate or appropriate to apply to ancient peoples of the OT if the intention is to describe *social organization. Nomadic* is a descriptive term for a *residence mode,* which can be found in all four social categories, not just tribes. Similarly, *pastoralism* is a *subsistence strategy,* not a type of social organization, and can be found in all types of societies. Subsistence strategies can of course play a role in economics, especially when surpluses are created that can be used for trade. Terms such as *kingdom* are not precise with regard to social organization and need to be defined. *Kingdom* could apply to a modern state like Great Britain or a tribal kingdom that is organized along kinship lines such as exist in many places in the Middle East and Africa. The concept of nation is a fairly recent one that originated in Europe and then was applied globally. It does not really apply to ancient sociopolitical organizations at all, although biblical scholars frequently use it for the Hebrew word *gôy* or the Greek *ethnos* (Tibi, 132).

2.2. Archaeology and the Identification of Ancient Israelite Social Structures. In understanding ancient biblical social organizations, there is another pitfall beyond the use of appropriate terminology, and that is the assumption that ancient social structures can be archaeologically discerned simply by identifying a "trait-list" of archaeological remains that supposedly correlate with a certain level of social organization. For example, some scholars have assumed that the presence of monumental architecture, such as large public buildings and palaces, as well as large settlements with city walls and so forth, imply the existence of socially stratified complex societies, that is, states. Recent anthropological work has shown that, while state-level societies can possess these elements, so can less complex

societies. Thus, the presence of a "proto-ionic" capital (an architectural feature atop a column or pillar, found in places like Jerusalem and Ammon) does not by itself require a state-level society. At the same time, recent ethnographic research of modern tribal societies shows that kinship elements such as tribalism can exist within highly complex state-level societies. These findings suggest that getting at the precise nature of ancient biblical social structures is not as easy as earlier scholars assumed.

Nevertheless, careful study of biblical social terminology combined with analysis of the archaeological record within the framework of modern anthropological understanding can produce some insightful results. For example, a careful review of the terms in the Hebrew Bible reveals quite a bit of information about ancient Israel's family structure (*see* Family Relationships). The expression "tribes of Israel" is, of course, a familiar expression to any reader of the OT. However, this is just one of several social organizational expressions that reveals a rather sophisticated kin-based social system. The smallest family unit was the individual, or the individual household or nuclear family (Heb *geber*). Beyond the individual or nuclear family unit was the *bēt ʾāb* ("the house of the father") or the *bayit*, the family "lineage." The next level was known as the *mišpāḥâ* (extended family or clan). (For some scholars there is little difference between the lineage and the clan.) The next level would be the *šēbeṭ* or *matteh* ("tribe"). Finally, there are several terms for the highest and most inclusive levels of family/societal organization, including *ʿam* ("people"), *šibtê yiśrāʾēl* ("tribes of Israel") or *bĕnê yiśrāʾēl* ("sons of Israel").

Archaeologists believe they can identify this literary description of ancient Israelite social units in the archaeological record. The basic individual family house is equated with the pillared houses found throughout the territory of ancient Israel—sometimes called three- or four-roomed houses because of the number of rooms these houses typically possess. These houses usually consisted of a central open court with a dirt floor, with a long room on each side of the court and another broad room going across the back. It is thought that many of these houses had an upper floor over the three "exterior" rooms. Cooking and other activities took place in the open central courtyard, while animals might be stabled in one of the side rooms. The other side room might contain wood, food or the equipment for various craft activities. The back room might have been for sleeping and living. In many Israelite and Judahite villages, clusters of these pillared houses have been isolated and appear to correlate with the *bēt ʾāb*.

Examination of the construction of these house clusters suggests that as the family grew, new houses were added to the cluster—that is, as a son took a wife, he might build a new house close to that of his father's original house. It is estimated that anywhere from ten to thirty people might occupy one of these house clusters. It is also estimated that up to three, and occasionally four, generations would be represented in these house clusters. That is, the typical *bēt ʾāb* compound would house children, parents, grandparents and occasionally even great-grandparents. Each married couple lived in their own "pillared" house, but the house of their own children or parents were immediately and physically attached to their own dwelling. Passageways that connect these clusters suggest that there was a fairly free flow of the family members from one part of the compound or house cluster to another. Undoubtedly the wealth and resources accumulated by members of the *bēt ʾāb* were usually shared by all. It is further believed that the several house clusters that make up the typical small Israelite village would generally correspond to the *mišpāḥâ*, or clan.

Occasionally a *bēt ʾāb* compound might become too crowded and some young man might decide to break off and establish a new house of his own. In this manner the house clusters did not grow too large, but the village nevertheless continued to grow. L. Stager estimates that there may have been as many as twenty *bēt ʾāb* clusters in the village of Raddana, housing a population of as many as 200 individuals, probably all related. Similar house clusters have been found in other ancient Israelite villages, such as Beit Mirsim, Tell Farʾah (N), Tell en-Nasbeh, Tel Masos. Each settlement would undoubtedly be named after the leading family or patriarch of the clan.

Eventually even a village might have become too crowded or the resources in the immediate area too scarce to support the members of the village. In this case, a young man or men may have decided to move into the countryside and establish a new nuclear house or a series of nu-

clear houses that would grow into new house clusters and villages. The numerous small settlements, villages and towns in a given geographical region would naturally comprise the tribal territory. The growth of houses, house clusters and villages throughout Iron Age Israel, Ammon, Moab and Edom (1200-600 B.C.) has been well documented by archaeologists.

An important aspect of ancient tribal society was its *fluidity*. In brief, it was quite easy for individuals or smaller family units to join different families or tribes if there was some advantage to be gained. This could be through adoption or some statement of allegiance to the new family. Examples can be found from the time of Abraham (Gen 15:2-3) to that of Uriah the Hittite, who faithfully served Israel under King David (2 Sam 11), and into later periods. Beyond the individual level, larger units of tribal societies could form temporary or long-term alliances to deal with a common problem. This could work at the house, clan or tribal level. The ability of tribal societies to coalesce into larger entities, including supra-tribal entities, when the situation demanded can be seen to lie behind the union of the twelve tribes of Israel under a single king at the commencement of the monarchy.

With this brief background, what can be said of Israel's evolving sociopolitical structure through time? Combining textual, archaeological and ethnographic data with modern anthropological theory one can describe pre-monarchal Israel (patriarchal period and period of the Judges) as primarily a tribal or chiefdom type of social organization (some scholars have argued for combining the categories into "tribal chiefdoms"). In the earlier biblical period (patriarchal times) the residence mode was more semi-nomadic and the principle subsistence strategy was pastoralism. Because this type of residence mode is difficult to discern archaeologically, little can be said of the patriarchal or even the earlier time of the Judges from an archaeological perspective (scholars have differed over when to date these biblical periods, of course). However, in the immediate pre-monarchal period (time of the Judges), there is a discernible shift in Canaan's highlands to a residence mode that is more sedentary (small villages and towns), and the subsistence strategy moves from less dependence on pastoralism to an increase of intensive *agriculture. Most scholars identify these highland settlements as Israelite.

This trend of increasing sedentarization and intensive agriculture continues throughout both the time of the monarchy and the divided monarchy—pastoralism continues as a component, but intensive agriculture (including tree crops and vineyards) continues to increase, and larger components of the population are living in villages, towns and what might be called cities (although cities in ancient Israel were seldom on the scale of cities in Egypt and Mesopotamia). Anthropological analysis based on such things as ethnographic parallels indicates that during this time the Israelites were developing a more complex and sophisticated social organization. Saul and David's early careers certainly have the earmarks of complex chiefdoms as the Israelites attempted to establish a monarchy. The kin-based tribal component continued to play an important role in Israelite society.

It is during the time of the monarchy, especially during the latter part of David's reign and through the time of Solomon, that Israel's social structure appears to have reached its highest level of social complexity and might properly be described as a "state." Nevertheless, it is clear from both textual data and the archaeological record that the tribal element persisted within Israelite society. For this reason some scholars have suggested describing the monarchy as a "tribal state" or "tribal kingdom." Although Israel's power and prestige seem to have diminished after the dividing of the Solomonic monarchy, Israel and Judah did not revert back to a purely kin-based tribalism. Rather, once Israel accepted the concept of kingship, this remained an important aspect of Israelite society even after the breakup of the monarchy.

See also CITY, TOWN, CAMP; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; ISRAELITES; SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES.

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SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES

Since the advent of *historical-critical studies of the Bible, new approaches have been introduced reflecting changes in literary analysis, *archaeological techniques and, most recently, the introduction of social-scientific methods and theories. The aim of social-scientific criticism, as a subfield of biblical exegesis, is to study the biblical materials as a reflection of their cultural setting. The meaning and the social background of the text are thus more fully illumined by the exercise of sociological and anthropological methods and theories. The era of modern social-scientific research began in the late nineteenth century with the work of S. Freud, K. Marx, A. Comte and H. Spencer. Their work created an atmosphere of curiosity about the human condition and advanced the evolutionary perspective that had taken hold with the writing of C. Darwin. As sociology and anthropology emerged as separate sciences, scholars such as W. R. Smith and L. Wallis adapted their methods (at least comparative and functionalist perspectives) to Israelite history and culture. Despite this early start, there was a hiatus in the use of the social sciences (especially psychology, sociology and anthropology) in the study of the Bible during the period between 1930-1960 as literary and archaeological approaches (W. F. Albright School) predominated. However, in the last several decades, building on the work of M. Weber and continuing with the study of Israelite origins by G. Mendenhall and N. Gottwald, they have had a revival and have burgeoned into a major subfield.

1. Early Approaches
2. Recent Developments
3. Application of Social-Scientific Methods to the Study of Early Israel
4. Future Directions for Social-Scientific Criticism

1. Early Approaches.

In the earliest works that employed social-scientific methods, the emphasis was on collecting data from biblical narrative and laws, from archaeological excavations and from ancient Near Eastern texts. In addition, a few comparative studies were done with modern "primitive cultures," such as the bedouin of the Middle East and African tribal groups. Very often, however, assumptions of the evolutionary character of cultures and of the "survival" of ancient societal forms hampered the usefulness of these studies and in some cases discredited their findings.

Among the most influential of scholars employing social-scientific methods was W. R. Smith, considered by some the founder of social anthropology. In his extensive writings on Semitic life and culture (especially kinship, marriage and sacrificial practices), Smith posited an evolutionary process of ancient Israelite culture that included a primitive, a matrilineal and a totemistic phase. *Sacrifice, he suggested, was designed to create within the tribal group a sense of social unity and to tie the members to their

patron god. Using this model, he then asserted that as society became more complex, sacrifice became more ritualized and subsidiary to the growing influence of state development. In fact, his interest in ritual ran counter to the comparative-myth models of many of his contemporaries.

While many of Smith's views have been disputed, the questions he asked have continued to hold a central place in reconstructing the social world of ancient Israel. For example, in his examination of the role of ritual in Semitic culture, he strongly emphasized the materialistic origins for the development of social ideas and practices. This in turn became central to the development of the theories of the sociology of religion by E. Durkheim and to the comparative folklore studies of J. G. Frazer. In addition, Smith's careful examination of Arab culture promoted the use of careful field studies that now characterize modern social and cultural anthropology today.

Another early pioneer in the social-scientific study of ancient Israel was L. Wallis. He suggested that the people's cultural development was the direct result of cultural and class struggle. This clash of ideas was caused by the conflict between rural and urban societies, first Canaanite urban culture versus Israel village culture, then a struggle for supremacy between the local and regional Israelite village establishment (championing the *covenant with Yahweh) and the growing urban elite of the monarchic period. It is this conflict model as well as Wallis's insistence on separating theological from sociological studies of the biblical world that helped spark the work of G. Mendenhall, N. K. Gottwald and F. S. Frick since the 1960s.

A third major influence on modern critical study is the work of M. Weber. As a sociologist, Weber brought an expertise on social organization and the relationship between religion and society. His work on ancient Judaism analyzed the elements of Israel's cult, including the role of the Levites within the priestly hierarchy and the manner in which Hebrew prophecy served as a focal point of conflict in the struggle between Israelite religious ideals and the growing socioeconomic forces of the emerging Israelite state. He developed an "ideal type" model categorizing the social structure and the levels of social authority in ancient Israel. For example, in his definition of *priests as cultic specialists, he set them apart from the normal categories of human enterprise. He further magnified this perception by including "charisma" as a personality trait that distanced those in leadership roles from the masses.

Weber's work on the forces within organizational structure and the transformation of a culture as it shifts from a collective mentality in the village setting to a more individualistic and competitive pattern in the urban setting was also taken up by the French sociologist A. Causse. This transition, according to Causse, eventually led in the postexilic and Hellenistic periods to a further reinterpretation of social symbols, as individualism became the basis for social identity in an era when political autonomy had been eliminated. Community values, as a result, came to be centered in mishnaic Judaism on faithfulness to the religious tradition rather than to a political entity.

From the 1930s through the 1950s, however, these early efforts at introducing anthropological and sociological methods into biblical interpretation ceased to advance as quickly. For instance, the very useful and influential study of Israelite religious and cultural institutions by R. de Vaux provided a form of encyclopedic register but was not tied to specific social theories. The very dominant American scholar and archaeologist W. F. Albright turned his students and their research to comparative studies of the ancient Near Eastern context of the biblical world. Their emphasis on linguistic analysis, archaeological investigations and historical reconstruction added to the store of available data but did not effectively explore the social prospects of cultural development.

2. Recent Developments.

Since the 1970s the emphasis of social-scientific critics has been on the application of a variety of sociological and anthropological methods, in conjunction with the emerging field of ethnoarchaeology. The delineation of social models allows researchers to identify both common and apparently unique cultural elements and behaviors. While some studies do choose to look at isolated cultural phenomena, it is more common to find comparative studies. These investigations can then be designed to look at cultural units over long or short periods of time, as well as within particular regions or in comparison

with culture areas or social "harvest zones" in widely dispersed areas. The structures that make up society, from the family unit to the ruling elites, can be examined within the light of both historical as well as macroorganizational perspectives.

Since there are multiple perspectives from which a culture may be examined, it is not surprising to find that social theorists disagree on which method is most effective. The principle methods that have been employed center on structural-functional traditions, conflict theories of social development and cultural-materialist perspectives, which examine subsistence strategies or economic patterns. It is also quite common for scholars to employ multiple methods that complement each other.

2.1. Structural-Functionalist Methods. The structural-functionalist approach takes the position that all aspects of a culture interrelate and therefore cannot be understood except as components of the overall structure of that society. Each cultural facet (e.g., religious system, legal system) contributes to the advancement and the stability of the society as a whole and thus works toward equilibrium through consensus building. When conflict occurs within society, the forces calling for change would either be absorbed into acceptable and recognizable social structure (understood as necessary adjustments to established procedures) or denounced and outlawed as a danger to society.

The chief value in examining a culture from a functionalist viewpoint is found in its emphasis on analyzing a culture as an interrelated whole, categorizing its structure and establishing the relationships between these various facets of the society (e.g., kinship patterns, economic system) and actual behaviors of the inhabitants. However, there is also a tendency in such studies to limit the perspective and the study of a culture to a particular period. This does not allow sufficient latitude to deal with a culture with a long history and multiple social transitions.

2.2. Conflict Theory. As originally formulated by K. Marx and adapted by M. Weber, conflict theory examines forces within a society that either contribute to or promote conflict between the classes or structures of a society. At work are ideological differences on how to control the means of power and the modes of production. It is therefore necessary first to identify competing groups within the society. The task is then to analyze their methods for either protecting their own interests or supplanting the assets of other groups. The assumption is that the potential for social change and social conflict is endemic within society. The only way that this potential for flux or open conflict can be avoided is through methods of constraint. An ordered society is one, therefore, that has achieved control over the forces of conflict by coming to know and understand their potential for violence. Their energies are channeled into less revolutionary pursuits, and the society achieves equilibrium without totally suppressing the possibility for change.

2.3. Cultural-Materialist Theories. Within this set of theories are efforts to type societies based on their modes of subsistence (hunting and gathering, pastoral nomadism, agriculture) and on the technologies they develop to better take advantage of the natural resources of the area they inhabit. In this way cultural evolution and the likelihood of survival of a culture can be determined as new technologies or subsistence strategies are introduced. There is also a sense of environmental determinism inherent to this position, since it bases cultural development on the opportunities and limitations of the topography of the culture zone. The danger with such classification, however, is found in a too rigid approach that does not always allow for multiple economic endeavors. For instance, few farmers live exclusively off their crops. They realize it is necessary to balance the risk of below-normal rainfall or flood by keeping a few sheep and goats or engaging in small cottage industries (pottery, weaving, metalwork). Similarly, pastoralists often engage in seasonal agriculture or the care of fruit trees (olives and dates in the Near East).

These theorists also study the organizational aspects of subsistence strategies. It is understood that economy is based on resources, labor and leadership. An evolutionary process is posited in which society shifts from classless, egalitarian societies who share resources and combine their labor to rigidly stratified societies dominated by those who control the modes of production. According to this position (based on Marx and employed by N. Gottwald), the cultural transformation of ancient Israel from a village-based society to an urban-based society, dominated by a centralized authority, is explained by

the imposition of taxation and the means to enforce discipline by the monarchy. The later transition to vassal status under the domination of Mesopotamian empires simply added an even more authoritarian level of control, depriving the Israelites of political and economic autonomy and draining them of their resources.

The materialist approach is sometimes in conflict with those scholars who choose to emphasize cultural origins and evolution based on ideological development. It is possible to see a particular cultural attribute, such as conducting legal and economic transactions on the threshing floor, as a direct result of farmers coming together at the harvest to a communal agricultural installation to process their grain. While in assembly they see the advantages of doing business and conducting legal proceedings. On the other hand, these activities could be seen as part of a larger picture in which the egalitarian ideal of the village culture finds its voice in collective understandings of justice and fair dealing.

In sum, it must be noted that no single social-science model can be touted as the most reliable or most useful for the reconstruction of the ancient world. Instead, while scholars may favor a particular method or theory, most choose to take a more eclectic approach, applying a variety of social theories to what is revealed by the ancient textual material and the exposed archaeological data. Most also recognize that building a social model of an ancient culture based on information drawn from the study of modern cultures has its dangers. Presuppositions or the desire to make the data fit the chosen model simply discredits the process. However, critical use of models can be useful in tying data and allows for self-evaluation and restructuring of the analytical approach when too many factors indicate the need to refine or recalibrate the model.

3. Application of Social-Scientific Methods to the Study of Early Israel.

One of the difficulties that biblical scholars have had in adopting social-scientific methods to their study of ancient Israel has been in mastering an additional scholarly field. This has limited the number of scholars applying these methods to their interpretations of the biblical text. There has also been some difficulty in gaining acceptability for their findings by the academic community as a whole. However, the growth of interest in the reconstruction of the social world of the ancient Near East within its cultural milieu has created a better climate for new theoretical orientations. This has already had an effect on archaeological investigations, drawing them away from the functionalist, ahistorical approach of the 1960s "New Archaeology" and reinvigorating the movement to tie artifactual remains to historical reconstruction.

3.1. Modern Interpreters. With the publication of his essay on "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," G. Mendenhall (1962) set the stage for the reintroduction of social-scientific criticism into biblical studies. By questioning the existence of the amphictyonic tribal league posited by M. Noth and the assumption that Israel was an ethnic group separate from the Canaanites, having originated as pastoral nomadic tribes (A. Alt), Mendenhall shattered a scholarly paradigm and left the issue open for new interpretations. He called for a reexamination of the very limiting notions of tribe and posited a conflict theory that placed the rural peasant classes at odds with urban elites. The struggle for the emergence of Israel out of a "peasant revolt" was strengthened, in his opinion, by the unifying character of the *covenant with Yahweh.

N. Gottwald then took Mendenhall's model a step further by applying in a more systematic way the principles of the structural-functionalist and cultural-materialist approaches. Using an interdisciplinary model, he diminished the importance of Yahwism as the driving force behind Israel's emergence. Instead, he pointed to a disaffection by the lower classes in Canaanite society that chose to revolt with their feet, withdrawing from the urban centers, "retribalizing" in a village setting and eventually reemerging as a rival political entity. Although Gottwald's economic determinist model has been strenuously critiqued (see Herion), his careful delineation of the social facets of ancient Israel (from its tribal structure patterns to its modes of subsistence management) have guided many scholars over the last three decades. His study has reinforced the fact that, while biblical scholars need to be familiar with the theories of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, they must also be cautious in making broad assertions about the sociology of religion of an ancient culture such as Israel.

3.2. Methods for Political Development. Ongoing studies of Israel's origins and its eventual political evolution into a chiefdom and then a monarchy have built upon or responded to the

work of Mendenhall and Gottwald. For instance, G. Lenski traces the pattern of Israel's political development from a "frontier society," existing on the margins of Canaanite control, which naturally returns to monarchic and bureaucratic structures once it has grown in size and social complexity. F. Frick points to better management of natural resources, improvements in technology and the resulting economic surpluses attendant with population growth as a combination of factors leading to the development of a chiefdom and eventual political stability under the leadership of a single family. The numerous archaeological surveys and excavations by I. Finkelstein, L. E. Stager and others in Israel and Jordan during the last two decades of the twentieth century have helped to support this widening social perspective and have pointed to the necessity for a multifaceted approach to the reconstruction of cultural and political development. In addition, D. Hopkins's effective use of geomorphology, climatic studies and agricultural economic principles in his study of the materials discovered in the Iron I settlements of the central hill country has added a further dimension to social-world studies.

3.3. Investigation of Social Institutions. The other major interest area in social-scientific criticism is the investigation of the social *institutions* in ancient Israel. This includes kinship patterns, concepts of *honor and shame, gender roles and prophetic activity. At the heart of these studies is a blending of the older comparative methods of ethnographic analogy with materialist and ideological analysis. There is also a strong emphasis placed on human experience as a generator of cultural patterns and customs.

3.3.1. Kinship. Kinship studies (*see* Family Relationships) take into account the work of cultural anthropologists such as C. Lévi-Strauss. They include the examination of marriage patterns (endogamy, exogamy, incest taboos and divorce), inheritance customs (primogeniture, matrilineal and patrilineal) and rules of association (patron-client relations, class distinctions, economic strictures [e.g., usury]). Among the recent studies of kinship in the Bible (see Steinberg), there is a clear realization that ideal patterns existed but had to make way for the realities of childlessness, political dislocation due to immigration and shifts in available or eligible marriage partners.

Since the ancient Near East is not a living culture, much of the data for this type of analysis has to come from textual evidence. However, careful use of analogous data from the study of preindustrial cultures in the Middle East as well as modern tribal groups has proven useful. For instance, obligations placed upon daughters to remain virginal prior to marriage and chaste after marriage and the obvious social and legal concerns over adultery are found in biblical as well as ancient Near Eastern law codes and in the customary practices of Middle Eastern cultures.

3.3.2. Reciprocity. The models employed by cultural anthropology also demonstrate that reciprocity appears to be one of the major social forces at work in the ancient and modern Middle East (see Matthews and Benjamin). This social principle appears in the *lex talionis* ("law of retribution," "an eye for an eye"; *see* Bodily Injuries, Murder, Manslaughter, §3.2) clauses in ancient law and is a central feature of the determination of personal and household concepts of honor and shame. Thus an honorable household was one in "good standing" with its community, contributing to the economy, arranging marriages, functioning as civic leaders or elders and providing warriors to defend the village or town. Honor is therefore to be defined in this model by the wise person who recognizes proper behavior and understands the implications of every social action. For example, the offering of hospitality does two important things. First, it transforms a potential enemy from a stranger into a guest and therefore nullifies, temporarily, any threat to safety of the household. Second, playing the host garners honor for the household because it contributes to the welfare of the entire community and places an obligation on the guest to reciprocate when the opportunity arises. This sense of mutual obligation is also found in the laws providing for the "protected classes" (e.g., *widows, *orphans, *aliens) and in the conventions of political patronage and clientage.

3.3.3. Gender. With regard to gender-study approaches to the biblical text, the most influential have been by C. Meyers and P. Trible. Meyers, a field archaeologist, applies the principles of ethnoarchaeology as well as economic models to demonstrate that in the labor-intensive village culture, the small population relied upon the contributions of every person, male or female. She notes that women worked hard, both in the

fields and as childbearers and managers of the household's resources. Women might not have the right to own land or serve in the assembly of elders, but their control over the domestic economy would have given them status within the household. Meyers has also studied female participation in the cult, especially their role in musical performance and sacrificial activities.

As a literary critic and feminist scholar, Trible has attempted to break down stereotypical images of women in the ancient world and to provide a more realistic evaluation of Israelite restrictions on their behavior. This ideological approach, coupled with the methods of rhetorical criticism, examines dialogue, social status, social identity and action to create a set of social categories for the characters in the biblical text. In her study of metaphors, she elicits the connotations attached to God as "father," "mother," "king" and "warrior." In this way, the theological dimensions of the text are coupled with its social context.

3.3.4. Prophetic Figures. A final major area of study of Israelite social institutions has been in prophetic figures and prophetic activity. Building on the "ideal type" described by Weber, R. R. Wilson describes prophets as "intermediary figures" and discusses the social forces that required their intermediation. He points to central or establishment prophets, who relied upon the cultic community and the monarchy for support or recognition (e.g., Isaiah), and to "peripheral" prophets (e.g., Elijah and Elisha) whose "support group" was drawn from the marginalized classes of society. G. A. Herion has criticized Wilson's overemphasis on the group orientation of prophetic figures as too limiting, forcing the prophet into the ideological mold of his or her interest group without allowing for any autonomous expression of viewpoint or social context.

T. Overholt has provided a social-psychological approach to the biblical prophets. He has done comparative research using ethnographic studies of Native American tribal groups. Realizing the dangers inherent to the comparative approach, he emphasizes that "the most successful cross-cultural comparisons will likely be those couched in terms of social patterns or structures" (Overholt, 5). In his study of shamans, "spirit mediums" and diviners, he points to community belief systems in the supernatural as the key to understanding prophetic authority and power. These practitioners take their cue from crisis within the community and shape their message based, at least in part, on feedback from the community they serve. This may include trance-state or ecstatic performance, acting out traditional gestures or pantomime, or reciting sections of sacred writ or story as forms of social reassurance or direction.

4. Future Directions for Social-Scientific Criticism.

As is clear from the foregoing review, the field of social-scientific criticism does not rely on a single approach or method. Like cultural anthropology, from which it draws many of its theories and much of its comparative data, the social-scientific approach to the biblical text is eclectic. It includes an understanding and appreciation for the various theoretical approaches that have been formulated since the mid-nineteenth century, but it also has a healthy recognition of the contradictions that are apparent between the ideals that societies put forward as their norms and the realities of individual variations. Humans may be governed or shaped by their social environment, but that does not mean that they always follow the rules or are never working to effect social change through nontraditional means.

Having said this, it must also be understood that biblical scholars are not anthropologists. They may use the tools of other academic fields, but they must also recognize that they are generally a step removed from the cutting edge of critical inquiry in those fields. This can be the basis for discrediting the social-science approach by some biblical scholars who are either unfamiliar with the theoretical underpinning being used or who feel their belief in the uniqueness of Israelite culture is being threatened or "deconstructed." As a result, it is imperative that biblical scholars who choose to use social-science approaches carefully explain what they hope to achieve with their chosen theories and models. A discipline that hides behind jargon or becomes a form of academic "gnosticism" will never attract general recognition or acceptance of these interpretations.

It seems likely that future efforts in reconstructing the social world of ancient Israel will continue to apply a variety of methods. Structural-functional approaches will continue to be coupled with ideological and ethnoarchaeological data. However, an overemphasis on determi-

native, relativistic, reductionistic or positivistic methods or assumptions necessarily will be subject to criticism and reexamination. Without careful self-examination and a willingness to rethink what has been previously assumed to be paradigms of interpretation, the field cannot change as new data or approaches emerge.

What may ensure the continuation and the growing acceptance of this approach will be closer cooperation between scholarly communities. It is clear from the paper titles at the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research that a growing synthesis is occurring. Instead of "dig reports," scholars are speculating on the anthropological implications of the social horizon represented by artifactual discoveries and a vision of settlements as a part of a larger social environment. Biblical texts are being reinterpreted based on sociological principles that add new dimensions to our understanding of the world in which the stories were composed and edited. This greater sensitivity to the "cultural grid," a holistic understanding of symbol, ritual, custom, expectation and behavior as related in the text and evidenced by artifactual remains, holds great promise for future Old Testament study.

See also ARCHAEOLOGY; DIVINATION, MAGIC; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; HONOR AND SHAME; LIFE, DISEASE AND DEATH; ORPHAN; RELIGION; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS; SLAVE, SLAVERY; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; WEALTH AND POVERTY; WIDOW; WOMEN.

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V. H. Matthews

SOJOURNER. *See* ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT.

SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN

Genesis 6:1-4 has long been considered one of the most controversial and difficult passages of the OT. This difficulty is due to four problems. First, the brevity of the pericope with its lack of much explanatory detail leaves large interpretive holes that must be filled in by the interpreter. Whether one describes the narrative as laconic, terse, elliptical or fragmented, the point remains that the character of the text undermines the confidence with which it can be deciphered. Second, the connections of the passage to the surrounding context have been seriously questioned. Does the account relate to what is positioned before it or after it? Or is it indepen-

dent of both? Additionally, does it relate yet another narrative of offense committed by transgressing boundaries, or is it simply setting up a situation with no offense described? Third, what mythical connections have been retained or expunged? What level of interaction between supernatural beings and humans can the text absorb or tolerate? Finally, there are numerous lexical problems in the short passage. Identification of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of man" will be the focus of this article. But the *nĕpîlîm* and the *gibbōrîm* (NIV "heroes") likewise cry out for clarification. Furthermore, two words in Genesis 6:3 are *hapax legomena* (words that only occur once in the OT) and therefore contribute more to confusion about the passage than to confident understanding.

1. History of Interpretation
2. Context Association
3. Material Distinction
4. Theological Distinction
5. Social Distinction
6. Conclusions

1. History of Interpretation.

From the earliest records of interpretation of these verses, the exegetical voices were at first in unison, then antiphonal and finally discordant. The following can only provide a brief sketch (see further Newman; Wickham).

1.1. Early Jewish Interpretation. The earliest record of interpretation comes from the second-century B.C. book of *1 Enoch,* where "angels" or, alternatively, "watchers" occurs in the description next to the "sons of heaven" (*1 En.* 6—11). Other second temple literature favored this view as well, including *Jubilees* 4:15, the *Testament of Reuben* 5:6, *2 Baruch* 56:12-16, *2 Enoch* 18:4, and the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1Qap Gen^{ar} 2:1). Philo (*Gig.* 2.6) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.3.1 §73) both followed this direction. Several Septuagint manuscripts (e.g., Alexandrinus) lend support to this view by rendering "angels of God" in place of "sons of God." The Talmud (e.g., *b. Yoma* 67b; *b. Nid.* 61a) and other rabbinic writings continued to promote this view. Nevertheless, as early as the second century A.D. the tide began to turn. Symmachus's translation of the OT into Greek rendered sons of God as "sons of the powerful," and *Targum Onqelos* (second century A.D.) and *Targum Neofiti* (second-fourth century A.D.) both went in a similar direction. *Genesis Rabbah* 26:8 (fifth-sixth century A.D.) cites R. Simeon b. Yohai (A.D. 130-160) as insisting on the interpretation "sons of nobles" and placing a curse on anyone who promulgated the "angels" theory. By the time of the medieval rabbis, this interpretation had become entrenched. Rashi, Ramban and Ibn Ezra all favored identifying the sons of God as rulers or judges.

1.2. New Testament Interpretation. The two primary passages in the NT are 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. Peter mentions a sin committed by the angels but gives no detail of that sin. The punishment he mentions is that they are held in chains/pits of darkness reserved for judgment. In Jude the sin is given a phrase of explanation: they did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode. Again, bonds in darkness is the punishment. The language used in these two contexts strongly suggests the authors' familiarity with the second temple traditions. In the second temple literature, however, there is a highly developed angelology in which Genesis 6 plays only a minor role. Though a strong case may be made for the conclusion that Peter and Jude are elaborating on Genesis 6 through *Enoch,* it is difficult to be certain whether the NT authors are referring to the event of Genesis 6 or to something else. Genesis 6 makes no reference to the punishment of the sons of God, and the punishment of chains is applied to angels on a number of other occasions in *1 Enoch* (e.g., *1 En.* 21; 54:3-6).

1.3. Christian Interpretation. The earliest church fathers continued supporting the "angels" view. Numbered among the supporters are Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Lactantius, Irenaeus, Cyprian and Ambrose (Newman, 22). As in Jewish circles, however, a shift began in the late second and early third centuries A.D. Julius Africanus's work contains the earliest known adoption of the Sethite theory (i.e., the sons of God are descendants of Seth). A variation of this view was promoted in Augustine's influential *City of God* (15.22). In the mid-fifth century, Cyril of Alexander produced a lengthy treatise on the subject (quoted at length in Wickham, 135-36) in which he viewed the sons of God as descendants of Enoch and labeled the "angels" view as perverse. This remained the "Christian" interpretation throughout the Reformation and beyond (both Luther and Calvin firmly supported it). The above paragraphs show the "angels" view to be the only contender into the second century, at which

time both Jewish and Christian interpreters began to deviate from that view in favor of "rulers" and "Sethites" respectively.

1.4. Critical Interpretation. As the materials from the ancient Near East became available at the end of the nineteenth century and into the present, the "angels" view experienced a comeback of sorts, though somewhat transmogrified. Instead of viewing the sons of God as fallen angels, critical scholars, who increasingly understood Genesis in mythological terms, saw Genesis 6:1-4 as simply an example of the promiscuous kind of behavior that is attached to the members of the divine assembly throughout the literature of Babylon and Canaan. In the 1970s, C. Westermann felt comfortable stating that "The chapter that asked, are the בני אלהים [*bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm,* "sons of God"] to be regarded as human or as non-human beings, can be considered closed. The number of voices supporting the view that they are human has diminished" (Westermann, 371). More specifically, R. S. Hendel, for instance, sees it as an instance of mixing categories (divine and mortal) resulting in hybrid demigods and bringing about a cosmic imbalance. From a literary standpoint, he sees Genesis 6:1-4 as the old introduction to the *flood story that has been replaced with a more ethically oriented account in Genesis 6:5-8. Another strain of interpretation views the author/editor as borrowing from an Enoch tradition like that encapsulated in the books of Enoch (discussion and documentation in Vervenne, 23). As a result of these interpretations, we have now come full circle; the text has been "remythologized." After an almost total departure from identifying the sons of God as supernatural in favor of various human identifications, there has been a widespread return among critical scholars to a supernatural identification. There is a difference, however, between these beginning and ending points. Initially interpreters did not balk at a mythological interpretation of the Bible because it coincided with their own worldview. Today interpreters do not balk at a mythological interpretation of biblical passages because they believe Israel's worldview was little different from its neighbors. In the intervening period interpreters neither had a mythological worldview themselves, nor did they believe that the Bible represented such a worldview. Lacking correlation to either world, they rejected the identification.

2. Context Association.

The three basic options in this category are (1) to view this short pericope as an independent illustration of the gradual intrusion of sin as it grew to pervade the population; (2) to see the verses as an introduction to the flood narrative (whether replaced and virtually obsolete or obscure and somewhat incongruent); or (3) to consider the verses a summary conclusion to Genesis 5 (Vervenne). Although association of the narrative with the flood is not impossible, literary linkage is insufficient to make a strong case. A greater syntactical linkage can be established with the material in Genesis 5 (Vervenne, 34-35), but the significance of many of the statements in these verses remains obscure even in light of this possibility. In favor of the independence of the narrative is the pattern in Genesis 1—11 of using short idiosyncratic narratives that are literarily somewhat isolated. Other possible examples include Lamech's song (Gen 4:23-24), Nimrod's kingdoms (Gen 10:9-11) and the tower of *Babel (Gen 11:1-9). It is not difficult to see in Genesis 6:1-4 the idea that sin has now infiltrated society programmatically. This is the last step before its universal manifestation at the time of the flood.

3. Material Distinction.

The Israelite worldview certainly accepted intercommunication between the divine and human realms, so the realms are not isolated from one another. Whether the closer contact of sexual relations would have been viewed as possible is harder to determine. There are no statements that differentiate between the material substance of humans and angels. In fact Genesis 18—19 and 32 give every indication of corporeality. It is not until Matthew 22:30 that sociological distinction is made in the statement that angels do not marry, a statement that stops short of explicitly affirming that sexual relations would be impossible.

3.1. Evidences. The most significant piece of evidence supporting this view derives from lexical analysis of the phrase *bĕnê hā-ʾĕlōhîm* ("sons of God"). It has frequently been observed that elsewhere in the OT the phrase refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). The argument can therefore cogently be made that lexical study indicates what the words mean, and what they mean determines the face value of the text. Consequently, the face value of the text would support the "angels" view. The only other reason to ad-

here to this position would be the belief that the NT affirmed this position, which for many provides substantial evidence.

3.2. Problems. For others, one of the major problems with this view is its mythological tone. The interpretation is not attested earlier than the Greek period when interpreters had already come under the influence of Greek mythology such as that found in Hesiod (where Zeus plans to annihilate the population in order to destroy demigods who have mated with mortals; Hendel, 18- 19). Calvin represented well the reactionary revulsion when he commented on the passage: "That ancient figment, concerning the intercourse of angels with women, is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity; and it is surprising that learned man should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious." On the other hand, W. VanGemeren points out that Christians should be the last to go about demythologizing biblical text. That issue aside, however, the exegete must evaluate how strong the single strand of support is. First of all, it must be noted that the lexical base for the phrase *bĕnê hā* is quite small. It is difficult to make confident semantic generalizations from only four occurrences. In fact, there is reason to believe that a larger semantic range could exist in light of the nature of the syntagmic combination "son(s) of X." This type of construction is used to describe items or individuals of a particular category (e.g., "sons of the prophets," "sons of the needy"). It describes "belonging." Although it is possible that Hebrew idiom only used the phrase to refer to angels, other meanings would be logically possible. If the sons of God belong to the "*ʾĕlōhîm*" category, they theoretically could be a group of humans who are related to the divine through their office. Such usage of *ʾĕlōhîm* occurs in the OT in Exodus 22:8-9 (MT 22:7-8) and Psalm 82:6. From a theoretical standpoint, then, one might find judges (see also Ex 21:6), kings or priests referred to as "sons of *ʾĕlōhîm*" (see also Gen 5:1-2; Lk 3:38, where Adam is "son of God"). Regarding the NT evidence, even if one is satisfied that Jude and 2 Peter reflect *1 Enoch's* interpretation of Genesis 6, hermeneutical issues need to be discussed similar to those concerning the author of Hebrews' presentation of Melchizedek.

4. Theological Distinction.

The idea that a theological distinction differentiated the sons of God from the daughters of men is premised on a number of schematic assumptions about the previous chapters of Genesis. This view takes Genesis 4:26 as referring only to the line of *Seth. It then ignores the possibility of the existence of other lines of descent from *Adam and *Eve, assumes that the lines of *Cain and Seth remained separate for millennia and extrapolates from the statements about Enoch and Lamech that the entire line of Seth was godly and the entire line of Cain was wicked. This sort of schema might have been attractive for the broad theological strokes of Augustine's two cities, but it enjoys little support from close exegesis. These points do not constitute evidence; they are simply unwarranted presuppositions.

4.1. Evidences. This position is supported by reference to passages that speak of the Israelites or godly people as God's children. Even though the specific term "sons of God" is never used for this group, the metaphor is used occasionally (e.g., Deut 14:1). Thus a case could be made for identifying the sons of God in theological terms. In addition, there are a number of passages that warn against pollution by marriage to those outside the elect line.

4.2. Problems. Besides the difficulty of accepting the assumptions required by this position (all of which are improbable), there are problems with the evidence. Even though the term "sons of God" can be defended as a theological designation, it is much more difficult to see the phrase "daughters of men" in theological terms referring to females of the line of Cain. Why should "daughters of men" be used to describe wicked people? On the second point of evidence, it is difficult to extrapolate the warnings against elect Israel intermarrying and to apply them to a group (Sethites) that has not been designated elect and has not even been identified as ethnically isolated.

5. Social Distinction.

This position occurs in several permutations. Even early in its history, variations for rendering *ʾĕlōhîm* such as "mighty ones," "judges," "rulers" and "kings" were adopted. In addition, there is a variation concerning the nature of the offense. Most who have held this position have considered the offense to be either polygamy or promiscuity. A more recent view identifies the offense as the practice known as "right of the

first night." This view is based on comparisons with the Gilgamesh Epic, which is seen as containing a paradigm for oppressive kingship that is also reflected in Genesis 6:1-4. Points of comparison with the Gilgamesh Epic are set out in table 1 (quotations and line citations from George):

Genesis	Gilgamesh
Sons of God	Gilgamesh is portrayed as 2/3 god and 1/3 man (1.48) and "flesh of the gods" (9.49)
Took wives, whomever they chose	Gilgamesh practices the right of the first night: "he will couple with the wife-to-be, he first of all, the bridegroom after" (P 160)
He is mortal; his days will be 120 years	The Anunnaki (netherworld gods) fix the fates and have established Death and Life (10.319-322)
Nephilim, Gibborim	Gilgamesh's heroism (1.30), tall, magnificent and terrible (1.37), six-cubit stride (1.57), eleven cubits tall (Hittite version, 1.8)

Table 1: Genesis and Gilgamesh Compared

5.1. Evidences. The general biblical evidence for sons of God being understood in terms of social rank is twofold. First, the term *ʾĕlōhîm* is possibly used in Exodus 22:8-9 (MT 22:7-8) and Psalm 82:6 to indicate categories of humans. This being the case, sons of *ʾĕlōhîm* could logically refer to humans belonging to the *ʾĕlōhîm* category. It is also true that kings in the OT can be designated as sons of God. Most notable is the wording of the Davidic covenant: "I will be his father; he will be my son" (2 Sam 7:14). The cognate evidence is more extensive. The titulary of the ancient Near East regularly indicated divine descent of kings, even outside Egypt's context of deified kings. This idea of divine descent was a rhetorical expression of divine election and legitimization of the king that was typical in royal inscriptions. From Sumerian times (e.g., Eannatum, Gudea), through Old Babylonian (e.g., Hammurabi), into Middle Assyrian (e.g., Tukulti-Ninurta) and Neo-Assyrian (e.g., Ashurbanipal), it was part of the royal prerogative to claim divine heritage (text citations in Walton). Thus the title "son of God" can be identified as a royal motif both in the Bible and outside of it.

5.2. Problems. Though it was common for kings to be portrayed as having divine parentage, there is no precedent for ancient kings as a group being referred to as sons of God. Other problems connect to the identified offense. Polygamy was always a weak candidate in that the OT does not condemn polygamy. Promiscuity is likewise an unlikely explanation in that the text describes the behavior as "taking wives," using the standard Hebrew idiom for marriage. The "right of the first night" explanation easily accommodates the terminology of marriage and can be easily identified as offensive on account of its use in Gilgamesh to epitomize oppressive behavior. The remaining problem is that it is a practice ill-attested in ancient literature. Nonetheless, the Gilgamesh Epic is clear, and there are references in later sources that attest to the practice in antiquity (see discussion in Lambert, 195-96; Tigay, 182 n. 15).

6. Conclusions.

Direct lexical evidence favors the "angels" view, but that evidence is mitigated by the slim lexical foundation and the plausible logical alternatives presented by the nature of the syntagm. If the NT does indeed affirm this position, that would also be strong evidence. The Gilgamesh connection is intriguing for its ability to deal with all the elements of the text and to position the text within a recognizable ancient Near Eastern context. The view neither suggests borrowing from Gilgamesh nor does it suggest that the account deals in any way with the story of Gilgamesh. It only sees Gilgamesh as an example of the kind of situation that Genesis 6:1-4 describes. There are also those who do not believe that any offense is recorded in the passage (e.g., Sailhamer, 76). Even so, such a view does not eliminate the need to identify the groups involved, and therefore the problems do not go away.

See also FLOOD; GENESIS, BOOK OF.

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SOOTHSAYERS. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

SOURCE CRITICISM

Source criticism concerns itself with earlier written documents used in the composition of biblical literature. Formerly called "higher" or "literary" criticism, it mainly applies to the Pentateuch, Isaiah and the Gospels, though not exclusively so. Traditionally the Pentateuch has been credited in some way to *Moses. Source criticism has noted some difficulties with this understanding and has proposed other scenarios concerning its composition (*see* Pentateuchal Criticism, History of; Harrison, 1-82; Houtman).

1. Authorship
2. Traditional View
3. Documentary Hypothesis (DH)
4. Responses

1. Authorship.

The author or writer of a written work today is usually easily identifiable from a heading or title page. In contemporary Western society such identification of authorship is important in order to evaluate the validity or usefulness of a document. In other times and contexts, such information is not as vital. In literature from ancient Mesopotamia, for example, it is much more common to find the name of the scribe or copyist than of the original composer of the text. In a similar way, the Bible is not very interested in authorship, possibly for theological reasons. If the ultimate author is God (cf. "thus says the LORD" often in the Prophets; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1), the human writer becomes less important.

Intellectual property rights were also not a concern in the ancient world in contrast with our contemporary copyright laws. Ideas or even more lengthy sections of an existing work could be freely used in a new composition without the necessity of citing one's sources. An ancient Near Eastern example of this, to which we will return later, is the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic (*COS* 1.132.458-60). This account, which includes a *flood story very similar to the story of *Noah, evolved over the course of centuries without indication that later editions were using earlier sources (Tigay).

Biblical statements that apparently concern authorship are open to various interpretations. For example, numerous psalms are headed as being "of" a named individual or group (e.g., David: Ps 3—9, 11—32; 34—41; descendants of Korah: Ps 42, 44—49; Asaph: Ps 50, 73—83; Solomon: Ps 72, 127; Moses: Ps 90). This is often taken as indicating authorship, but there are difficulties with this interpretation, especially when a group is referred to. Biblical books named after people also cannot necessarily be understood as claims of authorship, since the book names are themselves not an integral part of Scripture, having been added by later editors. Also, some books (e.g., Samuel) are clearly named for a chief character rather than a possible author. For example, in none of the Gospels is there a claim for authorship for any of the names traditionally associated with them. There do exist unambiguous references to authorship

in Scripture, however (e.g., Ex 17:14; 24:4; Num 33:2; Deut 17:18; 31:22), and these will be discussed below.

While incontrovertible claims for authorship of biblical texts are difficult to establish, the question is still not only of intellectual interest but also of historical importance. If a historical account was only recorded many centuries after the event itself, there are serious implications regarding factual accuracy.

2. Traditional View.

Nowhere in the Pentateuch is there a statement of its authorship, though traditionally Moses has been credited with writing it. The rabbis in their discussions in the Talmud concluded: "Who wrote the Scriptures?—Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam [cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.7.13 §157] and Job. Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and [the last] eight verses of the Pentateuch" (*b. B. Bat.* 14b; cf. also the twelfth-century rabbi, Maimonides [420], whose eighth principle of the Jewish faith is that "the whole Torah was given us through Moses our Teacher entirely from God").

Ascriptions to Moses occur even earlier, however. In the OT and subsequent literature, numerous references are made to "the book of the law of Moses" (Josh 8:31 [Ex 20:25]; Josh 23:6; 2 Kings 14:6 [Deut 24:16]; 2 Chron 25:4 [Deut 24:16]; cf. 2 Chron 34:14, 15), "the law of Moses" (Josh 8:32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 23:25; 2 Chron 23:18 [Lev 1]; 2 Chron 30:16 [apparently referring to Lev 1:5, though neither the verb nor the exact concept is used there]; Ezra 3:2 [Ex 27:1-8]; Ezra 7:6; Dan 9:11, 13 [Deut 11:26, 28]; Mal 4:4 [MT 3:22]; Tob 7:12, 13 [cf. Num 36:8]; 1 Esdr 8:3; 9:39; Lk 2:22 [Lev 12:6-7]; Lk 24:44; Jn 7:23 [Lev 12:3; cf. Gen 17:10-13]; Acts 13:39; 15:5; 28:23; 1 Cor 9:9 [Deut 25:4]; Heb 10:28; see also Num 31:21 [cf. 19:1-22]; Deut 33:4; Josh 1:7; 22:5; 2 Kings 21:8; Neh 8:14 [Lev 23:34-43]; Neh 10:29; Jn 1:17, 45; 7:19; 8:5 [Lev 20:10; Deut 22:20-24]; Heb 9:19), "the book of Moses" (2 Chron 35:12 [to Lev 3:3]; Ezra 6:18 [to no existing pentateuchal passage]; Neh 13:1 [Deut 23:3]; 1 Esdr 1:11 [Lev 2]; 1 Esdr 5:49 [Lev 1]; 1 Esdr 7:6, 9 [Lev 8—9]; see also Mk 12:26 [Ex 3:6]), "the commandment of Moses" (2 Chron 8:13 [Lev 23; Num 28—29]; see also Josh 22:5; Heb 9:19), and to Moses writing the law (Ex 24:4; 34:27-28; Deut 31:9, 24; Josh 8:32; see also Mk 10:3-5 [Deut 24:1-4]) and other things (Ex 17:14 [promise]; Num 17:2-3 [MT 17:17-18; scribal leaders' names]; 33:2 [itinerary]; Deut 31:19, 22 [song]; cf. 4Q266 18.5.6 [4QZedek 3:6]; 4Q504 [4QdibHam^a] 3:12; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.8 §39).

The NT associates various laws and teaching with Moses, even though not specifically saying they were written by him (Mt 8:4 par. Mk 1:44 par. Lk 5:14 [Lev 14:1-32]; Mt 19:7-8 par. Mk 10:3-5 [Deut 24:1, 3]; Mt 22:24 par. Mk 12:19 [Num 27:8]; Mk 7:10 [Ex 20:12 par. Deut 5:16; Ex 21:17 par. Lev 20:9]; Jn 7:22-23; Acts 15:1, 5; 21:21 [Gen 17:9-14, but see the discussion below]; Jn 8:5 [variant of Lev 20:10 or Deut 22:22]; Acts 6:14 [general cultic laws]; 7:44 [Ex 25—30]; Rom 10:5 [Lev 18:5]; Rom 10:19 [Deut 32:21]; 1 Cor 9:9 [Deut 25:4]; Rev 15:3 [perhaps the song in Ex 15:1-18 or Deut 32:1-43, though the words cited come from neither of these sources]).

In several instances the reference to "Moses" in the NT is to a canonical section of the OT (e.g., the Pentateuch) in distinction from the Prophets (Lk 16:29, 31; 24:27; Jn 1:45; Acts 26:22; 28:23), the Psalms (Lk 24:44; cf. also Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.8 §39) or a document read weekly in the synagogues (Acts 15:21).

Several of these references indicate that "Moses" is understood as indicating other than the author of a Scripture portion. Rather it is used as an identification marker for the piece, somewhat like "Jane Eyre," which is a title, not an author. First, Luke 24:44 indicates that the designation "Psalms" indicates a body of literature including, but larger than, the canonical book by that name. It would also include other material from the Writings (e.g., Proverbs, Job). The Prophets corresponds to the canonical portion known as the Former and Latter Prophets, including the historical books, which are not technically prophetic books but are included in that canonical section. These two canonical categories are referential rather than descriptive of either authorship or literary genre. One should then allow the third category, the Law of Moses, also to be referential rather than indicating either a strict genre (i.e., law, which is only one of the mixed genres of the Pentateuch) or an author (i.e., Moses).

The referential function is clearer in John 7:22-23, in which Jesus is quoted as saying: "Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs). . . . If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken. . ."

Here there is a clear distinction between a literary work in which the circumcision regulations are recorded, called "Moses" and "the law of Moses" on the one hand, and the author or originator, called "the patriarchs," on the other. Jesus seems to realize that his hearers might commit a category error, confusing title, which is what he intended here, with author, which was not his intent, so he makes his meaning clear. We, therefore, based on Jesus' own usage, need to be careful in claiming that "Moses" always indicates author and not title.

Even the above quote from the talmudic tractate *Baba Batra* does not indicate an understanding of Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch. It speaks of "Moses' book" (possibly Deuteronomy), which cannot be the Pentateuch, since the *Balaam story (Num 22—24) is distinguished from it.

If one has a high view of the inspiration and reliability of Scripture, it is important to take care in interpreting what it says. While it does clearly state that Moses wrote a number of individual passages, as indicated in the numerous references above, it nowhere clearly states that he is the author of the entire Pentateuch in its present form. One must be careful in defending a position that goes beyond what Scripture itself demands, just as, on the other hand, one should hesitate to deny any Mosaic input at all in the light of these scriptural claims.

2.1. Problems with Mosaic Authorship. Numerous items within the Pentateuch itself have caused people to question its Mosaic authorship.

2.1.1. Anachronisms. Several instances appear to show a time lapse between the event and the record of that event. For example, Moses' death is recorded in Deuteronomy 34. The logical impossibility of Moses' writing this was recognized early, with both Josephus (*Ant.* 4.8.48 §326) and Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 2.291) stating that Moses wrote of it prophetically. Others claim that Joshua wrote these problematic verses (see *b. B. Bat.* 14b above). There are other anachronistic texts in the Pentateuch, however. One is the reference to the city of Dan in the story of *Abram and *Lot (Gen 14:14; cf. Deut 34:1), which is not so named until later, in the period of the judges (Judg 18:29). There are two names for a single place elsewhere in the Pentateuch, an indication of updating geographical names that had changed over time (Bela/Zoar, Gen 14:2, 8; Siddim/Dead Sea, Gen 14:3; En-mishpat/Kadesh, Gen 14:7; Valley of Sheveh/King's Valley, Gen 14:17; see also Mamre/Hebron, Gen 13:18; 23:19; Kiriath-arba/Hebron, Gen 23:2 [indicating that Hebron had at least three different designations]; Luz/Bethel, Gen 28:19; 35:6 [cf. Judg 1:26]; region of Argob/land of Rephaim, Deut 3:13; Bashan/Havvoth-jair, 3:14). Genesis 36:31, Numbers 24:7 and Deuteronomy 17:14-16; 28:36 seem to assume the existence of the Israelite monarchy, which was not established until 1 Samuel 8—12.

In addition, peoples who arrived only later than the patriarchal period in what became the Promised Land are referred to as inhabiting it (Philistines: Gen 21:34; 26:14-18; Ex 13:17), and others who were there in earlier periods are spoken of as if they had since left (Canaanites: Gen 12:6; 13:7), phenomena noted as early as Ibn Ezra in the twelfth century. This same rabbi noted difficulty with Canaan being called "the land of the Hebrews" at a time when there was nobody with that designation (Gen 40:15) and with Transjordan being designated "beyond the Jordan" (Gen 50:10-11; Num 22:1; Deut 1:1, 5), which would be from the perspective of those looking from the west eastwards. Moriah/Zion is designated "the mountain of the LORD," a title that it only later acquired (Gen 22:14; cf. Is 2:3; Mic 4:2; Zech 8:3). The personal names *Jacob* and *Israel* are used to designate the later geographical regions so named (Gen 49:7). There are other instances where items recorded seem to be in the distant past (the phrase "to this day": Gen 22:14; 26:33; 32:32; 35:20; Deut 2:22; 3:14; 34:6; see also Gen 16:14; Ex 6:26-27; 16:35, 36 [an antiquated measurement]; Num 21:14 [citing an ancient source]; Deut 10:6-7; 32:7-20), including references to Moses in the third person ("he") rather than the first person ("I") that would be expected if he were the author (e.g., Deut 1:1). One of the latter cases involves the statement that Moses was "more humble than anyone else on earth" (Num 12:3 NLT), a statement that would be falsified if it were made by the one to whom it refers (see Friedman 1992, 6.612-16).

2.1.2. Divine Names. A precipitating observation that led to the modern discussion of pentateuchal composition was that various names for God are used in the Bible (*see* God, Names of). One is a proper noun, the personal name of Israel's God, which is *yhwh*, variously rendered Yahweh or Jehovah. The other involves a form

of *ĕlōhîm* ("God"), which is a common rather than a proper noun. A clear example of the variation is at the beginning of Genesis: 1:1—2:3 uses only *ĕlōhîm*, while Genesis 2:4—3:25 uses predominantly *yhwh ĕlōhîm*. Since the distinction between name forms is observable in numerous places in the Pentateuch, this led to the suggestion that more than one writer was involved, each with a preference for one of the names (see further terminological variation in Friedman 1992, 6.609-10).

2.1.3. Duplicate Narratives. Readers have also suggested that several incidents or motifs in the Pentateuch are repeated. Creation is described in Genesis 1:1—2:3, in which man and woman are created simultaneously (Gen 1:27), and another account immediately follows in Genesis 2:4-25 in which they are created sequentially (Gen 2:21-22). There are several duplicates in the flood story (Gen 6:5-8 and 9-13; 6:18-22 and 7:1-5) and two genealogies from both *Adam (Gen 4:17-26; 5:1-28) and *Shem (Gen 10:21-31; 11:10-26). A patriarch passes his wife off as his sister in order to preserve his own life not once but in three separate stories (Abraham: Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; Isaac: 26:7-11). The episode with *Hagar and *Ishmael is repeated (Gen 16:1-16; 21:8-19). *Isaac is promised (Gen 17:16-19; 18:9-15) and named twice (Gen 17:19; 21:1-3), as is the place named Beer-sheba (Gen 21:28-31; 26:32-33, seeming to be based on two different etymologies, since the root *šb*ʿ produces both "oath" and "seven"). There are also two variant accounts of the establishment of Abraham's *covenant with God (Gen 15; 17), as well as two narratives of Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia (Gen 28:5; 29:1), with two motives for the journey (Gen 27:41-45, 46) and two accounts of God's revelation to him at Bethel (Gen 28:10-19; 35:6-7). His name is twice changed to Israel (Gen 32:28; 35:10). Also there are duplicates of the manna and quail in the wilderness (Ex 16:2-35; Num 11:4-34), of Moses getting water from a rock at Meribah (Ex 17:5-7; Num 20:9-13), of Joshua's appointment (Num 27:12-23; Deut 31:14-23), of the centralization of sacrifice (Lev 17; Deut 12) and of the list of prohibited animals (Lev 11; Deut 14), as well as a triplet of the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17; 34:10-28; Deut 5:6-21; see further Friedman 1992, 6.609).

2.1.4. Literary Style and Vocabulary. It was noted above that some of the duplicated passages show stylistic or vocabulary differences from each other. Genesis 1 is formal, precise and repetitious (the language "of a jurist, rather than a historian"; Driver 1913, 12), while Genesis 2 is fluid and accessible. These same two passages are also distinguished by divine name (see 2.1.2 above), which distinction is itself a stylistic variant. Several lists have been drawn up of vocabulary that is characteristic of some parts of the Pentateuch and absent in others (e.g., Driver 1948, vii-xi [P], xiii [E]; cf. also McEvenue).

2.1.5. Contradictions and Divergences. Discrepancies in the *creation accounts show a different order of creation in the two accounts (Gen 1: plants, animals, male and female humans; Gen 2: male human, plants, animal, female human), while the flood account requires placing two of each animal in the ark in one place (Gen 6:19-20; 7) and in another, seven (Gen 7:2). The flood itself lasts either forty days (Gen 7:4), 150 days (Gen 7:24) or an entire year (Gen 7:11; 8:13). Moses' father-in-law is called both Reuel (Ex 2:18; Num 10:29) and Jethro (Ex 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-27), and possibly even Hobab (Num 10:29 is ambiguous, cf. Judg 4:11). The same site is called Horeb (e.g., Ex 3:1; 33:6; Deut 1:2, 6; 5:2) and Sinai (Ex 19:11; 24:16; 31:18; Lev 7:38; Num 3:1). Those buying *Joseph after retrieving him from the cistern are either Ishmaelites (Gen 37:25, 27-28; 39:1) or Midianites (Gen 37:36), while the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land are both Amorites (Gen 14:7; 15:16; 48:22) and Canaanites (Gen 10:19; 12:6; 13:7; Ex 13:11).

3. Documentary Hypothesis (DH).

Difficulties such as these with the traditional understanding of pentateuchal composition led to various alternative proposals regarding its authorship (Blenkinsopp, 1-30; Barton, 6.162-65; Noth; Hayes, 84-120). The most widespread alternative proposal to that of complete Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is the Documentary Hypothesis (DH), also called the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis after two of its most significant proponents. Rather than accepting a single author for the Pentateuch, it proposes four separate sources arising over the course of half a millennium.

3.1. Source Identification. The earliest purported source is that of the Yahwist, since the divine name used therein is Yahweh. It is abbreviated J (pronounced *y* in German and earlier English). Starting in Genesis 2:4b, this source includes much of Genesis and parts of Exodus

and Numbers (Campbell and O'Brien, 91-160). Originating from the southern kingdom of Judah (Friedman 1987, 61-67), it was written about 850 B.C. The second source used the divine name Elohim (Heb *ĕlōhîm*), so it is called the Elohist and abbreviated E. Starting with Genesis 15 (Campbell and O'Brien, 161-93), it covers material similar to J. It arose in the northern kingdom of Israel (at times also designated "Ephraim"; Jenks; Friedman 1987, 61-67) around 750 B.C. These two sources, difficult to distinguish from each other on stylistic grounds (Noth, 20), have a flowing narrative style. Refugees from Israel brought them together in Judah when many from Israel were exiled to Assyria in 722 B.C. The third source is Deuteronomy, abbreviated D, which was dated to 621 B.C. and was a product of Josiah's reform (2 Chron 34:3—35:19). It is restricted to the book of Deuteronomy itself and does not play a major role in the process of distinguishing the other sources, except as regards their relative dating. The fourth is the Priestly, or P, source, covering material from Genesis 1 through the notice of Moses' death at the end of Deuteronomy (Campbell and O'Brien, 21-90). It is the latest source, coming from a fifth-century postexilic context. It is not a continuous narrative like the others but a collection of different genres of material of interest to the priests. It shows an evolutionary development of religious practice leaving sole authority in priestly hands. For example, while the patriarchs erect *altars apparently at will in earlier sources (Gen 12:7-8 [J]; 22:9 [E]), P places cultic functions firmly in the hands of the priests (e.g., Lev 9).

3.2. Implications of the Documentary Hypothesis. A Pentateuch composed along the lines proposed by the DH raises several implications that cause concern. First among these is the issue of historical accuracy. What is the place of Moses in the compositional process? As usually formulated, the DH would have no place for Mosaic involvement of any of the material at any stage. This would imply that statements to the effect that Moses wrote at least some of the material (see 2 above) arose either through ignorance or distortion. The same applies to historical claims made within the Pentateuch. Writing is usually understood to reflect the period of composition more than the period about which it claims to report. In this case, it is possible to say that the *tabernacle never existed in Israel's history. Its inclusion in the P document was simply a reflection of the priests' interest in cultic matters, being in particular a retrojection of the later temple, specifically called "a historical fiction" (Wellhausen, 37, 39). This type of historical nihilism can be seen to have expanded to the entirety of the OT, since today some question whether anything at all can be historically determined through the Bible (cf., e.g., discussions in Long, Baker and Wenham). This has serious ramifications for a Judeo-Christian understanding that God works in human history (see 1 Cor 15:12-19).

This is not to say that the use of sources necessitates historical inaccuracy. Sources are mentioned within Scripture itself (see 4.1 below). However, the sources proposed by source critics are of a different kind from those used by historians to do their work. Historians seek clues in actual sources that may be dated as close as possible to past events so that they may reconstruct these events as accurately as possible. Source critics work in the other direction, starting with a finished piece of literature and hypothesizing what the constituent elements looked like. This process can be attempted with some hope for success when there is actual evidence from prior stages of the compositional process (e.g., the Gilgamesh Epic; see Tigay; cf. Carr, 16-20). When there are no actual controls in the form of antecedent documents, however—and there are none for the Pentateuch—any reconstruction is only highly speculative at best (Baker, 1989).

The time lapse between event and written record also relates to historical accuracy. Oral tradition is posited as the keeper of historical memory (*see* Traditio-historical Criticism; Form Criticism), since *writing was at times viewed as an innovation in Israel, only coming much later than the time of Moses and of the events purported to be narrated in the Pentateuch. Even then it was seen as being a skill restricted to scribal specialists (Nielsen 17, n. 3, and 56; but contrast Driver 1913, 158). This means of transmission left the information open to garbling over time. While the Pentateuch was not written as a historical document but as a theological one, its theology is nevertheless historically based, and impugning its historicity has theological outcomes.

4. Responses.

Problems with this consensus understanding of

the authorship of the Pentateuch have not gone unanswered. All the individual points raised above, which are only representative, cannot be addressed here, though they have been addressed with varying success in commentaries and other studies (e.g., Rooker, 25-38). Looking summarily at the five criteria mentioned above, one can offer the following responses.

Anachronisms (see 2.1.1 above) only prove a difficulty if one proposes a monolithically Mosaic composition of the entire Pentateuch. One could suggest, for example, a Mosaic core with editorial supplementation or some other model of composition that does not require suspicion of the historical integrity or intentionality of the text.

Divine names (see 2.1.2 above) can be varied for the same deity in other ancient Near Eastern texts without suggesting multiple authorship. In the Akkadian *Enuma Elish* creation account, the fifty-one names of Marduk are not only recited (*COS* 1.111: 402), but two of them are specifically mentioned as being Ea (line 140) and Enlil (line 149), names of two other chief deities in the story. Gods also are given both names and titles in the same document, such as Anat, who is entitled *btlt,* "virgin, girl" (e.g. *COS* 1.86.243), as is the case with Yahweh and Elohim. Consequently, this cannot be assumed to be the sign of multiple or composite authorship.

Duplicates (see 2.1.3 above) need to be determined by a careful, close reading of the text. None of those proposed are exact parallels, any more than are the four Gospels. The differences as well as the similarities need careful examination, ascertaining their rhetorical function. If these were in fact duplicates, there also needs to be consideration of what their function within a text would be, since some author/editor/redactor placed them together at some stage. Simply positing multiple sources does not answer the question for the present document.

Style (see 2.1.4 above) is a weak standard for establishing authorship, since there have been no adequate objective criteria established in the field (through such tools as statistical stylistics) to ascertain how much stylistic breadth there is within the known output of an identified author. One would need to take into consideration such things as an author's style within various literary genres and their own maturation and change. This is to say nothing of the opposite side of the problem, the need to quantify the minimum necessary criteria for distinguishing between works of two different authors. This is not to deny difference in style, but it is to demand some objective criteria by which to evaluate what these differences mean.

Contradictions (see 2.1.5 above) also need to be evaluated by close reading. A number of proposed contradictions have been shown to be spurious when attention is paid to what the text actually says.

Several general responses to DH must be also be made.

4.1. Sources and History of Composition. One cannot deny the use of sources in the composition of the Bible, since there is much recorded in the Pentateuch of which the author was not witness. As a result, the author either composed the material using imagination or relied on others for information (cf. Lk 1:1-4). There is also clear evidence that composition at times took place in several stages. The problems arise in discussing the nature of these sources and stages.

The ancient equivalent of footnoting explicitly acknowledges sources in numerous places in Scripture (e.g., "the Book of the Wars of the LORD" [Num 21:14]; "the Book of Jashar" [Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18]; "the Book of the Acts of Solomon" [1 Kings 11:41]; "the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah/Israel" [e.g., 1 Kings 14:29; 15:31] "the annals of the kings of Media and Persia" [Esther 10:2]; "the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah" [e.g., 2 Chron 35:27]; "the vision of the prophet Isaiah" [2 Chron 32:32]). Other passages refer to works by a title (e.g. "the book of the generations of Adam" [lit., Gen 5:1]; "the book of the covenant" [Ex 24:7; 2 Kings 23:2]; "the book of the vision of Nahum" [Nah 1:1]; cf. the references to a "book" in 2 above). These explicitly acknowledge that writers referred to previously composed material, which would have been written down (*sēper* ["book, written document"]; see BDB; *HALOT;* cf. the cognate Akkadian verb *šapāru,* which can mean "to write" [*CAD* 17.1.440-46]; in Northwest Semitic, see *DNWSI* 2.798-801).

Several stages in writing a biblical account can be discerned in some texts. For example, two or possibly three stages are evident in Joshua 6:24-25: the event of the destruction of Jericho; an initial composition somewhat later, but still within the lifetime of those who were there ("until this day"); and a possible note

some centuries later that the spoil ended up in the temple, if that is how "the treasury of the house of the LORD" is to be read (though it more likely refers to the tabernacle [1 Chron 9:23] or even the temple at Shiloh [1 Sam 1:24]). Genesis 14 also shows several ancient names that are glossed by later, new names adopted for the same site (as noted in 2.1.1 above). In light of the existence of these phenomena in sources elsewhere in the Bible, one cannot reject the DH on the grounds of denying sources, but one can disagree with the nature of those proposed.

4.2. Evolution of a Theory. Although the DH has held sway for over a century as the prevailing view (Rendtorff, 101; Friedman 1996, 87), it must not be viewed as a finished, monolithic hypothesis. There has been constant debate from even before its articulation by Wellhausen as to the nature, extent and relative dating of the sources. A vocal minority, consisting of both conservatives (e.g., Cassuto, Segal, Wiseman, Garrett, Alexander) and those who would not identify themselves as such (e.g., Noth, van Seters, Westermann, Rendtorff, Kikawada and Quinn, Talmon, Whybray), has found aspects of the DH inadequate on various grounds. Proponents of the DH have also lacked consensus, and the hypothesis is in a constant state of flux, which is in fact how an enterprise based on the investigation of hypotheses should work (for a discussion of DH over the last quarter century, see Wenham).

One wonders, however, how much modification the DH can undergo while still maintaining something identifiable as the original hypothesis. Some now deny the existence of separate J and E sources, resulting in a combined source JE (called the Jehovist by, e.g., Van Seters 1994). This seems to deny the relevancy of the foundational criteria of diversity of divine names, which led to the development of the theory in the first place (see 2.1.2 above). Additionally, J, the earliest of the sources, has been recently redated to the time of the exile (Van Seters, who argues for duplication of accounts as the sole sure criterion for determining sources). This disallows the possible evolutionary development between texts that was needed to explain apparent discrepancies. Some also place the P document much earlier (Wenham, 134; McConville, 154-55; Joosten, 13-15) or maintain that it was never a separate and distinct source (for bibliography, see Carr, 43 n. 1). This not only disallows evolutionary development but also presents other difficulties, such as supposedly earlier documents referring to those that should not have been written until much later according to DH orthodoxy (cf. Baker, 1987). A leading German scholar has gone so far as to say, "Recent Pentateuchal research on the whole shows that one has to treat the classical criteria for source division with much greater caution and that without exception they have lost their certainty" (Westermann, 576). In spite of all of this, the DH has by no means been generally abandoned (Nicholson; Wenham, 133-34).

4.3. Conclusions. As S. Talmon comments concerning questions of authorship of works in antiquity, "conclusions, arising from whatever method of investigation is used, cannot be corroborated by any tangible means" (Talmon, 226). In other words, any conclusion regarding authorship must be regarded as extremely tentative since the authors are no longer available for consultation. It is also important to acknowledge that alternatives to traditional views should not, at least in the first instance, be viewed as wrong-headed attacks on orthodoxy. Most who made these proposals did not do so out of a desire to destroy people's faith in the Bible (Harrison, 24). Each of the problems noted earlier (see 2 above) arises from the biblical text itself and must be addressed. Those espousing the DH or some other explanation should be seen as doing so in good faith, seeking to address the issues. Those who disagree with the particular interpretation must produce a persuasive and reasonable counter explanation rather than doing what is too often done, resorting to *ad hominem* slander, which does a disservice to one's own cause.

We also need to be reminded of the outcome of the entire debate about DH: "an invalidation of the Documentary Hypothesis, if this indeed should be considered the upshot of the statistical linguistic investigation [as employed by Radday], does not yet prove the original unity of the Book of Genesis, nor does it have any bearing on the traditionally accepted Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch" (Talmon, 231). While source criticism is in serious disarray, if not retreat, a fully adequate explanation of pentateuchal composition is still awaited.

See also AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; FORM CRITICISM; GOD, NAMES OF; HISTORICAL

CRITICISM; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM; WRITING.

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SPIRITISTS. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC.

SPOIL, PLUNDER. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

STAFF OF GOD. *See* ROD, STAFF.

STEALING. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

STRUCTURALISM. *See* LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM.

SUBDUE. *See* BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

SUZERAIN-VASSAL TREATIES. *See* COVENANT; DECALOGUE.

T

TABERNACLE

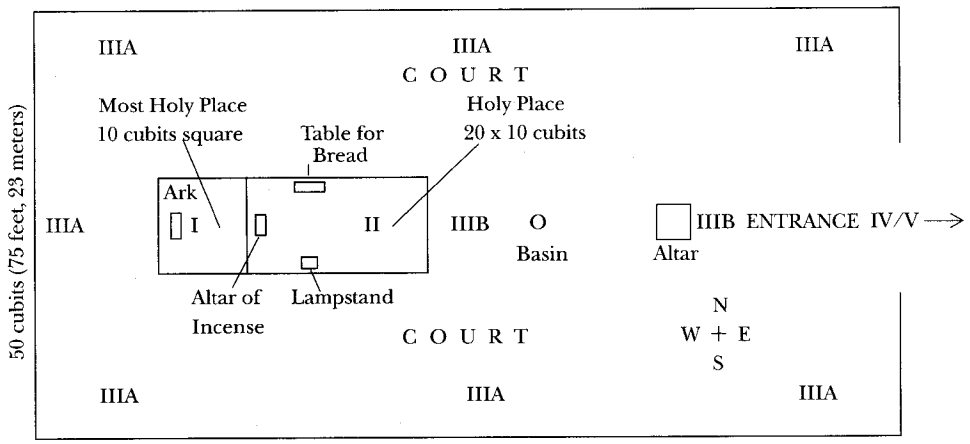
The tabernacle sanctuary was the Lord's tented dwelling place in the midst of *Israel as they traveled from Sinai to Canaan (Num 10—21). Even after they conquered the land, up until the time of Solomon's temple, the tabernacle survived as a sanctuary (2 Sam 7:6; 1 Kings 8:4; 2 Chron 1:3-6), although the ark of the covenant was removed from the tabernacle in the days of Eli (1 Sam 4—6) and never returned there. After the Lord delivered them from *Egypt (Ex 11-12), he guided and protected them on their journey from Egypt through the *wilderness to Sinai (Ex 13—18) by means of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21-22). In accordance with the Lord's instructions (Ex 25—31), they constructed the tabernacle (Ex 35—40) while they camped there at Sinai for almost one year (cf. Ex 19:1 with Num 10:11). On the day of its completion (Ex 40) the Lord promptly occupied the tabernacle in his glory (Ex 40:34-35) and from that point forward continuously manifested his guiding and protecting presence to all the people in the form of a cloud by day with fire in it by night over the tabernacle (Ex 40:36-38; Num 9:15-23; 10:11-12, 33-34). The details of the shape, content, construction, erection, dedication, history, theology and the central principles of worship in the tabernacle are treated in this article:

1. Terminology and Dimensions of the Tabernacle
2. Furniture of the Tabernacle
3. The Tabernacle Construction Account (Ex 25—40)
4. Community Holiness and Orientation Around the Tabernacle (Lev 1—Num 10)
5. The Tabernacle Presence of God
6. The Tabernacle and the Glory in the New Testament

1. Terminology and Dimensions of the Tabernacle.

There are three major terms used for what we usually refer to as the "tabernacle" (see the diagram and chart): "sanctuary" *(miqdāš)*, "tabernacle" *(miškān)* and "tent of meeting" *(ʾōhel môʿēd)*. Within the tabernacle complex as a whole there was, from west to east, the actual tented building itself, then the "basin" (or laver; *kîyôr*, e.g., Ex 30:18) and "the *altar of burnt offering" *(mizbaḥ hāʿōlâ*; e.g., Ex 30:28). Within the tented building there were two main areas: "the most holy place" *(qōdeš haqqŏdāšîm)* and "the holy place" *(haqqōdeš)*. Within the most holy place was "the ark of the testimony" *(ʾărōn hāʿēdut*, e.g., Ex 25:22; or "the ark of the covenant of the LORD," *ʾărōn bĕrît yhwh*, e.g., Num 10:33). Within the *holy place was "the altar of incense" *(mizbaḥ haqqĕtōret*, e.g., Ex 30:27), "the table of [the bread of] the presence" *(šulḥan happānîm*, e.g., Num 4:7) and the "lampstand" *(mĕnôrâ*, e.g., Ex 25:31).

***1.1. Sanctuary* (*miqdāš*).** The most common term for the tabernacle complex as a whole is *miqdāš*, "sanctuary" (see, e.g., Ex 25:8 with Lev 12:4 and Num 3:28, although *miškān*, "tabernacle," can sometimes be used in a similar way even in the same context; e.g., Num 3:29). In Ugaritic *mqdšt*, "sanctuaries," occurs once, whereas the normal word for "sanctuary" is *qdš* (= biblical *qōdeš*, see below). There are also other occurrences of *mqdš*, "sanctuary," in Phoenician and Punic sources as well as in Arabic *(maqdiš)*. It derives from the root word *qdš*, which in the Bible is used in various forms to identify a person, place, thing or time as "holy" (or "sacred"; cf. "sanctuary" as a sacred place, Latin *sanctuarium*) as opposed to "common" (or "profane," *hll*). Note especially the Lord's statement of principle in Leviticus 10, when he com-



Zone	Description	References
INSIDE the tabernacle complex:		
I	The most holy (place) *(qōdeš haqqŏdāšim)*	Ex 26:33; Num 4:4, 19
II	The holy (place) *(haqqōdeš)*	Ex 26:33; 29:30; Lev 6:30; Num 3:28
I-II	The tabernacle *(miškān)*	Ex 25:9; 26:1, 7, 15, 26
III	The court(yard) *(ḥāṣēr)*	Ex 27:9-19; Num 4:26, 32
A	A holy place *(māqôm qādōš)*	Ex 29:31; Lev 6:16, 26-27; 7:6; 10:13
B	Entrance (doorway) of the tent of meeting *(petaḥ ʾōhel môʿēd)*	Ex 29:4, 32, 42; Lev 1:3; 3:2; 12:6; 16:7
I-III	The sanctuary *(miqdāš)*	Ex 25:8; Lev 12:4; 19:30; 20:3; Num 3:28
OUTSIDE the tabernacle complex:		
IV	A clean place *(māqôm tāhôr)*	Lev 4:12; 6:11; 10:14; Num 19:9
V	An unclean place *(māqôm tāmēʾ)*	Lev 14:40, 41, 45

Figure 1: The Tabernacle and Its Zones (Adapted from Jenson, 90, with significant changes and additions.)

mands *Aaron "to distinguish between the holy *[qōdeš]* and the common *[ḥōl]*" (Lev 10:10), and then in Leviticus 11:45, "you shall be holy because I am holy" (cf. Lev 11:44 and the virtual repetitions of this formulaic statement in Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26 and similarly Lev 21:8). It was, therefore, essential that the high *priest should not "profane the sanctuary of his God" (Lev 21:12), and that he and the other priests see to it that no one else did either.

Since holiness is a relative category in the Hebrew Bible, it is "graded" or "graduated" (see Jenson and figure 1), and the terminology is somewhat fluid. Although there are general tendencies in the way the various words are used, the same terms can sometimes be used for larger or smaller units that are more or less holy than others. Therefore, as noted above, *miqdāš* often refers to the tabernacle complex as a whole. It can also refer to other sanctuaries, whether foreign (Is 16:12; Ezek 28:18) or Israelite, legitimate (Josh 24:26; 1 Chron 22:19; 28:10; Neh 10:39; Ezek 37:26, 28; 44:9-16; 45:4) or illegitimate (Lev 26:31; Ezek 21:2; Amos 7:9, 13). However, in a few instances it refers to the sacred furniture of the tabernacle (Num 10:21; cf. Num 3:31-32) or the sacred part of gifts offered to the Levites (Num 18:29). It occurs once in plural form for the multiple holy precincts in the sanctuary complex (Lev 21:23; cf. for the temple also Jer 51:51 and probably Ps 73:13) and once even for the inner sanctum, the most holy place, in

the unique expression "the sanctuary *[miqdaš]* of the holy place *[haqqōdeš]*" (Lev 16:33).

The same is true for the related term *qōdeš*, "holiness," when used in reference to the tabernacle. Sometimes it too refers to the whole tabernacle complex and has the meaning "sanctuary" (Ex 30:13; 36:1; Lev 10:4), but most often it designates either the outer room of the tabernacle building called "the holy place" (with the article, *haqqōdeš*) or "a holy place" somewhere within the sanctuary complex (normally without the article, *qōdeš*, but with the article meaning "in the sacred precinct" in Lev 10:17-18; 14:13; see Milgrom, 392, 622), for which the adjectival expression *māqôm qādōš*, "a holy place," is normally used (e.g., Ex 29:31; see figure 1). In a few instances *qōdeš* refers to the tabernacle building as a whole (Lev 4:26) or even the inner sanctum, the most holy place (Lev 16:2).

The effect of all these terms for the holiness of the tabernacle and the holy places in the tabernacle was to impress upon the ancient Israelites (and the modern reader) both the holiness of God and his concerns and intentions for the holiness of his people. Except for the sanctification of the *sabbath referred to in Genesis 2:3, the first occurrence of any form of the root *qdš* in the Hebrew canon is the reference to the "holy ground" at the burning bush on Mount Sinai (Ex 3:5). Later, again at Sinai, the Lord promised that if they would commit themselves to a *covenant with him, the Israelites would become his "treasured possession out of all the nations"—they would become his "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation" (Ex 19:5-6; cf. also the very end of the legal stipulations of the Pentateuch, Deut 26:16-19). There have been numerous proposals for the meaning of "kingdom of priests," but clearly its connection to "holy nation" assures us that at least part of the point is that, like priests, Israel could draw near to the Lord in all his holiness (see Lev 10:3, "among those who draw near to me I will show myself to be holy").

Israel was a kingdom of priests consecrated to the Lord, even though there were also special consecrated (Aaronic) priests within that kingdom of priests. Compare the *blood ritual for the consecration of the holy nation (Ex 24:6-8) with that for the consecration of the holy priests (Ex 29:19-21), which was also the occasion of the consecration of the tabernacle (Ex 29:35-37). In both cases the blood of the offerings was applied directly to the people involved, although the latter was carried out in a more precise manner than the former. This is very unusual. The blood was rarely applied to people. Of course, these are two different levels of holiness, but both the nation and its priests were holy.

This is confirmed, furthermore, by the fact that when any person in ancient Israel (priest or not) was restored to the nation after having been severely unclean for a period of time and dwelling outside the camp (Lev 13:45-46), the ritual for their re-admittance to the camp of the "holy nation" was essentially the same as that for the consecration of the priests (cf. Ex 29:19-21 with Lev 14:14). For obvious reasons, the ritual of splashing the blood around on the people as an act of consecration for the whole nation (Ex 24:8) became more specific when only one Israelite was involved (Lev 14:14). The holiness terminology for the tabernacle, therefore, focuses our attention on the holiness of God, his otherness and transcendence, along with the need to maintain the holiness and purity of his dwelling place in the midst of his people. This, in turn, requires that his people actually function as the "holy nation" he chose and called them to be, for God himself is holy: "be holy because I am holy."

1.2. Tabernacle (miškān). The term *miškān*, "tabernacle" (i.e., "dwelling place"), shifts our attention from the holiness and transcendence of God expressed by the term *miqdāš*, "sanctuary" (i.e., "holy place," Ex 25:8; note the same basic noun structure of these two terms), and related *qdš* words. With *miškān* our attention is focused on the presence and immanence of the Lord suggested by the fact that he would "dwell in their [Israel's] midst" (Ex 25:8, the verb *škn*) in a "tabernacle" (Ex 25:9, the first occurrence of the noun *miškān* in the Bible), which would be constructed according to a plan that the Lord revealed to Moses on the mountain (Ex 25:9; 26:30; cf. also Acts 7:44 and Heb 8:5; 9:23). Within two verses (Ex 25:8-9) the text binds the transcendence of God together with his immanence. They belong together. A meaningful understanding of one is essential to grasping the other. The Lord's transcendence is only understandable to us when held in relationship to his immanence, and vice versa. It is the holy God of heaven, creator and sustainer of the universe, who deigned to take up a tented abode in the midst of a nation that he himself called and de-

livered out of *slavery into his blessed light (Num 6:24-26; cf. John 1). Each side of this duality sets the other off in relief.

Although *miškān* can also be used for human dwellings, especially tent dwellings (e.g., Num 16:24, 27), when it specifically designates the tabernacle of the Lord the reference is to the tented building inside the tabernacle court, not the entire tabernacle complex (see Ex 26 and 36, and the contrast between the *miškān* and the court that surrounded it, e.g., in Ex 35:11-15 vs. Ex 35:16-17 and also Ex 35:18; 38:31; Num 3:26; for the complex as a whole see the remarks on *miqdāš* above). Various forms of the same word also occur in cognate languages. For example, in Akkadian *maškanu* can refer to a "tent canopy" or "sanctuary." In Ugaritic it occurs only twice, but both times it refers to an abode of the gods, and in both cases it is parallel to *ʾahl*, "tent" (Heb *ʾōhel*). Later Aramaic inscriptions use it with the meaning "shrine," and it also occurs in Arabic as *maskan/miskan* for a dwelling or house. In the Bible it sometimes occurs in combinations with other terms, for example, *miškan hāʿēdut*, "the tabernacle of the testimony" (Ex 38:21; Num 1:50, 53; 10:11; cf. "the ark of the testimony" in Ex 25:22 with the explanation based on Ex 25:16).

By extension, *miškān* is later used in the plural for the temple, perhaps as a reflection of the various parts of the temple or as a plural of majesty (Ps 43:3; 46:4 [MT 46:5]; 84:1 [MT 84:2]). However, in its original sense, when referring to the tabernacle it suggests a nonsedentary transience. Like any other tent, it was portable, and that was specifically the reason for its construction. It was to be a moveable dwelling place for the Lord in his travels with Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land. It was the Lord's tent in the midst of the tents of the Israelites. That brings us to the term "tent of meeting."

***1.3. Tent of Meeting* (ʾōhel môʿēd).** The difference between *miškān*, "tabernacle," and *ʾōhel môʿēd*, "tent of meeting," when they refer to the tabernacle is that the latter emphasizes the "tent" nature of the dwelling and especially its function as a place of "meeting" between God and his people (*môʿēd* derives from the verb *yʿd*, which means "to designate, appoint" in the qal stem, but "assemble, gather, meet" in the niphal stem), while *miškān* focuses on its function as a transient "dwelling place" of God's manifest "presence" (see 1.2 above). The term *môʿēd* occurs in Ugaritic in the expression *phr mʿd*, "appointed or gathered assembly," which refers not only to an assembly of the gods but also the place of their assembly, in the mountain of the god El.

R. E. Hendrix has observed that there is an abrupt shift from the exclusive use of the term *miškān* in Exodus 25:9—27:19 (19 times), where the Lord gives instructions regarding the structure and construction of the tented tabernacle, to the exclusive use of *ʾōhel môʿēd* in Exodus 27:20—33:7, where the focus is on the cultic functions within the tabernacle. Actually, the occurrences of "tent of meeting" end with Exodus 31:7, excluding the sabbath command subsection of Exodus 31:12-17. The latter seems to be inserted here specifically to emphasize the need to keep the sabbath even during the weeks and months when the tabernacle was being built. The same command is briefly reiterated in Exodus 35:1-3 as an introduction to the actual construction account in Exodus 35—39. Since the *golden-calf catastrophe (Ex 32—34) interrupted the continuity between the command and compliance sections of the tabernacle construction account, it was necessary to refresh and reemphasize the need to keep the sabbath during the construction period (Ex 35—39). After all, the weekly sabbath was the sign of the covenant between God and Israel (Ex 31:13, 16-17), and violation of it would bring the death penalty (Ex 31:14; cf. Num 15:32-36).

Exodus 31:18 is the concluding structural and thematic link, which by its connection back to Exodus 24:12 binds Exodus 25—31 to its surrounding narrative framework (i.e., Ex 19—24 and Ex 32—34). There are no occurrences of "tent of meeting" after that, except the two in the narrative parentheses of Exodus 33:7-11, where it occurs twice in Exodus 33:7 (but note also simply "tent" in Ex 33:8-11), and where it refers to the other tent of meeting pitched outside the camp (see below), not the tabernacle tent of meeting, which had not been fabricated yet according to the sequence of the Exodus account (see Ex 35—39).

The "tent of meeting" section, therefore, consists of Exodus 27:20—31:10, where the focus is on cultic functions in the tabernacle complex. In fact, the end of the previous section and beginning of this one is signaled by the reference to the *ʿăbōdâ*, "service," of the tabernacle

(Ex 27:19, the first and only occurrence of this term in Ex 25-27). First, there are the *priestly garments (i.e., the cult functionaries), their consecration and the consecration of the tabernacle complex itself (Ex 27:29—29:37). The second unit describes certain cultic functions for which perishable goods must be supplied on a regular basis (Ex 29:38—30:38), including also the financial resources needed to supply those goods for "the service *[ʿăbōdâ]* of the tent of meeting" (Ex 30:16, which is part of the census ransom payment passage in Ex 30:11-16, and the only mention of *ʿăbōdâ* in Ex 28-31). Third, there is the call of Bezalel, the chief craftsman, whom the Lord "filled with the Spirit of God" for the various kinds of workmanship required in the fabrication of the sanctuary (Ex 31:3; cf. Ex 35:31) and to whom he also assigned other skilled craftsmen (Ex 31:6; cf. Ex 35:30-35; 36:1; 37:1, etc.). Note that the last mention of the tabernacle "tent of meeting" in Exodus 25—31 is in the Bezalel unit (Ex 31:7).

One might say that Bezalel and his craftsmen were also functionaries, albeit dedicated to the construction of the tabernacle rather than the regular priestly cultic functions that would be performed in it. However, the rationale for the inclusion of the craftsmen at this point may have more to do with the fact that Bezalel was "filled with the Spirit of God," which calls to mind the other "tent of meeting" pitched outside the camp. The latter is first mentioned explicitly in Exodus 33:7-11 (but compare Ex 33:7b with Ex 18:13-16), which is a parenthetical subnarrative embedded in the golden-calf account (Ex 32—34). It describes where and how Moses regularly received oracular revelations from the Lord both before (Ex 33:7-11) and after (Num 11—12) the tabernacle tent of meeting was functional. It was also there at that tent of meeting that the Lord put "his Spirit" on the seventy elders (i.e., the Lord's Spirit on *Moses was transferred to them as well) so that they "prophesied" (Num 11:16-17, 24-25, 29; but note the freedom of the Spirit in Num 11:26).

Moreover, according to the regulations for the continual daily cult in Exodus 29:38-46, the tabernacle tent of meeting was to become not only a cultic tent but also an oracular one, like the tent of meeting pitched outside the camp. The Lord would meet at the tabernacle not only with Moses but with all the Israelites: "It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at the entrance of the tent of meeting* where *I will meet with you to speak* to you there. *And I will meet with the Israelites there,* and it will be consecrated by *my glory*" (Ex 29:42-43). Compare this to Exodus 33:7b, 9, "*Anyone who was seeking the* LORD *would go out to the tent of meeting* that was outside the camp. . . . When Moses entered the tent *the pillar of cloud* would descend and stand *at the entrance of the tent,* and he would *speak with Moses.*" It is not entirely clear how the oracular functions of these two tents varied, but there were no regular cultic functions performed at the tent of meeting outside the camp, at least not of the sort that would be taking place within the tabernacle tent of meeting.

The biblical details and historical-critical debate about this oracular tent of meeting and its relationship to the tabernacle tent of meeting will be treated later (see 3.3 below). For now, however, it is important to take special note of the fact that the intervening golden calf debacle (Ex 32:1-8) struck at the very heart of their covenant relationship with God; namely, worship of the only true God according to the standards called for in the first two commandments (Ex 20:2-6; i.e., no other gods and no images). It jeopardized the continuing existence of that generation of Israelites (Ex 34:9-10), the establishment of the tabernacle tent of meeting and the system of worship within it, which was the subject of the previous chapters (Ex 25-31), as well as the continuing manifestation of the Lord's personal presence at the tent of meeting pitched outside the camp (Ex 33; for further remarks see 5 below). It was only the prayer and other forms of intercession (Ex 32:11-34; 33:12-14) by which Moses called on God's *grace (Ex 33:19; 34:6-9) that avoided these consequences and led to the reestablishment of the covenant (Ex 34:10-28), including the re-issuing of the two tablets of the *law (Ex 34:27-28; cf. Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:19-20).

"Tent of meeting" is used less exclusively in Exodus 35—40 and in the rest of the Pentateuch. Usage suggests that the term "the entrance [*petaḥ,* lit. "doorway"] of the tent of meeting" is relatively broad in its meaning, referring to the whole area between the entrance to the tabernacle complex as a whole and the entrance to the tabernacle tent itself (see the helpful discussions in Milgrom, 392-94, and Klingbeil, 61-64). One gets the impression that laypeople were limited to the forecourt, basically

between the entrance to the tabernacle complex and the burnt offering altar, but some distance was maintained between them and the altar itself. The inner court was the domain of the priests alone (Haran, 184-85).

According to Leviticus 8:3-4 the congregation assembled "at the entrance of the tent of meeting" to witness the consecration procedures for the priests. At that time Moses had Aaron and his sons "draw near" so that he could "wash them with the water," which no doubt refers to the water in the basin between the altar and the tabernacle tent (Lev 8:6). In this instance drawing near must have involved going further into the court than "the entrance of the tent of meeting" where the congregation was located. Furthermore, during the seven day consecration period the priests could not "go out from the entrance of the tent of meeting" (Lev 8:33), which must mean that they could not exit the tabernacle complex. It cannot mean that they must stay in the tabernacle tent, since some of what they were required to do involved, for example, going to the water basin of the burnt offering altar in the court. On those days, therefore, they were to occupy themselves "at the doorway of the tent of meeting," which included the whole area from the entrance of the tabernacle complex as a whole (they could go out to it, but not out from it) to the entrance of the tent structure inside the complex.

1.4. Dimensions, Framework and Curtains of the Tabernacle. The dimensions given for the tabernacle court in figure 1 are based on the standard assumption that a cubit equals about 18 inches (45 centimeters), the distance from an average-size man's elbow to the tip of his fingers (Sarna, 159). There is really no serious debate about the length and width of the tabernacle court (see the measurements in Ex 27:9, 12, 18). Accordingly, it was about 150 feet long (100 cubits), 75 feet wide (50 cubits), and the hangings *(qĕlāʿîm)* that surrounded the court consisted of the curtains *(yĕrîʿōt)* and the pillars *(ʿimmudîm)* on which they hung, and stood about 7½ feet high (5 cubits, Ex 27:18). The gate was in the middle of the east side and was about 30 feet wide (20 cubits, Ex 27:14-16; see Sarna for all the details about the cloth fabrics, designs, wood and metals used in the fabrication of the tabernacle).

With regard to the tent itself, V. A. Hurowitz suggests that "boards" (*qĕrāšîm*, e.g., Ex 26:15) that made up the solid structure were really "frames" (like the doorframe surrounding a doorway; see Hurowitz 1995, 131, and the diagrams, pp. 147-50). The curtains (*yĕrîʿōt*, e.g., Ex 26:1) were draped over the framework. The dimensions of both the frames and the curtains are well established. Twenty frames made up each long side of the tabernacle, and they were each 1½ cubits wide, so if they were simply butted up against each other (there is debate about this, see below) and held together by means of a combination of grooves, rings, sockets and bars (Ex 26:15-30; see Sarna, 169), then the tabernacle building was 45 feet long (i.e., 30 cubits; Ex 26:15-18). The rear wall was made with six regular frames plus two double frames on each end that were constructed and placed differently in order to support the structure. Of course, there was no front wall since that was the entrance side. If the frames were simply butted up against each other, the total length of the back wall was 15 feet (10 cubits; see the discussion and diagram in Hurowitz 1995, 131-32, 149).

We can confirm the width and length of the structure by the dimensions of the curtains. When properly fitted together the total length of the ten underlying curtains was 40 cubits, which is 60 feet. It was draped over the wood framework covering the top, sides and rear (Ex 26:1-6). Therefore, we can confirm that the structure was 45 feet long and stood 15 feet high (i.e., 45 + 15 = 60). When properly fitted together the three overlying layers of spun goat hair, ram skins and dolphin skins, respectively, were 44 cubits long, which is 66 feet (the extra six feet overlapped like an awning over the front of the tabernacle), and 30 cubits wide, which is 45 feet. The width covered up one side, over the roof and down the other side of the tabernacle framework, so it was 15 feet high and 15 feet wide (i.e., 15 + 15 + 15 = 45 feet).

One interpretive tradition makes much of the different colors of the curtains (e.g., Ex 26:1): white linen for purity, blue for God's transcendence, purple for his royalty and red for the shed blood that was so important for atonement. Others emphasize the gradation of the quality and value of the materials—the closer in toward the inner sanctum the higher the quality and value of the materials (e.g., Sarna, 156-57). This is relatively clear for the metals: the altar overlaid with bronze and the bronze basin overlaid in the courtyard (Ex 27:2; 30:18) may be contrasted with the table and incense altar overlaid

with gold (Ex 25:24; 30:3) and the gold lampstand (Ex 25:31) in "the holy place." The ark was also overlaid with gold, inside and out (Ex 25:11). The colors, weaves and leathers of the curtains are less clear with regard to their quality and value, but the blue, purple and red dyed yarns woven with the fine white linen, from which the underlying curtain of the tent was made, were the most expensive in those days (Sarna, 155). Goat hair was normally used in the making of tents (Ex 26:7; cf. Ex 35:26), rams' skins dyed red are known from later Arab portable shrines, and "dolphin" skins (see the helpful discussion in Cross 1998, 88-89) were used as a leather covering over the woven fabrics of the inner layers of the tabernacle tent (Ex 26:14).

On the one hand, the curtains that surrounded the court were of fine white linen alone, but the veil that separated the most holy from the holy place, the screen that covered the entrance to the tabernacle tent and the screen that covered the entrance into the tabernacle complex were all woven of the same materials: blue, purple and red dyed yarns woven with the fine white linen. This is probably because the line of movement from the entrance of the tabernacle complex into the holy place and, finally, into the most holy place was the straight line of approach to God. On the other hand, the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place was embroidered with *cherubim (Ex 26:31; cf. also the inner tent fabric as a whole, Ex 26:1), which suggests the limitation of entrance into the most holy place even for the priests, except for the high priest on the Day of *Atonement. It is worth noting the function of the cherubim in Genesis 3:24, but also the fact that cherubim thrones of deities are known from elsewhere in the ancient Near East (Cross 1973, 35-36).

The "veil" (*pārōket*, Ex 26:31-35) that separated the most holy place (the inner sanctum) from the holy place (the outer sanctum) was apparently suspended on four pillars under the "clasps" that linked the two halves of the underlying curtain together (Ex 26:6, 32-33), thus 20 cubits (30 feet) back from the entrance of the tent, leaving a most holy place behind the veil that was 15 feet cubed. Alternatively, the *pārōket* may have been a kind of canopy that not only shielded off the ark of the covenant in the most holy place but also extended back over the top of the ark, suspended on the four pillars mentioned in Ex 26:32 (see Averbeck, 3.687-89; Friedman, 295; Hurowitz 1995, 144-46). There was also a "screen" *(māsāk)* suspended on five pillars that covered the entrance to the tabernacle tent leading into the holy place (Ex 26:36-37).

R. E. Friedman has proposed that the frames were not butted up against each other, but overlapped in such a way that the tabernacle would have had smaller dimensions: 20 cubits (30 feet) long, 8 cubits (12 feet) wide and 10 cubits (15 feet) high. The curtains would have overlapped to fit the framework over which they were draped. Moreover, he observes that the tabernacle was actually brought into the temple (1 Kings 8:4; 2 Chron 5:5), and proposes that the tabernacle itself may have actually been set up in the temple under the wings of the large cherubim in the inner sanctum (most holy place) of Solomon's temple (1 Chron 23:32 and esp. 2 Chron 24:6; 29:5-7). The dimensions of the most holy place in the temple would accommodate the tabernacle if it were assembled as Friedman suggests (see 1 Kings 6:20 and 2 Chron 3:8; 20 x 20 x 20 cubits, with cherubim 10 cubits tall and with 5 cubit outstretched wings on each side).

Recently, Hurowitz has vigorously opposed Friedman's view of the dimensions and history of the tabernacle (see Hurowitz 1995). His arguments are detailed, forcefully stated and most likely correct. Aside from the fact that it is difficult to see how the tabernacle tent would have fit under the wings of Solomon's cherubim even according to Friedman's own dimensions (e.g., both the tabernacle and the cherubim were a total of 10 cubits high, 1 Kings 6:23-28), the passages he cites in support of his view of the setting up of the tabernacle in the inner sanctum of the temple are hardly convincing (Friedman, 293-94). For example, it is indeed true that 1 Chronicles 6:48 [MT 6:33] refers to the *Levites, the tribal relatives of the priests, as those who "were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle *[miškan]* of the house of God." However, this passage stands within the section that begins in 1 Chronicles 6:31-32 [MT 6:16-17], which says, "They were ministers in song before the tabernacle tent of meeting *until* Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem." The writer of Chronicles was well aware of the shift to the temple after it was built, even though he sometimes conflated the two in his description of the cult.

Similar arguments apply to other passages as well. For example, according to 1 Chronicles 23:32, the Levites were assigned by David to "keep the charge of the tent of meeting," but this seems to refer to the charge that had been given to them since the days of Moses that would be applied to the temple after it had been built (note the reference back to the tabernacle days in 1 Chron 23:26). Again, in 2 Chronicles 24:6 Joash refers back to the levy that Moses had imposed on the congregation of Israel "for the tent of the testimony," commanding that it be reinstated to support repair work in the temple. 2 Chronicles 24:6 simply uses *miškān* in its general sense of "dwelling place," like in Psalm 74:7, where it is used in poetic parallel with "sanctuary" *(miqdāš)*, and Lamentations 2:6 simply refers to God's "meeting place" *(mô'ēd)* in the temple sanctuary.

2. Furniture of the Tabernacle.

Moving from east to west into the tabernacle complex, the furniture of the complex included (1) the bronze (burnt offering) altar, (2) the water basin (laver), (3) three items in "the holy place," the outer sanctum of the tent—the table of (the bread of) presence along the north wall, the lampstand along the south wall (Ex 26:35), and the gold incense altar up close to the veil but outside of it, near the ark of the testimony that was on the other side of the veil (Ex 30:6), and (4) the ark of the testimony itself in "the most holy place" (Ex 26:33-34). We will focus our attention on the water basin, table, lampstand and ark of the testimony (see Altars; Cherubim).

2.1. The Ark of the Testimony (Ex 25:10-16).

The ark was the most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle. It was placed in the inner sanctum of the tent called "the most holy place." The cover on top of the ark was called the "the atonement seat" (*kappōret*, from the verb *kipper*, "to make atonement") overshadowed by two gold cherubim. According to Leviticus 16:2, the Lord said to Moses, "I will appear in the cloud over the atonement seat," so he was to make clear to Aaron that the high priest must not enter there except once a year on the Day of Atonement. With regard to Moses, however, the Lord would "meet" with Moses there and "speak" to him all the commandments so that he could deliver them to the Israelites (Ex 25:22). In fact, the ark was the depository of the two stone tablets of the *law, which the Lord was about to give Moses on the mountain (Ex 25:16; cf. Ex 24:12; 34:28; Ex 40:20; Deut 10:5; 1 Kings 8:9). Thus the ark is sometimes called "the ark of the testimony" (*'ărōn hā'ēdut*, e.g., Ex 25:22; or "the ark of the covenant of the LORD," *'ărōn bĕrît yhwh*, e.g., Num 10:33).

The ark itself was a rectangular box made of acacia wood overlaid inside and out with pure gold plating, 2½ cubits long (c. 3 feet 9 inches), 1½ cubits wide (c. 2 feet 3 inches) and 1½ cubits high. There are many species of acacia, most of which are thorny bushes or shrubs, but a few have trunks from which timber could be cut. It is a very hard and durable wood that is also lightweight. The term *acacia (šittîm)* is of Egyptian origin (Sarna, 158; KBL^3 1473). Gold molding ran along its edges, and two gold rings were attached to each long side so that acacia wood poles overlaid with gold could be inserted along both sides for carrying the ark without touching it. The poles were to remain in the rings permanently.

2.2. The Table of the Presence (Ex 25:23-30).

The table was also made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was 2½ cubits long (c. 3 feet), 1 cubit wide (c. 1½ feet) and 1½ cubits high (c. 2 feet 3 inches). Like the ark, it also had a gold molding around its edges, but there was also a "rim" about a "handbreadth" (c. four fingers) wide, perhaps a raised border meant to keep the bread and other elements in place on the table ("rim," *misgeret*, from *sgr*, "to shut, close"; Ex 25:25, 29-30). Like the ark, the table was fitted with gold rings on its corners through which poles could be inserted, but there is no mention of keeping the poles in the rings permanently. They were probably removed so that the priests could maneuver more easily around the table in their cultic functions. This table was the place where the "bread of presence" was continually displayed before the Lord (Ex 25:30). The utensils mentioned (Ex 25:29) include (1) "bowls," which were perhaps the pans in which the loaves of bread were shaped or baked; (2) "dishes," or "ladles," perhaps containers for the frankincense that was to be spread on the bread (Lev 24:7); as well as (3) "jars" and (4) "jugs," or "bowls," one or both of which were used in libations (Ex 25:29, "with which drink offerings were poured"; Sarna, 162-63).

Immediately after the regulations for the annual cycle of *festivals (Lev 23), Leviticus 24:1-9 details the daily provisions for lighting the lamp-

stand (Lev 24:1-4; see 2.3 below) and the weekly provision of bread for the table (Lev 24:5-9). There were to be twelve loaves arranged in two rows on the table, six to a row, or perhaps in stacks of six each. The frankincense spread on them made them "a soothing fragrance" offering to the Lord, probably representing the twelve tribes of Israel standing in the presence of the Lord. The bread was replaced every week, on the sabbath, and the week-old bread was eaten by the priests (Lev 24:8-9).

The combination of the daily lighting of the lampstand and associated burning of incense (Lev 24:3 with Ex 30:7-8) plus the bread constantly on the table impresses one with the fact that the Lord had truly taken up residence in the tabernacle. If there is a lamp burning, incense burning and bread on the table, then someone is "home" (see 5 below for discussion of "presence").

2.3. The Lampstand (Ex 25:31-40). The lampstand was a six-branched *mĕnōrâ* made of one piece of pure, hammered gold (Ex 25:31, 36), the seventh "branch" actually being the extension of the central shaft (see the first-century drawing in Taylor, 54). It stood across the holy place (on the south side) from the table (on the north side). It is significant that at the end of the lampstand section the "pattern" command is reiterated: "See and make [them; i.e., the lampstand, lamps and all the utensils] according to the pattern [*tabnît*, from *bnh*, "to build"] shown you on the mountain" (Ex 25:40; cf. Ex 25:9 and esp. Num 8:4 again). The verbal description is such that it is difficult to imagine exactly what the lampstand looked like, so seeing it on the mountain was necessary to its construction. For example, no dimensions are given in the text, unlike the earlier prescriptions for the ark and the table.

The major utilitarian function of the lampstand was to shed light in the holy place. The technical terminology for the shaft, cups and botanical features of the lampstand is largely Egyptian, suggesting an Egyptian background to the object as a lampstand (Ex 25:33-36; Sarna, 164). Its shape as a stylized tree, however, also has symbolic significance, and for this C. Meyers has argued effectively that the background is from the late bronze age northern Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Cyprus, although the object appears to be particularly Israelite as well. The lampstand, therefore, is a stylized "tree of life."

Some writers have gone further with this, identifying the artistry and imagery of the lampstand with the asherah tree of the Canaanite fertility cult, which seems to have been an extensively pruned living tree planted by an altar (see, e.g., Taylor and the literature and iconography cited there). However, it is important to remember two things. First, the asherah tree itself derived from the tree of life imagery of the ancient Near East, though Canaanite religion associated it with Asherah, the goddess of fertility. Any visual similarities between the menorah and the asherah arise from their common background in this tree of life imagery. Second, it is clear from the biblical text that asherahs were to be eliminated, along with the other accoutrements of the Canaanite fertility cult (see, e.g., Ex 34:13; Deut 7:5; 12:3; Judg 6:25, etc.). Moreover, they were not to be planted or utilized in the Israelite worship system, even at legitimate solitary altars (Deut 16:21; cf. the solitary altar law in Ex 20:24-26), much less in the tabernacle. The menorah was in no way conceived of as an asherah.

2.4. The Basin (Ex 30:17-21). Since it was located in the courtyard rather than in the holy place, the basin (*kiyôr*, sometimes called the "laver") was made of bronze, probably in two parts: base and bowl (Ex 30:18). It was supplied with water for the priests to wash their hands and feet before they approached the altar or entered into the holy place in the tent, lest they die (Ex 30:19-21; 40:30-32). There are no dimensions given, but it must have been large enough to hold sufficient water for all the priests to wash.

3. The Tabernacle Construction Account (Ex 25—40).

The tabernacle account begins in Exodus 25 and, as far as its construction and erection is concerned, concludes with Exodus 40. However, the account continues in the elaboration of tabernacle principles and procedures that are of primary concern in the narratives and instructions that extend from Leviticus 1 through Numbers 10, when the Israelites finally departed from Sinai under the guidance of God's glorious presence within and over the tabernacle (Num 10:11-12, 33-36). The tabernacle account, therefore, not only fits within but also dominates the Sinai narratives (Ex 18—Num 10).

3.1. Discourse-Level Structure. Some basic observations regarding the arrangement of material in Exodus 25—40 have been presented above

and are assumed here (see 1.3 above). In brief, Exodus 24:12—25:1 links the narrative recounting of the giving of the law and ratification of the covenant in Exodus 19:1—24:11 with the tabernacle construction account in Exodus 25—40 (note the shared narrative pattern between Ex 24:15—25:2 and Ex 40:34—Lev 1:2 observed by Blum; see 5 below). Moreover, the promise of the tablets of the law in Exodus 24:12 and the reception of them in Exodus 31:18 provide the outside narrative boundaries for the first unit, Exodus 25—31.

Many have observed that Exodus 25—31 falls naturally into seven major sections (Ex 25:1—30:10; 30:11-16, 17-21, 22-33; 34-38; 31:1-11, 12-18), according to the recurrence of the introductory formula in the first verse of each section ("The Lord spoke/said to Moses"; see, e.g., Longacre). The first section, Exodus 25:1—30:10 (in fact, the whole of Exodus 25—31), is really a narrative speech of the Lord to Moses. Moreover, Knierim points out that this is especially significant because it presents the instructions for the tabernacle as having their origin not only in Moses but in the Lord himself. The decision to build a sanctuary as well as its design was a decision of the deity (Knierim, 114-19). This is true within the Bible (cf. 2 Sam 7:1-16) and in the ancient Near Eastern world of the Bible as well (see the summary and literature cited in Averbeck 2000, 419-20, n. 8 and 9).

Moreover, the fact that the call for contributions for building the tabernacle (Ex 25:2b-7) comes before the revelation of the architectural details (beginning in Ex 25:10) indicates that Exodus 25:1—30:10 (also with Ex 30:11—31:17) is a particular kind of divine speech. It is the commissioning and publication speech given by the Lord through the one responsible for the building of the sanctuary (Moses) to the people who would actually do the building work (Knierim, 120-23). It assumes that the plan is already complete, and this is in fact reflected in the building plan shown to Moses on the mountain (Ex 25:9, 40; 26:30; Num 8:4). It is instruction about the plan, not the plan itself.

The repetition of the sabbath law immediately before and after the golden calf incident (Ex 31:12-17 and Ex 35:1-3) sets off Exodus 32—34 as a historical and literary interruption in the tabernacle construction account (see 1.3 above). Exodus 35:1—39:43 is a standard building report. There is no instruction. It is a compliance narrative, reporting the ready obedience of the Israelites to the instructions in Exodus 25—31. The construction follows the details of the command carefully, and the report emphasizes this fact (see Ex 38:21 and the regular refrain "just as the LORD commanded Moses," Ex 39:1, 5, 7, etc.). The same is true for the erection and consecration of the tabernacle in Exodus 40 and the priesthood in Leviticus 8. According to Exodus 40:16, "Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him; just so he did it," in accordance with the instructions in Exodus 40:1-15. Again, in the compliance section that follows, there is the regular refrain, "just as the LORD commanded Moses" (Ex 40:19, 21, 23, etc.).

Unlike the instructions in Exodus 25—31, the compliance section follows the natural pragmatic order of construction (Klein, 265-66). First, there is the call to collect construction materials and gather craftsmen and other laborers (Ex 35:4-19), followed by the abundant compliance of the Israelites to this call (Ex 35:20—36:7). The actual construction begins with the fabrication of the tabernacle tent itself (Ex 36:8-38), then the furniture in the tent (Ex 37:1-29), followed by the altar, basin and court surrounding the tent (Ex 38). The garments of the priests conclude the compliance section proper (Ex 39:1-31). The final conclusion gives notice of the completion of the tabernacle with the presentation of it all to Moses for his examination and approval (Ex 39:32-43).

Hurowitz (1985) has shown that, with necessary variations, the tabernacle construction and erection account in Exodus 25—40 follows the general pattern of temple construction accounts in the ancient Near East: (1) the divine command to construct the tabernacle (Ex 24:15—31:18); (2) the transmission of the divine command to the people charged to implement it (Ex 34:29—35:19); (3) the collection of construction materials and enlistment of artisans (Ex 35:20—36:7); (4) the account of the actual construction of the tabernacle and its furniture (Ex 36:8—39:43); and (5) the final erection and dedication of the tabernacle (Ex 40; cf. Lev 8).

3.2. The Tabernacle and Creation. There has been a great deal of scholarly attention paid to the correspondences between the creation accounts in Genesis 1—4 and the tabernacle construction account in Exodus. With regard to Genesis 1:1—2:3, the pattern of sevens is most significant (see Balentine, 138-41; Levenson, 78-

90, and the literature cited there): (1) Moses starts up the mountain to receive the instructions for the tabernacle on the seventh day, after the glory cloud of the Lord's presence has been manifest on the mountain for six days (Ex 24:16); (2) the pattern of seven divine speeches in Exodus 25—31, like the seven days of the creation, ends with the sabbath command (compare Gen 2:1-3 with Ex 31:12-17; cf. Ex 35:2-3); (3) the sevenfold repetition of the compliance formula in Exodus 40:17-33 ("just as the LORD commanded Moses," Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32) evokes the response to the divine creative word; (4) the patterns expressing completion in Genesis 1:31—2:3 correspond with Exodus 39:43, 32 and 40:33, respectively (God and Moses "saw" the work completed, Gen 1:31; Ex 39:43; the work was "finished," Gen 2:1; Ex 39:32; God and Moses "finished" their work, Gen 2:2; Ex 40:33; God and Moses blessed the completion of the work, Gen 2:3; Ex 39:43). Other verbal and literary patterns are also important. For example, the dividing and ordering of the world in Genesis 1 and the dividing and ordering of the tabernacle (e.g., sacred versus profane space, see 1.1 above) are both according to God's design.

G. Wenham has proposed a number of parallels between the Garden of Eden account in Genesis 2—3 and the tabernacle. He begins with the fact that the garden was the ideal "sanctuary," within which the Lord would be present with his people and walk with them (see Gen 3:8, Lev 26:12; see 5 below). Other proposed parallels between the tabernacle and the Garden of Eden that are more or less convincing, include the following examples:

(1) The cherubim the Lord stationed (lit., "caused to dwell," from the verb root *škn;* cf. *miškān*, "tabernacle") east of the Garden of Eden to guard the entrance (Gen 3:24) correspond to the two cherubim that form the "atonement seat" on top of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:17-22; cf. also 1 Kings 6:23-28 with 1 Kings 8:6-7 in the temple), the cherubim designs on the veil (or canopy) curtains that separate the most holy place within which the ark was housed from the holy place outside the veil (Ex 26:31; cf. 1 Kings 6:29 in the temple), and the fact that the entrance of the tabernacle also faces toward the east (Ex 27:13-16).

(2) The tree of life in the garden (Gen 2:9 and Gen 3:24) corresponds with the tabernacle menorah (lampstand), which not only provided light in the holy place, but was probably also conceived of as a stylized tree of life (Ex 25:31-40; see 2.3 above).

(3) The two terms in the Lord's command to Adam that he "cultivate *[ʿābad]* and keep *[šāmar]*" the garden of Eden are the same terms used together in various passages for the work and service of the priests and Levites in the tabernacle (Num 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6). The latter term, in fact, is used specifically for the "guard duty" (Num 1:53) of the Levites around the tabernacle.

Some have proposed that these kinds of patterns extend beyond Genesis 3 as well (see the summaries and literature cited in Balentine, 140-41). For instance, there is something of a creation—fall—re-creation pattern in Exodus 25—31, 32—34, 35—40, similar to Genesis 1—2, 3—6, 6—9. The term *ark* is common to both accounts; Noah's ark is constructed like a floating "house," a box-like structure similar to the ark of the covenant; and both are actually "sanctuaries" that are places of security in the midst of the chaos of this world. Moses is like a new Noah who intercedes to prevent annihilation (Ex 32—34), and both find favor in the eyes of the Lord (Gen 6:8; Ex 33:12-17). Moreover, the waters of the flood were dried up and Moses erected the tabernacle on New Year's Day (Gen 8:13; Ex 40:2).

Finally, based on the above intertextual literary patterns within the Pentateuch and comparisons with cosmogonies and temple-building texts of the ancient Near East, J. Levenson has argued persuasively that to build a sanctuary was to create a "microcosm," a small, properly ordered world within the larger "cosmos" (Levenson, 53-127). A sanctuary is the cosmos in miniature, and the cosmos itself is a sanctuary, depending on which way you look at it. Utimately, God's "glory fills the whole earth" (Is 6:3), and the sanctuary was to be a special place in which the glory of God is displayed, treasured and engaged with in a special way by humans. The cosmos and the tabernacle were reflective of each other as the literary and thematic parallels between the creation and the building of the tabernacle show. By building the tabernacle (or temple) and by performing the ritual functions within it, people were allowed "participation in the divine ordering of the world" (Levenson, 91). There they approached God in appeal to his

involvement in their lives and the world around them.

3.3. The Tabernacle in History. J. Wellhausen argued that "the representation of the tabernacle arose out of the temple of Solomon as its root, in dependence on the sacred ark, for which there is early testimony, and which in the time of David, and also before it, was sheltered by a tent. From the temple it derives at once its inner character and its central importance for the cultus as well as its external form" (Wellhausen, 45). There are, of course, many parallels between the tabernacle and the temple. After all, they are both sanctuaries. The details are most interesting, however. For example, the dimensions of the tabernacle tent are exactly one half those of the temple (compare figure 1 above and the explanation of Ex 26 in section 1.4 with 1 Kings 6:2 and 1 Chron 3:3). Wellhausen, therefore, believed the tabernacle to be a "pious fraud." There was no historical moveable tent sanctuary before the time of Solomon's temple, unless it was the tent of the David tradition and its precursors, in which the ark was housed.

Since the time of Wellhausen there have been various tradition-historical proposals that have argued, in one way or another (the details vary with particular scholars), that the priestly tabernacle tradition of Exodus-Numbers was composed based on combining the traditions of Solomon's temple, the earlier traditions of Moses' oracular tent pitched outside the camp (Ex 33, see 1.3 above), the sanctuary tradition at Shiloh (1 Sam 2-3; see Haran, 198-201, 262 n. 3) and the tradition of David's tent for the ark in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6 and 1 Chron 16; see Cross, 85, 92-95). The goal was to capture all or some of these traditions in projecting the sanctuary back into the Mosaic period as a means of supporting the agenda of the Priestly writer (P) in his own day.

There is also a competing tradition about a "tent of meeting" pitched outside the camp (see 1.3 above), which was, according to some scholars, a projection back into the Mosaic period by the Elohist (E) and Deuteronomist (D) under the influence of the prophetic institution (as opposed to the tent of meeting promoted by P). Although a few scholars have suggested that the ark was at one time housed in this oracular tent of meeting outside the camp, there is no text that associates the ark with this tent, and most would argue that these two tents never co-existed historically. M. Haran has pointed out that, according to the biblical text, there is a natural connection between the *theophany in Exodus 19—20 and the tent-of-meeting practice outlined in Exodus 33:7-11.

The oracular pattern outlined in Exodus 33:7-11 (cf. also Ex 34:29-35; Num 11:16, 24-30; 12:4-10) began when Moses went out to meet with God on the mountain on behalf of the people (Ex 20:21). Furthermore, Moses did not meet with God inside this tent but instead used the tent as a place to prepare himself and as a protection from the potentially fatal effect of seeing God's glory. Moses stood inside the tent and looked out from the doorway when he met with God, who appeared in the pillar of cloud outside the doorway of the tent (Haran, 265-69). The people also worshiped the Lord at the doorway of their own tents when they saw the glory cloud standing and meeting with Moses at the tent of meeting outside the camp (Ex 33:10). This is a completely different tent of meeting than the priestly tent of meeting set up in the middle of the camp.

Although there is a great deal of historical-critical skepticism and speculation reflected in the scholarly debate outlined above, there has also been a good amount of reaction against Wellhausen's view that the tabernacle is entirely a work of pious fiction. Much has been made of the possible background for a moveable tent sanctuary in the ancient Semitic world based on the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Arab tent shrines (see Morgenstern for a detailed collection of the data). Most recently, K. A. Kitchen and D. E. Fleming (cf. also Cross) have brought forth evidence for large portable tent shrines from the Bronze Age (long before the evidence from Arabic sources) in Egypt, northern Mesopotamia and the Levant. Wood-framed and boarded pavilions are known from Egypt in the third and second millennia B.C., some with richly worked curtains, some for secular and others for religious use. The war tent of Ramesses II (c. 1275 B.C.) was even divided into two rooms, the outer one being twice as long as the inner one, like the Israelite tabernacle (*see* Egypt, Egyptians).

The large tent at Mari (c. 1750 B.C.) had ten "framing[?] units" (*qersu* in Akkadian = *qeršu* in Hebrew). It took twenty men to carry them, and the term is cognate to the *qereš*, "wooden frames," of the tabernacle building (Ex 26:15),

which also appears in Ugaritic descriptions of the "tent shrine" of El (see Kitchen, 121, and esp. Fleming, 486-92). Other parallels include, for example, the layout of the Egyptian war camp as reflected on the Battle of Qadesh reliefs of Ramesses II, with Ramesses' tabernacle-like tent fenced off in the middle of the camp (Kitchen, 123). Boxes borne on carrying poles passed through rings attached to the boxes are also well attested from Bronze Age Egypt. They originally contained vessels for libation rituals (Kitchen, 125). Other points of comparison could also be made.

The point is that there is good evidence for suggesting that a tabernacle-type structure is realistic in the Bronze Age world of the ancient Near East. The biblical account that puts the tabernacle back into the late Bronze Age is not an unrealistic projection of later ideologies and realities back into the Mosaic period. According to the biblical text, the tabernacle tent originated with God's instructions to Moses, was constructed and erected under his direction, and endured from then through the wilderness wanderings and conquest to be set up at Gilgal (Josh 4:15-19), then Shiloh (Josh 18:1; 19:51; 1 Sam 2:22), Gibeon (1 Chron 16:39-40; 2 Chron 1:3-6) and finally stored in the temple (1 Kings 8:4).

4. Community Holiness and Orientation Around the Tabernacle (Lev 1—Num 10). The tabernacle construction account concludes with its erection in Exodus 40, but Exodus 40 also opens up onto Leviticus and Numbers, binding Exodus 25—40 with the sacrifices and other ritual principles and procedures inside the tabernacle (Lev 1—16) and eventually the prescriptions and descriptions of its religious, moral and physical centrality to the wilderness community that surrounded it (Lev 17—Num 10; for a thorough discussion of Leviticus 1—16, *see* Sacrifices and Offerings).

Numbers 1—10 describes and presents that community as a war camp, but continues the focus on the tabernacle as the center of the community. The chronological notice in Exodus 40:1 assigns the erection of the tabernacle to "the first day of the first month (of the second year)" after the *exodus from Egypt (i.e., eleven months and two weeks after the exodus; cf. Ex 12:2, 6, 51), and Numbers 1:1 assigns the census of able soldiers to "the first (day) of the second month in the second year after they had gone out from the land of Egypt," exactly one month after the erection of the tabernacle. The intervening chapters, Leviticus 17—27, focus on maintaining the holiness of the community that surrounded the tabernacle.

4.1. The Holiness of the Community (Lev 17—27). Historical critical scholars generally distinguish between two main sections of Leviticus: Leviticus 1—16 is the so-called Priestly Code, or P (see also Num 1—10 discussed below), and Leviticus 17—26 is the Holiness Code, or H (on Lev 27 see discussion below). Most have taken H to be an earlier collection of laws that was incorporated into the later P collection by a priestly redactor in the postexilic period. Alternatively, P is sometimes viewed as a redaction (not an originally independent literary source) that shaped H and other priestly traditions into what we now have in the canonical book of *Leviticus. In any case, H has usually been viewed in historical-critical discussions as an intermediate collection of priestly teachings that stood historically and ideologically between D (the core of Deuteronomy, Josiah's law book of 2 Kings 22:8-13) and the Priestly Code.

Recently, I. Knohl (1995, 1996) has reversed the order, arguing that the "school" of H rather than P was the final redactor of the Pentateuch (in the post-exilic period). On the one hand, in its character and function the inner priestly circle of the tabernacle system constituted a "sanctuary of silence." This was the perspective of P, the legislative core of which is expressed in Leviticus 1—16. It is concerned only with the ritual cult practiced in absolute silence in the inner circle of the numinous presence of the Lord in the tabernacle (and temple). Moral ethics and popular practices of piety and worship, such as prayer and praise, functioned completely outside of this inner circle. The priestly school of P, according to this view, commenced its activity with the construction of Solomon's temple, or perhaps even before that, at the shrine in Shiloh (1 Sam 1—3).

On the other hand, according to Knohl the school of priestly writers that stands behind the writing of H began its work much later, in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah, and was the basis of Hezekiah's cultic reforms (2 Kings 16—20). Their concern was to promote a new concept of holiness that combined ethical with cultic concerns as well as a form of sanctuary worship that included popular expressions of piety, including

vocal prayer and praise. The inner circle of the priestly cult remained "silent," but from this time forward it was surrounded by an outer circle of popular worship that included the assembly as an essential part of the sanctuary worship system.

Although he agrees with Knohl on the historical priority of P before H, Milgrom rightly objects to his proposal of complete silence and lack of ethical expression within the inner priestly circle (P). For example, he points to Leviticus 16:21, where on the Day of Atonement "Aaron shall lay his two hands on the head of the live (scape-)goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Israelites and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins" (Milgrom 1991, 24-25; cf. the response in Knohl 1995, 227-29). This passage allows neither for complete silence nor for lack of expressed concern for ethical matters in the inner priestly cult.

Some historical-critical scholars question the distinction between P and H altogether. They deny the independent existence of H and divide the book between Leviticus 1—10, the establishment of the divine service, and Leviticus 11—26, purity and holiness (see esp. Blum, 312-32). The basis for this is the literary and theological linkage between Leviticus 1—16 and 17—26 (note, e.g., that the reference to the clean and unclean animals of Lev 11 in Lev 20:25-26 binds Lev 11—15 with 17—26). The discussion of Leviticus 1—16 (*see* Sacrifices and Offerings) suggests that, from the perspective of overall structure and content, the primary literary break is indeed between Leviticus 16 and 17 (cf. also the remarks on Lev 17—27 below), but this does not necessarily mean they are from two different literary sources or that they are the product of different schools of redaction, one preceding the other chronologically.

Actually, the distinctiveness of these two sections of Leviticus is a matter of sociology, not chronology or ideology. Leviticus 1—16 is "priestly" in the sense that it views the tabernacle from the standpoint of the priests, from the inside looking out into the community. Leviticus 17—26 is more concerned with community "holiness" in light of the fact that the Lord was present in the tabernacle in their midst. It views the tabernacle from the standpoint of the congregation as a whole, from the outside looking in toward the tabernacle. Leviticus 1—16 and 17—26 belong together both historically and theologically. The historical-critical discussion outlined above is plagued by the diachronic fallacy that views differences in perspective as, at best, competitive and, at worst, contradictory, and in any case deriving from different chronological stages in the development of ancient Israelite *religion.

Leviticus 17, therefore, begins a new section of the Sinai narratives, but it also serves as a pivot between Leviticus 1—16 and 18—26. This second major section of Leviticus is often referred to as the Holiness Code specifically because of the recurring expression "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8) and the abbreviation of the formula "I am the LORD (your God)" throughout the section (numerous occurrences from Lev 18:2 to Lev 26:45). The formula occurs neither in Leviticus 17 nor Leviticus 27. The latter is a kind of appendix to the book (note the dual colophons in Lev 26:46 and Lev 27:34), but it also forms an inclusion with Leviticus 17, thus surrounding the Leviticus 18—26 Holiness Code. Both Leviticus 17 and 27 are concerned with the immediate relationship between the people, the tabernacle altar and the offerings.

Thus the subject in Leviticus 17 is still the tabernacle, but there is a shift to the general orientation of the camp of all the Israelites toward the tabernacle and worship of Yahweh as they traveled through the wilderness. Anyone who slaughtered an animal as a peace offering (i.e., for meat) or as a whole burnt offering either within the camp or outside the camp, without bringing it to the tabernacle to present and slaughter it as an offering there (Lev 17:2-9) was to be "cut off from the midst of his people" (Lev 17:4, 9). The purpose of these regulations was to maintain exclusive worship of Yahweh in the wilderness: "so that they no longer offer their sacrifices to the goat demons, after which they prostitute themselves" (Lev 17:7).

The Holiness Code proper (Lev 18—26) focuses on the purity and holiness of the camp overall, but it also recognizes that the tabernacle was at the center of that community and always keeps it in plain view in the legislation (Lev 19:30; 20:3; 26:2, 11-12). Whole sections are concerned with the tabernacle presence of the Lord in their midst. For example, the regulations for the priests (Lev 21), their families (Lev 22:1-16), the quality of the sacrifices in Israel (Lev 22:17-33), the annual cycle of festivals (Lev 23), the

lampstand and table of the bread of presence (Lev 24:1-9), and even the laws of consecration at the end of the book (Lev 27) all focus on the tabernacle itself, the relationship between the priests, the people and the tabernacle, or the ritual activities within or around the tabernacle.

4.2. The Community as a War Camp (Num 1—10). Numbers 1—10 turns our attention to the arrangement of the community as a moveable war camp that would travel through the wilderness until it reached, invaded and conquered the land that God had promised to Israel (Num 13:1-2). The section begins with a census, the primary purpose of which was to number the men twenty years and older who would serve in the army (Num 1:3). The *Levites were not included in the census because, instead of serving in the army, Moses was to appoint them "over the tabernacle of the testimony" and its furnishings (Num 1:50; cf. Num 2:33), to transport it as they traveled (Num 4), and to dwell closely around it when they camped in order to prevent the other Israelites from illegitimately encroaching on the tabernacle presence of God (Num 1:47-53; cf. Lev 10:1-3 and 15:31).

All the other tribes were to camp around the tabernacle at a distance and by their ordered positions, each family under the identifying ensign (i.e., standard or banner) of their particular tribe (Num 2). The Levites were anointed and consecrated for the Lord's tabernacle service in place of the firstborn of all the Israelites (Num 3:12-13, 40-51; Num 8:5-26; cf. Ex 13:11-15). Of the families of the Levities, Gershon camped on the west side of the tabernacle, Kohath on the south, Merari on the north, while Moses and Aaron and his sons were on the east side, by the gate leading into the tabernacle, so that they could prevent laypeople from coming too close or entering the tabernacle complex and having the Lord break out against them (Num 3:14-39).

The Levites not only transported the tabernacle and camped in the inner circle, closely surrounding the tabernacle, but they were also anointed and consecrated to assist the Aaronic priests in "the service of the tabernacle" in cultic worship (Num 3:5-9; cf. Num 8:11, 14-15, 19, 22-26). It is especially significant that Numbers 7 flashes back once again to the time of the erection, dedication and consecration of the tabernacle recounted in Exodus 40 and Leviticus 8 (Num 7:1; see the remarks on Ex 40 and Lev 8 above). On that very day (cf. Ex 40:2 with Num 7:1), the twelve military chiefs of the tribes collectively brought an offering of six covered carts and twelve oxen (two to pull each cart) that were distributed to the Levites specifically for the purpose of transporting the tabernacle (Num 7:2-9). Moreover, after the altar had been anointed (Num 7:10, 88), over a twelve-day period, one chief per day brought a standard set of offerings for the dedication of the burnt offering altar in the tabernacle. These included silver and gold vessels along with grain, incense and animal offerings (Num 7:10-88).

There is a brief but important note in Numbers 7:89. It tells us that when Moses spoke to the Lord in the tabernacle (i.e., in the holy place, not the most holy place [lit., "holy of holies"]), the Lord spoke back to Moses in a loud voice "from above the atonement seat which is on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim" (Num 7:89). The Lord had promised direct communication with Moses in this manner in the instructions for the building of the ark (Ex 25:22). Since Numbers 7 relates to the period of the initial erection and dedication of the tabernacle (recall Num 7:1), the conclusion of the dedication narrative, therefore, takes note of the fact that this promised oracular practice was now functioning. The following verses (Num 8:1-4) relate directly to this oracular practice. Moses received an oracle from the Lord specifically commanding Aaron to set the lamps on the lampstand in the holy place where Moses received the oracles. Special note is made of its workmanship.

The next oracle describes the purification and sanctification of the Levites whom the Lord gave to Aaron and his sons as a gift to assist them in the priestly functions of the tabernacle (Num 8:5-26). This no doubt also took place immediately after the erection of the tabernacle (Ex 40:2; cf. Num 7:1), sometime during the twelve-day period of the consecration (Lev 8), inauguration (Lev 9—10) and dedication (Num 7) of the tabernacle, its altar and the priests, before the Passover celebration on the fourteenth day of the same month (Num 9:3, 5). Numbers 9:15-23 recalls the day on which the tabernacle was erected (Num 9:15; cf. Ex 40:2, Num 7:1) and expounds on the appearance of God's glory-cloud presence covering and inhabiting the tabernacle and its importance for guidance on Israel's journey from Sinai to the Promised Land. The journey begins in Numbers 10:11, "in the

second year on the twentieth day of the month," six days after the celebration of the second month Passover for those who were unclean and who, therefore, could not present their Passover offering at the tabernacle in the first month (Num 9:6-12).

5. The Tabernacle Presence of God.

The subject of God's presence with humankind is an important theme from the beginning of the Bible (Gen 1—4, creation and corruption of the heaven and earth) to the end (Rev 21—22, recreation and purity of the new heaven and earth). We constantly face the tension in Scripture between God's transcendence and immanence, both of which are important to a correct and meaningful understanding of God, his revelation of himself and how he relates to us. The earliest chapters of Genesis provide a helpful starting point for serious consideration of this tension. On the one hand, in Genesis 1:1—2:3 God is transcendent, although very much involved in the creation of the world by fiat. He even presents himself as the creator of humankind, male and female, in his own image and likeness. On the other hand, in the Garden of Eden story in Genesis 2:4—4:26 the Lord presents himself in intimate earthly relationship with people. He is immanent. For example, he shapes the man out of the dust of the earth and breathes the breath of life into his nostrils (Gen 2:7), plants a garden (Gen 2:8) and later builds the woman from the man's rib (Gen 2:21).

Eden, therefore, was a place of God's presence (Gen 4:16, "Cain went out from the presence [Heb *pĕnê*, "face"] of the LORD and dwelt . . . east of Eden"; cf. *pĕnê*, "face" in Lev 9:24—10:2 and the discussion of Ex 33 below). This was especially true of the Garden of Eden, in which God would "walk with" the first man and woman in the evening breeze (Gen 3:8). Even after the expulsion from the garden, however, those who were godly could be referred to as those who "walk with God" (see, e.g., Gen 5:24; 6:9; 17:1; 48:15; Mic 6:8; Mal 2:6). In the NT book of Revelation Jesus "walks" in the midst of the churches (Rev 2:1; 3:4) and, eventually, in the new heaven and earth the presence of God will be unmediated once again (Rev 21:3, "the tabernacle of God is with men"; Rev 21:22-27, "the glory of God" illumines the New Jerusalem and "its lamp is the Lamb," so that the nations will "*walk* by its light").

As we have already observed, Wenham has drawn out various verbal, thematic and structural correspondences between the Garden of Eden account in Genesis 2:4—4:26 and the tabernacle (see 3.2 above). Specifically as it relates to God's presence, according to the Sinaitic covenant blessings, if the Israelites would make no idols, observe the Lord's sabbaths, reverence his sanctuary and keep his covenant statutes and commandments (Lev 26:1-3), then, among other things, the Lord promised them "I will put my dwelling place [or "tabernacle"; *miškān*] in your midst and my soul will not abhor you. I will *walk in your midst*—I will be your God and you will be my people" (Lev 26:11-12). This passage explicitly links the tabernacle dwelling of God to his *walking* in the midst of Israel (see also Deut 23:14 [MT 23:15] and esp. 2 Sam 7:6-7, "I have been *walking about* in a tent, a tabernacle") and shows that Yahweh was Israel's God and they were his people. His active presence with them and their obedience to his revealed will along the way was essential to the covenantal nature of the relationship between God and Israel (Ex 19:4-6).

The correspondences between the creation account and the tabernacle are important, but the near context is even more significant. It begins with the burning bush through which the Lord appeared to Moses at "the mountain of God" (i.e., the mountain that God made his special dwelling place, Ex 3:1-2; cf. Ex 4:27; 18:5; 19:2; 24:13). This was "holy ground" (Ex 3:5), and it was there that the Lord promised not only to be "with" Moses as he brought Israel out of Egypt but also to bring him back there to worship God "on this mountain" (Ex 3:12) and from there to lead them "to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite, Hittite [etc.]" (Ex 3:8). In other words, the Lord would be present with Moses and the Israelites all the way from Egypt to Mount Sinai, and from Sinai to the Promised Land.

The form in which the Lord guided them to and from Sinai, and its similarities to the theophany at Sinai itself, is most significant. From the time of the exodus from Egypt and the crossing of the Reed Sea, until they arrived at Sinai, "The LORD was traveling before them *by day in a pillar of cloud* to lead them on the way and *by night in a pillar of fire* to give them light so they could travel day and night. Neither the pillar of

cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night departed from before the people" (Ex 13:21-22; cf. Ex 14:19-20, 24; Neh 9:12; and note also the similarity to Gen 15:17). The cloud actually concealed the "glory" (Heb *kābôd*) of the Lord from their sight, but on one occasion "the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud" as part of a rebuke against their grumbling in the wilderness on the way to Sinai (Ex 16:10; cf. Ex 16:7). At Sinai this manifestation turned into a terrifying display of God's awesome power in the form of a thick dark cloud from which thunder sounded and lightning flashed (cf. the pillar of fire), the purpose of which was to instill the fear of the Lord in the people so that they would be sure to obey his commandments mediated through Moses (Ex 19:9; 20:18-21; Deut 5:22—6:3).

Unfortunately, Israel's fear of the Lord did not last long, for less than two months later (cf. Ex 24:16, 18 with Ex 32:1, 15-20) they had already severely violated the Lord's presence and his other basic commands in the golden calf debacle (Ex 32). In the aftermath of the catastrophe that followed (Ex 32:27-28, 34-35), the absolute necessity of the divine presence with Israel from Moses' point of view becomes clear (Ex 33). Because the people were so "stiff-necked," the Lord proclaimed: "I will not go up [to the Promised Land] in your midst . . . lest I destroy you on the way" (Ex 33:3); instead "I will send an angel before you" (Ex 33:2; cf. Ex 14:19; 23:20-23; 32:34). To both Moses and the people this was an even more severe calamity (Ex 33:4-6, 12-16). Thus there was great significance in the fact that the Lord spoke face to face with Moses from the pillar of cloud at the entrance of the other tent of meeting (not the tabernacle) pitched outside the camp, part way up Mount Sinai (Ex 33:10-11; cf. the background for this tent in Ex 20:21).

Moses, therefore, responded to the Lord: "See, you have been saying to me, 'Bring this people up,' but you have not made known to me whom you will send with me, even though you have said, 'I know you by name and, furthermore, you have found favor in my eyes'" (Ex 33:12). The Lord responded back, "My *presence* [Heb *pānay*, lit. "my face"] will go and I will give you rest" (Ex 33:14). Then Moses said, "If your *presence* does not go, do not take us up from this [place]" (Ex 33:15). In the following scene Moses asked to see God's glory (Ex 33:18), perhaps meaning that he wanted to see the manifestation of the glory of his "presence" that had been referred to in Exodus 33:14-15 (cf. "face to face" in Ex 33:11).

The Lord agreed to show him his glory, but insisted, "You are not able to see my *face*" [*pānay*, lit. "my face"; Ex 33:20], which is exactly the same term rendered "my *presence*" in Exodus 33:14 (cited above). After all, as the Lord put it to Moses, "no man shall see me and live" (Ex 33:20). Thus, the "presence" (i.e., "face") of Yahweh is identified as Yahweh himself and, for Moses' own good, the Lord took precautions against Moses' seeing his "presence" when he showed his glory to him (Ex 33:21-23; note once again, "my face"/"my presence" in Ex 33:23). Interestingly, the brightness of God's glory was reflected in the glow of the skin of Moses' face (recall "face"/"presence" in Ex 33) when he came down from receiving the second set of law tablets (Ex 34:28-29; cf. Ex 32:19 for the breaking of the first set). This struck fear in the people of Israel, so he covered his face with a veil (cf. 2 Cor 3; see 6 below).

The main point to be observed is that God showed his glory to Moses in a special way, face to face. However, that same glory was also manifest to Israel in the glory of the Lord that appeared to them on Mount Sinai shortly after they ratified the covenant in Exodus 24:1-11. God summoned Moses up onto "the mountain of God" to receive the first set of tablets (Ex 24:12-13) and, as it turns out, also to reveal to Moses the plan of the tabernacle and its furniture (Ex 25-31; cf. the mention of the tablets again at the very end of the section, Ex 31:18). According to Exodus 24:15b-16a, 18a and 25:1-2a (numbers in parentheses below refer to basic elements of the pattern found also in Ex 40:34—Lev 1:2; see below):

> The (1) *cloud covered* the mountain, and (2) *the glory of the LORD* settled *[škn]* (3) *on Mount Sinai* . . . and (4) *he called to Moses* on the seventh day *from* within the cloud. . . . And the appearance of the LORD's glory was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the Israelites. Then (5) *Moses entered the midst of the cloud* and went up into the mountain. . . . And (6) *the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the Israelites."*

E. Blum (312-13) has pointed out that a virtually identical pattern of divine glory cloud and revelation also occurs in precise detail at the very end of the tabernacle construction account, im-

mediately after Moses had erected and dedicated the tabernacle. According to Exodus 40:34-35 and Leviticus 1:1-2:

> Then the (1) *cloud covered* the tent of meeting, and the (2) *glory of the* LORD filled (3) *the tabernacle [miškan].* And (5) *Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting* because the cloud had settled *[škn]* upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. So (4) *the* LORD *called to Moses* and the (6) LORD *spoke to him from* the tent of meeting, *saying, "Speak to the Israelites."*

Here we see the similarity between the appearance of the Lord's glory to the people in Exodus 24:17 ("the appearance of the LORD's glory was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain") and his original appearance to Moses in Exodus 3:1-3 (i.e., the burning bush that was not consumed, also on Mount Sinai). The tabernacle became the medium through which the Lord in his true presence traveled from the mountain of God (Sinai) to accompany and guide Israel from there to the Promised Land.

The tabernacle was, therefore, a sort of moveable Sinai. The purpose for building the tabernacle was to provide a place for the Lord to "dwell among them" even after they left Sinai (Ex 25:8; cf. also Ex 29:45-46). Wherever the tabernacle was, the Lord would be present in all his glory just as he had been at Sinai. The last three verses of Exodus anticipate the Lord's guidance of Israel through the wilderness from Sinai to the Promised Land: "when the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on their journeys, but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out. . . . For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their journeys" (Ex 40:36-38). The same motif is repeated over and over again in Numbers 9:15-23, just before their departure from Sinai in Numbers 10:11-12, 33-34 and, of course, recalls the original cloud and pillar of fire that led them out of Egypt (see remarks on Ex 13:21-22 above).

Leviticus 1:1—Numbers 9:14, therefore, is encased between these two tabernacle presence and guidance passages (Ex 40:34-38 and Num 9:15-23), and the regulations contained therein focus especially on the need to "practice" that presence on various levels, in the tabernacle as well as in the community at large, and in multiple ways: in worship, in maintaining the purity and holiness of God's presence, in relationships within the community and in separation from corrupting influences of the surrounding nations. Even the main narrative section within the book of Leviticus focuses on the consecration of the tabernacle and the priesthood, and on the inauguration of tabernacle worship in Israel (Lev 8—10).

The same glory of the Lord that occupied the tabernacle immediately and completely on the erection day—so that Moses could not enter the tabernacle (Ex 40:34—Lev 1:1)—also "appeared to all the people" on the inauguration day in a fire display that consumed the inaugural sacrifices on the altar (Lev 9:23-24). This same glory of the Lord also regularly appeared "in the cloud over the atonement seat" on top of the ark of the covenant in the most holy place of the tabernacle (Lev 16:2). Later the same glory of the Lord would occupy the temple of Solomon on its dedication day so that the priests, like Moses in Exodus 40, could not enter the temple, and on the same day (as in Lev 9) there was the divine fire display that consumed the temple dedication sacrifices on the altar (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:13-14; 7:1-3).

Some scholars have argued that the Hebrew verb *škn*, "to dwell" (i.e., "to tabernacle"; the underlying verbal root of the noun *miškān*, "tabernacle") was used in P (i.e., the priestly source or redaction of the Pentateuch) as a reaction against the preexilic Sabaoth-Zion temple ideology of the monarchy (recall that, according to standard critical theory, P is postexilic). According to this theory, Zion temple theologians used the verb *yšb*, "to sit, dwell," to indicate that God actually dwelt in the temple, enthroned above the cherubim on top of the ark of the covenant (2 Kings 19:15; cf. the early tent shrine background for this in 1 Sam 4:4 and 2 Sam 6:2), like a king on a throne (see, e.g., 1 Kings 1:35).

The later priestly theologians of the Pentateuch, however, corrected this Zion temple view of God actually dwelling on earth by using the term *škn* instead of *yšb* for Yahweh's habitation of the tabernacle sanctuary, suggesting that the Lord would only descend on the tabernacle periodically and then depart (Ex 33:7-11; Num 11:14-17, 24-30; Num 12:5, 10). Moreover, according to this view, the term "tent of meeting" and expressions associated with it (e.g., *appearing* at and *filling* the tabernacle) suggest that God would only appear at the tabernacle period-

ically, whenever he was "meeting" with Moses or the people. There was no continuous presence of the Lord in the tabernacle according to this view.

This is not the place to attempt to sort out all the specific details of this scholarly discussion (see the very helpful review and the literature cited in Kutsko, 79-87), but a few remarks are in order. First, the tent of meeting referred to in Exodus 33:7-11, Numbers 11:14-17, 24-30 and Num 12:5, 10, upon which the Lord only descended periodically and then departed, was the tent of meeting pitched outside the camp, not the tabernacle tent of meeting that was pitched in the middle of the camp (see, e.g., Ex 40 with Num 1:52—2:34, and 1.3 above).

Second, the fact that the Lord would "meet" periodically with Moses, the priests or the people at the tabernacle and, on occasions, would "fill" the tabernacle with his glory does not necessarily imply that he did not take up continuous albeit mobile residence there in the form of his glory in the cloud. His habitation in the tabernacle tent was just as continuous as the habitation of the Israelites in their tents around the tabernacle, perhaps even more so (note 2 Sam 7:6; but see also 1 Sam 4:4; 7:1-7; 2 Sam 6:10-11), if one considers the tent David pitched for the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem to be an extension of the wilderness tabernacle (note the parallel priestly functions established by David in the tabernacle at Gibeon and in the tent in Jerusalem, 1 Chron 16:4-6, 37-42). There can be no other reason for the daily cult carried out in the tabernacle (Ex 29:38-42; Num 28:1-10, etc.; Knohl 1997, 73-74).

Third, with regard to the usage of the terms *škn* and *yšb*, it is true that the latter is sometimes used for God's dwelling in the temple (1 Kings 8:13 par. 2 Chron 6:2), but there are also times when *škn* is used (see esp. 1 Kings 6:13, 8:12 par. 2 Chron 6:1; cf. also *miškān* for the temple in 2 Chron 29:6 and Ps 74:7). Furthermore, even when Solomon used *yšb* to refer to God's dwelling in the temple in his prayer for the dedication of the temple, he went to great pains to emphasize that God was not "contained" therein: "But will God truly dwell *[yšb]* on the earth? Even the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built" (1 Kings 8:27 par. 2 Chron 6:18; cf. also God's dwelling *[yšb]* in heaven, 1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49, etc.). The difference between the tabernacle and the later temple was that the former was mobile, as a tent should be, while the latter was not. They were both points of access to God's continuous manifest presence in the midst of his people, but neither of them is presented as a place to which God limited his presence exclusively. In anticipation of the instructions to build the tabernacle, God was present and "dwelt" (or "settled," *škn*) on Mount Sinai in the glory cloud (Ex 24:16, cited above) but later moved this manifest presence to "dwell" (or "settle") on the tabernacle once it had been erected (Ex 40:35).

Thus, God's manifest presence moved to the tabernacle from Mount Sinai and was moveable in the tabernacle as Israel traveled from Sinai, but, in any case, the Lord was continuously present in the tabernacle until the dedication of the temple. Unfortunately, by the time of the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites had so desecrated and defiled the temple that the glory-cloud presence of the Lord actually departed from there, discontinuing his previously continuous manifest presence there and abandoning it to destruction (Ezek 8:4; 10:3-4, 18-19; 11:22-25). Even then, however, there was the promise of the Lord's return to a new and permanent temple (Ezek 43:1-9). This does not appear to have happened at the dedication of the second temple (Ezra 6:13-18), which brings us to the NT.

6. The Tabernacle and the Glory in the New Testament.

As John 1:14 puts it, "The Word became flesh and *made his dwelling* [Gk *skēnoō*, "tabernacled"] among us. We have seen *his glory, the glory of the One and Only*, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (NIV, italics added; cf. Jn 2:11; 7:18; 17:24). Later, in his high priestly prayer on behalf of those who would believe in him (Jn 17:20), Jesus said to the Father, "I have given them *the glory* that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me" (Jn 17:22-23 NIV, italics added). This glory comes from the Holy Spirit of God who indwells believers (2 Cor 3:17-18; 4:4, 6; cf. Jn 14:16-17). The church is "a *holy temple* in the Lord . . . *a dwelling* in which *God lives by his Spirit*" (Eph 2:21-22 NIV, italics added; cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17 and 1 Pet 2:4-5). According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, believers are actually the reflection of God's glory in the world: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed

into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (NIV).

As in the OT, the sanctuary presence of God is nothing to trifle with. The corporate body of believers is sacred to him, and God takes violation of that sacred domain seriously: "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is *sacred*, and you are that temple" (1 Cor 3:17 NIV, italics added). Similarly, the individual believer is "a temple of the Holy Spirit," so one must be defiled through immorality (1 Cor 6:18-19), but instead "honor [lit. "glorify," Gk *doxazō*] God" with the body (1 Cor 6:20; cf. Lev 10:3 cited above). Thus the presence of God is the key to tracing the theme of sacred *space* in the OT into the NT, where it is developed in terms of sacred *community*. As Jesus said in John 4:23-24, instead of worshiping God at Jerusalem, "a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (NIV).

The glory of the New Covenant, therefore, is greater than that of the one mediated by Moses at Sinai (2 Cor 3:7-11). In turn, the new heaven and earth will have no need for a temple (Rev 21—22). God will be immediately present in all his glory and fully accessible in his profound holiness, surrounded by a people who will have been purified and sanctified through the redemptive work of the divine Son of God, the mediator of the New Covenant and the cornerstone of the church (Eph 2:19-22; *see DPL*, Temple).

See also ALTARS; ATONEMENT, DAY OF; CHERUBIM; EDEN, GARDEN OF; FESTIVALS AND FEASTS; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; LEVI, LEVITES; LEVITICUS, BOOK OF; PRIESTLY CLOTHING; PRIESTS, PRIESTHOOD; RELIGION; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

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TABERNACLES, FEAST OF. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

TABLE OF NATIONS. *See* NATIONS, TABLE OF.

TABLE OF THE PRESENCE. *See* TABERNACLE.

TAMAR

Tamar (literally, "palm tree"), the daughter-in-law of *Judah and wife of Er and then Onan, has become very popular in the wake of the feminist movement, and not without reason. The feminist perspective rightly sees the story as one about a woman who was wronged by two men, first her brother-in-law and then her father-in-law, and perhaps even a third, her original husband Er. "It is characteristic of the patriarchal stories that revolt against the established social order, where it is a question of injustice, is initiated by women only. And in each case the justice of such self-defense is recognized" (Westermann 1986, 56).

Tamar demonstrated strength of character, obedience, courage, daring, skill, shrewdness, initiative and decisiveness in spite of the questionable deed in which she was involved. More articles have been written in the last decade about Tamar and her contact with Judah (Gen 38) than about the twelve sons of Jacob combined. Her entire story stems from one chapter in Genesis, although she is mentioned in the ancestries of both David (Ruth 4:12) and Jesus (Mt 1:3).

1. Tamar, Daughter-in-Law of Judah
2. Tamar and the Joseph Narrative
3. Tamar, Place Name

1. Tamar, Daughter-in-Law of Judah.

Tamar married Judah's son Er. She is mentioned in the Pentateuch only in Genesis. We know nothing about Tamar's background except her name, which in Hebrew refers to the palm tree, "the tree of life in the desert" (Wildavsky, 46). The narrative of Genesis 38 seems to imply that she was a Canaanite. Judah had moved into the territory of the Canaanites, and there he had met Hirah, a Canaanite from the town of Adullam, later part of the tribe of Judah in the eastern Shephelah. Adullam is located in the hill country of Judah, ten miles northwest of Hebron. Furthermore, Judah married a Canaanite woman, the unnamed daughter of Shua. Nowhere does it suggest that Judah went back to his own land to find a wife for Er. The issue of whether or not Tamar was a Canaanite remains open, however, and by leaving it open, "the narrator may allow for greater acceptance of the woman who will become the ancestress of the Davidic line" (Jeansonne, 101).

When God put Er to death, Judah gave his daughter-in-law to Onan according to the levirate law. Onan apparently intended not to share the inheritance of his father with the offspring of his deceased brother and so spilled his semen on the ground. When Onan also died, Judah hesitated to give her to Shelah, lest he lose a third son. Consequently, he told Tamar to live as a widow in his house until Shelah came of age (Gen 38:11). After a long period of time, during which Tamar lived in Judah's house, Judah's wife died (Gen 38:12). Then Tamar began to act (Gen 38:13-14).

When Judah failed to keep the promise of giving his son Shelah as husband to Tamar, Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute connected to a pagan shrine, placed herself in Judah's path, accepted his request to sleep with him and became pregnant by Judah. The obscurity of the laws of levirate marriage suggest that Tamar's righteousness consists not only in her obedience to her father-in-law Judah but also in the fact that she had been more righteous "in her relationship to her dead husband, to herself, to Judah himself, and above all to posterity than Judah had been" (Andrew, 267). When all other options in the family of Judah had failed, Tamar at least recognized Judah as the last remaining option within the levirate law (Wildavsky, 44). She alone, of all the characters in the story, was willing to raise up offspring for her husband Er. Some view the action of Tamar as moral, in that she exercised her right to offspring through the levirate law whereas Judah intended to keep that from her. Indeed, C. Westermann argues that her action is normal "and

no moral judgment is passed" (Westermann 1986, 53; Wildavsky, 42). If the levirate law was to be applied according to a rule such as "the nearest available male relative," then Judah would have been that person. That Judah never again slept with her (Gen 38:26) suggests that the narrator would have viewed such a relationship as incest but did not so view the initial relationship (*see* Sexuality, Sexual Ethics, §4.3). Furthermore, the twins seem to be accepted as legitimate, both in this narrative and in the Book of Ruth.

The story is also a story of movement from death to life. Death comes early in the narrative to Er, Onan and the wife of Judah. It could have come to Shelah. It almost came to Tamar, who had wisely protected herself. Five people either died or could have died. Life remains with Tamar because of her shrewd decisiveness. While being brought out to her death, she moved toward life. Life continued not only in the birth of a son but in the birth of twins, Perez and Zerah (Gen 38:27-30). Even the names of Tamar's sons signify the flourishing of life, for Perez means "breaks out" and Zerah may refer to the rising of the sun. In this movement from death to life, the story of Tamar illustrates the power of God, which often operates in unexpected ways, accomplishing the will of God in spite of human mistakes. Her appearance at this stage in the narrative of Genesis can be seen as a threat to the promise of God to the patriarchs that they will have many offspring (Bandstra, 104).

2. Tamar and the Joseph Narrative.

The location of this chapter within the *Joseph narrative highlights the importance of the Judahite line for the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior. According to 1 Chronicles 5:1-2, the rights of firstborn were lost by Reuben, passing instead to Joseph. The role of Judah is alluded to in that passage and more fully explained in Psalm 78:59-72. There the psalmist indicates that God chose the tribe of Judah over the tribe of Joseph, and Genesis 38 anticipates those events. Clearly, Tamar was important to the development of the position of both the person and the tribe of Judah.

Besides the obvious connection to the person of Judah, one of the links of the Tamar story to the Joseph narrative, within which it is embedded, is the role of clothing, which is the medium of deception and of truth in both stories. In addition, the kid of a goat and the verb "to recognize" are also common to Genesis 37 and 38 (Lockwood, 35). P. F. Lockwood argues that Genesis 38 "serves as an abridgement of the whole Joseph cycle and anticipates its outcome. It is the Joseph story in a nutshell" (Lockwood, 37). Both Tamar and Joseph suffer banishment and a threat to life, both force their victimizers to acknowledge wrongdoing and mend their ways, both experience God turning the misdeeds to good effect, and both Tamar and Joseph have two sons, with the second elevated above the first (Lockwood, 40).

3. Tamar, Place Name.

One pentateuchal reference to a place name, Hazazon-tamar (Gen 14:7), is probably unrelated to Judah's daughter-in-law, instead referring to the palm tree. The place is identified in 2 Chronicles 20:2 as En Gedi (Westermann 1985,197).

See also JOSEPH; JUDAH; WOMEN.

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TAMID. *See* SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS.

TARGUMS. *See* TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

TELL DEIR 'ALLA TEXTS. *See* BALAAM.

TEMPLE, COSMOS AS. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION; TABERNACLE.

TEMPTATION. *See* FALL; SIN, GUILT.

TEN COMMANDMENTS. *See* DECALOGUE; ETHICS; LAW.

TEN WORDS. *See* DECALOGUE.

TENT OF MEETING. *See* TABERNACLE.

TERAH

Terah was a descendant of *Shem, the son of *Nahor and the father of *Abram, Nahor and *Haran (Gen 11:10-27). Along with Abram, *Sarai (Terah's daughter-in-law) and *Lot (the son of Haran), Terah left *Ur of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran in north Syria, where he died some years later at the age of 205. After Terah's death, Abram and his family moved to Canaan (cf. Acts 7:4). It is important to note that all of the material in Genesis 11:27—25:11 is prefaced by the statement, "This is the family history of Terah," as he was the family head. Terah, along with Nahor, is described as an idolater who worshiped other gods (Josh 24:2). In fact, the Joshua source interprets Genesis as implying that Abram's decision to follow Yahweh was a break with his ancestors' traditions (Gen 12:1-6).

1. Etymology of Terah's Name
2. Terah in the City of Ur
3. Terah and Later Traditions

1. Etymology of Terah's Name.

An understanding of the etymology of the name Terah has proved to be difficult. It was previously postulated that Terah occurred as *trḥ*, a divine name at Ugarit (Jouon, 280-85; contra Gordon 1938, 407-10; Albright 1938, 35-40), but no evidence of this has come to light, and thus this theory has been rejected. *Trḥ* in Ugaritic is a nominal and verbal root, and it has not been found as a personal name. It is probably related to Akkadian *terḫātu* ("to pay the marriage price").

Others have speculated that *Terah* is related to the Hebrew word, *yarēaḥ* (moon) or *yeraḥ* (lunar month), implying that Terah and his family were moon worshipers (Hamilton, 363). Another suggestion has *Tèrah* meaning *Tèr-ʾāḥ* ("brother moon" or "the divine brother"), where *Tèr* is a dialectical equivalent of *šhr*, a South Arabic term for the moon (Key, 21). This has been deemed plausible because of the fact that both Ur and Haran were main centers of moon (Akkadian, Sin) worship in the Tigris-Euphrates region. Moreover, *Tèr* (Iltehri and related forms) was the name of the moon god in the vicinity of Haran by the Neo-Assyrian period, and it was present in a series of personal names (Landsberger and Bauer, 92; Lewy, 425-26; Zadok, 42). However, most argue that this association is untenable since *Tèr* is a form of West Semitic *Ser/Sahr* and phonologically different from Terah. This being the case, one should note that several other individuals in Terah's family did have names that may have been associated with lunar worship (Sarah, Milcah, Laban).

Others have noted that *trḥ* in Hebrew means "ibex, mountain goat," a root that appears as part of an Amorite feminine name *(al-li-tur-raḥum)* in the early second millennium B.C. (Gelb, 34, 200). Finally, there is a Sumerian personal name *te-ra* in a cuneiform text from the Ur III period (c. 2120-2000 B.C.). This name, however, is not considered related to Terah (Schneider, 521).

The name *Terah* is also compared to the place name *Til (ša) turāḫi*, a place named in Assyrian texts during the period of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) located on the Balikh River in the vicinity of Haran (Kraeling, 153-54; Parpola, 355-56). This Assyrian king claims to have taken this town in 854 B.C. Other towns in this vicinity mentioned in the same records are Til Nāḫiri (Nāḫuru) and Sarugi, names that appear to correspond to Nahor and Serug, the grandfather of Terah. The term *til* (mound) possibly indicates that the Assyrian period site was built on a preexisting mound (possibly from the second millennium B.C.), although there is no evidence for this. Some have postulated that this place name is found among Aramean settlements of the sec-

ond millennium B.C. (Albright 1924, 386-87), a view that is now considered untenable. Thus, in addition to being a personal name, Terah likely has associations with a place name in northern Mesopotamia, similar to other names in Abraham's ancestry.

2. Terah in the City of Ur.
Scholars have debated for generations the precise location of the city of Ur, the city of origin for Terah's family. Although it has traditionally been presumed to be the Ur in southern Mesopotamia, a city that had strong Amorite connections in the Middle Bronze Age (Saggs, 200-209), others have argued for a northern Mesopotamian location for the city. Some have argued for either Urfa (modern Edessa), about twenty miles northwest of Haran, or Ura, a city in the Hittite Cilicia (Gordon 1958, 28-31). Moreover, northern Mesopotamia is called Abraham's "country" in Genesis 24:4-7.This makes sense when one considers that many place names in the region are related to Abraham's relatives (Nahor, Terah, Haran, Serug). However, it is historically plausible that Amorites moved back and forth from northern and southern Mesopotamia in this period. It is true that northern Mesopotamia was the Amorite homeland, and that many families began to travel south in the late third millennium B.C., establishing themselves in the urban centers (Ur, Uruk, Babylon, etc). It is certainly plausible that Amorite families returned to their homeland periodically. Thus, Terah's family may have come to Ur in previous generations and returned to their families' place of origin later on. Thus, it seems most plausible that Terah and his family lived in Ur in southern Mesopotamia.

3. Terah and Later Traditions.
Many have attempted to reconcile the chronological data concerning Terah in Genesis 11:26-32 with the statement in Acts 7:4. According to Genesis 11:26, Terah was seventy years old when Abram was born. Abram left Haran to enter Canaan at the age of seventy-five when his father Terah was 135 (Gen 12:4). Terah then lived seventy more years and died at the age of 205 (Gen 11:32). However, Acts 7:4 (and Philo) states that Abram left Haran for Canaan only after the death of his father. It is possible that Luke was using the LXX or Samaritan Pentateuch, where Terah is stated to have died at the age of 145. One other approach is to argue that Genesis 11:26 states that Terah began to father children at the age of seventy but that Abraham was born sixty-five years later.

The geographic name Terah, an Israelite encampment in the wilderness between Tahath and Mithkah (Num 33:27-28), appears to be etymologically related to Terah. Its precise location, however, is unknown.

See also ABRAHAM; HARAN; NAHOR; SARAH.

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TERAPHIM. *See* IDOLS, IDOLATRY, TERAPHIM, HOUSEHOLD GODS.

TESTING

Under the rubric of testing we shall look at two contrasting ideas: God's testing of *Israelites and Israel's testing of God. The Pentateuch itself underlines this contrast, and it is mirrored in the Psalms. The vocabulary used for both sets of testing is essentially the same.

Devotional spirituality has traditionally ex-

trapolated from explicit examples of God's testing of Israelites to contemporary experience, with the corollary tendency of identifying any difficulty or hardship in life as a test engineered by God himself. Cognitive psychology would speak of this tendency in terms of attribution theory—explaining a difficult experience by attributing its onset to God. This would be a way of finding meaning in the circumstances and avoiding categorizing them as random, meaningless or damaging. For these reasons, when we articulate what the biblical text says about testing, we need to be aware that modes of Christian extrapolation from Scripture and our life strategies are at issue as well.

1. God Testing Human Beings
2. The Vocabulary for Testing

1. God Testing Human Beings.

1.1. The Testing of Abraham (Gen 22). The story of the sacrifice of *Isaac is the episode that dramatizes the concept of God putting an individual to the test. The narrator introduces the Isaac episode in direct, unambivalent terms: "God tested Abraham" (Gen 22:1). This gives the reader access to the privileged information of the storyteller and interpreter. *Abraham may not be framing the events this way, but our perspectives as readers are shaped to construe it this way. Tension will build as the story unfolds because we are pulled into the dramatic moment and we feel with Abraham, and this despite knowing the outcome—as the first readers would have also done in their generation. It is important to note that this opening comment by the narrator removes the episode from the domain of attribution theory to the domain of biblical storytelling and biblical theology. It is not a matter of Abraham attributing his compulsion to God's instigation. It *is* God's initiative.

The story is also distinguished from ordinary life by its transparently supernatural quality. God speaks directly to Abraham by name, apparently speaking aloud: "God said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am!' God said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go . . . offer him' " (Gen 22:1-2). The dialogue, the specific unmediated command and the *promise of a further disclosure of exact whereabouts—"one of the mountains that I will show you" (Gen 22:2b)—prepare the reader for further supernatural intervention by direct dialogue. Abraham is stopped from carrying out the killing and burning by the angel of the Lord (Gen 22:11-12). To this, in Genesis 22:15-18 the narrative adds a second audible utterance "from heaven" in which God reiterates his covenant promises of *blessing. Abraham has passed the test: "*because [ya'anāšer]* you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son" (Gen 22:16). By its antecedent episodes, by its narrative frame and by its direct audible divine commands and direct audible divine comments afterward, this episode is distinguished from episodes in contemporary life and stands before us in all its stark extremes.

The enormity of this test, the horrifying and disturbing demand that God makes of killing the son and heir to all the promise, these also distinguish Abraham's test from other events in the metanarrative of salvation—except for the test embodied in the story of Jesus, epitomized in his facing of crucifixion. A different typological trajectory of testing, from Abraham to the gospel story, sees God the Father filling the role of Abraham, the father, while Jesus fills the role of Isaac. Perhaps this analogy underlies Paul's statement in Romans 8:32.

The testing of Abraham's obedience by specific direct command has a setting and an accompaniment that resonate with other dimensions of Israel's metanarrative and with specific episodes in it. First, we could say that any direct divine command is a test of obedience, and that would apply to the command in the *Eden story (Gen 2:16-17; 3:11) as much as to the *Decalogue and all the covenant stipulations. Second, God's initiative, provision and commitment are prominent in the Abraham story, as they are in the Eden story, in Exodus and in the retrospective and prospective of Deuteronomy.

We could enunciate this as a principle in the biblical presentation of testing as follows. Testing is embedded within a relationship that God himself initiates and is active to maintain. The relationship is rich with promise and foretaste. It is backed up with substantiations and guarantees.

In the Eden story, the garden; its resources of water, food and animals; the woman; and God himself walking there in the cool of the day are all presented as provisions and accompaniments to the test of obedience. In the offering of Isaac, God's provision is highlighted. First there is the father's opaque reply—"God himself will provide a lamb for the offering" (Gen 22:8)—

which becomes translucent in retrospect. In addition, the name that Abraham gives to the place and the incident probably includes a play on words between "see" and "provide": " 'The Lord will provide [or "see"]'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided [or "be seen"]' " (Gen 22:14 NRSV). This same emphasis on relationship and provision are explicit in the episodes in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Finally, the Isaac episode is bound into the wider story of Abraham, which speaks so emphatically of God's commitment and *promises. Isaac himself is the symbol of all this, of God's previous supernatural intervention in his conception, of this son and heir as foretaste of descendants as numerous as sand and stars (Gen 22:17, compare Gen 17 and 15). To sacrifice Isaac was to sacrifice the promised future, but what was at stake for Abraham was his relationship with God. Without that relationship there would have been no command and no test. The text implies that the relationship with God would have survived even if Isaac had died. So this testing of Abraham is a test of the strength of the relationship with God. We cannot separate testing from trust and reliance. God counts on Abraham to honor his command. Abraham counts on God to stand by him.

This brings us to the issue of outcome. Israelite readers would have known that the story of God and Israel continued. They would have known this even after the exodus generation failed the test of obedience and after both northern and southern kingdoms were exiled from the land of promise. Where the readers are located in the metanarrative contributes to how the story will be heard. Yet that location of the reader does not solve the theological question: Does God know the outcome of any test that he engineers in advance? Is it a foregone conclusion? Genesis 22 tells the story as a discovery by God of the strength of Abraham's commitment: "for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me" (Gen 22:12). The words *"for now [kî ʿattâ]* I know" certainly dramatizes the episode. If we read them literalistically, then God himself did not know what Abraham would choose in advance. In fact, it would be unfair to Hebrew storytelling to ask it to turn into an academic treatise on God's sovereignty and human freedom. Rather, this story is the story of a journey with God, sometimes told from God's perspective—as in the narrator's opening words—and sometimes told from the human participant's perspective.

1.2. Israel in the Desert. The desert journey of Israel both before and after Sinai is the setting for testing in two directions, God's testing of Israel and Israel's testing of God. The first has theological approval. The second is condemned. The retrospective of Deuteronomy 8 offers us the best vantage point on God's testing of Israel. Jesus quotes words from Deuteronomy 8:3 about obedience to God being the staff of life (Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4) during his temptation in the desert (Mk 1:12-13).

The idea of God running an experiment on the Israelites in the laboratory of the desert dramatizes the concept of testing: "Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments" (Deut 8:2 NRSV). This retrospective embraces the entire *wilderness period, not simply particular episodes within it that mention testing nor the period after balking at entering Canaan. This overview statement raises similar issues and carries similar motifs to the testing of Abraham, which is no surprise since the Abraham story previews Israel's experience and is deliberately shaped to create correspondences by analogy and to give coherence to the metanarrative. If we take the words of Deuteronomy 8:2 at face value, then God did not know the outcome of the test in advance. This would accord with "openness theology" in which God does not know the future in any absolute way, though he has information and resources to further his purposes. However, given the human propensity to sin that the Pentateuch documents for humanity and for Israel, we need not press the wording "to know . . . whether or not" unduly. *Moses could have told God the outcome from his own experience of the Israelites.

Deuteronomy in particular, and *covenant and political treaty language in general, is concerned with wholehearted loyalty to the overlord. That concern is dramatized in the language of Deuteronomy 8, which speaks of "walking in the ways of the Lord and fearing him" (Deut 8:6), as well as referring to "the heart." The desert journey is the literal walking that accompanies the spiritual walk with God.

The desert environment made Israel dependent on God for life in every sense, materially for the basics of water and food. The dependence is counterbalanced by God's abundant provision that Deuteronomy 8 emphasizes as the counterpart to the "humbling and letting you hunger" (Deut 8:3). If Israel was tested by the desert experience, then Israel's trust was also rewarded, substantiated and affirmed by God "feeding you with manna" (Deut 8:3). In addition, clothes did not wear out, nor did feet swell (Deut 8:4). Promise and provision lie ahead in the destination of Canaan (Deut 8:7-10). All these motifs of covenant relationship, promise, blessings and providence echo the context of Abraham's testing.

An important dimension is added to the concept of testing in Deuteronomy 8 by its reference to the father-son relationship: "know then in your heart that as a father disciplines a child, so the Lord your God disciplines you" (Deut 8:5). The same ideas of fatherly discipline appear in Proverbs, generalized for all Israelites all of the time (Prov 3:11-12), and they are reapplied to Christian believers who are under duress in Hebrews 12:5-11.

Both the nurturing aspect of parenting and the disciplinary aspect of parenting appear in connection with God's testing, training and unique relationship with Israel. Israel is privileged, so Israel may be punished. Deuteronomy 8 places provision and blessing before the community that is listening to Moses' address. Prospect rather than threat fills the foreground. Yet the choice to obey remains pivotal for this retrospective and prospective passage, as for the whole of Deuteronomy. Testing relates directly to covenant loyalty in the relationship with God and to choices facing Israel. Such testing cannot be depersonalized into surviving tough circumstances, nor can it be turned into an opportunity and an occasion for a merit award—though in the case of Genesis 22 and Deuteronomy 8 there is a closely associated reiteration of the promises of blessing.

The specific test of Exodus 16 is related to the provision of *manna. Israel's complaints are the background. God announces the gift of quail and the regular manna, adding: "each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not" (Ex 16:4 NRSV). Some fail the simple test by leaving surplus manna to go bad and by looking for manna on the *sabbath. This angers Moses on God's behalf (Ex 16:20, 28), but no judgment falls. Again, testing is closely related to God's provision and implicitly to covenant as well because the sabbath becomes a sign of covenant (Ex 16:25, 29), and a pot of manna is placed in the ark of the covenant (Ex 16:31-34). The provision of water in the previous chapter, or rather the desperate thirst and the discovery of brackish water, is looked back on as a test: "there God put them to the test" (Ex 15:25). Miraculous provision undergirds both the water and the food tests.

Rather different is the *theophany at Sinai, which terrifies the Israelites. Moses assures them that God means them no harm: "Do not be afraid; for God has only come to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so you do not sin" (Ex 20:20 NRSV). The fear of the Lord is a key motif in Exodus (Ex 1:17, 21; 14:10-11, 30-31). In Exodus 20:20 it relates directly to the formation of the covenant and being God's "treasured possession" (Ex 19:4–6). The invitation to the covenant meal at the top of Sinai and the fact that "they beheld God, and they ate and drank" without God harming them (Ex 24:11) links the theophany on top of Sinai with covenant making. Yet covenant breaking is an explicit possibility in Exodus 20:20. This unfolds in the *golden calf incident.

The same vocabulary of testing is used of Israel's provoking God by distrust, complaint and disobedience. The scene at Massah and Meribah reverberates in Exodus 17:7; Numbers 20:13, 24; 27:14; Deuteronomy 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; and resonates in Psalms 78; 81; 95; and 106 (cf. Heb 3:9-19). Testing God is equated with rebellion, provocation, complaint, distrust, unbelief and sin—the antithesis of good covenant relations. This said, we must also point out that biblical theology incorporates prayers that question, accuse and complain to God, the so-called lament psalms, which express despair, anxiety and anger. By canonizing these forms of prayer, OT faith presents a robust spirituality that is rooted in a committed relationship.

2. The Vocabulary for Testing.

The key verb for "testing" in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy is *nissâ*, the Piel of the root *nsh*, with a semantic range of "try out, exercise, train, put to the test." There is nothing hostile, emotionally negative or pejorative about

the verb as such. It is used equally of God testing and of Israel provoking him: "and yet [they] have tested me *[yĕnassû ʾōtî]* these ten times and have not obeyed my voice" (Num 14:22). Context, relational dynamics and theology decide the appropriate nuance of *nissa*. The place name Massah (*massâ* is a noun form of *nsh*) means "trial, test" and is associated with the noun Meribah from the root *rîb*, "to bring a lawsuit against, dispute, quarrel."

Elsewhere in the OT, for instance in Psalms and Jeremiah, this verb *nsh* for testing is associated with verbs for scrutinizing or scanning, and some of these contexts are associated with the metaphor of refinement of gold or silver.

See also ABRAHAM; FAITH; WILDERNESS.

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TETRAGRAMMATON. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

TETRATEUCH. *See* DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Since there are no extant autograph copies of books of the Bible, its text must be established by the process known as textual criticism. Textual criticism involves the comparison of witnesses to the text, such as manuscript copies, early translations and citations. This article will survey the witnesses to the text of the Pentateuch and seek to provide a synthesis of the picture they give of the text.

1. Definition and Aims
2. Textual Witnesses
3. Textual Problems
4. Synthesis
5. Method

1. Definition and Aims.

Textual criticism is usually seen as the attempt to define the text in its *original* form. However, in order to distinguish textual criticism from literary criticism, textual critics of the Bible also often see themselves as seeking to define the text in its *final* form. There is in the use of the two words "original" and "final" with regard to the biblical text the recognition that the textual critic is seeking to classify and eliminate deliberate or accidental changes that have taken place in witnesses since the biblical books were completed at a literary level, and yet also that the textual critic does not seek to take into account any stages of literary composition before an OT book was complete. For many works of classical literature, the definition of a final and original text is not difficult, since they were composed in a short time and then published. On the other hand, works such as those of Homer underwent significant graphic changes hundreds of years after their composition when the writing reforms of fifth-century Greece were introduced. Modern textual criticism wisely does not aim to restore Homer's works to their putatively original spelling. Similarly, preexilic biblical literature will almost certainly have undergone substantial linguistic updating since its composition. Thus, for instance, given less use of vowel letters within the word in Hebrew inscriptions from before the exile, it seems reasonable to suppose that compositions such as the Pentateuch were originally spelled with fewer vowel letters than they now contain. However, the Ketef Hinnom amulets (see 2.1.4 below) show that at least some medial vowel letters are preexilic. Still, the textual critic does not seek to reconstruct a hypothetical form of the text but rather the text as it was finalized.

Just as the authors of some biblical books were anonymous, so were the scribes involved in the finalization of the written form of the Pentateuch, though there is no compelling reason to believe that the latter were involved in editing the content. The present lack of textual evidence from the early Second Temple period does not permit certainty as to the time when spelling was fixed. However, it is possible that this took place when the script of the Pentateuch was changed from the Old Hebrew or paleo-Hebrew script to the Aramaic (or "Assyrian") square script some time after the exile. As with all ancient Hebrew, this text was without vowel markings except for *matres lectionis* (vowel letters). The aim, then, of textual criticism is to define the books in this received form, which by the work of the Spirit of God is canonical Scripture.

2. Textual Witnesses.

2.1. Hebrew Witnesses.

2.1.1. The Masoretic Text. The OT text from which almost all modern Bible translations are made is basically the Masoretic Text (MT). This Hebrew text has been transmitted to us by a meticulous group of Jewish scholars called the Masoretes who flourished between approximately the sixth and the tenth centuries A.D. They devised a system of marks that could surround the Hebrew consonantal text and describe the manner of reading without disturbing the consonants. These marks included vowel signs and indications of the quality of consonants *(daghesh* and *raphe)* as well as cantillation marks representing the way the text was recited liturgically and indicating the syntax of the sentence. The Masoretes also produced notes on the text, including the *Masorah parva* (Mp) and *Masorah magna* (Mm). The Mp is a system of notes in the side margin of manuscripts particularly marking unique forms, listing statistics of the spellings of words and indicating times when what was traditionally read (the Qere) was different from what was represented by the written consonantal structure of a word (the Kethib). The Qere and Kethib system seems to have fulfilled a variety of functions, including marking textual variants and updating archaic forms. The Mm, usually marked in the top and bottom margins, expanded some of the notes in the Mp, listed passages marked only as statistics in the Mp and also contained additional information. The Masoretes introduced or passed on other signs, for instance, the large letter *waw* in the word *gāḥôn* ("belly") in Leviticus 11:42 to mark the middle letter of the Pentateuch. Around Numbers 10:35-36 inverted forms of the letter *nun* may mark a variant textual tradition, since these verses are placed before verse 34 in the Septuagint (LXX), the early Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

The Masoretes, though they created these innovations, were essentially seeking to preserve older traditions rather than invent a system *de novo*. They seem to have passed on the text they received very carefully, and as a result there has been minimal change in the consonantal structure of the Hebrew text from the beginning of our era to the time of the invention of the printing press, which allowed even greater standardization of the text. That there has been so little change in the consonantal text underlying MT is shown by some of the Dead Sea Scrolls (see 2.1.3 below). Furthermore, the vocalization recorded by the Masoretes can be shown by comparative philology to represent accurately the phonemic structure of the ancient language. There is some evidence that early Bible translators such as Aquila and Jerome had access to vocalization traditions not dissimilar to those found in the Masoretic systems. The particular system of vocalization that is represented in modern printed editions of the Hebrew Bible is called the Tiberian system, but there were at least two other varieties, known as Babylonian and Palestinian, though these systems are only extant for parts of the Bible and are not as fully developed as the Tiberian system. In addition, the text now underlying printed Hebrew Bibles is known as the Ben Asher text, which was a predominant variety of the Tiberian text closely related to the Ben Naphtali text, from which it differs only eight times in its consonants (Würthwein, 25).

The earliest manuscript containing the whole OT in Hebrew is known as Codex Leningradensis or L (MS Firkowitsch I. B19A in St. Petersburg). It comes from A.D. 1008 and forms the basis for the standard critical edition of the OT, namely the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* There are also some earlier manuscripts of the tenth century containing the Pentateuch (Tov, 47). The comparative lateness of the manuscripts of MT led to some negative estimates of its value before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2.1.2. The Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) is the version of the first five books of the Bible that constituted the canon of the Samaritans and was first introduced to European scholars in A.D. 1616 by Pietro della Valle. It is written in a script related to the Old Hebrew script, and unlike MT it does not have a consistently applied system of vowel signs. The extant manuscripts of the SP date from around the twelfth century A.D. and later, though like the MT, the SP has in general been faithfully transmitted. In comparison with the MT, the SP contains a greater number of vowel letters and a number of features that seem to be updatings of linguistically archaic forms. The text is also often expansionistic. In particular, formulas from parallel passages are inserted to make the text in a given instance include information recorded elsewhere. Thus, after Numbers 20:13 the SP inserts sections largely following the wording of Deuteronomy 3:24-28 and 2:2-6. These pluses are almost universally understood to be second-

ary expansions and play little part in text-critical discussions.

In addition, the SP contains a few variants that are viewed as sectarian innovations reflecting the theology of the Samaritans. The main sectarian variants in the SP are as follows. Twenty-one times when Deuteronomy refers to the place that God "will choose" *(ybḥr)* the SP reads "chose" *(bḥr)*, indicating that Gerizim is the place already chosen by God, not Jerusalem, which would be chosen in the future from the point of view of the Pentateuch (see also SP's "in *the* place where I *have caused* my name to be remembered" in Ex 20:24, where the MT has "in *every* place where I *shall cause* my name to be remembered"). There are also expansions to the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:21 (based on Deut 11:29-30; 27:2-7), making the tenth commandment to build an altar on Mount Gerizim. The MT of Deuteronomy 27:4 requires that the altar be constructed on Mount Ebal, for which the SP reads Mount Gerizim. It is not entirely agreed that it is the SP that contains the secondary text in this last case, and some authorities believe that the innovation has taken place in the MT. The connection between the variant in Deuteronomy 27:4 mentioning Gerizim, not Ebal, and the expansion at the end of the Ten Commandments is important because it shows that alterations to the law made on grounds of the theology of the Samaritans are also connected to an expansionistic tendency that is similar to the expansionistic tendency in the SP manifested in variants that show no sectarian motive. Since nonsectarian variants in the SP show up in certain manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is possible that there are several strata of variants in the SP, with the specifically sectarian changes taking place at a later stage than some of the expansionistic changes. However, the existence of expansionistic variants in Qumran texts showing no sectarian elements and of similar expansions containing sectarian elements in the SP may suggest some continuity between the earlier and later stages of development of the SP. Thus we should probably not think of the Samaritans adopting a text from a community outside their own.

A satisfactory edition of the SP is still a desideratum. The edition of von Gall is flawed by the editor's preference for Samaritan readings closer to the MT.

2.1.3. Ancient Manuscripts from the Judean Desert. Text-critical investigation of the Bible has been revolutionized by the discovery since 1947 of a number of manuscripts, now generally known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which have a much greater antiquity than the manuscripts of the MT and the SP. The chief location of discovery has been Khirbet Qumran, where the scrolls are usually dated from before approximately A.D. 68 back to the middle of the third century B.C. There have also been important finds of ancient texts, though not in the same quantity, at Masada, Wadi Murabaʿat and Nahal Ḥever. Among the Qumran scrolls every book of the Pentateuch is represented in several fragmentary manuscripts, with Deuteronomy heading the list with at least thirty-one such copies. Ten of the texts of the Pentateuch (and one of Job) are written in the paleo-Hebrew script, as opposed to the square "Assyrian" script that is now normally thought of as the Hebrew script.

For the biblical text generally, Tov (114-17) introduces a fivefold classification of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

1. Those that reflect the consonants of what was later the MT are known as *proto-Masoretic* manuscripts. For instance, 4QGen^{b} (4Q2), probably from the first century A.D., only has one variant (an orthographic *waw*) from the consonants of the MT and also reflects quite closely the division of the MT into paragraphs. This indicates how early the consonants of the MT were fixed. The majority of the Qumran biblical scrolls are classed as proto-Masoretic.

2. Those that reflect some of the variants later attested in the SP Tov calls *pre-Samaritan* texts. They are sometimes also called *proto-Samaritan* texts on the ground that there is a link between the types of expansion that have occurred in earlier and later strata of the text of the SP. A prime example of this type of text is 4QpaleoExod^{m} (4Q22), which contains parts of Exodus 6:25—37:16. 4QpaleoExod^{m} shows many of the expansions of the SP, but from space calculations it is surmised that it probably did not have the sectarian expansion to the Ten Commandments. It is therefore thought that the text is not Samaritan. While 4QpaleoExod^{m} is generally assigned to a text type or group with the SP, it also contains some agreements with the MT against the SP. In addition, the manuscript 4QNum^{b} (4Q27) contains a number of nonsectarian expansions similar to the SP. It should be noted, however, that sectarian expansions

would not be expected in Numbers, since the SP of Numbers does not contain passages as clearly sectarian as the SP does in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

3. There are a few manuscripts that seem to reflect the text type of the *Vorlage* (or "source text") of the LXX. There are no very clear cases for the Pentateuch, though 4QLev^{d} (4Q26) and 4QDeut^{q} (4Q44) show that significant variants from the LXX existed in Hebrew, and other pentateuchal manuscripts also contain LXX-type variants.

4. Approximately twenty percent of the biblical manuscripts at Qumran are written in what is called *Qumran style.* This involves a system of orthography using vowel letters much more than in Masoretic orthography, though with even less consistency. Qumran style often involves a different morphology. Thus, the third masculine singular independent pronoun occurs as *hw'h,* not *hw'*. Because the attitude of copiers using Qumran style does not seem to have been strict regarding the reproduction of their *Vorlage,* it is difficult to define with certainty the type of text from which such texts were made. Texts in this style were almost certainly written at Qumran itself, whereas the other texts may have been brought from elsewhere and may antedate the settlement of the community at Qumran (probably second century B.C.; *see DNTB,* Qumran: Place and History).

5. Approximately ten percent or so of the manuscripts do not align strongly with any of the above groups and are classified as *nonaligned.* The term *nonaligned* does not always mean that the text in question does not have strong characteristics. Some of these texts could point to the existence of a previously unknown type of text that is just as real as the types of text represented by the MT, SP and LXX.

However, even this fivefold classification is problematic since many of the fragments only consist of a few legible words. Thus, the way texts are characterized by scholars now, based on the existing fragments, could be significantly different from how they might be characterized if they were available in their entirety.

These texts show that a plurality of text types was in use during the Second Temple period but also that there is no objection in principle to supposing the uncorrupted transmission of a text like the consonants of the MT during a long period for which we have no direct witness. The relative proportions of the text types seem to attest some sort of ascendancy for the proto-Masoretic type. The texts from Qumran also reveal much about scribal practice from antiquity, about scroll and column size, and about some of the scribal features of the MT in their inception.

In evaluating the significance of the discoveries at Qumran, we should also recognize that they bias our reconstruction since they provide so much more data than other contemporary areas. We must therefore be cautious in generalizing the idiosyncrasies of Qumran to make statements about the textual situation of the Second Temple period as a whole.

2.1.4. Other Witnesses. A few other Hebrew witnesses to the biblical text exist. The earliest of these are two tiny silver rolls, possibly amulets, from Ketef Hinnom that contain a quotation of the wording of the priestly blessing (Num 6:24-26), with some variation from the MT. These probably date to the century before the Babylonian exile.

2.2. Early Translations of the Bible.

2.2.1. The Septuagint. The Septuagint (or LXX) was the first translation of the OT into Greek. Its name, meaning "the seventy," is derived from the tradition, reflected in the *Letter of Aristeas* (first century B.C. or earlier), that a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek was made by seventy(-two) translators in the first half of the third century B.C. under Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The term *Septuagint* thus originally referred only to the translation of the Pentateuch but subsequently came to denote the whole Greek OT, which was probably complete before the end of the second century B.C., as indicated by the prologue to Ecclesiasticus. However, the history of the LXX has not been simple, and divergences in its text from the proto-Masoretic text motivated a number of revisions. The most significant of these was that of Origen (died c. A.D. 254) in producing the Hexapla.

The Hexapla was a massive work of six columns in which the contents were in principle arranged thus: the first contained the Hebrew text; the second the Hebrew text in Greek transliteration; the third, fourth and sixth the translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion respectively (see 2.2.2 below); and the fifth a version of the LXX. Origen adapted the fifth column containing the LXX, adding symbols in the text marking where the LXX had a plus in relation to the Hebrew, and also insert-

ing Greek text from the other three Greek translations, especially Theodotion's, where the LXX had a minus in relation to the Hebrew. As copies of the fifth column were made and recopied, many of these signs were omitted, and since the text of Origen's fifth column has infected most LXX manuscripts, the task of reconstructing the original LXX has become more difficult. Origen's critical signs have survived partially in a few Greek witnesses, particularly in the fourth or fifth century A.D. Codex Colberto-Sarravianus (G) for the Pentateuch, and in Syriac and Armenian texts. The two most important early and extensive manuscripts of the LXX for the Pentateuch are Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Vaticanus (B) from the fifth and fourth centuries A.D. respectively. Codex Vaticanus is not extant in Genesis until Genesis 46:28. A few fragmentary manuscripts of the LXX Pentateuch are to be found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2.2.2. The Three. Dissatisfaction with the LXX as a translation led to the creation of three more translations of the OT into Greek, known as "the Three," dated to the second and perhaps early third centuries A.D., each essentially reflecting the proto-Masoretic text. The first of these, by Aquila, is famed for its literalism and etymologizing translations even at the expense of violating normal Greek grammar and idiom. These features make the translation very useful for textual criticism. The translation of Symmachus is one particularly noted for its elegant Greek style. The translation of Theodotion is important because of its role in the fifth column of the Hexapla, though what is ascribed to Theodotion in manuscripts may go right back to the first century A.D. or even earlier. These translations are no longer extant for extended passages in the Pentateuch.

2.2.3. The Peshitta. The Peshitta is a translation of the OT into the East Aramaic dialect of Syriac, probably during the first two centuries A.D. It may have been translated by a Jewish group lying outside rabbinic Judaism. As scholars have reconstructed more of its original form, it has become apparent that it was made from a Hebrew text more similar to the proto-Masoretic than had previously been supposed. The syntax of Syriac lies moderately close to Hebrew, but the translation is not characterized by strong attempts at formal literalism, and therefore those using the Peshitta for text-critical purposes need to be aware of its tendency to prefer idiomatic Syriac over slavish translation.

2.2.4. The Targums. There are a number of Targums for the Pentateuch. Targums are translations of the Bible into Aramaic and share translation features such as the avoidance of anthropomorphisms with reference to God, the updating of geographical place names and expansions inspired by subtle triggering phrases in the original text (*see DNTB,* Rabbinic Literature: Targumim). Originally Targums were not written down. As a result, those that we now have in written form may contain oral elements significantly older than the time of their final editing. The earliest Targum is *Targum Onqelos,* made some time between the first and fifth centuries A.D. The more expansive *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* was completed some time after the rise of Islam. In 1956 A. Díez Macho announced the discovery of a previously unknown targum now known as *Targum Neofiti,* which is contained in a manuscript dating from A.D. 1504 but with a text dating back at least to the mid-first millennium A.D. There are targums that have only partially survived among the manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah and that originate in Palestine, and there are also fragment targums (collected in *Fragmentary Targum*), which are short extracts of midrashic material without a continuous translation of text. All these targums contain expansive exegetical material, though *Onqelos* is the least expansive. Despite these expansions, at the level of formal correspondence to their *Vorlage* the targums are sometimes quite literal, and thus it is apparent that they all reflect a text very close to the MT. In addition to these Jewish targums there is also the *Samaritan Targum,* which is the Aramaic translation of the Samaritans based on SP but which exists in more than one form.

2.2.5. The Vulgate. The Vulgate is the Latin translation of the Bible made by Jerome between A.D. 390 and 405. In the OT it is hard to establish evidence of variation from the consonants of the MT in its *Vorlage.* This is because, though translated from a Hebrew text, it was also made with considerable reference to the existing Latin tradition of translation from the LXX. Its agreement with the LXX against the MT therefore need not indicate a non-Masoretic Hebrew *Vorlage.* It is, moreover, often para-

phrastic and therefore needs to be used with caution in textual criticism.

3. Textual Problems.

When extensive texts are copied manually over long periods of time it is inevitable that mistakes are introduced, and it is clear that this has occurred with manuscripts of the Bible. In addition, it is shown by the scrolls at Qumran that whereas accurate and skilled copying existed for some purposes, not all copying was done to equal specifications.

There are certain formal descriptions given of common mistakes that occur accidentally in copying. The term *dittography* is used for the writing twice of an element (varying in extent from a letter to a section) that should only appear once. The converse is *haplography*, which occurs when something that should be written twice is written but once. Often this takes place when two similar phrases occur that begin the same *(homoioarcton)* or end the same *(homoioteleuton)*.

However, while many of the variants introduced in manuscripts of the Bible have been accidental, others have clearly been introduced deliberately. A deliberate change may result from the attempt by a scribe to restore a text that is already corrupt, or that the scribe believes to be corrupt, but changes in the text also resulted from theological disputes between different groups.

While most of the Pentateuch is the same in the main witnesses of the MT, SP, Dead Sea Scrolls and LXX, there are also some substantial areas of difference between some of these texts that deserve special attention here.

*3.1. **Chronology.*** At the level of *chronology the texts differ. This is true not only for the ages in the *genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, where the MT, SP and LXX have different schemes, but also in smaller details such as the chronology of the *flood and whether God finished *creation on the seventh (MT) or sixth day (thus LXX, SP, Peshitta) in Genesis 2:2. The texts also have different ways of reckoning the length of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt (Ex 12:40). There are certainly signs of inner-Greek alteration of chronology (witness the division of Greek witnesses to the dates of Methuselah's life), but the appearance of variant chronologies in the SP suggests that the basic chronology of the LXX also goes back to a Hebrew *Vorlage*. The SP's chronology of the antediluvian patriarchs must be partially secondary, since it seems designed so that Jared, Methuselah and Lamech all die in the flood.

*3.2. **LXX Exodus 35—40.*** In the second account of the *tabernacle in Exodus 35—40, the LXX has a text significantly shorter than the MT and SP, and also with differences of order. In this case the variants of the LXX are thought by Gooding to go back essentially to the process of translation and transmission of the LXX, though this is not universally accepted and scholars differ as to whether they class this as an issue of literary or textual criticism. However, due to the complex state of the end of the text of LXX Exodus, caution is required in its use for textual criticism.

*3.3. **Order.*** There are some smaller differences of order. The most significant of these is that, in contrast to the MT and LXX, the SP and seemingly 4QpaleoExod^{m} place Exodus 30:1-10 (the account of the incense *altar) between Exodus 26:35 and 26:36. Both the locations of the SP and the MT have their own logic, and the wording is not affected.

4. Synthesis.

There is little dispute that from at least the beginning of the second century A.D. the tradition from which the MT derives has been handed down with extreme care. On the other hand, several centuries before this there seem to be significant variations between witnesses, such as the proto-Masoretic, proto-Samaritan and LXX-type texts. The second and third centuries B.C. could then be seen as a time when a variety of texts was allowed within Judaism, before the proto-Masoretic text gradually gained the ascendancy witnessed in the Masada texts (from A.D. 73 or before), which are almost all proto-Masoretic. The proto-Masoretic text thus pushed out the other texts so that they survived only outside Judaism. However, according to the numbers of manuscripts found at Qumran, it would seem that texts of the proto-Masoretic type were already in some form of ascendancy by the second century B.C. and that by then the stricter spelling conventions of the MT had been fixed. Since the somewhat later MT contains so many forms that agree with reconstructed forms from comparative Semitic philology, it must have been based on a reliable source. This should be borne in mind when comparing the proto-Ma-

soretic text and other texts, since at least at the level of vocalization the Alexandrian Jews who translated the LXX do not seem to have had so firm a tradition. This difference in reliability could well be explained if, with Tov, we suppose that the proto-Masoretic text arose from inside a group regarded as authoritative within Judaism.

Another model to explain the variety of texts has been the theory of local texts, most recently expounded by F. M. Cross. For the Pentateuch, according to this theory, the proto-Samaritan manuscripts reflect a text type from Palestine, the LXX-type manuscripts reflect a text type from Egypt and the proto-Masoretic manuscripts reflect a text type from Babylonia. This tripartite local division looks similar to the divisions made for NT Greek manuscripts, but while there may be some truth in the fact that certain text types flourished in certain locations, the association of the proto-Masoretic text with Babylonia is without evidence and, if the *Letter of Aristeas* is to be believed, the *Vorlage* of the LXX Pentateuch came from Palestine. The situation is also more complex, and a simple tripartite classification does little to explain the nonaligned texts from Qumran. In principle, however, the theory that texts were restricted to localities does explain how variant texts could have arisen without mutual interference.

5. Method.

Frequently textual criticism is presented as a science governed by strict rules of interpretation or maxims that lead the scholar to the right result. One of these is the rule *lectio difficilior potior,* "the more difficult reading is the preferable." This is sometimes explained to mean that "the more difficult reading to derive from the other readings is the original one." However, Tov evaluates such maxims in use for OT textual criticism negatively. In fact, in most texts where there are two possible variants, good and contrary explanations can be given for the originality of each. The textual critic gains insight only by experience and by acquaintance with a number of cases in witnesses where the direction of origin of the variant is much clearer.

The textual critic needs to be aware of the tendency for certain letters to be confused. These include *kaph* and *beth, yodh* and *waw,* and *resh* and *daleth* in the later, square script. However, the textual critic must also have an awareness of the shape of letters in the paleo-Hebrew script, since some letters looked similar in that script but no longer look similar in the familiar square script.

A textual critic needs to remember that a correct reading may be contained in any witness but through experience will also perceive that not all witnesses contain good readings with equal frequency. Given the frequent ambiguity of internal criteria for deciding between readings, a textual critic must sometimes resort to evaluating variant readings purely on the quality of the witnesses in which they appear. In this connection it should be noted at the level of generalization that the MT in diagnostic readings more frequently shows signs of originality, and therefore its witness pitted against another in an otherwise ambiguous case is to be preferred. However, this generalization should not be made into a law. Another aid to deciding the originality of a reading is the grouping of witnesses against each other. A reading contained in two witnesses that are otherwise typologically far apart, as in the case of the MT and the LXX of Exodus, if not clearly secondary on internal grounds, has a strong case for originality. However, different textual groups may share secondary readings, and that a variant is shared by different textual groups does not on its own demonstrate its originality.

In treating the versions it is important to consider each version and its method of translation as a whole before using its text critically. It is clear that this has not been done sufficiently in the production of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* Its apparatus should therefore not be used without further confirmation as a witness to the text of a version.

See also FORM CRITICISM; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; SOURCE CRITICISM; TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM; WRITING.

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P. J. Williams

THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY

Biblical law attempted to protect individuals from the unwarranted removal or destruction of their property. To that end, pentateuchal law specified various punishments for acts that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, unlawfully deprived one member of the community from his or her own legal property. Even beyond that, the biblical laws sought to create a certain ethos in Israel, one that promoted the value of human life over material property and that encouraged a right relationship with God and one's neighbor. By thus promoting and balancing justice and fairness, the biblical laws concerning theft and deprivation of property enabled Israel to enjoy the harmony and material well-being intended by God.

1. Categories of Theft and Deprivation of Property
2. Penalties for Theft and Deprivation of Property
3. Theology, Ideology and Morality in the Property Laws

1. Categories of Theft and Deprivation of Property.

***1.1. Theft, Stealing, Burglary (Heb* gnb).** The most frequent Hebrew root in the general semantic range of theft, and the one used in the *Decalogue's prohibition (Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19) is *gnb*. Rabbinic tradition (Westbrook, 15) holds that this root has the connotation of taking by stealth and deception, as opposed to "robbery," which is done openly using threat of violence (see 1.2 below). This analysis generally holds true for the occurrences of *gnb* in the Pentateuch except for kidnapping (lit. "stealing a person"), which presumably does involve use of force (Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7). Rachel stole the *teraphim* when Laban was away shearing sheep (Gen 31:19); *Jacob *stole the heart of* Laban in the metaphorical sense of *deceiving* him (Gen 31:20); predatory animals steal sheep when a shepherd sleeps (Gen 31:39); and Jacob tried to preclude the possibility of accusation of theft by keeping in his flock only animals of specific colors different from Laban's, making chicanery seemingly impossible (Gen 30:32-33). Burglars try to break into houses either when no one is home or when the residents are asleep (Ex 22:2-3 [MT 22:1-2]), and Joseph's brothers feared accusation of stealing in the sense of stealthily carrying

away silver (Gen 44:8).

1.2. Robbery (Heb **gzl).** The Hebrew root *gzl,* on the other hand, is a stronger term than *gnb,* taken traditionally as an open act involving threat or use of violence, though this rabbinic view is qualified by B. S. Jackson (8) who sees *gnb* as an individual within the community and *gzl* as a group act of outsiders, and this further qualified by R. Westbrook (17, 23-30) who, rejecting Jackson's "insider-outsider" dichotomy, sees the essence of *gzl* as "abuse of authority." Examples of *gzl* include Abimelech's servants *seizing* a well belonging to Abraham (Gen 21:25) and Laban and his posse threatening to *take by force* his two daughters whom Jacob had married (Gen 31:31).

1.3. Confiscation, Withholding (Heb **ʿšq).** The Hebrew root *ʿšq* is often translated generally with the notion of "oppress" or "exploit", but J. Milgrom (337) argues the meaning is more explicit, referring to such actions as *withholding* wages (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15; Mal 3:5) and *confiscating* pledges in the case of loan default (Ezek 18:7; cf. Deut 24:6, 10-14). It is used in parallel with *gzl* as an act of abuse of power ("Do not confiscate *[ʿšq]* from your neighbor nor rob *[gzl]* him," Lev 19:13; "oppressed *[ʿšq]* and robbed *[gzl],*" Deut 28:29; "they covet fields, then rob *[gzl]* . . . and they confiscate *[ʿšq]* a man and his house," Mic 2:2). Like *gzl, ʿšq* can involve the use of open force (to confiscating houses, lands, pledges and persons), but *gzl* is usually an act of the lawless, whereas *ʿšq* is an act by the rich or the powerful that is either technically legal or else is an abuse of power tolerated by (even perpetuated by) legal authorities. Whether or not legal, *ʿšq* is always pitiless and can amount to legally sanctioned robbery.

1.4. Spoil, Plunder (Heb **bzz, šll).** Jacob's sons looted (Heb *bzz*) Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah, taking livestock, wives and children (Gen 34:27-29; cf. Gen 14:11-12). Israelites in the desert feared becoming plunder (*bz,* Num 14:3), though they themselves were sometimes allowed to plunder (Num 31:9-47; Deut 2:35; 20:14).

1.5. Fraud. Fraudulent acts include using dishonest scales (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:15), sending one's cattle to graze another man's field (Ex 22:5 [MT 22:4]), refusal to return an item that was lost and found or else left in bailment with another (Ex 22:7-13 [MT 22:6-12]) and moving a boundary stone (Deut 19:14).

1.6. Usury (Heb **nešek, m/tarbît).** OT laws seek to protect poor Israelites from economic exploitation ensuing from loans to them at interest (Ex 22:25 [MT 22:24]; Lev 25:35-38). Terms for interest are *nešek,* literally "bite," perhaps referring to the interest paid up front to the lender at the beginning of a loan (like "points" on a house loan), and *m/tarbît,* literally "increase," which may refer to interest paid subsequently. Another view is that the former is interest on money, the latter on produce (cf. Loewenstamm, 78-80). The Laws of Eshnunna §§18a-21 (c. 1800 B.C. Babylonia) limited interest rates to 20 percent for money and 33.3 percent for grain, exorbitant rates by modern standards that could easily lead to default, forfeiture and enslavement (Neh 5:3-5; 2 Kings 4:1).

Deuteronomy 23:19-20 appears to condemn interest taking altogether (except to foreigners), not just for the poor, a view put into practice by the medieval church. However, in view of Exodus 22:25 (MT 22:24) and Leviticus 25:35-38, which refer explicitly to the poor, the poor may also be in mind in Deuteronomy 23:19-20 (so Calvin; cf. Sutherland, 3-9). Failure to address the needs of debtors could spawn civil unrest (cf. the defaulting debtors among David's disenfranchised, early followers; 1 Sam 22:2).

2. Penalties for Theft and Deprivation of Property.

2.1. Kidnapping: Execution. Kidnapping, literally "stealing a person" (Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7), generally related to the slave trade (Gen 40:15; cf. Gen 37:18-36; 1 Tim 1:10, where "kidnapper" [Gk *andrapodistēs*] is a term for slave dealers), was punishable by death, whether the victim was found in the thief's possession or whether the victim had been sold into slavery (contrast theft of animals below, where disposal of goods increases the penalty).

2.2. Animal Theft with Disposed of Goods: Four- or Fivefold Restitution (Possible Slavery). Exodus 22:1 (MT 21:37) indicates that a stealer of an ox or sheep that he has slaughtered or sold must return fivefold for the ox, fourfold for the sheep. Multiple restitution for animal theft is probably a result of the importance of animals to an agricultural/pastoral society, for they were not only the herdsman's property but also his livelihood. Stealing these was akin to stealing a carpenter's tools or a fisherman's nets, depriving one of future as well as present benefits. Also, the greater multiple for an ox probably represents its com-

paratively greater importance within the ancient economy (Sprinkle, 134-35). If the thief were too poor to pay full restitution, he could be sold into slavery for up to six years (Ex 22:3 [MT 22:2]; cf. Ex 21:2), the proceeds of his sale going for the restitution. In the ancient Near East an ox was worth more than half the value of a typical slave—in fifth-century B.C. Babylonia, forty shekels as compared with sixty shekels (Sprinkle, 133)—so the owner who had an ox stolen by a poor person would receive less than full multiple restitution. Poor thieves were deterred by potential loss of freedom, rich thieves by the multiple restitutions.

2.3. Animal Theft Without Disposal of Goods: Twofold Restitution. Unlike the case of stealing a person, a distinction of penalty is made between theft where the animal has been disposed of and where it has not. Only twofold restitution is required when the goods were not disposed of. The rationale for this is puzzling since, as B. S. Jackson puts it, a thief caught with the goods is not less guilty, only less successful (Jackson, 134). One possibility is that moral rather than strictly legal considerations come into play: the thief, until he or she had disposed of the goods, was not yet "rooted in sin" (R. Akiba, *t. B. Qam.* 7) and still had the possibility of repentance. Perhaps the lower penalty reflects the hope that this might lead to repentance (for other views, cf. Sprinkle, 135-37; see 2.5 below).

2.4. Theft of Personal Property: Twofold Restitution. When household goods were stolen and the thief was found, twofold restitution was required (Ex 22:7, 9 [MT 22:6, 8]); that is, the object or its value was returned, plus one hundred percent.

2.5. A Thief Who Repents: Reparation/Guilt Offering and Restitution plus Twenty Percent. The priestly law (Lev 6:1-7 [MT 5:20-26]) deals with the case of sacrilege (Heb *m'l*) caused by swearing falsely concerning a deposit, an investment (?), something robbed *(gzl)*, something withheld *('šq)* or something lost. In this case the culprit swears under the self-curse of an oath (see 2.9 below) that he or she has not done this but subsequently "feels guilty" (following Milgrom, 338-45; pace "becomes guilty" [RSV, NASB] or "realize guilt" [NJPS]). The thief then is to make restitution to the person defrauded, adding one-fifth to it as a penalty. Reduction from the usual twofold restitution for theft takes into account his or her repentance (see 2.3-4 above). Besides restitution, which provides satisfaction to the person defrauded, the culprit is to offer a guilt/reparation offering to atone for the offense against God.

2.6. "Theft" of Crops by One's Animals: More Than One Hundred Percent Restitution. When one's animals have grazed a neighbor's fields (Ex 22:5 [MT 22:4])—a form of theft if deliberately driven into the field, but in any case negligence—restitution must be made from the best (or highest value) of the victim's field, resulting in one hundred percent plus compensation for the loss. By replacing the damaged crop at the maximum yield the field could be expected to produce (more than it might actually have produced), the owner of the field has no grounds for complaint even if he suspects the act was deliberate.

2.7. Damages to Animals or Property Due to Negligence: Simple Restitution. Related to the theft laws are laws concerning damages due to negligence, all of which require exact replacement of the loss, with no windfall to the victim. Hence, the owner of a goring ox that fails to take precautions so that it kills a neighbor's ox must make restitution "ox for ox" (Ex 21:36), though the owner is allowed to salvage the value of the carcass. A similar rule applies when negligence regarding an open pit kills a neighbor's animal (Ex 21:33-34). When fire ravages a neighbor's field, in which case, unlike the case of grazing another's field, the negligent party receives no benefit (see 2.6 above), simple restitution (rather than restitution from the "best" of the field) is prescribed (Ex 22:6 [MT 22:5]).

2.8. Damages to Another's Animal Without Negligence: Share the Loss. In Exodus 21:35 two oxen owned by different owners encounter each other, and one gores the other to death unexpectedly. No one was at fault; either ox could have been killed. In this case, rather than making one person bear the whole loss, the law demands splitting the loss between the two parties (a ruling identical with Laws of Eshnunna §53). Finkelstein (23, 36) terms this a primitive form of shared-risk accident insurance following a principle of loss distribution.

2.9. Suspected Theft with No Proof: An Oath but No Restitution. Where evidence was lacking, justice could be left to God through oaths.

2.9.1. Requirement of Oaths. When a bailee claimed an item left with him was stolen, but the bailor suspected it was actually expropriated by the bailee but had no proof, the bailor could

force the bailee to swear an oath, that is, to make a conditional self-curse that he or she did not trespass the neighbor's property (Ex 22:7-8, 11 [MT 22:6-7, 10]). Without solid evidence, the plaintiff could not demand any restitution.

Likewise, in the next case (Ex 22:9 [MT 22:8]) a lost or stolen item is found by the original owner, but the owner cannot prove that the found item is actually his or her property. Again, the owner cannot force the current possessor of the item to return it nor demand multiple restitution, for the owner has no proof. The owner can, however, force the possessor to come to God ("the judges" for *hā'ĕlōhîm* of some English translations is philologically dubious; cf. Sprinkle, 145-48) and can force the accused to swear that he or she did not trespass the neighbor's property (Ex 22:11 [MT 22:10]). The accuser also must swear that he or she is not making false accusation in an attempt to expropriate the property of the accused.

2.9.2. The Rationale Behind Oaths. The use of the oath assumes that even where human courts fail, the divine Judge can punish wrongdoers and is especially inclined to do so in cases of false oaths (cf. Zech 5:2-4). In the process of oath taking, the accused may, under fear of divine wrath, break down and confess the crime or else show guilt by refusing to pronounce the self-curse (interpreted as "God declaring one guilty"; Ex 22:9 [MT 22:8]), in which case the thief must pay twofold (see 2.4 above). Oaths operated similarly in ancient Mesopotamia (van der Toorn, 45-49).

2.9.3. Other Cases Enforced by God, Not State. Even without an oath, threat of divine intervention remains, as when Deuteronomy 25:15 admonishes the Israelites to keep honest scales "so that your days may be prolonged in the land." Similarly, one who moves a boundary stone is declared "cursed" by God (Deut 27:17). Oppressive usury taking and pledge seizing from the poor may lead to imprecatory prayers against the lender and judgment from God (Ex 22:25-27 [MT 22:24-26]), preventing the lender from receiving God's full blessings (Deut 23:19-20 [MT 22:20-21). Apparently the usury "laws" served as moral admonitions rather than state-enforced statutes, since Nehemiah the governor had to cajole rather than command rich Israelites to stop taking interest from poor Israelites, this despite Ezra's having made the Mosaic law the law of the land (Neh 5:1-13; cf. Ezra 7:25-26). Laws that are enforced by God rather than the state are not "laws" in the ordinary, modern sense.

2.10. Accusation of Theft with Proof to the Contrary: No Restitution, No Oath. If the accused could show some exculpatory evidence—as in the case of a bailee suspected of wrongdoing with an animal left in his care who produced evidence of depredation beyond his control (Ex 22:13 [MT 22:12])—then the plaintiff could demand neither restitution nor the taking of an oath. The oath was reserved for cases where evidence was lacking.

3. Theology, Ideology and Morality in the Property Laws.

Every society has condemned theft as disruptive of the social order, and there are many similarities between Israel's laws/morality and its neighbors' (van der Toorn). Nonetheless, the Pentateuch, by placing theft in the *Decalogue (Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19) as one of the kinds of behavior fundamentally incompatible with a *covenant relationship with Yahweh, underscores that theft is not only a "crime" but also a "sin" against God, as is the coveting that can lead to it (Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21). From a theological perspective, unjustly depriving others of goods is to deprive them of the blessings and tangible benefits that God meant for his people to enjoy and is therefore an undermining of divine purposes (Wright, 136-38). Even where deprivation comes legally as a result of economic ups and downs, it was the divine purpose that on the sabbatical year (Deut 15:1-3; 31:10) there be a remission of debts, and on the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:39-55) additionally a release from slavery and a restoration of ancestral land to the original owners (*see* Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, Jubilee). Permanent deprivation was thus contrary to the divine will.

In some ways the Bible seems lenient concerning theft. In the ancient Near East, theft of an animal could require up to thirtyfold restitution and the death of the thief who could not pay (Laws of Hammurabi §§8, 265; Hittite Laws §§57-59, 63, 67, 69). The Laws of Eshnunna (§13) require the execution of the housebreaker at night, and the Laws of Hammurabi (§21) requires any housebreaker to be executed. Biblical law, as M. Greenberg points out, differs from ancient Near Eastern laws in limiting restitution to at most fivefold and not allowing a death penalty for property crimes. Only "stealing a person" and taking an item under the ban (Deut

7:26; 13:17; cf. Josh 6:18; 7:15) are capital offenses, never ordinary theft of property. Indeed, biblical law, unlike cuneiform law, protects the life of the housebreaking thief (Ex 22:1-4 [MT 21:37—22:3]) by pronouncing bloodguilt on anyone who murders the thief except in what might be termed an act of self-defense at night. Hence, biblical law values human life above property to a greater degree than cuneiform law.

Similarly, the goring oxen laws show the value of human life over property. Unlike similar cuneiform laws, biblical law sharply distinguishes between the case where an ox gores an ox (Ex 21:35-36), involving mere property, and where an ox gores a human (Ex 21:28-31), when transcendent life value is involved. The latter requires the execution of the goring ox, whereas the former does not. Moreover, if negligence is involved in an ox goring a person to death, the owner must ransom his life in order to avoid execution, thus possibly giving an economic windfall to the victim's family (he will give all he has to save his life), whereas negligence resulting in the death of a neighbor's ox results in replacement value of the animal and no more, with the owner of the goring ox even keeping the carcass. These differences underscore the supreme value of human life over property in biblical law.

Moral and religious admonition is wedded with legal procedure in these laws. Creditors were admonished to respect the dignity and property rights of debtors by not barging into the house to seize a debtor's pledge but were to wait outside for the debtor to bring it out (Deut 24:10-11). Out of compassion, creditors are encouraged not to seize as pledge a person's only cloak needed to keep one warm or only millstone needed for preparing the flour essential for subsistence (Ex 22:26-27 [MT 22:25-26]; Deut 24:6, 12-13). Biblical law provides for the possibility of repentance and placating both persons and God (see 2.3, 5 above), and threatens wrongdoers with divine punishment even when they escape human justice (see 2.9 above).

By promoting a sense of justice and fairness—punishing thieves both rich and poor, tempering legality with compassion, encouraging repentance by reducing penalties when it occurred, compensating those who suffer loss by negligence, endorsing the sharing of losses when no one was at fault and placing wrongs in the hands of God when beyond human courts—these laws were meant to assure harmony and material well-being in Israel.

See also BODILY INJURIES, MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER; DECALOGUE; LAW; WEALTH AND POVERTY.

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THEOGONY. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION.

THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH

In the end, it is the OT's theological vision that explains why it has survived for more than two millennia and has shaped the world in the process. To a large extent that theological vision is given decisive shaping by the Torah (the Pentateuch). The univocal presentation of God in that block of material establishes the theological parameters for the rest of the OT. So much is this the case that while OT theologians cannot agree on a "center" for OT theology, G. Hasel could still assert without any real fear of contradiction that God himself is the center. Throughout the thirty-nine books one concept of deity is pervasive: God is the one transcendent Creator. Even in the wisdom literature, which foils so many proposals for a "center," there is no question about the concept of God the writers espouse. In part, this underlying consistency in the rest of the OT is due to the consistency

within the Torah. There is complexity in the picture, even mystery, but not contradiction. Throughout, God is the transcendent Creator who is passionately concerned that his creatures experience the good for which he created them. Because of this consistency, it is possible to talk about a theology of the Pentateuch, a single understanding that underlies differing emphases in the different books.

1. Theological Worldview
2. God
3. The World
4. Humanity
5. Sin
6. Salvation

1. Theological Worldview.

Beneath everything else the Pentateuch does and says is a view of reality that is radically different from that of any of Israel's neighbors. While the history of religions school of the late nineteenth century sought to deny this point of view, W. F. Albright and his students brought it back into currency in the middle years of the twentieth century. It was most succinctly expressed by G. E. Wright, who maintained that because of the manifest differences between the religion of Israel and that of Israel's neighbors, the kind of evolutionary development proposed by J. Wellhausen was impossible. Unfortunately for his point of view, Wright was not able to offer an intellectually consistent explanation for the origin of this supposed uniqueness. Following Albright's lead, he suggested that God had revealed himself in certain great historic events upon which the Hebrew people had reflected and from which they derived their theology. The weak point of that argument is that Wright admitted that the reports of those supposedly revelatory events as found in the Bible have been heavily adapted and embellished, so much so that we can only speak generally about what may or may not have taken place. Wright's critics, especially J. Barr and B. Childs, pointed out that events that cannot be reconstructed from the data now extant can hardly serve to explain a unique theology.

As a result of this inability to explain where the supposed uniqueness came from, there has been a major shift away from the Albright-Wright point of view in recent years. Since it is once again assumed that Israelite *religion must have developed in an evolutionary fashion much like the other West Semitic religions, it is not thought possible that it contained any truly unique elements. But much of this argument revolves around what constitutes uniqueness. If it can be shown that the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten demanded the worship of one god, does that show that Israelite monotheism was not unique? If it can be shown that Aristotle taught the existence of an "Unmoved Mover," does that show that the Israelite concept of transcendence was not unique? Does the existence of certain Assyrian records claiming that a god directed the activities of a certain dynasty show that the Hebrew idea of God revealing himself in human history is not unique?

These and other examples that could be cited might be used to show such a thing, *if* uniqueness is thought to mean that an idea never existed outside of Israel. However, all these cases were isolated and momentary. They appeared and disappeared, making little or no impact upon their cultures. The prevailing religious point of view in Egypt, Greece or Mesopotamia from 3000 B.C. to A.D. 300 is very different from these points of view, and it is diametrically opposite to that of Israel as reported in the Bible. To this extent Wright was entirely correct. Even if one were to grant the point of T. L. Thompson that the religion depicted in the OT never existed until it was artificially created in the Second Temple period, we are still left with the inescapable fact that nowhere else in the world is there a religion that is consistently and thoroughly constructed on the principles that OT religion is. If we choose to explain it as the product of evolutionary development, we are still faced with the fact that nowhere else in the world does evolutionary religion lead to this result. It is in this sense that the theology of the Pentateuch and, by extension, the OT, is unique: if certain of the parts may be found elsewhere in isolation, nowhere else are these and many other elements put together in this exclusive, consistent and thoroughgoing way.

1.1. Transcendence. In contrast to all the cultures neighboring Israel, the Pentateuch insists that God is other than the physical world. He is not to be identified with the *creation in any way. This parameter is set at once in Genesis 1 and is maintained throughout. God spoke the world into existence. It is neither an extension of him nor an effusion from him. Thus it is forbidden to represent him in the form of any cre-

ated thing (Ex 20:4-5; Deut 5:8-9). Nor is this prohibition a minor issue in the theology of the Pentateuch. The making of a bull *idol is the first breach of the covenant, one that is serious enough to have threatened the destruction of the people (Ex 32:1-10; *see* Golden Calf). *Aaron and the people clearly saw no disparity between *Moses' worshiping the invisible Yahweh on the mountain while they worshiped the visible Yahweh in the valley. That was the way of Egyptian religion, as it was for all the other religions of the ancient Near East. But those religions all emphasized the essential continuity of the divine with the cosmos. This Sinai religion was different in insisting on a radical discontinuity between these two. Especially as that theology reaches its climax in Deuteronomy, the prohibition of idolatry assumes an even more important position. To engage in this practice became the key evidence of disloyalty to Israel's God (cf. the first curse in Deut 27:15). It is difficult to imagine why this should be the case except for the overwhelming importance that the Israelite theologians attached to the idea of transcendence.

A compelling argument can be put forward that every other major conception about God to be found in the Pentateuch has its rootage in this idea. Iconoclasm has already been mentioned. It is not accidental that there are only three iconoclastic religions in the world (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and that all three spring from the OT. The same three religions, and only these three, teach monotheism. Why should they alone insist upon the oneness of God? Again, it is because of their dependence upon the same source, the OT. Why does this source alone succeed in conceiving of God in this way? And why was Akhenaten's attempt so abortive, surviving his death by less than a half dozen years? Surely the answer is transcendence. If the divine is conceived of as being continuous with this world, as Akhenaten and every other religious thinker in the ancient Near East did, monotheism is a logical impossibility. As this world is multiple, so must be the divine. On the other hand, once one grants that the divine transcends every other entity in the cosmos, then unity becomes a necessity, for there can be only one entity that is truly other than all others. Again, this idea of monotheism that pervades the OT has its origins in the Pentateuch. It is implicit in the first commandment (Ex 20:3) and is made explicit in the Shema (Deut 6:4; cf. also Ex 8:10 [MT 8:6]; 9:14; Deut 4:35, 39).

Fundamental to the Pentateuch's idea of divine transcendence is the self-existence of God. The remarkable declaration of Exodus 3:14 underlines this point. When Moses asked for the name of God as a part of his attempt to avoid going to Egypt, the Lord responded with much more than Moses asked, not with a label, but with an announcement of his identity, "I AM WHO I AM" (NRSV). Here is a being who exists in himself. He is neither dependent on any other nor derivative from any other. In all times and all places, he is. No other being in the universe can make that claim. All other beings are contingent on something or someone else for their existence. They exist only because of the prior existence of something else. As Aristotle recognized, only one being could conceivably say "I am" without reference to anything else.

But the Pentateuch's idea of transcendence differs from that of the classical Greek philosophers. And this difference almost certainly explains why the Pentateuch continues to shape world thought while Aristotle's had little impact even in its own day. The difference is the Bible's successful coupling of transcendence and personality. The Greek philosophers could imagine something utterly other than the cosmos but could only conceive of it as impersonal. The theologians of the rest of the world could conceive of the gods as personal, but their gods were actually only the forces of nature, society and psyche wearing humanlike masks. The stories of the gods never represent the gods as full-orbed, multifaceted personalities. They are a caricature of personality, the divine made in the image of the human. The Pentateuch succeeds in doing what no other theological document before or since has done: it describes the transcendent One as fully personal. The God described in the Pentateuch is not an imperfect image of the human. Instead, humans have ultimate value because they reflect the personal *image of their Creator. Thus, individual human people come to have incredible value in the pages of the Torah because their personhood is derived from that of the One who stands behind all things.

The lifeless transcendence of the Greeks had no power to sway the hearts of human persons, no personal authority to compel their wills. On the other hand, the one-dimensional personalities who peopled the myths were not only inca-

pable of escaping their own destinies as parts of the cosmos but were also incapable of entering into meaningful relationships with their worshipers. Where else but in the Pentateuch could there be found such a description of the transcendent one as that in Exodus: "I am the LORD, I am the LORD, the merciful and gracious God. I am slow to anger and rich in unfailing love and faithfulness. I show this unfailing love to many thousands by forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. Even so, I do not leave sin unpunished, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and the fourth generations" (Ex 34:6-7 NLT)? But even if a similar statement could be found concerning some other deity, what could not be found is an entire body of religious literature that is consistently and thoroughly shaped by this concept of one transcendent person.

How are we to explain this unique worldview? The Pentateuch nowhere presents it as the result of human reason applied to the everyday routine. Neither does it present it in some logically organized form. The text conveys to us that this theology was the result of a fairly complex process. That process involved above everything else direct, intelligible verbal communication by God to individual humans. That communication came in a number of ways. In some cases it was audible, as when a representation of God, sometimes referred to as "the messenger (angel) of the Lord," spoke with someone (*Abraham, Gen 18—19; *Jacob, Gen 32) or when the Israelites heard God speaking from Mount Sinai (Deut 4:32-33). In other cases the communication was in a dream (Jacob, Gen 28:12-15). In some cases it seems to have been directly to the ear of the hearer (e.g., Moses, Num 12:8: "mouth to mouth"; see also Ex 33:11; Deut 34:10: "face to face").

This divine speech was always in the context of unique human experiences. God spoke to *Adam and *Eve in the context of the garden and of their sin. He spoke to *Cain in the context of his temptation and subsequent sin. He spoke to *Noah in the context of the *flood. He spoke to the patriarchs in the context of their journeys both in compliance with and defiance of his will. He spoke to Moses and the Hebrew people in the context of the Egyptian captivity, Sinai and the *wilderness wandering. Nowhere does the Pentateuch say that its distinctive worldview was the result of human speculation upon a limited number of dramatic incursions by the divine into the Israelite experience. It insists that God spoke to Israel and its representatives consistently and constantly, giving divine interpretations of what he was doing and why. It further makes clear that God never spoke to them in abstract terms unrelated to the specific realities of life. In other words, the Pentateuch maintains that its distinctive view of reality was communicated to Israel by God in the context of life experience. It should not be surprising that no place else do we have even the intimation of such a process. A unique content demanded a unique means of communication. Furthermore, we should recognize that if the Pentateuch's claims about God and the nature of reality are correct, there is no way unaided human speculation upon the cosmos could possibly arrive at an understanding of that reality. Such speculation could not go beyond the limits of the cosmos and could certainly not reach to that which seems logically contradictory to the cosmos: a transcendent person. The nature of the cosmos would lead a speculator to conclude that forces rather than people are fundamental and that continuity, not transcendence, is the vital principle.

1.2. The Gender of God. The idea that God is a transcendent person poses some difficulties in communication, especially in the context of the ancient Near East. Obviously, even if the Hebrew language had provision for a neuter gender, which it does not, it could not have been used, for this God is not a force, an it, a thing. He is a person, and in human language it is impossible to speak of a person in gender-free terms. But if it was necessary to use gendered terms to describe this transcendent person, what terms should be used? The Pentateuch, as well as the entire rest of the Bible, uses masculine pronouns and terms exclusively. Why is this? It is commonly suggested that this was a result of a patriarchal society, using *patriarchal* in a wholly pejorative sense. Because men ruled the society, they arrogantly constructed God in their own image. However, reflection shows that this is much too easy an answer. In fact, every society in the ancient Near East was patriarchal. Yet the other societies regularly ascribed great power and prestige to female deities. In fact, in many of them the most popular deity, both among men and women, was the mother, or fertility, goddess. Thus, it will not do to explain the He-

brew choice as the result of social prejudice. The Israelites were no more prejudiced in favor of males than any of their peers. In fact, comparison of their *law code with that of surrounding nations suggested they may have been less prejudiced in that direction.

In that case, why the exclusively male terminology for God? It seems likely that this is the only alternative left if both personhood and transcendence are to be preserved. While sexuality is a prominent feature of many male deities in the ancient Near East, it is not so with all of them. On the other hand, it is not possible to find any female deities where sexuality is not the prominent feature. The sexuality of the female deities constantly underlines their oneness with the creation, perhaps because of the oneness of the mother and the child. If it is important to stress the separateness of God from creation, then it is impossible to describe him in anything other than male terms. However, this is *not* to suggest that maleness is somehow superior to femaleness; it is only a device to preserve both the transcendence and the personhood of God. God is *never* described in genital terms, and he never acts sexually male. All that is good and true of both genders is a reflection of the character and nature of the one God.

2. God.

The concept of God in the Pentateuch everywhere shows the impact of the doctrine of transcendence. In contrast to the gods shaped by the worldview of continuity (the divine, the natural and the human all co-inhering in each other), this deity is never described in terms of identity with any created thing. He creates without conflict and according to a preexisting plan. He has a purpose for creation. He is suprasexual. He cannot be manipulated by sympathetic magic. He is motivated by love that is not tainted with self interest. He is absolutely reliable. He promulgates and adheres to a single standard of right and wrong. He reveals himself by involving himself in unique, nonrecurring events in time and space and through relationships with unique people in time and space.

2.1. Character. The Pentateuch describes the character of God as remarkably consistent. This does not mean he is always predictable. He is never depicted as being within the grasp of mere human reason. But from the outset he is shown to be absolutely true to his word. He can be depended upon. There is only one situation in which he can be depended on *not* to keep his word: if he has announced destruction because of sin and is given almost any good reason to change his mind, he will gladly do so. The best of such reasons is *repentance on the part of the sinner, but another is intercession (Gen 18:16-33; Ex 32:11-14). Furthermore, it is clear that the Lord puts a high premium on *ethical relationships among people. Just as it is impossible to manipulate him through the environment, so he does not seek to manipulate his people and does not sanction such behavior among them. He has a passionate concern for right treatment of other people. These characteristics of God are described in several key concepts.

2.1.1. Holy. The concept of holiness in the ancient world was an unremarkable one. While the term is not uncommon in the other Semitic languages, neither does it occur particularly frequently. It describes that which sets apart the divine, and that which pertains to the divine, from the common or ordinary (*see* Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean). It has no particular moral connotation, as it could not, applying equally to such generally beneficent gods as El and such predatory gods as Resheph (pestilence).

Thus it pertains more to matters of perceived essence than it does to character. It describes a god's otherness. There is one sense, however, in which "holy" does have implications for character. Whatever belongs to a particular deity is expected to share the character of that god or goddess. Thus the "holy men" or "holy women" of the Canaanite temples were expected to be sexually promiscuous, just as their divine masters or mistresses were (Deut 23:18 [MT 23:19]; cf. also Gen 38:21).

A quite different situation prevails in the Pentateuch. To be sure, one of the very earliest occurrences of "holy" does stress the essential difference between the divine and the ordinary. When Moses met God at the burning bush, God's first words were to command Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on "holy ground" (Ex 3:5). The dirt on the soles of Moses' shoes was ordinary dirt, whereas God's presence in the bush made the dirt immediately around it of a different quality. It might also be argued that the occurrence in Exodus 19:6 is similar to the general usage when it promises that the Hebrews will become a holy nation if

they keep God's covenant. That is, they will belong exclusively to God and will be capable of being used only for his purposes. But the doctrine of transcendence changes all that. There is only one being in the universe who can rightly be called "holy." Thus it becomes possible for the first time to describe "holy" behavior: it is the behavior of the only Holy One.

What is that behavior? As with all the rest of their theology, the Israelites learned this through the incarnational mode of revelation. When the people of Israel entered into a *covenant with God, they were called upon to live in certain ways. These ways encompassed all of life: religious, civil, social, environmental and personal. Why were these stipulations placed upon Israel? Because, as was true of all suzerainty treaties, the stipulations expressed the wishes of the covenant lord. To relate to this covenant lord one must live in keeping with his desires. But the biblical covenant takes these requirements a step beyond mere wishes. This is made clear in the elaboration of the covenant that appears in the block of material following the *book of the covenant (Ex 20—24). That unit extends from Exodus 25 through Numbers 9. The present book divisions obscure the unity, but study of the dates given in Exodus 19:1; 40:1-2; Numbers 1:1; 9:1 and 10:11 makes it plain that the material from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10 is intended to be read together. When that is done, the prominence of the concept of holiness becomes apparent. From the descriptions of the *tabernacle, its furnishings and service (Ex 25—31; 35—40), through the manual of *sacrifices (Lev 1—9; 16) and the so-called Holiness Code (Lev 17—27), words having to do with holiness occur more than two hundred times.

What emerges when these words are studied is that God is calling his covenant partners to manifest a certain kind of character in all areas of life because that is his holy character. So the Israelites are expected to honor their parents because their Lord is holy; they are expected to be careful of their neighbor's reputation because their Lord is holy; they are expected to preserve the sanctity of *sex in heterosexual marriage because God is holy. In short, having become covenant partners with the holy God, they not only belong exclusively to him but are also expected to live in ways appropriate to his character. The most succinct statement of this point is to be found in Leviticus 22:31-33:

> Thus you shall keep my commandments and observe them: I am the Lord. You shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel: I am the Lord. I sanctify you, I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord.

Thus the Israelites learned that "holy" describes not merely the essence of deity but also the character of deity. And as there is only one holy being, so there is only one holy character. And although we humans cannot share that essence, we *can* share that character and indeed are expected to, although it is not as simple as the Israelites first thought it would be. In the process of trying to live out God's holy character, the Hebrews learned a great deal about their own character.

2.1.2. Unfailing Love. The most significant thing the Israelites learned about the holy character of God is that it is "unfailing love." Just as "holy" is an unremarkable Semitic word that the Pentateuch invests with remarkable value, so is the word translated here as "unfailing love." This is the Hebrew word *ḥesed.* So far the root is not known to have been used in ancient Near Eastern literature outside the Hebrew Bible, whereas in that corpus *ḥesed* and its related words occur nearly 275 times. While the word itself only occurs about twenty times in the Pentateuch, the concept is clearly rooted there. N. Glueck argued that the term had special covenantal significance. More recent studies by F. I. Andersen and K. D. Sakenfeld have shown that its meaning is more broadly based than Glueck recognized. It speaks of a favor given to someone who does not have a right to that favor by someone who does not have to give that favor. As such, there is no single English word that captures all the connotations. In differing contexts translations can range all the way from "kindness" to "mercy."

This facet of God's character is made abundantly clear in the Pentateuch. Lot testified that this was the only reason he escaped Sodom (Gen 19:19). Jacob admitted that this was the only reason he escaped the conniving of Laban (Gen 32:10). *Joseph was able to survive all the human treachery that befell him because of God's *ḥesed.* But even prior to these verbal occurrences, God's *ḥesed* had been manifest. For this reason Adam and Eve were not simply destroyed on the spot, nor was the race completely

wiped out in the flood. This is why God came to Abraham with completely undeserved promises and continued to keep those promises to the succeeding generations. Moses knew this when he declared in the Song of the Sea (Ex 15:1-18) that it was only as a result of "unfailing love" that the Lord brought his people through the sea and put them on the road to the Promised Land (Ex 15:13). Later Moses observed that God keeps his *ḥesed* with thousands of those who love him (Ex 20:6), and in Deuteronomy 7:9 he clarified that he meant thousands of generations.

But nowhere is this aspect of God's holy character made clearer than in the incident of the golden calf (Ex 32—34). At the moment when God was giving the instructions whereby the people would be able to have his presence in their midst, they succumbed to their fears and rushed ahead to fulfill their needs for themselves. As a result, they broke the blood oath they had made just a few weeks earlier in which they called down death on themselves if they broke the covenant (Ex 24:8). In simple justice God was obligated to destroy them. But in fact he invited Moses to intercede for them by saying that he would destroy them if Moses would "let me alone" (Ex 32:10). In fact, Moses would not do that and reminded God that he had obligated himself in the promises to Abraham and his descendents. Nothing more is needed to move God not to carry out his justice (Ex 32:13-14). (While it is true that some who were apparently ringleaders were killed by the Levites at Moses' command, it is still true that the nation as a whole was spared when in justice it should have been destroyed.) The conclusion of the experience was that Moses received a revelation of God in which what Moses had inferred was made explicit. This is the passage in Exodus 34:6-7, which was quoted above. This passage is quoted or alluded to at least a half dozen times in later parts of the OT, showing how it became the foundational understanding of Israel's God. As such, it may have a better right to be called Israel's creed than does Deuteronomy 26:5-9, as it was styled by von Rad. The opening statement declares that the Lord is the gracious and compassionate God and then goes on to explain that appellation with two characteristics, one negative and one positive. On the one hand, God does not become angry easily; on the other, he is full of *ḥesed* and "truth" (see 2.1.3 below). In contrast to the other gods of the ancient world, this God is characterized by a self-denying faithfulness to his people that is inexplicable in terms of any analogy with features of this world. This was not merely a mother's self-sacrifice for her children nor a father's self-denial for them. It was something that described the very essence of the being of the divine.

2.1.3. Truth. Another feature of the character of God, one often occurring in company with *ḥesed,* is truth, or faithfulness. The Hebrew root involved is *ʾāman,* "to be stable, reliable, secure." The nominal/adjectival derivative is *ʾemet,* "true, truth." What the Pentateuch insists is that this God is true to his people in unheard-of ways. He is true to his covenant promises long after there is any legal obligation to do so. He is also true to promises that have no legal basis, such as those made to Abraham. It is that truth that Moses appealed to in Exodus 32 when he declared that God could not destroy the Israelites even though they had brought the covenant curses on themselves. God had promised Abraham a nation, and God, being who he is, could not break the promise. He is also true to his declarations about the results of sin. The serpent may declare that God lied when he said that eating the tree would result in death, but the writers of the Pentateuch demonstrate that God's statement was entirely dependable. This idea of God's truth has very significant implications. If the sole Creator of the universe, the transcendent One, is absolutely reliable, absolutely true to his word, then it begins to be possible to think of that which is true outside of any creature's wishes or perceptions. There is a foundation laid here for the concept of objective truth.

2.1.4. Just. A third expression of God's holy character is his consistently "right" behavior. In the Pentateuch, two Hebrew roots are used to express this idea. The more frequent of the two is *šāpaṭ,* "to govern, order." God is depicted as the one who governs his creation in a "right" way, that is, a way that is in keeping with the nature of the creature being governed. Thus God's "ordinances" *(mišpāṭîm)* are always the right way for people to live. He does not command them to do things that are not right. The second root is *ṣdq,* which most often occurs in the nominal/adjectival forms *ṣaddîq, ṣedeq* and *ṣᵉdāqâ,* "right, righteous, righteousness." In Genesis 18 the concept is expressed in the rhetorical question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right

[mišpāṭ]?" (Gen 18:25). This is a particularly instructive example of this concept. What was right or just in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah? If only a handful of people in those great cities had not corrupted their way of living, would not the destruction of the cities on account of the sins of the mass of people have been the "right" thing? Clearly that was not the case, for God remained before Abraham in an invitation for Abraham to intercede on behalf of the faithful few. The right thing, or the just thing, for this God to do was to spare the many for the sake of the few. God will unfailingly do the right thing, and the right thing will always err on the side of mercy.

Another expression of this characteristic of God in the Torah is found in Deuteronomy 32:4, where in the Song of Moses the unblemished (perfect) justice and rightness of God's behavior is compared favorably with the perverse and crooked behavior of humans (Deut 32:5). In paganism, the gods are simply super-sized versions of humanity, both more just and more perverse than humans. The gods are thus made in the image of humans. But the Torah insists that God does not share all the characteristics of humans. Humans were made in his image but have fallen away from that image because we refused to be subject to him.

2.1.5. Purity. The idea of God's purity is closely related to the idea of his essential oneness. The Pentateuch is at pains to establish the fact that the divine cannot be subdivided either in character or in identity. God is not partly true and partly deceptive; he is not partly beneficent and partly cruel; he is not partly transcendent and partly continuous. He is not partly clean (constructive) and partly unclean (destructive). At the same time, it is clearly important for humans to learn that only that which stems from God and his creative plan is clean. What is unclean in the world is that which is in defiance to God and his plan. This is not an implicit dualism in which positive and negative forces are eternal in the cosmos, each having a real essence in itself. Rather, the Pentateuch treats the unclean merely as a negation, an absence. God alone is self-existent and eternal, and he is wholly good, wholly clean.

The importance of this idea in the Pentateuch can be seen in the number of covenant stipulations given to teaching this point. Many of them seem bizarre to modern readers, whose ideas of cleanness are almost wholly physical. It comes as a new thought that death and all things associated with it (such as buzzards, shellfish [which live on the seafloor, where death filters down] and pigs [which eat anything, including carrion]) should be unclean because death is the ultimate negation of God's creative plan. Similarly, it is hard for us to grasp that dualism is an idea so dangerous that the Hebrew learners would be required to symbolize rejection of it by refusing to wear clothing made of two or more kinds of cloth.

2.2. Roles. As W. Brueggemann has pointed out, the Hebrew language is a language of action, with verbal forms defining the basic outlook and approach of the language. Thus it is not surprising that the understanding of God in the Pentateuch is expressed in terms of what he does as well as who he is. It is possible to identify at least five prominent roles assigned to God in this block of material: Creator, Sovereign, Father, Redeemer and Judge.

2.2.1. Creator. God's role as sole Creator of the universe is established from the beginning of the Pentateuch (*see* Creation). There is no preexisting chaos from which he emerges, nor is he the creation of some earlier gods to solve a problem they cannot solve. He exists alone and creates solely as an expression of his own plan and purpose. The recurring phrase "It was good" in Genesis 1 demonstrates this point. Clearly this is not a statement that the creation was morally good. Rather, it states that the outcome was in keeping with what the artist had envisioned before the actual work of creation had begun. As stated above, the fact that the creation was spoken into existence establishes that the creation is neither an effusion of nor an emanation from the Creator. There is a clear distinction between the Creator and that which was created. God created in an orderly and progressive fashion with his ultimate purpose the creation of humans, whom he could vest with responsibility in the creation, on whom he could confer his blessing and with whom he could have fellowship. Given the personal nature of God, it is not surprising that human persons should be the highest expression of his creative purpose.

In contrast with other ancient Near Eastern stories of the origins of the cosmos, *sexuality plays no part in creation. God does not produce anything by sexual activity. Here again is an evi-

dence of transcendence. The fact that sex is a part of the cosmos, as the Bible clearly recognizes ("male and female he created them" [Gen 1:27]), does not mean that it is a part of ultimate reality. Theologizing that arises from speculation on the cosmos can always be expected to find sexuality at the heart of existence. The Pentateuch does not.

A similar situation exists with regard to conflict. Almost all other origin stories in the world claim that creation was the outcome of a cosmic struggle between forces that are constructive of life as we know it and forces destructive of such life ("good" and "evil" being almost wholly defined in such terms). Not so in Genesis. There is no conflict whatsoever in either of the versions of the creation story found there. God creates all things in serene harmony. There is no opposition to him. All things exist solely as an expression of his will. There is no cosmic principle of evil to oppose his creative purposes. Conflict only enters the world *after* creation is complete, and it is not the result of some destructive cosmic principle opposed to life but of the refusal of humans to be subject to the authority of the Creator. Once again, if divine reality is constructed on the basis of the world we know, then conflict must be a part of that reality, because it is a part of all our experience. The Pentateuch gives evidence of having arrived at its theology in a different way.

2.2.2. Sovereign. Although the noun "king" is never applied to God in the Pentateuch (cf. Ex 15:18), the term Lord is regularly so applied (apart from the euphemistic use of *ʾadonay* in place of the divine name, e.g., *ʾādōn:* Ex 23:17; 34:23; Deut 10:17; *ʾădōnāy:* Gen 15:2, 8; 18:3, 27, 30-32; 20:4; Ex 4:10, 13; 5:22; 34:9; Num 14:17; Deut 3:24; 9:26). Most uses of *ʾădōnāy* occur in direct address in which the speaker is painfully aware of the awesome power of God and is entreating him to do something. The occurrences in Genesis 18 are especially interesting because this is where Abraham hesitantly intercedes on behalf of the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. The God who can reduce two cities to cinders with a word is not someone to be trifled with. Similar examples appear in Exodus 3, where Moses is looking for excuses to avoid the Sovereign's call to go to Egypt. The most inclusive statement of God's sovereignty is found in Deuteronomy 10:17, where Yahweh is called "God of gods and Lord of lords"—he is *the* God and *the* lord in all the earth.

But even apart from the use of these specific terms, it is clear that the Pentateuch considers God to be the absolute ruler of the earth. Nowhere is this more vividly stated than in Exodus 7—12, in the narrative of the plagues. What God decreed did happen in spite of the greatest king on earth at that time and in spite of all the gods of Egypt (cf. Ex 18:10-11). Thus Moses concluded his song of praise by saying, "the Lord will reign forever" (Ex 15:18). Similarly, the creation narrative describes a God who has no rival to the accomplishment of his will. Finally, the acceptance of the covenant by Israel implies their recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God in their lives. Israel was acknowledging that God had the right to pronounce commandments, decrees and statutes over them. He alone has the right to determine what is acceptable behavior and what is unacceptable. This sovereignty is never successfully challenged in the Pentateuch. No one is able to stand against God, whether king (*Pharaoh, Sihon, Og), prophet (*Balaam), priest (Korah) or magician (priests of Egypt).

But this sovereignty is not expressed by merely forcing people to do God's will. It is greater than that. The text never suggests that God willed Joseph's brothers or Potiphar's wife to sin against Joseph so that God could maneuver Joseph into a position of power. Rather, God's sovereignty is great enough that he can use even sinful choices to accomplish his purposes. In the case of Pharaoh, it is quite clear that God did not harden Pharaoh's heart against Pharaoh's own will (*see* Hardness of Heart). Pharaoh was not a gentle, kindly man who was suddenly turned into a hard-hearted tyrant by an equally hard-hearted God. Long before there was any word of God hardening Pharaoh's heart, the king of Egypt had cynically commanded enslavement and infanticide for Israel. What God did was to demonstrate that this man who thought himself ruler of the world was not free. He was a prisoner of his prior choices because that is the kind of world the sovereign God created (cf. Ex 3:19; 7:22; 8:15 [MT 8:11]; 9:12). God's sovereignty in spite of sinful choices was also demonstrated when the Israelites refused to trust God and enter the land at Kadesh-barnea (Num 14). God did not cause them to make this choice, but neither was his promise to Abraham and all his descendants frustrated.

God would find another way to keep that promise through a second generation who would choose to believe.

2.2.3. Father. It was stated above that the most unique contribution of the OT to world thought is that the transcendent One is a person. Although the actual term "father" is only applied to God once in the Pentateuch (Deut 32:6), the concept of one who is personally involved with his children is very apparent throughout this material. It may be that the term itself was not used more widely because of its negative connotations in a pagan context. There "father" was largely restricted to "the one who engenders." Since that idea is very much counter to the Pentateuch's understanding of creation, there may have been a conscious decision not to use the term. But immediately in Genesis 2, when it is said that God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, it is hard to avoid the image of a father and children sharing time together. Likewise, the response of God to the sin of Adam and Eve was one of personal grief and pain, not calm judicial pronouncement. God's relations with Abraham and *Sarah were intimately personal. He dealt with them on a personal level in relationships that were dialogical, not monological.

We are told eventually that God's purpose in all this is to create a people *for himself* as his own special possession (Ex 6:7; Deut 4:20; 29:13 [MT 29:12]). This is not disinterested involvement for the sake of some abstract salvific purpose. God is creating a family, not through sexual manipulation of the cosmos but by risking rejection in inviting people to freely choose to be in relationship with him. Thus we have a God who passionately cares about what becomes of his people. He loves them passionately and becomes passionately angry at them when they choose roads away from him to their own destruction. He is jealous for them (Deut 32:16, 21), as is a parent who longs for the best for his or her child. Most of the center portion of the Pentateuch (Ex 19—Num 10) revolves around how the presence (lit. "the face") and the glory of God can be in the midst of his people without destroying them. One of the more poignant parts is found in Exodus 33, which reports that God told Moses to take the people and to go on to the Promised Land without him—in light of the rebellion revealed in the golden calf incident, it was probable the people would do something to cause God's "face" to destroy them. God would keep his promise to them but would give up his own desire to live among them. But Moses, with the theological and spiritual sensitivity that had come to characterize him, explained that the land without the presence of God would be worthless and that he and the people would remain where they were. The people's primary need was not for deliverance from bondage or for possession of a land; it was for a face-to-face relationship with the personal, fatherly God.

2.2.4. Redeemer. If God is truly Creator, Sovereign and Father and his creatures rebel against him, he must find a way to restore them into fellowship with himself. It would not be possible for him simply to turn his back on them and annihilate them. This emerges in the very first pages of Genesis. It was because of God's mercy that Adam and Eve did not die instantly. Rather, God prolonged their lives in order that they and their progeny might not end their lives as rebels. The same thing is true in the story of the flood. Unlike the Sumerian version of the story, the God of Genesis intentionally sought a person through whom the human line might possibly be carried on. And when an arrogant humanity intent on bringing God down to their level had been scattered in confusion, it was God who sought out Abraham and Sarah through whom the blessing intended for humans (Gen 1:28) might yet be theirs. This pattern continues through the remainder of Genesis. It is God who continually makes the first overtures to people with the purpose of making his blessing available to the human race. The pattern continues in Exodus. It is reported in Exodus 2:23 that the people cried out for relief from their slavery and that God heard them. But in fact this report comes at the end of the chapter that tells about God's providential preparation of a deliverer. Once again the writer tells us that before we pray, the Redeemer God has already begun to answer. Redemption is always initiated out of the heart of the personal, sovereign creator.

But it is one thing for a person to wish to redeem, quite another for that person to be able to redeem. Here the sovereignty of the Creator comes into play. There is no power in the cosmos that can prevent God from redeeming those who will turn to him in trust, belief and obedience. This is the burden of the book of Exodus: God not only wants to redeem the human race; nothing can prevent him from doing that

except continued rebellion on the part of humans. This thought continues throughout Leviticus and Numbers. God can find a way so that humans corrupted by sin who wish to have a relationship with him may do so. But those like *Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-7) who refuse to submit to the Sovereign and insist on coming to him in their own way find redemption impossible. The same was true for the generation in the wilderness, especially as represented by Korah and Dathan (Num 16). The giants of Canaan could not have prevented God from bringing the promised blessing to his people, but continued rebellion could. Thus in Deuteronomy, one of the prominent features of this second giving of the law is the theology of obedience, which appears between the *Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 and the case examples in Deuteronomy 12—26. Moses takes pains to show that submission and obedience are the appropriate results of memory of God's faithfulness, of awe at God's power and justice, and of love in response to God's incredible love. In short, Moses attempts to show that in view of the redemption God has demonstrated, continued rebellion would be not only disastrous but also stupid.

2.2.5. Judge. But if God is a redeemer, acting out of a fatherly heart to realize his sovereign, creative purpose, he is also the Judge who enforces the effects that follow from the choices that humans make. This is the point of the revelation in Exodus 34:7: God forgives "wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished." The point is that while God is glad to restore the sinner to fellowship with himself, this should not lead anyone to conclude that they can sin with impunity, presuming on God's grace. Sin has consequences in the order of creation that follow on even if forgiveness is extended. For God to do otherwise would be to destroy the order he built into creation.

As mentioned above, the Hebrew root *špṭ* involves much more than the mere legal proceedings that the English translations "judge," "to judge," judgment" and "justice" suggest. It connotes that right order of things that makes human life possible. One of the recurring descriptors of the stipulations of the covenant is "judgments" *(mišpāṭîm)*. A more accurate translation might be "regulations." They express the order under which humans were made to live which, if violated, results in a diminution of the realization of the human potential. So the people called *šōpĕṭîm* ("judges") in the OT were much more than legal officers. They may have given decisions in disputes, but they were much more involved with maintaining God's created order in human affairs. This involved military action as well as administration and government. Thus the Pentateuch views God as the archetypal *šōpēṭ*. Sin is not merely an offense against God's will; it is much more an offense against the order of creation, so God cannot allow it to go unaddressed. While the Pentateuch often depicts God bringing the effects of human choices upon people directly, it is also true that indirect effects are just as much a part of God's governing activity. Thus children do indeed suffer the effects of their parents' sins, not because God vindictively decides they should suffer but because it is the result of this world of cause and effect. God makes it possible for us to avoid one of the effects of our sin, estrangement from himself, through atonement (Lev 1—9; 16). But as the Judge of the universe he must carry out the physical effects of our sin or the order of the universe would be destroyed. By the same token, if people persist in rebellion, he has no choice but to bring punishment upon them. Again, because God is no mere "force," the Pentateuch often represents this judgment as being an expression of God's anger. It is because he is a person who created us in love for fellowship with himself that his response to our self-destruction is not one of cool, judicial disinterest. His anger is the necessary complement of his love.

3. The World.

As already mentioned above, the Torah sees the world as distinct from the world's Creator. It is a creation, a brand new thing. Thus manipulation of the world has no effect on God. Rather, the world is utterly subject to God's will. He can intervene in its processes at will, though normally he chooses to allow those processes to continue at the pace and in the measure he originally designed. As a creation it has its own reality. It is not a reflection of a primal reality. It is reality itself. Thus what takes place here is not the result of actions in the "real" invisible world. Free choice is possible here with appropriate, traceable effects stemming from those choices. In its original expression, the world was wholly good. That is, it fully conformed to the original design of the Creator. Like humans, the physical world

has been affected by human sin, but this has not utterly destroyed its ability to reveal what God had planned in it. It is now a place of frustration in work and pain in human relations, though it is still possible for humans to experience a measure of the pleasure and satisfaction God intended it to provide. But it can only provide these if it is maintained and cultivated under human care as God directs.

4. Humanity.

Human beings are the apex of creation. They are not an afterthought created to provide for the needs of the gods, as in the Babylonian story of origins, the *Enuma Elish*, nor are they slaves of the gods, created to perform unpleasant tasks that the gods do not wish to perform, as in some of the Egyptian stories. Rather, humans are partners of God in the maintenance and cultivation of the world. As such, humans are a different order of being than the rest of the creation. They are a separate order of creation, transcending the rest of the world just as God transcends the entire creation. Both of the previous points are expressed in a concrete way in Genesis 2 when God has Adam name the animals, symbolically establishing their natures. Adam shares with God in the task of ruling the world of nature, and he is separate from it.

Humans are made in the image of God. Although the Pentateuch nowhere specifies exactly what that means, it seems plain that at the least it includes the personal nature of God and a capacity for relationship with him. Some have suggested it also includes self-consciousness, the ability to transcend oneself. But this can only be inferred. Humans are sexually differentiated, and nothing indicates that this differentiation was anything but intended from the beginning. We do not find our true identity in self-centeredness but in fellowship and self-giving. Humans have become perverted through rebellion. Attempting to make themselves morally self-sufficient, our first parents cut themselves off from the dependent relationship with God for which they were made and did irreparable damage to the human race in the short term. No place is this stated more clearly than in Genesis 6:5: "every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually" (NRSV). This same thought occurs again in Genesis 8:21 and Deuteronomy 31:21. Something has happened to the very way we form our thoughts and concepts so that we have an innate resistance to authority, a consuming desire to possess and a fear of other people depriving us of our wants. The evidence of these characteristics is to be found throughout the Pentateuch, from Cain to Korah and Dathan, and Moses presumes that it will continue in his song in Deuteronomy 32, which is explicitly composed as a witness against the people when they turn against God in the future (Deut 29:24-29). Nevertheless, the Pentateuch declares that humans are capable of redemption if they will follow the pattern of Abraham and Moses, trusting God's love, believing what he says about the way of redemption and obeying his commands.

5. Sin.

*Sin is understood as any offense against life as God designed it. It is to miss the target that God designed for humanity, whether intentionally or unintentionally (*ḥaṭṭāʾt,* "sin"); it is the expression of an inner twistedness (*ʿāwōn,* "iniquity," "guilt"); it is finally to step over the bounds God has defined for humanity (*pešaʿ,* "transgression," "rebellion"). In paganism offenses against the gods were largely confined to trespassing, often unconsciously, into some area of life the gods had reserved for themselves. This is not the case in the Pentateuch. While there is considerable attention given to dealing with the effects of unintentional sin (cf. Lev 1—7; 16), it is made clear at the outset that the distinctive feature of the human behavior that separates them from their Creator is willful disobedience of his known will (Gen 2—3). In particular, it is the attempt to define for oneself what is "good" and what is "bad." It is the refusal to admit transcendence. Humans will be God in their lives (cf. Num 15:30-36). The result is the one discussed above: a perverted way of thinking in which on any issue people tend away from submission to God and obedience to his will. No longer must they be told, as Eve did, that God cannot be trusted. Humans believe it instinctively. Thus the Pentateuch shows the amazing but all-too-familiar picture of people who have experienced God's fatherly care for them again and again but who are convinced in every new crisis that God means to do them harm. As a result of this condition, humanity has fallen into theological darkness, ignorant of God's purposes and ways, with the ensuing result that even when they are enabled not to transgress God's ways intention-

ally, they constantly fall short of his best and are rendered spiritually unclean. Sin has become not merely certain actions but an attitude toward God. The Pentateuch addresses all of these conditions in very concrete but also very profound ways.

6. Salvation.

From the very outset the Pentateuch is addressed to the solution of the sin problem. How can humans be restored to fellowship with God and thus receive the blessings for which they were originally created? From one point of view, the flood narrative serves to show what will not work. The effects of sin have gone so deeply into human nature that even if the best-behaved people alive were preserved and everyone else were destroyed, sin *as an attitude* would still rear its ugly head (Gen 9:20-23). Somehow sin would have to be addressed on a different level. There needed to be an attitude change before there could be a behavioral change. And in all of that there needed to be some way for humans to reenter the presence of God, without which life is only existence.

To address these issues God started at the beginning. Adam and Eve disobeyed God because they did not believe what he had said would happen to them if they disobeyed. And they did not believe his word because they had become convinced that they could not trust him to provide their most basic needs (physical—food; aesthetic—beauty; intellectual—wisdom). So God began with another couple by showing them his absolute trustworthiness. He cared about their most basic needs (place, progeny, posterity) and promised to provide these if they would permit him to do so.

Once God's trustworthiness had been established, Abraham was given the opportunity to believe a frankly incredible promise. When Abraham had passed this test (after some detours along the way), he was ready for the final one, the test of obedience. Again he passed with honors. This pattern is developed twice more in the book of Genesis in the Jacob and Joseph stories. Thus the paradigm for experiencing the blessing of God is reestablished. But not only is the paradigm restored; in the obedience of the patriarchs a platform is erected upon which both the results and the being of sin may be addressed. A just God cannot simply ignore the results of sin in the world, and a loving God cannot allow the contagious nature of sin to continue to pollute the race. Thus the patriarchal narratives are means, not ends. They prepare the way for something beyond themselves: the covenant.

6.1. Covenant. Already in the Noah narrative the concept of covenant was introduced. God solemnly committed himself never to destroy the world with water again. This kind of voluntary self-limitation of a god for the sake of humans was strange enough, but the developments that followed were stranger still. In Genesis 15 God's response to Abraham's belief was again a solemn oath to keep his promises to Abraham. But in this case the divine commitment was solemnized in a ceremony in which the deity condemned himself to death should he break his word. Again, such a thing was unheard of in the ancient world. The normal pattern was directly overturned. Instead of a human being required to make such a fearsome commitment to his god, while the god accepted no obligation whatsoever, here the deity put himself under the doom of death, while requiring nothing from the worshiper! Only in Genesis 17 is the first covenant obligation put upon Abraham, and it is the apparently rather innocuous one of *circumcision, marking oneself as a devotee of God.

In all of this God was carefully preparing the way for what would appear in Exodus 19 and following. Sin had done three things: it had made it impossible for the "face" (the presence of God) to dwell with humans in unbroken fellowship; it had led humans into a willful ignorance of the holy character and nature of God; and it had made them incapable of reproducing the divine character in their life in God's world. Genesis had shown that the prerequisites for coming back into God's presence were trust, belief and obedience. But the fundamental issues described above remained to be addressed. The Sinai covenant was the means of addressing them, of showing how they would ultimately be addressed.

As noted above in the discussion on God's holiness, the present division of the Torah into books obscures the unity of the material between Exodus 19 and Numbers 10, the description of what took place at Sinai during the year and twenty days the people of Israel spent there. When this material is looked at as a unit, important understandings of the covenant emerge. Exodus 19 describes the preparation for the cov-

enant, reminding one that covenant is not the means of entering a relationship with God but is a response to his prior grace. Exodus 20—24, containing the Decalogue and the book of the covenant, describes the basis upon which the relationship between God and humans can continue to exist: absolute loyalty and a replication of the divine character in every area of life. In Exodus 25—40 the goal of the covenant is described. That goal is the residence of God in the midst of his people as represented by the tabernacle. Throughout the instructions for building, furnishing and serving the tabernacle (Ex 25—31) and in the subsequent report of how those instructions were carried out (Ex 35—40) the word *holy* appears again and again, with something of a climax being reached when it is said that a gold plate was to be affixed to the front of the priest's turban, on which were to be the words "Holiness to the Lord" (Ex 28:36; 39:30). Thus when the book of Exodus reaches its climax with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle (Ex 40:38), a question is raised: How can an absolutely holy God live in the midst of sinful people without destroying them? The answer is given in Leviticus 1—16 (17).

The means of maintaining the covenant is nothing other than the grace of God, who provides continuous *atonement for those who wish to remain in covenant with him. It is significant that atonement is not the means of entering the covenant. The covenant is entered by trusting, believing and obeying God. It is also important to note that atonement is not given for those who insist on sinning "with a high hand"—presumptuously—like Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-7). It is almost entirely given for those who intend to live obediently to God and who from an outward perspective are doing so. Leviticus 10:8—15:33 is a parenthesis prompted by the tragedy of 10:1-7. In Leviticus 1—9 God had been trying to show his people that his holiness constituted a positive danger to humans and that he alone could define the terms of their relationship. Nadab and Abihu demonstrated that the lesson had not been learned. So God gave a whole series of object lessons designed to help the people learn that the distinction between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, is a real one. In Leviticus 16:1 the reader is returned to what had been originally intended to be the climax of chapters 1—9, the Day of Atonement. As the addendum to chapter 16, Leviticus 17 tells us that atonement requires the shedding of blood (Lev 17:11). As Genesis 2 made plain, sin results in death, so unless there is a death in our place, we cannot have fellowship with God, however much we may want it. But the purpose of the covenant is not atonement. Atonement is only the means of maintaining the covenant. The purpose of the covenant is that humans should share the character of God. This is shown by the succeeding section of the unit, Leviticus 18—27, which states again and again that God expects his people to be holy as he is holy. This is not merely a description of a theological condition, as the section makes quite clear. The command to be holy is followed by specific ethical, civil and ceremonial commands. Holiness is a way of living, a way of living that reflects the holy character of God. The final section of the unit, Numbers 1—9, reverts to discussing the goal of the covenant, God's presence in the midst of his people in the tabernacle. Again, as in Exodus 40:38, the climactic statement is in Numbers 9:15, which reports that the cloud of God's glory covered the tabernacle.

6.2. The Law. Thus obedience to the commands of the covenant was never intended to be the way into a relationship with God. Instead, such obedience was expected to be the glad response to the revelation of God's grace in his deliverance from bondage. As humans, availing themselves of God's continuing gracious provision of atonement, experience the grace of God's sanctifying presence (Lev 22:31-32), they are expected to live out the life of God. Holy living is the necessary and natural outcome of a genuine experience of God's grace. The concept of the law that Jesus and Paul both attacked so vehemently, that by obedience one could earn God's favor, is neither the Pentateuch's nor the OT's. It is a Pharisaic perversion. The covenant did not exist to show humans that they could obey God and thus please him. Rather, it existed to show them that even with the best will they could not attain his holy character in themselves. This is what both the Pentateuch and the rest of the OT show. Until Moses' hope expressed in Numbers 11:29, the giving of the Holy Spirit, was made possible by Jesus' death on the cross, that holy living was only a forlorn hope. But when the cross, foreshadowed in Leviticus 16, occurred, the fulfillment of the covenant in holy living and in the experiencing of the "face" of God in the tabernacle of the hu-

man heart became a genuine possibility.

See also ATONEMENT, DAY OF; COVENANT; CREATION; DECALOGUE; ELECTION; FAITH; FALL; GRACE; HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; IMAGE OF GOD; LAW; MESSIAH; PROMISES, DIVINE; REPENTANCE; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; SIN, GUILT; THEOPHANY.

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THEOMACHY. *See* CREATION.

THEOPHANY

A theophany may be defined simply as a visible manifestation of God, a self-disclosure of the deity. The word does not occur in the OT or NT but is a theological word formed by the combination of two Greek words, *theos* ("god") and *phainein* ("to appear"). Thus *theophany* refers to an appearance of God. The Greek word was actually used in nonbiblical literature to refer to the displaying of images of gods at a festival at Delphi. In the OT the Niphal of the verb *r'h* ("to see") frequently occurs in the context of a theophany with the meaning "to appear" (Lev 9:23; Num 14:10; 16:19, 42 [MT 17:7]; 20:6).

As theophanies are normally understood to be temporary manifestations of God, many scholars maintain that they are restricted to the OT, since the NT understanding of the incarnation of Christ removes any need for further visible manifestation of God.

1. Theophany and Theology
2. Types of Theophanies
3. Ancient Near Eastern Background
4. Theophanies and Old Testament Contexts
5. Manner of Manifestation
6. Characteristics of Theophanies
7. Human Reaction to Theophany
8. The Form of Theophany Accounts
9. Theophany and the Angel of the Lord
10. Theophany and the New Testament

1. Theophany and Theology.

Since God is understood to be different and distinct from his creation (i.e., *holy), he is in no means limited by it (1 Kings 8:27; Ps 139; Amos 9:2-4). Thus when he appears in theophanies he in essence limits himself to specific and particular forms within the context of the *creation he has made.

Theophany should be regarded as one of the means whereby God reveals himself to humanity. Whereas God's special revelation may be di-

vided into the broad categories of word and deed, God's revelatory *deeds* occur as either theophany or miracle. A theophany is a form of divine revelation wherein God's presence is made visible (or revealed in a *dream) and is recognizable to humanity.

2. Types of Theophanies.
Theophanies occur in various ways in the OT. These include (1) a direct message (Ex 19:9-25); (2) a message in a dream (Gen 20:3-7; 28:12-17); (3) a message in a vision (Gen 15:1-21; Is 6:1-13; Ezek 1—3; 8:1-4); (4) a message by an angel (Gen 16:7-13; 18:1-33; 22:11-18; 32:24-30; Ex 3:2—4:17; Josh 5:13-15; Judg 2:1-5; 6:11-24; 13:2-25); and (5) a message by an angel in a dream (Gen 31:11-13). Some OT theologians, such as W. Eichrodt and G. Davies, would eliminate the category of dreams from the list of theophanies, since the manifestation of God is not a physical reality but takes place only in the mind of the dreamer. Yet the broader definition that includes any manner in which God chooses to reveal himself seems to be the safest way to approach the subject.

2.1. Theophany and Covenant. J. J. Niehaus has isolated reasons God appeared in theophanic glory in conjunction with his *covenant relationship with the nation of Israel. First, God appeared to initiate the covenant. This occurs in Genesis with reference to creation (Gen 1:1—2:3), in Genesis 15 with relation to *Abraham and in Exodus 3—4; 19 with relation to *Moses and the nation of Israel at large. Second, God appeared to instruct, or correct, his covenant partner. We find an example of this manner of manifestation in Joshua 5:13-15 with the angelic appearance to Joshua and in 1 Kings 18:20-40 to illustrate his power to the nation. Third, God appeared in theophany to commission or encourage a prophet (Is 6; Ezek 1; 1 Kings 19:9-18). Fourth, God appeared to the nation to bring covenantal judgment on his rebellious subjects. This would include his intervention after the *Fall of humanity (Gen 3:8-19) as well as the judgment on *Nadab and Abihu (Lev 9:23—10:2).

2.2. Theophany in Pagan Religion. The nonoccurrence of God's appearing in the form of an animal in the OT is related to the avoidance of any association of Israelite worship with paganism. It was customary in the ancient Near Eastern cultures, particularly in Egypt, for a god to be associated with an animal form. Thus this distinction was in part related to Israel's call to be holy, distinct from the world and the surrounding nations.

3. Ancient Near Eastern Background.
The notion that a supernatural being or god could reveal himself or herself to humanity was generally accepted not only in the ancient Near East but also in the Hellenistic world during the OT and NT eras. In the ancient world the attribution of human victories and defeats to the action of gods and goddesses was a common phenomenon. These engagements by the gods in human military conflicts required theophanic language. The use of theophanic language was naturally and frequently extended to favored monarchs who went to battle against rebellious vassals.

3.1. Glory and Theophany. Mesopotamian epics frequently refer to the "glory" *(melammu)* of the gods as part of the military armament used to defeat their enemies and thus demonstrate their power. This is analogous to the "glory" *(kābôd)* or glory-cloud (see Ex 24:16) of the Lord, which also was seen to be a manifestation of power and strong enough to destroy anyone who should gaze upon it. This form of the divine presence was manifested at the ratification of the covenant at Sinai and represented God appearing as a witness to his covenant with his people. A good case can be made for identifying this form of the divine presence with the appearance of the Spirit of God at creation in Genesis 1:2 as well as at Pentecost at the ratification of the new covenant in Acts 2. The glory of God is also associated with God's "face" (*pānîm*, Ex 33:18-20).

3.2. Thunderstorm and Theophany. In contrast to both Mesopotamian and Canaanite traditions, in Israel God was not associated in theophany with beneficent phenomena of nature (e.g., rivers, trees, and the sun and moon) but rather with those natural forces that often terrify people, such as the lightning flash, the dark thundercloud or the raging storm—all aspects of a majestic thunderstorm. While data from the ancient Near East may suggest that covenant relationships between gods and humans did exist, there is no evidence that a covenant relationship of this form was initiated with the god appearing in a storm theophany. This is all the more striking, as many ancient Near Eastern traditions did portray gods as in some sense cre-

ators. This uniquely distinguishes the Sinaitic covenant from the other covenants of the ancient Near East.

4. Theophanies and Old Testament Contexts.
Many of the OT theophanies occur in the Pentateuch, particularly in the patriarchal narratives and Exodus, but they also appear in the conquest events, as well as in Judges. Theophanies also occur in prophetic literature, often in association with the prophetic call of the individual prophet to service.

4.1. Patriarchal Narratives. In the patriarchal narratives the theophanies of the Lord are accompanied by the announcement of divine promises. These theophanies were not spirit appearances but specific temporary manifestations that were not accompanied by the frequent outbursts of nature in earthquakes, fire, cloud, wind, thunder and smoke, such as occurred in the Sinai theophany. The patriarchs normally responded to these appearances by erecting an *altar (Gen 12:7; 26:24-25; 28:12-19; 35:1-15).

4.2. Sinai Theophany. Later during the exodus-conquest period, Sinai and the ark of the covenant dominate the biblical narratives. The Sinai theophany was accompanied by cataclysmic events, although it is emphasized that when God spoke to Moses no form was seen (Deut 4:12, 15). The revelation of God to Moses and then to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai was the watershed event in Israelite history and as such marked a change in the way God would manifest himself in theophanies. Up to this point in time God had manifested himself to the individual patriarchs, but now with the creation of the nation of Israel and the establishment of the *tabernacle, the special dwelling place of God, God's appearances would usually be connected with the ark or the tabernacle. In essence, the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle became a portable Sinai. The martial character of the Sinai theophany was evident not only in the cloud in the battle of the sea (Ex 14:19-29) but also in the assembling of Israel in military companies by tribe, and in the march from the mountain by tribes following the divine warrior. The pillars of cloud and fire and the other heightened forms of natural phenomena at Sinai were understood to be sense-perceptible representations of God's presence (Ex 13:21-22; 14:19; 16:7, 10; 24:16). The God of Mount Sinai accompanied Israel in the wilderness in the forms of the fire and the cloud (Ex 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24). "The cloud" (with the definite article; Ex 24:15-18; 40:34-38; Num 9:15-23) referred to the tabernacling presence of God, as did "the name." This pillar or glory filled the holy of holies at the dedication of the Mosaic tabernacle and rested between the cherubim on the cover of the ark (Ex 25:22; 40:34-38). Later, during the monarchy, the temple in Jerusalem and the Temple Mount of Zion were viewed as the special place of God's presence among the people. The same glory of the Lord entered Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:11).

5. Manner of Manifestation.
The different writers of the OT portrayed the appearances of the Lord in various yet remarkably similar ways. Sometimes the Lord appeared as a man, sometimes as or in the person of "the angel of the Lord." Frequently the phrase "glory of the Lord" is used to describe a theophany (e.g., Ex 24:16-18). Similarly the phrase "pillar of cloud" occurs in Exodus 33:9 to mark a theophanous appearance on Mount Sinai.

5.1. Concealment of God in Theophany. While the essential characteristic of every theophany is the appearance of God, in every theophany God's power must be held in check. Whenever the Lord reveals himself, he also conceals himself. The reason for this is the recognized danger to the one who gazes on God's appearance. In an encounter with God or one of his envoys, the survival motif is constant. The reason for the concealment certainly is related to the idea of God's holiness. The concealment often took the form of a thick, dark cloud. This understanding is reflected in the first appearance of the angel of the Lord, when the angel appeared to Hagar. Hagar asked, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" (Gen 16:7-13; cf. Judg 6:22-23). A possible consequence of having a visual perception of God was the danger of forming a "graven image," if even only a mental one (Ex 20:4).

5.2. Freedom of God. The various ways in which God revealed himself is an indication of his freedom. He could use fire, thunder, lightning, his Spirit or his angel to reveal his presence, but all are to be equally understood as genuine revelations of God.

6. Characteristics of Theophanies.
6.1. Divine Initiation. A prevalent characteris-

tic of all OT theophanies is their divine initiation. This feature distinguishes theophanies in the Bible from those alleged to occur in pagan societies that resulted from persistent and strenuous efforts (1 Kings 18).

6.2. Temporary. Another common feature of theophanies is that they are always temporary. Theophanies are always transient manifestations and are to be distinguished from the ongoing testimony of the existence of God through nature (Rom 1:19-20). The temporary nature of the theophanies is related to their purpose. After the purpose of the theophany is accomplished, the divine appearance ceases. Perhaps the best example of this is Mount Sinai, where God met with Moses alone and then appeared to him after the exodus among the Israelites. Subsequent to the Mosaic period we hear nothing of manifestations of God from Mount Sinai.

6.3. Holy Space. God imparted holiness where and for how long the theophany lasted. For example, God warned Moses that he was on holy ground (Ex 3:5; cf. Josh 5:15). As long as the Lord was present in theophany, the sacred place was holy because God's presence sanctified it. The Lord's holiness later sanctified the tent of meeting (Ex 29:42-43). The Lord descended to the entrance of the tent in order to commission someone (Ex 33:7-11; Num 11:24-25; Deut 31:14-15) or to carry out his judgment (Num 12:5-15). Later in Israel's history the Lord's holiness sanctified the Solomonic temple (1 Kings 9:3). God's theophanic appearance at the dedication of Solomon's temple as at Mount Sinai placed this temple in the framework of the Mosaic covenant and revelation. This connection was reinforced through the presence of elders and other leaders, and a seven-day feast on both momentous occasions (1 Kings 8:1, 65). The transference of the symbols of the Lord's presence to the temple was analogous to the movement of the pillar of cloud to the tabernacle. Thus it was not a great leap for later theophanic appearances to be associated with Mount Zion, the special residence of the temple, which became the site associated with the Lord's presence. Theophanic images of Sinai are set in Mount Zion (Is 24:23; 40:5). God appeared on Mount Zion as a thunderstorm going to war against Israel's enemies (Ps 18:7-20; 29:1-11; 97:1-5; 144:1-11). In fact, in the prophetic writings theophanies are associated primarily with Zion (Ezek 1; 10; Amos 1:2; Mic 1:2-4; Zeph 1). As was mentioned above, it is God's presence that makes a place holy, but that holiness is gone when God departs from the designated place. Mount Sinai was holy only as long as God was present there. God left the temple as a consequence of Judah's abominations (Ezek 8—11), thus depriving the shrine and the city of its sanctity.

6.4. Natural Sites. God appeared at locations in the natural environment such as springs (Gen 16:7), rivers (Gen 32:22-32) and trees (Gen 12:6-7) but predominantly at mountains (Gen 12:8; 22:1-14; 28:12; Ex 19; Ps 48). For many cultures of the ancient Near East the mountain was considered the most conducive location for communication with the supernatural. God's glory covered Mount Sinai for six days (Ex 24:15-18), just as God's Spirit moved in creation for six days (Gen 1:2-31). Niehaus observes that this correlation was intended to suggest that a new creation was taking place in the exodus events analogous to the original creation.

6.5. Terminology. The Hebrew term *qôl* ("voice," Gen 3:8; Ex 19:16; Ps 29:3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 46:6 [MT 46:7]; 77:18 [MT 77:19]; Joel 2:11; 3:16 [MT 4:16]) is common in theophanies and is used to indicate the thunderous and frightening sound of the appearance of God. Trumpeting the sound of the divine presence occurred at Sinai, at Pentecost and at every Day of the Lord (cf. Jesus' Parousia). The sound of God's coming signaled even the initial theophany in the garden. The root *rʿm* ("thunder") is sometimes used in conjunction with *qôl* (Ps 29:3; 77:18 [MT 19]; 104:7).

6.6. Topography. In many of the OT theophanies, topography and nature were disturbed. These disruptions frequently took place in the atmosphere (Ex 19:16-19; 1 Kings 19:11-13).

6.7. Israel's Benefit. Theophanies often introduced momentous events (Ex 3:1-12), further revealed God's plan (Gen 15:1-17; 28:12-17), supported the wavering (Ex 3:2—4:17; Judg 6:11-24) and were restricted to Israelites, except in such cases where foreigners had contact with Israelites (Gen 20:3-7; Num 22:20-35).

6.8. Sinaitic Theophany. In all of Israel's history, God's self-disclosure at Mount Sinai was unique because it was here that God entered into a covenant relationship with the entire nation. Important to the theophany at Sinai was the recognition of God as Israel's king and thus rightly the bestower of his will through his *law. This is similar to ancient Near Eastern practices

of newly established kings imparting new legislation. Laws were the inevitable outcomes of the theophanies of the Lord as king (Ex 19—24; Ps 132; Is 2:2-4). Theophanies forcibly impressed on God's people the sovereignty of God, and assured them of his presence and concern for them.

7. Human Reaction to Theophany.

The human reaction to God's appearance was always one of fear and terror. This fear was not the result of God's being mysterious or even all-powerful but rather a result of his being totally separate and distinct from humanity and creation. The terror of God's theophany was a common element in the Jewish intertestamental literature (Jdt 16:15; Wis 5:21-23; Sir 16:18-19; 43:16-17; *As. Mos.* 10:3-6; 1QH 3:32-36). The terrorizing appearance of God explains why God was often cloaked in a cloud in the theophanic appearance: the full revelation of his glory would totally overwhelm and could in fact destroy a human onlooker (Ex 20:19; Deut 18:16).

8. The Form of Theophany Accounts.

8.1. Old Testament Accounts. Genesis 26:23-25 provides a good example of the literary components of a theophany:

- introductory description: "From there he went up to Beer-sheba. And that very night the LORD appeared to him and said,"
- divine self- asseveration: " 'I am the God of your father Abraham;' "
- quelling of fear: " 'do not be afraid,' "
- assertion of divine presence: " 'for I am with you' "
- *hieros logos* (holy word): " 'and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham's sake.' "
- concluding description: "So he built an altar there [and] called on the name of the LORD."

The same forms occur in the important Sinaitic theophanies. For example, Exodus 3:1—4:17 contains an introductory description (Ex 3:1-4), a divine self-asseveration (Ex 3:5-6), an assertion of gracious presence (Ex 3:7-8a), the *hieros logos* (Ex 3:8b-10), a protest by the addressee (Ex 3:11), and *hieros logos* with repetition of the earlier elements (3:12—4:17). Likewise, Exodus 19:16—20:17 contains an introductory description (Ex 19:16-21a), the *hieros logos* (Ex 19:21b-22), a protest by the addressee (Ex 19:23), *hieros logos* (Ex 19:24) and *hieroi logoi* (Ex 20:1-17).

8.2. Ancient Near Eastern Accounts. Scholars have noted that these same motifs are also observed in the Assyrian theophanies. J. J. Niehaus has shown that these identical motifs are also to be found in the NT with the apparition of the angel Gabriel to Mary (Lk 1:26-38), the angelic theophany to the shepherds (Lk 2:8-20), the account of Jesus walking on the water (Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:16-21), the transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36) and the appearance of angels at the empty tomb (Mt 28:1-8; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:10-18), as well as Jesus' postresurrection appearances (Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-29). Theophanic descriptions frequently occur in the form of hymns explaining God's being and appearance in poetic form (Judg 5:4-5; cf. Deut 33:2-5, 26-29).

8.3. Words of Theophanies. God's word, the *hieros logos*, should be considered a critical component among the elements of theophany. According to G. von Rad, all the phenomena that accompanied the theophany were mere accessories to the divine pronouncement that inevitably formed the center of the theophanic event (von Rad, 2.19). Even though the visual component in all of these theophanies was important, if not awesome, the heart of the matter in each case was what Yahweh had to say (Niehaus 1995, 29). Without the words accompanying the theophany, the phenomena and meaning of the theophany would go unexplained. Thus God explained that the meaning of the vision given to Abram was the establishment of the covenant (Gen 15:17-21). This is also illustrated through the first Sinaitic theophany, when God appeared and explained that Moses would lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 3:1-10). An indirect outcome of the explanation of the theophanous events was God's intention to reveal more of his personal nature. Through the effect of the divine appearances accompanied by the divine communication, God's people ultimately learned more of God's power and attributes.

9. Theophany and the Angel of the Lord.

Many consider the appearances of the angel of the Lord as constituting theophanic events. There are justifiable reasons for viewing these appearances as theophanies, especially since the angel of the Lord is frequently equated with God. The deity of this unique angel is suggested

by the facts that he (1) is identified as God (Gen 16:7-13; 18:2, 10, 13; 22:10-12, 15-18; Ex 3:2-6, 14, 18; Judg 2:1, 5; 6:11, 14, 16), (2) is recognized as God (Gen 16:9-13; Judg 6:22-24; 13:21-23; cf. Gen 32:24-30 with Hos 12:4-5), (3) is described in terms befitting the Deity alone (Ex 3:2-9, 14; 23:20-23; Josh 5:15), (4) calls himself God (Gen 31:11, 13 [in reference to the "angel of God"]; Ex 3:2, 6, 14), (4) receives worship (Josh 5:14; Judg 2:4-5) and (5) speaks with divine authority (Judg 2:1-5). The angel of the Lord who appeared in the burning bush (Ex 3:2) not only says he is God (Ex 3:6) but is designated as God by the text (Ex 3:4). The angel of the Lord received sacrifice (Judg 6:21), and Gideon feared his life because he had gazed at God (Judg 6:22). The angel who wrestled with Jacob (Hos 12:4) was recognized to be God (Gen 32:30). The angel-of-the-Lord theophanies are linked with major statements in redemptive history, including the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.

10. Theophany and the New Testament.
In postexilic times the theophanic cloud came to be called the Shekinah, which signified God's "dwelling" with his people (Ex 25:8). The glory-cloud is associated with the first and second comings of Christ (Mt 17:5; Acts 1:9; Rev 1:7; 14:14). The crowning event of the book of Exodus was the theophany of the Lord at the completion of the tabernacle. In a similar way God also descended on the day of Pentecost in the NT and filled the church, a temple of living stones. God appeared in glory in the OT and will appear in like manner in the eschaton (Is 24; Rev 19—22). The OT recognizes a future time when the Lord's theophany will be continuous (Is 60:19).

See also DREAMS.

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TÔLĚDÔT. *See* GENEALOGIES; GENESIS, BOOK OF.

TORAH. *See* LAW.

TOWER OF BABEL. *See* BABEL.

TOWN. *See* CITY, TOWN, CAMP.

TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM

As applied to biblical texts, the term "traditio-historical criticism" (also "tradition criticism" or "tradition history") describes the attempt to uncover the folk traditions that lie behind passages in the Bible. The method assumes that much of the material of the Pentateuch—both the narratives and the legal texts—went through a long process of oral composition, transmission and modification before any written texts were produced. On the basis of analogies from other cultures and by applying rules that ostensibly distinguish oral material from material that began as written texts, scholars have attempted to describe the tradition history of the Pentateuch (and of other biblical texts). Such an analysis demarcates which texts began as oral tradition, who were the tradents (storytellers) that created and passed on these tales, what was the original setting *(Sitz im Leben)* and purpose for a given tale, and the process by which the oral tale was transformed into a written document. Advocates of the method claim that the results of a tradition-critical analysis are useful for gaining an understanding of the theology and history of OT Israel.

1. From Oral Tradition to Written Text
2. The Beginning of Traditio-historical Criticism
3. The High-Water Mark of Traditio-

historical Criticism
4. Concluding Observations

1. From Oral Tradition to Written Text.
A traditio-historical analysis must demonstrate how oral tales were transformed into written texts and redacted into the present biblical documents. This is a complicated matter; tradition critics often argue that the oral tale was radically different both in content and purpose from the present text. The *Sitz im Leben* of the OT traditions is often said to be the campfire scene or the popular festival where storytellers recited their tales. As these tales passed from speaker to speaker, they naturally underwent transformation as individual storytellers added or omitted details, gave the story local coloring or otherwise modified it to reflect their own viewpoints. When the tales were committed to writing, moreover, they were further changed to fit the theological, ideological and political agendas of the scribes and redactors who used them. It is no small matter for the modern scholar, working with only the text of the OT, to delineate such a convoluted and obscure history.

The relationship between tradition history/tradition criticism *(Traditionsgeschichte or Überlieferungsgeschichte)* and form history/form criticism *(Formgeschichte or Gattungsgeschichte)* is somewhat confused. At its simplest, form criticism is the attempt to classify a text by its formal structure and literary genre; in principle, it may be applied to a written text without any attempt to investigate that text's oral history. As practiced by many, however, form criticism is the preliminary spadework that leads an investigator from the written text to its oral, preliterary antecedents. Many scholars therefore regard tradition criticism as an outgrowth of form criticism or indeed treat the two methods as a single investigatory process.

2. The Beginning of Traditio-historical Criticism.

2.1. Hermann Gunkel. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) introduced folklore research, such as had been carried out by the Grimm brothers, into pentateuchal studies. Gunkel wanted to find the preliterary stages of growth that lie behind the OT—the oral traditions. In a career that included major publications on Genesis and the Psalms, as well as *Das Märchen im Alten Testament* (ET: *The Folktale in the Old Testament),* Gunkel convinced many scholars of the soundness of his method and the significance of his results. In the latter work, he compared the folktales he uncovered in the OT to folktales selected from around the world and argued that the same processes governed the rise and transformation of folktales in both groups.

Gunkel made a distinction between "legend" and "history" that was fundamental to his method. He described a legend as an oral tradition that concerns the life story of a family and tends to be poetic. History, by contrast, is based on written texts, concerns political situations and is prosaic (see Gunkel 1987, 21-27; Kirkpatrick, 24). For him, the patriarchal history of Genesis 12—50 was based in legend (Gen 1—11 was classed as myth).

An example of Gunkel's method at work is his interpretation of Genesis 34, the sack of Shechem (Gunkel 1997, 357-65). He asserts that two primary legends lie behind the event: (1) A "Hamor variant," in which all twelve tribes sack the city, and (2) a "Shechem recension," in which only *Simeon and *Levi do the deed. The personal names used here actually represent *tribal groups* and *not individuals*; the time of the event was when the pre-Israelite tribes wandered Canaan as nomads. The story of the rape of Dinah probably has no basis in fact; it is a legend motif that has been artificially inserted into the tale. Nevertheless, it has critically shaped the story. The Hamor variant takes the position that whoever violates an Israelite woman should justly be put to death, whereas the Shechem recension is more complex, portraying Shechem and Hamor somewhat sympathetically and implying that Simeon and Levi were rash in their actions. The Hamor variant is thus the later version; it comes from a later time when the framers of the narrative tended to moralize and idealize the patriarchs. The redactor who combined the two was more sympathetically disposed toward the Hamor variant. The outlook of the unified narrative is one of heaping scorn on the local Gentiles; the image of these Canaanites *circumcising themselves for an Israelite girl probably delighted the original audience.

In addition to the tradition-critical analysis described above, we should note that Gunkel's treatment of the text is complicated by a *source-critical analysis that employs J, E and P.

2.2. Axel Olrik and Andre Jolles. Two scholars,

neither of them an OT specialist, contributed significantly to the rise of tradition criticism. Axel Olrik was a Danish folklorist who, beginning in 1909, published observations on the characteristics of oral narrative. Gunkel incorporated this material into the third edition of his commentary on Genesis (see Gunkel 1997, xxxi-xxxvi) as further evidence of the soundness of his method. Olrik's observations have been dubbed "Olrik's laws." These "laws" became the tools by which some scholars uncovered oral traditions in the Bible.

R. N. Whybray (146-47) presents Olrik's laws in a systematic form. They assert that an oral narrative has clear structure and clear unity of plot, moves toward a single conclusion, avoids irrelevant or retrospective material and frequently has a series of episodes, each with progressively greater tension. Oral narratives tend to give clear, vivid accounts, to make use of repetition and patterns and to have a preference for things occurring in threes. They also focus on a single character and will only have two main characters, and they put only two characters in a single episode. Thus, a scholar who discerned many of these traits in a given text could argue that behind the text lay an oral tradition. In recent scholarship, J. Van Seters has advocated applying Olrik's laws to Genesis. For example, he uses the absence of traits of oral composition in Genesis 21:8–21 to argue that the text must be a literary (not oral) composition that drew upon Genesis 16 (Van Seters, 200).

Andre Jolles did research into Norse family traditions, especially those from Iceland of around 1000. His chosen term for these traditions was *Sage,* and through his influence many OT scholars in the mid-twentieth century were convinced that the "saga" was the (oral) genre that lay behind the patriarchal narratives. These scholars would conduct their research into Genesis using the Icelandic sagas as their analogue and historical model. Jolles's influence has been immense; Westermann (1980, 31-35) asserts that Jolles gave us the fundamental description of the narrative form and that elements of the Icelandic sagas have precise counterparts in Genesis.

3. The High-Water Mark of Traditio-historical Criticism.

Although Gunkel may rightly be termed the father of tradition criticism and produced a massive commentary on Genesis, the method came to full flower in the works of Albrecht Alt, Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth. The work of these scholars was also the high-water mark of the method; after them, tradition criticism would never again be so dominant or fruitful in OT research.

3.1. Albrecht Alt. The usefulness of tradition criticism, in the eyes of many scholars, was established through the work of A. Alt, in particular by his 1929 essay "Der Gott der Väter" (ET: "The God of the Fathers"). Alt argued that the divine titles "the God of *Abraham," "the fear of *Isaac" and "the mighty one of *Jacob" are the remnants of oral traditions lying behind the present book of Genesis. In his view, three distinct "numina" (deities) had been the patron gods of the individuals Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (who were not related to one another). These numina were worshiped by nomadic tribes prior to their settlement in Canaan. As tribal groups entered the land, they associated their patriarchal numina with the cult shrines already in the land. As Yahwism began to dominate and unify the tribes of Israel, J and E brought the patriarchs together into a single genealogy and their numina into a single deity, the "God of the fathers," who was, of course, made out to be Yahweh.

The original traditions about the patriarchs and their numina were either forgotten or suppressed; only the titles of the numina (e.g., "God of Abraham") remain. The stories about divine encounters in the present book of Genesis (e.g., Gen 28) were for the most part original compositions by the documentary writers, although they do preserve fragments of the traditions of the numina (e.g., Gen 15). They also contain elements of traditions that were attached to the local shrines (e.g., Gen 28:11-12, an E text, preserves such a cult tradition about Bethel). It is possible, however, to make inferences about the relationship between the numina and the tribes. All of the traditions about the Jacob numen, for example, are attached to shrines in the territory of the *Joseph tribes; this indicates that the Joseph tribes worshiped the "mighty one of Jacob." Because J associates the numen of Abraham with the oak of Mamre, Alt suggests, we can associate that cult with *Judah and the *Calebites. Yahweh was originally associated with the cult at Shiloh; the notion that the whole nation had worshiped Yahweh at Sinai before

entering the land was a fabrication of the *Moses saga. All of the tribes were able to unify under Yahweh as a national deity because the cult of Yahweh had successfully assimilated the tribal numina; they never had to abandon their ancient gods.

3.2. Gerhard von Rad. Tradition criticism may have hit its high point in von Rad's 1938 essay, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch." It is a superb example of the method and results of tradition criticism. As his starting point for examining how the "Hexateuch" was formed, von Rad observes that Deuteronomy 6:20-24; 26:5b-9 and Joshua 24:2b-13 are creeds. He contends that they are not casual historical recollections but are formal recitations for cultic settings. He also asserts that minor accretions in these texts are obvious and easily set apart from the rest. In his development of the argument, von Rad contends that later free adaptations of the creeds are proof that they served the purpose of being early recitations around which the Israelite understanding of their faith developed. Taking as examples 1 Samuel 12:8; Psalm 136 and Exodus 15, one sees how the creedal formulation was a fixed constant in Israelite religion but was also freely subjected to adaptation and transformation. A striking omission, he says, is any reference to Sinai in these compositions; in fact, the earliest reference to Sinai in a creedal statement is Nehemiah 9:13-14.

Following Wellhausen, von Rad takes it as a given that the Sinai tradition is an independent strand. It is a fixed, self-contained unit that has two major elements: the *theophany and the making of the *covenant. The Sinai tradition, moreover, is devoid of references to God's saving acts in the exodus and the desert wanderings. And just as there are free reworkings of the creed, so there are loose, poetic renditions of the Sinai tradition (e.g., Deut 33:2, 4). Thus, there are two separate, primitive traditions: the creedal tradition of the settlement (involving the patriarchs and the exodus), and the Sinai tradition.

This of course leads to the question of the setting in which the Sinai tradition took shape. For von Rad, following Mowinckel, the answer is clear: a cultic setting. Confirmation of this hypothesis is found in the form of Psalm 50, which is a witness to a cultic ritual involving Sinai, theophany and the *Decalogue. Psalm 81 is similar; it obviously reflects a New Year festival (Ps 81:3 [MT 81:4]) and a celebration of the giving of the Decalogue (Ps 81:8 [MT 81:9]). The cultic origins of the legislative/Sinai tradition is further indicated in Deuteronomy, where the use of the word "today" as a kind of refrain (e.g., Deut 29:10-15) makes the giving of Yahweh's law contemporary for the worshiper in a cultic setting. Indeed, the hortatory and recital form of the presentation in Deuteronomy probably reflects a more primitive version of the cult than does the historical narrative in Exodus 19—25. The most likely setting for the Sinai cult, von Rad suggests, is the covenant festival at Shechem (Josh 24), a Yahwistic New Year festival that can be identified as the Feast of Booths (*see* Festivals and Feasts).

The cultic setting for the settlement tradition is established in the creed of Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 as the Feast of Weeks. This was originally a Canaanite harvest festival, but the settlement creed afforded the early Israelites a useful method for appropriating the festival. The purpose of the settlement creed was to account for Israel's ownership of the land. The location of this cult was, von Rad asserts, at Gilgal (see Josh 14:6-14; Judg 2:1).

It was the Yahwist who began the process of taking the traditions of Israel and, by a literary *tour de force,* drawing them together into a coherent narrative. The traditions themselves were far older than the Yahwist; he was a collector rather than an original author. The settlement tradition reflected in the Deuteronomy 26 creed was the starting point for this process. It and other early (pre-J) formulations of the creed already referred to the patriarchs. By the time the Yahwist began his work, moreover, the tradition-historical process outlined by Alt, whereby the separate patriarchs and their numina were fused into a single genealogy and faith, had already taken place. But the Yahwist arranged and gave order to the saga material and, most importantly, integrated the patriarchal tradition into the settlement tradition. He achieved this by reorienting the patriarchal traditions into a prelude to the settlement. Furthermore, it was the Yahwist who fused the settlement tradition to the Sinai tradition, although it took a long time for this merging of traditions to gain acceptance as the orthodox faith of Israel. Therefore it was the Yahwist who gave the Hexateuch its basic form. Although the problems of the formation and redaction of E and P are themselves quite

complex, by the time they arrived the fundamental shape of the text, the Hexateuch, was established.

The upshot of all this is that an enormous amount of cultic tradition has been incorporated into J, although the astounding thing, in von Rad's words, is that "there is not one single instance in which the original cultic interest has been preserved" in J (von Rad, 68). The Yahwist has thus to some extent secularized Israel's faith, in that he has divorced major elements of it from the cult. For him, Yahweh's primary sphere of dealing with his people is not in sacred institutions but in history, especially in the fact that Yahweh has fulfilled his promises and given Israel the land.

It is not by accident that the first volume of von Rad's *Old Testament Theology* was subtitled *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*. For him, the theology of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch can be described as a massive elaboration of the original creed of Deuteronomy 26 (von Rad 1962, 1:122-25). In describing OT theology, therefore, the scholar is describing how the traditions have grown and been transformed. Tradition criticism is the key to understanding how Israel understood and developed her core beliefs.

3.3. Martin Noth. Martin Noth detected five major independent streams of early Israelite tradition that lay behind the Pentateuch. These were: (1) the guidance out of Egypt; (2) the guidance to the arable land; (3) the promises to the patriarchs; (4) the guidance in the wilderness; and (5) the revelation at Sinai. He suggests that as the early tribes that were to make up Israel came together in Canaan, different groups brought different traditions with them, and these traditions were slowly merged into the one story of Israel. For example, the tribes that had a tradition of meeting a deity at Sinai combined their story with those who had a tradition of deliverance from *Egypt. The traditions of promises to the patriarchs were adopted by the whole of emerging Israel as legitimizing their conquest of the land.

This leads Noth to a skeptical agnosticism about some of the most significant elements of biblical history. About Sinai, he is only willing to say that some group of people (not all Israel) had a pilgrimage to Sinai and maintained this memory with a cult tradition; he suggests that bearers of this tradition scattered to the other tribes of Israel so that all Israel adopted it as their own. About Moses he is even more silent; he is not sure which of the major themes Moses might have originally been attached to, but he is certain that Moses had no connection to the original Sinai tradition (Noth 1958, 109-37).

4. Concluding Observations.

Tradition criticism operates from the assumption that the modern scholar can recover the earliest oral traditions that lie behind the present text of the OT as well as their historical circumstances and subsequent developments. Is this valid? Unless the scholar has something near to omniscience, it hardly seems possible.

Many of the fundamental tenets of tradition criticism are doubtful. Gunkel's distinction between "legend" and "history" is clearly overdrawn if not artificial. There is no reason to believe that the cult shrines of the ancient Near East generated traditions in the manner that tradition criticism presupposes. Moreover, describing Olrik's observations as "laws" is misleading because it is clear that not all oral tales have all these characteristics. Still less can one contend that wherever these traits are found one is in oral material; a story originally composed as a written text could easily have most or all of them. Modern folklorist study has progressed well beyond Olrik's work. This is not to say that all of his opinions have been abandoned, but they are hardly worthy of being called "laws," and many would question whether it is possible to describe a universal set of traits for all oral tales. Among modern OT scholars, few follow Olrik's laws, and those who do add major qualifications (e.g., Van Seters, 158-61). Furthermore, tradition criticism does not take seriously the evidence that ancient Near Eastern societies were highly literate and regularly committed material they thought worth remembering to *writing (Waltke).

The idea that the Icelandic saga can serve as a type for the patriarchal tradition strikes many scholars today as outlandish. The cultural gap between the two societies is enormous, and the violent Icelandic sagas are too unlike the Genesis stories for meaningful comparison. On top of that, it is not even clear that the Icelandic sagas began as oral tradition (Kirkpatrick, 83).

The specific theories outlined above only increase one's suspicion of the method. Noth's five themes, for example, are not sufficiently

well-established to serve as the basis for historical research. Anyone is free to be skeptical about the stories in the Pentateuch; what is intolerable in Noth is that he bases his skepticism on the alleged *certainty* of his traditio-historical analysis.

Gunkel's discussion of the "two traditions" that lay behind Genesis 34 is fanciful in the extreme. How can we, from this distance, possibly know how many "traditions" were behind this text, what their *Sitze im Leben* were and where the moral preferences of the tradents lay? Scholars have pointed out that Alt's analysis is devoid of external controls (e.g., Van Seters, 141; Kirkpatrick, 36). One needs to understand that Alt's elaborate reconstruction is based entirely on inferences from the biblical text. Alt does appeal to analogies from Arab, Aramean and Greek culture, and especially to Nabatean and Greek inscriptions, but it is clear that these are only a thin façade of external data; they contribute nothing substantial to the argument (and the value of these analogies has in any case been fairly dismissed by subsequent scholarship).

A single example will suffice to illustrate Alt's cavalier handling of the evidence. Alt asserts that the "god of the fathers" is an artificial construct meant to draw together the separate patriarchs and their numina and that this "god of the fathers" has no connection to any shrine. This is in spite of the fact that Genesis 46:1 asserts that Jacob offered sacrifice to the "God of his father Isaac" at Beer-sheba. More than that, Alt himself asserts that early traditions in Genesis associate Beer-sheba with Abraham (see Alt, 22 n. 59, 54). In short, Alt dismisses the fact that the evidence associates the "god of the fathers" at Beer-sheba with all three patriarchs!

Von Rad's starting point for investigation contradicts powerful historical analogy that a creed comes at the *end* of a historical process and not at its beginning. The creeds of the Christian faith, even the very basic so-called Apostles' Creed, come after the formation of the NT, not before it. A creed is by definition a simple, concise, yet reasonably complete statement of *a large body of faith that is already established*, although the creed may give that faith definition from a distinctive perspective. Even the supposed creeds in the NT, minimal though they are (e.g., 1 Tim 2:5-6), came after the gospel of Jesus had been widely proclaimed in the Gentile world; one would be hard-pressed to show that the NT grew out of such a text. One does not begin with a creed and then slowly create a story and faith.

Beyond that, the details of von Rad's analysis are hopelessly conjectural and at times incoherent. Claiming that the creeds have their origins in cults and that the cult center for the settlement tradition is the celebration of the Feast of Weeks at Gilgal is little more than piling speculation on speculation (especially since Gilgal has no association with the Feast of Weeks). In von Rad's model, Deuteronomy is the seedbed for *both* the *settlement* and the *Sinai* traditions. Of course, a scholar may contend that the present Deuteronomy has been so redacted that both traditions have been forced together, but one is struck by how seamlessly Deuteronomy 26 moves from the "settlement creed" to exhortations to obey the statutes and decrees of Yahweh—a hallmark of the "Sinai" tradition! At the same time, Psalm 81, a hymn supposedly from the Sinai tradition, contains explicit reference in verses 6-7 (Eng 5-6) to the exodus. Yet it is critical to von Rad's thesis that the two traditions were entirely separate at this stage. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that here as elsewhere the entire tradition-critical project has broken down.

Tradition criticism is not dead, but its future does not look very bright. After the withering criticism the method and its results have received from scholars (e.g., that one cannot with confidence determine what material had its origin in oral literature, that the notion of the cult-etiology is questionable, that the "five themes" approach to the material improperly controls the analysis of the data; see Knight 1985, 268-71), it is difficult to see how it could return to prominence. To be sure, there are those who more or less advocate its continuing usefulness (see Knight 1977), but no subsequent sweeping theses such as those developed by von Rad and Noth have captured the field the way these did. Probably the most significant scholar after von Rad and Noth is C. Westermann, who builds a case for understanding the narratives of Genesis through analyzing the promises to the patriarchs and distinguishing earlier traditions of promise from later ones. Other traditio-historical syntheses, particularly that developed by I. Engnell (which asserts that two independent streams of tradition produced the Tetrateuch and the Deuteronomic History in the postexilic period), have won few adherents.

See also FORM CRITICISM; HISTORICAL CRITICISM; LITERARY/NARRATIVE CRITICISM; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM; TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

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TRADITIONSGESCHICHTE. *See* TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD. *See* THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

TRANSPORTATION. *See* TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

During the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, travel in the ancient Near East was, save for local traffic, primarily for the purposes of trade, commerce and military movement. Several accounts in the Pentateuch depict the Hebrews moving their flocks from one grazing area to another. *Joseph's brothers, for example, moved their animals from the valley of Hebron to Shechem to Dothan, a distance of some sixty miles (Gen 37:12-17). From Egypt come numerous topographical lists for this time period describing Egyptian military campaigns into Palestine.

Travel in antiquity, especially long-distance, was a particularly dangerous affair. A text from Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (early Middle Bronze Age) called "The Satire on Trades" comments on such travel:

> The courier goes out to a foreign country, after he has made over his property to his children, being afraid of lions and Asiatics.... The itinerant merchant sails downstream to the Delta to get trade for himself. When he has done more than his arms can (really) do, the gnats have slain him, the sand flies have made him miserably miserable. Then there is inflammation. (*ANET*, 433; *AEL* 1.188)

Often the roads were simply impassable. A remark by Galen, a medical author of the second century, certainly applies to much earlier periods, when he says: "Even today we see that some of the ancient highways of the world are in part swampy, in part covered by stones or thickets; that they are difficultly steep or dangerously sloping, infested with wild animals, impassable because of the width of rivers, long, or rough" (Meijer and van Nijf, 145).

Most people traveled by foot in these times, even over long distances. But that is not the only way they journeyed. We now turn to discuss the various means of transportation in the ancient Near East during the second millennium B.C.

1. Modes of Transportation
2. Roads of Antiquity

1. Modes of Transportation.

1.1. Sea Travel. Many scholars agree that water-borne transportation may be traced to the Neolithic period in the ancient Near East, approximately 10,000 years ago. The earliest artistic representations of ships date to the Ubaid period in Mesopotamia (c. 5200 B.C.), although ships with sails are not found until around 3500 (Steiglitz, 135). The latter appear in Egypt a little later, around 3300 B.C. From the beginning of the second millennium B.C., shipping was a ma-

jor means of transport in the ancient Near East (De Graeve, 17).

For the Hebrews during the second millennium (the period of the events of the Pentateuch), the sea served as a barrier rather than a highway (Pritchard, 4.333). Several factors contributed to this condition. First, Palestine has an absence of natural harbors. Second, the coastal areas were dominated by other peoples during this time—the Hebrews had very little access to the sea. Finally, the Israelites were not a seafaring people in the second millennium B.C. but principally a seminomadic people dependent on herding and agriculture. Confirmation of this situation is the paucity of references to seafaring in the Torah (Gen 49:13; Num 24:24; Deut 28:68). Not until the time of Solomon in the tenth century B.C. did Israel participate in maritime enterprises, and only then from the Gulf of Aqabah and not from the Mediterranean Sea.

1.2. Land Travel. In addition to referring to walking, the Pentateuch alludes to various forms of land travel. Some scholars, however, argue that some of these modes of transport, such as the camel, do not belong to the purported age of the Pentateuch, that is, the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. They understand these references to be anachronistic—a reading into the times of the Pentateuch by later writers. Thus, we are encouraged to be careful in our analysis and study.

1.2.1. Wheeled Vehicles. Wagons and carts for travel were apparently invented in Mesopotamia. The date of invention, however, is a matter of debate. Saggs, for example, places it early, in the Halaf period in Northern Mesopotamia, about 4000 B.C. (Saggs, 35). Others insist it did not happen until later in the fourth millennium B.C. (Childe, 177-78). There appears to be universal agreement that carts and wagons came into use no later than 3000. Therefore, references to wagons in the Pentateuch are not out of place (Gen 45:19, 21, 27; Num 7:3, 6-7).

Chariots are mentioned frequently in the Torah (see, e.g., Gen 41:43; 46:29; 50:9; Ex 14:6-7; Deut 11:4). It is likely that the Sumerians invented chariotry in the first half of the third millennium B.C. Not everyone agrees, but the latest date given for the discovery of chariotry is in the very early years of the second millennium B.C. (Moorey, 196-215). It must be earlier than that date, however, because of the recent discovery of a clay horse figurine found at Tell es-Sweyhat in Syria. The statuette has a hole bored through its muzzle, indicating that the animal was domesticated and held reins in its mouth—these to pull a chariot. In addition, several model chariots were found at the site from the same period, dating to about 2300 B.C.

1.2.2. Donkey Caravan Travel. Transportation by donkey in a caravan is well known in the Pentateuch (Gen 22:3; 42:25-28). It had been common as a means of transport since about 3000 B.C., for both travel and trade. As W. F. Albright so cogently remarks, it is clear "that the sudden appearance of vast numbers of donkeys among the Midianites of *Moses' time is perfectly in keeping with the actual situation then, just as are the donkey caravans of Joseph's brethren in Gen. 42—47, or the Israelite donkey caravans of the time of Deborah (Judg. 5:6-11)" (Albright, 205).

1.2.3. Camels. The camel is mentioned twenty-eight times in the Pentateuch, and each reference reflects the domestication of that animal (Gen 12:16; 24:10-64 [18x]; 30:43; 31:17, 34; 32:7, 15 [MT 32:8, 16]; 37:25; Ex 9:3; Lev 11:4; Deut 14:7). Many scholars argue that not until the first millennium B.C. was the camel fully domesticated in Palestine as a transportation animal (Van Seters, 17). W. F. Albright comments: "Tame camels and camel riders do not appear with certainty until well along in the first millennium B.C." (Albright, 197-98 n. 1). These authors conclude that biblical references to camels in the Torah—such as *Abraham giving his servant ten camels to search for Isaac's wife (Gen 24:10)—are later additions to the text and do not reflect the reality of camel domestication in the Levant (Kohler-Rollefson, 183).

A main problem with an outright dismissal of camel domestication in Palestine before the first millennium is the paucity of evidence regarding the matter. It is simply impossible to give a precise date to the domestication of the camel and its appearance in the Levant (Knauf, 149). The best reconstruction is by R. Bulliet, who sees four stages of camel domestication: (1) it began in the fourth to third millennium in southeastern Arabia; (2) during the third millennium the camel was employed as a beast of burden and used in caravans; (3) by 1000 B.C. camels were being used throughout the ancient Near East for military purposes; and (4) between 500 and 200 B.C. warriors learned to use the lance and sword while mounted on camels, which they could not do in the prior stage (Knauf, 149).

One author concludes that the "earliest archaeological evidence comes from Umm an-Nar, a site located on a small island . . . in the Persian Gulf. Here the cultural context suggests that the dromedary may have been domesticated in the eastern part of the peninsula during the 3rd millennium B.C., perhaps as early as 2700 B.C." (Wapnish, 105) It is also clear that the earliest evidence of camel domestication on the Iranian Plateau occurs roughly between 2600-2500 B.C. Consequently, it is not out of line to conclude that camels were generally used in ways described by the Pentateuch before the times it is purported to describe. Yet, this general statement leaves something to be desired because the diffusion of the domesticated camel from Arabia to the ancient Near East has not been fully documented. The crucial question is, when did domesticated camels first appear in the Levant and in Palestine in particular?

Camel bones have been found in archaeological contexts of Palestine beginning in the early third millennium B.C. (Lernau, 87). Occasional representations of camels appear on monuments and in figurines from this early period (Van Seters, 17). The problem with such evidence is how to distinguish whether or not these represent wild or tame camels. The evidence is simply inconclusive.

Inscriptional evidence of the Levant is also uncertain. A tablet from Alalakh dating to the fifteenth century B.C. may mention the domesticated camel in a fodder-list. The initial reading has been disputed, however (Lambert, 42). Mesopotamian lexical lists found at Ugarit from the Old Babylonian period (c. 1950-1530 B.C.) appear to demonstrate some knowledge of the camel and its domestication. A Sumerian text from the same period found at Nippur makes mention of camel's milk, which would lead one to assume some sort of domestication (Kitchen, 79). The clearest, earliest reference to the camel as a domesticated animal occurs in the inscription of Assur-bel-kala from Assyria (c. 1074-1057 B.C.).

Caution is the word of the day. As the evidence presently stands, any conclusions drawn regarding camel domestication must remain tentative at best. For scholars to say that the appearance of tame camels in the Pentateuch must be anachronistic is to go too far. Our knowledge is simply lacking, and it is an argument from silence. Even so, it appears that domestication of the camel began in the Levant not much later than 2000 B.C., but significant camel use did not begin until much before 1200 B.C. (*see* Zoology).

2. Roads of Antiquity.

Not until the Roman period was much attention paid to the construction and upkeep of roads and highways. During the period of the Republic, the Roman authorities began the construction of a vast system of highways that made communication possible between Rome and various parts of the empire, including Palestine. For example, Plutarch says of the construction of roads by Gaius Gracchus (late second century):

> His roads were planned so as to run right across the country in a straight line, part of the surface consisting of dressed stone and part of tamped-down gravel. Depressions were filled up, any watercourses or ravines which crossed the line of the road were bridged, and both sides of the road were levelled or embanked to the same height so that the whole of the work presented a beautiful and symmetrical appearance. (Meijr and van Nijf, 143-44)

In addition, no maps of roadways are known from before the Roman era. Therefore, it is quite difficult to determine the routing of roads in Palestine prior to this time.

For the Middle and Late Bronze ages, we are primarily dependent on extrabiblical literary sources, such as texts from Egypt, to supplement the Bible. However, because of the scarcity of evidence even from these sources, routes for travel in the period of the Pentateuch may be generally divided into two basic groups: (1) international highways; and (2) regional/local roads.

2.1. International Highways. During the Middle and Late Bronze ages there were two principal international highways through Palestine. The first, often called the Great Trunk Road, linked Egypt with virtually every part of the Levant. It ran from Memphis, the very important religious, political and economic center of Middle Egypt, to Pi-Ramesse, a city probably to be identified with Tell el-Dab^{c}a, about seventeen miles southwest of Tanis (Currid, 125-28). From there the route proceeded to Sile (Tell Abu Sefa) in the Delta region of Lower Egypt. The roadway went along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea until it reached Gaza, a town in the coastal plain

of Palestine. The Bible refers to this section as the "way of the land of the Philistines" (Ex 13:17). The Egyptians called it the "Way of Horus" (*AEL* 1.103, 108, 231).

This highway in Palestine traveled to the north along the coast until it reached the Arunah Pass, and it turned slightly to the northeast to the city of Megiddo. From there it divided into three branches: (1) one went directly eastward to Beth-shean; (2) a second continued northward along the coast to Acco and points north; and (3) the final branch proceeded to the Sea of Galilee, north to Hazor and eventually to Damascus.

The Great Trunk Road was an important thoroughfare for trade and commerce between Egypt and Mesopotamia, but beyond that this highway was a main artery for military campaigns and conquests throughout the history of the ancient Near East. When Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 B.C.) invaded Palestine, the route he took was from Sile to Gaza, then to Megiddo (*ANET,* 235). The same route was taken in later military campaigns under Ramesses II and Shoshenq (*ANET,* 255; Currid, 190-92).

The second principal route is called the King's Highway. Although not as important as the Great Trunk Road for travel between Egypt and Syria, it was vital because of the many roads to Arabia branching from it. Its southern extension began in the area of Elath/Ezion-geber, at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqabah, and it ran northward along the hill country of Transjordan through ancient Edom and Moab. The route went by the towns of Bozrah, Dibon, Heshbon and Amman. From there it proceeded north through ancient Gilead and Bashan, eventually reaching Damascus. The road was used frequently by the Egyptians in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Three topographical lists provide a description of the route: from the reigns of Thutmose III, Amenophis III (c. 1391-1353 B.C.), and Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.) (Krahmalkov, 54-62). Part of this road was used by the Hebrews in their escape from Egypt under Moses (Num 20:17; 21:22).

2.2. Regional/Local Roads. Regional and local roads, paths, and tracks are very difficult to determine and trace for the pentateuchal period. They no doubt existed, but to give detail to their general existence is practically impossible. The use of the Hebrew word *derek* may at times imply the location of a roadway. For example, in Deuteronomy 3:1 the biblical author explains that after the Hebrews had destroyed much of Sihon's kingdom, they "turned and went up the road *[derek]* to Bashan." In another instance, Jacob relates that he buried Rachel "on the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem" (Gen 48:7). The precise routes of these roadways are unknown.

From Egyptian literature comes evidence that helps to define regional routes during the Middle and Late Bronze ages. For instance, when the Israelites left Egypt to go into the Sinai desert they seem to have used a primary road of Egyptian mining expeditions during the Middle and New Kingdoms (c. twentieth to twelfth centuries B.C.). Some of the military campaigns of the Egyptian pharaohs, such as Thutmose III, also employed regional roads through Palestine and thus can provide some general direction.

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TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. *See* FALL.

TREE OF LIFE. *See* EDEN, GARDEN OF; FALL; TABERNACLE.

TRIBES OF ISRAEL. *See* ISRAELITES; SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

ÜBERLIEFERUNGSGESCHICHTE. *See* TRADITIO-HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

UNCLEAN. *See* HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

UNLEAVENED BREAD, FEAST OF. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

U, V

UR

Genesis 11:31 tells us that Abram departed from "Ur of the Chaldeans," along with *Terah and his family, on a journey that would take him to Canaan. Modern archaeology has discovered a city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia that is believed by some to be the city of patriarchal origins.

1. Archaeological Discovery and Historical Reconstruction
2. Ur of Patriarchal Origins

1. Archaeological Discovery and Historical Reconstruction.

The city of Ur is one of the oldest and most famous in Mesopotamia, with a recorded history of over two millennia. It is identified with modern Tell al-Muqayyar, located on the Euphrates in southern Mesopotamia. In a sounding at the site in 1855 J. E. Taylor discovered a brick inscribed with a foundation text of Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.), which enabled H. C. Rawlinson to identify the modern tell with the ancient city of Ur. C. Thompson (1918) and J. E. Taylor (1919) conducted excavations at the site, but it was C. L. Woolley, director of the joint British Museum–University of Pennsylvania expedition, who conducted the first systematic investigation of the tell during the period 1922-1934.

The roughly elliptical tell measures approximately 1200 meters by 900 meters—not, therefore, one of the most extensive cities of its time—and the density of the dwellings has been taken to indicate an average population of around 24,000.

Findings at the tell point to the Early Dynastic (ED) III period (2600-2500 B.C.) and the Third Dynasty (2111-2003 B.C.), especially under Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, the first two kings of the Third Dynasty, as the high points in the city's history. It was during Ur-Nammu's reign that the famous ziggurat began to be constructed. This three-story building measures 62.5 meters by 43 meters at its base, has a core composed of mud bricks protected by an outer skin of burned bricks, and was provided with a series of stairways that led to the temple of Nanna, built on top of the third story. Ur was the center of Mesopotamian worship of Nanna/Sin, the moon god, the same god who was said to reside in *Haran, the city to which Terah and his family migrated when they left Ur.

The city never recovered a political leadership role in Mesopotamia after its destruction at the end of the Third Dynasty, but it remained an important religious center, one that Nabonidus sought to enhance when he promoted the cult of the moon god.

Woolley made his most spectacular finds at the site when he uncovered a number of royal tombs, the earliest of which date to ED III. In two of these tombs, those of King Meskalamdug and Queen Puabi, he discovered an array of expensive, finely crafted artifacts. These included chariots, weapons made of gold, a solid gold helmet, stringed instruments of various shapes and sizes with gold overlay, and a wealth of jewelry in gold and lapis lazuli (for photographs see Roaf, 92-95). Human remains were also found buried with these artifacts; in one case as many as eighty bodies were found, mostly females. All this material and all these people were intended to serve the needs of the departed king and queen in the afterlife. The servants may have been given poison to drink once they were in the burial area, or they may even have been sacrificed prior to the funeral. However, the practice of killing servants to enable them to accompany the king or queen to the afterlife is not widely attested in Mesopotamian history.

The rich finds in these tombs indicate the wealth of the city during this period. The city had the advantage of proximity to the Persian Gulf, and its wealth was most probably derived from its lucrative involvement in trade along the Gulf, perhaps also from trade links with the Indus Valley.

Woolley's discovery of a three-meter-deep deposit of alluvial sand led him to assume that this was evidence for the Genesis *flood. There clearly was a major flood that affected the city, but subsequent finds of significant alluvial deposits at other sites in Mesopotamia come from quite different periods of history.

2. Ur of Patriarchal Origins.

According to Genesis 11:31, Abraham left "Ur of the Chaldeans" with Terah and his family on their proposed journey to Canaan. The descriptor *Chaldean* is not used of southern Mesopotamia until the tenth century at the earliest. Biblical *chronology, however, clearly indicates a date for Abraham much earlier than this (the debate about dating the patriarchs continues), and the reference to the Chaldeans here is most probably an editorial aid for readers for whom the Chaldeans were the dominant element in the region. Nevertheless, chronological difficulties associated with the use of the term *Chaldean* and traditions pointing to a location for Abraham's birthplace in the north of Mesopotamia, in the region of Haran, have raised questions about Tell al-Muqayyar/Ur's claim to fame as the city from which Terah and Abraham migrated.

The Haran region is closely associated with Terah, Abraham and their wider family in OT traditions (cf. Gen 24:10; 28:10), and a reputedly ancient tradition associates the Ur that Abraham left with the city of Urfa (Edessa), which is some thirty-two kilometers northwest of Haran. The tradition is, however, probably no earlier than the eighth or ninth century A.D. In any case, the term *Chaldean* would be an inappropriate descriptor of the region at any time in its history. The traditions that locate Abraham's birthplace in the south of Mesopotamia are more impressive than those supporting a northern locale. Local traditions that have survived in the south bear witness to a continuing belief about Abraham's birthplace there, even though they are often vague. Both Eupolemos (c. 150 B.C.) and Josephus were convinced that Abraham's birthplace was the southern city of Ur.

The Genesis text gives no indication whether Terah's decision to leave Ur was based on any economic, political, military or some other change in the city's prospects and therefore in his relationship to it. Neither does it indicate what role Terah and his family, whose origins are clearly among the peoples of the Haran region, was playing in the life and commerce of the city of Ur.

Since detailed dating of the patriarchs is still a matter of considerable debate, there is no scholarly agreement about which, if any, changes in Ur's fortunes might have precipitated this migration, which was to make such a lasting impression on human affairs.

See also ABRAHAM; HARAN; TERAH.

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URIM AND THUMMIM. *See* PRIESTLY CLOTHING.

USURY. *See* THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY.

UTNAPISHTIM. *See* FLOOD; NOAH.

VILLAGE. *See* CITY, TOWN, CAMP.

VISIONS. *See* DIVINATION, MAGIC; PROPHETS, PROPHECY.

W, X, Y, Z

WANDERING IN WILDERNESS. *See* EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; NUMBERS, BOOK OF; WILDERNESS, DESERT.

WAR CAMP. *See* TABERNACLE.

WARFARE

Warfare is generally understood to be armed conflict by one political unit against another with the purpose of destroying either the opponent or its will to resist. This article briefly examines the conduct of warfare found in the Pentateuch, as well as instructions provided for the waging of warfare in Israel. Ethical issues related to the conduct of war by Israel in the Pentateuch conclude the study.

1. General
2. Vocabulary
3. Accounts of Warfare
4. Ethics of Warfare

1. General.

Conflict is a common event recorded within the OT. Some of that conflict is between God and humanity and is found from the opening chapters of Genesis to the closing chapters of the Bible. Much of the conflict is between individuals, from *Cain and *Abel in Genesis to divorce between husband and wife in Malachi. So, too, there is much conflict between political units (i.e., warfare) from the account of *Abraham and the five kings in Genesis 14 to the great nations at war with one another in the eschatological portions of Daniel and Zechariah.

Not only do people from various walks of life engage in warfare within the Pentateuch (for individuals engaged in warfare, see 3 below), but God himself is portrayed as a warrior. While T. Longman and others argue that there are overtones of warfare in the divine conflict with chaos in the *creation account (*see* Cosmology), the portrayal of God as warrior in the Pentateuch is most evident in Exodus 15:3, where God is said to be a warrior who battles the forces of *Egypt on behalf of Israel. He is understood to be present in the battle camp in Deuteronomy 23:14, where there is implication that failure to maintain ritual purity would result not in his aid and comfort to Israel but in his rejection of and hostility toward them. The presence of the pillar of fire and cloud, first in evidence in Exodus 13:21-22 and used as a blocking force in Exodus 14:19-20, 24-25, is closely associated with the God of Israel, who in Numbers 10:34-36 is said to rise and scatter the enemies of Israel.

2. Vocabulary.

While a full discussion of the terminology of warfare used in the Pentateuch lies beyond the scope of this brief article, the more common terms are addressed below in alphabetic order. (The term often understood to refer to "holy war," *ḥērem,* is discussed in a separate article by that name.)

2.1. Ḥămūšîm. This term, which means "arrayed for battle," is found just twice: in Exodus 13:18, with respect to the movement of the Israelites from Egypt to the Red Sea; and in Numbers 32:17 (where *ḥămūšîm* should be read for *ḥūšîm,* with the LXX and Vulgate), where the tribes settling in the Transjordan agree to participate in the invasion of Cisjordan. In both cases a military formation or gathering of some sort is intended. It is possible that the word's lexical relationship to the number "five" is indicative of an arrangement similar to that described in Numbers 2, though the term is not used there. Such forces would move with a unit positioned forward, a unit to its rear, a unit to each side to protect the column's flanks, and with the leader-

ship occupying a fifth and central position.

2.2. Lāḥam. This verb, meaning "to wage war," is found seventeen times in the Pentateuch, only in the Niphal. The seventeen instances relate to nine occasions, more frequently to discussions about warfare rather than to the narrative description of combat itself. Even in narrative texts *lāḥam* describes combat fighting in only the most general of terms. For example, the king of Egypt is concerned that Israel may join forces hostile to Egypt (Ex 1:10). Likewise, several texts state that Yahweh will fight for his people (Ex 14:14, 25; Deut 1:30; 3:22). Numbers 21:26 notes past actions by Sihon, and Numbers 22:11 reports that Balak is planning warfare. Deuteronomy 1:41-42 reports a discussion of Israel's decision to go to war against the Canaanites, and Deuteronomy 20:4, 10, 19 offers rules for conducting warfare. On the other hand, the verb is used three times to describe active warfare against the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-10) and twice to note actual hostilities by the king of Arad and by Sihon against Israel (Num 21:1, 23).

2.3. Milḥamâ. This substantive form of the preceding root is found thirty-seven times in the Pentateuch, predominantly in Numbers and Deuteronomy. It may be understood as warfare in a general sense in a number of cases (e.g., Ex 13:17; 17:16; 32:17; Num 21:14; 31:27; 32:20, 27, 29; Deut 4:34; 20:5, 6, 7) but also relates to certain aspects of warfare. For example, *milḥamâ* appears in construct with "men" to designate a person engaging in warfare, a soldier or warrior (Num 31:28, 49; Deut 2:14, 16). Similarly, the victory song following the dramatic events at the Red Sea likens Israel's God to such a warrior (Ex 15:3). Deuteronomy 1:41 uses *milḥamâ* to signify a weapon of warfare.

Frequently *milḥamâ* is used with a variety of verbs to signify the physical relationship of the combatants to a battle. One departs *(yāṣā')* for the purpose of engaging in warfare (Num 21:33; Deut 20:1; 21:10). One approaches *(qārā')* the field of conflict (Ex 1:10; Deut 2:32; 3:1) and arrays one's forces *('ārak)* to engage in battle (Gen 14:8). One actually engages in or enters into *(bô')* hostilities (Num 10:9; 31:21; 32:6), incites *(gārâ)* hostilities (Deut 2:9, 24), then returns back home *(bô')* from the field (Num 31:14). When combined with the verb *'āśâ, milḥamâ* signifies the general waging of warfare (Gen 14:2; Deut 20:12, 20).

2.4. Ṣābā'. This verb is found in the Qal in the Pentateuch on six occasions, but only in Numbers 31:7, 42 does it refer to warfare. Elsewhere it is used of those who provide various services in the religious precinct (cf. 1 Sam 2:22).

The substantive for this root, also *ṣābā'*, is found nearly ninety times in the Pentateuch, the great majority in Numbers. It is not found in Leviticus. The word carries a variety of meanings associated with various groupings of people or of heavenly objects (units, hosts, corps). Most frequently in the Pentateuch, however, the word is associated with military units. In Genesis 21 and 26 Phicol is said to be the leader of a military unit. In Exodus 6 and 12 Israel is said to move in tribal units, which also appear to have a military responsibility to guard the nation assigned to them. In Deuteronomy 20 and 24 the word is used in the context of mustering for military service. In Numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 26, 31 and 32 the word is used exclusively in the context of military formations or activities. In Numbers 33 the word is used in a summary fashion, as it is in Exodus, to signify the movement of tribal units with a military responsibility presumably assigned to them. It should be noted that the expression "Lord of hosts," found widely elsewhere in the OT, is not found in the Pentateuch.

2.5. Ṣûr and Ṣārar. The verbs *ṣûr* (I Qal) and *ṣārar* (I Hiphil) are used with the meaning "to besiege" (Deut 20:12; 28:52). The verbs *ṣûr* (II Qal) and *ṣārar* (II Qal) are also used with the more general meaning "to attack" (Ex 23:22; Num 10:9; 25:18; 33:55; Deut 2:9, 19). The substantive of the root *ṣûr, māṣôr*, is found twice in Deuteronomy 20:19, 20, once with the general sense of a siege and once as a word for the siege works themselves.

2.6. Qārab. This verb is found in the Qal in the Pentateuch forty-five times. It generally means "to draw near" (rarely in the sense of ritual activity, where the Hiphil is more commonly used), normally without hostile intent. Nevertheless the act of drawing near to another can be deemed an unfriendly action (Ex 14:20; Deut 2:19, 37; 20:2, 10; 25:11).

3. Accounts of Warfare.

Both the patriarchal period and the period following the *exodus from Egypt record armed conflict between Israel (or its forebears) and other political units. With rare exception the battle is described more for the divine intervention

than for its technical conduct, which is the particular interest of this article.

*3.1. **Early Accounts.*** The oldest literature speaks to the warlike capacities of the various tribes in terms that do not often condemn but rather usually praise the aggressive behavior of certain groups. Thus Genesis 49 records praise for *Judah (Gen 49:8-11), *Dan (Gen 49:17), *Joseph (Gen 49:23-24) and *Benjamin (Gen 49:27). On the other hand, the same poem condemns the actions of *Simeon and *Levi (Gen 49:5-7; cf. Gen 34) against Shechem in a time of peace. Exodus 15:1-18 records a triumph song celebrating the actions of the divine warrior against the army of Egypt as God intervened to rescue his people from their oppressors. Deuteronomy 33 combines these themes, expressing the protection of the divine warrior and the particular strengths of some of the tribal groups: Judah (Deut 33:7), Joseph (Deut 33:17), *Gad (Deut 33:20-21) and Dan (Deut 33:22).

*3.2. **Battle Accounts.*** There is far greater interest in the political ramifications of the oppression of God's people and their restitution following armed conflict than in any recounting of the battles themselves. For example, the reference to the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num 21:14), notwithstanding the provision of its title, provides only political boundary information without regard to military action. Nevertheless, the following battles are significant.

3.2.1. Abraham. The conflict between the forces arrayed with Abraham and the marauders from the north (Gen 14) is typical of most of the accounts rendered in the Pentateuch. The account of the initial battle mentions only the array of the northern forces against those of the plain and the latter's confusion and defeat among the tar pits (Gen 14:8-10). The concern of the writer is the capture of *Lot and his family. Abraham's enlistment of allies for support, his marshaling of his forces, his pursuit of the northern force and his recapture of Lot and the others taken captive is merely summarized (Gen 14:13-16). Much more emphasis is placed upon the subsequent encounters between Abraham, *Melchizedek and the king of Sodom and their negotiations with regard to the spoils (Gen 14:17-24).

3.2.2. The Exodus. The telling of the exploits of the exodus from Egypt emphasize the helplessness of Israel and the mighty acts of God against the overpowering capacities of Egypt to wage war. The battle is God's, and thus the powers are cosmic and do not involve alliances, military formations, weapons of warfare or the leadership structure necessary to carry out hostilities. This divine intervention sets something of a paradigm for the reporting of all subsequent warfare in the Pentateuch. The emphasis is upon the mighty acts of God on behalf of an inadequate rabble in arms (cf. Num 10:35-36).

3.2.3. The Wilderness. Following the exodus, Israel appears both to encamp and to proceed forward between encampments in formations that suggest some military organization. The five-part organization described in Numbers 2:1-34 and 10:11-28—with the leadership placed in a central location among the other tribal groups, each composed of three tribal units with a designated leader—suggests a military formation arranged for command and control. This formation, to be held while in hostile territory, is defensive on all fronts, though the weaker numbers to the west (rear) and south (right flank) suggest that danger was more likely to be encountered as they moved east (forward) and from the north (left flank). While military formation, particularly the hiding of an ambushing force, is sometimes discussed in the accounts of later military exploits (such as at Ai and Bethel in Josh 8), this is the only record of military formation in the Pentateuch.

3.2.4. Amalek and First Invasion. The attack by Amalek against Israel at Rephidim (Ex 17:8-13; cf. Deut 25:17-19) is remarkably devoid of description save for the comment that the initial attack was upon the rear of the column and among the stragglers (Deut 25:18). Similarly, the defeat of a portion of Israel at the hands of the Amalekites and Canaanites (Num 14:39-45; cf. Deut 1:41-44) emphasizes only the failure to go to battle without the blessing of God or the appointed leadership. The only aspect of warfare noted is that Israel ascended to the ridge in attacking the inhabitants. This description suggests a frontal assault against strong defenders, an attack lacking surprise and cunning.

3.2.5. Arad to Bashan. The campaigns from Arad to Bashan in Numbers 21—25 also reveal little of the strategies or tactics of warfare. The surprise attack by the Canaanite king of Arad (Num 21:1-3) begins with an initial success on the part of the attacker, but it raises such hostility on the part of Israel that they defeat the army and go town to town destroying all the inhabit-

ants to the extent that the area is designated a waste, Hormah.

The attack by Sihon and the Amorites at Jahaz (Num 21:23-24; cf. Deut 2:32-35) recounts only their attack against Israel's encampment, most likely now in a defensive posture on the desert fringes. The defeat of the army of the Amorites, who prior to this period had defeated the Moabites, driving them south of the Arnon (see Num 21:26-30), allows the Israelites to press northward to take possession of the land to the east of the Jordan from the Arnon in the south to the Jabbok in the north.

In similar fashion the account of the defeat of Og king of Bashan (Num 21:33-35; cf. Deut 3:1) provides only the notice that Og came out to attack Israel and was defeated, laying open his country to Israelite occupation. Finally, the account with regard to Moab and Midian and the seer *Balaam (Num 22—25) is interesting for its description of the negotiations among allies prior to waging war against what is seen as a dangerous enemy. The failure of a satisfactory prognosis results in diplomatic subterfuge (Num 24:25—25:18; cf. 31:8, 16).

3.3. Instructions for Waging Warfare. Various instructions with regard to activities related to warfare—the calling up of a citizen army, the terms to propose to the enemy and the setting up of a siege—are found in Deuteronomy 20. With its reference to those who have planted a vineyard or built a house, these instructions appear more appropriate to warfare conducted from a national homeland than they do for tribal groups encamped temporarily on the desert fringe. They are thus provided in the context of Deuteronomy with a view to the future, not as indicative of the method by which warfare was conducted or even ought to have been conducted in the context of the period of early Israelite history recounted in the Pentateuch. No such instructions, however, are found elsewhere in the OT, and thus these are of significant interest to the student interested in the conduct of war during the later periods of the Israelite monarchy.

3.3.1. Fear. Of first importance is the need to be certain that those going into battle are emotionally and religiously prepared for the dangers of combat. Thus the priests assure the soldiers that God fights for them. The officers then ascertain whether any would rather return home than fight, lest they forfeit the fruit of their labors or fail to leave offspring to their widows. The truly fearful would likely endanger their comrades and thus should be eliminated from the fight. Once those who might defect are winnowed from the fighting force, subordinate leaders are selected.

3.3.2. Negotiations. Next in importance is the recognition that warfare is only conducted when the enemy will not acquiesce to the demand to surrender. Those surrendering are not to forfeit their lives. In the event of the necessity of military operations, only the adult men forfeit their lives for their resistance. Women and children as well as livestock and other property become the possession of the Israelites. The exception are those peoples and cities under *ḥērem. According to Deuteronomy 20:16-18, certain people groups within the land which Israel is to possess are to be utterly destroyed.

3.3.3. Siege Warfare. With respect to siege warfare, the instructions state only that fruit-bearing trees may not be destroyed in the construction of siege works. The destruction of wealth-producing agriculture is unnecessary, since fruit-bearing trees are seldom sufficiently large to be structurally significant in construction. Moreover, if Israel should succeed in overcoming the city, the future inhabitants would immediately benefit from a food source that would otherwise be decades in cultivation.

4. Ethics of Warfare.

Perhaps to justify the horrors of war perpetrated by a people deemed to be chosen specially by a just and holy God, past biblical interpreters have assumed that the war conducted by the Israelites was always justified in some way, either as self-defense or as a warfare commanded by God. The greatest difficulty is found with respect to warfare initiated by the people of God against others, an event found only once in the Pentateuch.

4.1. Defensive Warfare. As noted above, many of the engagements were initiated by other political units, forcing Israel or its forebears to defend themselves. The attacks against Israel by Egypt at the Red Sea, by Amalek at Rephidim, by the king of Arad at Hormah, by Sihon at Jahaz and by Og of Bashan all result in defensive engagements, although the entry of Israel into areas controlled by the kings of Arad, the Amorites and Bashan were likely seen by those three as potentially offensive in nature. Abra-

ham's fight with the kings in Genesis 14 is not strictly defensive but in its wider context can be understood as a response to a hostile and unprovoked raid against his near kin, Lot.

4.2. "Holy War." On some occasions war is commanded by God. Within biblical scholarship such warfare is frequently spoken of as a kind of "holy war," different from the brutishness of ordinary warfare. This "holy war" is seen as primarily defensive by some (see von Rad regarding the oldest biblical material) or as a divine reordering (see Boling and Wright, 27-37). The association of the Hebrew term *ḥērem* with some of the battles recorded in Joshua, as well as its use in the Pentateuch, has led some to this conclusion (see Niditch for a review of the literature).

4.3. Offensive Warfare. If one dismisses the entry of Israel into territory controlled by the kings of Arad, the Amorites and Bashan as neutral or friendly in nature, the only hostile warfare instigated by Israel in the Pentateuch is its attack against the Canaanites in Numbers 14:39-45, which results in a sound defeat. The initiation of this attack is rooted in the promise of God to deliver the country of the Canaanites to Israel (Num 13:2). Only when the people recoil in disbelief upon hearing the report of their spies is the offer postponed for forty years (Num 14:33). The defeat is thus seen not as a result of offensive warfare but as a result of disobedience against the orders of God.

See also HEREM.

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WEALTH AND POVERTY

The OT demonstrates throughout a deep concern for the poor and, while sometimes perceiving riches as a gift from God, also consistently warns about the dangers of wealth. Recently some scholars have questioned this commitment to altruism as inadequate or even as ultimately serving the class interests of later redactors (cf. Pleins, Rodd; Sneed). This negative ideological stance, however, does not do justice to the pervasive ethical impulse of the text. Through its narratives, legislation and nuanced vocabulary the Pentateuch provides a clear testimony of the demand to care for the defenseless and to be a gracious steward of material possessions.

1. The Choice of a Methodological Approach
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4. Wealth as Gift and Responsibility
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1. The Choice of a Methodological Approach. Critical theories regarding authorship and composition are relevant to the discussion of topics of ethical concern in the Pentateuch. Based on differences in structure and content, many scholars have related the three primary series of laws to diverse time periods: the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:33) to the Israelite monarchic period, Deuteronomy to the reforms of Josiah in the seventh century and the Holiness Code (Lev 17/18—26) to the exilic or postexilic period. They have claimed that these dissimilarities reflect distinct theological constructs and ideological agendas. In other words, moral concepts and institutional realities varied over time. Legislation pertinent to issues of wealth and poverty that have been utilized as sample cases for this notion of a legal evolution include, for example, the Jubilee (North, 191-212; Westbrook, 36-57; Crüsemann, 283-85). In addition, many date the concept of *covenant late and dismiss it as a significant basis for the moral demands of God before the seventh century (Nicholson). A critical perspective also is applied to the narrative sections of the Pentateuch, with various proposals put forward concerning the identity and dating of the Yahwist, Elohist and Priestly strands (*see* Source Criticism).

These interpretations, of course, impact the understanding of the Pentateuch's social teaching in terms of the provenance, interconnections and motivations of its moral demands and

models. This is significant because these critical reconstructions do not coincide with the traditional biblical presentation of life in ancient Israel. From these perspectives, a proper reading of the texts would not lead to a uniform treatment of the biblical material but rather should attempt to trace the changes in ethical thought over time.

Critical pentateuchal scholarship, however, is in flux. New views of the historical and textual data are emerging, and some of the past consensus is beginning to break down (e.g., Crüsemann). While not denying that Israel's social mores and institutions developed across the centuries, our alternative to trying to wed the consideration of wealth and poverty in the Pentateuch to any particular hypothetical textual and sociohistorical reconstruction is to ground the presentation in more of a synchronic analysis. Such an approach can acknowledge the variety in the information, even as it attempts to offer a more comprehensive picture, and can appreciate as well the broader sociocultural backdrop of the ancient Near Eastern context.

2. Ancient Near Eastern Legislation.

Poverty was not an uncommon experience in ancient times. Diseases, wars, market fluctuations (both national and international), heavy tributary demands and agricultural disasters such as crop failure, drought and insect plagues all would have contributed to the ruin of a family, village, city or country. Ancient Near Eastern literature reflects these harsh realities and demonstrates attention to the poor in several ways.

The prologues of several law codes (e.g., the Laws of Ur-Nammu, c. 2100 B.C., *ANET,* 523; Lipit-Ishtar, c. 1930 B.C., *ANET,* 159; Hammurabi, c. 1750 B.C., *ANET,* 164-65) declare that the care of the poor is a virtue of a good king and utilize the formula "I established justice [Akk. *mīšārum*] in the land" to emphasize the promulgation of legislation on behalf of the needy. (Scholars question whether these pronouncements are better taken as political propaganda rather than as indicative of actual legal practice.) Second, these codes contain specific laws designed to deal with a number of the causes of poverty and to help particular groups of the unfortunate. For example, there is legislation to protect *widows and *orphans and to regulate debt *slavery (e.g., Code of Hammurabi §§114-119; Middle Assyrian Laws §§C2-3; cf. Chirichigno, 30-100). Third, other literary genres give voice to the distress of the disenfranchised (e.g., in Egypt, The Peasant's Lament, *ANET,* 407-10). Lastly, at their coronation monarchs occasionally proclaimed exoneration from debts, granted amnesty for prisoners and slaves and declared certain cities exempt from taxes, corvée and military service. Examples of these royal edicts can be found across the ancient Near East (cf. Chirichigno, 85-92; Weinfeld, 75-110, 133-51), of which the most complete extant decree comes from the reign of Ammi-ṣaduqa of Babylon (1646-1626 B.C., *ANET,* 526-28).

It is not difficult to recognize parallels with biblical legislation, as the OT also deals with the victims of poverty and offers a variety of solutions for their plight. The uniqueness of the biblical material in some measure lies in some of the details of the legal guidelines but is especially apparent in the theological motivations for the moral life.

3. Foundational Narratives.

Three narrative complexes serve as the primary theological background for the Pentateuch's treatment of wealth and poverty. Their goal was to shape a peculiar national ethos and lifestyle (Birch; cf. Wenham).

The first set of narratives is the description of *creation in Genesis 1—2. Out of the formlessness and emptiness (Gen 1:2) God shaped and filled a world that he blessed (Gen 1:22, 28) and deemed "good" (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25)—"very good" after the creation of humans in his image (Gen 1:26-27, 31). The account culminates with the establishment of a day of rest, a day specifically set aside and blessed by God (Gen 2:1-3). According to Genesis 2, Yahweh God placed Adam in a fruitful garden to enjoy fellowship with him and the companionship of the woman (Gen 2:15-25; 3:8). They were charged with working this garden as God's representatives (Gen 2:15-20). In sum, all the earth is Yahweh's, and everything and everyone are the work of his hands. Each human potentially is a recipient of the divine blessing, both to enjoy the bounty of this watered paradise and to participate in the creation of life by being fruitful and multiplying. Humans are to live in accordance with God's will and to respect the rhythm of life, which is celebrated with the *sabbath (cf. Wright 1983, 67-87).

The subsequent downward spiral into rebel-

lion, violence and death in Genesis 3—11 sets the stage for the second narrative complex (Gen 12—50). Humanity was judged by God (Gen 3; 6—8), and the failure of *Noah and the hubris at the tower of *Babel (Gen 9; 11) suggest even further alienation from the Creator. Against this series of reversals, Abram/*Abraham was chosen as the mediator of God's blessing to "all the families of the earth," a purpose reiterated to his descendants (Gen 12:2-3; 18:18; 22:17-18; 26:4; 28:14). The blessing worked itself out in both material and spiritual dimensions. This mission was successful to the degree that the patriarchs lived exemplary lives before other peoples and maintained a proper relationship with Yahweh (Gen 15:6; 18:19; 20:7; 21:22-24; 22:12, 18; 26:5, 28-29; 30:27; 41:39). Their place of activity was the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1, 5-9; 13:14-18; 15:7; 17:3-8; 26:1-5; 28:15-22; 50:24-25), where the divine blessing was to be made visible and incarnated in the obedient life of God's people (cf. Carroll R.).

The final set of narratives—and the most important for social concern—comprises the exodus from Egypt. Israel was miraculously liberated from oppression under *Pharaoh. This merciful deliverance by the God of the patriarchs defined the character of Yahweh in a special way (Ex 2:23—3:22; 6:2-9; 14:30—15:21). He heard the cry of the oppressed and led them to a new way of life in another place. This freedom from slavery was the beginning of the pilgrimage to create a different kind of people, a people constituted at Sinai by the *law and a covenant (Ex 19—24). From there Israel traveled to the Promised *Land "that flows with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 13:27; 14:7-8). This land was Yahweh's (Lev 25:23) and was to be holy; here God would manifest himself in a special way at the *tabernacle (Ex 25—40; Lev 26:11-12; Deut 12:2-12, 18; 14:23, 26). The comprehension of the land of Canaan as gift and presence, in combination with the aforementioned notion of the earth as God's creation, were to be the basis of a different estimation of land possession and tenure (cf. Wright 1990; Habel; Millar, 67-104).

4. Wealth as Gift and Responsibility.

The patriarchal narratives recount the acquisition of possessions by God's people, both in the Promised Land and in Egypt (Gen 14:22-24; 20:14-16; 24:35; 26:12-13; 30:43; 47:27; Ex 11:2-3; 12:35-36). Yahweh later pledged to provide homes, good crops, fruitful trees and vineyards in Canaan after the dispossession of its inhabitants (Deut 6:10-11; 8:7-10).

At one level these material gifts echoed the divine purpose at creation to bless humanity and were a particular expression of the mandate to multiply and fill the earth (note Gen 24:35; 26:12-14; 47:27). Prosperity ideally would lead to a spirit of generosity toward others and to a greater trust in divine providence: Abram allowed Lot to choose his residence and was rewarded with the hope of a greater possession (Gen 13:8-17); *Jacob shared with *Esau from what he had gained in his sojourn in Paddan-aram (Gen 33:10-11); and Joseph sent his brothers home with abundant provisions (Gen 45:19-24; 50:20).

The law encouraged those who had material means not to take advantage of the less fortunate: boundary lines to family properties were to be preserved (Deut 19:14; 27:17), scales kept true (Lev 19:35-36), negotiations done equitably (Lev 25:13-17), legal proceedings not perverted (Ex 23:1-8; Lev 19:15-18; Deut 16:19) and interest not charged to fellow Israelites (Ex 22:25-27 [MT 22:24-26]; Lev 25:35-37; Deut 23:19-20). In addition, harvesters were to leave sections of the fields for reaping by the poor (Lev 19:9-10; Deut 24:19-22).

Gratitude toward Yahweh for material plenty was to be expressed concretely by bringing tithes and offerings to the tent of meeting (e.g., Deut 14:22-29). Participation in the agricultural feasts was another means of acknowledging God's provision and celebrating his goodness (e.g. Ex 34:22; Lev 23:15-21, 39-43; Deut 16:16-17). Even the poor were to bring offerings to God and to fulfill their vows, even though theirs were adjusted to fit their economic status (Lev 12:8; 14:21-22; 27:8). Worship, in other words, was not the prerogative simply of the comfortable and secure but was designed to allow all to reflect upon the blessings of the Creator and the mercies of the nation's redeemer.

Underlying these directives were reminders not to forget the implications of creation and especially of the exodus. The experience of the grace of God was to engender socioethical sensitivity (e.g., Ex 20:11; 22:21-24 [MT 22:20-23]; 23:9; Deut 5:15; 10:12-22). Failure to comply with Yahweh's law and the violation of the rights of the weak would bring natural calamities, invasion and ultimately expulsion from the land itself—

that is, the loss of wealth (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68). The enjoyment of wealth, therefore, was to be appreciated as a stewardship, a responsibility and a motivation for worship. A nation thus shaped by faithfulness and benevolence would be a witness to the world of divine blessing (Deut 4:5-8; 15:6).

5. Poverty: Issues and Solutions.

5.1. The Vocabulary of Poverty. The OT has a varied vocabulary to refer to the poor, and on occasion it might seem that several of the terms communicate different nuances about poverty (Pleins). Nevertheless, no neat and consistent distinctions can be drawn between them, as they can appear in tandem or in parallel (e.g., Deut 15:11; 24:14). The most prominent words for the poor in the Pentateuch are *dal* (*TDOT* 3.208-30; *NIDOTTE* 1.951-54), *ʾebyôn* (*TDOT* 1.27-41; *NIDOTTE* 1.228-32) and *ʿānî* (*ThWAT* 6.247-56; *NIDOTTE* 3.454-64). The causes of poverty were multiple, and several groups (such as widows, orphans, resident aliens) were more exposed to its impact. The OT underscores oppression as a major component of the life of the poor and here too offers a rich lexicon to denote this exploitation (e.g., *lḥṣ*, *TDOT* 7.529-33; *NIDOTTE* 2.792-93; *ʿšq*, *NIDOTTE* 3.557-58; Hanks, 3-40).

Dal might denote poor peasant farmers. Though they suffered economic hardship, they were not totally destitute since it was assumed that they were able to offer sacrifices (Lev 14:21). The vision of the emaciated cows of Genesis 41:19 is a graphic representation of the weakness and powerlessness of the *dal*. The *ʾebyôn* were the needy who were in more desperate straits (e.g., Ex 23:6, 10-11; cf. Is 32:6-7); scholars have suggested that the term referred to landless day laborers. The word *ʿānî* designated the afflicted and humble poor who struggled to survive and had to fall back on the generosity of others (e.g., Lev 19:9-10; 23:22). All of these terms described economically and socially dependent individuals or groups (although probably not social classes in the modern sense of the term) that, often without property and social status, were unable to sustain a family and successfully negotiate the severe vicissitudes of daily life in the ancient world.

5.2. Legislation for the Poor. The laws of the Pentateuch attempted to provide a safety net for the unfortunate and vulnerable members of society. The Pentateuch prescribed a series of charitable acts and legal measures that were designed to aid the poor in their distress. Mention has already been made of the provisions for gleaning and the call for just dealings at the city gates. All of these directives were designed to help preserve the stability of Israel's multiple household, patrilocal, ancestral land-tenure system. If observed, these laws would have prevented the creation of great landed estates (latifundialization) and the wrongful accumulation of land at the expense of the defenseless.

The precariousness of existence made falling into debt a constant danger. In Israel, as in the rest of the ancient Near East, the accumulation of debt could eventually lead to debt slavery, where children (Ex 21:7-11; cf. 2 Kings 4:1) and even heads of households would be sold to pay off a debt. The sabbatical manumission laws set the limit for such an arrangement at six years and laid down guidelines for the pardoning of debts and release from servitude which could help the individual be reincorporated into civil society (Ex 21:1-11; Deut 15:1-18). The most extensive legislation dealing with the impoverishment of an individual or family was the Jubilee (Lev 25; for an explanation of how to coordinate these manumission laws, see Chirichigno).

The Jubilee was to be proclaimed at regular intervals (of either forty-nine or fifty years; see North, 10-34; Chirichigno, 317-21). Scholars debate whether the Jubilee was an early or late idea and whether it was a utopian ideal or a viable arrangement (Wright 1990, 125-28; Chirichigno, 354-57). The text envisions three successive stages of impoverishment with corresponding policies to remedy each situation, with the Jubilee as the final solution if all else failed. Initially, an Israelite would sell a part of his property, which could be redeemed later by either a near kinsman or himself (Lev 25:25-28); in the second situation, the one in difficulty could work for another Israelite and should be able to receive interest-free loans (Lev 25:35-38); the lowest level of misfortune required entry into debt slavery (Lev 25:39-55).

This passage returns repeatedly to the exodus account as the motivation for gracious treatment of the poor (Lev 25:38, 42, 55). In addition, the declaration that Yahweh was the divine patron who blessed the land (Lev 25:23; cf. Deut 15:4-6, 10) and the focus on the sabbath (Lev 25:1-7; cf. Lev 26:34-35, 43) pointed back ultimately to the creation and first sabbath rest of

Genesis 1—2. The Creator decreed that his established rhythm of life be lived out within the history of his people. The Jubilee also had sacral connections: the trumpet sounded on the Day of *Atonement (Lev 25:9). Once again, social ethics and worship went hand in hand.

The context for these measures was the extended family and clan (the *bêt ʾāb* and *mišpāḥâ;* cf. Gottwald, 237-341; Wright 1990, 48-55; Perdue, 174-79; Janzen, 26-105). This sociocultural circumstance left several groups within Israel especially vulnerable. On the one hand, widows and orphans had no family head to provide protection and guarantee an inheritance. Several laws, such as allowances at harvest (Deut 24:19-22; cf. Lev 19:10; 23:22) and a triennial tithe (Deut 14:28-29), afforded them periodic charity. Another group bereft of a kinship support system and reliant on Israelite hospitality was the alien (*gēr; TDOT* 2.439-49, *NIDOTTE* 1.836-39). These were those who had left their native lands because of war or famine (e.g., Gen 21:23; 47:4) and had come to reside in Israel. They were to be included in the gleaning provision, the triennial tithe, the sabbath rest (Ex 20:10; 23:12) and several of the feasts (Deut 16:11-15). Widows, orphans and aliens were not to be deprived of justice, since Yahweh was their protector (Deut 1:16; 10:18; 24:14-15, 17; 27:19). Israel was to be gracious, because it too had suffered as an alien in Egypt (Ex 22:21-24 [MT 22:20-23]; 23:9; Deut 10:19; 24:18) and even now was an alien or tenant on Yahweh's land (Lev 25:23). In this regard Deuteronomy 15 is significant. The relationship of "brother" and the obligation to a kinsperson was extended to embrace the entire community (Deut 15:2-3, 7, 9, 11-12; cf. Houston). Once again, the text appealed to the exodus to orient attitudes and actions toward the poor (Deut 15:15). The blessing experienced by the nation would be determined by their care for the needy, who could appeal directly to Yahweh their protector (Deut 15:4-6, 9-11).

The power and the limitation of these laws was that there were no formal sanctions for complying with these moral demands. Israel was to respond to theological and moral persuasion and to shape its character to mirror the person and actions of Yahweh.

6. Wealth and Poverty in the Rest of the Old Testament.

The care for the poor in the rest of the OT can be related to the Pentateuch. If one holds to the view that the pentateuchal material is early and an important foundation to subsequent revelation, then these passages could very well be consciously alluding to or building upon the first five books of the OT. Even if a contrary reconstruction of the history of the *religion of Israel is advocated, it still is admitted that all of the OT to some degree shares echoes of a common moral ethos. For example, kings were commanded not to accumulate possessions inappropriately but instead were to gain knowledge of the law (Deut 17:17); Rehoboam and Ahab ignored this principle (see below). The sabbath was supposed to be inseparable from graciousness to the needy, so the prophetic denunciation of irresponsible religiosity is readily understood. Some scholars also argue that the prophets referred to violations of specific laws (e.g., for Amos, see Niehaus, 322; cf. Kaiser).

At the same time, while some data suggest these connections, other material points to development and amplification of what is contained in the Pentateuch. (Of course, once again one's critical posture determines how these are defined and explained.) Proverbs particularly stresses the individual's actions instead of citing Israel's laws for the community. On the other hand, the prophets and the historical narratives provide names and faces to the law's stipulations—that is, the laws are incarnated, so to speak, for good or bad, in the lives of individuals. Finally, the eschatological hope pictures a day when these norms will be a reality.

The conscientious use of wealth and concern for the poor continued as moral virtues throughout the OT (Pleins; cf. Gutiérrez, 287-306). In his defense Job recounted his care of the needy (Job 29; 31:13-23; cf. 24:1-25), and Nehemiah decried those who took advantage of fellow Israelites who were in debt (Neh 5). Even kings, who at times reveled in opulence, were held accountable for unjust gain. For example, Rehoboam witnessed the division of the kingdom for failing to lighten the load on the nation (1 Kings 12:1-19), and Ahab was denounced for acquiring Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:17-29). The possession of riches should be accompanied by wisdom and integrity (Ps 112; Prov 3:13-18; 8:18-20; 22:1; 30:7-9), for wealth can be fleeting (Prov 27:23-27), especially in the hands of the unrighteous (Ps 49:5-20 [MT 49:6-21]; 62:9-10 [MT 62:10-11]; Prov 11:28).

Proverbs has much to say about the poor. On the one hand, individuals are warned that poverty can come because of laziness (Prov 6:6-11; 24:30-34), the pursuit of pleasure (Prov 21:17; 23:19-21), greed (Prov 11:24; 28:22) and the failure to heed counsel (Prov 13:15-18). At the same time, those with means and in positions of power are admonished not to oppress the poor (Prov 13:23; 14:21; 21:13; 22:16; 28:3, 15, 27), since they are under Yahweh's special care (Prov 14:31; 17:5; 22:2, 22-23; 29:13). Some suggest that the various perspectives on the poor in Proverbs reflect diverse social settings (e.g., Whybray), but sensitivity toward the needy is everywhere evident.

The Psalms champion the cause of the poor and oppressed (Ps 10; 12) and link ethical concern for their plight with true worship (Ps 15) and worthy rulers (Ps 72; 82). At times, the term *poor* can refer in a metaphorical way to the pious in general, who humbly trust in God for sustenance and protection (e.g., Ps 37; cf. Zeph 2:2-3; 3:12-13).

The powerful rhetoric of the prophetic literature repeatedly decries the abuse of the needy (Sicre). The absence of justice in the land turned worship into hypocritical religiosity (e.g., Is 1:2—5:30; 58:1-14; Jer 7:1-15; Amos 2:6-8; 5:21-24; 8:4-6; Mic 6:6-8). Many eschatological passages of national hope, however, envision a world of abundance for all, a life devoid of warfare and physical need and characterized by justice and acceptable worship of Yahweh (e.g., Is 2:1-5; 11:1-9; 65:17-25; Amos 9:11-15).

See also ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT; BLESSINGS AND CURSES; COVENANT; ETHICS; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE; ORPHAN; SABBATH, SABBATICAL YEAR, JUBILEE; SLAVE, SLAVERY; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; THEFT AND DEPRIVATION OF PROPERTY; WIDOW.

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WEEKS, FEAST OF. *See* FESTIVALS AND FEASTS.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Metrology is the science of weights and measures. As a science it demands precision in its standards of measurement. Unfortunately, prior to the founding of the metric system there was no absolute standard of measure. For this reason, biblical metrology is *not* an exact science, and usually only approximations may be given. Consequently, precision is rarely an issue in biblical metrology.

Imprecision exists because no official standard of measurement ever existed in the history of Israel. In fact, at any given period more than one system was in operation at the same time. In some periods there was a *royal* standard and a *common* standard. Second, biblical metrology also tolerated considerable margins of error—there was not a high level of accuracy. For example, archaeologists have uncovered numerous shekel weights from a variety of sites in ancient Palestine, and there are great discrepancies between them regarding true or real weight. Third, many aspects of biblical metrology are poorly attested in both ancient literature and archaeology. Seldom is one measure defined in terms of another. Much interrelating is mere guesswork. Fourth, comparative systems of measurement in the rest of the ancient Near East are not of great help in determining biblical metrology because those systems (in Egypt and Mesopotamia) were as loose as the biblical systems. When the analysis is primarily directed toward the Pentateuch, which relates the earliest history of Israel, then the task becomes even more difficult.

With all those caveats, however, we yet know a good deal about biblical weights and measures during the time of the Pentateuch. We cannot fully reconstruct the ancient biblical systems, but much can be said about them.

1. Weights
2. Linear Measures
3. Capacity Measures
4. Surface Measures
5. Conclusion

1. Weights.

1.1. Balances. The only way in which weighing was done in antiquity was by means of a balance (Wolters, 163), which consisted of two metal pans suspended from either a hand-held beam or an upright support. Several fragments of balances, such as pieces of pans, beams and weights, have been discovered in second millennium B.C. sites in Palestine. We know that balances were used in the ancient Near East at least as early as the middle of the third millennium B.C. A relief in the tomb of Mereru-Ka at Saqqara from the Sixth Dynasty (2350-2200 B.C.) pictured gold being weighed in a hand-held balance (*ANEP,* 40). Judgment balances that are free-standing were commonplace by the end of the third millennium B.C.

Balances or scales were not precision instruments in antiquity. Tests have demonstrated that ancient balances have a margin of error up to 6 percent (Diringer, 86). Even so, the Torah calls for the Hebrews to be just in weights and measures (Lev 19:35-36).

1.2. Provenance. The Hebrew system of weights was borrowed from greater Canaan, which in turn derived its system from Babylonia. Three of the four principal weights were the same in each culture: mina, shekel and gerah. A parallel may also be drawn by the fact that weight pieces were called *stones* in both Akkadian and Hebrew (see Lev 19:36; Deut 25:13). The two major weight systems in the ancient Near East were from Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are no references to Egyptian weights in the Bible.

Although the Hebrew system of weights was ultimately borrowed from Babylonia, the Israelites gave different values to the various weights. Babylonian standards were sexagesimal; for example, one talent equaled sixty minas. The Hebrew system was quinquagesimal: one talent was the same as fifty minas (see Gen 23:15; Ex 30:24; 38:29; Num 31:52). Both value systems were present in the rest of the ancient Near East: Ala-

Weight	Value	Torah Reference
talent	3,000 shekels	Ex 25:39; 37:24; 38:25-26
mina	50 shekels	no reference
shekel	1 shekel	ubiquitous
pim	$^2/_3$ shekel	no reference
beka	$^1/_2$ shekel	Gen 24:22; Ex 38:26
peres	$^1/_2$ shekel	no reference
gerah	$^1/_{20}$ shekel	Ex 30:13; Lev 27:25; Num 3:47; 18:16
qesitah	unknown	Gen 33:19

Table 1: Israelite Weight System Prior to Monarchy

lakh and Ugarit had a quinquagesimal system, whereas Ebla had a sexagesimal one (Archi, 48).

1.3. Weight System. The basic unit of currency in the Hebrew system was the shekel. That term is derived from the verb *šql,* which means "to weigh." The shekel as the primary and foundational weight was common for all Semitic metrologies (de Vaux, 203). It was so customary in the Hebrew system that the word *šeqel* was sometimes entirely omitted in a passage (see Gen 20:16; 37:28).

Inscribed shekel weights have been found in large numbers at various sites in Palestine, such as Lachish, Samaria and Gezer. Recovered shekels leave room for conjecture regarding the precise weight of the measure. They weigh anywhere from eight to twelve grams. In addition, shekel values have been uncovered in various denominations: one, two, four, eight and twenty-four pieces.

Different shekel systems operated in Hebrew culture simultaneously. Genesis 23:16 mentions "the shekels current with the merchant." The merchant/trader seems to have had two sets of weights, a light set for purchasing and a heavy set for selling (Deut 25:13). The Torah also mentions a "shekel of the sanctuary" (Ex 30:13, 24; 38:24-26; Lev 5:15; 27:3, 25), and a "king's weight" is spoken of in the later historical books (2 Sam 14:26). In Assyria two weight systems, the royal and the common, operated simultaneously (Rainey, 34-36).

The basic weight system of the Israelites before the monarchy is presented in table 1.

2. Linear Measures.

2.1. Variety. As with weights, precision was rarely an issue with lengths and distances in ancient Israel. For example, the basic unit of length was the cubit; however, its precise length varied from place to place and from time to time. In Deuteronomy 3:11, a cubit is defined as *the length of a forearm*—and because body lengths vary, so must the length of a cubit. According to 2 Chronicles 3:3, Solomon's temple was constructed based upon the old standard of cubits, indicating that there must have existed a new standard of cubit length. Ezekiel defined a cubit as 20.6 inches (Ezek 40:5). The Roman cubit used in NT Palestine was seventeen inches. As O. R. Sellers comments, "That there were different cubits in Israel is clear" (Sellers, 837).

2.2. Provenance. The cubit was a widespread convention in the ancient Near East, and it may have been used as early as Paleolithic times. In Egypt, it was called a *mh,* and it specified a length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (its hieroglyph includes an extended forearm and hand). There were various cubit standards in Egypt, such as the royal cubit that measured 20.65 inches. The same was true in Mesopotamia, where both a royal and a common cubit existed at the same time. The royal cubit of the statues of Gudea, prince of Lagash (c. 2000 B.C.), was 19.5 inches.

2.3. System. No actual Israelite cubit measures have been uncovered through archaeology. The most definite evidence comes from the Siloam Tunnel inscription from the eighth century B.C.

Length	Value	Torah Reference
finger	$\frac{1}{4}$ handbreadth; $\frac{3}{4}$ inch	none; only in Jer 52:21
handbreadth	4 fingers; $\frac{1}{6}$ cubit; 3 inches	Ex 25:25; 37:12
span	3 handbreadths; $\frac{1}{2}$ cubit; 9 inches	Ex 28:16; 39:9
cubit	2 spans; 18 inches	Deut 3:11 and many others
reed	6 cubits	none; only in Ezek 40:5-7

Table 2: Israelite Linear Measures

It claims that the tunnel is 1,200 cubits long. According to R. B. Y. Scott, based upon actual measurement of the tunnel, each cubit would be 17.5 inches (Scott 1958, 214). However, it is likely that the inscription was merely providing a round figure. It also states that the tunnel is 100 cubits below ground, a figure that is also apparently a round number.

Lengths in the OT (and the Pentateuch, in particular) employed *natural* measures. The common scale appears in table 2, and some approximations are provided for each length.

The ratio in length from the finger to the cubit is 24 fingers = 6 handbreadths = 2 spans = 1 cubit.

Longer distances are not measured by cubits in the Pentateuch but rather by *bowshot* (Gen 21:16), *a day's journey* (Num 11:31), *three days' journey* (Gen 30:36; Ex 3:18), *seven days' journey* (Gen 31:23) and to the *extent of the country* (Gen 35:16). These distances naturally lend themselves to imprecision.

3. Capacity Measures.

3.1. Provenance. The Hebrew system of capacity measurement mainly derived from Mesopotamia. The latter system was highly complex, and there was considerable variation in standards. It is likely that the premonarchic Israelite culture also employed a number of different standards of capacity measurement. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reconstruct any of these systems fully. We are left with the ability to provide only a basic outline.

3.2. Systems. Capacity measurement may be divided into two categories: for dry and liquid measures. The unit names derived from "household utensils and the farmer's estimates of quantities" (Scott 1959, 29-32). For example, the dry measure *homer* derived from the Hebrew word for "donkey", and it signified a load of grain carried by a donkey. The term *omer* literally means "sheaf"—it is the quantity of grain from an average-sized sheaf. Such measurements are naturally and necessarily imprecise.

The basic dry-measure system of the Hebrews was a decimal structure: 1 homer = 10 ephahs; 1 ephah = 10 omers (see Ex 16:36; Ezek 45:11). The ephah, according to Leviticus 19:36, was the primary and most common dry measure. It was equal to 3/8 to 2/3 bushel. A dry measure of uncertain size called a *seah* is mentioned in Genesis 18:6.

The Hebrew system of liquid measures is only generally known. Moving from the largest to the smallest measure is 1 bath = 6 hins; 1 hin = 12 logs. It is a sexagesimal system based upon an Assyro-Babylonian precursor. The hin is the principal measurement for liquid capacity (Lev 19:36). Its size is unknown: suggested figures range from 1/2 quart to 2-3 gallons.

4. Surface Measures.

4.1. Provenance. Area measures are poorly attested in the Pentateuch and in the entire OT. There does not exist a system of terms for measures of area. A system may have been in operation, but it simply has not come down to us. The ancient Egyptians measured area according to the cubit. However, even that was inconsistent because "measures of area used in Egypt during the Old Kingdom differed from those current in the Middle Kingdom" (Baer, 113). The Pentateuch employs the cubit as an area marker for the levitical cities (Num 35:4-5).

4.2. System. For the most part, the Hebrews estimated surface measures by processes of seeding. That was the practice of field measure-

ment in the entire ancient Near East (except Egypt) as early as the third millennium B.C. It naturally arose out of agricultural practice. Thus, in 1 Samuel 14:14 and Isaiah 5:10, the term *ṣemed* is used of land measure. It literally means "yoke" and refers to what a pair of oxen could plow in a day. In 1 Kings 18:32, Elijah is pictured digging a trench around an altar that was large enough to hold two measures of seed. Throughout the OT, a specified amount of barley was equal to an amount of land area that it would sow (Lev 27:16). A common misconception is that such surface measures are necessarily vague. That is not true. Assyro-Babylonian records indicate very precise surface measurements corresponded to *seed* values.

5. Conclusion.

It is abundantly clear that no weight or measure in the Pentateuch or in the whole Bible was fixed precisely. We cannot provide exact metric equivalents, only approximate values for metrological terms. The same is true for the entire ancient Near East (Hallock, 204-6; Zaccagnini, 312). What M. A. Powell says about Mesopotamia rings true of the Bible: "The evidence is such that it does not allow us to define *the* norm of ancient Mesopotamia, for the probability is that no single, preferred norm ever existed" (Powell, 87).

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WHEAT. *See* AGRICULTURE.

WIDOW

Whereas in modern parlance the term *widow* refers simply to a woman whose husband has died, in the OT and in the ancient Near East the label had more specific social, economic and legal connotations. In societies characterized by a patrilineal and patrilocal framework, the loss of the head of a home left the widow (Heb *ʾalmānâ)* in a precarious and vulnerable situation. She would be left without a male protector and an important basis of her social identity and status. The protection of widows was a pervasive theme throughout the ancient world, and their care was usually understood to be a fundamental commitment of the "gods" and was demanded of human rulers. In the Pentateuch the widow is also the subject of legislation dealing with a variety of familial matters and appears as an important character in several narratives.

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context
2. Widows Within the Pentateuch
3. The Concern for Widows in the Rest of the Old Testament

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context.

Widowhood would not have been uncommon in the ancient Near East, and its causes were multiple. The impact of disease and war on the male population, as well as the typical age difference of about a decade between men and women at marriage (hence the potentiality of the wife surviving her older husband), could result in a sizable number of widows. Legal documents evidence the sense of duty towards the widow (Sum. NU.MU.SU; Akk. *almattu*; cf. *CAD* 1.362-64) in at least two ways (cf. Fensham; Owen; Tavares; Roth).

First, the rhetoric of the prologues and epilogues of the law codes mention the monarch's responsibility toward the widow as a fundamental virtue of a just reign. The defense of the weak usually is tied to the sun god. The prologue of the law code of Hammurabi (c. 1750 B.C.) states that his calling from the gods is to establish justice (*ANET,* 164), and in the epilogue he explains the measures he has taken to protect the widow (*ANET,* 178). No law codes have yet been

discovered in Egypt, but the same stance is echoed in other literary genres, such as the royal instructions (e.g., Instruction for Merikare, *ANET*, 415).

Second, specific laws target issues defining and safeguarding the maintenance of these women and their children (e.g., Code of Hammurabi §§171-173, 176a-177; Neo-Babylonian Laws §§12, 13; Middle Assyrian Laws §§A28, 33-34, 45-46). The financial future of a widow depended on retrieving the dowry supplied by her father's house and on the provision of food, shelter and a stipend stipulated in a testament that her husband might have made before his death. The latter would be subtracted from the inheritance due to his male heirs, if there were any, and might be terminated if she remarried. Not surprisingly, these settlements sometimes were legally contested. In some contexts, laws allude to a levirate practice (see below), whereby the brother of the deceased married his widowed sister-in-law (e.g., Middle Assyrian Laws §§A30, 33, 43). Women who did not remarry could return to their parents' home and authority. The very poorest might have found refuge at the temple.

2. Widows Within the Pentateuch.

2.1. Methodological Considerations.

2.1.1. Issues in Pentateuchal Criticism. The data in the Pentateuch concerning widows echo in many ways the literature of its milieu. What complicates the study of this information, however, are certain critical approaches that postulate different hypotheses about the settings of the *laws and their connection to relevant narratives. For instance, scholars have observed apparent discrepancies in details between the regulations for levirate marriage in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and the account of *Tamar's actions in Genesis 38 and point out the contradiction between those guidelines and the prohibitions against marrying a brother's wife in Leviticus 18:16; 20:21. Scholarly options range from attempts at harmonization to various suggestions of changes in practice and law over time (Westbrook, 69-89). Some recent criticism has moved beyond the classical JEDP paradigm to quite different theories regarding the dating of the three principal blocks of legislation—the *book of the covenant (Ex 20:22—23:33), the Deuteronomic law (Deut 12—26), and the Holiness Code (Lev 17—26)—and the manner and purpose of the final composition of the Pentateuch (e.g., Crüsemann; *see* Source Criticism). Other approaches to this material—both social-scientific and literary—might prove more profitable than entering into debates about hypothetical diachronic developments.

2.1.2. Contextual Considerations. Socioarchaeological studies have illuminated the nature of the family in ancient Israel (Meyers; *see* Family Relationships). An awareness of environmental realities and the special demands of an agrarian social context, in which roles are specified by age and gender, are fundamental for a proper appreciation of the lot of the widow. Such societies place a premium on the inalienability of family property, and progeny are a vital source of labor.

The basic kinship group in Israel was a residential, multigenerational family collectivity under the leadership of a male head called the "father's house" (Heb *bêt ʾāb*); hence, it is patrilocal. The perpetuity of the family domain was determined patrilineally. Such an arrangement does not necessarily imply a dismissive view of women. *Women were held in high regard because of their role in childbearing, the administration of the home and the education of children (Meyers, 22-41; cf. Wright, 183-221; contra Pressler). At the same time, this system could expose the widow to a precarious existence.

Anthropological studies underscore the anomalous situation of the widow as an unmarried, childbearing woman outside the patrilineal structure (Matthews and Benjamin, 132-41; cf. Niditch). OT legislation can be viewed, then, as responding to the financial dangers of this sociological irregularity.

2.2. Legislation and Issues of Character. The Pentateuch stipulates two acts of community charity to provide sustenance for the widow. Reapers were to leave some of the harvest in the field for the powerless within Israel: the alien, the *orphan and the widow (Deut 24:19-20; cf. Ruth 2). In addition, every third year there was to be a special tithe for the needy, and compliance was encouraged by the promise of divine blessing (Deut 14:28-29). Of course, the existence of legislation is no guarantee of its observance, and subsequent narratives picture widows in desperate socioeconomic straits (1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 4:1-7).

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 deals with the situation

of the childless widow and is designed to safeguard the continuance of ancestral lands within the family (Westbrook, 69-89; Pressler, 63-77). The phrase "when brothers dwell together" (Deut 25:5) refers to a time in the *bêt ʾāb* after the death of the father but before the division of the estate among the male heirs. This levirate law prescribes the duty of the husband's brother (the *levir*) to provide a legal heir for the deceased and his portion (compare Num 27:5-11; *see* Zelophehad, Daughters of; *Levites were not allowed to marry widows, Lev 21:14). Refusal would bring public shame.

These biblical injunctions are not to be envisioned as isolated acts of obedience but are set against the backdrop of broader national narratives. Yahweh's demand that Israel should not take advantage of the widow refers to the experience of the exodus (Ex 22:22-24 [MT 22:21-23]; Deut 10:17-19). That redemptive act defines the divine character and also establishes the basis of the moral imperative. The memory of oppression and release was to mold the values of the people of God and their attitudes toward the less fortunate in the land (Deut 24:18, 22; cf. Janzen, 55-86; Millar). The widow in no way was to be excluded but was to be welcomed as a full member of the worshiping community (Num 30:9 [MT 30:10]; Deut 16:11-14).

Family histories are part of the larger narratives, too, and can offer paradigms for ethical formation (Janzen, 26-54). At one level the account of Tamar in Genesis 38 is a story of the abuse of levirate custom by both brother and father-in-law, yet it is also another episode of the outworking of the sovereign provision of children to the patriarchs (Gen 12:2; 17:6, 20; etc.) and the choice of the younger (Perez) over the elder (Zerah; Gen 38:27-30; cf. 25:24-26). In the wider canonical perspective, Perez is a member of the line of David (Ruth 4:18-22). But Tamar, a non-Israelite, embodies as well loyalty to communal ideals in contrast to *Judah, who follows his impulses (Gen 38:26). This widow now is not only a victim of circumstance but also a model of selflessness, even if her behavior entails great personal risk—an admirable trait characteristic of other widows elsewhere in the Bible (van der Toorn, 137-39).

3. The Concern for Widows in the Rest of the Old Testament.

Beyond the Pentateuch, Yahweh remains the protector of the widow (Ps 68:5 [MT 68:6]; 146:9; Prov 15:25). The care of widows is a mark of moral virtue (Job 29:13; 31:16), while injustice toward them is strongly condemned by the prophets (Is 1:17, 23; 10:2; Jer 7:6; Ezek 22:25; Mal 3:5). Perhaps the most well-known account is that of Ruth, a widow whose story includes a levirate-type marriage with a paternal kinsman (an agnate) and the redemption of family property. Even though of Moabite origin, Ruth is a model of propriety and is linked back to Tamar (Ruth 2:11-13; 3:10; 4:11-12). As in the rest of the ancient Near East, the ideal was that the kings of Israel establish justice to care for the weak—including the widow—in the land (Jer 22:3, 15-16; cf. 2 Sam 8:15; 1 Kings 10:9; Ps 72) and in the future restoration (e.g., Is 11:1-9; Jer 23:5-6).

See also ALIEN, FOREIGN RESIDENT; ETHICS; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; ORPHAN; WEALTH AND POVERTY; WOMEN.

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WILDERNESS, DESERT

In the Hebrew Bible, the wilderness is not simply the open desert of blowing sand and palm trees. Rather, it is that marginal geographical area that does not provide sufficient resources to sustain long-term community existence. The wilderness plays a significant role in the life of the Pentateuch. This is not only in the physical sphere for Israel, due to the preponderantly pastoral lifestyle of the people and also their wandering as a nation in the wilderness prior to entering the Promised Land, but also as a theological construct.

The most common Hebrew word translated as "wilderness, steppe, desert" is *midbār*. It occurs 271 times in the OT, 105 of which are in the Pentateuch. A second term, *ʿărābâ*, is used sixty-one times in the OT, nineteen of these in the Pentateuch (Numbers and Deuteronomy only). Most probably it is cognate with Arabic and Ethiopic words for "dust, dryness" *(HALOT)*. A third term for "desert, steppe," *yĕšîmôn*, is rarer and occurs thirteen times in the OT, three times (Num 21:20; 23:28; Deut 32:10) in the Pentateuch. It derives from the Hebrew root *yšm*, which itself is an alternate, biform of the root *šmm*. *yšm*, unlike *šmm*, does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. They both denote devastation and desolation, semantically close to the English word *desert*.

1. Wilderness as Physical Location
2. Wilderness as Theological Construct

1. Wilderness as Physical Location.

1.1. Genesis. All seven occurrences of *midbār* relate to geographical areas in the region of Canaan. Genesis 14:5-7 describes the military campaigns of a coalition of kings that moved south as far as "El-paran near the desert" (Gen 14:6). El-paran is also called Elath (Pritchard, 33), and the nearby desert, to the north and west of the Red Sea, is elsewhere called the wilderness of Paran (Gen 21:20). This is where *Ishmael settled after being exiled from *Abraham's household (Gen 21:20-21). Abraham's family lived "between Kadesh and Shur" (Gen 20:1), in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, and when *Hagar and Ishmael were originally expelled they were in the wilderness of Beer-sheba (Gen 21:14), which apparently lies between Beer-sheba and Kadesh, some forty miles to its south. The two wandered to the northeast of their original home and then moved directly south to settle. This would indicate that this entire area of the Negev could be considered *midbār*.

One of *Esau's descendents is said to have made a discovery in the wilderness (Gen 36:24). What was discovered is unclear, but most translations take it as some source of water (e.g., Vulgate, NASB, NIV, NKJV), an event remarkable enough in the arid region to receive special note. Since Esau and his descendants settled in Seir, the area southeast of the Dead Sea, this unidentified wilderness probably is to be located there, due east of that of Paran.

Wilderness is also found farther north. Joseph was commissioned to find his brothers, who were tending their sheep near Shechem (Gen 37:12). Since sheep constantly needed new pasture, they had moved into the vicinity of Dothan, about fifteen miles further north, when Joseph came upon them (Gen 37:17). His brothers threw him into a cistern in the desert there (Gen 37:22). This incident indicates that a wilderness area is sufficient to support animal grazing for at least a short period but needed its meager water supply stored in an artificial holding place.

1.2. Exodus. The wilderness plays a much more significant role in the subsequent pentateuchal books. It occurs some twenty-seven times in Exodus. It is first mentioned there in conjunction with *Moses, who lived in the land of Midian after fleeing *Egypt (Ex 2:15). This area is in Transjordan and stretches down as far as the eastern side of the Gulf of Aqabah, the eastern branch of the Red Sea (Pritchard, 30). There is evidence of Midianites throughout a wide area, however (cf. Gen 37:28, 36), so living among them did not necessitate Moses' movement a great distance from his Egyptian home. Starting from somewhere in this region, he arrived at Horeb, God's mountain (Mount Sinai), while seeking fresh pasturage for his sheep.

This is described as being on "the far side of the desert" (Ex 3:1; cf. 4:27), the first time *midbār* is used in the book. The desert is described in relation to Moses' starting point. The location of Sinai is debated, but wherever it is, and wherever in Midian Moses started from, the Sinai Peninsula is aptly described as "wilderness." It is also given this designation when viewed from Egypt to its west, since it is to there that Moses requested *Pharaoh that Israel might be allowed to go to worship its God (Ex 3:18; 5:1, 3; 7:16; 8:27, 28 [MT 8:23, 24]). The request to go only a journey of three days into the wilderness would not have allowed them to reach the traditional site of "the mountain of God" (cf. Ex 15:22; 19:1). This time period could have been meant as a ruse or as a test of Pharaoh's willingness to cooperate with God's plans for Israel (Houtman, 376 nn. 93, 94).

When setting out from Egypt toward the west, the Israelites went "by the desert road toward the Red Sea" (Ex 13:18 NIV). Based on their starting point in the eastern Nile Delta (Gen 47:6), the two geographic designations most probably indicate the course of the road as passing through the wilderness by way of, or around, the Red Sea, the latter being a way station rather than the road's destination. Since wilderness is ubiquitous in the Near East, there are several roads designated "of the wilderness" (Josh 8:15; Judg 20:42), so care must be taken to understand which one is meant. One of their first stops on this route was Succoth (perhaps the Egyptian *tkw;* J. Seely, 6.217), which is "on the edge of the desert" (Ex 13:20). This would indicate that the whole territory east of the Nile Delta was considered as *midbār*. In the mind of those not familiar with it, the *midbār* is a place inimical to travel (Ex 14:3), a place of death (Ex 14:11, 12).

The first section of the *midbār* they entered is called the wilderness of Shur (Ex 15:22; cf. Gen 20:1 above), in which water was scant and, what little there was, bitter (Ex 15:23). They then passed through the wilderness of Sin, which is west of Mount Sinai (Ex 16:1; 17:1), so its location depends on the site determined for that location (D. Seely, 6.47). Here the people again complained about their lack of water in comparison to Egypt (Ex 16:2-3), and God met their need right there in the wilderness (Ex 16:14, 32). Israel then came to the wilderness near "the mountain of God" (Ex 18:5; see above), where Moses had been prior to his return to Egypt. Finally they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai (Ex 19:1, 2), where they stayed for almost two years (cf. Num 10:11).

The final occurrence of *midbār* in Exodus uses it as one of the boundaries of the *land that God promised to his people. It would stretch "from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River" (Ex 23:31). This seems to provide a north-south extent, between the Red and Mediterranean Seas, as well as an east-west one, between the Sinai wilderness and the Euphrates.

1.3. Leviticus. Leviticus is set at Mount Sinai, which is located in the wilderness of Sinai (Lev 7:38). Elsewhere one reads of the *midbār* only in Leviticus 16, where the scapegoat is described as part of the ritual for the Day of *Atonement. The significance of the ritual will not be discussed here, except to note that the significance of the wilderness, to which the goat will be sent (Lev 16:10, 21), is that it is a land "cut off" (*gĕzērâ;* Lev 16:22; "solitary," NIV). This is so that it will not come into contact with anyone, since the wilderness is not a place of permanent habitation. The implied uncleanness of this area "outside the camp" will be discussed below.

1.4. Numbers. Numbers is the "wilderness book" par excellence. Its Hebrew title, taken from the first distinctive words in the book, is *bĕmidbar*, "in the wilderness," where the entire book is set. Structured as an itinerary from the wilderness of Sinai (Num 1:1) to Transjordan, Numbers has the most references to the "wilderness" in the Pentateuch (forty-eight for *midbār*, nine for *ʿărābâ* and two for *yĕšîmôn*). The first nine chapters take place at the wilderness of Sinai, including the census of potential warriors and *priests (Num 1:19; 3:14; cf. 26:64), the sin of *Nadab and Abihu (Num 3:4) and a celebration of the Passover (Num 9:1, 5; *see* Festivals and Feasts). After their preparations, Israel struck camp and moved from one *midbār* (at Sinai; Num 10:12) to another, that of Paran (Num 10:12; 12:16; 13:3, 26). It was a place needing special skill and knowledge for survival (Num 13:32). From there the spies were sent out to explore yet another desert, that of Zin/Tsin (Num 13:21; 20:1), not to be confused with that of Sin. This lay just to the south of Canaan in the northern Negev, in the vicinity of Kadesh (Num 13:26; see Gen 20:1 above). The nation Israel was coming full circle to the area previously inhabited by their forefather, Abraham. There

they also rebelled, complaining against the provisions of God (Num 27:14).

When the people heard the report of the spies, they again grumbled about the *midbār* being a place of death, as they would do numerous times subsequently (Num 14:2; also 16:13; 20:4; 21:5; cf. Ex 15:22; 17:2-3), where it would have been better to die of thirst or starvation rather than by the sword of the intimidating Canaanites. Ironically, God arranged for this wish to be met, since all those enumerated in the census at the beginning of Numbers died before they had any opportunity to be killed by the Canaanites (Num 14:16, 29, 32, 33 [2x], 35; 26:65; Deut 2:14). God reminded the people of the miraculous signs of provision that he had provided for them in the *midbār* (Num 14:22). Since they forgot this, he urged them to turn back to the wilderness road from where they had come (Num 14:25).

Soon Israel continued its progress toward the land, leaving the Sinai wilderness and crossing into Transjordan, going through several locations described as *midbār*. These included the area south of Moab (Num 21:11) as well as the area to its north, approaching Ammonite territory (Num 21:13, 18). The Amorites opposed Israelite passage through their territory north of the Dead Sea (see Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 52), though they were unable to stop them (Num 21:31). The Israelites' wandering enumerated in the Pentateuch ends with them settling in northern Moab (Num 22:1), which was also a wilderness (Num 24:1).

Numbers 33 is a summary of the wilderness wanderings and mentions *midbār* in several places: in conjunction with Succoth and Etham (Num 33:6; cf. Ex 13:20 above) and with Marah, where it is called the wilderness of Etham (Num 33:8; cf. Ex 15:22 above, where it is called that "of Shur"), the wilderness of Sin (Num 33:11-12), the wilderness of Sinai (Num 33:15-16) and the wilderness of Zin (Num 33:36; cf. 34:3), matching the progress outlined in Exodus, with the one alteration of name noted.

At times, the designation *midbār* seems to apply generally to the entire region traversed by Israel between its exodus from Egypt and its preparation to enter the land, not to any specific location within it (cf. Num 15:32). This entire area is associated with wandering and death (Num 27:3; 32:13, 15).

The writer of Numbers also uses the other two words in this semantic field. Numbers 21:20 describes Pisgah, which is in Transjordan at the north end of the Dead Sea, the site where *Balaam delivered his second and third oracles (Num 23:14; cf. 23:28) and the height from which Moses looked down on the land of Canaan, which he would never enter (Deut 34:1). It is there called a "wasteland" (NIV; *yĕšîmôn*; cf. also 23:28), which here serves as a synonym for *midbār*, which was used to describe the same area in Numbers 21:11, 13. The difference between the two terms *midbār* and *yĕšîmôn* is impossible to determine from these contexts. The third term, *ʿărābâ*, is used of the low-lying area along the east side of the Jordan River just north of the Dead Sea (Num 22:1; 26:3, 63; 31:12; 33:48, 49, 50; 36:13). Here Israel encamped immediately prior to entering the land. The NIV translates this "plains of Moab," but the area is also designated as a *midbār* (Num 24:1, above), so these three terms have much semantic overlap. While *ʿărābâ* describes a specific locale in these verses, in later prophetic texts it has the meaning of a wilderness or desert as an unproductive area semantically parallel to *midbār* (e.g., Is 35:1; Jer 2:6).

1.5. Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy, a sermonic summary of Israel's history, would be expected to employ the semantic field in a way similar to the other pentateuchal books. Its setting is in the *midbār* "east of the Jordan—that is, in the *ʿărābâ*" (Deut 1:1), using two of the terms encountered earlier. The term *midbār* describes the territory between Horeb/Sinai and Kadesh (Deut 1:19; cf. Num 10:12; 13:26), including that area south of Kadesh toward the Red Sea (Deut 1:40; 2:1), the area of Moab along the east side of the Dead Sea in Moab (Deut 2:8; cf. Num 21:13, 18), and further to the north in the vicinity of a town named Kedemoth (Deut 2:26; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 52), in whose desert area was the city of refuge known as Bezer (Deut 4:43; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 108). It also is used of the wilderness of Zin (Deut 32:51; cf. Num 13:21; 20:1 above). In addition, it serves as a general description of the Sinai Peninsula (Deut 1:31; 2:7; 8:2, 15, 16; 9:7, 28; 11:5; 29:5 [MT 29:4]), where God both punished and preserved his people. It is also a general designation of the southern part of the land promised to Israel, in contrast to Lebanon in the north (Deut 11:24; cf. Ex 23:31 above).

Finally, in one of the only poetic passages in

which the semantic field occurs in the Pentateuch, Moses in his song (Deut 32) describes Jacob/Israel's origin as being "in a desert *[midbār]* land," also described as a "wilderness waste *[yĕšîmôn]*," where God found and cared for him (Deut 32:10).

1.6. Summary. For people who had to traverse or spend time in the wilderness or desert, it was a notable demographic area. The main cause of its unsuitability for much permanent habitation was the lack of sufficient water. While a swath of land running from Mesopotamia through Syria and Israel to Egypt is known today as the Fertile Crescent, this fertility is limited to watered areas, and much of it was shown in the study above to be much less fertile. The Pentateuch mentions numerous towns in relation to the wilderness, but these are located at water sources, and their description is often noted as being adjacent to the wilderness. While vast areas such as the entire Sinai Peninsula are described as desert or wilderness, there are also subdivisions within it, each designated as the "wilderness of X," as are areas of Transjordan.

2. Wilderness as Theological Construct.

The desert was a significant place for Israel. This is shown literarily by the extraordinary amount of material associated with it in the Pentateuch. It was a dangerous place for Israel, a place of dread because there they not only met death but they also met their God. It was the place where they first became a separate, cohesive nation, and it also was the place of wandering following repeated rebellions against God and his appointed leader Moses. It was a transitional place, the place between *slavery and the land of promise where they would permanently settle. It was also transitional in that it was "outside the camp," a place that, while at times clean (Ex 33:7; Lev 4:12), was also where the unclean and defiled were relegated (Lev 10:4-5, 13:46; 24:14, 23; Num 5:3). This is particularly exemplified by the scapegoat in Leviticus 16, which carried the sins of the nation to this outside place. Since these sins were expelled from the camp in order to protect it from pollution, by implication the place where they ended up would suffer pollution.

The earliest part of Israel's journey through the wilderness is pictured in terms of a disciplined army on the move toward its objective, an appointment with God at Mount Sinai (see the military census in Num 1). It is only after the Israelites lost this first vision that they became wanderers, as described by one writer as "not on the way anywhere" (Brueggemann, 8), unable in that generation to reach the end of their wanderings (Num 14:30-31).

Through their encounters with their God in the wilderness, Israel was formed and forged as a people. They experienced God's *grace and salvation at both ends of their wilderness wanderings, with the exodus and its parted waters as they entered the wilderness (Ex 13:17—15:21) and the parting of the Jordan waters and the conquest as they left the wilderness (Josh 3—4) and entered the land. Their *election from among the nations is described as taking place here (Deut 32:9-12; Barth, 87-88), as is God's provision for their physical and psychological needs. God lived among his people (Num 11:20; 14:14; Deut 2:7), and his presence with them and his actions on their behalf were visible (e.g., Ex 16:10; Deut 11:5-7). He guided them using smoke and fire (Ex 13:21; Deut 1:30-33), his divine messengers (Ex 23:20-21; 32:34) and his own divine presence in the ark (Num 10:33, 35-36; 14:14). God, and no human guide, was the one whom they followed (Deut 8:2; cf. Num 10:29-36, where the human guide refused to lead; Barth, 102).

God's physical provision was multifaceted. His psychological support was given through the assurance of his presence, but he did not stop there. He provided water (Ex 15:22-27; Num 20:1-13; 21:16-18; Deut 8:15; 32:10; 33:8; cf. Gen 26:15-22) and food (Ex 16:4, 11-15; Num 11:4-9, 31-32) and met their need for clothing (Deut 29:5) and healing.

The latter suggests the other aspect of the time in the wilderness; it was also a time of rebellion (e.g., Deut 9:7) and subsequent judgment. The wilderness is described as a time of testing, where God was ascertaining the true relationship his people had with him in order that he might bless their faithfulness (e.g., Ex 15:25; 16:4; Deut 8:2, 16; 13:3). Instead of maintaining steadfast trust in the one who had freed them from slavery and promised his presence throughout their journey toward the land, they in fact tested him (Ex 17:2; Num 14:22; Deut 6:16; 33:8) and had to suffer the destructive consequences that befell that generation. While Jesus was tested in the wilderness and prevailed (Mt 4:1; Mk 1:13; Lk 4:1-2), Israel failed its test-

ing. Numbers 14, a chapter in which wilderness terms occur more than any other in the Pentateuch, is a picture of rebellion and defeat, of wandering homelessness. Punishment is brought by fire (Num 11:1-3), plague (Num 11:31-35; 14:36-37; 16:41-50 [MT 17:6-13]; 25:8-9), the wilderness wandering itself (Num 14:26-35, 39), earthquake (Num 16:30-33), snakes (Num 21:4-6) and execution (Num 25:5, 7-8). The very leaders of the nation were not immune from punishment (Num 20:12). None of these punishments was complete and terminal for the nation, however. God allowed the nation as a whole to continue, often providing healing for the hurts brought upon the Israelites through their own stubbornness (e.g., Num 21:7-9). He did not allow his divine anger to erase his love for his people (Ex 15:13; 34:6-7; Num 14:18; cf. Ezek 20:17).

God's ultimate goal was not punishment, however, but the restoration of the people from out of slavery and the fulfillment of his *promises. The people had become a "great nation" (Gen 12:2; cf. Num 1:44-46) prior to setting out from Egypt, but the ultimate goal of their journey was the Promised Land (Gen 12:1; 15:7; 17:8). While the journey itself was stretched to thirty-eight years of wandering in the wilderness due to the people's lack of faith, its ultimate goal was entry into the land and the rest and security that it would provide (Deut 26:9). This was Israel's inheritance, the place of rest that they would ultimately possess (Ex 15:17; Deut 12:9-10).

There is some evidence that an uninhabited and uninhabitable wilderness was part of the *creation tradition. In Deuteronomy 32:10, the writer juxtaposes "wilderness" *(midbār)* and "wasteland" *(yĕšīmōn)* with "barren" *(tōhû)*, a term that describes the setting for God's creative acts in Genesis 1:2, where it is rendered "formless" (NIV). As this primordial condition was inimical to life, so was the marginal land of the wilderness. W. Brueggemann states: "Wilderness is the historical form of chaos and is Israel's memory of how it was before it was created a people" (Brueggemann, 29). As God set out in Genesis to make the uninhabitable habitable, his goal for the wilderness generation was that they ultimately reach the land, where there was fertility, flowing with "milk and honey" (cf. Ex 3:8; Lev 20:24; Deut 11:9; *see* Land, Fertility, Famine). The disfavor of barrenness would be replaced by the favor of fecundity.

The two sides of the notion of wilderness continued in Israelite tradition, and its positive aspects should not be ignored. Deserted wilderness could be a horrible place (e.g., Is 30:6), associated with punishment for Babylonia (Jer 50:12, with both *midbār* and *ʿărābâ*) and even for Israel itself (e.g., Jer 4:26; Hos 2:3), as well as with isolated loneliness (e.g., Ps 102:6). Human power can also destroy, resulting in a wilderness (e.g., Is 14:17; 33:9). Wilderness is also seen as a good place, a place of solitude and restoration (e.g., Ps 55:7 [MT 55:8]), a place where God shows, and the people experience, his power and might (Ps 68:7-8 [MT 68:8-9]; 136:16; Is 35:1; 40:3; Hos 13:5). It is a place where Israel is able to spend uninterrupted time with God, where he woos and loves her, entering into a marriage contract with her through the *covenant, this time remembered not as a hardship but as a honeymoon (Hos 2:14-15).

See also EXODUS ROUTE AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY; LAND, FERTILITY, FAMINE.

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D. W. Baker

WOMEN

"The Old Testament, and the religion of which it tells, is male-originated, male-focused and probably anti-women. This is seen in the way

that it is written, in the interests of the writers and most clearly in the laws which it describes, where women's interests and concerns are of small account and where women are seen as little more than the property of men or at best as adjuncts. The Pentateuch in particular shows the truth of these statements." Statements such as these are often presented as truisms, sometimes leading feminist thinkers and modern women in general to dismiss biblical faith as irrelevant to or destructive of their life and identity. However, there is need for a much closer examination of the relevant material before this kind of easy judgment can be supported.

There is no doubt that the societies described within the Pentateuch were patriarchal. Most of the material was written by men and presents a male perspective. However, these statements in themselves do not justify the conclusion that the text as a whole denigrates women or even that the religion of Israel was basically "bad news" for women. There is also no doubt that certain individual women were recognized and seen as having a significant role in the history of the nation, and women as a whole were seen as an integral part of society.

Of the 187 chapters that comprise the Pentateuch, 107 (or 57 percent) have some direct mention of a woman or women. It is granted that some of these references may be peripheral, but the figures do not include references to the community as a whole or references to children (as opposed to sons). In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers the percentages are lower—48 percent (nineteen out of forty chapters), 48 percent (thirteen out of twenty-seven) and 33 percent (twelve out of thirty-six) respectively—although in these cases many of the chapters contain detailed instructions about *laws and rituals and may also have no specific reference to males. In Genesis, where the main focus is on narratives about the life of the chosen family as they move toward becoming the chosen people, 78 percent of the chapters (thirty-nine out of fifty) make reference, often very significant reference, to women. In Deuteronomy, dealing with the meaning of community and the life of the community, it is 71 percent of the chapters (twenty-four out of thirty-four). Thus, women are certainly not missing from the Pentateuch. It remains to be seen whether or not it is accurate to describe them as marginalized and irrelevant to the interests of the writers.

This article will include a brief look at the way in which women are included in the laws and speeches within the Pentateuch and then spend more time considering the way in which the understanding and teaching of the laws and speeches is interpreted within the narrative texts.

1. Women in Legal and Ritual Texts
2. Women and the Life of the Community
3. Women in Narrative Texts
4. Conclusion

1. Women in Legal and Ritual Texts.

There are indications that women were seen as the property of their fathers or husbands, and it could be assumed that women had no rights of their own. Compensation for the violation of a virgin was paid to her father (Deut 22:28-29), and Exodus 21:22 states that anyone who caused injury to a pregnant woman, so that the baby but not the woman died, "the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands." That is, injury to a woman seems to have been viewed primarily as injury to her father or her husband. Similarly, fathers and husbands could overrule any vow made by a woman (Num 30:1-15). Again, although the point of Exodus 21:2-11 is to provide some safeguards for slaves, it does appear to sanction the purchase of women as sex slaves (Ex 21:7-11).

Women who had *sex with any man other than their husbands were automatically suspect; the possibility of rape does not seem in general to have been considered relevant (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). The death sentence appears to have been mandatory for all women involved in adulterous situations; the concept of an innocent woman is never really considered. If the woman was engaged rather than married and the sexual encounter took place in an isolated area, then the possibility of the woman's innocence does come into play (Deut 22:25-27), but in general it was taken for granted that the best option for a virgin who was raped was for her rapist to marry her. He had no choice in this matter, but apparently neither did she. The only possibility was for her father to refuse to allow the marriage (Ex 22:16). Finally, a man was able to divorce his wife if she did not "please him" because he found "something objectionable about her" (Deut 24:1), but no provision was made for a wife to divorce an objectionable husband.

However, the attitude to women that these texts seem to portray and that is so alien to modern perceptions do not tell the full story. It is interesting that statements such as these are found almost entirely within the casuistic or case law. They deal with situations that existed and needed regulating rather than commanding or even encouraging such situations to exist in the first place. Jesus, in Matthew 19:8, makes it clear that he saw the arrangements for divorce as having always been a concession rather than an ideal. In fact, even in their recognition of the existence of oppression, many of these regulations are geared to provide a level of protection for the women involved. Daughters could be sold as *slaves (Ex 21:7) but not as prostitutes (Lev 19:29). Women who were "bought" as wives could not be sold as slaves or even simply neglected (Ex 21:11; Deut 21:14). Women who displeased their husbands could be sent away, but only with a paper that permitted them to marry again without being declared an adulteress.

Men could bring accusations against their wives simply on a jealous whim, but the regulations ensured that proof of any charges had to be provided before any action was taken (Deut 22:15-21). The "adultery test" described in Numbers 5 seems rather unpleasant, but it recognizes the lengths to which jealous men may go and provides a woman with a way of proving her innocence rather than living with the results of ongoing suspicion. Unlike some similar tests in other cultures that may easily have resulted in the death of the woman, this potion, a mixture of holy water and temple dust, would only be likely to harm the woman as a result of the psychological pressure brought upon her through guilt.

Assaults on female slaves were treated as seriously as those on male *slaves (Ex 21:20, 26-27). Deuteronomy 15:12-17 makes it clear that female slaves were to be freed after six years in the same way as male slaves. Thus it appears that the apparent restriction in Exodus 21:7 ("When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do") provided protection for a woman who had been taken as a slave-wife, preventing her from being cast off after six years, rather than restricting the freedom of all bonded women.

Women were seen as having the right and the ability to make vows and were held fully accountable for the fulfillment of any vows they might make (Num 30:3-16). The only exception to this was if a father or a husband specifically overruled a vow. Thus again, there is recognition within the text of the realities of a patriarchal society alongside the recognition of women as independent and responsible beings. It is notable that the most serious vow that an Israelite might make, the Nazirite vow, was explicitly available to be made by men or women (Num 6:2). Similarly, women were free to bring *sacrifices in their own right, and there were particular sacrifices relating to purification after childbirth that women were particularly commanded to bring (Lev 12:6). Mothers also were to be honored alongside fathers (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16).

2. Women and the Life of the Community.

There is no indication within these texts that women were ever seen as anything other than full members of the community. They were as much a part of God's chosen people as the men; they joined in worship, received blessings and, although themselves not undergoing circumcision, were nevertheless not, using later terminology, seen as part of the "uncircumcised." Much of the material within the Pentateuch relates to the whole Israelite community of men, women and children. Reference to the entire or whole "Israelite community" is made twenty-three times in Exodus and Numbers, and its equivalent "all Israel" occurs eleven times in Deuteronomy.

Women were involved in musical aspects of worship (Ex 15:20-21), and both men and women were involved in the craft work (*see* Arts and Crafts) necessary for the construction of the sanctuary (Ex 35—36). Deuteronomy 12:12 and 14:26 speak of whole families involved in sacrifices and sacrificial feasts. Exodus 23:17 states that "three times a year [i.e., at the three major *festivals] all your males shall appear before the LORD God." Deuteronomy 16:16 repeats this charge. However, the preceding verses describe those involved in keeping the feasts as including "your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, . . . and the widows resident in your towns" (Deut 16:14). Thus the charge to the men is by no means to be interpreted as a restriction on the women. Women and children were explicitly included as part of the *covenant ceremony in Deuteronomy 29—30. The call to "choose life . . . loving the LORD your God, obey-

ing him, and holding fast to him" (Deut 30:19-20) is addressed to the women as much as to the men. The regular law reading, which Israel was commanded to undertake, was to be attended by all the women as well as all the men. It mattered that the women too "hear and learn to fear the LORD your God and to observe diligently all the words of this law" (Deut 31:12).

3. Women in Narrative Texts.

It is impossible to cover all the narrative incidents within the Pentateuch relating to women. An attempt has been made to provide a general picture of the material within Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, while considering a smaller number of specific texts in further detail.

3.1. Genesis.

3.1.1. Genesis 1—11: Primeval History. Issues relating to the creation narratives are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this volume (*see* Creation), so only a few points will be noted here. Within Genesis 1 there is no distinction between men and women as being in the *image of God or as having dominion over all the earth. The blessing and commission of Genesis 1:28 is given equally to both. Moreover, God sees men and women cooperating together in managing the creation as "very good." Genesis 2 approaches the creation in a different way but achieves the same result of presenting men and women as distinct beings whose relatedness is stressed more than their distinctness and who are both interdependent and responsible. The implication is that human *life in every area can only be lived in the way that God intends when women and men cooperate together—for men to be alone, without the partnership of women, is "not good." This picture in Genesis 1 and 2 is of men and women as different but united, cooperating together as perfect complements, each playing a part in the God-given task of governing the earth. In Genesis 3 this relationship is disrupted and spoiled, and we see that as a result of *sin, where there had been communion there would be conflict, and where there had been cooperation there would be domination. Life outside of *Eden would have to be lived with all the tensions and conflicts inevitably resulting from human disobedience to God.

3.1.2. Genesis 12—25: Abraham Narratives. *Abraham is the link figure throughout these narratives, but in several of the individual stories he is in the background, with the main focus being on another, whether *Sarah, *Hagar, *Lot, Lot's wife and daughters, Abraham's servant or Rebekah. These narratives leave the reader in no doubt about the key part played by women in Israel's early history. The writer is certainly aware of women's interests and concerns and seems to be making a conscious effort to make sure that these interests and concerns are brought out within the text. There are a number of occasions where the account, although not always the characters it portrays, indicates an understanding of and attitude toward women that does not reflect the worldview of the society depicted.

Sarai is introduced alongside Abram in Genesis 11, and although God's call is described as coming to Abram, it is clear that Sarai was with him from the beginning. In fact, the first story that is told, after the initial entry into the land indicated by God and the building of *altars and the invoking of the name of Yahweh, focuses on Sarai. Her words are not recorded, but it is she whom the Egyptians notice and she who takes the responsibility of saving Abram from potential danger. It may be thought that Abram was careless of his wife's safety and that the only thing that counted for her as a woman was her looks. However, the pair apparently saw themselves as fleeing from certain death in the Canaanite famine and assumed that Sarah's unusual beauty meant that she was likely to be taken anyway. The only question was whether Abram himself could survive. As a husband he would not; as a brother he might. In addition, the presence of a brother—who in many instances was seen as having a greater responsibility for the well-being of a woman than her husband—could in any case have provided more security for Sarai. So Sarai cooperated in an attempt to save Abram's life. What the text brings out is that, regardless of how Abram and Sarai saw the situation, the Lord, powerful even in Egypt, was as concerned to preserve Sarai from the dangers of abduction as he was to preserve Abraham from death. Her well-being was important. Pharaoh's affliction was "because of Sarai." The concept that God's "worldview" may be rather different from that of Abram, Sarai and their contemporaries begins to be presented in the text by a writer who appears to be both aware of the culture of the time and able to present a critique of it.

This understanding and critique of society

continues in Genesis 16. Sarai was barren. The tragedy of this condition particularly for women is well-presented here as elsewhere in the OT. In this instance it was Sarai's concerns rather than Abram's that led to the use—or abuse—of Hagar in order to produce offspring for the now-aging couple. "Abram listened to the voice of Sarai" (Gen 16:2). This may or may not have been usual in that society, but here it is presented without comment. Sarai's opinions counted for Abram, just as his safety counted for her. In this context, the one who did not count was the foreign slave-woman. It is noteworthy that on no occasion in the text is Hagar called by her name by either Abram or Sarah. Here and in Genesis 21 she is simply the slave-girl, in their society of no real account. When Hagar seemed unwilling to enter into the spirit of this exercise in surrogate motherhood, Sarai's resentment is clearly described. The reader's sympathy is pointed toward Hagar, but Sarai's reaction is clearly understood. The discernment of the writer at this point and the understanding of the feelings of the women are remarkable. Hagar's "constructive dismissal" from Sarai's service—local laws appear to have made it impossible for a slave used as a surrogate mother to be actually dismissed, but cruel treatment was tolerated—led to an encounter with "the angel of the LORD." Here again, God's "worldview" is shown to be different from Abram and Sarai's; he calls Hagar by her own name and deals with her as a significant individual. However, although we are made aware that contemporary human culture is not the only way of understanding life, and may not always be right, nevertheless Hagar is sent back to live within that culture. But first she is given the privilege of being the first recorded person to give a title, or name, to God. The meaning of the title is unclear, and it is not expanded on elsewhere, but the fact that Hagar, the female outsider, had a direct encounter with God is considered significant enough to mention.

In Genesis 17 the writer's interest in women continues. This chapter, which develops the understanding of the covenant, is one of the most significant theological passages within the Pentateuch. We learn in much more detail of the promises made to Abram and his descendants and of the covenant sign of circumcision. Given the nature of this sign, it may be thought that the covenant was really aimed at Israelite men and that the women were merely incidental. However, the writer again makes it clear that this was not so. Deliberately placed in the center of the circumcision narrative (Gen 17:15-22), we have explicit reference to the fact that the promise of *blessing and of many descendants, including a royal line, was also for Sarah. She, as much as Abraham, was chosen as the parent of God's covenant people. The placing of these references to Sarai is perhaps done to preempt any thought that, just as circumcision related to men, so did the covenant itself. It is certainly hard to find other justification for the unusual way in which this chapter is arranged. The account of Abram's difficulty in accepting the possibility of Sarah's motherhood and his attempt to make it easier for God by being quite happy to accept Ishmael as his covenant heir is interesting. He does appear to have assumed that the covenant was about himself and himself alone. God's rebuke, with a firm no, seems to have been as much about Abram's self-centered discounting of Sarai as it was about his lack of faith. The child of the covenant was to be born to both Sarai and Abraham.

Chapter 18 reinforces this point. The situation of Abraham providing hospitality for the three visitors and remaining with them while they ate was normal. Their mention of Sarah and even deliberately bringing her into the conversation was not. The strangeness of this behavior, which in other contexts may even have been considered offensive, is likely to have drawn the attention of ancient readers. It mattered that Sarah as well as Abraham understood the nature of Yahweh's power and purposes. Her attitude is pictured as being significant. Even her embarrassed lie was brought out into the open. She as much as Abraham had to face up to the question, "Is anything too wonderful [i.e., hard] for the LORD?" (Gen 18:14).

The story of the rescue of Lot and his family from Sodom is not a glorious one. Lot's callous disregard for the safety of his daughters is somewhat easier to understand in a culture where nothing could be seen as worse than a breach of hospitality. However, it could be argued that here again is a critique of Lot's perspective. His action is certainly not approved within the text and seems to be presented as at the least misguided. The later despair of the daughters in their situation of fear and isolation—we are not told how long they remained in the cave before

they took their drastic action, although they still apparently could obtain wine—is surprisingly well told by the presumably male writer. Nothing to them was worse than being single and childless. Their action is described without comment, as had been their father's actions concerning them. Readers are left to draw their own conclusion about God's attitude to treating human beings, whether male or female, as objects to be manipulated for one's own purposes.

The final, and longest, story within the Abraham narratives, leaves the reader with many questions about Abraham and *Isaac. For example, at what stage did Abraham die? Why was Isaac not to go seeking his own wife? Why was the servant assumed to have control over the adult Isaac's actions? However, the picture of Rebekah is clear. The ideal wife for Isaac was a strong, outgoing woman, able and willing to carry the vast amount of water needed to feed ten camels, happy to set aside normal custom and to talk freely with a male stranger, and adventurous enough to set off immediately to face a new life. Rebekah, like Sarah, is pictured as knowing her own mind and expecting her ideas and opinions to count.

3.1.3. Genesis 26—50: Isaac, Jacob and Joseph Narratives. Rebekah, particularly in Genesis 27, continues to be portrayed as the dominant partner in her marriage. Her manipulation of Isaac and favoritism toward *Jacob is not necessarily approved by the text, but the writer clearly presents her initiative and ability. As the Jacob stories proceed, there is continued interest in family life, and the writer draws clear pictures of Rachel and Leah with an insight into the vital importance of fecundity for these women's valuation of themselves. However, in these chapters the focus remains centered on Jacob, and there is little sign of a critique of contemporary values or any parallels to the concern for Sarah's spiritual development that the earlier chapters present.

Within the Joseph narratives women virtually disappear. There are a number of brief genealogical references, and Rachel's death is acknowledged (Gen 48:7) because of its effect on Jacob. Potiphar's wife is presented as the temptress, but there is no interest in her character or her fate. Within this context, Genesis 38 has more in common with the Abraham narratives than with the chapters that surround it. It describes the machinations between *Judah and *Tamar, with both seeking to manipulate the other. Here again the common view of the society, that women were only significant insofar as they furthered men's aims and met their desires, is both presented and critiqued. Tamar is certainly a person in her own right whose personal rights and desires are recognized and even affirmed.

3.2. Exodus.

3.2.1. Exodus 1—15: Moses' Early Life and the Escape from Egypt. The first two chapters of Exodus focus briefly on a whole range of characters. Apart from *Moses himself and the oppressive *pharaoh, all other characters are women. The brave midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, stand out as Israelites who, because they feared God (Ex 1:17), risked their lives to enable Hebrew baby boys to live. Their bravery, initiative and intelligent diplomacy are noted by the text and presented as approved by God. Similarly, Moses' mother and sister are both presented as having intelligence and initiative. Without these women, and also the compassionate Egyptian princess, the *exodus never would have happened. The story of Zipporah and her sisters, protected by Moses from the bullying tactics of male shepherds, shows that men as well as women can behave in heroic ways but also presents the welfare of the women as having significance.

In Exodus 3—15 Moses takes center stage, and the other main characters are *Aaron and the *Egyptian officials. Other men and women are only in the background as part of the people, Israelites and Egyptians, both in different ways waiting to learn of their fate. Israelite women were presumably fully involved in preparations for eating the Passover and leaving the land and in obtaining gifts from the Egyptians, but we are given no details of specific personnel involved in this. The only other character who is introduced is *Miriam, described in Exodus 15:20 as Aaron's sister who was a prophet. This is the only reference to Miriam in the book of Exodus, and she is presented in this instance very briefly as a musician and worship leader.

3.2.2. Exodus 16—40: Life in the Desert. The second half of Exodus has small sections of narrative enclosing summaries of the law and details for the construction and contents of the *tabernacle. Most of these contain comments about Israel as a whole, and apart from the story of the *golden calf are not much more than editorial

links. A few characters are mentioned in passing: *Jethro, Moses' wife and sons, Aaron's sons, and Bezalel and Oholiab the craftsmen. Exodus 35 tells of the involvement of the whole congregation in the provision of materials for the tabernacle and in its crafting: "everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing . . . came, both men and women," bringing their gifts and offering their skills (Ex 35:21-22). The leaders were men, but the text goes out of its way to let readers know that women were involved. For example, Exodus 35:25-26 speaks of the women's skill in spinning and make it clear that material used even in the inner parts of the tabernacle was created by women.

3.3. Numbers. Like Leviticus and Deuteronomy, much of the material in the book of Numbers deals with the organization and structuring of the community as well as its life and worship. However, there are a number of narrative sections recording specific incidents during the travels of the Israelite tribes. Many of these incidents are negative, including the complaints of the people about the *food and the resultant provision of *manna and quails, the appointment of seventy elders to work with Moses (Num 11), Korah's rebellion (Num 16), further complaints by the people and Moses striking the rock (Num 20) and the syncretism of Zimri and others (Num 25).

Two incidents focus on women. In Numbers 12 we are told of the jealousy of Miriam and Aaron over what they perceived as Moses' favored position. The description is fairly brief, but the implication is that both Miriam and Aaron had been used as spokespeople by God and wanted to receive recognition equivalent to that of Moses. The resultant punishment indicates that Miriam was the prime instigator of their complaint. Women are as capable of arrogance and jealousy as men, and their sin is treated equally seriously. God's words and actions at this time show that their status as his *prophetic spokespeople is not in question, but such status is not to be given more significance than it deserves and all Israelites must be wary of making complaints against those whom God has chosen to use in a special way. Aaron's pleading on Miriam's behalf shows a positive family solidarity that balances their bickering with Moses.

In Numbers 27 we meet the five daughters of *Zelophehad. The point of this account is to make clear that, when there were no sons to make sure that the daughters of a family were properly cared for, the daughters themselves were to inherit their father's property. This purpose could have been achieved simply by including the point within the general case-law, but the writer includes the story of these particular women, describing their ability to speak out on their own behalf in a lucid and persuasive way. We are even told the names of all five of these women: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah (Num 27:1). Moses, perhaps recognizing the validity of their position but also reflecting the unwillingness of a male-dominated culture to accept their demands, instituted a special consultation with the Lord himself. It needed to be made clear that women were not to be deprived of their rightful inheritance within the community. The regulation is further clarified in Numbers 36. In order to prevent the disintegration of tribal lands, women who fell into this category were to marry within their own tribe. Women's rights, as all human rights, are significant but cannot be used to support the destruction of the community that can make those rights a reality.

4. Conclusion.

An examination of the narrative passages within the Pentateuch confirms that the society was patriarchal and that women were not often at the center of national life or given great consideration. However, it also confirms what the legal passages had made clear, that women were fully acknowledged as members of the community, that, like the men, they were capable of both loyalty and betrayal, of unselfishness and of greed, and that, like the men, they were given full credit for their righteous actions and held fully accountable for their sin. The Pentateuch may be male-focused, but it cannot be seen as anti-woman. In fact, it is surprisingly aware of the concerns and interests of women and surprisingly conscious of their contribution to the community and its life.

See also EVE; FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; HAGAR; LAW; MIRIAM; SARAH; SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ETHICS; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MAN; TAMAR; WIDOW; ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF.

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WONDERS. *See* SIGNS AND WONDERS.

WORLDVIEW. *See* COSMOLOGY; CREATION; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

WORSHIP. *See* RELIGION; SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS; TABERNACLE.

WRATH. *See* SIN, GUILT; THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

WRITING

Writing is a means of recording language in visible form, a means whereby ideas, thoughts and deeds of humankind can transcend the physical limits of time and space. Writing was well established across the Fertile Crescent long before Israel, or even the patriarchs, came into existence, and Israel became a nation at the time and place in which the simplest of ancient writing systems was maturing.

1. Writing Systems
2. References to Writing in the Pentateuch
3. The Ancient Context of the Pentateuchal References
4. Written Sources
6. Oral Tradition and Written Records

1. Writing Systems.

1.1. Early Systems in the Biblical World. Current evidence suggests that writing arose late in the fourth millennium B.C. as an administrative tool for the increasingly complex societies developing in Mesopotamia and Egypt, noting goods issued and received by the controlling powers. It was soon turned to various tasks: commemorating royal achievements; transmitting messages to neighboring places; preserving magic spells and rituals precisely; setting down literary compositions. Both the Babylonian cuneiform, written on clay tablets, and the Egyptian hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts, the latter written on papyrus, were current in the Levant in the third and second millennia B.C., where town rulers adopted them for local use and for diplomatic correspondence. That meant their clerks were trained in foreign scribal traditions, those learning cuneiform, at least, copying Babylonian literature as part of their education. Those two writing systems are complex. To read and write Babylonian required knowledge of some three hundred signs, Egyptian some seven hundred, denoting both syllables and words.

While cuneiform was adapted for recording several different, often unrelated languages (Sumerian, Babylonian, Hurrian, Hittite), neither script was well suited for recording the West Semitic dialects and other tongues of the Eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, the second millennium saw a period of experimentation as scribes tried to find better scripts for their own languages. On Crete, Minoan hieroglyphs gave way to Linear A and Linear B with its Cypro-Minoan and, later, Cypriote Syllabary offshoots, each with between 50 and 150 signs, Linear B being used for recording Mycenean Greek. In Anatolia the Hittite hieroglyphic system also had about 150 signs. The latter and Linear B were basically syllabic scripts, having signs for *ba, bi, bu, da, di, du,* and the like, besides a number of word signs. An apparently syllabic script has been found at Byblos, and some specimens of another were excavated at Tell Deir ʿAlla in the Jordan Valley; both remain to be deciphered.

1.2. The Early "Alphabet." In Canaan another system appeared early in the second millennium

that was simpler still. This Proto-Sinaitic or Canaanite Linear script comprised about thirty signs only. Surviving examples are damaged or brief, the majority found in the area of Egyptian turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadem in western Sinai, a few in Canaan and two in middle Egypt. The few words that have been read are sufficient to show the language was "Canaanite" (e.g., *bʿlt*, "lady"). The script continued in use throughout the millennium, the signs gradually being simplified until they are clearly ancestors of the Phoenician letters of the first millennium. In origin, they probably represented simple syllables, a consonant plus any vowel (e.g., *b* + *a*, *i* or *u*), and that is basically the structure of the Arabic and Hebrew writing systems of today, where marks may be added to the letters to note the vowels. Consequently, these scripts are, strictly speaking, syllabaries, not alphabets. For writing the Semitic languages, marking vowels is not essential. (When the Greeks adopted the Phoenician signs about 800 B.C., the nature of their language forced them to create independent vowel signs, which they did partly by giving new values to Phoenician signs for sounds Greek did not possess, such as *a* for the Semitic glottal stop *ʾaleph*. Thus they created the first true alphabet with one sign for each sound.)

The Canaanite Linear script slowly gained popularity in the Levant. When scribes at the northern town of Ugarit, educated in Babylonian cuneiform, saw the advantages of the simpler system for recording their own West Semitic language, they imitated the new script with an "alphabet" of twenty-seven cuneiform signs (three extra signs were added to ease the writing of Hurrian and then used for the Ugaritic language, too). The scribes' inherent conservatism, their need to continue writing in Babylonian for diplomatic purposes and, almost certainly, the cost of importing papyrus from Egypt prevented them from adopting the Canaanite script itself. Clay tablets inscribed in their Ugaritic language display the whole range of uses that are seen in Babylonian and Egyptian writing, from accounts and legal deeds, census lists, international treaties and letters to rituals and lengthy epics. Personal names were engraved on stone seals and metal tools and occasionally written on pottery vessels before they were baked; there are also two stone stelae with short funerary texts. It is significant that, if the clay tablets are discounted, the few Ugaritic cuneiform texts that remain are very similar to the texts written in the Canaanite Linear script, allowing the deduction that much more was written with that script on papyrus, leather or wax-covered wooden tablets that have perished.

Being nearer to Egypt, and often under Egyptian suzerainty, the scribes in Canaan followed Egyptian writing practices (e.g., writing from right to left) and used Egyptian materials, papyrus and wooden boards. Thus the tablets from Ugarit suggest what may have been written further south but is no longer accessible. Beside their testimony should be placed an Egyptian version of a Canaanite myth, Astarte and the Sea, and a Hittite tale, Elkunirsha and Ashertu, known from fragmentary copies of the late second millennium (*ANET*, 17-18, 519-20; *COS* 1.23:35-36, 1.55:149) and echoes of Phoenician stories in classical sources. There is no reason to doubt that written literature did exist in Late Bronze Age Canaan. At Ugarit the documents, lists, letters and the like were called *spr* (= Heb *sēper*), and the one who wrote them was titled "scribe" (*spr* = Heb *sōpēr*), a term found as a loanword from Canaanite in contemporary Egyptian texts (Hoch, no. 540). The clay tablets were described with the word "tablet" (*lḥt* = Heb *lûah*), sometimes defined by the content. This word basically signified a plank or slab of any material. In Babylonia, from early in the second millennium, the Akkadian word *lē'u* was applied especially to wooden boards, frequently covered with wax, on which notes, accounts and other works were written, as later in Hebrew (Is 30:8; Hab 2: 2).

1.3. Writing in the Iron Age. The collapse of the city-states of the Levant at the end of the second millennium B.C. saw the disappearance of the cuneiform and Egyptian scripts from the region; thereafter they are present only on imported objects or when Assyria took control. The Phoenician alphabet, the conventionalized form of the Canaanite Linear script, became the usual writing system, and local scripts developed from it in the new states of the Arameans, Israelites, Ammonites, Edomites and Moabites (Naveh). The oldest continuous inscriptions are carved on a stone sarcophagus and foundation blocks discovered at Byblos, belonging to the tenth century. Royal monuments from the ninth century show the script current from Moab to Aramean Gozan on the Habur River, and there are more from the next two centuries. Since

most writing was done on papyrus, leather or wood, it is lost.

An impressive quantity of seals and other inscribed objects displays its use much in the same way as described above for the Canaanite Linear script: to indicate ownership, donations and the like. However, there is also a growing number of *bullae,* small lumps of clay that sealed documents and containers, many of which bear on one face the imprint of a seal and on the other the marks left by the fibers of the papyrus documents they once secured. Hundreds from Judah prove the existence there of such documents in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. However, the least important records were not put on expensive papyrus but scribbled on pieces of broken pottery. These potsherds (*ostraca*) were the scrap paper of antiquity and often do survive where the longer documents, written on perishable materials, have rotted away. Between two hundred and three hundred ostraca from Israel and Judah demonstrate the currency of writing there in daily life during the eighth and seventh centuries (see Renz and Röllig). Although contemporary copies of literary compositions on papyrus or leather are not available, their existence and appearance is suggested by an Aramaic text painted on a wall at Tell Deir ʿAlla in imitation of a column of a scroll, retelling visions seen by *Balaam son of Beor. The plastered wall is dated slightly before 800 B.C. Graffiti scribbled on plastered walls and on two store-jars at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, a way station in the Negev Desert in the ninth century, and on the walls of tombs near Hebron a century later also show a readiness to write connected texts of a religious nature (Renz and Röllig: 47-64, 199-211).

2. References to Writing in the Pentateuch.

The first mention of writing in the Pentateuch occurs when God commanded *Moses to record the defeat of Amalek in a book *(sēper)* as a memorial (*zikkārôn,* Ex 17:14). Moses is also depicted as writing the Israelites' itinerary from *Egypt (Num 33:2), his parting "song" (Deut 31:19, 22), the names of the tribal leaders on staves (Num 17:2-3 [MT 17:17-18]) and particularly in connection with the *law (see below). Within the law there are requirements for others to write: the king was to make a copy of the law for himself (Deut 17:18); householders were to write the commandments on their doors and gates (Deut 6:9; 11:20); in the question of a wife's adultery, the priest was to write curses "on a scroll" (*sēper,* Num 5:23); a man divorcing his wife was to give her "a certificate of divorce" (*sēper kĕrîtut,* Deut 24:1, 3); craftsmen were to provide for *Aaron's vestments stones bearing the names of the tribes and a golden plaque with an inscription *(miktāb)*—in both these cases, the writing is described as "'engraved like a seal'" (*pittûḥê ḥôtām,* Ex 39:6, 30). There was a register of the elders of the tribes, for two were among the "listed" (*bakkĕtūbîm,* Num 11:26). God kept a book *(sēper)* containing the names of those he held guiltless and from which names could be erased (*māḥâ,* Ex 32:32-33).

With regard to the law, from the start it was written. When Moses first descended Mount Sinai, he recorded the laws that the people had accepted (Ex 20—23) in the *book of the covenant *(sēper habbĕrît)*, which he read to the people (Ex 24:4, 7). Later he wrote further commands that God gave (Deut 31:9, 24) in "the book of the law" (Deut 28:58, 61; 29:21; 30:10). The laws were also to be written on stones when Israel entered the Promised Land (Deut 27:3, 8). Most famously, the law was given on stone tablets" (*lūḥōt hāʾeben,* Ex 24:12): "He gave to Moses two stone tablets, written with the finger of God" (Ex 31:18), "inscribed on both sides, God's work, the writing of God, engraved *[ḥārût]* on the tablets' (Ex 32:15-16). After Moses had broken the first set, on which he said God had written (Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10), he was told to carve out *(pāsal)* a second set on which God would write the commands again (Ex 34:1; cf. 34:4; Deut 10:1, 2, 4), although Exodus 34:27 possibly implies Moses wrote "the words of the covenant, the ten words" (*see* Decalogue). These tablets were called "tablets of the covenant" (*lūḥôt habbĕrît,* Deut 9:11, 15) and "[tablets of] the testimony" (*[lūḥôt] hāʿēdut,* Ex 25:16; 31:18; 32:15; 34:29).

2.1. Purposes of Writing in the Pentateuch. The name "tablets of the testimony" discloses a major purpose of writing, to preserve information for future use as a form of witness (cf. Deut 31:26). This was a major role of written documents throughout the ancient Near East: affirming at the highest level the conquests of kings and so their claims upon territories; and at the individual citizen's level purchases or dispositions of property and so claims to ownership. Treaties were a means of regulating the

former and were expected to be renewed by successive generations. Legal deeds between individuals were usually witnessed but were themselves witnesses to be produced if disputes arose. Reports of lawsuits show that they could serve in that way generations after the contracting parties were dead. The "tablets of the testimony" kept in the ark had that function; their words could testify that Israel had, or had not, kept the basic terms of the Sinai *covenant. The penalty the breach demanded was countered by the blood of the *atonement *sacrifice poured over the lid *(kappōret)* of their container. The order to write the law on plastered stones at Mount Ebal had the same intent (Deut 27:2-3, 8). The record of the Amalekite war was a form of memorial *(zikkārôn)*, similar to the records ancient kings had composed to celebrate their victories, the case of Moses' song as a text for teaching and many written hymns from the biblical world.

2.2. Terminology of Writing. As indicated, the verb "to write" *(kātab)* is basic, with derivatives, and the action is usually done in or on a "record" *(sēper)*. The latter term may apply to the collection of laws, the record of the Amalekite war, the curses on the allegedly adulterous woman and the divorce deed. It denotes, therefore, a written document of any length, as in Ugaritic. The curses on the alleged adulteress being washed into the water she was to drink (Num 5:23) and God expunging names from his book (Ex 32:32-33; Deut 29:20 [MT 29:19]) show that the normal writing material permitted erasures. The verb used *(māḥâ)* means "to wipe away" (e.g., 2 Kings 21:13; Is 25:8) and so applies better to ink writing on papyrus or leather than to anything else, although it could be extended to inscriptions on hard surfaces (e.g., the epitaph engraved on the stone coffin of Ahiram at Byblos, c. 1000 B.C.). The writing on the plastered stones at Mount Ebal was presumably in ink. However, the names on the wooden staves could have been written with ink or scratched, whereas stones, including the two stone tablets, were engraved. Writing implements are not named, apart from "the finger of God." What was written was read *(qārā')*: Moses read the book of the covenant to the people at Sinai (Ex 24:7); the law was to be read to the people every seven years (Deut 31:10-11); the king was to read the law constantly (Deut 17:19).

3. The Ancient Context of the Pentateuchal References.

First, the simplicity of the terminology deserves attention. A single word, *sēper*, covers all types of written text; the terms "roll" *(mĕgillâ)* and "little roll" *(gillāyôn)* found in other books are absent, as is any trace of the Aramaic and Persian words that appear in Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Esther and Chronicles *(pitgām, patšegen, 'iggeret, 'igrā', ništĕwān)*. This suggests that the books reflect a preexilic situation, apparently one where writing was a normal part of life, accessible to the citizenry.

Second, the range of writing materials indicates local traditions derived from Egypt. It was there that writing on papyrus or leather had developed; there stones were engraved and plaster could be applied to stone surfaces, then painted, although surviving specimens were all inside buildings or tombs. These techniques were used in Canaan before the rise of Israel.

Third, Exodus to Deuteronomy relate the experiences of Israel on the route from Egypt to Canaan, events that the biblical *chronology would place in the era now called the Late Bronze Age. Every ancient text deserves to be treated as reliable unless objective evidence proves it is not. Taking these books as reflecting that time, therefore, how consistent are they with other evidence about writing in Late Bronze Age Canaan? There is nothing to tell which script Moses would have written. Cuneiform is unlikely because it was not the normal script in Egypt, being known there only for international correspondence; the common Egyptian hieratic is certainly possible, in the wilderness written rather on animal skins than papyrus. Either of these scripts would probably have required him to compose in the appropriate language, necessitating translation in due course and transfer to Hebrew characters. (Both scripts could be used for writing Canaanite or similar languages, but examples are quite rare and the results not entirely satisfactory.) The most likely writing system for Moses to have used was the relatively new Canaanite Linear Script. It was simple, had reached a cursive form by 1300 B.C. and did not require any transfer once its offspring, the Hebrew system, was established. If Moses used that script, then he could have written in an archaic form of Hebrew. Ink would have been made simply, from lamp black and gum. Scrolls of skin or papyrus would have

been relatively light and easy to carry and could have been made sufficiently long for any composition (see 3.3 below).

The two stone tablets, the second set cut from the rock by Moses, were evidently not large, as painters have often depicted them, for Moses had to carry them down the mountain. In Egypt flakes of stone were commonly used like ostraca. Examples convenient to hold in the hand, written on both sides, would easily contain the text of the Ten Commandments, possibly more (*see* Decalogue). The Egyptian examples are usually written in ink, but on the mountain, scratching with another stone would have been as practical, with the advantage that the letters would not smudge or fade. The two tablets are called *lūḥôt* (singular *lûaḥ*), the same word as Babylonian *lē'u* and Ugaritic *lḥt* (see above). Writing on stone tablets was clearly feasible in Late Bronze Age Canaan and is exemplified there in the Iron Age by the tenth century Gezer Calendar, thus contradicting G. Garbini's contention (Garbini, 104-5) that Israel would only have conceived the idea of stone tablets when it met cuneiform tablets during the exile in Babylon, a contention that also ignores the currency of cuneiform tablets in Late Bronze Age Canaan (Millard 1994).

3.1. Acquaintance with Writing. To picture the Israelite tribes as desert nomads, unlikely to be acquainted with such urban skills as writing, is incorrect; they had left a settled life in Egypt where some had contact with the court or were trained in various crafts (Bezalel and Oholiab are named; others worked with them; Ex 35:30—36:2, 8; etc.). Scribes may have been among them. The nature of the land they were entering was known in Egypt from military campaigns and travel for administration and trade, as the school exercise of the thirteenth century B.C. known as the Satirical Letter demonstrates (Papyrus Anastasi I, *ANET,* 475-79). It was a land of rival towns, formally controlled by Egypt. Therefore its populace had some familiarity with Egyptian clerical activities, tax-collecting in particular, but were also aware to a small degree of Babylonian cuneiform, of Ugaritic cuneiform and, perhaps more widely, of the Canaanite Linear script. Israel was not isolated from other peoples, so the fact that those groups had all sorts of written texts makes it plausible to suppose that the Israel of Moses may have had some, too. While many people may have known about writing, fewer would have had need to know how to read and write, tasks usually left to the scribes.

3.2. Uses of Writing in the Late Bronze Age in the Levant. In connection with the Pentateuch, it is pertinent to observe the existence of written treaties, territorial descriptions, itineraries and rituals among texts of the time. Treaties are well attested in the Late Bronze Age, and the basic formula they reveal is remarkably similar to the pattern visible in the Pentateuch. Among its constituents relevant here are the provisions for written copies to be kept in sacred places and read periodically (see Beckman, 46, 51, 81, 91, 111, 123). Several treaties include detailed descriptions of frontiers, fixing which towns belong to which of the treaty partners and how intruders should be treated. Clearly, such descriptions could only result from knowledge of the territories, which may well have been written (Beckman, 24, 35, 45, 109, 114-17). It should be noted that travelers reported on places they had visited, as the Egyptian Satirical Letter and the slightly later Report of Wen-Amun illustrate (Papyrus Anastasi I, *ANET,* 475-79; Wen-Amun, *ANET,* 25-29; *COS* 1.4:89-93). Likewise, Babylonian scribes recorded the daily stages of various journeys (Edzard). From Ugarit and her contemporary further east on the Euphrates, Emar, come several tablets inscribed with rituals (COS 1.95:299-301, 122-26, 427-43) that can be set beside extensive and well-known Babylonian, Hittite and Egyptian ones from the third to the first millennia. The Emar rituals offer particularly relevant comparisons with passages in Leviticus, including ablutions and the apportioning of meat offered and hides of *sacrificed animals to *priests. Recording rituals was the best means of ensuring they were performed correctly and thus effectively. Earlier in origin but current at this time is the Egyptian Story of Sinuhe, which offers comparisons with the patriarchal narratives, especially *Joseph, exemplifying the continued popularity and preservation of an old tale (*ANET,* 18-22; *COS* 1.38:77-82).

The separate written compositions named in the Pentateuch (e.g., the book of the covenant, Ex 24:7; the list of stages, Num 33:2-49) find analogies, therefore, in contemporary literature. Other passages, not specifically described as written, may well stem from clerical activity (the ritual instructions of Leviticus; the census lists [e.g., Num. 1]; the offering lists [Num 7:12-88];

see Levine, 259-66). Inclusion of such records within longer works is more rarely found and, although many ancient inscriptions incorporate earlier material, there is nothing of quite the same pattern or extent as the Hebrew books from Genesis to Deuteronomy. Inclusion of older laws beside more recent ones, as with many in Exodus replaced in Deuteronomy, illustrates how an authoritative ancient text might be preserved even if it had been superseded to some degree. Thus Hammurabi's laws, with a historical introduction, promulgated in the eighteenth century B.C., were copied for more than one thousand years, although they had lost any force they may have had as other laws had been introduced subsequently (COS 2.131:335-53). The Hittite Laws exist in an earlier and a partly revised later version (COS 2.19:106-19). The value attaching to proving ownership to property through its descent in a family meant that documents that were title deeds were written and kept with care. In some cases, lawsuits concerning ownership reproduce earlier texts brought forward as evidence to prove the case.

Without external evidence, the question of whether or not producing the books of the Pentateuch was within the competence of Late Bronze Age scribes is difficult to answer. The quantity of text is not an obstacle. In Assyria and Babylonia scribes would copy long compositions onto successive, numbered tablets; at Ugarit narratives occupied more than one tablet; in Egypt papyrus scrolls could be lengthened as required (Millard 1998, 174-75).

Preservation would present another problem. Would a mobile population be concerned to care for books? The difficulties are easy to exaggerate. Ancient scrolls were not so large as those often seen in modern synagogues. At most they were about 30 centimeters (11 inches) high, often half that, and when well rolled, they would have looked like a thick stick, between 2 and 6 centimeters in diameter (0.75-2.5 inches), thus not awkward to carry in a bag. Decay has destroyed scrolls that might have lain in ruined buildings in Canaan and Israel to indicate who owned them. Evidence from other countries shows that books were often stored in temples and palaces. State treaties might be deposited in shrines "at the feet of" a god (Beckman, 46, 111, 123), protected by the sanctity and witnesses before the god against the party who broke their terms. The book of the law was placed beside the ark in a similar way, in the charge of the *Levites (Deut 31:26). Diplomatic letters, reports and a variety of other documents have been found in royal palaces in Mesopotamia and Syria, from the archive of Ebla (c. 2300 B.C.) to those of Nineveh in the seventh century B.C. Yet many discoveries demonstrate that books were far from confined to temples and palaces, for the houses of individual citizens in several cities (Ur, Nippur, Ashur, Ugarit among them) have yielded literary texts besides their legal, business and household records (Pedersén). The graffiti at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and in tombs exemplify a similar situation for ancient Hebrew (see 1.3 above).

3.3. Uses of Writing in the Iron Age in the Levant. After the Late Bronze Age there is little trace of writing in the Promised Land until the eighth century B.C. That fact has led to a widespread supposition that writing was rare in the interval. An argument has also been made against the currency of writing before the eighth century on the grounds that there were no suitable political states in the land to foster it (Jamieson-Drake). That case, since adopted by several scholars, carries little weight since the model of the state used is inappropriate and the archaeological and epigraphic material is undervalued or incorrectly assessed (see Lemaire). Names and notes scratched on potsherds and the agricultural cycle of the Gezer Calendar exemplify writing in the tenth century. Ostraca and graffiti, especially the messages scribbled on store jars in the desert way station at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and the Balaam text from Tell Deir ʿAlla, prove its use for identification and for "literature" in the ninth. These few survivors testify both to the ability to write and to a readiness to write spread across the land in the earlier part of the monarchy. The accidents of survival and discovery explain the absence of extensive Hebrew texts from the twelfth to the ninth centuries better than theoretical models; the situation is not peculiar to ancient Israel.

4. Written Sources.

While the books of the Pentateuch doubtless reached their present forms through amalgamation of a variety of earlier writings, to delineate those components is difficult, other than in the specific cases mentioned above (see 3.2 above). Distinct from the Documentary Hypothesis (*see* Source Criticism), a variety of literary devices can be observed that mark divisions within the

Pentateuch, although not necessarily indicating different documents (Baker). Observing how Babylonian scribes added a colophon at the end of literary texts copied on cuneiform tablets, giving the title and other bibliographical information, P. J. Wiseman (1936) suggested that the phrase "these are the generations of" in Genesis had the same function. He rendered *tolĕdôt* "origins" or "histories," arguing that each time the word occurred it closed the preceding section. Thus Genesis 2:4 refers back to Genesis 1:1—2:3, Genesis 5:1 to Genesis 2:4b—4:26, and so on. In each place it marked the end of a clay tablet on which the individual record had been preserved prior to the compilation of Genesis. Other commentators had treated the term as retrospective, so the attraction of Wiseman's presentation was the ancient context in which he was able to set it. However, *tōlĕdôt* is better translated "generations" or "issue," a term looking forward rather than back, to the issue rather than the parentage (see Wenham, 50, 55-56; *see* Genesis, Book of, §1.1).

How much of the Pentateuch may have been written in the Late Bronze Age remains indeterminate. There is no reason, from the point of view of ancient writing practice, why the texts Moses is said to have written were not, nor much of the rest. If an early date is accepted for the Pentateuch, the present form of the books results from later editorial work, for the language is later than Moses' day (*see* Language of the Pentateuch). Repeated copying, revision or modernizing of old writings was not unusual in the ancient Near East in order to keep them alive for religious use and private study.

5. Oral Tradition and Written Records. Concentration on the role of oral tradition in the formation of the Pentateuch, as well as other parts of the Hebrew Bible, has led scholars to underestimate the part played by writing. In his pioneering studies, H. Gunkel apparently assumed that early Israel existed in a wholly illiterate environment where short verses were the only form of literary composition, prose coming later (Gunkel). As described above (see 1 above), writing was well established across the Fertile Crescent long before Israel, or even the patriarchs, came into existence and could easily have been available to Moses. Late Bronze Age literature from both Mesopotamia and Egypt includes poetic narratives of royal exploits alongside prose accounts of the same events, all written shortly after they took place. They are thus comparable with the Song of Moses in Exodus 15 and the prose narrative in the previous chapters (prime examples are the Assyrian Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the king's inscriptions [see Foster, 209-29; Grayson, 243-46, 271-76] and the Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II [see *COS* 2.5:32-40). While the hallmarks of oral composition have been traced in parts of the Pentateuch, especially in Genesis, oral composition does not preclude commitment of the work to writing, whether that be almost simultaneous or at some later moment (*see* Traditio-historical Criticism). The Ugaritic myths and legends, poetry from the Late Bronze Age, display even more obvious oral traits in their extant, written forms (*ANET*, 129-55; more recently *COS* 1.86, 87:239-83, 102, 103.333-56). Consequently, considerations of the history of the Pentateuch should allow for the existence of oral and written versions of some portions of it side by side over long periods.

It is remarkable that Israel became a nation and took control of a land at the time and in the area where the simplest of ancient writing systems was maturing. The means for recording their traditions, laws and history were readily available, for an elite scribal class could not maintain a monopoly over so simple a script, as history reveals.

See also AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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A. R. Millard

YAHWEH. *See* EXODUS, BOOK OF; GOD, NAMES OF.

YAHWIST. *See* AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH; PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM, HISTORY OF; SOURCE CRITICISM.

YHWH. *See* GOD, NAMES OF.

YOM KIPPUR. *See* ATONEMENT, DAY OF.

ZEBULUN

Zebulun was the tenth son born to *Jacob and the ancestor of the Israelite tribe of the same name. He was Jacob's youngest son except for *Joseph and *Benjamin, who were born to Jacob by Rachel. Jacob's first wife, Leah, bore Zebulun and his brother *Issachar after *Reuben, Jacob's eldest, had brought his mother mandrakes as an aphrodisiac to cure her infertility (Gen 30:14-20). Zebulun plays a background role in the Pentateuch, both as a son of Jacob and as a tribe.

1. Birth and Name
2. Zebulun's Role in the Pentateuch
3. Subsequent History

1. Birth and Name.

The name *Zebulun,* which probably means "honor," is derived from a wordplay uttered by Leah in Genesis 30:20: "God has presented me *[zĕbādanî]* with a precious gift *[zēbed ṭôb]*. This time my husband will treat me with honor *[yizbĕlēnî]*" (NIV). The verbal root *zbl* ("to exalt, honor") is taken by some instead to mean "to dwell" (e.g., NKJV, NASB). Both meanings find support in 1 Kings 8:13: "I have surely built you a lofty house" *(bêt zĕbul)*, while the Ugaritic parallel *zbl,* "prince(ship)," and Akkadian *zabālu,* "to carry or bear up," support the former. In either case, the name Zebulun reflects the Leah's heartfelt longing for her unresponsive husband.

The Ugaritic parallel to Zebulun, *zbln* ("disease"), may also be derived from the Akkadian verb *zabālu* with the sense that disease "carries off" its victims. Other personal names derived from the West Semitic element *zbl* are Zebul (Judg 9:28) and Beelzebul (Mt 10:25).

2. Zebulun's Role in the Pentateuch.

2.1. Standard Formulas. Typically Zebulun appears only in standard genealogical or census-related formulas common to each of the sons of Jacob or tribes (Gen 35:23; 46:14; Ex 1:3; Num 1:9, 30-31; 2:7; 7:24; 10:16; 13:10; 26:26; 34:25; Deut 27:13). In every case except two (Num 13:10; Deut 27:13), Zebulun is listed either just before or just after Issachar. This link is based in fraternity but also anticipates their tribal settlement patterns in that they received adjacent allotments of land in lower Galilee. Moreover, both tribes usually follow immediately after Judah in these lists, again following birth order but perhaps also foreshadowing the relative importance of Zebulun in later biblical history. In fact, biblical statements regarding Zebulun subsequent to the Pentateuch tend to emphasize Zebulun's role as a people who were important in redemptive history. This importance is also reinforced by Zebulun's size: the fourth largest of the tribes in the two censuses of *Moses (Num 1:30-31; 26:26) and largest in population of the tribes who would be apportioned land in Galilee.

2.2. The Blessings of Jacob and Moses. The blessings that Jacob (Gen 49:13) and Moses (Deut 33:18-19) bestowed on Zebulun can best be understood as anticipating Zebulun's strategic position once the tribe settled in the land of Canaan.

Zebulun's tribal allotment bordered Manasseh to the southwest, Issachar to the southeast, *Naphtali to the northeast and *Asher to the northwest (Josh 19:10-16). Zebulun received the hilly region of western lower Galilee and the northwestern end of the Jezreel Valley (cf. Josh 21:34). This region is dominated by the hard limestone Nazareth ridge that separates the broad Jezreel Valley on the south from the Beth Netophah (i.e., Iphtah-el; cf. Josh 19:14) Valley on the north and is rich in terms of water resources, soil and building materials.

Perhaps most importantly, the tribal inheritance of Zebulun carried a number of important natural routes connecting the seacoast with points inland, including the Great Trunk Road running between Egypt and Mesopotamia (the *Via Maris; see* Travel and Transportation §2.1). Of the towns lying within Zebulun's territorial boundaries (Josh 19:10-16), Shimron (Khirbet Sammuniyeh) and Hannathon (Tell el-Bedeiwiyeh) were particularly important in that they guarded strategic junctures on the main routes, as witnessed by their appearance in Amarna texts 8, 224, 225 and 245 (cf. Josh 11:1). Notable also was Gath-hepher (Khirbet ez-Zurraʿ), hometown of the prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25).

The wording of Jacob's blessing is a bit vague ("Zebulun shall dwell toward the seashore," Gen 49:13) and leaves open the possibility of Zebulun's territory actually touching the shore. All told, this blessing would better fit the tribal inheritance of Asher (cf. Josh 19:24-31), yet Zebulun's eventual control of the northwestern extremity of the Jezreel Valley and of the final bend of the *Via Maris* toward the Mediterranean is adequate to explain Jacob's words.

Moses' blessing focused on the potential for Zebulun and Issachar to live prosperous and righteous lives in their respective homelands (Deut 33:18-19). The "mountain" at which these tribes would offer "righteous sacrifices" (Deut 33:19) was probably Mount Tabor, standing as a lone sentinel on their shared border and evidently a location of Israelite worship prior to the centralization of Yahwistic worship in Jerusalem (cf. Hos 5:1).

3. Subsequent History.

Zebulun's position in what the prophet Isaiah would term "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Is 9:1 [MT 8:23]) offered Israel great opportunity for political and economic expansion in their land but also provided a clear target for nations that sought to control the international highways crossing Galilee. The early period of Israel's settlement saw Zebulun confined to the hilly regions of its territory (Judg 1:30). Archaeological evidence shows the region to have been sparsely settled during the Late Bronze Age, with a number of small Israelite settlements appearing only in the thirteenth to twelfth centuries B.C. Zebulun played a prominent role in the military victories of Barak (Judg 4:6, 10; 5:14, 18) and Gideon (Judg 6:35), laying the foundation for Israel's eventual control of the Jezreel Valley during the time of David. In 733 B.C. all of Galilee fell to the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (cf. 2 Kings 15:29) and was made a part of the Assyrian Empire. Isaiah's response to the "contempt" now facing the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali (Is 9:1 [MT 8:23]) was to foresee the coming Messiah (Is 9:2-7 [MT 9:1-6]). Matthew's citation of Isaiah's words heralded the public ministry of Jesus, the carpenter who was raised in Nazareth in the old tribal territory of Zebulun (Mt 4:12-17).

See also ASHER; BENJAMIN; DAN; GAD; ISRAELITES; ISSACHAR; JACOB; JOSEPH; JUDAH; LEVI, LEVITES; NAPHTALI; REUBEN; SIMEON.

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ZELOPHEHAD, DAUGHTERS OF

When Zelophehad, son of Hepher and grandson of Gilead, died in the wilderness, his death raised an inheritance problem. Because he had no son, his five daughters—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah—publicly petitioned *Moses, *Eleazar and the elders for an equal

share in his inheritance—and received it (Num 27:1-11). Later, the daughters' case closes the book of Numbers by further clarifying that they could marry whom they chose, but only from the tribe of Manasseh (Num 36:1-12). Significantly, Moses took both requests before the Lord and received a direct command.

1. The Initial Request and Ruling
2. A Clarifying Request and Ruling
3. Later Interpretations

1. The Initial Request and Ruling.

The daughters, who are mentioned by name four times in Scripture (Num 26:33; 27:1; 36:11; Josh 17:3), posed a keen legal question of what should happen to a father's patrimony if he died without a male heir. This question was immediately recognized as one likely to occur in the future and affect subsequent generations. The women presented their petition in a public setting and used cogent arguments (Num 27:3-4).

Their story comes in a section of Numbers dealing with succession issues. Their speech reads like a legal argument offered in a court setting. The daughters stated that their father had died in the *wilderness but had not taken part in Korah's treason and blasphemy. He left no sons. The daughters expressed concern for the preservation of their father's name and their own inheritance claims. Their argument exhibits a clear understanding of the desert experience and the reason for the death of their father's generation, namely, because of unbelief in God's ability to lead the Israelites into the land he had chosen for them.

That the daughters mention Korah—and the fact that their father had no part in his rebellion—probably was a legal tactic showing that there was no moral or theological reason for differentiating him from those of his generation who were likewise condemned by the Lord to die without entering the Promised Land. They argued that there was nothing to separate them from being in line to receive their father's rightful inheritance—except their gender.

Upon hearing their arguments, Moses chose not to decide their question on his own but instead sought the Lord (Num 27:5). The Lord answered on the side of the daughters by telling Moses, "You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relations and turn their father's inheritance over to them" (Num 27:7).

Then the Lord further elaborated on inheritance issues. If a man died without a son, his inheritance went to his daughter; if he died without a son or a daughter, his inheritance reverted to his brothers; if he had no brothers, then his inheritance went to his father's brothers; and if his father had no brothers, then his inheritance went to the nearest relative in the clan (Num 27:8-11).

A brief account in Joshua 17:3-6 confirms that the daughters' allotment was contained in that of the tribe of Manasseh.

2. A Clarifying Request and Ruling.

The book of Numbers ends with a further controversy regarding the daughters of Zelophehad. This time the daughters did not approach Moses and Eleazar on their own. Instead, the family heads of the clan of Gilead asked Moses about marriage partners for them (Num 36).

Again the Lord provided guidance. The Lord commanded Moses to tell the leaders of Gilead that the daughters of Zelophehad could marry whom they pleased within the tribal clan of their father (Num 36:6). The Lord further stated that no inheritance was to pass between tribes but that each Israelite was to have the tribal land inherited from his forefathers (Num 36:7). The text recounts that the daughters followed the Lord's command and married within their father's clan (Num 36:12). This action ensured that Zelophehad's name would not be lost in Israel.

The ruling in favor of Zelophehad's daughters applied to other Israelite women as well. They too could marry within their fathers' tribal clans and thus keep the inheritance of an Israelites within tribal boundaries. The inheritance solution appears to have addressed another situation as well, one in which a wife and mother also died and a levirate marriage had not taken place. The rulings sought to maintain equity among the twelve tribes and did not allow one tribe to gain status and land in a manner out of proportion with the others. This issue was particularly important in light of Israel's imminent settlement in Canaan.

3. Later Interpretations.

Jewish tradition praises the daughters of Zelophehad for sagaciously choosing the right moment to approach Moses, one in which he

was expanding on levirate marriage law. The daughters showed notable exegetical ability in presenting their case. Jewish tradition lauds them for their virtue and the care they showed in choosing husbands. The youngest, for example, did not marry until age forty, when she found a worthy husband.

According to Jewish tradition, Zelophehad did not murmur against God (Num 11:1) and did not join the ten spies in condemning the land (Num 14:1). Therefore, he deserved his inheritance in Israel. Rabbi Akiba, however, believed that Zelophehad was the man who gathered wood on the *sabbath (Num 15:32; *b. Šabb.* 96b).

See also WOMEN.

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R. G. Branch

ZIPPORAH. *See* CIRCUMCISION.

ZIUSUDRA. *See* NOAH.

ZOOLOGY

In the Pentateuch the names of a number of animals and birds occur, some in a narrative context (e.g., Ex 11:7) and others in lists within a legal context (e.g., Lev 11:4-30). The former are relatively easy to identify; the latter in places are virtually impossible to identify with any degree of certainty.

1. The Range of Pentateuchal Zoology
2. A Historical Survey of Pentateuchal Zoology
3. The Limitations of Pentateuchal Zoology
4. Criteria for Identification
5. The List of Unclean Birds
6. Wild Animals
7. Beasts of Burden
8. Animal Products

1. The Range of Pentateuchal Zoology. Various animals and birds mentioned in the Pentateuch include: (1) domestic animals such as sheep, goats, cattle and pigs (Gen 12:16; Lev 7:23; 11:7; Deut 14:8); (2) beasts of burden such as camels and horses (Gen 12:16; Deut 17:16); (3) insects such as gnats, flies, locusts, grasshoppers, bees and scorpions (Ex 8:16, 20 [MT 8:12, 16]; 10:4; Num 13:33; Deut 1:44; 8:15); (4) reptiles and amphibians such as vipers, frogs, venomous snakes and cobras (Gen 49:17; Ex 8:2-9 [MT 7:27—8:5]; Num 21:6; Deut 32:33); (5) birds such as quail and eagles (Ex 16:13; 19:4); (5) mammals such as dogs, rock hyraxes, rabbits, weasels, rats, deer and gazelle (Ex 11:7; Lev 11:5-6, 29; Deut 12:15; 14:7); and (6) wild animals such as wild donkeys (Gen 16:12), wolves (Gen 49:27), wild oxen (the now extinct aurochs Num 23:22; 24:8; Deut 33:17) and several words for lion (lion cub and lioness included, Gen 49:9).

2. A Historical Survey of Pentateuchal Zoology. Throughout the centuries scholars have attempted to identify the creatures occurring in the Pentateuch. Rashi and Luther did so largely in terms of the fauna of the south of France and Germany respectively. Thus zoologically misplaced European fauna such as "badger," "ferret" and "lapwing" found their way into the English Authorized Version of 1611. Gradually scholars realized that the fauna of the Pentateuch was essentially Middle Eastern, not European. Several, such as Samuel Bochart of Caen in his *Hierozoicon* (c. 1650), addressed this. H. B. Tristam's *Natural History of the Bible* (1867)

laid the foundation of modern study. His arguments were based on comparative philology and observations gleaned from a year's stay in Palestine. More recently F. S. Bodenheimer's *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (1960) and G. S. Cansdale's *Animals of Bible Lands* (1970) have brought extensive zoological knowledge to bear upon the subject.

3. The Limitations of Pentateuchal Zoology. Ancient zoological classification certainly did not correspond to the exactitude of our modern Linnaean system. So although *nešer* means "eagle" (Lev 11:13), it also appears to refer to the "vulture" in Proverbs 30:17 (where the context is feeding on carrion) and Micah 1:16 (where baldness, a characteristic of the vulture, not the eagle, is referred to). Likewise, *ʿăṭallēp* ("bat") (Lev 11:19; Deut 14:18), which occurs in the list of unclean birds, is, strictly speaking, a mammal, not a bird at all.

4. Criteria for Identification. In attempting to identify a given animal or bird, a number of criteria need to be applied. Each of these criteria needs to be examined critically.

4.1. Discerning the Consensus of Modern Scholarship. Sometimes a consensus of scholarship is easy to discern. For *dûkipat* (Lev 11:19; Deut 14:18), all modern English translations have "hoopoe." Similarly, *ḥăsîdâ* (Lev 11:19, Deut 14:18) is rendered as "stork" by all, though the REB offers "heron" in the margin.

However, for *yanšûp* (Lev 11:17; Deut 14:16) a consensus does not exist. NIV, NRSV, NASB and NJPS have "great owl," while RSV has "ibis," JB "barn owl" and REB "screech owl" (another name for the barn owl). For *rāḥām* (Lev 11:18; variant *rāḥāmâ,* Deut 14:17) NIV and REB have "osprey," NRSV and NASB "carrion vulture," JB "white vulture" and NJPS "bustard." By way of a caution it should be noted that even where a number of translations have opted for a common identification, such an identification need not necessarily carry more weight; translators out of desperation may simply have copied one another.

4.2. The Use of Comparative Etymology. For *rāḥām* (Lev 11:18) and the variant *rāḥāmâ* (Deut 14:17) the Arabic cognate *raḥamu(n),* "white or carrion vulture," would seem to count against the identification "osprey" and "bustard" cited above. However, it should be noted that the name of an animal or bird may not be used for the same species in a different language. Take, for example, *dîšōn* of Deuteronomy 14:5. This is equated by some with Akkadian *ditānu* or *didānu,* the "bison" or "aurochs" (*AHw* 173b; *CAD* D:164a), and even the Hittite *tišanuš* (of same meaning), but no translations offer this, as such a large animal would be inappropriate in a list of deer and goats. Similarly, *ṣāb* of Leviticus 11:29 is "tortoise" in modern Hebrew (cf. KJV), but all modern versions follow the Arabic *ḍab* to read "lizard."

Comparative etymology from languages spoken in areas nearer and closer in time to the events narrated in the Pentateuch should have priority over examples from areas farther away or more distant in time. Take, for example, the frequently occurring *taḥaš* (Ex 25:5; 26:14; 35:7, 23; 36:19; 39:34; Num 4:6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 25; Ezek 16:10). The Egyptian *ṯḥś* ("leather") should thus be preferred to Arabic *tuḥas,* a kind of dolphin or dugong (sea-cow). So JB and NRSV.

4.3. Data from Elsewhere in the Old Testament. Sometimes mention of an animal or bird in other parts of the OT helps to identify that animal or bird and to eliminate other identifications. The Hebrew *bat yaʿănâ* (Lev 11:16; Deut 14:15), following the Septuagint *strouthos,* has traditionally been translated "ostrich," but this hardly fits the context of Micah 1:8, since ostriches rarely make a noise. So NIV renders the phrase "horned owl," REB "desert owl." Similarly, Hebrew *qāʾāt* (Lev 11:18; Deut 14:17), following the Septuagint *pelekan,* has traditionally been rendered "pelican," but Psalm 102:6 (MT 102:7) suggests a desert habitat for this bird. Consequently, NIV and NRSV offer "desert owl," REB "horned owl."

It is perhaps appropriate to signal a potential caveat here, too. The writers of other OT books, living in different periods and in different geographical locations, may not necessarily have had the same zoological knowledge as the writer of the Pentateuch.

4.4. The Geographical Range of the Animals and Birds. It is all too easy to impose animals and birds into the biblical text that never lived in the lands of the Bible. For example, the KJV had "badger" for *taḥaš* and "ferret" for *ʾănāqâ* ("gecko"; Lev 11:30). Even "mole" for *ḥōled* (Lev 11:29), followed by TEV, NASB, JB and JPS, would seem inappropriate, since moles do not live in Palestine (Tristam, 120; Committee on Transla-

tions of the United Bible Societies, 55). Thus, "weasel" of KJV, NIV and NRSV would seem more correct.

Certain species of birds migrate, so the birds in the list of unclean animals need not necessarily be permanent residents of Sinai, Palestine or wherever the list is thought to have been written. The NIV's "red kite" for *dā'â* (Lev 11:14; variant *rā'â* in Deut 14:13) is only a migrant in Palestine, and as G. R. Driver notes (Driver, 11), flying at a great altitude, the bird is not easily seen, so "red kite" appears overspecific, with "kite" being the choice of other English translations except NRSV, which has "buzzard." In a similar vein, G. S. Cansdale comments that pelicans fly over Palestine only once or twice a year as quickly as possible, using thermals to mount high in the sky and glide north on almost fixed wings, usually so high that they can only be identified through field glasses (Cansdale, 157).

5. The List of Unclean Birds.

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 give a list of unclean birds.

5.1. Variations in the List. Minor variations occur within the list as cited in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Leviticus 11:14 has *dā'â*, whereas Deuteronomy 14:13 has *rā'â*. The same verse also has *dayyâ*, which may be an attempt to reflect the Leviticus *dā'â*. The variants *rāḥām* (Lev 11:18) and *rāḥāmâ* (Deut 14:17) have already been noted. The position of *šālāk* is variable, occurring after *kôs* in Leviticus 11:17 and after *rāḥāmâ* in Deuteronomy 14:17.

5.2. A Pattern in the List? The question remains: Is there any logic or pattern discernible in the list? Of course, the lack of precise identification of some of the birds hinders the discernment of a pattern. G. R. Driver argued for a pattern, that the birds are arranged in a roughly descending scale of sizes by natural families (Driver, 19), but it is clear that he fitted some of his identifications to fit his preconceived pattern of grouping the land birds before the sea and river birds. For example, for *šāḥāp* (Lev 11:16; Deut 14:15) he advanced "long-eared owl," for *šālāk* (Lev 11:17; Deut 14:17) "fisher owl," and "cormorant" for *'ănāpâ* (Lev 11:19; Deut 14:18), although all English versions, except for TEV, have "gull," "cormorant" and "heron" respectively, which being sea or river birds did not fit into his pattern. G. S. Cansdale comments that "Driver's work must be accepted with caution . . . because . . . his findings imply a more detailed knowledge of birds by the ancient writer than seems likely" (Cansdale, 141 n.).

The occurrence at the end of the list of *'ăṭallēp* ("bat"), which is a mammal, not a bird (as Aristotle taught), may not be accidental.

6. Wild Animals.

Two wild creatures are worthy of further comment.

6.1. The Aurochs. The Hebrew term *rĕ'ēm* (Num 23:22; 24:8; Deut 33:17) is without doubt the now extinct aurochs, or wild ox *Bos primigenius*. The Egyptian king Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.) claimed to have killed seventy-five out of a herd of 176 aurochsen. Ramesses III (1184-1153 B.C.) hunted aurochsen in Gezira in Sudan. This huge creature had disappeared from Palestine before the Christian era. The last recorded specimen died in A.D. 1627 in a park north of Warsaw.

6.2. The Hornet. The Hebrew term *ṣir'â* occurs twice in the Pentateuch (Ex 23:28; Deut 7:20) and also in Joshua 24:12 in the context of dispossessing the inhabitants of Canaan. It has traditionally been translated "hornet" (so NIV, NASB). Comparison can be made with the modern Hebrew term, which means "wasp." The Septuagint has *sphēkia*, "wasps' nest."

The presence of the definite article in all three cases suggests a definite weapon that God used to dispossess the Canaanites. J. Garstang (258-60) suggested it was a reference to the Egyptians, "the hornet" referring to Pharaoh's hieroglyph *bi'ty*, the symbol of Lower Egypt. Others take it in a more metaphorical sense, such as NJPS's "plague," NRSV's "pestilence," TEV and NEB's "panic" or Holladay's "depression," "discouragement" (*HALOT*, 310b).

7. Beasts of Burden.

Three beasts of burden are mentioned in the Pentateuch: donkeys, horses and camels.

7.1 Donkeys. The donkey was the main beast of burden, being mentioned in all the pentateuchal books except Leviticus. The first mention is during Abram's stay in Egypt (Gen 12:16), but he had probably used donkeys as transport from Mesopotamia, where several distinct breeds were recognizable by about 1800 B.C. "Donkeys" that drew wheeled carts in Mesopotamia more than a thousand years earlier are now known from stone carvings and drawings to

have been onagers, the wild ass *Equus onager* that is still found in parts of West and Central Asia (Cansdale *IBD*, 53).

7.2 Horses. The horse is first mentioned in a list of livestock brought to *Joseph in Egypt in exchange for food (Gen 47:17). *Jacob referred to the horse when blessing *Dan (Gen 49:17). The Egyptian army that perished in the "Sea of Reeds" had horses (Ex 14:9, 23, 15:1, 19, 21, Deut 11:4). The horse was primarily perceived as an animal of war (Deut 20:1), hence the prohibition on a future Israelite king not to acquire great numbers of them (Deut 17:16).

The origin of the horse lies in Central Asia. It was probably first tamed in the grass steppe lands of northern Ukraine or somewhere farther east. Numerous horse bones in the Tripolye culture of Ukraine 2800-2700 B.C. are cited as evidence. By 2100 B.C. Third Dynasty of Ur texts refer to the *ANŠE.KUR.RA* "donkey of the (eastern) mountains." Horses occur in the Kanesh (Kültepe) texts of central Anatolia around 1900 B.C. Eighteenth-century horse models have been found at Brak and Chagar Bazar in Northern Syria. In Egypt a single horse skeleton at the Middle Kingdom fortress of Buten may have been buried as early as the seventeenth century B.C. (Drower, 71-78). The presence of horses in the Pentateuch (even at its earliest possible fifteenth-century B.C. date) is thus not at all anachronistic.

7.3 Camels. References to camels (Gen 12:16; 24:35; 30:43; 32:7, 15 [MT 32:8, 16]) in the stories of the patriarchs are often dismissed as anachronistic, since according to many archaeologists the camel was not domesticated until the twelfth century B.C., when pictorial and written references to the camel become frequent.

Evidence for the pre-twelfth-century use of camels is scanty, but this is not entirely surprising. The camel is not a city animal; it is kept outside settlements and is primarily used in the desert. Even so, there is some evidence. In Turkmenia Namazga IV period (3000-2600 B.C.) models have been found of camels pulling carts. In Egypt a limestone carving of a camel is dated to the First Dynasty (c. 3100-2890 B.C.). Camel bones have been found at Mari in pre-Sargonid levels of the twenty-fifth to twenty-fourth centuries B.C. Old Babylonian lexical texts from about 2000-1700 B.C. attest domestication. A Sumerian text from Nippur of the same period refers to camel's milk. A camel jawbone has been found in a tomb at Tell el-Farah North in Palestine from about 1900-1550 B.C. A kneeling camel figure from Byblos is dated to the eighteenth century B.C. Thus the pentateuchal narratives themselves should also be treated as evidence of pre-twelfth century camel domestication and not simply dismissed as anachronistic (*see* Travel and Transportation).

8. Animal products.

A number of products that are directly or indirectly derived from animals are mentioned in the Pentateuch.

8.1. Onycha. The Hebrew term *šĕḥēlet* occurs in a list of spices, blended together to make incense (Ex 30:34). It is universally translated "onycha" following the Septuagint. Onycha is made from a certain mollusk, of genus *strombus,* similar to the murex shell, found deep in the Red Sea. The strombus *Blatta byzantia* is advanced as a specific identification (Tristam, 297). More specifically, onycha is made from the horny operculum or shield by which the opening to the shell is closed when the soft body has been drawn into it (Cansdale, 232). But its presence in a list of vegetable products may be sufficient to cast doubt on this identification, as F. N. Hepper notes: "there is doubt whether onycha ... was really intended. It is more likely that it was a fragrant plant, the identity of which is not positively known" (Hepper, 142).

8.2. Honey. Honey occurs in the oft-repeated refrain "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 14:8; 16:13-14; Deut 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15: 27:3; 31:20; Josh 5:6; Jer 11:5; 32:22; Ezek 20:6, 15). The Hebrew term *dĕbaš* may not only signify bee honey but also syrup extracted from such fruits as figs, dates and grapes (cf. the Arabic *dibis,* Turkish *pekmez).* Thus "a land flowing with milk and honey" may not stand for a land of bees but for a land rich in fruit (Committee on Translations of the United Bible Societies, 11).

8.3. Curds. The Hebrew *ḥem'â* is a "type of curdled milk similar to yoghurt" (*HALOT,* 107b). Thus Genesis 18:8 and Deuteronomy 32:14 refer to "curds," "a coagulated substance formed by action of acids on milk, and made into cheese or eaten as food" (*COED,* 250b).

See also HOLY AND HOLINESS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN; TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

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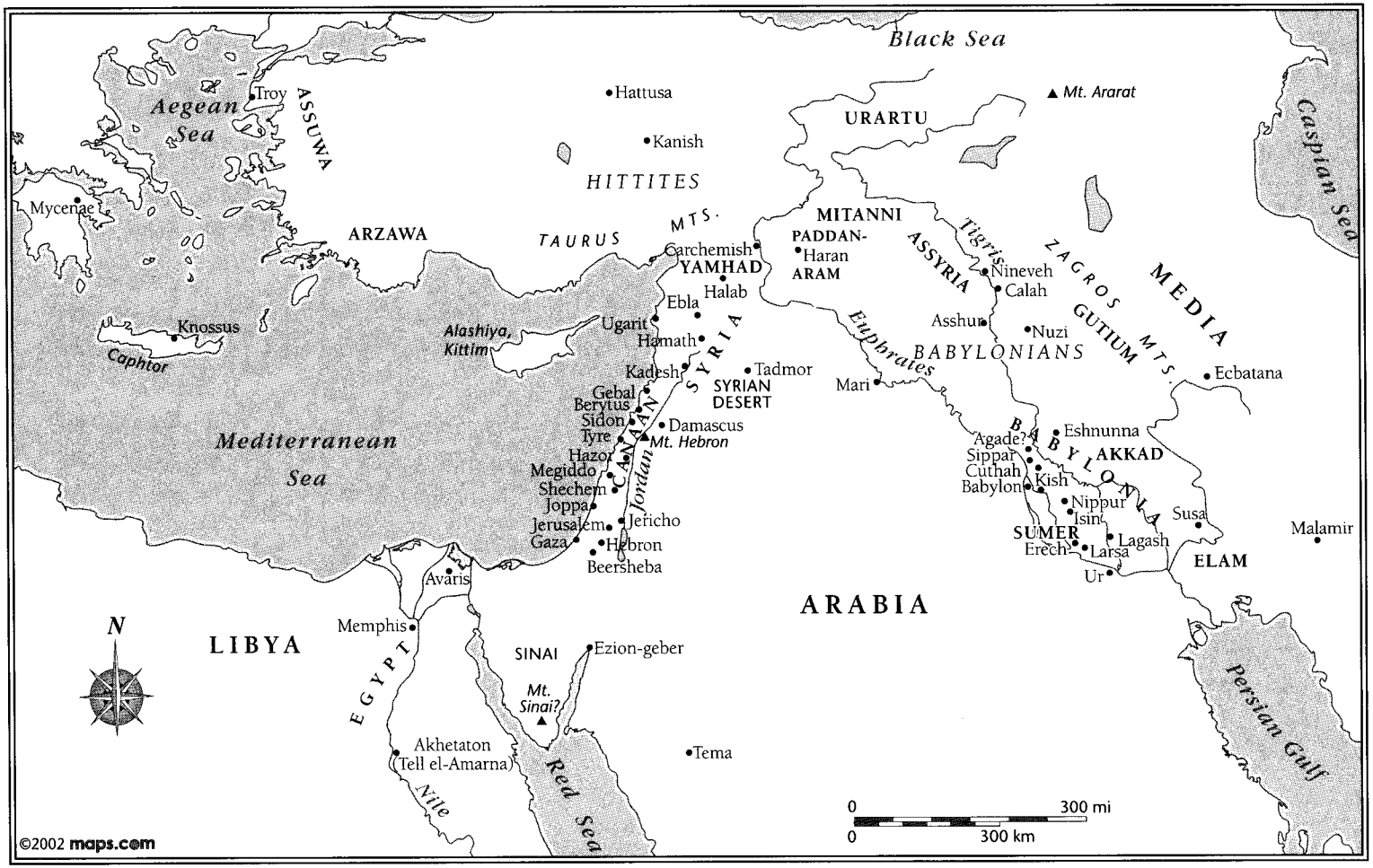
Palestine in the Patriarchal Period



The Ancient Near East in the Patriarchal Period

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