



*An Introduction to the  
Old Testament*

*The Torah  
(Pentateuch)*

Composed:

10<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Century

B.C.E. (B.C.)

# **Biblical Scholarship**

**Source Criticism (Wellhausen)**

**Form Criticism (Gunkel)**

**Tradition Criticism**

**Archaeological Scholarship (Albright)**

# J (Yahist)

begins with the second creation story, so the J source picks up in Genesis 2:4,

## **Date:**

about the tenth century and to the time of perhaps King Solomon.

# The main characteristics of the J source

- (1) that it uses a personal name Yahweh for God from the time of creation, and that will be in your Bibles as "Lord";
- (2) It describes God very anthropomorphically.
- (3) J has a very vivid and concrete earthy style;  
and,
- (4) It uses the name Mount Sinai to refer to the place where the Israelites with Moses will conclude the covenant with God.

# **E (Elohist)**

begins around Genesis 15 is really the most fragmentary.

## **Date:**

most likely composed in the northern kingdoms about the ninth century.

# The main characteristics of E

- 1) it uses Elohim, “God”;
- 2) it has a much less anthropomorphic view of God;
- 3) God is more remote
- 4) there's also an emphasis on prophets and prophecy in the E source;
- 5) The style is more abstract, a little less picturesque,  
and;
- 6) the E source uses a different name for the mountain where the covenant was concluded. It uses the name Horeb instead of Mount Sinai

# **D (Deuteronomic)**

is essentially the book of Deuteronomy. The book purports to be three speeches delivered by Moses as the Israelites are poised on the east side of the Jordan River

## **Date:**

622 during the reform by King Josiah in Judah



# The main characteristic of D

the one source in the Bible that clearly insists that one central sanctuary only is acceptable to Yahweh. God cannot be worshiped at makeshift altars. It doesn't actually ever say Jerusalem, which is why Samaritans think that it's at Mount Gerizim and that they have the correct temple and that they're authorized to offer sacrifices

# P (Priestly)

mostly in the books of Leviticus and the non-narrative portions of Numbers

## **Date:**

the exilic period, the period after the fall of the Southern Kingdom in 586 when the Babylonians have taken many of the Judeans into exile in Babylon

# The main characteristics of P

(1) a great concern with religious institutions, with the sacrificial system, with the Sabbath, with holidays, with rituals like circumcision, the Passover, dietary restrictions (the laws of *kashrut*) the system of ritual purity and impurity, and also holiness, ethical holiness and cultic or ritual holiness: Genesis 1, the first creation account, is attributed to P. It's orderly, it's systematized, the god is extraordinarily abstract;

(2) God is transcendent, and even perhaps remote. God is concealed and revealed only in his *kavod*. This is a word that's often translated as "glory," but what it refers to actually is a light-filled cloud;

(3) interested in covenants, in censuses, in genealogies

# Genesis

- Creation,
- the Fall,
- the Flood,
- spread of the nations,
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and  
Joseph
- Enslavement in Egypt

# Exodus

- Enslavement,
- Moses,
- 10 plagues,
- Passover,
- Leave Egypt,
- Red Sea Crossing,
- Mt. Sinai and the 10  
Commandments

# Leviticus

- Instructions on sacrificial system and the priesthood
- Instructions on moral purity

# Numbers

- Still at Mt. Sinai,
- people make false idol,
- punishment,
- 40 years wandering begins.

# Deuteronomy

- Moses' discourses on God's Acts for Israel
- the Decalogue, the ceremonial, civil, and social Laws, and covenant ratification