

The Mountains of God
Moses and the Pentateuch
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April 23, 2017

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1. This is the first presentation in a series that will look at how Christians came to have the Bible, which many see as the most important book they will ever read.
2. We will look at the times and contexts in which the various books were written and make an effort to determine who did and who didn't write them.
3. The first three presentations will look at the books of the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Old Testament by Christians.
5. The fourth presentation will look at the books of the New Testament.
6. The last presentation will look at how the books in both the Old and New Testaments were selected from other books that were candidates for inclusion and talk about what it means for the Bible to be the word of God.
7. Today we will look at the five books at the beginning of the Bible that are known as the Pentateuch or the Torah.

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1. I understand the sensitive nature of the subject matter of this series.
2. Many of us have been taught since Sunday school that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, David wrote the Psalms, Solomon wrote Proverbs, Daniel wrote the book that bears his name, Paul wrote all the letters attributed to him and the Apostle John wrote Revelation.
3. For some, any effort even to talk about what scholars have concluded about the authorship of the books of the Bible or their time periods can seem to be an attack on their most basic beliefs.
4. So, before I start with the substance of these presentations, I want to tell you why I am making them and what I hope you will take away from them.
5. I believe that understanding modern views about the human writers of the words in the Bible can help protect Christianity from some of the most vigorous attacks against it and make Christians more comfortable with their beliefs.

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1. As anyone who reads the Bible carefully knows, the Bible contains some obvious inconsistencies and contradictions, some more important than others.

2. For example, in one verse in the story of Noah, God directs Noah to take “[t]wo of every kind of bird” onto the ark. *Genesis* 6:20.
3. Just a few verses later, God directs Noah to take “seven pairs of every kind of bird.” *Genesis* 7:3.

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1. One story about the Ten Commandments says Moses received them from God on Mount Sinai. *Exodus* 19:20.
2. Another story says Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Horeb. *Deuteronomy* 5:2.
3. Exodus refers to Horeb as the “**mountain of God,**” a phrase usually associated with Mt. Sinai. *Exodus* 3:1.

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1. Other inconsistencies are more significant.
2. According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus was taken to the authorities for trial **after** he had eaten the Passover meal with his disciples. *Matthew* 26:17; *Mark* 14:12; *Luke* 22:7-8.
3. On the other hand, the Gospel of John says Jesus was taken into custody by the authorities **before** the Passover meal had begun. *John* 18:28.

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1. Pointing to inconsistencies, New Atheist Richard Dawkins writes this about the Gospels: “**All have the status of legends, as factually dubious as the stories of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.**” Dawkins, *The God Delusion* at 122.
2. The basic idea is that if the Bible is the word of God, it could not contain conflicting versions of when Jesus was taken before the authorities -- God would certainly know when this event occurred.
3. As the late Christopher Hitchens writes: “**Either the Gospels are in some sense literal truth, or the whole thing is essentially a fraud and perhaps an immoral one at that.**” Hitchens, *God is Not Great* at 120.

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1. In my opinion, the claims of the New Atheists are based on a faulty assumption.
2. God is not responsible for errors and contradictions in the Bible – people are.
3. God’s word may be perfect; his translators were not.

4. The human beings who wrote the words of the Bible, no matter their level of inspiration, inevitably interpreted the words of God in light of their own experiences and biases.
5. As Karen Armstrong writes: **“The life of Jesus had been a divine revelation, but the writers who recorded it were ordinary human beings, subject to sin and error.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 195.
6. Another Christian author writes: **“[I]t is false logic to argue that if one part of Scripture can’t be taken literally then none of it can be. That isn’t true of any human communication.”** Keller, *The Reason for God* at 97.

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1. Some of the teachings of the Bible, especially if taken literally, simply cannot be squared with current understandings of science and history, providing another basis for New Atheists to ridicule Christian beliefs.
2. For example, atheist Sam Harris recently wrote: **“120 million of us place the big bang 2,500 years after the Babylonians and Sumerians learned to brew beer.”** Harris, *The End of Faith* at 17.
3. But the teachings of the Bible have to be seen through the knowledge and understanding of writers at the time.
4. The human author who wrote the **“sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day”** (*Joshua* 10:13) was explaining what happened based on his understanding of celestial movements, not on ours.
5. As one author says: **“If God inspired humankind to write his messages, then surely those messages had to fit the historical times in which they were written.”** Trickler, *Who Wrote the Books of the Bible?* at 9.
6. As Karen Armstrong recently wrote: **“The Bible is in danger of becoming a dead or irrelevant letter . . . by claims for its literal infallibility.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 229.
7. In short, I believe that talking about the human writers of the Bible and contexts of their writings can help liberate the Bible from the claims of those who use it to attack Christianity.
8. With that understanding, I will begin this series by looking at the first five books of the Christian Old Testament -- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy -- often collectively called the Pentateuch.

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1. For a very long time, Jews and Christians have believed that Moses wrote the books of the Pentateuch.
2. Although nothing in the Pentateuch says that Moses wrote every word of it, there are statements that he wrote at least some of it.
3. For example, *Exodus* 17:14 states: **“Then the LORD said to Moses: ‘Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered . . .’”**
4. *Exodus* 24:4 states: **“Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.”**
5. The Book of Nehemiah refers to **“the Book of Moses.”** *Nehemiah* 13:1.
6. The author of Luke refers to Scripture as including **“Moses and the Prophets.”** *Luke* 24:27.
7. Referring to teachings in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus, Jesus said: **“For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’”** *Mark* 7:10.
8. For some Christians, the fact that Jesus attributed books of the Pentateuch to Moses is all the evidence they need.

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1. But anyone who reads the Pentateuch without a preconception of who wrote it can find plenty of evidence that Moses, at the very least, did not write all of it.
2. For example, *Numbers* 12:3 includes the following statement: **“Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”**
3. It seems unlikely that Moses would have written such a statement about himself.
4. But if Moses did describe himself as the humblest man on earth, it is even more unlikely that he would have written these words: **“For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.”** *Deuteronomy* 34:12.
5. These words were written at a time when, as the passage itself says, **“to this day no one knows where his grave is.”** *Deuteronomy* 34:6.
6. Think of what it would mean if Moses wrote these words -- he wrote that his death had occurred so long ago that no one knew where his grave was.

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1. The Pentateuch contains other evidence that Moses did not write all of it.

2. Genesis introduces a list of Edomite kings with this sentence: **“These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned.”** *Genesis 36:1.*
3. Because there were no Israelite kings until long after the death of Moses, this sentence itself provides some evidence that it was not written by Moses.
4. In the eleventh century, a Jewish physician named Isaac ibn Yashush living in Spain pointed out that many of the Edomite kings listed in Genesis lived long after Moses died, meaning that Moses could not have created this list.
5. As much as we may be convinced by this evidence that Moses did not write about events happening long after he died, most Christians at the time were not convinced.
6. After all, Moses was a great prophet and would have been able to foresee not only his own death but that people in the future would have forgotten where he was buried.
7. For example, Exodus reports that God told Moses that the Pharaoh would release the Israelites and he eventually did. *Exodus 6:1.*
8. Therefore, went the argument, Moses could have written what God told him would happen in the future.
9. So Isaac ibn Yashush, who argued that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, was repudiated as **“Isaac the Blunderer.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 23.

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1. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes, the great British philosopher, studied the Pentateuch and wrote this in his book, *Leviathan*: **“It is therefore sufficiently evident, that the five Books of Moses were written after his time, though how long after it be not so manifest.”** Hobbes, *Leviathan*.
2. One author has called this **“a shocking assertion”** at the time. Kugel, *Who Wrote the Bible* at 31.
3. In addition to the passage in Deuteronomy about the long ago death of Moses, Hobbes cited *Genesis 12:6*: **“Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.”**
4. As Hobbes pointed out, during the life of Moses, the Canaanites were still in the Promised Land because the Israelites had not yet displaced them, something that took place after the death of Moses.
5. Hobbes also pointed to *Numbers 21:14*, which cites a book called the *Book of Wars of the Lord* describing battles at the time of Moses.
6. Hobbes thought it was not likely that Moses would have quoted from a book describing contemporary events in describing those same events.

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1. Reviewing similar evidence, the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza wrote in 1670: **“It is thus clearer than the sun at noon the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but by someone who lived long after Moses.”**
2. At the time, his conclusions were condemned by both Protestants and Catholics.
3. Isaac de la Peyrère, a French Calvinist, was persuaded by Hobbes and Spinoza.
4. He wrote **“explicitly that Moses was not the author of the first five books of the Bible.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 20.
5. In support of this conclusion, he cited additional evidence.
6. In the first chapter of Deuteronomy, the author speaks of areas east of the Jordan River as being **“beyond the Jordan,”** telegraphing that whoever wrote this was on the western side of the Jordan. *Deuteronomy* 1:1.
7. But Deuteronomy also reports that Moses died before he ever reached the western side of the Jordan. *Deuteronomy* 34:1-6.
8. Therefore, Peyrère reasoned, Moses could not have written this section and there was no reason to believe he had written any of the Pentateuch.
9. Because of his writings, Peyrère was arrested and his books burned and banned.
10. To gain his freedom, he recanted.
11. At about the same time, Richard Simon, a French priest, was forced to recant his claims that Moses had not written the entire Pentateuch, which he believed had been assembled from various writings.

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1. In the eighteenth century, Simon’s claims that the Pentateuch was a compilation of various writings began being seen as the explanation for a characteristic of the Pentateuch that had long intrigued scholars.
2. The Pentateuch frequently contains more than one telling of a story, sometimes contradicting each other and sometimes providing different names for the same thing.
3. These duplications are called “doublets.”
4. For example, *Numbers* 10:29 says that Moses’ father-in-law was named Reuel.
5. But *Exodus* 18:12 says Moses’ father-in-law was named Jethro.

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1. The most famous doublet is the story of creation in Genesis.

2. According to the first chapter of Genesis, God created the animals **before** he created men and women. *Genesis* 1:20-30.
3. On the other hand, the second chapter of Genesis says that God created the animals **after** he had created Adam and Eve. *Genesis* 2:4-22.

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1. **“In time, it became clear that the doublets derived from two distinct sources, written in different times and different places.”** Finkelstein, *The Bible Unearthed* at 12.
2. The key to this understanding, which many Christians never notice, is that the Pentateuch contains two different names for God.
3. In some places, the Hebrew words *El* or *Elohim* are used, with are translated into English as “God.”
4. In other places in the Pentateuch, the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHWH is used as a personal name for God.
5. These four letters represent the name of God given to Moses from the burning bush, which mean **“I am who I am”** or **“I will be who I will be.”** *Exodus* 3:14.
6. YHWH, which was once pronounced “Jehovah,” is now pronounced “Yahweh” and is usually translated as “LORD” or “LORD God” in Christian Bibles.

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1. Eighteenth century scholars noticed that in many cases, one version of the doublet used *Elohim* for God and the other used Yahweh.
2. For example, in the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis, the creator is *Elohim*. *Genesis* 1:1.
3. In the second chapter, the creator is Yahweh. *Genesis* 2:4.
4. In the Exodus version of the receipt of the Ten Commandments, *Elohim* spoke the words to Moses on Mount Sinai. *Exodus* 20:1.
5. In Deuteronomy version, Yahweh spoke the words on Horeb. *Deuteronomy* 5:4.

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1. Look again at the story of Noah about the number of birds Noah was to take onto the ark. *Genesis* 6:20-22; 7:1-3.
2. In the first command, *Elohim* tells Noah to take two birds.
3. In the second command, Yahweh tells Noah to take seven pairs of birds.

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1. As eighteenth century scholars looked at such doublets, they noticed that the different names for God also corresponded to different conceptions of God.
2. Yahweh has characteristics reminiscent of humans.
3. Yahweh created man **“from the dust of the ground.”** *Genesis 2:7.*
4. Yahweh walked in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day and could not find Adam and Eve hiding among the trees. *Genesis 3:8-9.*
5. Yahweh personally shut the door of Noah’s ark and expressed regret for having made humans. *Genesis 7:16; 6:6-7.*
6. On the other hand, *Elohim* appears less human and more transcendent.
7. According to *Numbers 23:19*, **“Elohim is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind.”**
8. *Elohim* created simply by giving his word. *Genesis 1:24.*

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1. People who continue to believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch believe he used two names for God to reflect both his transcendent and personal characteristics.
2. Biblical scholars in the eighteenth century began coming to a different conclusion.
3. Observing the conflicting stories and characteristics of God associated with the different names of God, they concluded that the Pentateuch was constructed from two separate sources that had been combined later to form a single narrative.
4. They gave the name E source to the origins of those portions that called God *Elohim*.
5. They named the other portions J source after Jehovah, an earlier articulation of YHWH that is now pronounced Yahweh.

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1. In the nineteenth century, scholars noticed conflicting doublets even within the E and J source narratives.
2. For example, in one famous story in Genesis attributed to the E source, Jacob wrestles with *Elohim*, who then gives Jacob the name Israel, meaning “he struggles with God.” *Genesis 32:28.*
3. Jacob/Israel names the place where he saw God Peniel, meaning “face of God.” *Genesis 32:28.*

4. In another story, *Elohim* gives Jacob the name Israel, without explanation, and Jacob/Israel names the spot where he had talked to God Bethel, meaning “house of God.” *Genesis* 35:9-10, 15.
5. Either *Elohim* renamed Jacob twice, at two different places, or renamed him once and the Bible gives the place two different names.
6. Either way, this doublet suggests two sources.

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1. The Pentateuch also contains two versions of a famous story attributed to the J source.
2. In Exodus, the Israelites quarreled with Moses when they were at a place called Rephidim.
3. They threatened to kill Moses because they were without water and wondered why they had been led out of Egypt only to die in the wilderness. *Exodus* 17:2-4.
4. Yahweh told Moses to strike a rock and water came from the rock, saving the people and their animals. *Exodus* 17:6.
5. Moses named the site Meribah, meaning “quarrelling.”
6. Numbers reports that the Israelites were without water at a place called Kadesh and angrily wondered why they had been led out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. *Numbers* 20:1-5.
7. As in Exodus, Yahweh told Moses to take out his staff and the rock would provide water. *Numbers* 20:7-8.
8. As in Exodus, Moses struck the rock and water came out, saving the people and their animals and Moses called the place Meribah. *Numbers* 20:9-11.
9. But in the Numbers story, Yahweh punished Moses for bringing water from the rock by barring him from entering the Promised Land. *Numbers* 20:12; 32:50–52.
10. Some Christians interpret the story in Numbers as reporting a second place the Israelites were angry they were without water and Moses gave the same name to both places.
11. The difference is that the second time Moses disobeyed God by striking the rock rather than simply speaking to it as God had ordered.

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1. Nineteenth century scholars saw another explanation for the two E source stories about the renaming of Jacob and the two J source stories about Moses and the rock.

2. The Numbers version of the story of water from the rock mentions both Moses and Aaron, a priest, while the Exodus version mentions only Moses.
3. Similar differences exist in other doublets.
4. For example, in one passage God tells Moses to raise his staff to turn the Nile into blood. *Exodus 7:17*.
5. A few verses later, God tells Moses to tell Aaron to raise his staff to accomplish the same objective. *Exodus 7:19*.
6. Without identifying who actually raised his staff, the story ambiguously says: **“He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was turned into blood.”** *Exodus 7:20*.
7. Scholars concluded that the reference to Aaron was added to an earlier version that referred only to Moses.
8. From this and similar examples, scholars concluded that there was a third source of the Pentateuch, which took stories from E and J and modified them to fit its unique understandings.
9. This source reflected a fondness for Aaron, a priest, and focused on ritual and other matters of concern to priests.
10. For example, unlike the Exodus version of the story of Moses and the rock, the Numbers version refers to an **“assembly”** or **“congregation”** and a **“Tent of Meeting,”** words suggesting organized worship. *Numbers 20:6*.
11. Scholars named this source the P source for its priestly influence.

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1. In 1804, a German graduate student named W.M.L.de Wette published a doctoral thesis that added another element to the search for the sources of the Pentateuch.
2. He concluded that the Book of Deuteronomy originated as an entirely separate work.
3. Among his evidence was the ending verse of Numbers: **“These are the commands and regulations the LORD gave through Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.”** *Numbers 36:13*.
4. De Wette pointed out that Deuteronomy includes commands and regulations given to Moses on the plains of Moab that are not included in Numbers.
5. Because Numbers ends with the appointment of Joshua as the successor of Moses, de Wette thought it unlikely that Moses would have written what purported to be a complete set of regulations in Numbers and then added additional ones in Deuteronomy.

6. De Wette noted that in addition to including new regulations not found in Numbers, Deuteronomy also repeated, sometimes with variations, the same regulations found in Numbers.
7. De Wette also identified what he considered significant differences between Deuteronomy and the first four books of the Pentateuch.
8. For example, in Deuteronomy, Moses is depicted as a great orator, who gives a poetic farewell address to the Israelites on the plains of Moab. *Deuteronomy* 31-33.
9. On the other hand, the Moses described in Exodus is so “**slow of speech and slow of tongue**” that God directs Aaron to speak for him. *Exodus* 4:10, 16.
10. De Wette’s thesis that Deuteronomy originated separately from the first four books of the Pentateuch proved extraordinarily influential.
11. Scholars call the writings that make up Deuteronomy the D source.

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1. By the end of the nineteenth century, many Bible scholars had concluded that the Pentateuch had been assembled from four sources.
2. This idea became known as the Documentary Hypothesis.
3. According to the Hypothesis, the first four books, which some scholars call the Tetrateuch, were compiled from the E, J, and P sources by an editor or redactor sometimes called R.
4. Based on their unique words and themes, scholars have identified individual verses in the first four books from each of these sources, as shown in this chart.
5. Deuteronomy originated as a separate work, eventually combined with the other four books.
6. Of the 187 chapters of the Pentateuch, 87 chapters are thought to derive from the P source, including all of Leviticus and much of Numbers; 65 chapters are from the J and E sources combined, including most of Genesis; and the 34 chapters of Deuteronomy are from the D source.

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1. The Documentary Hypothesis has gained widespread acceptance and is taught in most seminaries today.
2. One author, writing in 1987, said: “**Until the past generation there were orthodox Christian and Jewish scholars who contested the Documentary Hypothesis in scholarly circles. At present, however, there is hardly a biblical scholar in the world actively working on the problem who would claim that the Five Books of Moses were written by Moses – or by any one person.**” Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 28.

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1. The Documentary Hypothesis does not answer the question of who wrote the individual sources or when they were written.
2. On this, there is less agreement than on the Documentary Hypothesis itself.
3. The most popular view was articulated in the late nineteenth century by Julius Wellhausen, a German Biblical scholar.
4. Relying on earlier works, he studied the four sources and sought to arrange them chronologically by comparing their contents with each other and with Jewish history.
5. Wellhausen's work has been so influential that one important author recently stated: **“To this day, if you want to disagree, you disagree with Wellhausen. If you want to propose a new model [for the Documentary Hypothesis], you compare its merits with those of Wellhausen's model.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 26-27.

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1. Under the Wellhausen model, the J source was the first to be composed, probably by a member of the tribe of Judah during the time the United Monarchy was ruled by Solomon.
2. Solomon was the son of King David, a member of the tribe of Judah, who had united the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah into a United Monarchy in about 1000 B.C.
3. The connection between the J source and the tribe of Judah is based on a study of stories that contain material from both the J source and the E source.
4. The story of Joseph is an example of a story combining both sources into a single narrative.
5. In the E source material, Reuben, the father of the tribe of Reuben, stops his brothers from killing Joseph. *Genesis 37:21-22.*
6. In the J source material, Judah, the father of the tribe of Judah, saves Joseph. *Genesis 37:26-27.*
7. The tribe of Judah was part of the Kingdom of Judah and the tribe of Reuben was part of the Kingdom of Israel.
8. From this and similar examples, scholars concluded that **“the author of J came from Judah and the author of E came from Israel.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 61.

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1. In support of the conclusion that the J source originated during the period of King Solomon, scholars point to language that supports the idea of a single country united under a common ruler.
2. For example, in *Genesis* 15:18, Yahweh promised Abraham that his descendants would have the land **“from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.”**
3. These were the boundaries of the United Monarchy.
4. Another J source passage quotes Yahweh as saying to Abraham: **“I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.”** *Genesis* 17:6.
5. Many scholars see in these passages support for the United Monarchy and its kings.
6. As one author states: **“The [J] source from the age of Solomon was promulgated in the interests of the national cult of the empire.”** Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* at 293.
7. Another author goes so far as to say that the author of the J source **“was most likely a member of Solomon’s court”** who wrote between 960 and 930 B.C. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 68.
8. According to the consensus view, the J source includes the earliest Jewish conception of God, which explains why the J source describes an anthropomorphic God who walks around the Garden of Eden looking for Adam and Eve among the trees. *Genesis* 3:8-9.

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1. The consensus view, consistent with the Wellhausen model, is that the E source was written second by a member of the northern Kingdom of Israel after it had separated from the Kingdom of Judah following the death of Solomon.
2. As one recent author writes: **“The northern kingdom, Israel, was now in need of its own version of the national epic, because the Yahwist [J source] work was so explicitly focused on the south and the Davidic monarchy.”** Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 69.
3. So, **“somewhere between 900 and 850 B.C.E., a writer in the northern kingdom paralleled the work of the Yahwist [J source] by creating the northern narrative of the people’s origins.”** *Id.*

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1. Evidence that the E source writer was loyal to the Kingdom of Israel can be found in those parts of the story of Joseph derived from the E source.

2. E source materials say that Joseph made his brothers promise that they would make sure his bones were taken to the land of his birth. *Genesis 50:24-26; Exodus 13:19.*
3. E source material says that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him as the Israelites left Egypt. *Exodus 13:19.*
4. Those bones were buried in Shechem, the capital of the Kingdom of Israel. *Joshua 24:32.*
5. From this and similar evidence, a recent author concludes: “[T]he person who wrote E was particularly interested in the kingdom of Israel.” Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 67.
6. He goes further and identifies “the author of E as a Shiloh priest who possibly thought of Moses as his own ancestor.” *Id.* at 79.
7. The E source is the basis for a view of God that is less anthropomorphic than the God of the J source.
8. As we saw earlier, “*Elohim is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind.*” *Numbers 23:19.*

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1. The Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and “refugees fleeing south brought with them some of the E texts.” Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 362.
2. At some point after that, an unknown editor in the south combined the E material from the north and the J material from the south into a single narrative, in some cases including two versions of the same story and in other cases using material from both sources in a single story.
3. One author speculates that the editor included two versions of the same story because including only one version would be seen as favoring one group over another. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 88.
4. It may seem strange today to think of a human editor picking and choosing among what materials to include in what we now consider to be Holy Scripture, sometimes including conflicting details of stories.
5. But ancient writers did not have the same view of the Pentateuch that we have today.
6. As Karen Armstrong writes: “Although these texts were revered, they had not yet been ‘scripture.’ People felt free to alter older writings and there was no canon of prescribed sacred books.” Armstrong, *The Bible* at 24-25.
7. Another author expresses the same idea this way: “Israel thus conceived of their Scriptures as a living word. In order for that word to continue to live, and to

give life and inspiration, it had to grow and adapt.” Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 74.

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1. In his thesis, De Wette concluded that the D source that became Deuteronomy includes the **“Book of Laws”** mysteriously found in the Jerusalem Temple during the reign of King Josiah, the king of Judah from 640 to 609 B.C.
2. Many scholars believe Deuteronomy was actually first written at the time of King Josiah from materials derived from the north. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 726.
3. As one author writes: **“Rather than being an old book that was suddenly discovered, it seems safe to conclude [Deuteronomy] was written in the seventh century B.C.E., just before or during Josiah’s reign.”** Finkelstein, *The Bible Unearthed* at 281.
4. Another author says that Deuteronomy **“appears to be a then-new text written by a Jerusalem Temple priest to goad Josiah into action.”** Trickler, *Who Wrote the Books of the Bible?* at 53.
5. Whatever its origins, Deuteronomy was used by King Josiah as he sought to reform the Kingdom of Judah by, among other things, prohibiting **“sacrificial worship of the God of Israel in any place but the Temple in Jerusalem.”** *Id.* at 13.
6. We will talk more about Deuteronomy and King Josiah next week.

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1. Deuteronomy also reflected the continued evolution in the Jewish conception of God.
2. In the earlier narratives, God dwells in the Tabernacle. *Exodus* 25:8.
3. In Deuteronomy, the Tabernacle is no longer the dwelling place of God, but only the **“dwelling for his name.”** *Deuteronomy* 14:23.
4. According to Deuteronomy, God is in heaven. *Deuteronomy* 4:39.
5. As one author writes Deuteronomy contained **“a new view of God as completely transcendent.”** Finkelstein, *The Bible Unearthed* at 13.

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1. Although there is significant disagreement on the subject, most scholars believe that the P source was the last to have been composed, although it likely drew on earlier sources and oral traditions.
2. Most scholars believe that the P source derived the laws included in *Leviticus* 17 to 26 from an earlier document called the “Holiness Code.”

3. The P source reflects a continued evolution in Jewish thought about the nature of God.
4. As one author notes, **“P depicts Yahweh as a more cosmic, less personal, God than in JE.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 191.
5. In the P source material, God does not speak to humans, even through angels.
6. Reflecting its emphasis on priests, the P source material emphasizes the **“principle that the consecrated priests are the only intermediaries between humans and God.”** *Id.*
7. Scholars do not agree on when the P source material was first written.
8. Wellhausen concluded that it was written after the Jews returned from the exile in Babylon in 539 B.C., a view that is still accepted by some.
9. Others have concluded that the P source was written before the exile. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 188.
10. Still others have concluded that it was **“completed in the sixth century, late in the Exile.”** Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* at 325.
11. Whenever it was written, most scholars believe the P source material was written by one or more priests from the family of Aaron.

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1. There is agreement among all scholars that at some point an editor or redactor took the J, E, D and P materials and **“mix[ed] them all together,”** creating a single document that we now call the Pentateuch. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 226.
2. At that time, the first three chapters of Deuteronomy were added **“to connect Deuteronomy with the tetrateuch.”** Doorly, *Obsession with Justice* at 103.
3. The most common dating of this event is about 400 B.C., when the Book of Nehemiah says that Ezra brought the **“Book of the Law of Moses”** from Babylon and read it aloud to the people. *Nehemiah* 8:1-8.
4. Some scholars believe that Ezra himself was the editor or redactor who pulled all the sources of the Pentateuch into a single document. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 218.
5. Evidence for this conclusion comes from *Ezra* 9:3-12, which scholars believe combines material from the P and D sources. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 647.
6. Whoever finally assembled the various sources into a single book, most scholars today believe that the Pentateuch relies on material from numerous locations and time periods of Jewish history.

7. As one author has written: **“The present Pentateuch is thus a weaving together of these four strands – the northern and southern narratives of Israel’s origins (Elohism and Yahwist sources, respectively) and the northern and southern legal materials (Deuteronomy and Priestly sources).”** Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 72.

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1. As Karen Armstrong has noted, **“conflicting visions were all included by the editors in the final text.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 222.

2. In the Deuteronomy version of the Ten Commandments, Yahweh said that the reason to **“observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”** was that Yahweh had brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, a major theme of the D source. *Deuteronomy* 5:12.

3. In the Exodus version, *Elohim* said that the reason to **“remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”** was that God had **“rested on the seventh day”** of creation, an important theme of the P source. *Exodus* 20:8.

4. The editor’s decision to keep two different versions of the Ten Commandments eventually helped scholars untangle the sources that contributed to the Pentateuch.

5. It is important to understand that the conclusion, shared by most scholars today, that the Pentateuch was compiled from four sources and not written by Moses says nothing about its inspiration by God.

6. Even works inspired by God can reflect contradictions based on human perceptions.

7. After all, there are four Gospel writers, whose writings don’t always agree.

8. We will talk more about that in the fourth presentation.

Slide 38

1. Next week we will look at those books of the Hebrew Scriptures that Jews call the Nevi'im or Prophets.

2. We will first look at books starting with Joshua and ending with Second Kings that many scholars call the “Deuteronomistic History” because of their apparent links to the Book of Deuteronomy.

3. We will then look at the books of Jeremiah and Isaiah that Jews call the Major Latter Prophets and will end with a brief look at some of the twelve Minor Latter Prophets.

4. We will learn that some scholars believe that many of those books were influenced by a single prophet whose name most of you know.

Resources:

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