

# A Case For Multiple Authors

## Part 1: The Book of Genesis

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### INTRODUCTION

While the Documentary Hypothesis has been formulated since the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, modern scholarships questioning the authorship of the scriptures known as the Hebrew Torah, or the Pentateuch (i.e. the first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) can be dated as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>1</sup>. Tradition has it that it was Moses who committed this Book of Law into writing but the only thing within the Torah that has been credited to Moses is the *Song of Moses* found in *Deuteronomy 32:1-43*. Tradition also states that it was Homer who created the poetic epics, *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*. This too, has been and continues to be disputed.

The purpose of this article is to place research with the Documentary Hypothesis aside and just spend some time taking a thorough look into the scriptures. The material below does not introduce anything new and it will not highlight every inconsistency. It is not my intent to. I am merely highlighting some of many examples where we can see the possibility of more than one author writing these words to scroll. Can we find cases in which it becomes apparent that more than one author added their piece to this puzzling text? If so, then what is its impact on future scholarship? How must we approach these varying pieces of information? I will separate this article into several parts and release them as we go along through the five books. Also note that all translations will be Jewish Publication Society (hereafter, JPS) translations of the Hebrew Torah.

### EXHIBIT 1: A DOUBLE CREATION

God first created the creatures of the deep on the fifth day, and all the other land animals on the sixth before man was created.

**Gen. 1:21** And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that creepeth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after its kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

**1:23** And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

**1:24** And God said: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind.' And it was so.

**1:25** And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

**1:26** And God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac ibn Yashush, a Jewish court physician of a ruler in Muslim Spain, pointed out that the list of Edomite kings that appear in Genesis 36 named kings lived after Moses .

dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

**1:27** And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.

**1:31** And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

In the following chapter we read that man was created first (Genesis 2:7) and God created the animals afterwards (Genesis 2:19) to keep the man company and have the man name them.

## **EXHIBIT 2: THE STORY OF NOAH**

**Gen. 6:3** And the LORD said: 'My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for that he also is flesh; therefore shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.'

**6:9** These are the generations of Noah. Noah was in his generations a man righteous and whole-hearted; Noah walked with God.

**9:28** And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

**9:29** And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

What we find here is a direct contradiction between two sets of sequential verses. In the one, the life of man has been limited to 120 years and Noah does not die. Instead, like Enoch, he *walks with God*.<sup>2</sup> In verse 7:6, we are told that Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came. 600 seems to be pretty far past the 120 year life expectancy God had decreed earlier. By the time we reach Genesis 9:29 we learn that Noah had lived a full life of 950 years and died. The Hebrew word *וימת*, *and he died*, cannot make it any clearer that he did not *walk with God*. Even the lifespan of the later patriarchs such as Abraham lived much longer than 120 years. It is written in Genesis 25:7 that Abraham lived 175 years and in Genesis 25:17 that Ishmael lived 137 years.. Genesis 47:28 states that even Jacob's life was 147 years.

## **EXHIBIT 3: BABEL**

**Gen. 11:1** And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.

**11:2** And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

**11:3** And they said one to another: 'Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

**11:4** And they said: 'Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, with its top in heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'

**11:5** And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

**11:6** And the LORD said: 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do; and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do.'

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2 Gen. 5:22

**11:7** Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'

**11:8** So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.

**11:9** Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

This story brings its own set of problems. In chapter 10 of Genesis we read:

**10:5** Of these were the isles of the nations divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

**10:20** These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations.

**10:31** These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

In just the following chapter we are told of how the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. While they journeyed to the east, the sons of men were overwhelmed with the fear of being scattered across the plains of the earth. How can the whole earth be of one language and collected to the east, when the seeds of the three sons of Noah branched off into their own inheritance with their own tongues in the previous chapter? Many have argued that the narrative of Babel was only an episode within the entire genealogical dispersion, revolving around one specific nation derived from one of the seeds of Noah's children. Even if this were the case, it still would not make any sense. Verses 1-2 of chapter 11 specifically say כְּלִי-הָאָרֶץ ('the whole earth' or 'all of the [known (?)] land') was of וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים ('one language') and that they (the whole world) journeyed east to the land of Shinar. While the nations were being dispersed and given their inheritance of the land and adopting their own languages, where would this episode fit?

Later authors attempt to address this anomaly. One such example can be found in the Book of Jasher. In chapter 7, verse 45, we read that all nations and their tongues heard of Nimrod's fame, and they gathered at Shinar while Nimrod reigned over them. Coming from being dispersed with separate languages, did they gather and adopt just one language? This is what the scribe of Jasher would have the reader believe, (unsuccessfully) attempting to clarify the original anomaly.

## **EXHIBIT 4: THE STORY OF ABRAHAM**

Once we reach the story of the patriarchs, geographic locations become quite the problem. A good example can be seen in Genesis 22-23:

**22:19** So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

**23:1** And the life of Sarah was a hundred and seven and twenty years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

**23:2** And Sarah died in Kiriatharba--the same is Hebron--in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

There is a lot of inconsistencies to where the patriarchs are presently located. The same can be seen later on in a story of Jacob after he leaves Laban the Aramean at Haran and heads back to the land of his fathers.

**Gen. 31:18** and he carried away all his cattle, and all his substance which he had gathered, the cattle of his getting, which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to Isaac his father unto the land of Canaan.

**31:19** Now Laban was gone to shear his sheep. And Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's. 20 And Jacob outwitted Laban the Aramean, in that he told him not that he fled.

**31:21** So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the River, and set his face toward the mountain of Gilead.

**31:23** And he<sup>3</sup> took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and he overtook him in the mountain of Gilead.

**33:17** And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

**33:18** And Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram; and encamped before the city.

**35:6** So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan--the same is Beth-el--he and all the people that were with him.

**35:9** And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.

Here we have multiple references to Jacob coming from Paddan-aram where the reality is that he had already settled some place else and is not coming from Paddan-aram. He left Paddan-aram in Genesis 31 and headed into Gilead. He then settled in Succoth; but there is still confusion because after settling in Succoth, the next verse places Jacob in Shechem after coming from Paddan-aram. Later on we find that he has come to Luz (Beth-El) after Paddan-aram.

## **EXHIBIT 5: THE STORY OF JACOB**

**Gen. 28:10** And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

**28:11** And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

**28:12** And he dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

**28:13** And, behold, the LORD stood beside him, and said: 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy

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3 Laban the Aramean.

seed.

**28:14** And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

**28:15** And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.'

**28:16** And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said: 'Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.'

**28:17** And he was afraid, and said: 'How full of awe is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

**28:18** And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

**28:19** And he called the name of that place Beth-el, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

**35:1** And God said unto Jacob: 'Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou didst flee from the face of Esau thy brother.'

**35:2** Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him: 'Put away the strange gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments;

**35:3** and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.'

**35:6** So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan--the same is Beth-el--he and all the people that were with him.

**35:7** And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el, because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

Jacob, when running for his life from Esau to Haran, had spent a night at a location which in the next morning had built a pillar (i.e. a small altar) and called the site Beth-El (Genesis 28). He is later told by God to go to Beth-El which in Jacob's time according to this part of the narrative (Genesis 35) is still referred to as Luz and built an altar dedicated to God. Jacob does so and names the site El Beth-El (God [of] Beth-El); that is, Beth-El (House [of] God). We have two separate namings of single site.

## **EXHIBIT 6: JOSEPH SOLD INTO TO SLAVERY**

**37:23** And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colours that was on him;

**37:24** and they took him, and cast him into the pit--and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

**37:25** And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and ladanum, going to carry it down to Egypt.

**37:26** And Judah said unto his brethren: 'What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?

**37:27** Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh.' And his brethren hearkened unto him.

**37:28** And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

**37:36** And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.

**39:1** And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither.

**45:4** And Joseph said unto his brethren: 'Come near to me, I pray you.' And they came near. And he said: 'I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.'

Initially Joseph's brothers intended to sell him to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants who were headed to Egypt. While Joseph admits to his brothers selling him into slavery in Genesis 45:4, we find that it was not his brothers but a group of Midianites who pulled him out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites in Genesis 37:28. In one tradition it was the Ishmaelites who sold Joseph to Potiphar, the Egyptian (Genesis 39:1), while in another it was the Midianites (Genesis 37:36). Joseph claims it was his brothers who sold him into Egypt (Genesis 45:4). Who then sold Joseph into slavery?

Note that the Midianites and Ishmaelites both come from the Abrahamic blood line and are regarded as two separate nations. Midian is conceived through Abraham and Keturah while Ishmael is conceived through Abraham and Hagar.

## **SUMMARY**

As we start to analyze the text, it becomes more apparent that this may not necessarily come to us from a single source. With that in mind, would it still be safe to use this collection of multiple traditions buried within the Hebrew Torah as a single undisturbed source in future research? Or would it be better to further dissect its authorship and then rely on each author as a separate source?