Lecture 1: Reading the Bible.

Reading: Kugel xi-xiv and 1-46; Canons of the Hebrew Bible (following these notes).

The Hebrew Bible is an **anthology of books,** written in Hebrew (mostly) by the people of Judah and Israel between (approximately) the eighth century BCE and (approximately) the second century BCE.

Four main **types** of books:

- history (narrative) (+ law);
- prophecy;
- wisdom (advice on how to live a good life; or books reflecting on the ways of the world);
- hymns (the book of Psalms).

The quadripartite arrangement of Christian Bibles (Law; History; Poetry/Hymns; Prophecy) reflects this.

Biblical books derive from **different groups/classes**:

- Priests (teach Torah); institutional home of priests was temple; cult of sacrifices;
- Prophets (speak the word of the Lord); not institutional; warning figures and social critics;
- Scribes (or sages) (give sage advice to upper class).

The tripartite arrangement (Torah; Prophets; Writings) of Jewish Bibles reflects this.

Modern Bible scholarship/scholars (MBS) assumes that:

- The Bible is a collection of books like any others: created and put together by normal (i.e. fallible) human beings;
- The Bible is often inconsistent because it derives from sources (written and oral) that do not always agree; individual biblical books grow over time, are multi-layered;
- The Bible is to be interpreted in its context:
  - Individual biblical books take shape in historical contexts; the Bible is a document of its time;
  - Biblical verses are to be interpreted in context;
  - The "original" or contextual meaning is to be prized above all others;
- The Bible is an ideologically-driven text (collection of texts). It is not "objective" or neutral about any of the topics that it treats. Its historical books are not "historical" in our sense.
  - "hermeneutics of suspicion";

    - ✦ Consequently MBS often reject the alleged "facts" of the Bible (e.g. was Abraham a real person? Did the Israelites leave Egypt in a mighty Exodus? Was Solomon the king of a mighty empire?);
    - ✦ MBS do not assess its moral or theological truth claims, and if they do, they do so from a humanist perspective;
        - ★ The Bible contains many ideas/laws that we moderns find offensive;
- The authority of the Bible is for MBS a historical artifact; it does derive from any ontological status as the revealed word of God;

Ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters, and their medieval and modern continuators, have an opposite set of assumptions according to which the Bible is:

- True (in two senses: factually, morally);
- Qualitatively different from all "regular" books:
    - ✦ Revealed by God;
    - ✦ Written by people who were in touch with God;
    - ✦ Divine speech is omnisignificant, cryptic, many meanings, layers of meaning;
    - ✦ Demands interpretation (exegesis);
- Harmonious, perfect;
    - ✦ Inconsistencies are only apparent;
- eternally true, speaking to and about *us;*
    - ✦ Not bound by any historical context, not historically conditioned;
    - ✦ Hence Jews could find Judaism in the text, and Christians could find Christianity, although historically considered the text is neither Jewish nor Christian;
- Kugel has a slightly different version of these "Four Assumptions " (pp. 14-17);
- In reaction to MBS, the theory of evolution, archaeological discoveries, etc. some Jews and Christians began to insist on these assumptions all the more so:
    - ✦ E.g. Evangelical Protestant doctrines of "inerrancy";
        - ★ See e.g. the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978);
    - ✦ On-going struggles within Judaism and Christianity between modernist and anti-modernist wings;
        - ★ See the troubles of Charles Augustus Briggs discussed by Kugel;
        - ★ Kugel's own twists and turns;

Perhaps the most obvious and blatant conflict between MBS and traditional belief concerns the date and the authorship of the biblical books:

- Traditionally the Biblical books are seen as unitary compositions from single authors, none of them later than the Persian period (ca. 450 BCE);

- MBS: most of the books have a long period of gestation and derive from many sources; the latest books derive from long after c. 450 BCE, even as late as the mid-second century BCE;
- The great battleground is the Torah (the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses): is the Torah the earliest biblical book, revealed by God to Moses shortly after the Exodus, around 1300-1200 BCE, or one of the latest, not completed until the exilic period – or later? (see Kugel)

Hebrew Bible (Jewish)	**Greek Septuagint (Greek Orthodox)**	**Latin Vulgate (Roman Catholic)**	**Protestant Bibles**
TORAH 1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy NEVIIM: THE PROPHETS 6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel 9) 1 Kings and 2 Kings 10) Isaiah 11) Jeremiah 12) Ezekiel 13) The Twelve: Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	THE LAW Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy HISTORIES Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles [*Prayer of Manasseh*] *1 Esdras* Ezra Nehemiah *Tobit* *Judith* Esther (with *insertions*) *1 Maccabees* *2 Maccabees* [*3 Maccabees*] [*4 Maccabees*]	THE LAW Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy HISTORIES Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles *Prayer of Manasseh* *1 Esdras* *2 Esdras* Ezra Nehemiah *Tobit* *Judith* Esther (with *insertions*) *1 Maccabees* *2 Maccabees*	THE LAW 1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy HISTORIES 6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) Ruth 9) 1 Samuel 10) 2 Samuel 11) 1 Kings 12) 2 Kings 13) 1 Chronicles 14) 2 Chronicles 15) Ezra 16) Nehemiah 17) Esther

Hebrew Bible (Jewish)	**Greek Septuagint (Greek Orthodox)**	**Latin Vulgate (Roman Catholic)**	**Protestant Bibles**
KETUVIM: THE WRITINGS 14) Psalms 15) Proverbs 16) Job 17) Song of Songs 18) Ruth 19) Lamentations 20) Ecclesiastes 21) Esther 22) Daniel 23) Ezra and Nehemiah 24) 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles	WISDOM/ POETRY Job Psalms [*Psalm no. 151*] [*Odes*] Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs *Wisdom of Solomon* *Ecclesiasticus* [*Psalms of Solomon*] PROPHECY Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations *Baruch* *Epistle of Jeremiah* Ezekiel Daniel (with *insertions*) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	WISDOM/ POETRY Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs *Wisdom of Solomon* *Ecclesiasticus* PROPHECY Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations *Baruch* *Epistle of Jeremiah* Ezekiel Daniel (with *insertions*) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	WISDOM/ POETRY 18) Job 19) Psalms 20) Proverbs 21) Ecclesiastes 22) Song of Songs PROPHECY 23) Isaiah 24)Jeremiah 25) Lamentations 26) Ezekiel 27) Daniel 28) Hosea 29) Joel 30) Amos 31) Obadiah 32) Jonah 33) Micah 34) Nahum 35) Habakkuk 36) Zephaniah 37) Haggai 38) Zechariah 39) Malachi APOCRYPHA *1 Esdras* *2 Esdras* *Tobit* *Judith* *Additions to Esther* *Wisdom of Solomon* *Ecclesiasticus* *Baruch* *Epistle of Jeremiah* *Song of the Three Children* *Story of Susanna* *Bel and the Dragon* *Prayer of Manasseh* *1 Maccabees* *2 Maccabees*

Source: adapted from http://www.bible-researcher.com/canon2.html; cf. JSB p. 2076

Lecture 2: The Bible's Main Ideas.

Reading: Hayes, excerpt from Lecture 2 (Kaufmann on Polytheism); Wikipedia, "Documentary Hypothesis"; the text which appears on the Basic Ideas timeline when you rollover each of the horizontal bars (also available as a PDF file).

Theological truth claims of the Bible:

- God, variously called YHWH or Elohim, is the universal God who created the world and established a universal moral order;
  - ✦ YHWH = a uniquely Israelite name for God;
    - ★ Pronunciation uncertain (not "Jehovah"), translated "Lord";
  - ✦ Elohim = the deity, translated "God," a variant on a divine name found all over the ancient near east (El);
  - ✦ Documentary hypothesis makes much of the change of names ("J," "E").
- There is no other God;
- This God is the God of both nature and history:
  - ✦ Nature: creation; natural phenomena obey God;
  - ✦ History: the Bible's grand narrative, from the creation of the world, to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), the Israelites in Egypt (Joseph), the Exodus (Moses), the conquest of Canaan (Joshua), the establishment of the monarchy (David and Solomon), the splitting of the kingdom in two, the destruction and exile of the northern kingdom (722 BCE) and the southern kingdom (587 BCE), exile to Babylonia, return from Babylonia.
- God stands in a special relationship with the people of Israel through a covenant and revealed law;
- God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, both individually and collectively, both of Israel and of the nations.

These truth claims are accepted by both Jews and Christians.

The Bible shows in spite of itself that these truth claims have a history, esp. "there is no other God" and "God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked."

"There is no other God."

Bible's own view: One true God creates the world; truth precedes error.

Bible does not explain how idolatry came about; but it shows that the Israelites (beginning with the golden calf episode, Exodus 32) regularly practiced it.

- Bible does not have a word for idolatry but refers frequently to two interrelated phenomena:
  - Worship of images (proper worship of God is to be *aniconic,* without images);
  - Worship of many gods (polytheism) in addition to, or instead of, YHWH.

The Bible's grand narrative: from worship of the one God to idolatry back to worship of the one God (when the Israelites repent).

MBS: this entire narrative is backwards. Polytheism and image worship come first.

Biblical itself and archaeology show that for a long time Israelites worshiped more than one God. (We have a large number of Israelite cultic figurines.)

The contrast between polytheism and monotheism is not just the one and the many; contrast in world views; see Hayes summarizing Kaufman.

Standard view of MBS:

- 8th century BCE emergence of God-alone theology ; prophets (Hosea) are champions of *monolatry:* Israel is to worship one God (not necessarily a statement about the existence of other Gods). Marriage metaphor; Israel is to be a one-man (one-God) woman (people).
- 6th century BCE emergence of *monotheism;* prophets (Second Isaiah) promote the belief that only one God exists;
- Image-less worship is associated with these two movements.

So, belief in one true God who created heaven and earth is a belief that derives not from the beginning of the biblical period but from the middle, and is projected back onto the narratives.

The Torah reflects this belief even if there are traces here and there of monolatry (Deuteronomy 4:19) and more than one God (Exodus 15:11).

God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.

Numerous Biblical passages (as we shall see) and the book of Job show that many Israelites were not comfortable with the traditional belief that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.

As a result in the second temple period there were two major developments:

1. Instead of the view that the one true God is in charge of everything (cosmic monism), comes the view that some hostile force (Satan, the elements, Beliar, the rulers) is in temporary command of this world (cosmic dualism) and that God's full power is manifest only in the next world.
2. Reward and punishment take place not in this world but the next:
   - Heaven/hell;
   - Judgment after death, judgment in the end time;
   - Messiah, messianic deliverer;
   - Resurrection of the dead;
   - "Apocalypticism": the belief that history is about to end, that the fated pre-determined time is about to come, that we are living on the brink, that the evil forces will soon be overthrown, etc.

Christianity will carry forward cosmic dualism.
Rabbinic Judaism will carry forward cosmic monism.

Lecture 3: Biblical Chronology and Geography: When and Where.

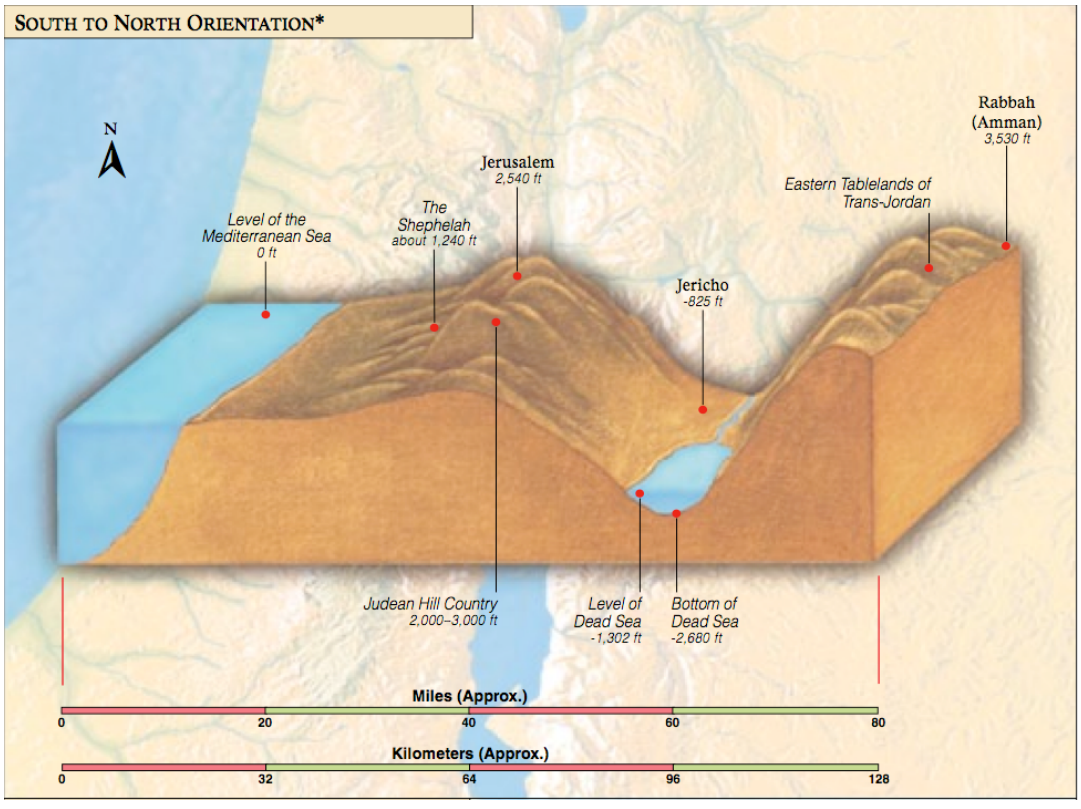
Reading: The text which appears on the Ideas Timeline (Basic) when you rollover each of the horizontal bars (also appended below);

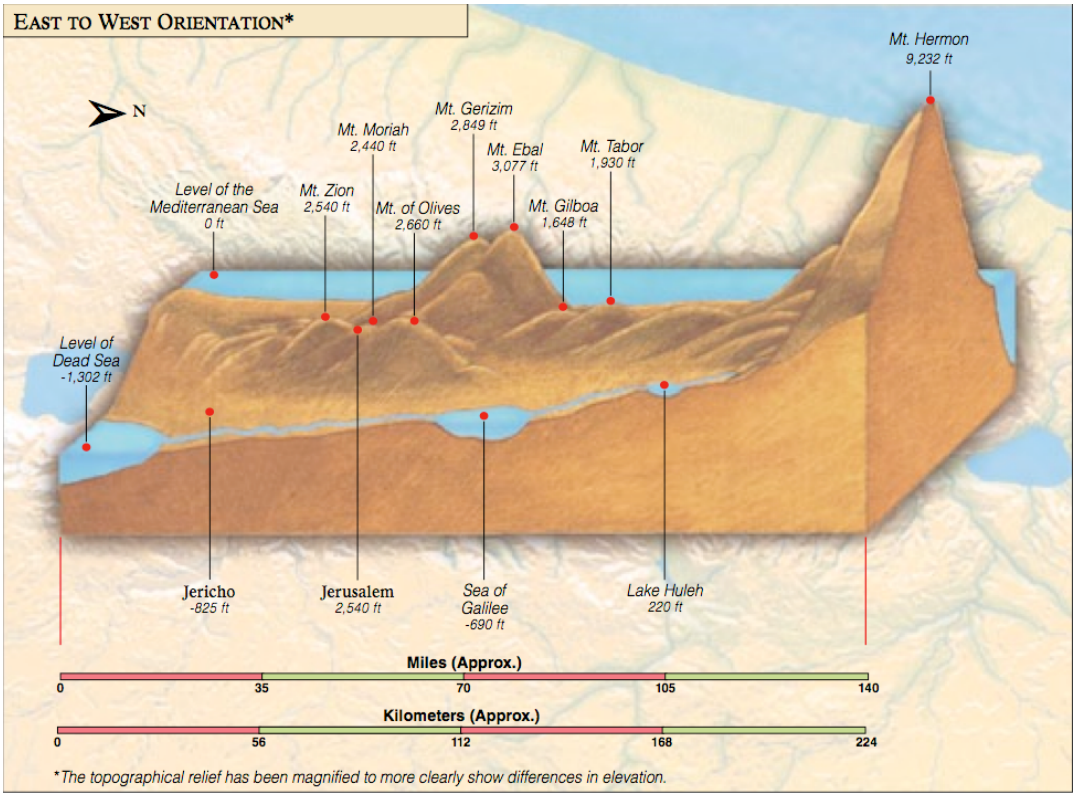
Four maps (http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bible-maps?lang=eng):
- Near East;
- The Kingdom(s) of Judah and Israel;
- Judaea/Palaestina: 15 required items;
- Judaea/Palaestina: contours;

Four timelines (http://ruml.com/thehebrewbible/timelines/):
- Overview: Eras and Precipitating Events;
- Biblical People and Events;
- Biblical Chronology as presented by the Bible Itself (with MBS addendum);
- Chronology of Ideas (Basic)

There are no lecture notes per se for lecture 3. The lecture refers to maps reproduced below and to an interactive timelines which can be accessed at: http://ruml.com/thehebrewbible/timelines/.

PHOENICIA
Litani
Mt. Hermon 9,232 ft
Pharpar
Tyre
Dan
UPPER GALILEE
Huleh Valley
BASHAN
Ptolemais (Accho)
LOWER GALILEE
Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth) -690 ft
Kishon
Mt. Carmel 1,790 ft
Nazareth
Mt. Tabor 1,930 ft
Hill of Moreh
Yarmuk
Valley of Jezreel (Esdraelon)
Megiddo
Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea)
Mt. Gilboa 1,648 ft
SAMARIA
GILEAD
Plain of Sharon
Samaria
Mt. Ebal 3,077 ft
Mt. Gerizim 2,849 ft
Jordan River
Jabbok
Joppa
Aijalon
Rabbah (Amman)
Gilgal
Jericho
Plains of Moab
Sorek
Ashdod
Ekron
Jerusalem
Mt. of Olives 2,660 ft
Elah
Bethlehem
Mt. Nebo 2,630 ft
AMMON
Ashkelon
Plain of Philistia
Shephelah
JUDEA
Gaza
Lachish
Hebron
Dead Sea (Salt Sea) -1,302 ft
Wilderness of Judea
Arnon
Gerar
MOAB
Beersheba
Besor
IDUMEA
Zered
Arabah
Negev
EDOM
Miles
0 10 20 30
Kilometers
0 16 32 48

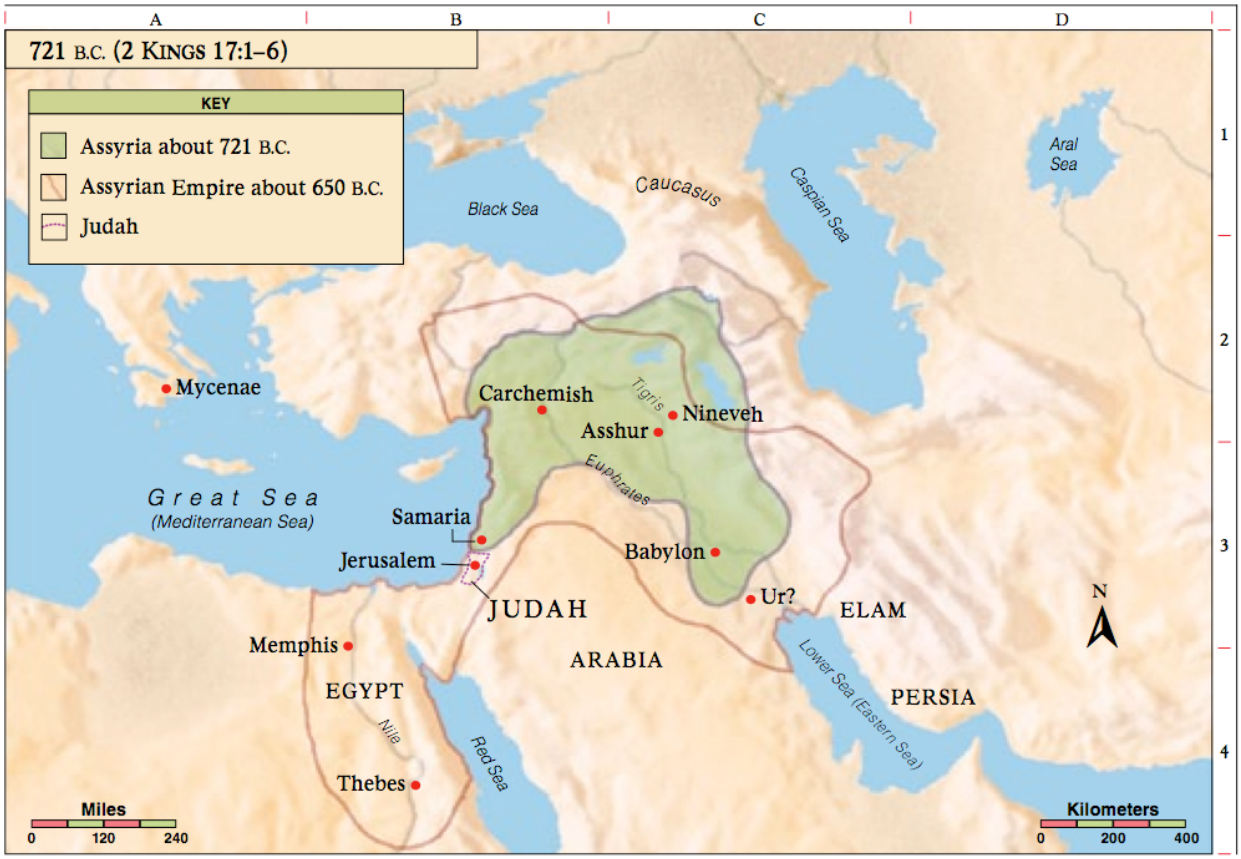

SOUTH TO NORTH ORIENTATION*
N
Rabbah (Amman) 3,530 ft
Jerusalem 2,540 ft
Eastern Tablelands of Trans-Jordan
Level of the Mediterranean Sea 0 ft
The Shephelah about 1,240 ft
Jericho -825 ft
Judean Hill Country 2,000–3,000 ft
Level of Dead Sea -1,302 ft
Bottom of Dead Sea -2,680 ft
Miles (Approx.)
0 20 40 60 80
Kilometers (Approx.)
0 32 64 96 128


EAST TO WEST ORIENTATION*
N
Mt. Hermon
9,232 ft
Mt. Gerizim
2,849 ft
Mt. Moriah
2,440 ft
Mt. Ebal
3,077 ft
Mt. Tabor
1,930 ft
Level of the Mediterranean Sea
0 ft
Mt. Zion
2,540 ft
Mt. of Olives
2,660 ft
Mt. Gilboa
1,648 ft
Level of Dead Sea
-1,302 ft
Jericho
-825 ft
Jerusalem
2,540 ft
Sea of Galilee
-690 ft
Lake Huleh
220 ft
Miles (Approx.)
0
35
70
105
140
Kilometers (Approx.)
0
56
112
168
224
*The topographical relief has been magnified to more clearly show differences in elevation.

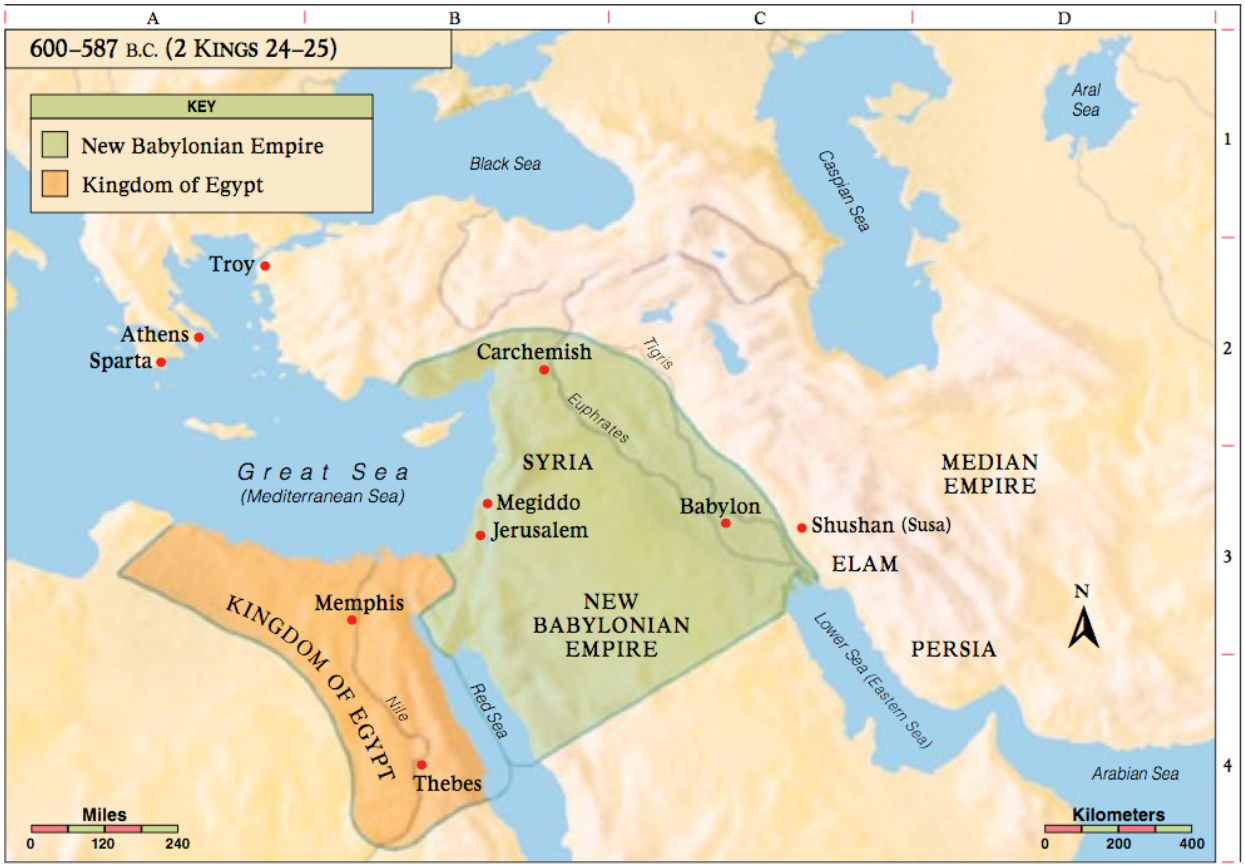
KEY
Boundary of the empire at its greatest height
Territory conquered by David
Kingdom at height of Saul's reign
ARAM-DAMASCUS
Mt. Hermon
PHOENICIA
Tyre
Dan
Hazor
ARGOB
Accho
Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee)
GESHUR
Mt. Carmel
Mt. Tabor
Dor
Megiddo
Jezreel
Ramoth-gilead
Beth-shan
Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea)
Mt. Ebal
Mt. Gerizim
Shechem
Succoth
Jabbok
ISRAEL
Jordan River
Joppa
Shiloh
AMMON
Bethel
Jericho
Gilgal
Heshbon
Gezer
Gibeah
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Mt. Nebo
Bethlehem
Medeba
Ashkelon
Gath
PHILISTIA
Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
Gaza
Lachish
Hebron
En-gedi
Arnon
Ziklag?
Arad
Beersheba
MOAB
Zered
AMALEK
Kadesh-barnea
Bozrah
EDOM
Arabah

Byblos
Beirut
Sidon
Tyre
SIZU
ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
Damascus
PHOENICIAN STATES
Acre
KINGDOM OF ARAM-DAMASCUS
Mediterranean Sea
Umm el-Amed
KINGDOM OF ISRAEL
Samaria
Shechem
Jezreel
ARAMEAN TRIBES
Jaffa
Beit El
KINGDOM OF AMMON
Rabbath-Ammon
Jericho
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Lachish
Ashkelon
Dibon
Hebron
PHILISTINE STATES
Gaza
KINGDOM OF JUDAH
KINGDOM OF MOAB
Beersheba
ARABU TRIBES
NABATU TRIBES
KINGDOM OF EDOM
Petra

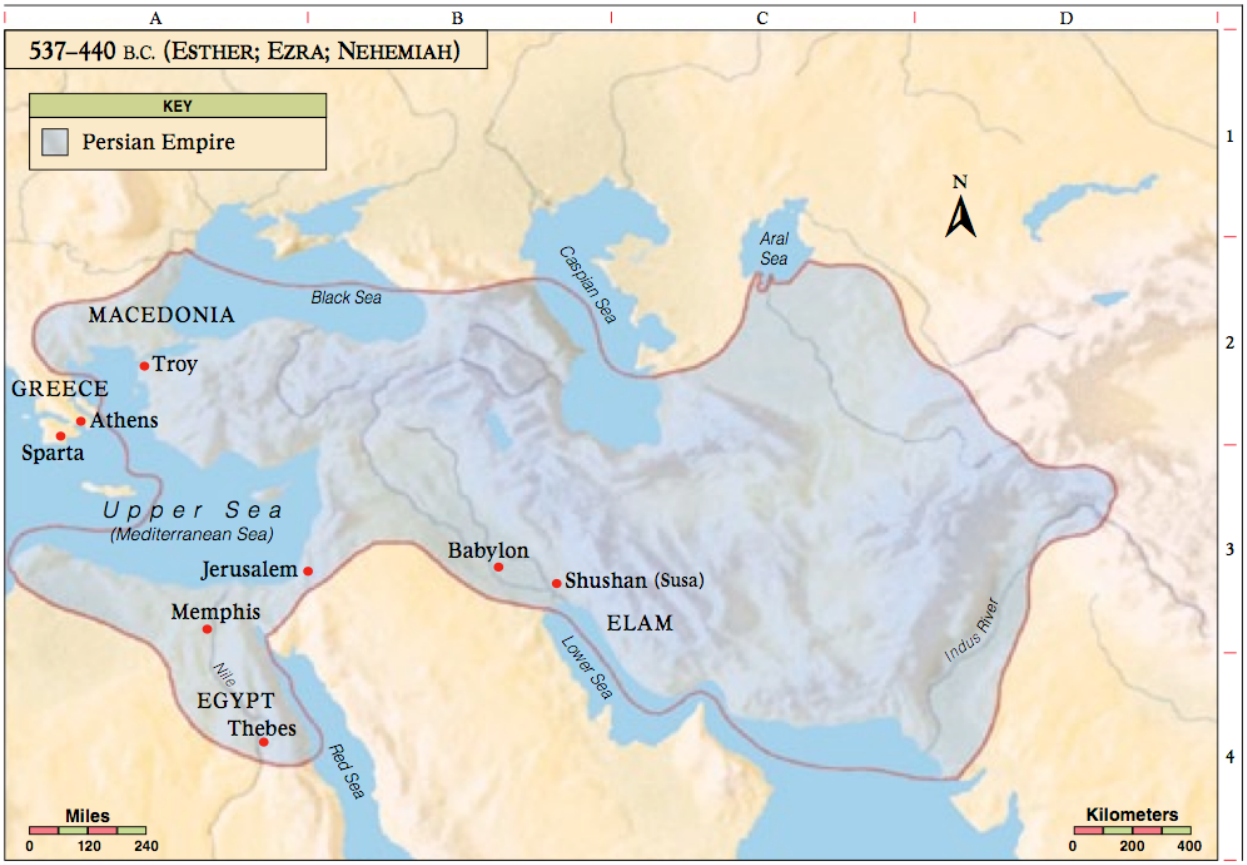
5. The Assyrian Empire



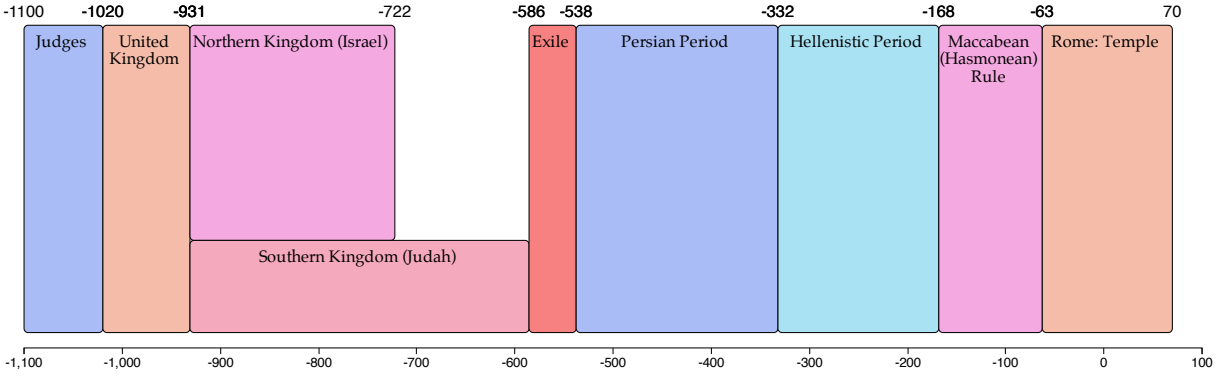
6. The New Babylonian Empire and the Kingdom of Egypt



7. The Persian Empire



CB39: The Hebrew Bible: Overview Timeline: Eras and Precipitating Events ☐ ShowDates ☑ Show All



1100 BCE isn't a firm date: by scholarly convention, the Exodus occurred (if at all) about 1200 with Joshua's conquest of Caanan 40 years later. So, 1100 seems to be a reasonable nominal date for the start of the period of **Judges**.

In **1020 BCE** (more or less) the monarchy began with the anointment of **Saul** as King by Samuel (followed by **David** and **Solomon**).

In **931 BCE**, on the death of **Solomon**, his son and successor declined to lighten the heavy taxation imposed by his father and the ten northern tribes broke away to become the Kingdom of Israel. The remaining two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) remained loyal to the Davidic house and formed the southern kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah.

In **722 BCE**, Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom and forced the people to resettle elsewhere. Many fled to the Southern Kingdom but the others remain unaccounted for.

In **587 BCE**, Babylonia under **King Nebuchadnezzar II** conquered the Southern Kingdom and destroyed the Temple. The elites had been sent into exile in Babylon ten years earlier (-597).

In **539 BCE**, the Persians under **Cyrus** conquered Babylonia and in the following year Cyrus' famous edict gave permission to the Judeans to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple.

In **334/332 BCE**, **Alexander** the Great conquered Judaea while passing through on his way to Persia and points east. When he died ten years later (-323), Judaea became part of the Egyptian empire of the Ptolemies. In **200 BCE** it came under the control of the Seleucid Empire.

In **168 BCE**, the **Maccabean Revolt** began. It eventually established the first independent government in over 400 years.

In **63 BCE**, the Roman Army conquered Judea and in 37 BCE installed **Herod the Great** as client king; he was a great builder and dramatically enlarged and refurbished the Second Temple (d. 4 BCE).

In **70 CE**, the Romans ended the First Jewish War (66-70) by sacking Jerusalem and destroying the Temple.

Lecture 4: The Two Creation Stories.

Reading: Genesis chapters 1-3.

- Gen 1-2:3 First creation account, climaxing in the Sabbath;
- Gen 2:4—3:24 Second creation account, climaxing in the expulsion from the Garden of Eden; [first rebellion in a series of rebellions against God; see next lecture]

Creation stories world-wide (flood stories too as we shall see) generally feature either copulation or battle, esp. between monsters, or both.

- Relics of mythological creation story elsewhere in the Bible; mysterious [sea] monsters; creation of world and end-time restoration involve beating back the forces of chaos:
  - *Rahav:* Isaiah 51:9 [book of Isaiah, chapter 51, verse 9]; Psalm 87:4, 89:11; Job 9:13, 26:12;
  - *Yam* ("Sea"): Isaiah 50:2, 51:10; Psalm 74:13; Job 7:12;
  - *Leviathan* and *Tanin* ("Dragon"): Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:14.
- These texts might be thought to support a theory of "cosmic dualism" in which the sea-monsters play the role later played by Satan, but probably not. Serious question whether this is "theology" or "literature".

In contrast: Genesis 1 ("P") and 2 ("J) are non-mythological, perhaps anti-mythological.

- Mythological relics:
- *tehom*, "the deep," "the waters" in 1:2;
  - Note correct translation of 1:1-2; not "In the beginning God created" but "When God began to create";
  - Note all the nouns in 1:2 – whence do all these entities come?
- *taninim*, "dragons," in 1:21;
- Plural in 1:26 (*let us make Adam in our image*) which reminds us of the ANE idea of council of Gods;
  - Later Jews and Christians: the passage refers to God and his angels. But when and where did God create angels?
- In Genesis 2-3: we have folklore relics more than mythological relics (Kugel): magic garden and magic trees and talking snakes;
- God is masculine [and plural!] but sexless [in spite of some gendered-images of God, e.g. Isaiah 42:13-14, juxtaposition of male and female image].

Compare and contrast Genesis 1 ("P") and 2-3 ("J").
Documentary hypothesis in its various forms clearest in the book of Genesis: see Kugel;

- Reminder: it is just a hypothesis, an approach by which to explain some puzzling features of the biblical text.

Genesis 1 ('P"); God creates through speech; through separation/making distinct; and the mysterious verb *bara'* "create";
Genesis 2-3 ("J") is less "philosophical" God is a master craftsman; creating not through speech but through artifice; no *bara'*.

The God of "J" (YHWH or YHWH-Elohim) is *anthropomorphic* [having human shape] and *anthropopathic* [having human emotions]; the God of P (Elohim) is neither.

The point of the P creation story is to explain the Sabbath; see Exodus 20:10; see Kugel;
The point of the J creation story is to explain why human society is structured the way it is: an *etiological* tale:

- why working the soil is so difficult;
- why bearing children is so difficult;
- why women are subservient to their husbands;
- why snakes don't have feet;
- why humans wear clothes;
- why men desire women (etiology explicit at 2:24).

Major contrasts of the two versions re creation of Adam:

- At the end of creation (P) or at the beginning (J);
- Male and female together (P) or male first, female second (J);
- Male and female in the image of God (P).

Why does Israel's sacred book open with this material? Probably because of its strong moral focus. A universal God who demands righteousness from all creatures and punishes them when they fail.

- God the creator a prominent theme in the Bible; see esp. Isaiah 45; Job 38-41; Psalm 104; Proverbs 8. The theme of these passages is the universality of God's rule and God's moral order.
- At what point Israelite monotheism reached this conception is debatable; perhaps not until the exilic period.
- Throughout the Bible: God uses natural phenomena (rain, drought, plague) to reward the righteous and punish the wicked.
- Morality tales continue in Genesis (see next Lecture).

Lecture 5: The Primeval History.

Reading: Genesis chapters 1-11:

- Gen 1 First creation account, climaxing in the Sabbath;
- Gen 2-3 Second creation account, climaxing in the expulsion from the Garden of Eden; [**first rebellion against God**];
- Gen 4 Murder of Abel by his brother Cain and Cain's punishment; [**second rebellion against God**];
- Gen 5: the "begats": ten generations from Adam to Noah;
- Gen 6:1-8 Evil in the world, miscegenation of divine beings with the daughters of Adam; **[third rebellion against God**];
- Gen 6:9-8:14 Noah and the Great Flood;
- Gen 8:15-9:29 aftermath of the great flood; God's pledge not to bring another flood; God's instructions to humanity;
  - Gen 9:8-17 God's covenant (*berit)* with Noah and his descendants;
  - Gen 9:19-27 Noah, Ham, and Canaan;
- Gen 10 repopulating the earth;
- Gen 11:1-9 the Tower of Babel [**fourth rebellion against God**];
- Gen 11:10-32 more "begats": ten generations from Noah to Abraham.

Sequence of episodes, not an organic history.

A series of rebellions against God (three of the four told only by J), each resulting in divine punishment: rebellions 1, 2, and 4 result in exile or banishment; rebellion 3 results in the flood.

- God punishes Cain, and the generation of Noah for violating laws that were never stated. The narrator assumes that God can hold people responsible to an inherent or self-evident morality:
  - Adam and Eve violated a law that had been given to them – not to eat of the fruit; not so here;
  - After the flood (9:1-7) Noah receives instructions from God for the new society; murder of humans is prohibited, but killing animals is permitted.

Later readers found in these rebellions hints as to the origins of evil (after all, creation is "good" or "very good" in Gen 1; whence evil?); see Kugel.

- The serpent = Satan; Cain = Satan; fallen angels of Gen 6 are the brood of Satan.
- Cain story was moved here (Kugel) to explain how a good creation goes bad.
- But not likely that this was the original function of these stories; no cosmic dualism here.
- These are morality tales focusing on the righteousness of God.

Observations on the Four Rebellions.

Rebellion 1: Adam and Eve in the Garden.
New England Primer (1777) "In ADAM'S Fall, We sinned all."
But etiological ending of the story says nothing about fallen state of humanity; life is hard and humans are mortal (as are all other creatures). Whether Adam was meant to be immortal, not clear; if he was, what then was the point of the tree of life?

Rebellion 2: Cain and Abel.
Eternal conflict between farmers and ranchers/herders.
God prefers the sacrifice of Abel because God prefers meat.
Divine curse of Cain (4:11-12) resembles divine curse of Adam (3:17-19).
Cain is cursed to wander but he founds a city (4:17); probably a commentary on urban crime.
Whom did Cain marry?

Rebellion 3: Miscegenation and the Flood.
Flood story:

- Found in many cultures (see Kugel);
- Biblical flood story seems to have strong connections with the ancient Babylonian flood story from the epic of Gilgamesh (see Kugel);
  - Most striking is the parallel to Gen 8:21: God smelling the sweet savor of Noah's sacrifice;
  - But the Biblical story is a morality tale; not so Gilgamesh.
- Biblical account seems to be a combination of two parallel versions (see next lecture);

Background to the flood is the story of divine-human miscegenation;

- This seems mythological, a relic of a much longer story;
- Other such relics in the Torah: Exodus 4:24-26 (circumcision); Serah daughter of Asher (Genesis 46:17, Numbers 26:46); Genesis 48:22 seems to allude to a story that we don't have.

Genesis 9:8-17: God enters into a covenant with Noah, and the covenant has a sign (rainbow); note parallel with Genesis 17 (covenant and sign with Abraham).

Rebellion 4: Tower of Babel.
Certainly of Mesopotamian provenance; cf. flood.

Features of interest:
God's instructions to Noah after the flood (9:1-7) ("P").
Curse of Ham and Canaan (9:18-27) ("J").

Lecture 6: A Closer Look at the Flood Story.

Reading: Richard E. Friedman, at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/flood.html (be certain to click on "launch interactive" about halfway down); reread Genesis 6-9 (can you see the seams?).

Topics:

- Why did the animals die? (What about fish?)
- "Pure" and "impure" animals (7:2; 8:20) - cf. Leviticus 11:47.
- On the prohibition of eating blood (9:4), cf. Leviticus 17:10-14.
- Are you convinced by Friedman's analysis? Do you see two version s of the same story woven together? or, perhaps, a narrator who, for his own stylistic reasons, goes back and forth in his story-telling?
- Should pious believers continue to send expeditions to Mt. Ararat in Armenia to search for remains of Noah's ark?

	Modern Bible Scholars (MBS)	**Traditionalists**
Working assumption	The Torah should be read like any other text.	The Torah is a unitary composition.
Contradictions and inconsistencies;	Evidence of "seams" between sources.	Require interpretation; contradictions and inconsistencies are only apparent, not real.
different names of God (YHWH vs. Elohim)	Evidence of different sources ("J" vs. "P" or "E").	Synonymous; focus on different qualities of God.
Sources	Sources can be reconstructed; in the case of the flood narrative, "J" and "P".	There are no sources; "J" and "P" are figments of the imagination.
Sources	The date and social location of the sources are debated by scholars, but can be reconstructed.	There are no sources.
The Torah as we have it	Put together by a "redactor," but the work of the redactor has not obliterated the evidence for multiple sources.	There was no redactor; no evidence of multiple sources.
The flood story Genesis 6-8	Two distinct parallel stories stitched together to create a single narrative.	One organic unitary composition.

[The following pages were prepared by the teaching fellows to accompany the debate which is part of Lecture 6]

Introduction (Documentary Hypothesis): When we look closely at the flood story, we discover that the story has a very surprising history. Originally, there were two separate flood stories, written down at different times on two different scrolls. Each of these stories--one composed by an author we call J (for Yahwist) and another composed by an author we call P (for Priestly author)--was considered a sacred book, but each had a different flood narrative. Later, a third person, whom we call the redactor (R), decided to combine these two narratives. Although the stories contradicted each other, R felt he (probably not she) could not change them because of their sacred status. How do we know this?

1. **Repetitions**: The story as we have it repeats itself awkwardly, but when we separate the story into two sources, this awkward style disappears.
    a. God commands Noah to get into the ark twice.

P	**J**
" . . . you shall enter the ark . . ." (6:18)	
	"Go into the ark . . . " (7:1)

    b. God commands Noah to gather animals twice.

P	**J**
"Of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark . . ." (6:19)	
	"Of every clean animal take seven pairs . . . every animal that is not clean two . . . " (7:2)

    c. Noah follows God's commands--to get into the ark and gather animals--twice.

P	**J**
"Noah did so; just as God commanded him (Hebrew: according to all that God commanded him) so he did)." (6:22)	
	"And Noah did just as the LORD commanded him (Hebrew: according to all that the LORD commanded him)." (7:5)

    d. Other repetitions: God "sees" human wickedness twice (6:12 [P]; 6:5 [J]), God states his intention to destroy mankind twice (6:13 [P]; 6:7 [J]), the reason Noah is spared is stated twice (6:9 [P] 6:8; 7:1 [J]), God announces a coming flood twice (6:12 [P], 7:4 [J]), the beginning of rain is described twice (7:11 [P]; 7:12 [J]), the death of animals is mentioned twice (7:21 [P], 7:22 [J]), the end of rain is described twice (8:2 [P] 8:2 [J]), the recession of the waters is described twice (8:3 [P]; 8:3 [J]), the completely dry earth is described twice (8:14 [P]; 8:13 [J]), God promises not to send a similar

judgment again twice (9:11; 9:15 [P]; 8:21-21 [J]).

We see this in no other major literature.

I would agree completely that from a modern standpoint these repetitions are problematic aesthetically. No good modern author will repeat herself/himself nearly so often. But is it fair to judge an ancient text by such standards--a text that was undoubtedly written to please a different aesthetic sensibility? More particularly, it is counter-intuitive to conclude from the repetitions themselves that their origin must be in separate documents. According to your model, Gen 1.1-2.4 is all ONE document, yet it is one of the most obnoxiously repetitious portions of the whole Bible! *God said blah blah blah, and then blah blah blah happened. And then it was morning, and then it was evening. God saw that it was good.* Are these monotonous examples from a putative *single* source somehow less repetitive than what you quote above about God *telling* Noah that he would someday go into the ark, and then God *commanding* Noah to go into the ark?

Elsewhere repetition is understood by MBS-s to be a sign that disparate passages are part of the same source, not as here, a sign of the conflation of two different sources. Consider, Gen 1.26-27 next to Gen 5:1-2. The DH understands both of these to be P. Yet, it repeats the same content with slightly different wording. According to your logic ought Gen 5.1-2 not be YET ANOTHER source, because it repeats information already given, not a continuation of a first one? The criterion of "repetition" as an indication of difference sources is inconsistently applied--sometimes it is an example of the continuity of sources and other times it is of discontinuity. What is the controlling principle?

1a. God's first "command" to Noah to enter the ark (6:18) is actually part of longer narrative sequence in which God lays out what he is going to do; sort of like how a pilot talks about his flight plan before takeoff. (The argument of MBS here is tantamount to saying that the pilot discussing his flight plan is no different than the flight itself.) Noah's entering the ark is just part of God's larger plan, which He discloses to Noah before the calamity begins (using an indicative verb). The actual command (with attendant verb) comes in 7:1. The same goes for (1b) with regard to the collecting of the various animals.

1c. According to Rashi, the same verb may be used in both verses, but each describes a separate action. In the first verse, it describes Noah assembling the ark, while in the second verse, it describes Noah entering the ark.

2. **Contradictions:** The story as we have it contains a number of contradictions, but when we separate the story into two sources, the contradictions disappear.

a. Dates and Time Periods

P	**J**
Flood begins: 2nd month, 17th day (7:11)	
	Rain falls for 40 days (7:12)
Flood increases for 150 days (7:18)	
Flood finishes: 7th month, 17th day (8:3-4)	
The waters recede enough for the mountains to be visible: 10th month, 1st day (8:5)	
	At the end of 40 days, Noah opens window of ark (8:6)

Notice in particular that we have two different accounts of how long the rain lasted (described using "floodgates of the sky" in P and described as "rain" in J):

P	**J**
	"The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights." (7:11)
"And when the waters had swelled on the earth one hundred and fifty days . . . the floodgates of the sky were stopped up . . . " (7:24; 8:2)	
	" . . . and the rain from the sky was held back 8:2"

b. **Animals**

P	**J**
"And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark . . . " (6:19)	
	"Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and its mate" (7:2)
"Of the clean animals, of the animals that are not clean, of the birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, two of each, male and female, came to Noah into the ark, as God had commanded Noah." (7:8-9)	
"They came to Noah into the ark, two each of all flesh in which there was the breath of life (7:15)	

I'll admit that the concatenation of numbers here regarding the duration of the Flood is confusing. But the examples you have offered cannot properly be understood as contradictions. A contradiction is: *the car is blue. the car is red.* These are clearly not the same car. In example A you are not describing a contradiction. Anybody who's ever seen a flood, knows that "flood" and "rain" are not coterminous. The start of rain in a particular location has little to do with when flooding starts in that location. Similarly, it is not as though flooding immediately subsides as soon as rain stops falling. When the southern Mississippi or Ohio Rivers flood after an afternoon of heavy rainfall somewhere upriver, it can take days and weeks for the waters to subside. That is what these putative sources are describing with their "contradictory" numbers. The duration of rainfall and the duration of the flood.

Regarding the numbers and kinds of each animal, is it not better to assume that there is a clarification here, not a contradiction? Since most wild animals are "unclean" does it not make sense to generalize the instruction as "one pair of each kind" and then in the less common case of clean animals fit for sacrifice to provide further clarification that seven of each clean pair be preserved in the ark. This was also a necessity, because as soon as Noah left the Ark, he made a sacrifice--which would have obliterated one of the mating pairs. (This is also Rashi's solution.)

The extent of these "contradictions" is greatly overstated, and even if we were to permit them, positing four disparate and yet largely parallel original sources mysteriously interwoven by a hypothetical editor hardly requires a much greater suspension of disbelief than the assumption of narrative integrity.

The picture here is complicated for Rashi. On the one hand, the text presents a very complex timeline; on the other hand, Rashi is beholden to an ancient Jewish teaching that it was one full 365 day year from the first rainfall to Noah's exit from the ark. To achieve this count and to , Rashi employs all of the dates and time periods mentioned in the text and harmonizes them into one whole. (See this website for more info.)

Flood begins	Year 600 : 2nd month, 17th day (7:11)
Rainfall	40 days (7:11)
Flood increases for	150 days (7:18)
Noah opens the window	40 days later (8:6)
Three dispatches of the dove	21 days (7 days between each dove)
Noah sees the saturated ground	Year 601: 1st month, 1st day (57 days later)
Flood ends	Year 601 : 2nd month, 27th day (8:14; 57 days later)

3. **Different Terminology.** When use the contradictions and repetitions to isolate separate sources, we find that the separate sources we have isolated also have distinct terminology. This fact that these differences in terminology fit perfectly with the evidence of repetitions and contradictions further confirms our hypothesis.
    - **a. Names for God**
        - i. P: Elohim ("God")
        - ii.J: YHWH ("LORD")
    - b. **Other**
        - i. P: "expired"
        - ii.J: "died"
4. **Consistency with Sources Elsewhere.**
    - a. **Names of God.** According to Exodus 6:3, a text written by P, the name YHWH was not revealed to mankind until the time of Moses. Thus, it makes sense that P does not use the name YHWH in this account, since this is long before Moses. J, on the other hand, uses the name YHWH from the very beginning of his narrative (Gen 2).
    - b. **Animals.** According to J, sacrifices were performed since creation. Thus, J's narrative has seven pairs of pure animals in the ark and concludes with a sacrifice. According to P, sacrifices were only authorized in the time of Moses. Thus, P's narrative has only one pair of each animal in the ark.
    - c. **Depiction of God:** In J God is anthropomorphic and anthropopathic, just like in Genesis 2: He shuts the door on the ark, feels regret, and smells the odor of the sacrifice. In P, God is not depicted in these ways, but instead is more separate from creation.
    - **d. Dates, Measurements.** Throughout the Torah, P tends to give precise dates and detailed measurements. Thus, it makes senses that P includes gives a detailed dating scheme for the flood and detailed instructions for the building of the ark. J, on the other hand, tends to use round numbers and rarely includes long lists of detailed measurements. Thus, it makes sense that J uses the round numbers of "7" and "40" and does not have precise instructions for the ark.
    - **e. Conception of the Universe.** In P, the sky is a "firmament," a solid disk with a heavenly ocean above it. Thus, P describes rain as the opening of the "floodgates of heaven." J, on the other hand, never describes such a firmament and simply describes rain as "rain."

Regarding the names used for the deity of Israel, you are misleading when you say that your hypothetical P uses "Elohim" *God* and that your hypothetical J uses "Yahweh" *LORD*. In fact, J uses Yahweh-Elohim, *LORD GOD*, a combination of the two, not simply one exclusively. Yet you rightly note that there is a difference here, some kind of change. But are there not myriad other places in the Hebrew Bible in which there is free and seemingly meaningless variation between the divine names? For instance in Jonah 4 we find within a span of four verses:

Jonah 4.4: And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah 4.6: The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush.

Jonah 4.7: But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered.

Applying your fragmentarian principles ought we not then attributed each of these actions to different hypothetical sources or perhaps to different deities all together?

Likewise, concerning your observation about the initial revelation of the divine name, Yahweh. In your P source you claim this occurs first in Exodus 6:3. It says there that Yahweh was the deity formerly known as El-Shaddai, *God Almighty* or perhaps *God of the (Two?) Mountains*. If we are to buy into the idea that this is a distinct source, would it not make sense to define the corpus attributed to this "source" according to the very principle it establishes there? Namely, before Ex 6:3 only those scant few places that refer to the deity if Israel as El-Shaddai should be considered part of the source. Should Ex 6:3 represent a line from a distinct source, would it not make better sense for this source's earlier references to God to use the term the "source" itself says it used for God in times gone by?

As an aside, let's look at how we address our venerable lecturer. If you were to address him, you would call him "Professor Cohen," "Professor," or, heaven forbid, "Dr. Cohen." Behind his back, you might call him "Cohen," or perhaps even "Shaye." That there are so many ways to address Professor Cohen does not mean that he has split personalities. And if Professor Cohen has that many names, imagine how many names belong to God!

God's different names certainly bothered Rashi and other ancient commentators. But they found a very elegant way to make sure that the text stayed unified and harmonious. Elohim and YHWH each refer to distinct aspects of God's character. Elohim emphasizes God's power of divine judgment, while YHWH underscores God's mercy. (But this dichotomy is difficult to maintain, and a number of examples in the Flood narrative illustrate this. See, e.g., YHWH said, "I will blot out from the earth the men whom I created" (6:7) – this sounds a lot like a judging and vengeful God than a merciful one. Elohim is likewise associated with God's mercy at the end of the narrative: "Elohim remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided" (8:1). Rashi struggles here with Elohim appearing to take on a compassionate side; his comment on this verse – Elohim is, indeed, the attribute of God's justice, but due to Noah's prayer, He became compassionate.)

Conclusion (Documentary Hypothesis): While any one of the pieces of evidence by itself might not make for a convincing case, the manner in which so many pieces of evidence all point toward the same conclusion makes the documentary hypothesis very compelling.

The evidence compounded by advocates of this theory is stretched beyond the limits of rational and intuitive interpretation. The repetitions, contradictions and tensions enumerated are overplayed and sloppily analyzed, and the basic principles extracted from the evidence are not applied consistently. These repetition and contradiction can both be signs of continuity and discontinuity among these imaginary sources depending on the whims and particular purposes of the interpreter. Surely, there is a better way to read!

For a traditionalist reader like Rashi, the text is only problematic if it hasn't been explained adequately. If the words of the Torah are omnisignificant, there can be no contradictions, doublets, inconsistencies, or editorial sources. Any indication that the latter exist is to the detriment of the interpreter.

Lecture 7: The Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac (and Ishmael); the Aqedah.

Reading: Genesis 12-22; Kugel 89-106, 119-132.

Second part of Genesis is the story of one family, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

Historicity of all these narratives is much debated; is the setting the early second millennium BCE, the ostensible date, or sometime in the first millennium BCE, the apparent date of the authors? Most scholars today, rejecting the legacy of Albright (see Kugel), prefer the second alternative.

Dramatic if unstated transition from Genesis 11 to Genesis 12ff

- Universal → particular.
- God chose Noah because he was righteous (Gen 6:9), but why Abra(ha)m? Text gives not a clue.
- In the text God chooses Abra(ha)m; in later interpretations Abra(ha)m chooses God (see Kugel); famous story about Abraham destroying the idols in his father's workshop.
  - Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness* (KJV and many others) vs. *And because he put his trust in the Lord, He reckoned it to his merit* (JPS in the JSB). For Paul, Abraham is archetype of "faith"; "faith" vs. "trust".

Genesis 12-22:

Gen 12 Abra(ha)m migrates from Haran to the land of Canaan; descent to Egypt;
Gen 13 Abram and Lot;
Gen 14 Abram the warrior;
Gen 15 covenant between God and Abra(ha)m "between the sections";
Gen 16 Abra(ha)m, Sara(i), Hagar, birth and expulsion of Ishmael;
Gen 17 covenant between God and Abraham, circumcision;
Gen 18-19 Abraham and the three visitors; destruction of Sodom; Lot and his daughters;
Gen 20 Abraham and Avimelekh king of Gerar;
Gen 21 birth of Isaac; expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael; covenant with Avimelekh;
Gen 22 the binding (*aqedah)* of Isaac.

Duplications here:

- Wife-sister motif (Gen 12 and 20; cf. 26 re Isaac; at 26:1 the redactor seems to be aware that he is dealing with a duplicate *Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar*);
- Expulsion of Hagar (Gen 16 and 21);
- Naming of Beer Sheva (21:31, 26:33);
- Two covenants (Gen 15 and 17).

Themes within these narratives:

God speaks with the patriarchs who clearly enjoy special status and ease of access to God:

- In 20:7, God tells Avimelekh that Abraham is a "prophet" (*navi*, intercessor) and that Avimelekh should request Abraham to pray for him to God.
- Abraham also intercedes for Sodom.

God appears in a dream to outsiders like Avimelekh (20:3); the moral order applies to them as well.

- Destruction of Sodom.
- The sin of the Amorite in 15:16.

Promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants: 12:7, 13:15, 15:7, 17:8, 24:7:

- Canaan is son of Ham son of Noah (10:6), cursed to serve Shem and Japheth (9:25-27); therefore the Canaanites are not entitled to the land;
- Mysterious motif: we are not of this place. Abraham and the Israelites come to the land from the outside twice-over: from Ur/Haran, and from Egypt.

Covenant (*berit*): a treaty, a compact. God had a covenant with Noah (6:18, 9:8).
Gen 15 "between the sections" (see Kugel) vs. Gen 17 circumcision.

- A covenant between a people and its God is unparalleled anywhere else in the ANE.

Narrators do not make the Patriarchs conform to later Israelite piety:

- build altars everywhere (Kugel);
- Abraham marries his half-sister (20:12; prohibited in Leviticus 18:9);
- Jacob erects a sacred pillar (28:18, 35:14), prohibited in Leviticus 26:1 and Deuteronomy 16:21
- Jacob marries two sisters (prohibited in Leviticus 18:18).
- Aside from circumcision (Gen 17) and removal of foreign gods (35:2-4), distinctive Israelite practices (e.g. Sabbath, food laws [cf. Gen 32:33]) are not mentioned.
- Is this a good argument for the date of these narratives (Kugel)?

Gen 22: a polemic against child sacrifice?

Lecture 8: The Patriarchs: Isaac, Jacob (and Esau), and Joseph.

Reading: Genesis 25-33; 37, 39-50; Kugel 133-162, 176-197. [Note that the Joseph story has a literary unity and polish that the earlier patriarchal stories do not have.]
Topics:

- the twelve sons of Israel;
- the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Ephraim -- a study in contrasts;
- Genesis 49:10 - one of the most cryptic verses in the Torah;
- Joseph --the first assimilated Israelite.

General pattern in the narratives of Genesis:

- Anonymous; the Torah does not claim to be the work of Moses;
  - ✦ All narratives in the Bible are anonymous;
- Omniscient narrator; knows what God said; knows private conversations of characters, etc.

A series of discrete episodes strung along a narrative frame; not a story so much as a series of stories.

- The order can be changed without consequence;
- Few references from one story to the other;
- Two good examples of self-contained stories: Gen 34 and 38 (both of which we are skipping).

Big exception to this is the Joseph story, which runs from chapter 37-50 (with some inserted material like Gen 38; 46:8-27; 49) which is a single sustained story.

Themes and Patterns

Barren matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, [Hannah mother of Samuel in 1 Samuel 1] [evoked by prophets like Isaiah 54:1] – message seems to be mercy/power of God.

Younger son ousts/takes precedence over the elder:

- Isaac replaces Ishmael (25:5):
  - Different mothers: Sarah vs Hagar;
  - (remarkable how little is told about Isaac);
- Jacob replaces Esau:
  - Twins! Same mother!
  - Storyteller seems defensive about Jacob acquiring Esau's birthright; does so three times (oracle delivered to Rebecca Gen 25:19-26; lentils 25:29-34; Jacob steals the blessing (26);
  - Perhaps reinforces the covenant idea that the link between Israel and God is not natural but constructed;
  - Jacob is trickster hero; narrator has some sympathy for Esau;
  - Ishmael and Esau are not part of Israelite sacred history; they are the ancestors of neighboring peoples; but all twelve of Jacob's sons, even the sons of the maidservants, are (see Kugel)– why the shift?
- Joseph lords over his brothers;
- Ephraim gains over Menasseh (48);
- [Moses is the leader, not the older brother Aaron];
- [David is the leader, not his older brothers].

Power of blessing [and curse]:

- Noah's curse of Ham and Canaan (9);
- Isaac's blessing of Jacob [Esau]: Isaac blesses the "wrong" son (27);
- Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Menasseh: Jacob blesses the "wrong" son (48);
- Jacob's blessing of the 12 sons (49).

Sometimes the sons are individuals, sometimes they are the eponymous ancestors of tribes or peoples (see Kugel):

- Offspring of Ishmael are [Arab] tribes (25:16);
- Rebecca's oracle re her two sons (25);
- "Children of Israel" = people of Israel (32:33; cf. 34:7);
- Esau is Edom (25:30; 36:1);
- Blessing of Jacob: Ephraim and Menasseh (48);
- Jacob's blessing of twelve sons = tribes (49):

- ✦ Reuben loses primogeniture; tribe of Reuben is a weak tribe (49:4 referring to 35:22);
- ✦ Simeon and Levi are punished (49:5-7 referring to c. 34); both are weak tribes except that Levi, through a process unknown to us, becomes the priestly tribe (a development as yet unknown to Gen 49);
- ✦ Judah is the "royal" tribe;
- ✦ Joseph is the prosperous tribe.

Joseph narrative or novella:

Explains how the Israelites came to Egypt.

Beautifully told story; everyone's favorite scene: Joseph coming out to his brothers (Gen 45:1-4):

- There are occasional bumps in the story: who sold Joseph into slavery: the Midianites (37:36)? The Ishmaelites (37:25-28; 39:1)? The brothers (45:4-5)? Who pleaded with the brothers not to kill Joseph: Reuben (37:22) or Judah (37:26)?

Prominence of dreams and dream-interpretation; these are the skills of a sage.

Joseph as cultural hero: responsible for the land-tax system of Egypt (47:13-26).

Divine control of history (esp. Gen 45:7-8, 50:12) – this is stated by Joseph the character, not by the narrator.

A courtier story, from slave to prisoner to viceroy of Egypt; model for Esther and Daniel – is this the actual date of origin of the tale?

An assimilated Israelite: gets an Egyptian name and an Egyptian wife, the names of his children show he is prospering in Egypt, hides his identity …

Lecture 9: The Exodus.

Reading: Exodus 1-15; Kugel 198-232.

Topics:

- Is the Exodus a historical event? (does it matter? Does it matter to Kugel?)
- What is the message of the Exodus narrative as a whole?
- Why did Moses need to bring ten plagues against the Egyptians – couldn't God have taken care of them all at once?
- Why did God harden the pharaoh's heart?

Exodus 1-15:

1 Enslavement of the Israelites; two Israelite midwives;
2 Birth of Moses, flight to Midian from Egypt;
3-4 Commissioning of Moses at the burning bush;
5-11 various confrontations of Moses with Pharaoh and conversations of Moses with God; plagues;
12 the institution of Pesah sacrifice; the deaths of the first-born;
13-14 flight from Egypt; the miracle at the Red/Reed sea;
15 The Song of Moses (and Miriam).

Two poles around which (some)(much) biblical theology revolves: creation vs. Exodus:

- the rationales for the Sabbath in the ten commandments, Exodus 20 (creation) vs. Deuteronomy 5 (Exodus);
- In the wake of the destruction of 587 BCE: Jeremiah sees God's redemptive act in terms of the Exodus, II Isaiah in terms of creation.

Historicity of Exodus narrative (much debated: see Kugel):

- Some elements of local Egyptian color (notably Israelite names, including Moses) in the Exodus narrative;
- *Hapiru* (immigrant workers in Egyptian texts) seems to be related to Hebrew *ivri* ("Hebrew"), which is used in the Bible mostly in Egyptian contexts (Kugel);
  - The *Hyksos* (invaders who take over Egypt for two centuries or so) are too early to be the "real" Israelites, even if later Egyptian writers conflate them.
- Still, no archaeological smoking gun, and no clear reference to Israelites in Egypt or to the miraculous departure of 600,000 slaves;
- Commonly encountered argument: who would make up such a story;
- Cf. story that Abra(ha)m migrates from Mesopotamia;
- Common view of MBS: *some* tribes/groups/clans that would later go on to join the Israelites told stories of their miraculous departure from Egypt; the story of these few became the story of the many. Most Israelites were actually of Canaanite stock; their ancestors did not participate in an Exodus from Egypt;
- Israelites did not build the pyramids!!!

Themes in the narrative:

God is the God of history, for both Israelites and non-Israelites alike.

Striking that morality/sin/punishment are not the driving force of the plot here:

- All is scripted: Genesis 15:13-14 [13]And He said to Abram, "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years; [14]but I will execute judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end they shall go free with great wealth.
- Similar statement at burning bush: Exodus 3:19-21;
- God remembers the covenant 2:24 6:5;

- Repeated references to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart;
- This is not "exile."

Why then does God need the plagues?

- To show off, to convince the Egyptians and the Israelites 10:1-2 [1]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh. For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his courtiers, in order that I may display these My signs among them, [2]and that you may recount in the hearing of your sons and of your sons' sons how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I displayed My signs among them—in order that you may know that I am the LORD."
- Pharaoh says "I do not know the Lord" (5:2). Let Pharaoh know! (7:5 14:2 14:18).
  - ✦ Israelite recognition of God implies exclusivity in the Torah's view; not so recognition by non-Israelites;
  - ✦ There were some Egyptians who feared the word of the Lord (9:20).

The "ten plagues":

- Nowhere said to be ten;
- Nowhere called plagues (*makkot*); they are signs (*otot*) or wonders (*mofetim*);
- The plague narratives are combined from different sources and form various patterns; see note in JSB on 7:14 p. 117;
- Long history of rationalizations; these attempts do not defend the text as much as they undo it (Kugel).

Exodus 12: history of *Pesah* (Passover) sacrifice:

- Sacrifice of the first born seems to be at the bottom of this;
- Replaced (??) by sacrifice of lamb or goat;
- Family feast, but its apotropaic quality is still evident in the blood manipulations;
- Gets combined with *matzah* (unleavened bread) festival, apparently agrarian, origins and meaning not clear;
- Eating of *matzah* gets historicized (12:39);
- Later in "D" becomes a pilgrimage festival (Deut 16:1-8).

Exodus 15: song of the sea: song of Moses, and song of Miriam (15:21):

- An ancient piece of poetry that may not be in complete agreement with the prose narrative that comes before it (Kugel);
- Cf. Gen 49 and Judges 5.

Lecture 10: Revelation at Sinai; Decalogue; Laws.

Reading: Exodus 19-24; the three Decalogues: Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, Exodus 34; Kugel 240-279.

Topics:

- What is the significance of the Decalogue?
- What is "the book of the covenant"?
- How do the different versions of the Decalogue differ from each other?

Two climaxes to the exodus from Egypt:

- passage of the Red/Reed Sea (Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea);
- Covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments).

The Ten Words or perhaps "The Ten Revelations" (Exodus 34:28, Deut 4:13, 10.4) = Decalogue:

- "Ten Commandments" is not a biblical phrase;
- Stipulation of the rules governing the treaty (= covenant) between the suzerain (God) and the vassal (Israel) (Kugel);
- Chosen people idea 19:1-6 (from D?);
- The text clearly implies that these laws are special: only these were accompanied by thunder and lightning, only these (or some subset) are revealed to the entire people without Mosaic intermediation;
  - Later Jewish readers (see Kugel) understood these ten as headings or rubrics that encompass all the laws of the Torah; some modern scholars have suggested that the laws of the book of Deuteronomy (which otherwise seem to be entirely random and in a random order) are in fact expansions of these ten in order.

The Decalogue – indeed all the laws of the Torah – contains laws that are:

- common or standard in many societies including the ANE (honor parents, prohibition of murder, theft, adultery);
  - Not "thou shalt not kill" but "thou shalt not murder";
- laws that are unique to Israel (exclusivity of the worship of God; Sabbath).

The Torah does not classify its laws:

- Medieval Jewish philosophers will distinguish *rational* laws from *revelatory* laws and will try to classify the commandments under various schemes;
- The Torah provides no headings or rubrics; no separation between civil, criminal, public, or cultic law, or what we would call "ethics"; see Leviticus 19 (ascribed by MBS to P or H) for a spectacular example.

Different versions of the Decalogue, Exodus vs. Deuteronomy:

- Usual assumption is that Deut revises Exod; Deut replaces creation of the world with the exodus from Egypt as the rationale for the Sabbath -- why?
- MBS try to reconstruct a shorter version of the Decalogue at the basis of both versions;
  - Demand for exclusive worship of the one God seems to have been the innovation of the prophets in the 8th centuries BCE so our version of the Decalogue would postdate them.
- Does Exodus 34 contain yet another Decalogue (usually called "ritual Decalogue")?

Different ways of counting the ten words/commandments (see notes in JSB);

- Jewish counting takes "I am the Lord your God" as a "commandment" which seems unlikely; various Christian traditions split "You shall not covet" into two commandments which also seems unlikely.

Decalogue is immediately followed by a series of laws that modern scholars call the Covenant Code; much of this is common to the great law codes of the ANE (Kugel). This fact seems to bother Kugel a great deal and I'm not sure why.

The Israelites have "Israelized" the law of the ANE just as they naturalized the flood story, converting it to a morality story; three important postulates:

- God himself legislates; elsewhere in the ANE kings legislate (Kugel) just as in Deuteronomy Moses speaks in the first-person singular;
  - ancient Israel develops the idea that the king is beholden to the law (Deut 17:14-20).
- Equality before the law, at least in civil and criminal law; no favoritism shown to upper classes as in ANE (but this does not diminish the reality of slavery);
- Only the perpetrator suffers for his crime, and s/he suffers commensurately:
  - *Lex talionis* ("the law of retaliation," Exodus 21:23-25): the point in context that you may not kill someone who knocks out your eye; and that you punish the perpetrator, not the perpetrator's offspring (see JSB on 21:31).

Lecture 11: Dissidence in the Desert.

Reading: Exodus 15:22-17:7 (no water, no food; manna; Moses strikes the rock);
Exodus 31:18; 32-34 (the golden calf; Moses importunes God);
Numbers 11-12 (no food; manna; Miriam and Aaron);
Numbers 13-14 (spies);

Numbers 16-17 (Korah; Dathan and Aviram);
Numbers 20:1-13 (no water; Moses strikes the rock);
Numbers 21:4-9 (bronze serpent);
Numbers 22-25 (Balaam; Baal Peor);
Kugel 236-240, 281-284, 328-334, 336-340.

Topics:

- Why do the Israelites rebel so often against the authority of Moses (and Aaron)?
- What is the meaning of all these rebellions?
- Why do the Israelites build images of calves – are these images idolatrous or are they meant to be images of YHWH?

Narrative structure of the last part of Exodus:

- When exactly, and how many times, Moses ascended Mt Sinai to the Lord, is not clear: Exodus 19:3 (descends in 19:14), 20:18, 24:1-2, 24:12-18.
- Chapters 25-31: Instructions for building the Tabernacle (*mishkan*), its appurtenances, the priestly vestments, and inducting Aaron and sons into the priesthood, etc. – apparently Moses is still on Mt Sinai the entire time.
- 31:18 God gave to Moses the two tablets of testimony. Seems to follow upon 24:18.
- 32-34 Golden calf (Moses descends, smashes the tablets, and then re-ascends and makes new ones).
- 35-40 building the tabernacle.
- Narrative thread is then lost; resumes somewhere in the book of Numbers.

Experience of Israelites in the wilderness: honeymoon with God (Jeremiah 2:2; 31:2) or rocky start to a relationship (Hosea 9:10, 13:5)? The latter tradition is enshrined in Exodus and Numbers.

Three basic patterns: Israelites grumble against Moses and/or God:

1. We have no food/water; life was wonderful in Egypt;
2. Who is Moses (who are Moses and Aaron) that he/they are in charge (Korah; Dathan and Aviram);
3. Israelites worship "idolatry" (Baal Peor; golden calf) and/or lose trust in God (spies);

- Common outcomes: God blows up at the Israelites, kills some/many; and/or God solves the problem (brings water/food);
- Tells Moses that he (God) will get rid of the Israelites and will make Moses into a mighty nation;
- Moses intercedes (JSB note on Exodus 32:10): what will the Egyptians say? God calms down;

- Many of these stories contain the miraculous: manna, water from a rock, mysterious plagues, healing through a bronze (or copper) serpent, earth swallowing up Dathan and Aviram, sprouting of the staffs;
- Many of these stories are complex assemblages of material. MBS: Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20:2-13 (the motif of striking the rock) are doublets (see Kugel). A story about Korah the Levite is combined with a story about the Reubenites Dathan and Aviram (see Kugel). Caleb is hero of spy story vs. Caleb and Joshua.

Why does the Torah have such stories?

- Emphasizes divine power and divine mercy; see esp. Moses pleading before God at the Golden Calf story and the spy story; God is just but merciful.
  - "Thirteen attributes of God": Exodus 34:6-7; cf. Numbers 14:18;
- The link between God and the people of Israel is not natural but constructed – God can reject his people if they sin sufficiently; he can but he doesn't.
  - In the presence of disaster the Prophets and Psalms will ask (as will later Jewish apocalypses) – has God rejected his people?
  - Chosen people motif does NOT mean that Israel is immune to punishment. Just the opposite.
- Specific motifs in specific stories explain: why Moses did not enter the land of Canaan, why the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years, and how they survived in the desert for forty years.

The golden calf is the most important of these stories:

- The story as we have it is polemic against the shrines built by Jeroboam 1 (Kings 12:25-33) (JSB note on 31:18-32:35).
  - Many MBS have conjectured that lurking behind our Golden Calf story is an original story authenticating it (see Kugel). Original story distinguished between "idolatry" and image worship of YHWH. "These are your God(s) who took you out of the land of Egypt."
- The story as we have it is polemic against Aaron (and Aaronides) in favor of Levites. (Aaron behaves badly; Levites support Moses.)
  - Contrast Korah story: in favor of Aaronides against Levites.
- The story as we have it raises the interesting question whether the divine presence is, or should be, in the camp or outside it. P puts Tabernacle in the camp, E puts "tent of meeting" outside the camp. See JSB note on 33:7-11.
  - Similarly, is it a good thing that God sends his angel to protect the Israelites: 23:20-23 (listen to my angel and he will bring you victory) vs. 32:34 (as explained by 33:1-3), a sign of diminished divine favor.

- Golden calf story later figures prominently in Jewish-Christian debate: for Christian interpreters Moses' destruction of the divine tablets represents the breaking of the old covenant.
  - 32:34 ("But when I make an accounting I will bring them to account for their sins") becomes in the Talmud something like Christian original sin. ("No divine punishment comes upon Israel that does not contain at least a little bit of the punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf." Rashi.)

"Horned" Moses = radiant Moses; see note in JSB 34:29.

Perhaps the most intriguing story is Balaam (Numbers 22-24), famous for its talking donkey (22:28).

Story turns on the power of blessing and cursing; cf. stories in Genesis.

The seer Balaam son of Beor has a history outside the Torah (see Kugel; JSB note on 22:2-24:25). The story seems to be an independent unit, but is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible (Numbers 31:16; Deuteronomy 23:4-7; Joshua 24:9-10; Micah 6:5).

Perhaps originally a favorable story -- Balaam is the only non-Israelite prophet in the Bible – but in its current form clearly mocking and unfavorable.

Responsibility for Baal Peor episode (Numbers 25) is allotted to Balaam in 31:16.

Lecture 12: P and Priestly Religion.

Reading: Leviticus 11 (pure and impure animals);
Leviticus 15 (impurity of sexual discharges);
Leviticus 16 (cleansing the sanctuary; Day of Atonement);
Leviticus 19 (Holiness code);
Leviticus 23 (sacred calendar);
Numbers 19 (Red Cow);
Kugel 284-289.

Topics:

- Consider:
- Is priestly religion "a religion of law"?
- Can you make sense of priestly religion and its rituals?
- Can you make sense of the juxtapositions and transitions in Leviticus 19?

Points of debate among MBS:

- How much narrative did P contain?
- Date of P: pre-exilic or exilic?
- P and H;
- Relationship of P to R.

P narrative material scattered throughout Gen-Numbers; legal material concentrated in second half of Exodus, Leviticus (entire), and Numbers.
Legal material has five themes:

1. The Tabernacle
2. Sacrifices
3. The Priesthood
4. Purity and Impurity
5. Holiness

1. The **Tabernacle** (Heb *mishkan* = dwelling place, where God dwells) or **Tent** or **Tent of Meeting**: central sanctuary.

- Temples in the ANE are regularly the "house" of the deity (Kugel) with a throne and/or footstool (in this case the ark of the covenant upon which were the *cherubim*)
- God's presence in the Tabernacle represented by cloud/fire (Exodus 40:34-38)
- Tension between the universality of God and localization in a building evident in D/Dtr in 1 Kings 8:27 (But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built); P does not acknowledge that tension.
- Solomon's temple is Phoenician; tabernacle may have analogue in ANE tent shrines (Kugel).
- not clear if the tabernacle was real or imagined (Kugel);
  - D does not mention the tabernacle; striking that the narrator of Samuel-Kings does not explain clearly what happened to this Tabernacle.
  - If it is priestly fantasy, perhaps its function is to offset the reality that the Jerusalem Temple was a royal foundation and always under the thumb of the king.
  - striking that P does not contain a commandment to the children of Israel to build a temple when they reach the promised land.

2. Sacrifices:

- What happens at the central shrine? Mostly animal sacrifices, that is, the slaughter, roasting and eating of cattle (ox/cow), sheep and goats, and birds; no fish, no wild animals, no "impure" animals;
- Various kinds of sacrifices are in response to various situations and have various effects (Lev 1-7).
  - distinction between communal sacrifices (e.g. Leviticus 23, sacred calendar) and individual sacrifices (e.g. thanksgiving sacrifices, sin offerings).

- ✦ The most frequent sacrifice was the *tamid* (continual sacrifice, offered every morning and afternoon). This was God's food (Numbers 28:2 My offering, the food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor, you shall take care to offer to me at its appointed time; cf. Genesis 8:21); otherwise P gives little information on what the sacrificial system is supposed to mean.
- ✦ Much debate in anthropological literature about the meaning of animal sacrifices; common view is *substitution (*I slaughter the animal so that the deity should not slaughter me). Cf. covenant between the sections (Gen 15), Passover (Exodus 12).

- The religious dimension of all this eludes us completely; no prayer, near silence prevails.
- Lev 17: any slaughter of cattle, sheep, and goats is to take place at the tabernacle; that is, all slaughter is sacred slaughter, and all slaughter belongs on the altar.
  - ✦ This is a centralization of the cult, but seems thoroughly impractical; contrast D.

3. Priesthood: in the Tabernacle only the priests of the tribe of Levi (Aaron and his sons) officiate; other Levites (members of other clans from the same tribe) pack and unpack the Tabernacle but otherwise do not officiate.

- priests officiate, Levites assist.
- MBS: much uncertainty and debate over the origins of this two-tiered system, indeed how the Levites became a landless hieratic tribe.
  - ✦ Gen 49 (Levites are landless but no mention of their priestly function) vs. Deut. 33:8-11 (Levites instruct and serve as priests).
  - ✦ Texts like Numbers 16 (revolt of Korah) and Exodus 32 (Golden calf incident) suggest that there was real rivalry between Aaronides and non-Aaronide Levites.
  - ✦ D regularly refers to "the priests the Levites," apparently blending the two.
- Priesthood and Levite-hood descend through the male line; a caste.
- Like the sacrificial victims, priests are to be blemish-free (Lev 21).

4. Purity and impurity: The sacred must be protected from impurity; no one may not enter the sacred sanctuary or partake of sacred foods when in a state of impurity.

- Sources of Impurity: human corpse (Numbers 19); (dead) impure animals (Lev 11); childbirth (Lev 12); sexual discharges (Lev 15); skin maladies (Lev 13-14).
- Removal of impurity can be effected by different means: wait until sunset; wait seven days; wash clothes/bathe the body; be sprinkled with the waters of the red heifer (Numbers 19).
- This impurity (sometimes called "levitical impurity" or "ritual impurity") has nothing to do with sin; these impurities are *inevitable* and *transient*; as long as one

does not enter upon the sacred in an impure state, the impurity does not imperil the relationship of God to the people of Israel.

- ✦ But some passages metaphorically associate the removal of impurity with the removal of sin.
- ✦ Leviticus 16: annual "wiping clean" of the central sanctuary from impurity which is here understood to be like contagion or pollution. This cultic cleansing at some point becomes "Day of Atonement" (Lev 16:30 For on this day atonement [lit. wiping clean] shall be made for you, to cleanse [lit. to purify] you; from all your sins you shall be clean [lit. pure] before the Lord.
  - ★ An annual "cleansing the central shrine of accumulated impurity" has become an annual "cleansing the people of Israel from their sins."

- Contrast Leviticus 18: violation of prohibited sexual unions will impurify the land and cause God to throw you out. These impurities are not inevitable (they are the product of sin) and their effects can be permanent; the impurity does imperil the relationship of God with the people of Israel.
  - ✦ Called by MBS: danger impurities.

5. Holiness: In addition to the language of purity P also speaks of "holiness." The holy is where God is ("I am holy," Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26); the tabernacle is "holy" (Exodus 25:8); the holy must be protected from contact with impurity.

- MBS: P (at least the first half of Leviticus) originally an internal priestly document; its "publication" (incorporation into the Torah, a public book) implicitly makes the point that holiness is to be cultivated not just by the priesthood but by all Israel. This idea becomes explicit in "the Holiness code," most spectacularly Lev 19.
- P (Lev 19:1) has the command "be holy" (aspirational); in Deuteronomy (14:2) the Israelites are holy (essential) (see JSB note on Deut 26:9).