

1: The Exodus Tradition in the Bible

The exodus is "the story of the Israelites' deliverance from oppression in the land of Egypt" is retold in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. Scholars call such recurrences of the story's themes and language outside of the book of Exodus "the exodus tradition."

Sources in the Pentateuch Dennis Bratcher The letters JEDP are a designation used by scholars to identify the component parts or sources that they understand were used to compile the first five books of the Old Testament. There have been various opinions as to whether these sources were written or oral traditions, and whether each source represents an independent strand or a stage in the development of an older source. This particular way of studying the biblical text in terms of sources used in its compilation is called source analysis or very broadly literary analysis. There is a long and interesting history of the development of this method of biblical study that dates back to Jewish scholars in the eleventh century AD see *Biblical Evidence beyond Doctrine: Dealing with the Content of Scripture*. Contrary to anti-scholarly rhetoric that is common in some church traditions even today, there was never any intent in this method to discredit any aspect of the Bible. That concern arose more as a reaction against the challenge this investigation raised concerning established ideas about Mosaic authorship that were deeply ingrained in some church tradition. That traditional view that had achieved the status of dogma in some circles, however, was not a conclusion arrived at by investigation but by acceptance of still earlier tradition. It was a view that was simply assumed apart from examining the evidence in the biblical text itself. It was not until the Reformation and the Enlightenment that systematic questions could be asked and investigated in these areas recall that Galileo tried that in the area of natural science, and was quickly silenced by the church because it was too disquieting to established views of truth! The goal of source analysis is simply to account for the features of the biblical text that emerge when the text was examined in terms of the linguistic, grammatical, and stylistic features that are common to human writing. That detailed study of the biblical text itself apart from the dogma and traditional interpretation that had been in place for centuries led to the conclusion that the material of the Pentateuch is composite, written by different people or different communities over a long period of time. There were excesses in this endeavor, however. For the first time in the church, Scripture could be investigated apart from the authority of the church in telling people what they must believe and what the text meant. Unfortunately, that led to some people focusing more on the process of investigation than what they were investigating. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, some scholars were so enamored with this method of biblical study that the number of posited sources for the Pentateuch greatly multiplied. Scholars also grew increasingly confident in their ability to identify these sources, sometimes as many as three in a single verse. This excessive zeal to dissect the biblical text into component parts led to a backlash against such methods from some circles. That reaction itself became overly zealous in the other direction, and, when combined with emerging Fundamentalism in the 19th century, resulted in the anti-scholarly rhetoric and biases toward biblical study that still echo in the church today. The result was a gradual modification of the perspectives of source analysis, both in terms of the number of identifiable sources and the confidence in being able to identify them. Also there arose a steady recovery of a focus on the whole of the biblical text rather than a preoccupation of only its component parts. While the early formulations of JEDP may not be widely accepted today among many biblical scholars, there is little question that the Pentateuch, and the larger biblical text, is composed of diverse strands of tradition compiled over the course of many years. So, it would be helpful for students of Scripture to understand the approach of source criticism in order to gain a better appreciation not only of the biblical text, but of the development of modern biblical studies. Originally, JEDP referred to what scholars had identified as the four main sources of the Pentateuch. This referred to the conclusion that the Pentateuch as we have it had been composed or compiled from a variety of previously existing documents or sources. The letters were simply the abbreviations for those earlier documents or sources. Later source analysis of both the Pentateuch and the Gospels allowed for the possibility that some sources were not written documents but arose from oral traditions. The earliest strands of the biblical traditions, dating perhaps in written form to the time of the Davidic monarchy BC, were given the

designations J and E. It was posited that this material was written or preserved in the Southern Kingdom of Judah after the division of the Kingdom in BC, and perhaps as late as the eighth century BC. While there is some legal material in these sources, most of it is epic narrative, traditional recounting of the origins of a people and their journey through history. E was similar material that used the generic term for deity *elohim* in referring to God. It originated in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, perhaps earlier than J before the establishment of the monarchy, although most placed it around the eighth century BC. Rather than material about the Davidic monarchy, E contained the tribal traditions of the conquest of the land and the traditions about the covenant and the worship centers outside Jerusalem. D was the designation given to deuteronomic material. This was understood to be instructional or preaching material that used language, concepts, and theological perspectives very similar to that found in the Book of Deuteronomy as well as some of the prophets e. It also included much of the legal material that revolved around obedience to God as faithfulness to the Torah. There was always debate about the exact time frame of this material, but it was generally agreed that there were two distinct phases in the editing or "redaction" of D material. Some saw it as living tradition that was constantly reapplied within the community. It contained traditions from Moses, but scholars thought that an early form of Deuteronomy was in place as a written document during the reign of Josiah c. A later version of this material was reedited after the exile to apply the theology of Mosaic traditions to the crisis of the exile. The perspective of D was also thought to have influenced some of the historical traditions in Samuel-Kings and some of the prophetic traditions, especially that of Jeremiah. The P material was understood to be priestly material, and focused on the concerns of priests serving in the Jerusalem temple. This would include technical record keeping and legal traditions related to the proper functioning of the Temple and its associated activities. It included material such as detailed regulations about how to observe festivals, the counting of days, the ordering of events into sequence, genealogies and statistics, as well as reflective theological material that related to the keeping of religious law. But the final shaping of the P traditions is considered late in the development of the final form of the Pentateuch, since the priests emerged as the leaders and wielders of power only after the return from exile after BC. Therefore, most of the priestly material, in the form we have it now, is usually understood as post-exilic in the fifth century BC or later. There was always debate whether there was ever an independent P document, or whether this material was simply a rewriting of other traditional material from the perspective of priestly concerns such as the second creation account of Genesis 1. This re-writing of older material is called "redaction" editing and this led to ongoing discussion whether the "redactor" is simply a compiler of other material or is a creative author. This same discussion relates to the Gospels as well, where it is more obvious that common material from traditional sources is being used, but yet is given unique theological slants by each of the four authors. Today, while there are still challenges from some to the idea of sources in the Pentateuch, it is generally accepted even by very conservative scholars. However, there have been significant modifications from years ago and the whole scenario of "source criticism" has been vastly simplified. Rather than "sources" as specific written documents many scholars now talk about traditions, emphasizing that Scripture grew out of the ongoing life of a worshipping community rather than simply being composed by a single individual at one time and then merely edited. This has shifted an emphasis from the "authors" of Scripture to its function within the community. The sources or pre-canonical traditions of the Old Testament are now generally simplified into three. The material of J and E has now been combined into what is generally termed the JE epic narratives. This is an acknowledgement on the one hand that it is mere speculation to try to subdivide the text any further, and on the other hand that this material remains distinctive from other Pentateuchal material. Scholars have continued to acknowledge the complexity of the deuteronomic traditions within the history of the biblical communities. The debates concerning this material have centered largely on the various editions through which the D material passed, whether D was ever actual documents or more a theological point of view from which other traditions were evaluated, and the influence of the D perspective on the compilation of other traditions within the Old Testament see History and Theology in Joshua and Judges. The priestly traditions are also now seen as much more complex than a simple P designation allows. Although the final composition is still placed in the post-exilic era, most scholars now consider the P traditions to contain significant amounts of much older

material. At the least, that suggests that it is no longer adequate to deal with all priestly material as if it were a creation of the post-exilic priestly hierarchy. Of course, this would preclude Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as we have it now, although it would not deny that some material may have come from Moses. Examination of individual texts with sensitivity to their location within various traditions has led us to an awareness that there are obvious differences in various strata of Pentateuchal material. For example, there is a marked difference in the development of religious laws within the various traditions. The JE material allows worship of Yahweh at various outlying shrines Shiloh, Bethel, Gilgal, Shechem while the D material is insistent that sacrifices are only to be allowed at Jerusalem. Likewise, even within these traditions there is evidence of a dynamic at work within the community, as seen for example, in the various systems of tithing in Deuteronomy that traces the development from a primarily agrarian economy to an urban one. Yet, most scholars now emphasize more the whole of the canonical material and affirm that study of the component parts are not as important as how the material has been "shaped" in the formation of the canonical books that exist now. That means that source analysis is simply another tool in understanding the biblical texts. This shift to canonical and theological concerns leads to new questions in relation to the sources. The traditions are usually understood to break down in this way: The story line of the exodus in the narrative material runs through chapter 11 with Moses as the main character. This includes keeping the Passover lamb shut up for three days and outlining a seven day festival recall in the narrative, the Israelites had to leave hastily in the course of a single night, not even having time to allow the bread to rise. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. I am the LORD. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat-- that is all you may do. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. And also bless me. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. There is some tension with the immediately preceding section where it states that a "mixed crowd" went up from Egypt, and the priestly regulations that no "foreigner" may eat of Passover the Israelites were the foreigners in Egypt; and they did not have slaves to worry about, they were the slaves! Do not break any of the bones. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. The consecration of the firstborn in the language and phrasing here is very similar to corresponding passages in Deuteronomy. There is also theological reflection on the events themselves and the proper response to them in light of relationship with God, and the grace the community has experienced. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal. Eat nothing containing yeast. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. Redeem every firstborn among your sons. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. This illustrates that even in what seems like a single unified passage, there may be more than one voice speaking with more than one point of concern and emphasis.

2: The Making of the Pentateuch - Wikipedia

After surveying the recent literature on the subject, Thompson closely examines the Pentateuchal tradition as a narrative of Israel's history, and offers detailed exegesis of the historical narratives in Genesis and Exodus, including Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the sojourn in the wilderness.

Email The Bible relates real history. With that said, there are always efforts by those who seek to discredit Scripture as well as those within liberal elements of biblical scholarship to claim that the historical record reveals something other than what is recorded in the Bible. One such historical element that has come into question is sojourn and slavery of Israel in Egypt. James Hoffmeier in his book *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* examines the scholarly debate and what ends up being a plethora of historical evidence that supports the Biblical record. Some may wonder why the pursuit of historical proof for the Exodus tradition is so important. After all, even if some of the facts noted in Scripture are said to have no observable historical support, the theological principle of God delivering His people from bondage, albeit not actual physical bondage, still remains factual, right? The answer to that question would be a resounding no. Hoffmeier first examines the various theories that have been presented by scholars in relation to the exodus tradition. He reveals the creeping in of skepticism among scholars, in particular liberal scholars who attempted to point to a lack of historical and archaeological evidence to support the biblical record. Hoffmeier then takes a look at the various perspectives on the origins of Israel as a nation, in particular that of the conquering of Canaan, given the taking of the Promised Land is of course connected to Israel departing Egypt. If proof can be provided that people of Semitic origins lived in Egypt during the time Israel was believed to have been enslaved, the assertions that the exodus tradition is full of holes itself begins to fall apart. Hoffmeier explores a number of key historical records that time and again support the biblical account. The archaeological evidence is abundant and convincing, leaving little room for further doubt to be cast on the validity of the biblical record or the reality that the people of Israel spent time in slavery in Egypt. The Joseph narratives have come under scrutiny over the years and in recognition of the importance of addressing the issue of Joseph, Hoffmeier spends some time looking at the evidence for a Joseph figure in Egyptian history that matches the individual noted in the closing chapters of Genesis. Keys exist in the biblical record that allude to the historical facticity of issues such as Joseph being sold into slavery. Hoffmeier notes that the sales price of twenty shekels was indeed the average price for a slave during that period. Other elements of the Genesis account such as the mention of magicians interpreting dreams and the rise of Joseph to serve as vizier, do have a basis in accepted historical fact. While there does not seem to be a historical document or archaeological treasure that at this point makes an undeniable connection between Joseph and a figure of Egyptian history, nothing yet discovered brings sufficient questions to light to deny such a connection exists either. Hoffmeier does a great job of outlining and investigating these issues. Of course no figure in the exodus tradition is as important as that of Moses. The story of Moses as a baby being taken in by the daughter of Pharaoh, raised in Pharaoh, and then running off essentially into hiding before being called by God to lead Israel from bondage is well-known by most. But what if any historical proof exists for this Moses figure? Questions of historical individuals and matters of geography have long been debated by scholars and Hoffmeier, as he did with the other important topics regarding the exodus tradition, examines in great detail the scholarly discussions. The information is quite interesting and while some have continued to choose to argue against Moses being a real figure or anything noted in the biblical record as being possible historical fact, the evidence clearly points to the reality that the Bible can be shown to be accurate on all counts. It is replete with interesting information, Hoffmeier examines the arguments for and against the exodus tradition, and brings to bear his expertise in the area of Ancient Near Eastern studies on this important issue. The result is quite clear: I received this book for free from Oxford University Press and the opinions I have expressed are my own.

3: Download [PDF] the exodus of israel

Week 1: The Mystery of the Exodus: Tradition, Source Text Criticism and Archaeology. The Exodus story has had a profound impact on the formation and continuation of the Jewish people.

Detering concludes on page 42 of his article: If Detering is correct, we can infer two important chronological consequences. Firstly, Indic influences entered into Jewish exegesis prior to the rise of Christian gnosticism the Naassenes, etc—see below. Secondly—and more controversially—we can be sure that those Indic influences occurred prior to the formation of the Christian tradition itself. One need only connect the dots regarding the Therapeutae: Detering has now shown they were influenced by Buddhism. We are now at a great turning point in understanding Christian origins. The way forward—according to the facts of history—must acknowledge the following: Of course, today only Jesus mythicists are in a position to appreciate all this. As a result, we have now reached the point in New Testament scholarship when only mythicists are able to proceed in a meaningful way. In his article under discussion, he has explored Indic influence on the Peratae, on the Naassenes, on the author of the Odes of Solomon, and so on. That influence came from within Judaism itself. I would characterize it as a Jewish proto-gnosticism. Clear evidence of such a movement has been documented. My own research suggests that the Levites were carriers of that Jewish proto-gnosticism. In the Iron Age the Levites were dominant e. Moses was a Levite country priests who were eventually usurped by, and then subordinated to, the Aaronide temple priests of Jerusalem. If we consider that Judaism, at the turn of the era, was an Aaronide-High Priest-Temple religion, then the Levites were the non-temple priests scattered about in the towns who once represented the dominant proto-gnostic religion of the people. In the Old Testament—which is largely an Aaronide production—the Levites are accorded nominal status in service to Aaronides and are restricted to menial duties in the Temple: Early Christianity reflects age-old tensions between Temple and people, between Jerusalem and countryside. After all, Jesus draws his disciples from the simple country folk. He disparages scribes, hypocrites, and those who make a pretense of much holiness. Most revealingly, Jesus is killed by the Temple establishment. All this suggests that the figure of Jesus—though invented in II CE—originated in the old Levitical side of the dispute. This suspicion receives confirmation in clues and anomalous data not in the mainstream of present-day scholarship, e. Interestingly, in the Acts of Mark he hailed from Alexandria. While this is a new field of study that must be fleshed out, I personally suspect that the Therapeutae were heirs to old and suppressed Jewish Levitical traditions specifically related to salvation through gnosis. An Alexandrine-Levite tradition does not, of course, exclude influence also from India and from Buddhism—the Therapeutae could have been influenced from both directions, Levitical Jewish and Buddhist Indian. Such dual-influence on the Therapeutae would explain the contradictory views of water found in Christian texts. Baldly phrased, a question can be posed: While Detering considers the former negative view, I would also add the latter positive view. Cultically dipping into water for religious purification is known in Hinduism, in ancient Mesopotamian religion, and—I would suggest—in suppressed Levitical strains of Judaism below. These are also present in early Christian history: Buddhism and metaphorical water In Buddhism, water symbolism is both positive and negative. On the negative side, one figuratively crosses the stream of cravings, e. The discourse identifies the stream with the Noble Eightfold Path V. In my opinion, only the negative view of water would have reached the Therapeutae from Buddhism. This coheres with both the OT Exodus motif and with the Jordan crossing. In this sense, Jewish gnostics may well have borrowed their conception of crossing over from Buddhism. This negative water symbolism seems subsequently to have been absorbed both by the Therapeutae and by the evangelists. When Jesus crosses the water, walks on water, and stills the storm he is transcending and dominating that which is viewed as negative. In contrast, the Christian sacrament of baptism indicates an opposing tradition—the tradition of sacred water. While this tradition may not yet have existed in Buddhism see above, I have argued elsewhere that there existed in the Levant—from very ancient times and long before Buddhism—a theology of sacred water. It goes back to Enki, the Babylonian god of water and the friend of mankind. By the Iron Age, the Abzu had become universalized throughout the Levant. Aaronide hegemony

dates from the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE. The Levitical priesthood experienced a reversal of fortunes. In pre-exilic times, the Levites were the old, de-centralized, and indigenous priesthood. After the exile, however, they became landless and were compelled to live on alms—this by fiat of Aaronide legislation embedded in the new Jewish scriptures. It is my contention, however, that the Levites continued their proto-gnostic traditions as a Jewish heterodoxy and that they largely went underground. Clues to their now esoteric traditions are understandably scant due to widespread Aaronide suppression. Nevertheless, much-maligned Levitical traditions briefly and obliquely insinuate themselves into Jewish scripture, where the Levites and their stand-ins usually appear in an unflattering light. This very positive water symbolism and accompanying gnostic theology infused suppressed traditions in Judaism in the centuries preceding the common era. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth, which is the holy baptism of those who know the eternal knowledge through those born of the word and the imperishable illuminators, who came from the holy seed: Yesseus, Mazareus, Yessedekus, the Living Water. The Apocalypse of Adam, 85
â€ If one knows these things, he has washed in the washing of the Hidden One. In turn, the mythological crossing of the Jordan superseded the mythological crossing of the Red Sea Exodus. Jewish-Buddhist circles of Alexandria attempted to interpret the [Buddhist] crossing of the Stream of Becoming in terms of the Old Testament. They found the key in the Exodus account. For them, the one who crossed over was Moses. In their nocturnal mystery ritual, the Therapeutae re-enacted how the people of Israel were led through the water of the Red Sea into the Holy Land. In their [allegorical] exegesis, this was out of the material realm into the spiritual, immaterial realm. Clearly, the Naassenes quite deliberately had recourse not to the Book of Exodus but to the Book of Joshua. In their view, Joshua had surpassed Moses in every way, as manifested by the fact that it was Joshua who succeeded where Moses failed in bringing the Israelites across the Jordan and into the promised land—a prefiguration and surety of entry into future life. At the same time, Joshua usurped the traditional role of liberator of the Israelites from Egypt, a role previously held exclusively by Moses. In this development we see a progression, one beginning with an interpretation of the Exodus and ending in the gnostic-Christian mystery of baptism. If Detering is correct, and if my foregoing analysis in this commentary is also correct, then the Therapeutae were mediators into Christianity of suppressed gnostic traditions from Buddhism on the one hand, and from the Levites on the other. After all, the Baptist was a Levite Lk 1:

4: H. Detering, "The Gnostic Meaning of the Exodus" A commentary (Pt. 27) | Mythicist Papers

The Bible's grand narrative about Israel's Exodus from Egypt is central to Biblical religion, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim identity and the formation of the academic disciplines studying the ancient Near East.

What will I learn? The Mystery of the Exodus: Tradition, Source Text Criticism and Archaeology The Exodus story has had a profound impact on the formation and continuation of the Jewish people. Indeed, without the Exodus, there might not have been a Jewish people. We will examine what is to be made of the lack of archaeological evidence for these events and what the Exodus saga has in common with other ancient Near Eastern literary and theological paradigms. We examine their stories and legacy. Clash of the Titans: The God of Israel versus the Pharaoh of Egypt Debate about the scientific, historical or archaeological evidence for the Ten Plagues ignores the purpose of their role in the Exodus story. We will examine the purpose and significance of the Ten Plagues and how they are understood in the contemporary context. Who wrote the Song at the Sea? What happened at Sinai? These questions have been and continue to be the subject of debate among scholars and laypeople alike. We will examine textual and current scholarship on these texts and their significance in the overall Exodus saga. Covenant, Redemption and Continuity A covenantal relationship with God has been part of biblical tradition since its beginning. Redemption is also a recurring theme in Jewish tradition. We will explore how these concepts have evolved through the biblical narrative and discuss how they are understood and enacted today. How will I learn? Discussion may vary from class to class Papers applicable only to certificate students How will I be evaluated? For certificate students only: Your instructor will evaluate you based on an essay, which you will complete at the end of the course. Some course materials may be available online. A copy of the Bible any translation is recommended, so that students can read selected passages from Exodus.

5: JEDP: "Sources" in the Pentateuch

The Exodus is the founding myth of the Israelites. Spread over the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, it tells of the enslavement that befell the children of Israel in Egypt, their liberation through the hand of Yahweh and the revelations at Sinai, and their wanderings in the wilderness up to borders of Canaan, the land their God has given them.

The origin tradition of ancient Israel, I: The Israelite Occupation of Palestine C. The Issue of Historicity D. Narrative Approaches to the Pentateuch B. Smaller Narratives and Variants: The Toledoth of Adam: The Toledoth of Terah: The Story of Abraham C. The Role of Isaac in the Tradition D. The Toledoth of Isaac: The Story of Jacob E. The Toledoth of Jacob: Moses and the Sojourn in Egypt B. The Toledoth Structure of Genesis F. Human help there has been. Before anyone else, I want to thank my children, Samir and Hilary, without whose long years of patient instruction I would still be grossly insensitive to the world of stories. To Professor Francois Langlamet and my students at the Ecole I wish to offer my sincere gratitude for that critical and academic support, so necessary to any work of scholarship. I wish also to thank my friend, Donald Murray for the many corrections and suggestions he has offered as this book took its final shape. This book is dedicated to my wife, Shirley Edith Janke. If I were able to cite all that this book owes to her, hardly a page would pass without reference to her contribution, in the language, in the understanding of the stories with which I have dealt, in the hundreds of corrections she has made, and in the details and insights which she has added. She is the one who has made this book readable. If there is a noticeable contrast in the clarity, logic, and humility of this book with that of my earlier work on the historicity of the patriarchs, that is largely due to her. The extent of her personal support might be glimpsed in the happy and confident tone with which most of this book is written; for it is written to her. During this decade, much has changed in the field of Old Testament studies. What had needed to be argued then, and argued strongly, can now be taken for granted. Theories and ideas which had then been dominant, and, at least in the United States, a requirement for employment and publication in the field, are so much a part of the past history of research as to appear today quaint or reactionary. This has not been just a simple change from widespread acceptance of biblical historicity to widespread skepticism, and it certainly has not been a change from conservative to liberal approaches to scholarship. Changes of perspective throughout the whole field of Old Testament studies have altered our understanding. Issues today at stake are no longer those of historicity at all. Much more, they deal with the historiographical quality of traditional narrative on one hand, and the foundations of the modern historiography of ancient Israel on the other. Rather, the questions which now arise are: Are the traditions about early Israel useful to the historian at all? I am not referring esoterically to debates about the exactitude of history as a science, but rather to questions about sources and about the historical relevance of the stories altogether. Most of us who have understood ourselves as historians of early Israel have found ourselves suddenly on the outside of the wardrobe leading into 12 The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel Narnia, and this wardrobe unexpectedly and dismayingly appears to us a wholly mundane armoire of ordinary human construction. A generation ago, the two most significant points of departure into the study of the pentateuch had been the Documentary Hypothesis, as expressed by Wellhausen, analyzing the development of the written traditions and sources of the pentateuch, and the form criticism or Gattungsgeschichte of Gunkel; cf. As students, most of us had learned to see these methods as complementary disciplines, both of which were necessary to understand the full meaning of any given text of the pentateuch. Publishing scholars between and, reacting to both liberalism and fundamentalism, were primarily interested in historical questions Barr, p. They asked such questions as: Two competing historiographical approaches to the pentateuch developed in the post-war years cf. Continental scholarship was most strongly influenced by Albrecht Alt; and Martin Noth esp. They understood themselves to be writing a history of Israel on the foundations of the historical-critical method. The alternative approach was that followed primarily in England and in the United States. American scholarship was dominated by one individual, the prolific W. However, they did not look to the history of the tradition to discover them, but rather they looked almost exclusively to the wealth of new material which was

external to biblical studies proper: The dominant interest on both sides of the Atlantic was historical: The Origins of Ancient Israel 13 to discover the events in history which had given rise to and had influenced the biblical tradition. Central to this reaction in Old Testament studies were the slogans: In the understanding of this neo-orthodox movement, it was a serious obligation of the biblical theologians to address history, there to discover and examine those originating events of the traditions, not so much on the grounds that these events gave rise to the traditions, but much more because it was perceived mytho-theologically that in these very events God had revealed himself. Among some of the more influential works of the biblical theology movement were the writings of G. In the s, the disenchantment with biblical theology, and its adherence to Heilsgeschichte, was reflected in a growing split between those scholars whose primary interests were theological, and those who were influenced by more secular, antiquarian, interests. On both sides of the Atlantic, the institutional independence of ancient Near Eastern faculties resulted in a noticeable ambivalence among younger scholars who specialized in Palestinian archaeology and ancient Israelite texts and traditions. In English-speaking countries and in Israel, the development of faculties of religion, understood as radically secular institutions within state universities, exacerbated this ambivalence, as an increasingly large group of scholars were trained in Palestinian and 14 The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel biblical studies from a wholly secular perspective, independent of any theological basis. For many who had lost confidence in the biblical theology movement as a supportive context for their research, the drive towards a secularization of the fields of biblical archaeology and early Israelite history became an issue of integrity. To some, theological issues appeared increasingly irrelevant It is, therefore, not surprising that debates across this far-flung, international field have often been so acrimonious. Religious and secular perspectives, once they are defended on principle, are so far apart psychologically, that mutual support and co-operation is exceedingly difficult. It was no longer an ameliorative, reforming, reinterpretation which was sought by the new, highly critical, and secular biblical scholars. Rather, religious faith was itself often seen to be a hindrance to understanding the past, and especially to understanding the biblical tradition as it truly was. The task that the biblical theology movement itself set for biblical studies was far too ambiduous to be successful. The affirmation of Heilsgeschichte, as a theologically viable view of the world history, the belief in a God who acts in history, as a basis for modern faith, placed an impossible burden on biblical studies cf. The task of discovering the historical Israel and an understanding of its traditions was as much as the method available to critical scholarship could reasonably seek cf. To uncover, in the process of historical research, revelatory acts of God behind historical events and tradidons was a task for which no one was prepared. That it was undertaken at all, is evidence only of the strength of this theological movement. Concentration was given to the special uniqueness of Israel and its faith, as well as to the trustworthiness, credibility, and verisimilitude of the tradition. To establish the antiquity of a tradidon was assumed to be to affirm its 1. The Origins of Ancient Israel 15 historicity. To uncover the original core of a tradition was often understood as discovering the event which had given rise to the greater tradition. To deny such antiquity or such originality was understood as equivalent to denying the theological import of that tradition, for it was seen as denying that the tradition had its basis in a saving act of God. What was ignored, and what I am at pains to point out, is that it was beyond the ability of any critical scholarship to establish a link between tradition and originating event, and between uniqueness and divine causality. Biblical theology began to fail in the s. With its failure, the historical constructs of Wright, Albright, Noth, von Rad, and de Vaux also began to fail. The collapse of these inquiries led quickly and inevitably cf. Rather, with the end of the debate, new energies were unleashed in hitherto unexpected and unforeseen directions. On one hand, scholars were free from the burden of supporting an ultimately unconvincing thesis, and on the other hand, opposition to the overly speculative German approach could now be understood and accepted in its own right. Such misconceptions were common, not only in the secondary levels of oral teaching in seminaries and universities, but throughout scholarly publications, dealing with both biblical and extra-biblical materials. Tracy Luke , and especially M. Unfortunately, but perhaps expectedly, by the time these protests had subsided, the ever-present popularizing side of scholarship laid hold of a new naivete, and a new universal myth, canonized by 1. The Origins of Ancient Israel 17 W. Dever in his textbook article, replete with impressive sociological jargon: It is to be hoped that the early criticism of this

view cf. Thompson, c performed its proper function of a quick and painless assassination. In a world of ignorance, history is often created by default. Mendenhall himself has not worked out the promise of his early article cf. This was left to N. Gottwald himself sees his book as a defense of the Mendenhall position. No greater clarity about 18 The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel specific forms of ancient Palestinian nomadism, nor about what share Israel may or may not have had in that nomadism, is offered. One is, however, given hours of reading ideas related to the topic, but they are abstract. Similarly, Gottwald does attempt, in his book of , to show that it is plausible to see an indigenous origin for Israel. However, it ought not be forgotten that it was just as plausible to many of us who read the Mendenhall article of Gottwald presents to us, at best, possibility after possibility for history, but he does not even try to tell us that it was, in fact, just so, that history happened! Mendenhall and Gottwald have presented their theory, but neither its foundation nor its justification. The situation, since then, has hardly changed. Instead of giving evidence of how, in fact, his description must have been so, Gottwald marshalls an impressive series of texts which might be reinterpreted in the light he wishes, if one could but ignore their chronology and their geography. It clarifies much about antique social structures in general, but nothing at all about the social structures of Palestine and Israel at the time in question, and it is in fact because social structures are so essential in the understanding of any people historically, that it is irresponsible to assert their existence in a particular form on the abstract basis of analogy. They are of an historical nature: There is far too great a dependence on analogies from the ancient Near East, 1. Similarly, there is far too great a dependence on analogous social structures, often leading into circular arguments. There is a lack of any clear indication in the biblical tradition of anything which might readily be interpreted as a social rebellion, at any time close to that period in which Gottwald assumes Israel originates. It is not that an interpretation of a revolt is impossible; only that there is no evidence for it.

6: Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition

The exodus from Egypt, in some form, may well have occurred. But if so, it was probably experienced by a limited group of Israelites. Certainly, it was originally remembered and retold by a limited group.

Methods in Biblical Interpretation: The Book of Exodus. Cambridge University Press, Methods for Exodus is a textbook on biblical methodology. The book introduces readers to six distinct methodologies that aid in the interpretation of the book of Exodus: Describing each methodology, the volume also explores how the different methods relate to and complement one another. Each chapter includes a summary of the hermeneutical presuppositions of a particular method with a summary of the impact of the method on the interpretation of the book of Exodus. In addition, Exodus 1â€™2 and 19â€™20 are used to illustrate the application of each method to specific texts. The book is unique in offering a broad methodological discussion with all illustrations centered on the book of Exodus. The Eerdmans Critical Commentary. This commentary on Exodus presents a fresh translation of the text along with an interpretation of the central themes, the literary structure, and the history of the composition of the book of Exodus. Thomas Dozeman here explores two related themes in the formation of the book of Exodus, namely, the identity of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the authority of Moses, the leader of the Israelite people. The story of Moses parallels this divine drama, drawing the mythic story of divine salvation into a model of human religious leadership. Exodus brings these themes into focus through a new translation of the Hebrew text, the clarification of the multiple literary genres with the text, the identification of the separate authors who interpret the identity of Yahweh and the authority of Moses in different ways, and the rich insights that arise from the comparative study of the ancient Near Eastern literary tradition. Dozeman further explores the influence of the book of Exodus in the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation. Integrating recent changes in pentateuchal composition and literary formation into this work, Dozeman has provided a comprehensive and helpful commentary that will be welcomed on the shelf of any Old Testament scholar. A Biblical Theology of Ordination. The World Council of Churches has called for renewed theological reflection on the biblical roots of ordination to strengthen the vocational identity of the ordained and to provide a framework for ecumenical dialogue. This book is a response to that call. It is grounded in the assumption that the vocation of ordination requires an understanding of holiness and how it functions in human religious experience. The goal is to construct a biblical theology of ordination that is embedded in broad reflection on the nature of holiness. The first, from the History of Religions, describes two theories of holiness in the study of religion, as a dynamic force and as a ritual resource. Both play a central role in biblical literature and establish the paradigm of ordination to Word and Sacrament in Christian tradition. Second, the study of the formation of the Mosaic Office illustrates how the two views of holiness model ordination to the prophetic word and to the priestly ritual. Third, Canonical Criticism provides the lens to explore the ongoing influence of the Mosaic Office in the New Testament literature. Holiness and Ministry will assist candidates for ordination to discern their call experience and establish professional identity within individual traditions of Christianity, while also providing a resource for ecumenical dialogue on the nature and purpose of Christian ordination. A Farewell to the Yahwist?: Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, Editors. Society of Biblical Literature, However, many North American scholars are unfamiliar with the work of a new generation of European scholars who are advancing an alternate view of the compositional history of the Pentateuch. This volume makes available both the most recent European scholarship on the Pentateuch and its critical discussion, providing a helpful resource and fostering further dialogue between North American and European interpreters. Power in the Exodus Tradition. Oxford University Press, The destruction of the Egyptian army in the Book of Exodus is the primary story of salvation for Israel and center stage is a portrait of God in combat.

7: Pentateuch History and Origins Collection (10 vols.) - Logos Bible Software

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Exodus and Conquest -- Myth or Reality? Can Archaeology Provide the Answer? A re-examination of the evidence suggests that the archaeology of this period is incompatible with the biblical narrative, and the campaign of conquest related in the Book of Joshua. To begin by grasping the nettle offered by the second half of our title, it has to be said that archaeology cannot usually tell us whether biblical traditions are historical or mythological. Archaeology is not, strictly speaking, a science although it employs scientific tools. One can rarely set up controlled experiments to test whether particular events biblical or otherwise actually happened. Rather, the archaeologist is at the mercy of the surviving evidence, and this imposes quite severe limits on what can be deduced with certainty. In the case of the cities of the Ancient Near East, limited time and resources mean that the archaeologist can only excavate a relatively small proportion of a tell the Arabic term for a ruin-mound, in Hebrew spelt tel. For example, Yigael Yadin estimated that to excavate every level of the tell of Hazor in northern Galilee in its entirety would take eight hundred years! This emphasizes the small proportion which can be uncovered in a few seasons. Furthermore, only a limited amount of buried material survives the centuries for the archaeologist to discover it. Archaeology therefore has serious limitations when it comes to answering the kind of question posed in our title. One cannot guarantee that the appropriate evidence has survived, or if it has that the archaeologist will find it. On the positive side, however, archaeology can significantly affect the balance of probabilities. I hope to show that it suggests the basic historicity of those biblical traditions which deal with the origins of Israel in Canaan. Those traditions, contained in the books Exodus-Joshua and referred to many times in the Prophets and the Psalms relate that the Hebrews suffered slavery in Egypt and were led to freedom by Moses at a time of dramatic natural catastrophes; after forty years spent in the area south of Canaan, they migrated northwards through Transjordan, crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua and conquered several key fortified cities. Today most biblical scholars and archaeologists doubt the historicity of even this basic outline of events. The biblical traditions as we have them are seen as the result of a long and complex process of development, only taking their final shape during or after the Babylonian exile 6th century BC and reflecting the political and theological concerns of that late period. Most scholars are therefore pessimistic about the possibility that these traditions preserve historical facts from a much earlier time. The majority view today is that the nation Israel arose within Canaan as an indigenous development. Ahlström states that the story of the Exodus from Egypt is concerned with mythology rather than with a detailed reporting of historical facts [Ahlström: The term "mythology," when used in this context, is not intended to denigrate the biblical traditions, but simply to say that they embody religious convictions rather than true history. The scepticism of these scholars is based in part on the view that the traditions took shape at such a late period that they cannot possibly contain historical reminiscences from almost a thousand years before [Lemche: However, another source of such scepticism is undoubtedly the perceived clash between the biblical traditions and archaeological evidence. It is no longer possible to offer even a reasonable defense of the Conquest narratives" [Lemche: I have therefore tried in recent years to reopen the question of the date of the Exodus and Conquest. The first part of this paper is devoted to challenging the conventionally accepted date in the 13th century BC and defending an alternative date some two centuries earlier -- a date suggested by the Bible itself. That date has remained the majority view. Even some of those scholars who reject the historicity of the Exodus and Conquest traditions still look to the decades around BC as the time when Israel emerged as a recognizable entity in Canaan. I will argue here that retention of the 13th-century date is an example of scholarly inertia, and that the evidence in its favour has long since been eroded away. The evidence of Exodus 1: The occurrence of this name in Exodus 1: The first thing to note is that the Hebrew Bible does not use the name Raamses with chronological rigour. It uses it in Genesis We have a very clear biblical example of such retrospective usage in Genesis In short, the

name itself does not provide the date of the building activity in which the Hebrews were engaged, only the date when the narrative was last worked over by an editorial hand. Against the use of Exodus 1: Both these verses have been either interpreted as symbolic or otherwise explained away on the strength of evidence favouring a later date [e. But as that evidence has now evaporated, the 15th-century date should be reconsidered. In connection with Exodus 1: The site of Pi-Ramesse already had a long history of occupation before Ramesses II built the Delta-residence bearing his name. This history goes back to the 19th century BC, but is not unbroken. The site shows little evidence of occupation between the end of the Hyksos period c. This apparent gap in occupation would seem to seriously damage the case for a 15th-century Exodus. However, it would be unwise to assume the abandonment of the site on the basis of present evidence. We need to recall the limitations of archaeology, as outlined in our Introduction. In the present case those limitations are well summed up in the dictum that absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence. This is an important reminder that archaeological evidence can be extremely elusive at sites in the Eastern Delta. This is widely acknowledged, but is sometimes conveniently forgotten when the lack of evidence can be used to bolster a favourite theory. Furthermore, in many places ancient occupation-levels have been destroyed during the last hundred years through peasants digging for sebakh soil used as fertilizer and for brick-making. The area has been greatly despoiled since it was explored and described by F. Lloyd Griffith and E. Naville in the s [Bietak Most importantly, as W. Shea has pointed out, logic would suggest that some part of the site was occupied in the 15th century BC; Thutmose III, Amenophis II and Thutmose IV between them conducted well over twenty campaigns into Asia, and one would expect that they had a base of operations somewhere in this vicinity [Shea: It is therefore highly probable that an energetic pharaoh such as Thutmose III would have maintained a supply-base there for his many campaigns into Syria-Palestine. Indeed, the statement in Exodus 1: It should also be noted that what evidence we already have is against a complete gap in occupation for most of the 18th Dynasty. So evidence of 15th-century activity may await discovery somewhere in the area if the occupation-levels have not been destroyed by sebakh-digging. Turning to the site of Pithom, two candidates have traditionally been considered for this identification: Kitchen, in the most recent and detailed study of this question [], argues convincingly for Tell er-Retabah. Goedicke has conducted excavations there and he reports finding remains of mud-brick buildings which he dates to the first half of the 18th Dynasty [Goedicke]. Full publication is still awaited, so the details cannot yet be assessed, but in this case building activity in the right period seems fairly certain. We have no evidence of a pharaonic residence-city in the Eastern Delta at this time, and this has long been seen as a stumbling-block for the early dating of the Exodus. However, in a forthcoming paper H. Goedicke will publish inscriptional evidence for the existence in the Eastern Delta, during the 18th Dynasty, of what he calls "a royal domicile [used] during the recurrent tours of inspection the Egyptian king was supposed to do". In short, archaeological evidence from the Eastern Delta, although not so clear-cut as we would like, does not rule out a 15th-century Exodus, as has so often been maintained. Evidence from Transjordan According to the biblical traditions in Numbers , after spending forty years in the area south of Canaan, the Hebrews moved north through Transjordan in order to enter Canaan from the east. Those traditions relate that the migrating Hebrews encountered various peoples during their northward trek; Edomites, Moabites, Amorites and the inhabitants of Bashan. With the latter two groups they even fought battles in which they conquered certain cities. Glueck from the s onwards, led Glueck to the conclusion that most of the region was without a settled population between the 19th and 13th centuries BC [Glueck Pottery from the middle and Late Bronze Ages appeared to be absent or very scarce over much of the region. There appears to have been some reduction in the population during the periods in question, but certainly not an absence of settlement. In fact Glueck himself revised his views shortly before he died [Unfortunately some scholars have lagged so far behind that as recently as the imaginary gap in occupation was cited against the 15th-century date for the Exodus [Stiebing: The truth is that the evidence from Transjordan is quite neutral as far as dating the Exodus is concerned; it cannot prove a 15th-century date but it no longer constitutes evidence against it. The argument from 13th-century destructions in Canaan Between and excavations in Palestine uncovered evidence that a number of cities were destroyed at or near the end of the LBA Late Bronze Age , i. These included cities which the Bible says were taken by the incoming Israelites: The fall of all these cities

was dated to around BC, and seemed to provide evidence for a wave of destruction at that time. Therefore there seemed to be good grounds for viewing these destructions as the work of the Israelites under Joshua. Furthermore, with Conquest dated to c. This neat scenario has now been eroded utterly. The LBA destructions can no longer all be dated to the same time. Indeed, a recent study by B. Wood [; a], analysing the pottery from a great many sites, shows that there were three waves of destruction spanning roughly a century. Of the places mentioned in the Bible as taken by Israel, it included only one: The second wave occurred c. However, it is now almost universally agreed that the true site of Debir is Khirbet Rabud, which was not destroyed in any of these three waves of destruction. The number of biblical sites involved in this second wave is therefore no more than one Bethel , and even this should probably be excluded; as we will see below, the location of Bethel at Beitin has recently been strongly challenged. Of the places Israel is said to have taken, this also included only one: Wood argues the latter view forcefully in a paragraph which is worth quoting at length, because it puts all three waves of destruction in a broader context: The underlying causes are not yet understood, but the end results are clear. One-by-one the city-states fell; some were destroyed, others were not. In a weakened condition, they may have succumbed to attack by outsiders, revolts from within, or simply been abandoned when the citizens could no longer eke out a living" [a]. Returning to the biblical account of the Conquest, it is also worth stressing that some cities which Israel is said to have conquered were definitely not destroyed in the decades around BC; indeed, some did not even exist at that time. Jericho Joshua 6 was abandoned from c. The city of Ai Joshua also comes into this category if its location at Et-Tell is maintained, but this will be discussed below. The negative evidence is often paraded as proof that the Conquest narratives are unhistorical [Weippert The new settlements of Iron Age I At the beginning of the Iron Age a great many new settlements appeared in the hill-country of Palestine.

8: Thomas B. Dozeman: Faculty at United Theological Seminary

The Making of the Pentateuch ("The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study", JSOT Press, Sheffield,) by R. N. Whybray, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at the University of Hull (UK), was a major contribution to the field of Old Testament studies, and specifically to theories on the origins and composition of the Pentateuch.

9: Exodus and Conquest -- Myth or Reality?

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