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Genesis Notes

In preparation for this session, review the questions in the syllabus and apply them to each statement of a covenant as we encounter it in this session.

The name Israel: Ish (man) – ra – el (the people of El)

Gen 1 name of God: God (El). Who is telling this story? El was the head of Canaanite pantheon. It's the north speaking.

1:1 Spirit of God – If you're thinking the Holy Spirit, you have the wrong idea. This is simply the action or activity of God.

The Genesis creation narrative is a response to, and competition for, Enûma Eliš, the Babylonian creation myth. That work proclaims Marduk as supreme. It names Apsû (a god representing fresh waters) and Tiamat (representing ocean waters). The chaos of Genesis 1:2 is also a reference to Tiamat. While not named, Lilith of Mesopotamian and Jewish mythology makes several appearances in the narratives, as the serpent, and (in contrast to Eve) Adam’s first wife (Alphabet of Sirach). In Genesis 1-3, we saw two different creation narratives. The authors / editors respected the ideas, emphasis, and style of each contributor and each source. What is the author saying by juxtaposing these two accounts? Gen 1 speaks of Elohim Gen 2:4+ speaks of Yahweh Adonai (represented LORD God in the ESV), as it transitions from the Priestly to the Yahwist source. Thus, Gen 1 conveys the Priestly creation tradition, whereas 2+ conveys the Yahwist creation tradition.

Gen 1:26 man is the generic term for mankind. Eve was the ‘helper’ to do what Adam could not do alone: make babies. In 2:7, man is formed from the dust of the ground. The name we translate Adam is so close to the word for the ground that there may actually be no difference. The connection between mankind and the ground is strong. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”
translated image is translated elsewhere as idol. It is a physical representation of a god. Most gods of
the ANE were anthropomorphic in form as well as personality. A modern expression of this idea is
“Man created gods in his own image.” Genesis turns this upside-down and explains it by saying that
Elohim created man in the image of Elohim. The idea of God as non-corporeal spirit came later. This
was their explanation for why so many of the gods look like humans. God made man to (physically)
resemble God. It could also explain why God did not permit man to make images of other gods, of
Yahweh, or (an early application of the principle of the hedge) of anything. An explanation later in
Torah is that you can't make an image of Yahweh because you don't know what he looks like. Earth
was already full of images (idols) of Yahweh: every human. Humans (at least Jews) were prohibited
from making images, but God could. We are the idols!

I think the phrase also means that the pantheon created humans as fellow immortals. Only later, when
humans disobeyed, was that immortality removed from them.

Food for Thought: Why did God create man? This question is not about what you
think, what you have been taught, or your doctrine or catechism. Does the text of the
Bible itself anywhere address this question? Does it contain any clues? Make and
defend your case from the Bible itself, not from your philosophy or doctrine.

People have offered various explanations for Elohim in the plural form. As I discuss in the syllabus, I
think this refers to the entire Caananite pantheon of El. This passage would naturally be understood as
El directing his pantheon to implement this part of creation. El would be acting in the role of a chief
executive officer (CEO). This paradigm is also a natural fit with the expressions of “Elohim said let
there be X and there was X.” It is an expression of executive authority. A modern expression, used by
a captain of the Starship Enterprise, is “Make it so.”

Gen 1:22 and 28 tell the animals and the humans to multiply (reproduce).

Environmental Stewardship

Read Genesis 1:26-28 in a good, accurate translation. Humans are given dominion over all
animal life on earth. Some say this is an assignment of responsibility for environmental
stewardship. The word translated dominion is used for the power of a captor over his captives,
their land, and their property. The captor can do anything they want with them. Typical
dispositions ranged from ethnic cleansing by slaughtering all the humans and animals and
burning all their property, to just killing all the males, to just killing the leaders and making
everyone slaves, to imposing a vassal suzerainty treaty, where the captives agree to submit to
rule of the captors and pay ransom. Examples are Genesis 37:8 (Joseph ruling his brothers);
Numbers 24:19, “And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of
cities!”; Judges 5 (the song of Deborah and Barak for their triumph over the Canaanites);
Judges 14:4, “At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.”

Nothing in Torah indicates Israel felt any responsibility toward the animals or to the planet. If
you want to build a doctrine of stewardship, you need more than a weak interpretation of these
two verses. Torah shows Israel using animals as they saw fit. They had to offer sacrifices from
them. Eventually they and the polytheists reduced the waste by offering only the parts they
didn't use (the fat and some organs). They were forbidden to use some animals like pigs, scavengers, and shellfish. That was environmental progress, but they had to modify their doctrines to accommodate it.

In the civilized world of today, we realize that we share the only planet we have. We are working toward a wise balance between preservation of the earth and its ecosystems, and use of those. Religion gets no credit for that. The religious right is infamous for its consistent opposition to anything environmental.

Gen 2:1-2 say creation was finished because the ancients never observed spontaneous creation. These accounts were an explanation for what is here now. Calling it finished is how they justify not looking for evidence of creation.

The creation narrative of Genesis 2:4+ does not attempt a comprehensive explanation and does not mention any timespan (such as a week). With Gen 2-3, Judah has specific stories about the first female human. Israel doesn't. 1:27, “male and female he created them”; 5:2, “Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.” From the Yahwist source, this narrative may echo ideas from Egypt or Babylon, where male and female do not have a separate creation event.

Genesis 3 continues the Yahwist tradition. Perhaps the Priestly and Elohist traditions had no comparable tradition. Nothing in this text suggests that the serpent was anything but a snake. To call the serpent Satan requires pesher. Covered more in my notes on the gospels, pesher or presentism is the interpretive practice by Jews from the time of the Babylonian captivity of claiming that an ancient text has a modern meaning. Also, no one would be surprised to read about a talking snake in an allegory. An allegory is written to make a point, not to explain details.

I have always been uncomfortable with the idea that “knowing good and evil” was a bad thing. I think I figured out why. Since the very next chapter begins with, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain,” and the entirety of Torah is to show Israel how to distinguish good and evil, I think 3:5 is about personally and intimately experiencing good and evil. I think the verse uses 'know' in the same sense as Genesis 4. By implication, all they have had so far was good. Gen 3:13 (and much later, 1 Timothy 2:14) says that Eve was deceived. Perhaps she had never before experienced a lie. This is the first time a human knew evil by actually doing it, experiencing it.

The text never says that Eve was the first woman, only that no suitable mate for Adam was found. Other Jewish folklore shows Lileth as Adam’s first wife, created at the same time, and from the same dirt, as Adam.

Gen 3:16-19 What is this explaining? Don't try to read your favorite doctrines into it. Instead, just read it, and see what it is explaining. The motive behind the earliest religions was to explain what they didn't understand, to answer the big mysteries of life. Which was this? Read the specific consequences of this violation to find out. For those so thoroughly indoctrinated they are incapable of reading the consequences, plainly described, as written, here they are:

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1. Snakes crawl.
2. Snakes and humans don't like each other. Snakes will hurt people. People will kill snakes. Lilith was a bad influence.
3. Childbirth is painful.
4. Husbands will dominate their wives. More generally, males dominate females.
5. Life is tough.
6. You will die because you will not be allowed to continue eating of the tree of life. Gen 3:22, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.”, is saying that Adam had joined the pantheon. So that humans would not live forever (as gods in the pantheon), they had to stop eating of the tree of life. Humans were banished from the company of the immortals. They were expelled from the garden of Eden, the garden of the gods, from Babylonian and perhaps even earlier Sumerian mythology.

It continues to amaze me how such a simple piece of ancient literature can be so consistently and intentionally misunderstood. Genesis 3 is a simple allegory rooted in the central idea of Jewish philosophy: the Mosaic Covenant. For Israel, to obey Yahweh / Elohim brings good things; to disobey brings bad things. In this case, it's their explanation for why life is tough, women don't like snakes, and why humans die. It also establishes an excuse for misogyny. If Israel had never disobeyed Torah, we wouldn't have these bad things. A hearer of these texts would find his head swimming as he recognized all the references to peer (especially Babylonian) mythology.

I found another serpent idea, which I have begun to confirm, via Bryson Hughes:

The serpent of Eden was not a snake. In Enoch the serpents were a band of 18 watchers / angels who made a pact to mutually defend one another for the crime of marrying human women. Enoch names all 18 of them and specifically notes the one which deceived Eve. "Satan" is not the devil, or a proper name. It is simply an untranslated Hebrew word which means enemy / adversary / prosecutor. Why translators choose not to translate "satan" properly can be attributed to conformity to Christian cultural mythology in which " sathan" is popularly conceived of as the proper name of the devil, which is incorrect. There are Hebrew proper names for the devil such as Beelzebub, which Translates as Lord of Flies. It is an implied reference to the foulness of that evil Spirit entity in suggesting flies are upon it as upon excrement. Another name is from the Babylonian creation myths adopted by some Hebrews, in which God subdues the dragon of chaos holding creation together by His might. This is referenced in the Psalms, the Epistles and Revelations. That dragon's name is Rahab, which is also the name of the woman of Jericho who assisted the Hebrew spies.

The book of 1 Enoch, of interest to many but canonical only to two Orthodox Tewahedo churches, the Ethiopian and the Eritrean, does have content like this. The first part, the Book of the Watchers, is generally dated to around 300 BCE. The Watchers were the angels who fathered the Nephilim in Genesis 6. The names of the holy angels are enumerated in 1 Enoch 20, and each name ends with 'el', including Michael and Gabriel.

Gen 4 Cain may be their reference to the Kenites. This is the first of many prominent exceptions to primogeniture, the inheritance right of the firstborn. Gen 5 is likely from the Priestly source. In 5:24,
Enoch was taken to serve the gods. 5:32, “After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” See Gen 10.

Gen 6:1-2, “When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.”

Ancient mythology is rife with accounts of gods having sexual relations among each other, and with humans. In this passage, el / elohim might be used in the generic sense. Most likely that's what this is talking about. These ideas were all around them. This Jewish account of Noah from the Yahwist source seems to be saying, among other things, that the God of Israel didn't like this kind of activity, and used the flood to eliminate it from earth. We never again encounter this idea in Tanakh. [See Numbers 13:33 for a possible exception.] That's my thought. See also the notes above under Genesis 3.

The first action taken by Yahweh is in verse 3. This (not Genesis 3) would be the explanation from the southern tribes for why there is death. At the very least, the reader would automatically compare these writings with peer mythology, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh. As Diaspora living in Babylon, they would have been thoroughly familiar with this literature, whether they wanted to be or not. The most dramatic difference is in what motivated the flood. It focuses on Enkidu's death, and Gilgamesh's subsequent quest for immortality. The Genesis flood story gives a different account for why we don't have immortality, and how it came about. The simple explanation for verse 3, “his days shall be 120 years.”, is that in 120 years the flood would come.

A natural phenomenon has been offered as an explanation for the inspiration for the various flood legends of the region. It's the Black Sea deluge hypothesis. It suggests that around 5600 BCE, rising sea levels after the last ice age, during meltwater pulse 1C, breached a shrinking sill between the Agean Sea and the Black Sea at the Bosporus.

Gen 6:9, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.” This is not consistent with most doctrines of universal depravity of man. I discussed what the Jews meant by righteousness. I invite all students to keep this in mind as they read the OT, and see if what I said is true.

Gen 7:2 Seven pair of clean animals. Why? (to sacrifice in 8:20). How did they know what was clean? Was this an anachronism? At the time of Noah, there's no hint that laws of clean/unclean animals had yet been given. However, they had been given by the time these texts were written. Even in 9:2-4, man became a universal omnivore. There was no clean/unclean, just don't eat the blood.

Gen 9:6, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.” – capital punishment for murder. If this were the penalty simply for killing a human, and if it were enforced, the first murder would have ended the human race. Another indication it meant murder, not just any killing of a human.
The Noahic Covenant is declared in verse 8. The literary form is the royal grant treaty, familiar to everyone in the ANE. They were typically unilateral and unconditional, but the beginning of the chapter is an indication that it included behavioral obligations by the inferior party. When the people are assigned enforcement duties, the philosophy transitions from covenant to law.

Gen 9:25-27, “Cursed be Canaan [a son of Ham]; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers. ... Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.” – This pronouncement encompassed all the ethnicities known by Israel/Judah. It provides justification for the later ethnic cleansing of Canaanites. It's also explanation or justification for the practice of slavery in the region, including slavery of Africans (presumably descended from Ham). These were an application of the “God said it; I believe it; that settles it.” mentality. Even today, to insult someone, you often say something negative about their parentage, that it was less than honorable. See Genesis 19 about xenophobia. See Deut 22:30 to see what is meant by uncovering your father's nakedness.

To help you recognize these names and understand their context, I offer a sneak preview of Exodus with these excerpts: “I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” (3:17), “When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, ...” (23:23), and “And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you.” (23:28).
Genesis 10 is the Table of Nations from the Priestly source. It claims to define the genetic origin of each ethnicity of the region. It defines “peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.”

1. **Japheth**: the coastal peoples (of the eastern Mediterranean). Not much more is said specifically about this line.

2. **Shem**: The texts we have about Eber are somewhat ambiguous about how he fit in, but the name is considered the origin of **Semitic** as it applies to ethnicities and languages. There's quite a bit of variation in how the term Semitic is used. The most important descendant, Abram, appears in the next chapter.

3. **Ham**: Considering the curse in the previous chapter, it's no surprise that the claimed descendants of Ham include traditional enemies of Israel: **Egyptians, Babylonians, Philistines**, History of Israel, by Frank Nemec, page 8
and various Canaanite groups. See also the footnote in the ESV Bible. Cush fathered Nimrod, a mighty hunter. Though this sounds complimentary, it is likely derogatory, meaning old-fashioned. The ESV notes support this idea. Cush is identified with both Assyria and Babylon. Both will later conquer Israel. The most notable descendants are Canaan, and from him, the Jebusites and various other tribes we'll encounter. Gen 10:11 explains how these people got to Assyria and Babylon.

Gen 11 (Judah speaking, the Yahwist source) gives a different explanation for the origin of language diversity. Both accounts acknowledge the existence of tribes who don't understand each other's languages. They can also be considered part of an explanation for how the north and the south could have different names for what they came to consider the same god. The tower they have in mind was probably a Mesopotamian ziggurat.

Gen 11:10-26 Why this genealogy? To show Abram as descended from Shem. It seems to contradict the (perhaps different) tradition that the Babylonians descended from Ham. Note the introduction of the players in 11:27-32.

Gen 12:3 is almost a self-fulfilling prophecy. Tribes which cursed Abram's line were often cursed by being annihilated. All the families left on earth (not annihilated) will be blessed because they blessed Judah. One example was Joseph blessing Egypt in the famine years. Part of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 12 is God's promise to be the “big brother”, or the bully protector, of Abram and his descendants. Bless and curse are not wimpy feel-good words. Curse usually implies violence. The various later expressions or reiterations or confirmations of this covenant may be the descriptions of a single covenant as they appear in the various sources (JEDP) of the Documentary Hypothesis. Immediately following the pinnacle of the Abrahamic Covenant, we have the first sister act (or its first telling).

Gen 12-13 Abram in Egypt. How could Abram understand the Egyptian language? Abram then settled into the Negeb (literally south, southern Caanan). Abram and lot were rich. Another mention of the tent, plus noticing that all the wealth described was portable, indicate this tribe was still nomadic. Lot settled generally east of the Jordan River; Abram generally west.

Gen 13:13 Sodom (see 10:19 for who was there). We don't know for sure what kinds of “wicked, great sinners against Yahweh” they were. Perhaps Ezekiel 16 answers this. 13:14-17 a promise of land, this one (cf. 12:7) with a timescale: “forever”. They did not have our modern mathematical concept of infinity. To them, this meant indefinitely, with no predetermined endpoint.

Gen 14 describes some simple warfare, and seems to come from a different source. It seems incongruous, here only to explain how Lot was caught in a conflict between four kings and five kings, and was then rescued. Recall from Gen 11:27, Lot is part of Abram's larger family unit (son of Abram's brother Haran). Lot is not a descendant of Abram, so none of the covenants apply to him or to his line. “Alternative names are given in this passage for a number of locations. This suggests that an older account has been reworded for inclusion here in Genesis.” (ESV notes) We then meet Melchizedek, a very interesting character, another king who, as many kings did, also served a limited

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priestly role. Salem most likely refers to Jerusalem. God Most High (El Elyon) is a name that would be applied to El as head of the Canaanite pantheon. It can also mean god of the mountains. What we find in Tanakh is too little to form a coherent view what the Jews thought of Melchizedek. It's a Jebusite name, and Zedek is the name of a Jebusite god. Writings of the Ancient Near East (ANE) show a very wide variety of ideas about Melchizedek. So far, I haven't found a credible set of ideas on which the strong emphasis in Hebrews is based. Chazal literature and the Babylonian Talmud identify him as Shem. Midrash says priesthood was given to Shem in Gen 9:27. In the Zohar's commentary on Gen 14, it was God who gave the tithe to Abram in the form of removing the Hebrew letter 'he' from the throne of glory and presenting it to the soul of Abram (to change his name to Abramha-m. (Wikipedia) 11Q13 (from the Dead Sea Scrolls) shows him as a divine being and applies such Hebrew titles as Elohim to him. Philo identifies him with the Logos as priest of God. Josephus refers to him both as a Canaanite chief and as a priest. 2 Enoch says he was born of a virgin and was taken by Gabriel (or Michael in some ms.) to the Garden of Eden to preserve him from the flood (without the need for Noah's Ark). An early Gnostic script found in the Nag Hammadi Library says he is Jesus Christ. Islam and the Mormons have their own stories. See also my notes on Joshua 10 and Judges 1.

Gen 14:22 Abram equates the El Elyon of Melchizedek with Yahweh. By so doing, Abram declares they are the same god. Having this Jebusite priest of El Elyon use Israel's name for God emphasizes this. As usual, we read only Israel's side of the story.

Gen 15 In a dream, Abram challenges Yahweh's promise of offspring with the fact that he (Abram) is childless. The answer was that his heir wouldn't be just someone from his entourage. It would be his biological descendant(s). ANE tradition always has the eldest son as the heir. The dream continues with a vision of a solemn covenant-ratification ceremony. Both parties pass between the halves of sacrificial animals. The implication is likely that, if I fail to keep the covenant, may this happen to me. Note carefully who passes between the halves. Both are almost certainly symbolic of God, such as in Exodus 13:21-22. Neither is Abram! That's why this is generally viewed as an unconditional covenant. (See also Jeremiah 34:16-17)

The meaning of verse 6, “And he believed the LORD and he counted it to him as righteousness” is clarified in 22:18, “because you have obeyed my voice”, and again in 26:5, “because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” That says the human requirements of this covenant had been satisfied.

Astronomical Measurement – The best current estimate is that the universe contains about $3 \times 10^{23}$ stars. Allowing each person a square yard to stand would require a square about 310 million miles on a side, almost the distance from the sun to Jupiter. Surely an omniscient god who created the universe knew how many stars it contained. Do you really think this number was intended to be taken literally? By comparison, the current population of earth (about 7.132 billion) could stand within a radius of 27 miles.

Gen 16 the Hagar incident. There is no suggestion that Sarai or Abram or Hagar did anything wrong. This was the norm. Any children would still be descendants of Abram, thus entitled to covenant benefits. Yahweh even comes to Hagar's defense. Nonetheless, you begin to see Ishmael portrayed as

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a second-class citizen. As noted below, this is Isaac's side of the story. 16:12 is generally considered to be describing the permanent Israeli-Arab conflicts.

Gen 17 Yahweh says to Abram, “I am El Shaddai.” Again we see the names connected. We also see Abram's name changed to Abraham (Sarai to Sarah). This covenant, or this retelling, or this confirmation, or this different version, is now conditional. Now you must “walk before me, and be blameless”. It's also described as an everlasting covenant. Here it's first described as a henotheistic covenant. “I will be God to you” and “I will be their God.” We have another new requirement, circumcision. “Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,” Marvin R. Wilson (in Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith) says that Egyptians practiced circumcision before the Hebrews. Another source (not yet confirmed) says that these Egyptians did this to captured Phoenecians and Hebrews, to mark them as slaves by a means less extreme (and less likely to be fatal) than castration. The Hebrews may have instituted it to disguise their immediate history as slaves.

Again, note that slavery is accepted as a matter of course, even recognized here by Yahweh. Slavery was a normal and accepted part of life in that era. The texts provide indisputable evidence, not that Yahweh approved of it, but that the people believed that Yahweh approved of it. 17:20-21 again notes the great divide between Isaac and Ishmael. The rest of the chapter clearly shows Abraham following his instructions. This is Isaac’s side of the story. All the rest of the book is about the descendants of Isaac. Islam has a different version for Ishmael's side of the story.

Gen 18 reiterates Gen 13:13, but still doesn't say what their sin was. It poses an important question in several ways. “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” “Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?” Will God behave in a way that they considered just? The answer was yes. The Psalms are full of demands that God act justly, and rectify any situation where the wicked prosper or the good suffer. This is how their god must behave. After all, that's what the covenants promised.

Gen 19 Lot offers typical Eastern hospitality to these men. Sitting at the gate typically represents a position of leadership and respect in the community. As patriarch of his clan, he was well within his rights to offer his daughters. It may seem repulsive to us, but it's their culture, not ours.

Gen 19:30-38 The scandal of Lot and his daughters, reminiscent of Genesis 9. The legend of the origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites. Make these tribes look bad before you slaughter them (Judges 3, 2 Samuel 8, 2 Kings 3, 1 Chronicles 18, 2 Chronicles 20 etc.) To attribute less-than-honorable parentage to ethnicities you hate is common practice in xenophobia.

Gen 20 another sister act. The text clearly asserts that no child of Sarah is a descendant of Abimelech. In v. 11, Abraham says, “There is no fear of El in this place.” That place is in the negeb, the south. Verses 17-18 seem to be describing actions of El and Yahweh as different players. Yahweh closed the wombs, and El opened them again. Fascinating. But beware of the 'trap' that caught me in class in verse 4. In his dream, Abimelech addresses El as Lord (not LORD). Abimelech is using a term of respect, especially a respect for authority. In the dream, El threatens Abimelech, while affirming his

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innocence. Abimelech is interacting with the god of the visitor to his land. Perhaps there wasn't fear of El in this place before, but there is now!

Based on how Abimelech treats Abraham, and what we have read so far, what should we expect for Abimelech's future? Good or bad? Why? Does this explain why Abimilech should be afraid of El? Keep this in mind as we see what happens next. Note especially where Abimelech goes later.

Gen 21 Isaac is born, reiterating the special baby theme. Isaac is circumcised, as instructed. The great divide, redux. Hagar and Ishmael head to Egypt, to found the Arabs. Is that “great nation” descended from this Egyptian “slave woman” the same nation (Egypt) which will later enslave Israel? Ishmael takes an Egyptian wife. Or is it the descendants of Ham from Gen 10? Or both?

21:22 A non-aggression treaty with Abimelech. “Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines.” From all we can tell, this was a time of peace. We haven't seen the last of the Philistines. Abraham called there on the name of Yahweh, the El 'Olam (of everlastingness).

Gen 22 In these societies, a patriarch was well within his rights to kill his children, see my notes on Gen 19 and 49. Sacrifice of the first-born son was somewhat common in early ANE. This was not a sacrifice for sin. In many of the ancient cultures practicing human sacrifice (even down to the Mayans), it was considered an honor to be the sacrifice, giving yourself to provide benefit for your entire tribe. Abraham was not unwilling to challenge Yahweh (see Gen 15). Abraham does not suggest in any way that he is being asked to do something he shouldn't do. Not until later (perhaps the Deuteronomistic reforms of Josiah) did Israel stop child sacrifice. Exodus 13 requires a substitute sacrifice for a firstborn human or donkey. This Genesis 22 account might be their explanation for why they stopped the practice of human sacrifice.

Attention to the names of God in this account shows Elohim requesting the sacrifice, but Yahweh stopped it. In verse 19, “Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba.” This gives some support to the suggestion that we are reading an account blended from a tradition (Elohist) in which Isaac is actually sacrificed, and another tradition (Yahwist) in which he is not. Views of the meaning of this text vary widely. This may also be why Gen 22:2 (from the Elohist source) says, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,” This text portion might be from a tradition in which Isaac had no brother. The justification for abandoning infant sacrifice is given in Exodus 13, namely the example of Egypt. These transitions demonstrate how a society can improve its moral standard, while justifying (rationalizing) it with earlier religious tradition. A written canon makes this improvement more difficult. Lecture 5 of the Old Testament Teaching Company course covers the subject in more detail.

I suspect that the descendants of Nahor (Abraham's brother) are listed here to show they are not descendants of Abraham, and perhaps also to show the genealogy of Rebecca and Laban.

Gen 22:15 An angel of Yahweh conveys another unilateral covenant with Abraham and his descendants. The reason: “because you have done this” [willingness to sacrifice Isaac].
Gen 23 Sarah dies at age 127. It's noteworthy because Sarah is an important figure in the line of Israel. 23:20 Abraham buys a field and cave from the Hittites in perpetuity to bury Sarah. Many other family members will be buried here.

Gen 24 begins with an affirmation that Yahweh is keeping his end of the covenant. The Canaanites (here meaning the inhabitants of the land of Canaan other than Abraham and his tribe) are already being portrayed as undesirable. They are considered descendents of Ham through his son Canaan.

Next is a rare case of a specific mate selection. Divination. He stacked the deck with Oriental hospitality customs. In standard folk tale style, heroes meet their wives at wells. Here we meet Rebekah, to become wife to Isaac. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother. She would thus be Isaac's father's brother's son's daughter. I'm sure there's a name for that relationship. In the ANE, most marriages tended to be within tribes.

Gen 25 a new wife, Keturah, and more descendants. Is their legal status specified? Abraham might have married her after the death of Sarah, though second wives were common, especially among the more wealthy. 25:6 Concubines were acceptable. The sons of the concubines were sent away and moved to the east. The sons of Midian may have become the Midianites we see in Judges 6:3. It's not clear whether Keturah was considered one of the concubines. Legal status of these descendants? 25:21 more “special baby”. Gen 25-26 tell Israel's side of the story. Esau and Jacob are born. Sibling rivalry began even before their birth. They are immediately contrasted. The name Esau means hairy, brutish, not quite civilized. Gen 25:29-34 begins to explain how treatment generally given to the eldest son are here conferred to the younger. Gen 25:23 is giving Rebekah the excuse to favor the younger.

All religions of the ANE required sacrifices to the gods. None required adherence to a moral standard. Judaism was one of the first. So far, the only implicit moral law is that against murder. Evidence from the texts is that multiple wives and concubines were a routine and accepted part of these societies. We lack authority to declare it immoral for them, when they themselves did not.

Gen 26:6 Is this another sister act? Or just a misattributed legend? Where is Gerar? A Philistine town, probably south of Gaza, perhaps near Beersheba. We hear about the Philistines. We see Isaac getting filthy rich. 26:15 Some suggest the filling of the wells was to discourage nomadic herdsmen from grazing their flocks in the area.

Gen 26:24 and 28:13 The promise reiterated. They were interlopers in Philistine land. 26:26-33 Shibah / Beer Sheba treaty with the Philistines. Obviously it didn't last. Esau married two Hittites.

Gen 27 the Jacob scam. Isaac gives to Jacob the blessing that was due Esau, the elder son. Gen 25:23 is Rebekah's implied excuse for perpetrating the scam. Besides the sold birthright, this was another explanation for favoring Jacob
over Esau, the younger over the elder. Furthermore, Esau shall serve Jacob. I think 27:29 would prevent from Jacob and Esau from cursing each other. Rebekah doesn't like Hittite women. She is active, and dominates every scene.

Gen 28 another shun of Canaanite women. 28:9 Esau took a daughter of Ishmael as another wife. 28:12 Jacob's Ladder, his famous dream. This account is very significant, since it shows God in a dream narrowing the Abrahamic Covenant to the line of Jacob (excluding Esau). The 'ladder' probably would have conjured up the mental image of a ziggurat, sometimes considered a stairway to the heavens. It is likely not an allusion to the Tower of Babel, except perhaps in the limited sense that it's a 'wormhole' between the earthly and the heavenly domains. A 'gate into heaven' was a common idea in the ANE, see ESV note on 28:17. John 1:51 is likely alluding to this, though it's not clear to me what point the author is making there. Jacob names the place Bethel (house of El). He will return to this place of remembrance.

Gen 28:20 Jacob's deal. If he believed the covenants, why would he make this deal? Perhaps just to show Esau not making the deal? It seemed unnecessary. It now obligates Jacob to giving a tithe (perhaps a one-time gift). The deal sounds like Jacob is giving God an incentive to keep him safe. Perhaps this is instead a way of acknowledging what God will do for Jacob, and showing gratitude. Part of Jacob's vow is that Yahweh shall by my El. We see this happen in 32:9.

Gen 29 The land of the people of the east might be the sons of the concubines of Abraham, as noted in Gen 25. The well stone was likely there just to keep out the wildlife. More deception.

Gen 29:31-35 Birth to Leah of southern tribes (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah)! The south is speaking here. 30 many sons by servants. Now the north speaking. 30:22 Joseph born to Rachel, another special baby.

Gen 30:27 divination. The practice is named again in Gen 44, as practiced by Joseph. The practice is later forbidden in Deut 18:10. 30:32 genetic engineering. More deception. 31:3 another covenant. 31:19 Rachel stole gods. Jacob flees to Gilead, east of the Jordan, just south of the Sea of Galilee. 31:43-50 a truce at Galeed or Mizpah. “The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.” This is not asking for protection for a fond friend. It's not a benediction! It's asking divine police to keep us from killing each other.

Gen 32:9 the first time Jacob addresses El as Yahweh, see 28:13. Jacob now takes the El of his father as his own. Jacob sent messengers to Esau in Edom (east of the Jordan, south of the Dead Sea, the name means red). The wrestling match is the first time the name Israel appears in the Bible. See the ESV notes about this renaming. The new name seems to be saying that this scrappy character even fights with God! Jacob wrestles with a man. Hosea 12:4 (if it's talking about this) says it was an angel. I found a reference suggesting that at least some rabbis teach that this was the guardian angel of Esau. Both seem to be describing this as striving with God. This being obliges by blessing Jacob (Israel). To say the meanings of this account are ambiguous and uncertain is an understatement.

I think this story is part of the explanation for why Israel thinks they are especially favored by God
over Esau and his line. They were sibling rivals even before they were born. They considered Esau to be the ancestor of the Edomites. Remember, we are reading the story as told by Israel, not by Edom.

Gen 33 Jacob and Esau 'kiss and make up'. Gen 33:4 probably inspired the language of the reunion of the prodigal son in Luke 15:20. See Gen also 27:29. Perhaps the wrestling match was about resolving the conflicts between the two of them. They made a non-aggression pact. Some references suggest something like this. Jacob settles at Succoth, probably just east of the Jordan and just south of Gilead, near Shechem. Esau returned to Seir.

Gen 34 shows Simeon and Levi taking revenge against a rape, escalating it to a deceitful slaughter of all the males of the city of Hamor and Shechem. Clearly they did not yet hold to the limitation on revenge of “an eye for an eye”. If integrity were a virtue to them, it had secondary status. The effusive words from El in Gen 35 implicitly condone the violence and deceit of chapter 34. We will get further evidence in Ex 32:32, where God intends to wipe out the Perizzites and others. We will see these two brothers (Simeon and Levi) cursed by Jacob in Gen 49 for their violence. This opens the way for Judah to gain prominence in the south.

Gen 35:2, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.” This is the first mention I recall of “foreign gods”. A henotheistic relationship is first hinted about in Gen 17. This also reminds us of Gen 31, where Rachel stole her father's household gods. Both passages seem to use the term 'gods' to refer to some material manifestation or representation. Jacob is again renamed Israel. See also 32:28. Jacob has now adopted the El of his father for himself? The earlier covenants to Abraham and Isaac are now focused on Jacob (Israel). Again, the significance of this mention is probably that Esau is not mentioned.

The chapter begins with Jacob being told by Elohim to leave the Succoth / Shechem area and “go up to Bethel and dwell there.” (Jacob was to build an altar there, where he had previously built a pillar.) This would be a wise move after their slaughter of all the males of Shechem. Verse 5 tells why they escaped with their lives. Jacob is running out of safe places to live. In Gen 35:16, they journey from Bethel toward Ephrath (Bethlehem). Why? In verse 1, God told him to dwell at Bethel.

Gen 35:22 Reuben's indiscretion. This is one of the two brothers who slaughtered all the males of the city to avenge a rape. This doesn't seem a great representation for those who claim the virtues of a permanent, external standard of morality. Gen 35:23 lists Jacob's 12 sons in one place. With the deaths of Rachel and Jacob, this marks the end of the narrative section that began with 25:19 (the generations of Isaac).

Gen 36 Focus moves to Esau. See where Esau (named Edom in 25:30, meaning red for the red stew) took his wives. Polygamy was the norm, not even noteworthy. Tribal identity is already being blended away. The use of 'chiefs' to refer to his sons (and probably some grandsons) tells us Esau is credited as the patriarch of 14 tribes. 36:31 lists some kings in Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites. Obviously this author knew about the later kings of Israel, starting with Saul around 1030BC. Abram / Abraham is best dated to somewhere early in the second millennium BC. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100, and lived for 180 years. Esau moves away from Jacob to Seir (Edom),

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east of the Jordan, south of Moab, south of the Dead Sea. I think this will be the last we hear of Esau. We will hear of Edomites, generally with a negative connotation.

Gen 37 Focus returns to Jacob. 37:3 transitions to the name Israel for Jacob. No clear significance is known for the Hebrew expression meaning a robe with long sleeves. The “robe of many colors” translation derives from a Septuagint translation. Joseph shares his imperialist dreams. His jealous brothers conspire to murder Joseph, then sell him as a slave to Egypt (via Midianites and Ishmaelites). We know how that will work out. Our pastors didn't have time in their recent sermon series, The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly, to even list all the bad! Or at least, bad by our standards. 37:36 begins the transition to the Egypt story.

Some use an extreme form of pesher to call Joseph here a type of Jesus. If the author wrote it with that objective, he did a terrible job. It was literally about Joseph's parents and brothers.

More sordid affairs in Gen 38. 38:8 see Deut 25:5-10. A consequence is the birth of Perez, yet another special baby! He and his sons are noted in 46:12. They may be the Perezites (Perizzites?) of Numbers 26:20. As we will see in Ruth 4, Perez is an ancestor of David.

Gen 39 Fast track promotions for Joseph, who presumably didn't even speak the language. The story of Potiphar is taken from the Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers. Potiphar acknowledges Yahweh as Joseph's god, and that Yahweh was responsible for Joseph's success and blessing, but does not worship Yahweh. The ancients did not consider their gods to be jealous. I don't think even Israel was henotheistic by this time. We see only the slightest of hints in that direction in the writings so far, and those hints may be anachronisms. In Gen 41, he achieves the position of vizier, second in command only to Pharaoh. 41:45 Joseph marries into a prominent Egyptian priestly family.

Unlike the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob stories, the Joseph story seems to be a unified story with a single author. In is generally considered of literary origin (not oral tradition), a bridge between the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob story of Genesis, and the Moses story of Exodus, and in the wisdom genre. “the majority of modern biblical scholars date the Joseph story in its current form to the 5th century BCE Persian era at the earliest.” (Wikipedia) That's a view of textual and historical scholars, not of theologians.
What in this story is so striking that it seems very out of place? Here is a special baby, born to Jacob by Rachel (his favorite wife), not just enslaved, but faithfully and honorably serving Hamitic peoples! That would have been a very foreign idea. The idea came from Jeremiah, see 29:1-7. This was a key part of how Judaism could survive and thrive in Diaspora.

Gen 40 dream of the pit. The pit? Remember 37:20? Imprisoned, the cupbearer and baker had no access to the magicians who typically interpreted dreams (see 41:8). Joseph had considered his own dreams as from God. Three days in the pit? We may see this idea again. Notice whom Joseph married. His marriage and his assigned name completed his integration into Egyptian culture and leadership (power). See Gen 47 for what Joseph does with this power.

Gen 41:16, 25, 28, 32 Joseph says Elohim is the one revealing the dream and causing the famine. Though Elohim is not an Egyptian god, Pharaoh chooses to act on this. Potiphar had already chosen to accept the indirect blessing from Elohim (via Joseph). At age 30, Joseph is suddenly integrated into the very top of Egyptian society with his position, name, and prominent Egyptian wife. Asenath was the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. Ephraim and Manasseh are born to her.

Gen 42 The scene changes back to Canaan. The story explains how all the descendants of Jacob got to Egypt. This had been forbidden in Gen 26, but delayed in 43:3. Joseph plays games. 43:23 Joseph lies about who put the money in the sacks. The Hebrew brothers were not surprised to see an Egyptian acknowledging their god. More extortion. Hebron to Goshen (Geshen) is about 200 miles, about the distance from San Jose to Reno or Visalia. Goshen was probably in the eastern region of the very fertile Nile delta. It would have been a good place to pasture herds. Joseph engineers their settlement into Goshen. I read a suggestion that “Apparently at this time Egypt was ruled by the "Shepherd kings" who had come in from adjoining Eastern countries and imposed their rule on Egypt. So the native Egyptians would not look highly upon shepherds, since they did not like being ruled over by non-Egyptians with the same occupation. This very fact (that they were shepherds) would help to keep Jacob's descendants a separate people while in Egypt.”

(Gen 45:5 and 9) Joseph tells his brothers that the current state of affairs was orchestrated by Elohim. Have we seen any basis for how Joseph knew or believed this? If not, then this is the first expression of that idea.
Gen 46 Elohim belays an earlier order not to go to Egypt. The idea of verse 4, “I [Elohim] myself will go down with you to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation.,” is an anachronism. The idea first appeared in the Diaspora, with Israel (the southern tribes) in Babylon. It is expressed in Isaiah as “God with us”. The God of Israel was transformed from a typical regional god of the ANE into a god of a people, wherever they happened to be. With this idea, Judaism flourished in Diaspora. This is another strong indication these texts were written during Diaspora, in Babylonia.

Gen 46:31-34 conniving, manipulation. Tell Pharaoh what he wants to hear so he will give you what you want. See 45:10 and ESV notes on Goshen. See also 43:32. The Egyptians were Hamitic, and the ethnic hatred of the Semitic peoples for the Hamitic peoples was likely mutual. See the Table of Nations (2200BCE) in the ESV Bible at Genesis 10 and Gen 9:20-27.

Gen 47 Joseph opens with his pity party. Perhaps this was a typical discourse introduction of the time. 47:11 is likely also an anacronism. Rameses didn't exist until the 13th century BCE. Perhaps the author is describing the place with a modern name familiar to his readers, rather than by the name it had at the time. Perhaps the author didn't know the name it had at the time.

Pharaoh accepts this engineered solution. He then recruits some Hebrew shepherds for his own flocks. Seems strange in view of the preceeding comments. 47:13 see 41:47-49 and 56-57. Joseph exploits the famine to enslave the people of Egypt and Canaan to Pharaoh, forcing them to sell themselves into slavery. 47:22 Only the priests keep their land. I wonder of Joseph's wife had any say in that. Joseph enacts a 20% tax on gross (not net) income.

All the people of Egypt are now broke, herdless, foodless, seedless, landless, enslaved, and encumbered with a 20% tax on gross. Pharaoh how has practically unlimited power. In this account, Joseph is credited with accomplishing that. That tax stands to 'this day' (verse 26), probably referring to when this account was written, most likely around 500BCE.

Gen 47:30 Jacob demands to be buried in Canaan, the promised land. Joseph is required to seal his promise with the hand-under-the-thigh ceremony, see also 24:9. It's a sign of a solemn vow. This burial will happen in 49:29-50:14. That text shows who is already buried there, and refers to its purchase in Gen 23.

Gen 48 Jacob rehearses the vision of El Shaddai and the terms of the (unconditional) covenant. He then takes what seems to be an unusual action. He elevates his grandsons to the status of sons. They are to be heads of their respective tribes. See 1 Chron 5:1-2 and Gen 35:22-23. Because Joseph was designated firstborn in place of Reuben, he qualifies for a double inheritance. That means Ephraim and Manasseh each receive a share equal to that of each of the other sons of Jacob. Between the two of them we have yet another younger-over-elder anomaly. This account explains why Ephraim as a tribe was more prominent than one would expect for a grandson of Jacob.

Gen 48:6 (to Joseph), “And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.” Unlike Ephraim and Manasseh, the other sons of Joseph remain Joseph's sons.

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Gen 48:15 Joseph pronounces a blessing on Joseph and his sons with a three-fold invocation to Elohim, Elohim, and the angel. See 28:15, 31:11, 13, and 24. In context, angel (messenger) seems to be used as a reference to a communication or an action by Elohim, rather than a more modern conception of an angel as a being.

Gen 49 Most of Genesis 49 is Jacob's last will and testament. In class, someone suggested that this was pointless and should be skipped. What do you think? Why did the author include this text? What did it mean to the people of Israel?

Only reluctantly do I ask for thoughts from texts we haven't covered yet. Did the tribe of Ephraim really have prominence? How did that prominence end up in the tribe of Judah? Why the criticism of Simeon and Levi? (That's from what we've already read). In spite of that, how will Levi come to be the tribe of the priests? Did either tribe actually ever get any land? (Hint: See Num 18:23-24, Num 35, Joshua 19 and 21.) Map 4 of the ESV Study Bible is one of many sources to see the geographic allocations attributed to the various tribes.

In his swan song, Jacob (Israel) lays down the law for his sons. Judah gets prominence, including military and political leadership. As 49:29 shows, Jacob as patriarch could command practically anything. It provides justification for David's conquering and unification of the united monarchy. Jacob demands to be buried in the family cave. Gen 50 Joseph takes a leave of absence to do this. 50:7 looks like Egyptian officials accompanied them (out of respect?), but the rest of the text seems to indicate it was the elders of the Hebrews. 50:15 The brothers lie to Joseph. 50:24 Joseph tells them they will not stay in Egypt, but Elohim will bring them out of Egypt, back to their own land. Segue to Exodus.

**Exodus Notes**


Ex 1:8 “Now” belies a gap of perhaps 300 years after the glory of Joseph. The greater tribe of Israel was 70 descendants (excluding slaves) at the time of Joseph. The paranoia of verse 9 suggests a population significantly higher than 70. Does this kill-the-sons story sound familiar? The Slaughter of the Innocents attributed to Herod in Matthew 2 is, at the very least, a literary device to cause the reader to draw parallels between Jesus and Moses. There is no historical confirmation that the Slaughter of the Innocents ever happened. On that subject, evidence from archaeology is that the exodus, as described, did not happen. (Finkelstein, Israel and Silberman, Neil Asher "The Bible Unearthed" 2001 p 63) The 'special baby' theme for Moses will be echoed in Jesus. Any Jewish gospel readers would immediately think of Moses. Moses gets back into Hebrew territory and takes a Hebrew wife. The seed is planted: Elohim knows what's happening, and remembers the covenant. The account suggests about 80 years from the new pharaoh to the exodus.

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Ex 1:11 This reference to Raamses is part of the reason I lean toward the later date of 1260 for the exodus (vs. the earlier 1446 date). See page 33 of the ESV Study Bible.

Ex 2:1 Our last view of Levi was not particularly flattering (Gen 34). Now, a descendant of Levi stands to be the messiah of Israel from Egypt, and the unquestioned channel for the Law (Torah) from God to the people of Israel. The descendants of Levi, once denied land, will become the designated priestly line. Go figure. Why do I express it that way? So you, the reader, will think about what's going on, and what the Jewish people are thinking when they do what they do.

Ex 2:10 Moses means drawn out of the water. It's a nice name to choose for someone who will draw Israel out of Egypt. I expect this was just enough time for Pharaoh's daughter Bithiah to serve as a wet-nurse, but it could have been longer. Unnamed in Exodus, Midrash identifies the Bithiah of 1 Chronicles 4:18 as this person. Though Bithiah called Moses her son, it was not by blood, so Moses probably could never have been a pharaoh. “In Acts 7:23, Stephen gives Moses' age at this time as 40 (reflecting Jewish interpretative tradition).” (ESV note on verse 11)

The protection of Moses parallels Isis, hiding her child from Set, who is threatened by the child, in a thicket of papyrus in the Nile Delta. The theme of Isis nursing her child is common in Egyptian art. (Wikipedia)

Ex 2:15 Moses sits down by a well. Dangerous! It risks finding a wife. See Gen 24:11 and 29:2. The reader would recognize this from the heroic folk tale genre. The hero is born under special circumstances, leaves home, finds his wife at a well, has a helper, faces a dramatic challenge and is thwarted by an opponent, and triumphs over it. He receives a mark or brand and is transfigured with a name change. (Amy-Jill Levine, Teaching Company course 653, The Old Testament, Lecture 7)

The Midianites are portrayed in Gen 25 as descendants of Abraham by Keturah. They may have been connected, religiously and politically, with the Moabites. They are thought to have worshiped gods including Baal-peor and Ashteroth. Other historians suggest worship of Yahweh originated in Midian. See Moses – A First Appraisal on page 27 about the Kenite Hypothesis. Ex 3 can be viewed as supporting this idea. Yahweh appeared to Moses in the famous burning bush, but then identified himself with the Elohim of Israel. This narrative seems to be defining the bush as the point where the Yahweh of Midian becomes identified with the Elohim of Israel. Ironically, Gen 37:36 says the Midianites are the ones who sold Joseph to Egypt. Most (all?) of the rest of Tanakh is not favorable toward Midian.

Any ambiguity about the status of Yahweh vs. Elohim is resolved in Exodus 3, culminating in verses 15 and 18. The key phrase appears 240 times in Deuteronomy, “Yahweh our Elohim.” This idea was clearly foundational to the author(s) of Torah.

The “many days” of Ex 2:23 is probably 40 years, see also Acts 7:30 and Ex 2:11 and 7:7.. It's a popular time interval.

Ex 3:7, 10 is the first time we see God referring to Israel as “my people”. Ex 3:20 God reiterates his

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intent to play the promised 'bully big brother' role on behalf of Israel. It's part of the covenant.

The name Horeb is used only in the Elohist and Deuteronomist sources. The name Sinai is used only in Torah by the Yahwist and Priestly sources. Most believe these are different names for the same place. There are many opinions about where this place is.

We see the famous encounter between Moses and Yahweh. In 3:6, Yahweh identifies himself as the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We see a reiteration of Gen 50:24, with the first list of the doomed peoples of the land they are to conquer.

In Exodus 3:14, we see the “I am” declaration. It's an answer to the question (appropriate in a polytheistic world) of the previous verse, “Which god are you?” That's an appropriate question to ask in a polytheistic world. I found a whole website aiming to explain this, at http://www.exodus-314.com/. I have scarcely started looking at it. Wikipedia also lists a variety of interpretations. They suggest that “The word Ehyeh is considered by many rabbinical scholars to be a first-person derivation of the Tetragrammaton, see for example Yahweh.” Moses is instructed to tell his people that Yahweh is the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Go talk to Pharaoh. It won't be easy. Eventually you'll plunder Egypt. He will be what he is. It’s hard for us to infer pronunciation in a language lacking vowels.

The “land flowing with milk and honey” conveys an image of abundance. Amy-Jill Levine notes that these are renewable resources. Exploiting them doesn’t require killing anything.

Ex 4 Moses's staff becomes his authentication. It explains the involvement of Aaron. Aaron appointed as proxy. The official chain of command and communication is to be God → Moses → Aaron → the people. 4:16 seems strange to us, “you [Moses] shall be as God to him [Aaron].” Most likely this is describing a relationship like Joseph is said to have had with Pharaoh. 4:22 Israel has firstborn status. This is covenant language. Israel is God's son. This is the antecedent of Deut 14:1, Psalm 2:7, and Psalm 89:26-28. Moses is to convey this analogy by threatening Pharaoh's firstborn son. 4:24 This strange story seems to be an emphasis of the importance of circumcision to the covenant. Presumably Yahweh, after all the preceding grand interactions, was about to kill Moses because his son wasn't circumcised. But his wife goes through a ceremony and makes it all OK. Moses then tells Aaron about his new job. Together, they tell the congregation, which believes them.

In infancy (perhaps somewhat beyond), Moses was nursed by his mother. After that, Moses was raised Egyptian woman. Like Sargon of Akkad, Moses was rescued by a woman. He spent much of his adulthood in self-imposed exile in Midian. While Moses knew he was a Hebrew, he may have known little about his people.
Ex 5:1, “Thus says Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel.” This is the epitome of a prophet. That's the role of a prophet. To hear messages from God, and tell them to the people. The request to pharaoh is, on the surface, a modest one. We're not told the nature of this feast. But it's portrayed as a religious observance. This new pharaoh does not know Yahweh. It has been probably 300 years since Joseph. Even then, Joseph identified his god as Elohim (not Yahweh). It's plausible that in 5:1, Moses uses el in a generic sense, or that pharaoh interpreted it that way. A ruler of Egypt, himself probably considered deity, had no reason to take orders from a god of another region. The Egyptians know these people as the Hebrews. That name probably refers to the Semitic peoples, described as descendents of Shem, sons of Eber, see Genesis 10:21. Verse 3 gives the people's reason to make this sacrifice: “lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” In verse 21 (for the first time) the Jewish foremen blamed Moses and Aaron.

Ex 5:22 Moses takes on the role of communicating from the people back to Yahweh. Moses complains to God.

Ex 6:1 Yahweh reiterates his intent to keep his covenantal commitment to play the bully big brother role.

Ex 6:3 a very explicit unification message! Another reiteration of the covenant. Whenever you think about Yahweh vs. Elohim, read this text. As noted earlier, Moses may have known the Yahweh name from his time in Midian. Yahweh is now bringing Moses up to speed with what he missed during his 40 years raised as an Egyptian, and his 40 years as a Midianite. Moses lives another 40 years. These authors (and the traditions from which they write) like 40's. How long did it rain for the flood? This text may be this author's explanation for how the Elohim of Israel came to take on the name of a Midianite deity. It's something that early readers (or listeners to prior oral tradition) of Torah would have wondered.

I have been accused of overemphasizing the usage of these two names for the deity of Israel. We, as readers two and a half millennia later, are not free to redefine the meanings the authors intended to convey to their direct audience, or to impute our own reasons for why they wrote the way they did. If we wish to learn from the texts, we need to work to discern the author's meaning and, where possible, the author's intent. Any explanation we offer must be consistent with this text, and the many other places in Torah where great care is taken in how these names are used.

Ex 6:5 Remember whom the text credits with causing everyone in Egypt to become a slave of pharaoh? Joseph. The present difficulties of Israel are an unintended consequence of the earlier actions of Joseph. 6:7 You will see the “Yahweh your Elohim” phrase ad nauseum in Deuteronomy. “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am Yahweh your Elohim.” The text shows Yahweh convincing Moses and the people that he is the god (Elohim) that they have been worshiping.

Ex 6:12 Moses tries to excuse himself again with, “How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?” The meaning is unclear, but it likely refers to 4:10 or to 4:24-26. Is this an
admirable trait of humility? Read Ex 5:10-17.

Ex 6:14 This genealogy focuses on Levi (see my note above for 2:1). It's needed to lay the groundwork for Moses to play a central role for the nation (and religion) of Israel, and for Aaron to be the head of a permanent priestly line. Aaron married into a prominent line of the tribe of Judah. We will see Amminidab in the genealogy of David from Perez in Ruth 4:20. We will see his son Nahshon as head of that tribe (Numbers 2:3). Gen 38 shows Perez as an anomaly, explaining why he received prominence normally due to the firstborn. The chapter closes with a summary of its beginning.

Ex 7:1 is very strange to Christians who try to apply modern theology to ancient Israel. “And Yahweh said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like Elohim to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.'” Looking ahead, I think this refers to acts that Moses will perform as he acts on behalf of Yahweh. I think it parallels what Pharaoh effectively said to Joseph with, “I have made you like Pharaoh to the people of Egypt.” In verse 3, Yahweh will do the signs and wonders. But as the drama unfolds, the events will come by command from Moses. Ex 7:7 sets the timeframe in the context of the rest of the account. The date is now probably around 1260 BCE, for the later exodus dating. See my notes in the course syllabus. 7:8 Pharaoh asks for authentication by signs. The duel of the magicians begins. The side which always wins is the side writing the story. Egyptian texts have plenty of descriptions of magicians doing these feats. I can't find the reference now, but I recall reading a suggestion that, since many of these plagues correspond to gods of Egypt, they were chosen as insults to the gods of Egypt.

Ex 7:3-4 is very clear and unambiguous. “But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.” From the perspective of your doctrines of inspiration, is this true? Is this fair? What does it say about the nature of God? Is that true? How do you reconcile your answers with your other doctrines? Does God change? If your doctrines conflict, at least some of them are wrong. If reconciling your doctrines requires extraordinary measures, your doctrines probably conflict. We should be able to agree that the text clearly expresses what the author(s) believed. Some texts (like 9:32) say Pharaoh hardened his heart. This may have been a difference in understanding between the Yahwist and the Priestly heritages. See also 1 Samuel 6:6. Most say God did it. Maimonides says God withheld the power of repentance. “At some point, it’s too late to file a plea bargain.” (https://whatspshat.org/2014/01/03/heavyheart/) Linguistically, the Hebrew words for heavy and respected share the same root. Perhaps this is saying that Yahweh respected the choice that Pharaoh made. (same source)

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Ex 9:6 “All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died.” Did the Egyptians (the common people, as distinguished from Pharaoh) bear any culpability in what was happening to the Hebrews? Is it fair that the Egyptians should suffer? Many people today refuse to worship a god who does things like this. Does God change? Is this the same God of Christianity? Some early Christians didn't think so. The Marcionites considered the Hebrew God a tyrant, a demiurge, and that the God of Christianity was a different god.

Ex 7:5 This story is still under the worldview of regional gods with regional influence. There is no claim that Yahweh is the only god, or that Egypt should worship Yahweh in any way. The message was that the god of Israel had influence over Israel. That included influence over neighbors, but only insofar as Israel is involved. The text clearly shows the sorcerers on both sides doing the same thing. Where there is a difference, those of Moses are stronger. The implication is that (not in general, but in this event) the god of Israel is stronger than the god(s) of Egypt. My daddy can beat up your daddy. That's exactly what God promised in the covenant (Gen 12:3, Ex 3:20, Ex 6:1).

Ex 7:8 the serpent is likely the crocodile, named by the ancient Greeks as the 'lizard of the Nile'. Calling it the Petsuchos, Egyptians worshiped it as the son of their god Sobek (shown at the right). When a Petsuchos died, it was mummified.

Ex 8:3 Heqet was the Egyptian frog-goddess of fertility.

Ex 8:19 The magicians attribute the signs of Moses to Elohim. 8:26 Moses acknowledges sacrificial practices different from those of Egypt. 10:3 identifies Yahweh, the Elohim of the Hebrews. It's possible that in passages like this, el is used as a generic word for a god. In that case, the speaker is distinguishing the god of the Hebrews from a god of Egypt (or from anywhere else). Nowhere is Moses or Aaron asking Pharaoh or the Egyptians to worship the god of the Hebrews. They have no criticism of the gods of the Egyptians, though their ambivalence shows up later. They ask only for Pharaoh to let the Hebrews worship their own god. There is no concept of evangelism here.

Ex 9:8 Finally Moses gets to do something on his own, without Aaron as proxy. 9:9 Tim G. said the boils would have made the Egyptian magicians unqualified to perform their duties. 9:14 We again see the suffering of innocent Egyptians, but now we are given a reason. See also the note on 10:2 below. It is for Yahweh to show off his power. 9:16 Another portrayal of Pharaoh as a helpless toy. 9:19Oops. Presumably Egypt's livestock were all killed 10 verses ago. Anyone have an explanation? 10:2 An admission of the reason for all the drama. A typical additional reason is that neighboring tribes
think twice about attacking a tribe with a legendary fierce god on their side. 10:26 apparently this was not a predetermined ceremony. Torah had not yet been dictated; the ceremonies had not yet been solidified. This is a natural heritage for nomadic herdsmen, whose herds were always with them. 10:29 Moses says his final goodbye. 11:2 The Hebrews ask for the spoils, adding insult to injury. Tim G (I think) suggests these may effectively be back wages for time in slavery. If so, why should their fellow slaves pay it?

Ex 12 The Hebrew calendar is calibrated to this date. The Passover ceremony is instituted. The description sounds like an established tradition overlaid onto a tradition of national heritage. 12:5 The lamb shall be without blemish. Clearly what we call perfection was not required. Enough qualified to provide a yearling male lamb for each household. 12:12 “on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.” This is a battle between the gods. Again, at this stage, there is not even a hint that there is only one god. It's the god of the Hebrews against the gods of Egypt. This is the first sign of direct criticism of, or conflict with, the gods of Egypt. 12:31 Maybe this is the final goodbye to Moses. 12:36 the plunder alluded to in 11:2. This is to show that Gen 15:14 was completed.

**Population of Ancient Israel**

600,000 men??? In Goshen? All this from herdsmen? Pi-Ramesses was one of the largest cities of ancient Egypt, with a population of 300,000. A rural population of herdsmen (just the men) twice this number? I found just one estimate of the entire population of ancient Egypt at around 5 million. Even by the Persian period, with more advanced technology, the population of all of Judea (Israel) was likely never more than 30,000 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_ancient_Israel_and_Judah#Persian_period). We should never be surprised to find exaggeration in legend, with numbers inflating with every retelling. One overview of scholarship regarding the historicity of the Exodus can be found in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Exodus#Historicity and of course anyone wishing scholarship more to their liking can find it. See also The Ethnic Cleansing of the Conquest on page 37.

Ex 12:40 430 years in Egypt. Gen 15:13 is given as an explanation for this. It's reasonable to consider the 400 years there as a round number. 12:44 A slave may partake in Passover only if he is circumcised.

Ex 13 Consecration / confiscation of the firstborn. I think it's first mentioned here. Again, likely an insertion of an established tradition onto 'history'. See the discussion under Genesis 22. Donkeys and humans can be redeemed.

To me, this is a great example of a triumph of social morality over religion. They came to realize that infant sacrifice was stupid and abhorrent, so they stopped doing it. Religion found a way to rationalize it. We see many more examples in the Bible of this happening within Israel, nd even more as we examine Second Temple Judaism. First in Diaspora, now in the absence of a temple, Jews realize they do just fine without offering sacrifices. Christianity made that even more widespread by offering the region's first free religion. The universal sacrifice meant that no sacrifices would ever again be required.

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Some interpret the eighth-day instruction as a suggestion that, for humans, circumcision may have been a substitute for infant sacrifice. Remember who caused the slavery? Joseph. Why unleavened bread? 13:16 is a colorful exhortation to remember. It is not an institution of a requirement for a physical object like the ephod or the phylactery (Deut 6:8, 11:18 etc.). 13:17 a sudden transition to Elohim. Discussion returns to Yahweh in verse 21. We see the role of the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. 13:18 equipped for battle (but kept away from the Philistines). Why? We've seen no hint of battle during these 400 years, or even of any time back to Abram.

Ex 14 We don't know where these places were, or exactly what places they meant by the sea (or the Red Sea). The name red might have referred to the direction (south) rather than the color of anything. Some scholars think thys *Yam Suph* may refer to various places was called the Sea of Reeds. The word for reed is the same as the material of Moses's basket. See Wikipedia on “*Yam Suph*” for an overview of these ideas. Others (bible.ca/archeology) suggest the average Jew uses Red Sea to refer to the Gulf of Aqaba, the opposite side of the Sinai peninsula. As noted earlier, this story may echo Noah's flood. 14:6 Pharaoh went along with his army. In the (unlikely) event that he led the charge from the front lines, he would have been killed. Sometimes we can get confirmation or more details from peer writings of other nations or tribes. We can't do this with the Exodus, since there is no record of it outside of Torah. The parting of the waters echoes the creation and flood narratives. Some say 1 Cor 10:4 describes these pillars as Christ. The connection seems very weak. 14:10 Blame Moses. 14:6 would qualify as a miracle, since it is an apparent violation of natural law *on command*. 14:14 is the first expression of this nature. 14:19 The angel of Elohim is generally used as descriptive of an appearance or presence of God, rather than as some form of heavenly being of later usage. This is much more consistent with the other descriptions of the pillars, especially the first. The role shifts from leader to protector. For the rest of the chapter, the author very clearly expresses the cause of the events. 14:31 First appearance of the ideas of fearing or believing God. It is offered as explanation for why Israel feared / believed in Yahweh and in Moses.

Ex 15 as student asked, “Why on earth is there a song here?” Good question. This is the first instance we see of praise given to Yahweh. Besides a typical medium for praise, song is used as a memory aid and as a unifying practice in collective religious ceremony. This one is called Song of the Sea (*Shirat HaYam* or *Az Yashir Moshe*). It may well be the oldest chapter in Torah, perhaps even in the Bible. (Wright) If this was a song sung to music, as we think of it, we have no clue what it might have sounded like. 15:2 is a good example showing the Old Testament meaning of the word translated salvation. It simply means protection from my enemies. 15:11 One god among many. 15:15-16 A common purpose of fierce legends was to make potential enemies fear you. These verses are a clear indication that this song was a later composition, inserted here into the text. It was not sung as-is at the time. They certainly would not yet have known any effect of these stories on the Philistines or Canaanites. They were even told not to go that way. 15:21 the Song of Miriam is much shorter. Who says the women are the talkative ones?

Exodus tells us practically nothing about the first 300 years in Egypt. Likely they would have continued as herdsmen, largely independent of Egypt until a pharaoh came along who wanted some slave labor. Their society would be tribal, strongly patriarchal. Whatever the patriarch says is what is done. Anything resembling Aristotle’s concept of rule of law is still a long way into the future. In
Egypt, whatever pharaoh says is what is done. Disagreements between tribes were resolved by negotiation and by fighting. From this point on, the tribes of Israel are on their own, with no influence or control from Egypt.

Ex 15:32 Marah was probably near the northeast shore of the sea. Water described as bitter is usually alkaline, but sometimes just brackish. It might be 'Ain Hawarah, which still has springs of salty and sulphurous water. There is a type of barberry which grows in the desert and is used to make brackish water less bitter. 15:25b might be simply an expression of the covenant. Scholars think it's more like a redaction, since the law at Sinai had not yet been given. 15:27 Elim might be about halfway to Sinai, about 45 miles from Marah. This is probably a reasonable distance for a 3-day journey. It's probably as far as they could go by carrying their own food and water. It might be Wadi Gharandel. “In Wadi Gharandel the water is very evil-smelling and bad-tasted in spring, but said to be sweeter in winter. There is a plentiful supply of water here.” (The Topography and Geology of the Peninsula of Sinai (Western Portion), United Arab Republic Survey Department) Plentiful is a relative term. I doubt it could supply anywhere near enough water for a million people plus their animals and then replenish supplies for them to carry. To me, this is but one of many indications that the population claim of 600,000 is vastly overstated.

Ex 16 resumes the journey along the eastern shore of the sea between Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula. The whole peninsula is about 23,000 square miles. Smaller than Maine, it's about the area of West Virginia. From Marah to Mt. Sinai is about 260 miles by road today. That's about the distance from Cupertino to Reno or Bakersfield. It's still dry and mostly barren. It's about the same distance from Mt. Sinai to the promised land, about a 6-hour drive today. More grumbling. Provision of manna. This is likely either an anachronism (since the Sabbath commandment had not yet been given), or it is portrayed as the origin of the idea of Sabbath. This becomes a key Jewish distinctive. 16:16 is the first hint of socialism. From each according to his ability; to each according to his need.

Ex 17 Grumbling about water at Rephidim (perhaps almost at Mt. Sinai). Strike the rock. Battle with Amalek (Gen 14:7, probably inhabitants of northern Sinai Peninsula). They bring a force strong enough to attack a million armed people? Hold my hands. First mention of Joshua. Unfair treatment of Amalek. After all, the Hebrews were the intruders. Here begins the theme of obliteration of other tribes. We will discuss this in more detail when we get to Joshua. Their willingness to fight and obliterate the Amalekites is justified by showing the unsavory parentage of Amalek: Esau (who sold his birthright) through his son Eliphaz and his concubine Timna). The ethnic cleansing of the Amalekites is completed in 1 Samuel 15. Saul didn't finish the job, so he lost his job as king. Samuel finally finished it.

An Aside – Moses – A First Appraisal

Finally, in April 2013, the pieces are starting to come together for me. I'm getting the big picture. Exodus 18 is a good time to look back at Moses and what these writings about him mean. I'll express this in the form of questions that the tribes of Israel would be asking. Among other things, these texts were written to show the answers to those questions.

1. Why is this Midianite hailed as the rescuer of Israel and the chief seer or medium of Israel? We don't like the Midianites. They are descendants of a concubine of Abraham, Keturah (Gen 25:4,
1 Chronicles 1:32-33). They sold Joseph to Egypt (Gen 37:36). We'll defeat them in battle (Judges 6-8, Numbers 31). A: Well, he's not really a Midianite. He's a descendant of Levi (Gen 2), brother of Aaron.

2. Why did no one know him as a child? A: He was raised Egyptian.

3. Why did no one know him as an adult? A: He self-exiled to Midian after murdering an Egyptian (Ex 2). There, he collected a wife, children, and probably their god. As noted at Ex 2:15, Moses married a daughter of a priest of Midian. My strong suspicion from Ex 3 and the other texts is that Reuel (aka Jethro, which might have been a title) was a priest of Yahweh. The name means friend of El. This marriage may have been the unification of Elohim with Yahweh. Ex 13 credits Yahweh with rescuing Israel from Egypt. Throughout Exodus, who has been talking with Moses? Yahweh, not Elohim. In Ex 18, Moses seems to be telling Reuel that his god rescued Israel. I'm sure I'm missing some subtleties in these exchanges, but that seems to be the focus.

4. Wait, we know Aaron as the head of our priestly line. How did this Moses get top billing? Moses didn't want to speak, so Aaron did all the talking.

Is Moses real or myth? That's impossible to answer conclusively. There is no reference to him outside of Jewish writing, not even in any Egyptian source. “His infancy parallels that of Sargon of Akkad: protected by women from execution by an evil king, placed in a reed basket, and rescued. Folk tale motifs abound here. His infancy account recollects the primeval history. The term for Moses’s basket is the same for Noah’s ark (tevah). He escapes drowning, as does Noah. His name may suggest an anterior story. Exodus 2:10 provides a Hebrew etymology from “draw forth” (from the water). 'Moses' is a good Egyptian name, like Ramses and Thutmose.” (Amy-Jill Levine, op cit, Lecture 8)

… and now back to the story.

I think it took exposure to the Babylonian idea of monotheism for the Diaspora Jews to fully reconcile the unification of Elohim and Yahweh. This competes with the covenant as a key theme of Torah. Genesis 17 is probably the first textual hint of henotheism. To this point in the texts, we have no hint of monotheism. The Documentary Hypothesis (now better named the Documentary Theory) and its variants encompass the majority of scholarly analysis of Torah. The dates of composition / redaction / editing are placed around the time of the Babylonian Captivity. If you reject that, you abandon the use of key tools to help understand the texts.


Ex 18:2 Perhaps Moses sent his wife and children back home for their protection. 18:15 Moses is acting in the role of a seer. The people come to him to inquire of God. Moses chose leaders and delegated this particular task with a hierarchical organization. This wasn't government. This was just determining an answer from God for a question of practice. Likely they already had tribal
'government'. This may be the justification for a religious rather than a civil hierarchy. Much of this writing may be for the purpose of explaining and justifying why we do things the way we do. 1 Samuel 9:9 seems to try to bridge the gap in terminology in a parenthetical expression, "(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer,” for today's “prophet” was formerly called a seer.)"

Ex 19:3 “while Moses went up to Elohim, Yahweh called to him out of the mountain.” This is the same mountain, and the same situation, as Exodus 3. Yahweh claim credit for the action against the Egyptians. Yahweh offers the conditional Sinaitic Covenant. All the people of Israel agree to be bound by the terms. By showing only Israel accepting this covenant, this author may be laying another block in the foundation of their justification for slaughtering anyone else.

Ex 19:6 “you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” The priests rule the people and give the orders. This was not unusual in the ancient world.

Ex 19:9 Yahweh promises an audience with the people, but then makes it a private event for only Moses and Aaron. There are to be no other witnesses. Deuteronomy 5:4 says it actually was face to face for the people. Deuteronomy 34:10 mentions “Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.” The mountain becomes untouchable.

At this point, I begin using Harmony of the Law – Volume 3, by a name most find familiar: John Calvin (Calvin, Harmony). But I won't use it much, since it's not the kind of 'harmony' appropriate for this study. We will examine Exodus 34, covering the publication of the second edition of the tablets (also a private ceremony), and Deuteronomy 5, the account via the Deuteronomist source.

Ex 20 begins with a powerful statement of identity. “And Elohim spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am Yahweh your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” A concise codification of (part of) the new obligations of Israel under the contract they just accepted. They are very clearly portrayed as dictated directly by God to Moses and Aaron, with no other witnesses. No one seems to care that this makes the claim to divine origin untestable.

Ex 20:3 is the prime henotheistic requirement. El was head of the Canaanite pantheon. Verse 3 could be construed as saying nothing more than this. Verse 5 rules out that idea. 4 is another Jewish distinctive: no material representations of any god or (just for good measure) anything else. Perhaps this is an anachronistic injection of the hedge concept. To make sure I won't make an image of a god (an idol), I won't make an image of anything. Such images are conspicuously absent from the tabernacle. The Hebrew word Pacal means to hew or to carve. Charash and Pathach are used for engrave. I don't know if this is a significant distinction. Apparently Solomon made some exceptions for the temple in 2 Chronicles 3 as he built the temple to include cherubim and an altar with a metal sea and gourd figures, oxen, etc. Perhaps they were acceptable if they were poured / molded instead of carved. Perhaps some were acceptable if they were not representations of other gods. I know of no other god of the ANE who is jealous. Today jealousy is not considered a positive moral attribute. Even in the Roman Empire, I think Judaism (and later Christianity) is the only monotheistic or even henotheistic religion.

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Ex 20:5 shows this jealous god punishing a man's (or a tribe's) children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren for his misbehavior. This will be repeated in Ex 34:7, and is probably a corporate rather than an individual threat. The response by Jesus to the question about the man born blind shows that by Second Temple Judaism (or at least by the first century), at least some of the Jews had abandoned this idea as it applied to individuals. It certainly doesn't appear in Christianity, though many modern Christians think it does.

For the most part, Deut 5 is identical to Ex 20 (at least in the ESV). Deuteronomy gives a different reason for Sabbath (another Jewish distinctive). Ex 20 reflects the Yahwist tradition with “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” Deut 5:15 reflects the Deuteronomist tradition with “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

Ex 20:7 is almost certainly more than today's simple epithets. It might refer to swearing by a name of God to affirm the truth of your words. Making oaths of this type was at times a prominent part of Jewish culture. 20:16 is also more than simply lying. It's accusing another in court of wrongdoing and asking that they be punished. Similarly, 20:17 is almost certainly more than simply wanting goods. It's most likely a declaration of property rights. It's fine to want a nice house like your neighbor's. It's not acceptable to steal it from him. That idea is congruent with all the rest of Torah. Objection to simply wanting goods is not.

Ex 34 begins with “and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.” but then says a lot more than Ex 20. Not just more, this list is very different, despite being the same words. No amount of rationalization is enough to reconcile these two versions of the Decalogue. The actual, simple explanation is that Ex 20 represents the Elohist tradition (called the Ethical Decalogue) or a Priestly version of the Deuteronomist from Deuteronomy 5, and Ex 34 the Yahwist tradition (called the Ritual Decalogue). I suspect this might be the most intensively redacted area of Torah. The Wikipedia article on Ritual Decalogue provides useful tools for comparisons of these three renderings of the Decalogue. In verse 17, “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.” the Hebrew word is that used in 32:4 about the golden calf.

Ex 20:22 seems related to 20:4. The altar for (at least future) sacrifices is to be made of dirt. We saw Israel wanting to offer sacrifices back in Ex 8. An altar for remembrance (not sacrifice) can be made of stone but not hewn stone.

Ex 21 covers treatment of Hebrew slaves. Apparently there were fewer restrictions on what you could do do a foreign slave.

The typical reason for a man to sell himself into slavery was debt. We saw Joseph institute that on behalf of Pharaoh on a grand scale. If I can create value by my own labors, I pay off my debts. If I can't, then I make a contract with my lender. I commit to give to my lender whatever labor I can (as an

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alternative to repaying the debt), in return for room and board. How does this compare to someone who can't (or won't) create value on his own, but instead chooses to get a 'job'? Or someone who doesn't do that, but instead demands society support him in return for nothing?

Ex 21:7 is likely the practice of selling a daughter as a wife or concubine of a wealthy man. The practice was routine and acceptable, but the master has certain responsibilities toward her. Laws about murder and assault begin to include limitations on revenge. This is a key milepost in the moral trend away from revenge. Manslaughter punishment is limited to self-imprisonment in a city of refuge (Numbers 35). Escalation is forbidden with the famous “eye for an eye”. This benchmark of moral progress was already encapsulated in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi of about 1772 BCE. It's very plausible that Babylon is where the Jews got this idea. It's permitted to beat a slave nearly to death, as long as he survives a day or two. If you knock out his eye or tooth, you need to set him or her free. The ox rules establish a principle of liability law. The principle of a slave as property is established and reinforced.

Ex 22 defines restitution as the primary punishment for theft. Property rights are affirmed. Judges will be involved in applying and interpreting these laws. At least by this time, Homo sapiens has developed the mental capacity to generalize. We are the only species to do so, as far as we know.

Ex 22:16 If you seduce a non-betrothed virgin, you must buy her and marry her. In some areas, this moral judgment is only recently abandoned. 22:18 Kill any sorceress (witch, someone who casts spells). But only female ones? 22:22 Mistreatment of widows and fatherless and oppression of the poor are the most common complaints of the prophets. 22:29-30 This command to sacrifice your firstborn son, oxen, and sheep has no provision for redemption. Thus it requires child sacrifice.

Ex 23 What happens with the things brought in accordance with these commands? Some is burned (usually the parts people don't eat). The rest feeds the priests. Ex 23:20 I suspect this 'angel' may refer to any seer / prophet who will be directing Israel and its leaders concerning whom to attack and when and how. Keep this in mind as you read of the battles and how they are directed. See what kind of meaning for 'angel' makes the most sense. Do not assume all usages translated angel refer to the same concept. The word used here is malak (Strong's 4397) – to dispatch, as a deputy; messenger; prophet, priest, or teacher. Who will fill this role for Israel? Joshua. 23:22 is part of the covenant. What are the benefits promised for obedience? God will be an enemy to your enemies. Food, water, health, wealth, fertility, and land. But you must remain strictly henotheistic. We see many expressions of jealousy. This is how they justified to themselves attacks on the residents of the lands they are invading, including the slaughter and the ethnic cleansing. 23:24 pillars, Deuteronomy 16:22, perhaps the ziggurat of Genesis 11.

Ex 24 describes another signing of the contract by the people, or is another mention of the original signing. 24:2 shows there are no witnesses. 24:7 the Book of the Covenant is almost certainly an anachronism. Most likely they didn't even have writing at this time. Again, the Hebrews accept the covenant. Ex 24:9-10 they saw the Elohim of Israel.

Ex 24:9-10, “Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up,
and they saw the God of Israel.” People desperately wiggle and squirm in efforts to rationalize this with 33:20. Still, Moses alone directly received the 'law and the commandment', with no witnesses. For all practical purposes, who wrote the Book of Mormon? Joseph Smith. Did he have witnesses? He claims 3 (all of whom eventually left the group) or 8 (all of whom were eventually excommunicated). The appearance to the elders and the signs of fire and smoke seem to be the only authentication offered to the people and the elders that Moses correctly brought the law. Another usage of 40.

Ex 25-31 are from the Priestly source. The 'contribution' is described as a voluntary tax for the building of the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. It's a radical departure from anything we've seen so far. Now we see why they had to plunder the Egyptians! Oops! We already have images of cherubim, traditional guardians of holy places. Perhaps this is from a different tradition, one in which images are acceptable. “Archaeological finds from non-Israelite societies suggest that these sometimes looked like winged bulls or lions with human heads.” (ESV notes) This reminds me of a sphinx, like the Great Sphinx of Giza (photo from Wikimedia Commons). 25:31 ESV notes suggest the golden lampstand was a “symbolic tree, recalling the tree of life in Eden.” It seems incongruous to be giving instructions like this to tribes wandering in the desert. All they have is stuff they plundered from the Egyptians.

Ex 25:17 The mercy seat (kapporet) is also translated as atonement cover. The most prominent place is given to the 'testimony', a representation of the law. 27:21 is speaking most directly about the oil for the lamp, but seems to apply to the entire tabernacle and its service, by extension. “Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.”

As you read Ex 18:1, list the required qualifications to serve as priest in Israel. Write them down before you continue reading. You must be a descendent of Aaron. You must be male! There is no requirement here for anything like moral purity or sinlessness. This is the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. Moses and Aaron are of the tribe of Levi. 28:3 The work is to be done by the 'skillful'. In class, someone suggested this meant wise of heart. To me, the usage of the word throughout this passage suggests the word really means skillful. 28:11 seems to be more graven images. The effusive display of wealth in the required priestly garments is either a testimony to the exalted role of priests, or it's a money grab reminiscent of modern televangelists. It's permissible to flaunt this wealth 'donated' by the people because God said to do it.

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Ex 28:30 introduces the **Urim and Thummim**. The class chose to postpone more detailed discussion of these when we encounter them in use. As I see their usage, my view (and apparently the view of most scholars) is that these are objects of divination, more specifically cleromancy. A modern example is rolling dice. See Wikipedia for some examples of cleromancy. I also encourage looking up biblical usage of the word divination (the word used in the ESV). There was a time when Israel was forbidden to do this. But not at this time, or not according to this (Priestly) source. 28:42 is an early indication of the propensity of the Jews to cover up the human body. Islam has carried this to an even greater extreme. I read a suggestion that excessive clothing was relatively unique to the Jews. I'll stay alert for confirmation or refutation. 28:43 confirms priests must be descendants of Aaron, as does 29:9.

Next, Ex 29, is a lot of slaughter for a bloody consecration ceremony. Why kill the bull? See 29:35-37. 29:26 The contribution to support the priesthood. When a contribution isn't voluntary, I call it a tax. 29:28 says this tax is permanent. 29:22 speaks of a permanent burnt offering, while everything else seems to be about just the consecration ceremony. 29:27 The wave offering reminds me of the first century practice we see as meat offered to idols. Same idea, but here it's offered to Yahweh. 29:33 is the first mention of atonement. 29:37 and 30_29, “Whatever touches the altar shall become holy.” In any other context, one would call this a magic altar. Perhaps the meaning here is that if something touches the altar, it may not be used for any other purpose. I think it's more likely a necessary counterbalance for all the other laws which say what is ceremonially impure / unclean, and how they can get that way. For example, if I touch an unclean person, I become unclean. 29:38 describes the daily offering. It's not specific here, but it would be consistent with other texts if this was what the priests lived on. 29:42-43 Who meets at the tent of meeting? See Ex 33:7-11. 29:45-46 declare God's intent to keep his side of the covenant. The text continues with a preview of perpetual required sacrifices.

Ex 30 begins with incense. Incense had religious usage throughout the East. It was used in Egypt around 2400 BCE, and in China at a probably similar time. See Wikipedia on the religious use of incense. Perhaps its real purpose was to cover up the stench of all the gory sacrifices. 30:9 Only authorized incense and offerings are permitted. 30:11 Remember the data path? God – Moses – Aaron – people. This text institutes a poll tax (corvee, **head tax**, capitulation tax, not a voting tax). Which source are we reading? The Priestly source, of course. The priests are setting their own salary. This is a professional priesthood. Take their word for it, it was commanded by God. The amount is half a shekel of the sanctuary per adult age 20+.

**Shekel**

The silver **shekel** was the most common coin of the Hebrews. In today's value, 11 grams of silver is about US $7. Silver is much cheaper today than it was then. The earliest coinage in the region appeared after 600 BCE. The term shekel means weight, and was a unit of weight. We find the word first used in the Akkadian Empire around 2150 BCE. It's also used in the Code of Hammurabi around 1700 BCE.

When would Moses take a 'census'? When he wants money for the priestly bureaucracy. The tax is neither progressive nor regressive. It's a flat tax. The penalty for non-payment is a plague (30:12). This was, literally, atonement money. A modern term for the practice could be extortion. Compare to History of Israel, by Frank Nemec, page 33
Catholic indulgences. The penalty if a priest doesn't wash his hands or feet is death. 30:22 specifies the exact recipe for holy anointing oil and for incense. Perhaps a purpose was to cover up the stench of burning flesh. Penalty for counterfeiting or use by an 'ordinary' person is expulsion from the tribes. 31:1 Yahweh hires specific artisans from the tribe of Judah. No competitive bidding. 31:12 Re-emphasis of Sabbath ("above all"), a distinctive of Israel. There's no way all this would fit on two stone tablets (24:12, 30:18). Ex 34:28 and Deut 10:4 say this is just the ten commandments (ten words). Even if they had a written language at this time (nomadic tribes don't need one), these tablets could plausibly contain symbols representing the ideas. The MacArthur Study Bible notes that “written with the finger of God” was a figurative way of attributing the law to God.

Ex 32­34 revert to the Yahwist source, so don't be surprised at discontinuity in thought. Placement of the golden calf story here seems to be showing that Aaron had not yet received the prohibition of graven images. Bull worship was common, and Israel is given instructions for sacrificing them. Aaron seems to make weak excuses and blame the people. The Priestly source has just finished establishing the permanent Aaronic priesthood. Now the Yahwist source shows Aaron doing badness. Perhaps they think less highly of Aaron than the Priestly source. The Deuteronomistic source mentions the Levitical priesthood but never the Aaronic priesthood. Yet it includes an explanation (pleading by Moses) that the punishment wasn't greater. Moses vs. Aaron may have been a long-standing point of contention. This story may be intended to defuse the tension by showing badness by Aaron minimized by grace from Moses, and that the penalty could have been much worse. It's also a threat. If you do this again, you won't get leniency. Then Moses tells some Levites to go slaughter some people (about 3000 men). Is Yahweh jealous that the people are giving some credit to Elohim for the rescue from Egypt? Perhaps this was the original message of this story. I think the explanation that best fits the text is that the priests who offered the (apparently) unauthorized sacrifices were descendents of Aaron. They had been set apart as priests earlier in the cellulose (the text, as we have it assembled). Thus it is natural that they would be the ones offering the sacrifices. Moses apparently commands those Aaronic priests who did not participate in this feast to slaughter those who did. It's not clear why Aaron survived. It also seems to show why they need atonement.

Ex 32:4-5, 'And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”' – the word translated gods is elohim! I think Aaron is speaking of Elohim and Yahweh, the god[s] of Israel, not any other gods. The only badness by Aaron is making images. And again, this story may be saying that prohibition had not yet been given. I just found a reference to someone else who already thought of this. (Coogan, M. A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in its Context. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009. p.115.)

Ex 32:6 In context, 'rose up to play' is likely the singing and dancing typically done after the eating and drinking in a religious feast. That's the interpretation of Philo. Nothing in the context suggests anything we would call sexual impropriety.

Fundamentalists holding doctrines of inspiration have a field day with Exodus 32:15-16. They have a text saying plainly that this law was literally written by God. It's a shame we don't have them today. Since it's very unlikely these nomadic tribesmen had writing at this time, I expect the stones contained...
pictures or symbols the people could use to remind them of the verbal law. Otherwise, there's no way Moses could have carried them down from the mountain. Ironically, those same Fundamentalists have discarded wholesale the vast majority of this law. In 32:19, Moses literally broke the law. Perhaps that's the origin of this phrase.

Ex 32:32 is the first mention of a book, without saying what it is. The only meaning that seems plausible in the context is that if you're in the book, you're alive. 32:35 seems to be an implementation of this threat, with Yahweh sending a plague on the people. It's an example of 32:34, “I will visit their sin upon them.”

Ex 33 Yahweh threatens to back out of his commitment to dwell with the people on the trip. 33:3 is God's anger management. I think this is the first thought of an angel as a being or a personality, not just the action of God. If the punishment of verses 5-6 sounds light, ask a teenage girl to go a day without jewelry. Actually, it's a traditional sign or mourning or penitence. I would not use the word repentance this early in their history. Verse 11 speaks of the end of an era, Verse 20 supports this idea. “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” Joshua is introduced. Moses intercedes and Yahweh relents.

Ex 33:19 (see Romans 9:15) It's my universe, and I'll do what I want with it.

Ex 33:20,23 See Genesis 32:30, Ex 24:9-11, and Deuteronomy 5:24. Perhaps this meant from now on. Perhaps this is a change in views about seeing God. Or perhaps this is simply a contradiction. Notice the angst you feel, the cognitive dissonance, as you desperately try to rationalize this conflict with your doctrines. The change may also be an explanation for the absence of visual evidence for Yahweh.

Ex 34 shows the publication of the law, second printing. 34:6 If this is slow to anger, I'd hate to see fast to anger. Effusive language of mercy, grace, slowness to anger, and love is promptly contradicted by a reiteration of the threat to punish children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Perhaps the 'slow to anger' language is an explanation for why God doesn't immediately inflict the threatened punishments. This seems to be the first mention of this particular rationalization of the apparent failure of their philosophy embodied in the Mosaic Covenant. It explains why, sometimes, bad people don’t suffer. God is being patient (longsuffering). 34:7 reiterates 20:5, and is probably the reason nearly everyone then living was not allowed to enter the promised land. God may forgive, but holds a grudge. Note that all the language here applies to Israel as a body of people. They have not expressed a concept of an individual being punished for his individual sins. 34:13 orders the people to cut down the Asherim of the peoples they drive out. These are sacred wooden poles used in the Canaanite religions to honor the Ugaritic mother-goddess Asherah, consort of El. Remember, we are reading from the Yahwist source. Jealous Yahweh will drive out the non-Hebrew Canaanites. The Elohist accounts showed lots of intermarriage. Yahweh says there should be none. More statements of law. Another 40 days. The first printing was broken. I wonder if this story
of the first tablets is the etymological origin of the phrase 'to break the law'. Much to the dismay of those Fundamentalists rejoicing prematurely over 32:15, 34:27-28 tell us Moses wrote this second printing. I wonder why Moses didn't need the veil the first time. Perhaps because the first description was from P and the second from J. 34:28 said Moses was there 40 days and 40 nights without food or water. The known record for survival without water is 17 days, but that didn't include climbing up and down a mountain carrying stone tablets. 34:29-34 I think the veil and the shining face were intended to convey the message that Yahweh spoke to Moses at the tent of meeting just as he did on Sinai. That would save Moses a lot of climbing. 34:32 is presented as the first time Moses tells the people the details of the law. Perhaps this is why the penalty for the golden calf incident was not more dramatic.

Ex 35-40 are from the Priestly source. Emphasis on the law. Dialog resumes just where the Priestly source left off in chapter 31. Compare Sabbath (here at the top of the list) with 30:12 and the 'above all' in 31:12. 35:4 (from P) describes the contribution as voluntary, though earlier texts (also from P) say it is not. Perhaps this voluntary part was just for building the tabernacle etc. 35:10 every skillful craftsman. 38 Bronze is a good material for burning things. This is toward the end of the Bronze Age. The bill of materials for gold alone was 29 talents * 75 pounds/talent * $1314/ounce * 16 ounces/pound or about US $46 million at today's prices (October 2013). With 603,550 men, that comes to US $76.22/man. Today, Israel has a gold reserve about 1000 times that size. The US has about 7100 times that size in Fort Knox. Construction finally finishes in 39:42, and they did it all right. Ex 40 begins usage of all that stuff. 40:16, “This Moses did; according to all that the Lord commanded him, so he did.” We see things like this often. Israel did not consider the commands of God impossible to keep. After all that has gone before, Moses can't enter. The end of Ex 40 seems to jump back to the desert journey. Yeah, almost forgot about that. 40:36, “throughout all their journeys”, shows they were still nomadic tribes. It's why their place of worship was a tent/tabernacle, not a building.

**The Covenants**

Pervading Jewish thought is the idea of the covenant (Berit). This is an expression of the relationship between the people of Israel and their god. The first form, the royal grant, is used for the covenants to Noah, Abraham, and David. This model, and the vassal suzerainty treaty below, have been used in ancient Mesopotamia from at least 4500 years ago. The earliest example we have is the Stele of the Vultures, from before 2500 BCE. For a very good description of these covenants, and how the covenants of Israel follow their design, see lecture 10 of course 653 from The Teaching Company, The Old Testament, by Amy-Jill Levine. For further reading, she recommends Rolf Rendtorff, The Covenant Formula: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation, Margaret Kohl, trans.; (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

**The Mosaic Covenant**

This foundation idea is seen throughout Torah, and in most of Tanakh. The Mosaic Covenant is expressed in a form very familiar to everyone in the ANE: the vassal suzerainty treaty. This is a form of contract between the party of the first (the dominant party, the suzerain) and the party of the second (the subservient party). It was commonly imposed by a conquering power over a conquered tribe. See also ESV notes page 325 for Deuteronomy according to this structure. Exodus 19 sets the stage for presenting the covenant to Moses, the elders, and the people. In verse 7, the people accept it by signing

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a blank check. They accept it again in Exodus 24:3. It follows a very specific format:
1. preamble, the titles of the superior party. “I am Yahweh your Elohim” (Exodus 20:2a).
2. historical prologue, assuring the party of the second part that the party of the first part is capable of fulfilling its obligations. See Joshua 9 and Exodus 20:2b, “… who brought you out of the land of Egypt …”. This is also an example of Yahweh keeping his part of the Abrahamic Covenant.
3. regulations/stipulations, the longest section. They typically require loyalty of the vassal to the lord, and restricts additional alliances. Exodus 20:3-6 as a concise, memorable excerpt, but most of Torah.
4. safe deposit and public readings. Deuteronomy 10:5, 31:9-13, Ezra. These often include formal renewal ceremonies, at least for every new generation, such as Joshua 24. The priests of the religion (thus the authors of Tanakh) recognized the essential importance of continually persuading the population that their god was capable of keeping his end of the bargain, as well as the importance that the population as a whole continue to meet their obligations. It’s why they harp on the exodus and the conquest of Canaan.
5. witnesses. Typically these are the gods of all the parties. Given the jealousy of the God of Israel, the Mosaic Covenant uses the people as both signatories and witnesses, and also monuments like stones. See Joshua 24 for these also.
6. blessings and curses. Deuteronomy 7:11-24, 28:1 vs. 28:15ff. Exodus 23:22, “But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.”

The Ethnic Cleansing of the Conquest

Exodus 3:17, 23:23, 33:2, and 34:11 all express the stated intent of God to drive out / blot out the current inhabitants of Canaan. Deut 7:1 says God will clear away these nations. Deut 20:17 commands the people to devote them to complete destruction. Joshua 3:10 etc. says God will drive them out. See the map on page 67 of the ESV Study Bible, and http://www.bible-history.com/maps/Map-of-Canaanite-Nations.pdf. Let’s see who these peoples are.

1. Canaanites. While this could refer generically to any inhabitants of the land of Canaan, it is a specific allusion to the descendents of Cain who murdered his brother, Genesis 4:8. Genesis 4:16 says, “Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.” We know no geography, but the point was that it wasn’t Eden. While they might have this in mind, the more direct reference is to Canaan, son of Ham, grandson of Noah. We saw earlier the

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bad things said about Ham. Remember what Genesis 10:15-20 say about the descendants of Canaan: “Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgasites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.” The ESV notes say Canaanite sometimes refers to all of these.

2. Jebusites. They inhabited and built Jerusalem before David conquered it.

3. Perizzites. They lived where Abram and Lot lived before they split their herds, Gen 13:7. They inhabited the fertile regions S and SW of Carmel. Numbers 26:20 say the Perezites are the descendants of Perez (a son of Judah), whose unusual birth is described in Genesis 38:29. Per Ruth, Perez is in the line of David. Despite the similarity in the names, I suspect the Perezites are not the Perizzites.

4. Amorites. Gen 14:7 shows them inhabiting Hazazon-tamar (Engedi), west of the Dead Sea, near Masada and Qumran.

5. Hittites. In Gen 23, Abraham buys a tomb for Sarah from them. It seemed like a very amicable, business-like transaction. I see nothing negative about them until we get to Kings / Chronicles, besides their descent from Canaan and therefore Ham. Yet they are on the hit list. Perhaps that’s from their history as part of the Hittite Empire.

6. Hivites. Joshua shows them making peace with Israel, though there seems to be some deception in Joshua 9. Still, they’re on the hit list.

7. Girgashites. Nothing bad is said about them either, except they descend from Canaan and Ham. They’ll be kicked out as well.

By all appearances, Israel intends to drive all these peoples out of their homeland, and slaughter at least some of them, just because they think their god gave them the land. The consolation is that evidence from archaeology shows that this violent expulsion never happened. The later proposed date for the exodus (ca 1260 BCE) is near the time of the Bronze Age Collapse. This could be Israel’s legend for how the Hebrews emerged from the ensuing chaos.

Ancient tribes sometimes included myth / legend about the power of their god to discourage neighbors from attacking or conquering them. It’s presented as evidence to persuade Israel that their god is capable of meeting his commitments to them under the Mosaic Covenant.

Lecture 12 of course 653 The Old Testament from The Teaching Company covers the topic of the conquest, exposing literary motifs not apparent in English translation or not likely to be recognized without an understanding of peer literature. It also presents the various models for how this event might have happened.

**Review**

Write a list of things we have seen repeated over and over again in Exodus. Enumerate key themes of the text. Also list surprises you got from your study, things you learned that you didn't know before, and views you changed as a result. Briefly describe the covenants. In my view, there are four, the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic. What are the terms for each party? Were the covenants
kept? How do you know? How do the authors of these texts answer these questions? If your answers are different, explain and justify any differences.

References