

The Hebrews and Their Covenant with God

I. Henotheism, Monotheism, and the Hebrews

A. Biblical Chronology

- ca. 2000 B.C. — Age of Patriarchs
 - Abram [Abraham] m. Sarai [Sarah]
 - Ishmael (son of Abraham and Hagar)
 - Isaac (son of Abraham and Sarah) m. Rebecca
 - Esau (son of Isaac and Rebecca)
 - Jacob [Israel] (son of Isaac and Rebecca)
 - m. Rachel (and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah)
 - 12 sons (→ 12 “tribes”) and 1 daughter
- ca. 1800 B.C. — Some “tribes” move into Egypt
- 13th cent. B.C. — The Exodus: Did Moses Exist?
 - a. No—Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1883)
 - b. Yes—Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (1987)
- 1304–1262 B.C. or 1290–1248 B.C. or 1279–1237 B.C. — Reign of Rameses II
- after 1200 B.C. — 12 Hebrew “tribes” form a confederation (judges)
- ca. 1020 B.C. — Saul becomes king
- ca. 1000–962 B.C. — David rules as king
- ca. 961–922 B.C. — Solomon rules as king
- ca. 922 B.C. — Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah) divide
- 722 B.C. — Assyrians Conquer Israel (10 lost “tribes”)
- 612 B.C. — Babylonians defeat Assyrians
- 597 B.C. — Army of Nebuchadrezzar II takes Jerusalem
- 586 B.C. — Army of Nebuchadrezzar II captures Judah (Babylonian Captivity)
- 539 B.C. — The Persians under Cyrus II conquer Babylonia
 - Babylonian Jews return to Judah

B. Terminology

1. Nomenclature for the people we are discussing
 - a. Martu
 - b. Hebrews < Habiri (Hapiri, Apriru) = refugees
 - alternatively: < Eber (Gen. 11) or , *eber* = “other side” of Euphrates
 - c. Jews, Judaism < Judah
2. Nomenclature for the deity
 - a. Elohim (= God, god, gods)
 - b. El Shaddai (= the almighty god)
 - c. Yahweh (Jahweh < YHWH + Adonai = YaHoWaH = Jehovah)
 - d. Adonai (= Lord)

Video: Abba Ebban, *A People Is Born* (pt. 2), from “Heritage: Civilization and the Jews”

II. The Pentateuch as Historical Source

A. Did Moses Write the Pentateuch?

1. Problem of the script
 - Canaanitish (Phoenician) { Hebrew
 - Aramaic
2. Evidence of the Text
 - a. duplication of narrative accounts
 - b. internal contradictions
 - c. anachronisms and problems of chronology
 - d. diverse literary styles
 - e. shifts and interruptions in the narrative
3. Possibly Four Narratives – “Documentary Hypothesis”
 - a. J—deity referred to as Yahweh (Ger. *Jahve*)
 - b. E—deity referred to as Elohim
 - c. P—emphasizes role of priests
 - d. D—associated mostly with Deuteronomy

B. The Challenge of Biblical Criticism

1. Traditional Literal and Figurative Interpretation
2. Naturalistic Interpretation—needs to be decoded
3. Bible Reflects Time When It Was Written
 - a. Levite priesthood from Shiloh (ca. 700 B.C.)
 - b. Aaronid priesthood
 - c. Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch of Neriyah
 - d. Ezra (5th century B.C.)
 - e. minimalists
4. Hebrew law derived from Mesopotamian Law

C. The Significance of the Hebrew/Jewish Covenant

Recommended Reading:

- Manfred Barthel, *What the Bible Really Says: Casting New Light on the Book of Books*, trans. Mark Howson (New York: Bell, 1982).
- Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Summit Books, 1987; New York: Harper & Row, 1989).
- J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The People of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Old Testament Literature, History, and Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), esp. pp. 42–46.