

## The Hebrews and Their Covenant with God

### I. Henotheism, Monotheism, and the Hebrews

#### A. Biblical Chronology

- ca. 2000 B.C. — Age of Patriarchs (Abraham [Abram], Isaac, Jacob)
- 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
  - 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
  - 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. Ezra (5th century B.C.)
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.