

## THE DEUTERONOMIST SOURCE

### INTRODUCTION: THE MOUNTING MOSAIC LEGAL TRADITION

This study of Deuteronomy will be necessarily different from the preceding three source introductions. In acquainting the reader with the Elohist, Yahwist and Priestly literary traditions – *how to distinguish and reconstruct their varying contents, authorial intents and historical contexts* – it proved advantageous to primarily limit our comparative investigation to within the book of Genesis. Like Exodus and Numbers, the Genesis compilation showcases all three sources of the *triple tradition* (JEP); however, unique to Genesis, deity is almost exclusively referred to as Elohim or El within its more clearly distinguishable Elohist or Priestly text.<sup>1</sup> In short, for various reasons, the usefulness of this once conspicuous identifier breaks down evermore by the early chapters of Exodus, where the natures of both Elohist and Priestly texts (recast within greater Judeo-Israelite religio-political context) significantly change surrounding the tradition of Moses.

Concerning Priestly tradition, it was first witnessed at the very start of our investigation:

{P} **Elohim spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am Yahweh;** and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as **El Shaddai**, but [by] **My name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them.** ... **Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am Yahweh...** Then I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you for a God {Heb. Elohim}; and you shall know that **I am Yahweh your Elohim,** who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I lifted up My hand to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you [for] a possession; **I am Yahweh.**”<sup>2</sup>

(Here, P emphatically acknowledged its Yahwistic shift in style – from “*El Shaddai*” to “*Yahweh*” – depicting “*Elohim*” instructing Moses to reveal to the Israelites: “*I am Yahweh your Elohim.*”)

Concerning earlier Elohist tradition, we were given the following original North Israelite theological affirmation (henceforth, to be rivaled in parallel accounts by both J and P):

{E} & {J or J-inspired redaction} Then Moses said to Elohim, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘**The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you.**’ Now they may say to me, ‘**What is His name?**’ What shall I say to them?” Elohim said to Moses, “**‘I AM WHO I AM’;** and He said, “**Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’**” Elohim, **furthermore,** said to Moses, “**Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel,**

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<sup>1</sup> (See the following note on the increased difficulties in distinguishing E outside of Genesis.)

<sup>2</sup> Taken from Exodus 6:2-8.

‘Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to generation of generation.”<sup>3</sup>

(Here, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the Book of Exodus – exhibiting subtle JE interleaving – still contains an archaic, non-Yahwistic Tetragrammaton for deity:)

אֶהְיֶה {AHYH} (‘Ehyeh) Original Israelite: “ <b>Elohim IS.</b> ”			יהוה {YHWH} (Yahweh) Judeo-Israelite: “ <b>Elohim IS YAHWEH.</b> ”
E: “say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM’” “I-am {AHYH} Who {‘asher} I-am {AHYH}”			J: “say to the sons of Israel, ‘Yahweh...’” P: “say to the sons of Israel, ‘I am Yahweh’”
אֶהְיֶה	אֲשֶׁר	אֶהְיֶה	יהוה

The uncanny Kenite-Judahite usurpation of Israelite tradition (i.e. Judahization), evidenced thus far throughout Genesis in the previous three introductory studies, perhaps reaches its climax with these early chapters of Exodus. Careful study demonstrates an original *Elohistic testimony of Elohim* was ultimately supplanted: first by latter and rival Yahwist textual tradition, and still later by the compromising Priestly pen – whose pen itself succumbs Yahwistic at Exodus 6:3 and thereafter! Indeed, the shared religio-political tradition represented by JEP tells the story of how Elohim became Yahweh-Elohim, just as the latter books of the Deuteronomistic history and beyond will further give witness to how the nation of Israel became Judeo-Israel. Thus, the proverbial *Kenite mark/oath of Yahweh-Cain* became more than a story, but an *effectually usurpacious living tradition*: destined not only to found ancient Judaism and her daughters, but to fundamentally permeate the successive Judeo-Christianities of Western and global society today.

Bluntly stated, the foundational five-book *Torah* (or so-called, *Law of Moses*) is literarily corrupt. It is particularly noteworthy that immediately after Exodus 3:14 – where an ever more eclipsed Elohistic tradition makes what might be called its dying declaration concerning Elohim: “I AM WHO I AM” – scholars of the Documentary and Supplementary Hypotheses widely differ in opinion over the nature of what constitutes original Elohistic text in Exodus and Numbers.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3:13-15

<sup>4</sup> Among scholars of the Documentary & Supplementary Hypotheses, there exists considerable disagreement about the nature of Elohistic text after Exodus 3. Some believe E – like P – shifts to using the name Yahweh, early into its Mosaic literary tradition. Others believe E consistently referred to the deity in Elohistic terms throughout its original composition. As such, the extent of what constitutes Elohistic text into Exodus and Numbers has also been an issue of some debate. Furthermore, the extent to which original Elohistic text may have been lately redacted to include Yahwistic terminology and themes is also worthy of consideration and further research.

For example, it was observed how “Elohim” appears lately inserted into Genesis 2,3 (J), creating the composite binomial formula “*Yahweh Elohim*” (rare in both original Yahwist text and throughout Genesis), bridging what would otherwise be an even more noticeable linguistic and theological shift between the Elohistic and Yahwistic creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 – now canonically arranged back-to-back. Similarly, the composite patriarchal formula

Hereafter, the increasing challenge of salvaging original Hebrew sources amid their present canonical arrangement will inevitably reflect the ever increasing adulterous states of the society responsible for such a biblical synopsis. How the adulterated triple tradition of JEP (i.e. the *Tetrateuch*), together with a non-synoptic fifth book (i.e. *Deuteronomy*), became further compromised by the sweeping, generalizing tradition of Mosaic authorship... is a history whose captivation rivals the individual stories of those so-called *Five Books of Moses*. This is the stuff – the disorientating or incomprehensible mystery – of which universalistic world religions are born.

This study will soon transition from contrasting the more easily identifiable examples of E, J and P within Genesis... to contrasting the extended Mosaic tradition of Deuteronomy (D) with earlier Mosaic traditions of E, J and P found primarily in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. First, a general outline of source attributions will serve to summarize our research thus far. The following table offers identifications for E/J/P found throughout Genesis and into Exodus, noting the first three chapters of this study in which the text was referenced:

PASSAGE	E/J/P	CH.	STORY WITHIN THE TRIPLE TRADITION
Gen. 1 – 2:3	P	3	Creation account
2:4 – 4	J	2,3	Creation account & Garden of Eden & Cainite Genealogy [P-inspired redactions: 2:4a; 4:25-26a]
5	P	2	Sethian Genealogy [relocated J or J-inspired redaction: 5:28b-29]
6-9	J&P	3	variously interleaving Noah’s Flood accounts
10	J&P	2,3	variously interleaving Noahite Genealogies
11:1-9	J	3	Tower of Babel
11:10-32	P	3	Shemite Genealogies

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“*Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*” was observed throughout JE (most recently at Exodus 3:13-15, transforming E’s “*the Elohim of your fathers*” into J’s “*Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob*”). Despite Isaac’s premature death (and therefore Jacob not being Isaac’s son) in original Elohist tradition, similar material reflecting this composite patriarchal tradition was found appended – sometimes seamlessly – into what may otherwise be E text in Genesis 28:10-22; 31:42; 48:15,16. (Ultimately, P recapitulates the same composite JE tradition of Exodus 3:13-15, recognizing a Yahwistic shift in patriarchal deity in Exodus 6:3.)

For another example of the confusion caused by subtle redaction (either by a third party redactor bridging two originally independent documents, or by an older source being supplemented) note: only P offers an extant account of Abram and Sarai’s names being changed to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17), yet the predominantly J text of Genesis 16,18 shifts from Abram/Sarai to Abraham/Sarah, just the same. The question arises: *was an original Yahwist account of this name change excised by the redactor of JEP? ... or did the original Yahwist composition always refer to these characters by one set of names – and the names have subsequently been altered to align with a favored P tradition?* Beginning with Exodus 3, a similar distinction concerning the nature and extent of Elohist text must be resolved: from here on, *is the Elohist Mosaic tradition more sparsely interleaved throughout? ... or are large portions of what now appears to be Yahwistic tradition originally Elohist text – altered to align with the responsive P recognition of a Yahwistic shift?* Given the separatist tendencies of the Northern Elohist text observed throughout Genesis, it’s not likely the original Elohist composition ever exhibited a Yahwistic shift in deity.

12 – 13	J&P	1	chiefly J; Abraham (Pharaoh takes his wife & Lot/Sodom)
14	?		Melchizedek
15	J	2	chiefly J; Abraham (Yahweh's covenant) [late redaction: 15:13-16]
16	J&P	1	chiefly J; Abraham (Sarah & Hagar)
17	P	1	Abraham (El Shaddai's covenant & Abraham laughs)
18 – 19	J&P	1	chiefly J; Abraham (Sarah laughs & Lot/Sodom)
20 – 22	E&J&P	1	chiefly E; Abraham (Abimelech takes his wife & Isaac killed) [J-inspired redaction: 22:11-15]
23	P		Abraham (Sarah's death, burial)
24	J	2	Abraham (Rebekah is found as a wife for Isaac)
25	E&J&P	1,2,3	Abraham & Keturah (E); Ishmael & Isaac Genealogies (P); Jacob & Esau (J)
26 – 27	J&P	1,2,3	chiefly J; Isaac lives (Abimelech takes his wife & Jacob is disingenuous with Esau/Isaac: steals their birthright/blessing) [appended P alternative racial commentaries: 26:34,35; 27:46]
28	E&J&P	1,3	Jacob given Isaac's blessing (P); Jacob's dream at Bethel (E) [J or J-inspired redaction: 28:13-16,21b]
29	J	1	Jacob (Leah/Rachel & Reuben/Simeon/Levi/Judah Nativities)
30:1-24a	E&J	1	chiefly E; Jacob (Dan/Naphtali/Gad/Asher/Issachar/Zebulun/Joseph Nativities) [relocated J or J-inspired redaction: 30:28b; other J redactions]
30:24b-43	J	1,2	Jacob (Joseph Nativity & Jacob is disingenuous with Laban)
31 – 33	E&J	1	subtle JE interleaving; Jacob (renamed Israel & Laban & Esau)
34	J	1,2	Simeon/Levi maligned (kill Hivites: capture children/wives)
35	E&P	1	interleaving; E: Jacob (Bethel return & Benjamin Nativity); P: Jacob recapitulation: (Bethel renaming & Israel Genealogy) [J or J-inspired redaction: (Reuben maligned) 35:21,22b]
36	P (&J?)	3	Esau Genealogy (P); Esau Genealogy & Kings (J?)
37	E&J	1	variously interleaving Joseph goes to Egypt accounts (E: stolen by Midianites; J: sold to Ishmaelites)
38 – 39	J	1,2	Judah's Canaanite relations; Joseph in Egypt (sold by Ishmaelites)
40 – 41	E	1,2	chiefly E; Joseph in Egypt (" <i>I was stolen</i> "; Priest of On; Ephraim/Manasseh Nativities)
42 – 45	E&J	1	subtle JE interleaving; Joseph in Egypt
46 – 47	E&J&P	2	subtle JE interleaving; Jacob in Egypt [including P Jacob Genealogy/accounting 46:8-27]
48	E&P	1	interleaving; Jacob blesses Ephraim/Manasseh (E); Jacob adopts Ephraim/Manasseh (P)

49:1-27	?	1	poem of Jacob's Patriarchal Blessing (composite traditions)
49:28 – 50	E&J&P	1	Jacob's death, embalming/burial; Joseph's death, embalming
Exod. 1 – 2	E&J&P	1	a new king in Egypt; Moses Nativity, his flight from Egypt
3 – 5	E&J	1,3	AHYH (E)/YHWH (J) is revealed to Moses, his return to Egypt
6	P	1,2,3	chiefly P; YHWH is revealed to Moses; incomplete Israelite genealogy (Reuben/Simeon/Levi...)

(Note: most major sections of Genesis have come to bear, some passages having been investigated more thoroughly than others. Some complex identifications are here listed more simplified. Some parts of Genesis – particularly concerning Joseph in Egypt – prove more difficult to identify and deserve careful research, as with all such compilations into Exodus and Numbers. Occasionally while studying JEP, passages beyond Exodus were also referenced, including: *Leviticus 11* (P); *Numbers 3* (P), *24* (JE); *Joshua 2,6,9* (J); *Judges 1,4,5* (N?) and into displaced Yahwistic material of *2 Samuel 21*.)<sup>5</sup>

Second, a general summary of the composite biblical tradition (as it continues beyond Genesis), will likewise serve as an introduction to the study of Deuteronomy:

As reviewed, the oldest major source of the Pentateuch – the **North Israelite Elohist** – abruptly begins in Genesis 20 with the patriarch Abraham. Had E once offered its own unique prehistories (Creation, primordial Genealogy, Flood...), such early accounts were long since discarded no later than the time JE was redacted. What is extant of E appears to be five major story arcs: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Balaam. While the Elohist Abraham and Jacob have been demonstrated to be fairly easy to distinguish in Genesis, the Elohist Joseph is more challenging, partly because Elohim/Yahweh figures less frequently in the JE narrative of Joseph in Egypt. The identity and extent of Elohist Moses is at least as challenging to ascertain throughout Exodus and the middle chapters of Numbers for reasons given above. How much, if any, of the various legal codes and

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<sup>5</sup> The Priestly dietary restrictions exclusive to Israel in *Leviticus 11* (and their correlation with Israelite racial integrity), will be further outlined in this chapter. Similarly, *Numbers 3* included the penalty of death for polluting the Aaronite priesthood with strangers. *Numbers 24* included poetic, archaic Elohist references to both Seth and Cain. Meanwhile, the chapters covered in *Joshua* included Kenite Yahwist references to the Rahabites and Hivite-Gibeonites, while the chapters covered in *Judges* offered an alternative early witness, identifying certain of these “Kenites.” Additionally, the so-called “Song of Deborah” in *Judges 5* included a poetic, archaic list of Israelite tribes (devoid of Simeon, Levi and Judah), upon which the corresponding narrative in *Judges 4* (and 1?) appears to be lately dependent. Finally, the oddly placed material in *2 Samuel 21* recounts a Gibeonite-Hivite revenge on the House of Saul – of which David was complicit. Similarly, this chapter includes a list of miscellaneous, archaic traditions – upon one of which (concerning Elhanan the Bethlehemite) the famed narrative of David killing the giant Goliath may be alternatively dependent.

The letter “N” is here used for the ancient, original book of “Northern Judges” (or “Proto-Judges”). Its lately edited material (likely spilling into the early chapters of *1 Samuel*) may have culminated with the establishment of Saul's royal dynasty, much like the first-generation J material originally culminated with David's royal dynasty.

traditions listed in Exodus (particularly, 20-24) are E/Northern is also unclear.<sup>6</sup> Finally, an Elohist Balaam may be gleaned from what appears to be subtle JE interleaving in the midst of Numbers (22-24) – complete with archaic references to both the sons of Seth (24:17) and the Kenites of Cain (24:21,22).

(Another North Israelite textual tradition of comparable or greater antiquity may be found within what is now the heavily redacted ancient book of Judges. What was Northern or “Proto-”Judges, now exhibits the same sort of interleaving with latter Yahwistic texts as present in JE, suggesting a similar or same redactor.)<sup>7</sup>

The next major source identified – the **Kenite Yahwist** – is much more expansive. It begins with a Creation myth (including the Fall of man), a primordial Kenite Genealogy (including the Cain & Abel allegory), and a Great Flood (almost intact in *Genesis 2-4*; now synopsized with P in *Genesis 6-9*). Next in Genesis, comes the Tower of Babel, followed by stories of Abraham, Isaac, Esau & Jacob, and Judah & Joseph. Plot elements of the Yahwist Abraham – and virtually all of the Yahwist Isaac – appear to be dependent on and responsive to the older Elohist Abraham story arc. Similar literary dependence and reversal were witnessed in the rivalry of a favored Esau over Jacob, and a favored Judah over Joseph. Aside from the tribal insertions of Simeon, Levi and Judah, an arcane Kenite-Yahwist matriarchal tradition also figures from Eve, to Naamah, Bathshua & Tamar, to Rahab. Like E, a Yahwist Mosaic tradition figures throughout Exodus and the midst of Numbers. Unlike E, original (first generation) Yahwist text appears to continue beyond the Yahwist Balaam, into parts of what are now the books of Joshua, Judges and 1-2 Samuel. Scattered Yahwist text relates the stories of such Kenites as: the matriarch Rahab (*Joshua 2,6*), the Gibeonite

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<sup>6</sup> After the account commonly known as the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, much of the subtly interleaving material resembling JE from Exodus 20:18 through chapter 24 (particularly the set of laws given in 21:1—23:19) exhibits attributes of being neither Elohist nor Yahwist. As such, scholars have given this mysterious source of laws and surrounding narrative the designation “Covenant Code.” As outlined later in this chapter, the Yahwist account of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 34 appears to be literarily dependent upon some of the laws in this Covenant Code.

The extent to which (1) the original **Elohist** document, (2) **Northern Judges** and (3) the **Covenant Code** may each have been adulterated with Yahwist material in the weaving together of a redacted and/or supplementary epic of JE (now spanning parts of Genesis—Samuel) is worthy of consideration and further research.

<sup>7</sup> Much like the fate of the original Elohist material in Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, both Documentary and Supplementary arguments may be offered to account for the redaction history of the book of Northern Judges (N), perhaps spanning into 1 Samuel 4 concerning King Saul. Examples include: (1) N was supplemented – along with E – as one of the source texts used by J in the expansion of JE, (2) N was redacted – along with J & E – by a third party in the compilation of JE, (3) N was redacted – along with JE & P – by a third party in the compilation of JEP and/or the greater Deuteronomistic History, (4) N was supplemented by latter-generation Yahwistic author(s), before ultimately being redacted into the Deuteronomistic History. It is likely Northern Judges has gone through several stages of subtle revision and redaction, and – like the Elohist and Covenant Code – careful research is required to restore early and potentially Elohist Israelite sources to their pre-redacted, pre-Judahized states.

Hivites (*Joshua 9*), Rechab & Baanah (*2 Samuel 4*)... culminating with the rivalry & victory of a favored David over Saul – the latter house being destroyed in the namesake of Yahweh-Cain.<sup>8</sup>

(Subsequent generations of Kenite administrative scribes would expand the Yahwistic text (from the Davidic tradition to the Solomonic) into the books of 1-2 Kings, similarly celebrating the exploits of Jehu & Jehonadab, Hezekiah and Josiah. Eventually, with the fall of Samaria and Assyrian Captivity, scribal synopses were forged out of a favored J over both E and the Northern book of Judges.)

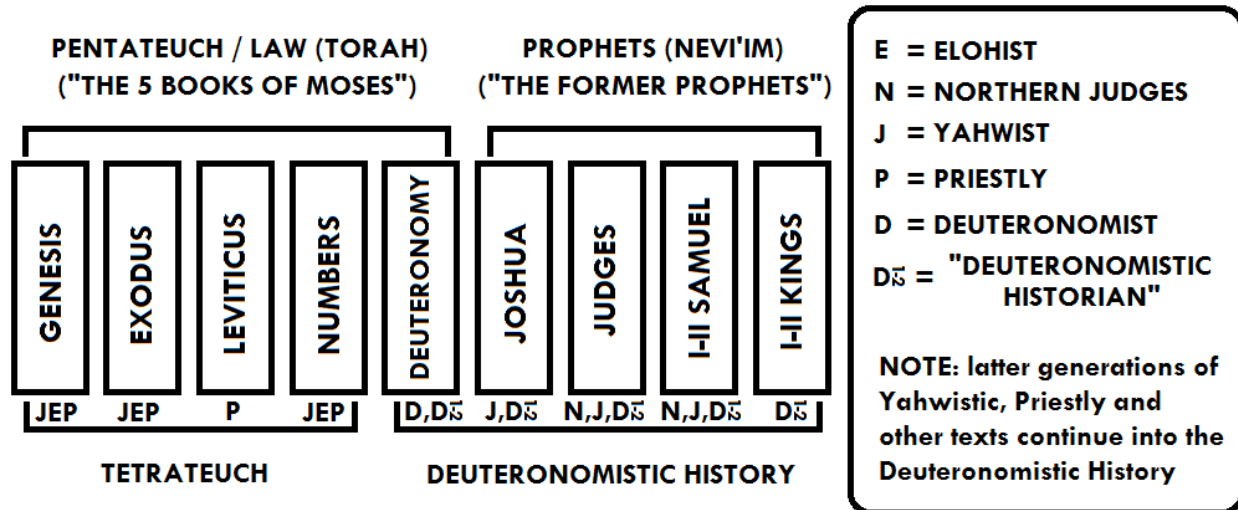
Next to be written – the **Aaronite Priestly** text – featured its own distinct Creation myth (now including man in the image of Elohim), a substitute Sethian Genealogy, and a Great Flood (almost intact in *Genesis 1,5*; synopsized with J in *Genesis 6-9*). Forging an alternative, P methodically revised and recapitulated much of the then double tradition of JE – now found throughout Genesis, Exodus and the midst of Numbers. Much of this clerical content was framed around extended genealogical information beginning with Genesis 5 and continuing with Noah in 7:6; 9:28,29... Abraham in 11:10b-26,32a... and Jacob in Exodus 6:14-25, where it was found to abruptly end with Levi. The Priestly dependence on JE and thematic reversal concerning racial purity figures throughout, and the conspicuous absence of detailed genealogy concerning Judah and the remaining tribes signifies the fundamental difference in worldview between J and P. Just as J appears to have produced a large corpus of unique textual tradition culminating with David victoriously sitting on his throne in 2 Samuel... beginning in Exodus, the methodical attention of P dramatically shifts into another large corpus of unique textual tradition culminating with the Priestly office and cult in Jerusalem. With the exception of Exodus 32-34, the last 16 chapters of Exodus (25-40) are Priestly, along with the following entire contents of what is now Leviticus. Almost uninterrupted, this unique Priestly material continues into Numbers 10, thereafter synopsized in the midst, before again chiefly comprising the last 12 chapters of Numbers (25-36).

(This Priestly alternative to JE wouldn't be the only product in the wake of King Hezekiah's centralizing reforms. A later generation of priests during King Josiah's reign would produce "*the book of the Law*" – the core contents of which are now known as **Deuteronomy**, along with editorial additions styled "D1." Eventually, with the fall of Jerusalem, Babylonian Captivity and end of Davidic Monarchy, another scribal synopsis was forged out of a favored P over JE.)

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<sup>8</sup> As outlined in CHAPTER 2, the murder of Eshbaal (King Saul's son and heir) at the hands of the infamous Kenites Rechab and Baanah is celebrated in the Kenite Yahwist allegory of Abel's murder at the hands of Cain, foreshadowed under the pretense of Yahweh's prophetic promise of victory concerning the "two seeds" in Genesis 3:15. The Yahwist text of 2 Samuel 21 further portrays the murder of King Saul's other sons as the just vengeance of the Gibeonite-Hivite Kenites, granted by King David under the superstitious "mark of Cain" in Genesis 4:15. The researcher will note the textual traditions favorable to King Saul (in the early chapters of 1 Samuel, sometimes attributed to the conclusion of Northern Judges) are ultimately eclipsed by succeeding layers of textual tradition favorable to King David (throughout much of the books of Samuel, concluding the original Yahwist epic).

Finally, in the post-Babylonian years, the presently existing **Pentateuch & Former Prophets** (i.e. the *Tetrateuch & Deuteronomistic History*) were finalized with more Deuteronomistic additions styled “D2,” and various late redaction. Meanwhile, still newer priestly histories emerged, namely: Ezra-Nehemiah and 1-2 Chronicles – the latter Chronicler offering yet another recapitulation and sweeping alternative to these newly forged *Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings*.



### NOTES ON THE EMERGENCE OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY (LAYERS OF RELIGIO-POLITICAL REVISION)

As with JEP in the Tetrateuch, the assimilated texts – including J – of the greater Deuteronomistic History exemplify the very definition of religious syncretism. (Add the example of traditional Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch!) Multifarious rival textual traditions were repeatedly appropriated and synopsized over generations to form a unified and inclusive “Law and Prophets” of the Old Testament. At the expense of original authorial intent, a *religious justification and celebration of adultery of both text and people* may be witnessed in the formation of the Hebrew Bible... along with all the so-called “Abrahamic” monotheistic religious traditions that would follow into modernity. If the goal of the Bible student is ascertaining the true histories, identities and original scriptures of rival Israel & Judah, then this syncretic phenomenon must be thoroughly scrutinized beyond the confines of these source introductions. The following outlined examples of Deuteronomistic influence on the decidedly unholy “whole” will suffice at present.

As evidenced, the rise and fall of Judah during its advantageous window between Assyrian & Babylonian Captivities (722-586 BCE) was fundamentally formative on the nature of what would become the Holy Bible. The original kernel of Deuteronomy (comprising at least the law code of *Deuteronomy 12-26*) was produced and presented by about 622 BCE – 100 years after the fall of Samaria. By this time, JE had been forged, and P was a relatively new document, the common knowledge or popularity of which are unclear. Concerning these “newfound” latest “*statutes and*



*judgments*”<sup>9</sup> of D, the pretense of their discovery was recorded by the latter Yahwistic administrative scribes as follows:

Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of Yahweh saying, “Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest that he may count the money brought in to the house of Yahweh which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. ... [L]et them give it to the workmen who are in the house of Yahweh to **repair the breach of the house.**...

Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, “**I have found the book of the law** {Heb. *sefer haTorah*} **in the house of Yahweh.**” ... Shaphan the scribe came to the king...and said... “**Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.**” And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest...saying, “Go, **inquire of Yahweh for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found,** for great is the wrath of Yahweh that burns against us, because **our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.**”<sup>10</sup>

For comparison, note the late Chronicler’s revisions:

{ **Unique to the Chronicler** } Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, **when he had purged the land and the house,** he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah an official of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of Yahweh **his Elohim.** They came to Hilkiyah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of Elohim, which the Levites, the guardians of the threshold, had collected **from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel,** and from all Judah **and Benjamin** and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Then they gave [it] into the hands of the workmen who had the oversight of the house of Yahweh, and the workmen...gave it to **restore and repair the house.**...

**Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law of Yahweh [given] by Moses** {Heb. ‘*eth-sefer Torah-YHWH b’yad-Mosheh*}. Hilkiyah **responded** and said to Shaphan the scribe, “**I have found the book of the law** {Heb. *sefer haTorah*} **in the house of Yahweh.**” ... Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and...told the king saying, “**Hilkiyah the priest gave me a book.**” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiyah...saying, “Go, **inquire of Yahweh for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found;** for great is the wrath of Yahweh which is poured out on us because **our fathers have not observed the word of Yahweh, to do according to all that is written in this book.**”<sup>11</sup>

The literary dependence between these parallel texts is apparent, highlighting even more the subtle yet revealing modifications the Chronicler made to the story:

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<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 12:1

<sup>10</sup> Taken from 2 Kings 22:3-13.

<sup>11</sup> Taken from 2 Chronicles 34:8-21.

1. The first noticeable change is in how **Kings** depicts Josiah embarking on his religious reforms (23:4-20) after hearing the words of the Book of the Law in his 18<sup>th</sup> reginal year... whereas **Chronicles** outlines the same reforms (34:3-7), stating Josiah began these purges in his 12<sup>th</sup> reginal year. Thus, concerning the purported time of discovery, the Chronicler adds the clause “*when {Josiah} had purged the land and the house,*” to legitimize both the law and the reforms (e.g. as not merely Josianic policy justified by a novel legal tradition).
2. Compared to the Yahwistic books of **Kings**... **Chronicles** leans a bit more Elohistic. Thus, what is invariably the “*House of Yahweh,*” is now also the “*House of Yahweh his Elohim*” and simply the “*House of Elohim.*” (The same post-Babylonian Elohistic resurgence was also witnessed in “*Assembly of Yahweh/Elohim*” in *Deuteronomy 23:3* vs. *Nehemiah 13:1*.)
3. Similarly, whereas **Kings** focus is still on Judah... **Chronicles** introduces several references to (North) Israel. Thus, rather than simply “*the people,*” the Levites collect from “*Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel*” along with “*Benjamin.*” (Likewise, “*the people and all Judah*” become “*those who are left in Israel and in Judah.*”)
4. Even more notable here is a clarification concerning the purported discovery of this Book of the Law. While **Kings** only gives the High Priest Hilkiah’s statement: “*I have found the book of the law in the House of Yahweh*”... the narration of **Chronicles** emphatically states: “*Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Yahweh [given] by Moses.*” Thus, any doubt concerning the Book’s authenticity is extinguished, as Hilkiah’s purported “*I have found...*” is now his emphatic “*response*” to having actually found it!
5. Moreover, and even more telling is what this document is now explicitly called. While **Kings** calls Hilkiah’s purported find “*the Book of the Law*” (22:8,11) and “*the Book of the Covenant*” (23:2)... here **Chronicles** adds the distinctions: “*of Yahweh*” & “*by Moses*”! (Likewise, what Josiah calls “*the words of this book*” become “*the word of Yahweh.*”)

A note on precise translation is needed, as many English Bibles – old and new – diverge from rendering the literal Hebrew here in 2 Chronicles 34:14. Compare the following:

- ...by the hand of Moises {Moses}. {*Wycliffe Middle-English Translations; 1394*}
- ...given by Moses. {*Coverdale Bible; 1535*}
- ...given by the hand of Moses. {*Geneva Bible; 1560*}
- ...by Moses. {*Darby Bible; 1890*}
- ...that had been given through Moses. {*New International Version; 1973*}
- ...(the LORD) had given to Moses. {*NET Bible; 1996*}
- ...that had been handed down by Moses. {*International Standard Version; 1996*}
- ...that was written by Moses. {*New Living Translation; 1996*}
- ...written by the hand of Moses. {*Holman Christian Standard Bible; 1999*}

אֶת-סֵפֶר	תּוֹרַת-יְהוָה	בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה
even / namely writing / document	Torah-of (law-of / instruction-of) Yahweh	in/by hand Moses

Literally: “*Even [the] writing [of the] law of Yahweh in/by [the] hand [of] Moses.*” (Thus, of those listed above, late-14<sup>th</sup> century Wycliffe remains the most faithful!) So may be witnessed the continued development of traditional Mosaic authorship. (Again, the same post-Babylonian Mosaic tradition was also witnessed in *Nehemiah 13:1* where a law found in “*the book of Moses*” may be recognized today as *Deuteronomy 23:3*.) Furthermore, the tradition is expressly found in Deuteronomy itself:

{D} It came about, when **Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book** until they were complete, that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, saying, “Take **this book of the law** {Heb. *’eth sefer haTorah*} and place it beside the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim, that it may be there as a witness against you.”<sup>12</sup>

Whether this text is an even later addition of the Deuteronomistic History, or part of what Hilkiah and Josiah advanced in 622, is uncertain.<sup>13</sup> What is clear is that: (1) Deuteronomy, as it exists today, claims its laws were written by Moses into something called *Sefer haTorah* (“Writing of the Law”)... (2) a *Sefer HaTorah* was recorded by Yahwistic administrative scribes to have been discovered by Hilkiah and presented to Josiah (which the Chronicler later stipulated was, “*by the hand of Moses*”)... and (3) Nehemiah references known contents of Deuteronomy as “*the book of Moses*”). That these different textual traditions each seem to reference and expand on the original 7<sup>th</sup> century claim of discovery is significant.

Most notably, amid Northern emphases, several attempts were also made by the Chronicler to add authenticity to these laws (as genuinely from Yahweh to Moses to Hilkiah to Josiah) – within the all-important religio-political context of King Josiah’s iconoclast and bloody “*purge.*” After the initial introduction of D, the Yahwistic administrative text of Kings recounts how Josiah made a public show of reading these laws at the Temple of Yahweh and making a covenant with Yahweh “*to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book.*” Whereas in Chronicles Josiah had already put such reforms into motion, here the monarchical scribe in Kings records how Temple-centric Yahwism (i.e. Judaism) was then legally enforced across Judah & Jerusalem. Specifically, Josiah:

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<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 31:24-26

<sup>13</sup> As with earlier sources in the Pentateuch, what became the book of Deuteronomy also represents layers of original and latter-generations of Deuteronomistic authorship (variously styled “D1,” “D2,” etc.). Thus, the contents of the allegedly discovered Book of the Law, enforced by Josiah after 622 BCE, may or may not have originally included such a meta-reference (i.e. “*this book of the law,*” written by Moses and placed into the Ark of the Covenant). Additionally, the original (D1) and/or latter (D2) Deuteronomistic textual traditions variously span into parts of what became the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings – forging the late compilation of the so-called “Deuteronomistic History.” Various Documentary and Supplementary arguments have been offered concerning a so-called “Deuteronomistic Historian” – once considered a single late author, then thought to represent a history of revisions and redactions involving N, J, P, latter-P (sometimes called “Holiness Code”), D, latter-D (D1 and D2), etc.

- “commanded...to bring out of the temple of Yahweh all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them...and carried their ashes to Bethel”
- “did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal...”
- “brought out the Asherah from the house of Yahweh...and burned it...and ground [it] to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the sons of the people”
- “brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense... Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.”
- “defiled...the high places which [were] before Jerusalem...which Solomon the king of Israel had built...”
- “broke in pieces the pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones”<sup>14</sup>

Now compare these Josianic reforms to the D law code, prefaced with Deuteronomy’s famous opening verse: “*These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness...*”<sup>15</sup>

{D} “These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which Yahweh, Elohim of your fathers, has given you to possess all the days as you live on the ground. You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, {Heb. ‘elohim} on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. You shall tear down their altars and smash their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods {Heb. ‘elohim} and obliterate their name from that place. **You shall not act like this toward Yahweh your Elohim. But you shall seek [Yahweh] at the place which Yahweh your Elohim will choose from all your tribes.** to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.” ... “Be careful that you **do not offer your burnt offerings in every place you see, but in the place which Yahweh chooses in one of your tribes**, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.”<sup>16</sup>

The reader will note how Josiah’s reforms follow the D stipulation to worship only Yahweh – and only “*at the place which Yahweh your Elohim will choose...in one of your tribes.*” Here, the author of D slyly depicts Moses referring to the contemporaneous Temple of Yahweh in Judah’s capital of Jerusalem, as if Moses foresaw and directed a centralized & Judaized religion for all Israel, some 700-900 years earlier in the wilderness from the other side of the Jordan river!<sup>17</sup> It is no

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<sup>14</sup> From 2 Kings 23:4-14.

<sup>15</sup> From Deuteronomy 1:1. Note the expression “*across the Jordan in the wilderness*” betrays the late author’s geographical perspective: whoever wrote this verse is not in the wilderness, but in Canaan (i.e. on the other side of the Jordan River, after the conquest portrayed in the book of Joshua). This sign of late authorship is similar to expressions such as “*to this day*” (e.g. Joshua 6:25), noted earlier for betraying an author’s late historical perspective.

<sup>16</sup> Deuteronomy 12:1-5,13,14

<sup>17</sup> The wide estimate of 700-900 years before the 622 BCE introduction of D as the alleged writing of Moses is respective of the conflicting biblical traditions concerning when the Exodus out of Egypt took place. Refer to INTRODUCTION TO THE OT and CHAPTER 1 for notes on this conflict of Exodus tradition as it historically relates to the Syro-Hyksos expulsion out of Egypt circa 1550 BCE.

coincidence that such a state-sponsored cult – hardly conceivable by the ancient Syrians fleeing Egypt – was the 7<sup>th</sup> century aspiration of both King Josiah and the central priesthood at Jerusalem, now both sponsoring D. Still, Josiah’s aspirations did not end with Judah, as the administrative monarchical scribe continues unabashedly recounting the Judahite king’s vile and murderous campaign against the cities of Israel. Furthermore, Josiah:

- *“broke down...the altar that [was] at Bethel [and] the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place... Then he burned the high place, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah.”*
- *“saw the graves that [were] there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned [them] on the altar and defiled it”*
- *“removed all the houses of the high places which [were] in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made provoking [Yahweh]; and he did to them according to all the acts he had done in Bethel”*
- *“slaughtered...all the priests of the high places who [were] there...on the altars and burned human bones on them; then he returned to Jerusalem”<sup>18</sup>*

As outlined in the introduction to the Old Testament, the waning grip of Assyrian domination (beginning with the southernmost cities of Israel, like Bethel) during the 7<sup>th</sup> century provided the first political vacuum and opportunity for Judah to impress itself upon de facto Israel. Not since the original (first-generation) Yahwist legends of David was it said that a King of Judah marched on these northern cities. Josiah did not bring aid to his purported brothers, long held under Assyrian occupation; rather, he came with a sword – and just as soon as possible, beginning with Israelite celebrated Bethel and moving northward. (The reader will note that Israel is here no longer given the dignity of its namesake, but is now demoted by the synecdoche “*Samaria*,” as Jerusalem & Josiah now assume the role of capital & king over all Judeo-Israel.) These Southern atrocities against the heritage and religious tradition of the North (destroying Israelite graves, defiling Israelite altars with human bones, slaughtering Israelite priests...) call to mind the long-standing Canaanite enmity, first allegorized by J in Genesis 3 and outlined throughout this study.

Now compare Josiah’s recorded acts with another Yahwistic addition to what would become the Deuteronomistic History. Apparently the customary propaganda throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> century since Hezekiah’s similarly anti-Israelite and centralizing reforms,<sup>19</sup> latter generations of Yahwistic administrative scribes again appended to their growing Solomonic legend the following:

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<sup>18</sup> From 2 Kings 23:15-20.

<sup>19</sup> Immediately following the original J epic culminating with King David’s rise and court history in the books of Samuel, the Solomonic legend in 1 Kings represents the editorial work of several latter generations of Yahwistic royal administrative scribes in Judah. The correlation of these layers, respective to the contemporary administrations which sponsored them, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) First, when met with stories of King Solomon’s grandiose building projects, including the construction & consecration of the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, along with the fortified walls/gates of Jerusalem and the northern cities of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer (e.g. *1 Kings 6-8; 9:15*)... the administration of **King Hezekiah** (featuring defensive constructions and centralizing cultic reforms) is reflected. Hezekiah’s policies included Temple repairs & re-consecration (*2 Chronicles 29:3-36*), and wall repairs & construction

Now behold, there came **a man of Elohim from Judah to Bethel by the word of Yahweh**, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh, and said, “O altar, altar, thus says Yahweh, **‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’**”<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the indignities Josiah committed against Israel required extra special justification. Just as a purportedly newfound and centuries-old Book of the Law was introduced as the pretext behind enforcing its new Deuteronomistic “*statutes*”... its new Deuteronomistic “*judgments*” – unleashed with particular violence and disgrace upon the inhabitants of both Judah and Israel – were written up as nothing less than prophecy fulfilled “*by the word of Yahweh*,” some 300 years earlier! Note how 2 Kings 23 alludes to the 1 Kings 13 “*Josiah*” prophecy:

Josiah...took the bones from the graves and burned [them] on the altar and defiled it **according to the word of Yahweh which the man of Elohim proclaimed**, who proclaimed these things. Then he said, “**What is this monument that I see?**” And the men of the city told him, “**It is the grave of the man of Elohim who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.**” He said, “Let him alone; let no one disturb his bones.” So they let his bones escape...<sup>21</sup>

To the historical-critical reader, such passages may plainly evidence the sort of politically motivated, contemporaneous emendation onto what would become the Deuteronomistic History of a revered Law & Prophets. Throughout the generationally modified Books of Kings (from Isaiah & Hezekiah, to Deuteronomy & Josiah), drastic measures were taken in efforts to assimilate

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of a wall around Jerusalem’s expanding western suburbs, then full of Israelite refugees from the north (2 *Chronicles* 32:5). (Note: the same sort of Hezekian administrative sponsorship of a centralized priesthood may be said for the corresponding layers of priestly ritual in Numbers 9, outlined later in this chapter.) (Also: see corresponding note in INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, concerning Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, etc.)

- 2) Next, when met with continuing stories of King Solomon’s unmatched wisdom & wealth, chariots & horsemen, and international trading & fame, including a political marriage to the daughter of “*Pharaoh king of Egypt*” (e.g. ***1 Kings 9:16; 10***)... the administration of **King Manasseh** (featuring a much more cosmopolitan rule compared with both Kings Hezekiah and Josiah, who came before and after) is reflected. (Manasseh’s lengthy reign is glossed over with relatively short and thoroughly negative parallel reports of idolatry and localized cults in 2 Kings 21:1-18 & 2 Chronicles 33:1-20.)
- 3) Finally, when met with responsive stories of King Solomon’s excesses, including 100’s of wives & concubines – many of them foreign – inciting Solomon to idolatry and to construct various cultic altars or high places to other gods (e.g. ***2 Kings 11:1-19***)... the administration of **King Josiah** (featuring a return to Hezekiah’s centralization of cult and the destruction of high places set up in the days of King Manasseh) is reflected. Josiah’s policies included Temple repairs & re-consecration (2 Kings 22:3-7; 23:4-14, 21-25; 2 Chronicles 34:3-13; 35:1-20a), and a campaign against “*Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt*” (2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chronicles 35:20b-23). (Note: the same sort of Josianic administrative sponsorship of centralizing Deuteronomistic reforms may be said for the corresponding layers of administrative propaganda in 1 Kings 13, and of the Passover legislation in Deuteronomy 16, also outlined later in this chapter.)

<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 13:1-2

<sup>21</sup> From 2 Kings 23:16-18

the swelling population of new Israelite refugees residing in Judah. As Temple Judaism emerged, centralizing religio-political reforms and anti-Israelite propaganda became no less than the authoritative Torah and prophetic word of Yahweh – forever mandating *one Yahweh-Elohim, one Jerusalem Temple, one Davidic King*. The Book of Deuteronomy, authorized by the state, represented the culmination of this pre-Babylonian Judaization across an increasingly adulterated Judeo-Israelite society. Indeed, if the administrative scribes could justify the murderous acts of Josiah by slipping his name into 1 Kings and gratuitously alluding to it in 2 Kings... then the priests of the same generation could concoct the whole “book of Moses” for similar gain. The following will serve as an introductory review of the Book of Deuteronomy, largely contrasting notable examples of its cultic, administrative and social revisions with earlier traditions of JEP.

### **“THE WORDS WHICH MOSES SPOKE TO ALL ISRAEL...”**

#### **THE DEUTERONOMISTIC LEGAL CODE**

#### **ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND TEMPLE SACRIFICES, PART I**

#### **(THE EVOLVING FALL FESTIVAL OF INGATHERING/TABERNACLES)**

Truly, the Greeks aptly titled the fifth scroll of the Hebrew Bible as Δευτερονόμιον {*Deuteronomion*}, for it really is a *deutero-nomos* or “Second[ary]-Law” – a latter restatement of older legal traditions ascribed to Moses. (The Jews to this day refer to Deuteronomy as דְּבָרִים {*Devarim*}, meaning “Words” – a reference to the first verse’s claim that its contents are “*the words which Moses spoke...*”) After Josiah’s violent campaigns against the heritage and religious traditions of Israel, the administrative scribe of Kings informs that he returned to Jerusalem to instate a new kind of Passover festival. As such, it seems appropriate to begin this review of Deuteronomy with an investigation into the different holy day and feast traditions in Israel and Judah, leading up to the latter Deuteronomistic reforms.

A closer look at the anti-Israelite religio-political propaganda featuring the traitorous King Jeroboam I of Israel will shed some light on the topic. The story of the so-called “*man of Elohim from Judah*” (depicted prophesying the coming of one “Josiah” who would burn human bones on the Bethel altar) was told in the context of Jeroboam I instating another, uniquely Israelite, feast:

Jeroboam said in his heart, “**Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.** If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, [even] to Rehoboam king of Judah...” So the king took counsel, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, “**It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem;** behold your gods {from Heb. ‘*elohim*}, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.” He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin... And **he made houses on high places,** and **made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.** Jeroboam **made a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah,** and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel **on the**

**fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had made from his own heart; and he made a feast for the sons of Israel** and went up to {i.e. “offered upon”} the altar to burn incense {i.e. “sacrifices”}.<sup>22</sup>

There are several revealing pieces of information in this passage. First of all, it is important to keep in mind that this is Judahite royal propaganda, written hundreds of years after the purported events. The growing legend of King Solomon (expanded during the administrations of Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah) has here been appended with the story of another legendary King Jeroboam I. As the introduction to the Old Testament outlined, the Kingdom of Israel had always been independent from Judah. (Historically, David never ruled in the North; archaeologically, Solomon never built the great walled cities of the North.) The story of Ten Tribes seceding from the House of David and electing their own Ephramite king (Jeroboam)... was just that: a story. It was composed in response to the Assyrian Captivity for promoting Judahite state allegiance among the new influx of Israelite refugees displaced into the cities of Judah. Their captivity was cast as Yahweh’s judgment against a sinful nation who rejected *Yahweh as God, David as king, and God’s exclusive and eternal house – the Temple in Jerusalem.*

Considering such political motivations of a 7<sup>th</sup> century monarchical scribe, the reader is struck by how the contemporary mutual concerns of a centralized monarchy and priesthood in Jerusalem have been projected onto the archaic character of Jeroboam. Thus lately depicted, it is Jeroboam of old who is shown concerned that if Israel should “*offer sacrifices in the House of Yahweh at Jerusalem,*” then they might become loyal to a Davidite king! Historical research reveals this is precisely the state loyalty Kings Hezekiah and Josiah were endeavoring to enforce with their centralizing cultic reforms – at the same time these royal Judahite annals were still being expanded. Consider also, Jeroboam’s curious statement: “*It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.*” This is in reference to the same enforced centralization of cult at issue in 7<sup>th</sup> century Judah, concerning which the Bible offers different traditions:

<b>INCREASING CENTRALIZATION OF CULT IN THE LAW OF PILGRIMAGE</b>		
<b>“Covenant Code”</b> <i>from Exodus 23:14-17</i>	<b>Yahwist Decalogue {J}</b> <i>from Exodus 34:18-24</i>	<b>Josianic Reforms {D}</b> <i>Deuteronomy 16:16,17a</i>
“ <u>Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.</u> You shall observe the <b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b> ... Also the <b>Feast of the Harvest</b> [of] the first fruits of your labors [from] what you sow in the field; also the <b>Feast of the Ingathering</b> at the end of the year when you gather in your labors from the field. <u>Three times a year</u>	“You shall observe the <b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b> ... You shall celebrate the <b>Feast of Weeks</b> , [that is], the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the <b>Feast of Ingathering</b> at the turn of the year. <u>Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel.</u> <b>For I will dispossess nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three</b>	“ <u>Three times in a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim in the place which He chooses,</u> at the <b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b> and at the <b>Feast of Weeks</b> and at the <b>Feast of Booths</b> , and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed. Every man according to the gift of his

<sup>22</sup> From 1 Kings 12:26-33.



<u>all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh.</u> "	<u>times a year to appear before Yahweh your Elohim.</u> "	hand {i.e. 'shall give as he is able'}..."
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Note the typical double and triple repetition of sources, as witnessed throughout Genesis; however, now the reader of Exodus and beyond is faced with *multiple Yahwistic* accounts. The difficult task of identifying the authorship of some post-Genesis materials is beyond the scope of this study of Deuteronomy, but it will suffice to note the set of laws in Exodus 21-23:19 (or more broadly, Exodus 20-24; sometimes called the “Covenant Code”) appears to be more archaic and independent from J. More specifically, J appears to have been dependent on this legal code, evidenced by the elaboration and restatement in Exodus 34. For the purposes of this study, a distinction to be clearly noted is the development of ever more centralizing language concerning these so-called Laws of Pilgrimage. The older, more general “*shall appear*” has become “*shall appear...in the place which Yahweh chooses in one of your tribes*” in the latter Deuteronomistic formulae of Deuteronomy 12,16, etc.<sup>23</sup> (Lest there should be any doubt as to the motive or purpose in Josiah and Hilkiah enforcing such a law, note also the all-important new stipulation: “*shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed.*”)

In the legendary words of King Jeroboam, not only would it have been “*too much*” for all the males of Israel to “*go up to Jerusalem*” (thrice annually, no less), but it would have been inconceivable. Only within the immediate Judahite context of Jerusalem and the surrounding cities of Southern Canaan could such a universal pilgrimage be geographically possible, politically enforceable or socially desirable. Indeed, throughout the entire history of the sovereign nation of Israel, this law – what amounts to a triannual Judahite national tax – had never been observed in the North. Furthermore, should the earlier traditions in Exodus have referred strictly to the House of Yahweh in Jerusalem, it appears such a law wasn’t even enforced across Judah until the days of Hezekiah’s construction projects, stimulated by the new Israelite refugees from the North. Nevertheless, every Northern King of Israel since Jeroboam I was pronounced as “evil” in the official royal Judahite annals of the Books of Kings – because, ultimately, they did not enforce this sort of Judeo-centrism

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<sup>23</sup> Introduced with the original D law code, the Deuteronomistic formula for an anachronistic reference (purportedly by Moses) to the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem and Judah appears frequently, beginning with Deuteronomy 12:5 where it is styled: “*the place which Yahweh your Elohim will choose from all your tribes to establish His name there for His dwelling.*” The formula is variously styled throughout Deuteronomy 12; 14-18; 26; 31.

The original Exodus 23:17 stipulation of: “*Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh*” {Heb. *ha’adon YHWH*} was part of the archaic Covenant Code, a source text reiterated by the Yahwist in Exodus 34:23. The original authorial intent was likely in reference to various local high places (as opposed to any singular altar/temple). (Compare Exodus 20:24, which immediately precedes the Covenant Code canonically.) The Yahwist reiteration introduces an allusion to long distance travel (i.e. “*enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year...*”), and here the authorial intent may well be strictly the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem. Nevertheless, such a Yahwist law would have only been locally observed, primarily by the residents of Jerusalem and neighboring towns in Judah. The evolution of this law from being observed locally to becoming centralized as the Deuteronomistic pilgrimage expecting all Israelite males to report to Jerusalem (i.e. “*the place which Yahweh chooses...*”) was a multi-generational religio-political process. (Compare also 2 Chronicles 8:12,13.)

that previously existed only in the Yahwistic legends of Kings David and Solomon. There, it was said King Solomon of old levied “*forced laborers from all Israel*” to fund his fabled and anachronistic construction projects, most notably a magnificent House of Yahweh in Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup> Note, accordingly, another double tradition:

KINGS	CHRONICLES
Now <b>three times in a year</b> Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he built to Yahweh, burning incense with them which [was] before Yahweh.	Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to Yahweh on the altar of Yahweh which he had built before the porch; and <b>according to the daily rule, offering up according to the commandment of Moses, for the sabbaths, the new moons and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths.</b> <sup>25</sup>

Here, the late priestly-inspired Chronicler has elaborated Solomon’s role of offering “*three times a year*,” naming “*the three annual feasts*” now along with other daily rituals, “*sabbaths*” and “*new moons*.” The following is a listing of such festivals and sacrificial holidays – including when and how they were to be observed – compiled from the cultic calendar first outlined in Leviticus 23 (P), then restated and elaborated in **Numbers 28,29 (H?)**.<sup>26</sup> (Notable Deuteronomistic reforms will be subsequently contrasted.)

Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘Yahweh’s <b>appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations</b> — <b>My appointed times</b> are these:” {Leviticus 23:1,2; see also 23:4,37,38,44} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, “Command the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall watch to present <b>My offering, My food for My offerings by fire</b> , of a soothing aroma to Me, <b>at their appointed time.</b> ” {Numbers 28:1,2; see also 29:39}	
<b>“continual burnt offering every day”</b>	various offerings, at “morning” and “twilight” {Numbers 28:2-8} (compare Exodus 29:38-44)

<sup>24</sup> 1 Kings 5:13; 9:15; 12:3,4 etc.

<sup>25</sup> From 1 Kings 9:25 & 2 Chronicles 8:12,13

<sup>26</sup> When compared with Leviticus 23 and related Priestly texts, Numbers 28,29 and other seemingly Priestly reiterations are sometimes set apart as a latter textual tradition, called the Holiness Code (H). Such a layer of Priestly tradition, should it deserve further distinction from an original-generation P, may either be a popularizing restatement of P by a literarily dependent so-called “Holiness School,” or a supplementary elaboration of P by the redactor of JEP (or some other Priestly-inspired editor). Either way, such material as in Numbers 28,29 represents a tradition that closely resembles “**Priestly**,” in the same sense that latter generations of administrative scribes appending the Yahwist epic into the books of Kings are called in this study “**Yahwistic**,” and as other late additions to D, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are called “**Deuteronomistic**.” (Thus, the “latter Yahwistic scribes” may be considered J2, and the “Holiness Code” considered P2, just as the “Deuteronomistic Historian” is sometimes called D1 & D2.)

Just as Numbers 28,29 appears to be a more elaborate restatement of the cultic calendar given in Leviticus 23 (including additional details about when and how various rituals were to be observed), Deuteronomy 16:1-17 is another elaborate restatement, specifically of the three pilgrimage feasts originally given in Exodus 23:14-17, then Exodus 34:18-24, and elaborated in Leviticus 23 & Numbers 28,29.

“ <b>sabbath</b> to Yahweh”	“on the seventh day there is a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work...” {Leviticus 23:3} additional various specified offerings {Numbers 28:9,10}
“at the <u>beginning of each of your months</u> ”	(i.e. <i>new moons</i> ) various specified offerings {Numbers 28:11-15} (compare Numbers 10:10)
“ <b>Passover</b> to Yahweh”	month 1, day 14; at “twilight” {Leviticus 23:5}
“ <b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b> to Yahweh”	month 1, days 15-21; “for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh;” (days 15 & 21 are holy convocations; no work) {Leviticus 23:6-8} additional various specified offerings {Numbers 28:16-25}
“ <b>sheaf of the first fruits</b> of your harvest”	“sheaf of the wave offering” ... “on the day after the sabbath” (i.e. amidst the seven days of unleavened bread); various specified offerings {Leviticus 23:10-14}
“count...seven complete <b>sabbaths</b> ” “ <u>day of the first fruits</u> ”	(i.e. <i>Harvest</i> , or <i>Weeks</i> ) day 50 from the sheaf offering (i.e. “the day after the seventh sabbath”); various specified offerings; holy convocation; no work {Leviticus 23:15-21} additional various specified offerings {Numbers 28:26-31}
“a reminder by <b>blowing</b> [of horns/trumpets]” “ <u>day for blowing trumpets</u> ”	month 7, day 1; “present an offering by fire to Yahweh;” “a rest;” holy convocation; no work {Leviticus 23:24,25} additional various specified offerings {Numbers 29:1-6}
“ <b>day of atonement</b> ”	month 7, day 10; “you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to Yahweh;” “a sabbath of rest;” holy convocation; no work {Leviticus 23:27-32} additional various specified offerings {Numbers 29:7-11}
“ <b>Feast of Booths</b> for seven days to Yahweh” (also translated: “ <i>Feast of Tabernacles</i> ”)	(i.e. <i>Ingathering</i> ) month 7, days 15-21; “for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh;” (day 15 is a holy convocation; no work); (day 22 is a holy convocation; no work; “present an offering by fire to Yahweh”) {Leviticus 23:34-36} many additional various specified offerings {Numbers 29:12-37}

Note: each day began in the evening.<sup>27</sup> The seventh day of every week is here called a “sabbath of rest” שַׁבָּת שַׁבְּתוֹן {*shabbath shabbathon*}, a holy convocation (i.e. meeting) during which work

<sup>27</sup> More specifically, “at sunset” בָּעֶרֶב {*ba’erev*} signified the end of one day and the beginning of the next. Thus, the sequence of each 24-hour period was observed as follows: sunset (beginning “evening”), twilight, the night/nightfall, sunrise (beginning “morning”), the day/daylight, finally terminated again by sunset. Note, for example, the P poetic summations of the 7 days of creation: “And there was evening and there was morning, one day. ... And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. ...” (Genesis 1:5b,8b, etc.). Nevertheless, the obscurity that often comes with religion – and the ambiguity that often comes with multiple redacted layers of ancient textual traditions – has given rise to various alternative interpretations by the faithful for when a “Hebrew” or “biblical” day began or ended (e.g. sunrise, or noon). (See corresponding note on *ba’erev*, etc.)

was strictly prohibited. Additionally, the annual holy convocation (also strictly prohibiting work) might likewise be called a “sabbath of rest,” or simply “rest”/“sabbath” שַׁבָּתוֹן {*shabbathon*}.

Both the Leviticus and Numbers calendars detail the three annual feasts, although sometimes with different terminology. What the more ancient source in Exodus calls the *Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits* – and the latter Exodus source, Deuteronomy and Chronicles all call the *Feast of Weeks* – is here described: “count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath,” later called, “the day of the first fruits.” “Weeks” is therefore in reference to the counting of seven “complete sabbaths” – or weeks of 7x7 days – after the wave offering on the first day of the week. (Still later, the holiday was called *Pentecost*, from the Greek *πεντηκοστής* {*pentekostes*} meaning “fiftieth [day].”) Similarly, what both ancient sources in Exodus call the *Feast of (the) Ingathering* is here – like Deuteronomy and Chronicles – called the *Feast of Booths* (also translated, *Tabernacles*). Additionally, the calendar restated in Numbers demands many more presents with a growing list of burnt offerings of numerous choice bulls, rams, lambs and goats (reportedly “for a soothing aroma to Yahweh”), along with various grain, drink, and other types of offerings... on top of newly specified daily, weekly and monthly offerings.

Note also: each month began with the new moon.<sup>28</sup> Less clear, however, is precisely when each agricultural year began (i.e. which moon by the spring season was counted as the “first month”). Indeed, no extant biblical source records how *the first day of the first month* was calculated. Nevertheless, that it was near the start of spring is evidenced by the three main festivals exhibiting an annual harvest cycle – beginning with an initial grain offering after Passover (sheaf of the wave offering), followed 50 days later by more first fruits of the harvest of Weeks, followed by a major fall harvest of Ingathering. Furthermore, the “first month” – connected with the original Passover and Exodus from Egypt – is named *Abib/Aviv* אֲבִיב in multiple sources (*Exodus 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1*), meaning “tender/green” and referring to young ears of barley.

Now some of this information may finally come to bear concerning the political fable of King Jeroboam who was said to have instituted and devised in his own heart a sinful (e.g. non-Judaic) festival at the cities of Dan and Bethel “in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah.” This “feast which is in Judah” is a reference to the fall harvest, also

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<sup>28</sup> More specifically, “new moon” חֹדֶשׁ {*chodesh*}, more often translated “month,” signified the first day of the month or, by implication, the full lunar period of one month (i.e. a lunation, also called, יָרַח {*yerach*}). Not only is *chodesh* simultaneously rendered “new moon” & “month,” it is also identified with *yerach* (e.g. 1 Kings 6:38; 8:2; also compare Genesis 29:14; Numbers 11:20,21 & Deuteronomy 21:13; 2 Kings 15:13). Moreover, *chodesh* is repeatedly related to the “appointed times”/“feasts” and “sabbaths” (e.g. Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15; 2 Kings 4:23; 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:33; Psalm 81:3; Isaiah 1:13; Ezekiel 45:17; Hosea 2:11; also compare Leviticus 23:2 & Genesis 1:14; Psalm 104:19). Note, the annual festival of Trumpets, observed on the first day of the seventh month, would thus always fall on a *chodesh*. Note also, the months are given Hebrew names in Exodus, Deuteronomy and 1 Kings, and post-Babylonian foreign names in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Zechariah (e.g. concerning the first month of Abib/Nisan, compare Deuteronomy 16:1 & Esther 3:7). Again, the obscurity and ambiguity that comes with religion and redacted texts has given rise to various alternative interpretations for when a month began (e.g. full moon, or unrelated to the lunar phases), and its connection, if any, to the sabbath. Also, there exists disagreement among the faithful about whether the empirical (observable crescent) or astronomical (completely dark) new moon signifies the first day of the first month. Furthermore, no biblical texts specify precisely how the first day of the first month was annually calculated (i.e. which new moon signified the first spring month of the new year; see Exodus 12:2), inviting more controversies, some of which are outlined later in this chapter.

known as Ingathering or Booths/Tabernacles, which was observed beginning with a holy convocation on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. Thus, Jeroboam is depicted *officiating a late harvest festival at Bethel*. (More accurately stated: such a chiefly Israelite feast would be regarded as late, from the Southern Judaic perspective.) Indeed, upon understanding that these annual harvest festivals were originally observed at various “high places” at the local level – and more pointedly, observed separately by Israel and Judah prior to the Assyrian Captivity and centralization of cult at Jerusalem – then it stands to reason that *the distinct nations of Israel and Judah did not always share the same lunisolar annual harvest-cycle*.

In other words, the biblical ambiguity concerning when exactly to begin the new agricultural year (with all of its cultic holidays) was due to the climatological dependence of harvest festivals – especially the first fruits. So, with respect to local or national regions – and the arbitrary phases of the moon, compared to the solar year<sup>29</sup> – an Israelite sheaf of new barley (or any other harvest) would have occasionally and necessarily been offered a month later, than in Judah! In short, depending on the year, the seasonal conditions constituting “*Abib*” would have indeed come a month later in the North... and, during such a year, what a Southern scribe calls the 8<sup>th</sup> month would have been the 7<sup>th</sup> in Israel!

Thus, the late Judahite propaganda of Jeroboam’s belated Israelite festival likely reflected an historic reality of incompatible agricultural and cultic calendars between ancient Israel and Judah. Israel’s different priests, altars and holidays weren’t diversions instated by a traitorous Jeroboam, jealous over potential Israelite loyalty to Jerusalem and the House of David. On the contrary, Israel always and quite naturally observed a distinctive, Elohist tradition. To the careful observer, this independent Northern tradition appears all the more removed from 10<sup>th</sup> century legends of a once-United Monarchy under David & Solomon... inspired by evolving 7<sup>th</sup> century realities of Temple Centrism, to the point of absurdity. As if all the tribesmen of Dan and Naphtali were expected to travel upwards of 100+ miles, thrice a year, sometimes out of season but never without their gifts to Jerusalem... as if Yahweh cursed Israel because their kings & priests didn’t slavishly enforce such inconceivable homage to the Houses of David and Yahweh.

Furthermore, as if this anachronistic pretense that Yahweh – authoritatively through Moses – commanded all Israel concerning such a future religio-political Judaism wasn’t absurd enough, the “Mosaic” legislation continued being revised with seemingly every passing generation of scribes and/or priests. Of all the new offerings and sacrificial stipulations found added to the Numbers 28,29 calendar, each of the seven days of Booths/Tabernacles (along with the eighth and final holy

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<sup>29</sup> As agricultural calendars depend on following the seasons of the solar cycle, any division of the solar year based on the number of lunar cycles will result in a figure of somewhere between 12 and 13 lunations per year. If the first day of the first (lunar) month is counted as the beginning of such a lunisolar calendar, any given year will have 12 or 13 months/moons, before an appropriate amount of days have passed to coincide with – for example – the next year’s first harvest spring festival, dependent on the vernal equinox. As such, whether any given year has 12 or 13 months – and, thus, which new month begins each new year – is a matter of varying interpretation and/or climatological need, amidst ambiguous biblical calendars and geographical differences between ancient Israel and Judah.

(As it happens, the solar and lunar cycles practically coincide every 19 solar years, as this period is nearly equivalent to 235 lunar months. This reliably repetitious cycle of ...12, 12, 13, 12, 12, 13, 12, 13, 12, 12, 13, 12, 12, 13, 12, 12, 13, 12, 13... was anciently discovered, used by many cultures, and is known as the Metonic cycle or Enneadecaeteris.)

convocation) demand particular excesses to soothe Yahweh with burning animal flesh: 13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 one-year old male lambs, 1 male goat along with grain and drink offerings, on one day... 12 bulls, 2 rams, 14 one-year old male lambs, 1 male goat along with grain and drink offerings, on the next day...etc.

Nevertheless, the “laws of Moses” ended neither here, nor with Deuteronomy, as a careful reading of Leviticus 23 will uncover yet another, post-Babylonian amendment to the Festival of Booths:

{P} {emendation} {Yahweh to Moses to the sons of Israel:} “**These are the appointed times of Yahweh** which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to Yahweh—burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, [each] day’s matter on its own day—besides the sabbaths of Yahweh, and besides your gifts and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to Yahweh.”

“On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days, with a rest {Heb. *shabbaton*} on the first day and a rest {Heb. *shabbaton*} on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your Elohim for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it [as] a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It [shall be] a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. **You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall dwell in booths**, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. **I am Yahweh your Elohim.**” **So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of Yahweh.**<sup>30</sup>

The usual signs of emendation are apparent. Note the repetition: the calendar of Leviticus 23 has already introduced all of its appointed times, outlining when and how to observe each, including the fall Festival of Booths in verses 34-36. This is then followed by the concluding statement: “*These are the appointed times of Yahweh...*” shown above in verses 37-38. Nevertheless, what follows is another introduction to the Festival of Booths (just a few verses after being introduced), complete with recapitulations that there be a feast in the 7<sup>th</sup> month, and for 7 days, beginning on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, and with no work on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> days.

Note also the repetitious style of the editor: compared to the familiarly succinct P, here the text is uncharacteristically verbose, repeating itself as it reiterates P. “*On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month... you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.*” “[Y]ou shall celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days... You shall thus celebrate it a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year.” Still, this addendum repeats itself again, this time with a new ordinance: “*You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall dwell in booths.*”<sup>31</sup> It is not coincidence that this latest commandment was referenced in the post-Babylonian book of Nehemiah:

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<sup>30</sup> Leviticus 23:37-44

<sup>31</sup> “Booths” סֻכּוֹת {*sukkot*}, also translated “tabernacles,” were temporary dwellings (i.e. huts, tents) covered in palm leaves and other species of overgrowth per the stipulations in Leviticus 23:40, likely added in post-exilic times. Arguably serving an agricultural purpose during harvest, the booths were allegedly reminiscent of the sort of makeshift or portable dwellings the Israelites kept during their legendary 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, led out of Egypt by Moses. The late ordinance was likely enforced during the time of Ezra & Nehemiah to be reminiscent of the years spent in Babylonian captivity, leading to the contemporaneous, politically sponsored goal of the construction of a second Jerusalem temple (i.e. Yahweh’s tabernacle). Hence, the fall harvest festival of Ingathering became alternatively and lately known as Booths/Tabernacles.

**They found written in the law how Yahweh had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month.** And that they will cause to be heard... **“Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and oil tree branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.”** So the people...made booths for themselves... The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths. **The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day.**<sup>32</sup>

Now may be discerned a third and telling sign of emendation. Just as the 7<sup>th</sup> century scribe of 2 Kings 23 referred and appealed to the propaganda for justifying Josiah’s rampage against Israel (contemporaneously slipped into 1 Kings 12, as if ancient prophecy)... here the 5<sup>th</sup> century author of Nehemiah 8 cites the ordinance of dwelling in booths (suspiciously appending Leviticus 23, as if ancient law). Just as Hilkiah the Priest “found” the Book of the Law, and it was publicly read and enforced... here Ezra the Priest reads the latest legal revisions, and they “find” a new way to observe the fall festival. Even more revealing is the admission that such an observance had never been kept by the sons of Israel since the legendary days of Joshua. Why wouldn’t it have been kept in the days of Hezekiah’s or Josiah’s cultic reforms? Hence, it becomes apparent why and how the original fall festival of “*Ingathering*” became lately known as “*Booths*.” Quite simply, in the time of Josiah, this new kind of Tabernacles – the ordinance to dwell in booths – had *yet to be inserted into the mounting Mosaic legal tradition*. Back in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Josiah and his priests were busy instating a new kind of Passover, also admitted to having never been observed before.

## **ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND TEMPLE SACRIFICES, PART II (THE EVOLVING SPRING FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER)**

In reviewing the evolving Mosaic cultic traditions of Israel and Judah, three different aspects of the harvest festivals – particularly the fall festival of Booths/Tabernacles – have been considered:

- 1) anti-Israelite and pro-Josianic propaganda of a legendary King Jeroboam I’s institution of an idolatrous “late” fall festival at the local altar of Bethel on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month
- 2) a review of all annual festivals – particularly the three major so-called “pilgrimages” – and how they might have historically and originally been observed in ancient Israel and Judah
- 3) a review of textual and generational revisions, including many additional offerings, increased centralization strictly at the House of Yahweh in Jerusalem, and a post-Babylonian ordinance to dwell in booths

Now a closer look at the spring festival of Passover (and related festival of Unleavened Bread) will shed more light on this same pattern of: (1) growing legend, (2) reflective of contemporaneous history, (3) followed by late revision:

- 1) much like the 7<sup>th</sup> century propaganda concerning Jeroboam I, the legendary origin-story and institution of an inaugural Passover and related Exodus from Egypt will be outlined
- 2) a review of underlying historical kernels in the Passover legend, and earlier priestly textual traditions, will reveal how Passover was originally a domestic or local observance for Israel
- 3) a review of later textual traditions will demonstrate how the Israelite domestic (i.e. family) festival was ultimately centralized and incorporated into state-sanctioned Temple Judaism

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<sup>32</sup> From Nehemiah 8:14-17



Consequently, a unique 7<sup>th</sup> century Deuteronomistic layer of legal revision will come to bear once the cultic reforms purportedly authorized by King Hezekiah, and especially King Josiah, are examined in light of the earlier legal traditions in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. First, a review of the legend of Passover & Exodus, taken from the Book of Exodus, is in order.

With P's introduction of Yahweh (in Exodus 6), and a relative scarcity and/or Yahwistic muddling of E (beginning in Exodus 3), the composite JEP tradition of Moses in Egypt continues with subtle redaction and supplementation beyond the scope of this study to critically distinguish. The multi-layered story, as it exists today, culminates with ten plagues devastating the land of Egypt. The final tenth and most fearsome plague, which compels "Pharaoh" to let his Israelite slaves go free out of Egypt, coincides with what the text calls "*Yahweh's Passover*." Now the word translated "Passover" פֶּסַח {*pesach*} is from a root verb "to skip/pass over," and so it denotes Yahweh's legendary "exemption" of the Israelites as narrated in Exodus 12:

For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the elohim {i.e. "gods"} of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am Yahweh. **The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are;** and **when I see the blood I will pass** {Heb. "*pasachtiy*"} **over you,** and no plague will befall you...<sup>33</sup>

More specifically, *Pesach* is used biblically in technical reference to one of the following:

1. the event or night Yahweh passed over the Israelite houses, sparing them from destruction
2. the annual spring festival ordained to memorialize the legend of Yahweh's passing over
3. the service or sacrificial offering(s) of the festival, originally a year-old lamb or goat-kid, later expanded and merged with the seven-day pilgrimage service of Unleavened Bread

Concerning the legendary night and institution of the first Passover service, various specifics and ordinances of annual observance may be compiled from multiple sources in Exodus 12, including:

1. on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month (Abib), each house "*according to their fathers' households*" selects a male year-old lamb/kid from the sheep or goats (i.e. from the "flock")
2. households too small for a lamb share with their nearest neighbor's house
3. the "*whole assembly of the congregation of Israel*" kills their respective lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib "*between the evenings*" (i.e. the period between sunset and nightfall; "twilight"/"dusk")<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> From Exodus 12:12,13

<sup>34</sup> The Hebrew expressions: "at evening" (properly, "at sunset") בְּעֶרֶב {*ba'erev*} and the idiomatic designation "at twilight" (lit. "between the [two] evenings") בֵּין הָעֶרְבַיִם {*beyn ha'arbayim*} have been the source of considerable confusion and debate among Jews and Christians, ancient and modern, scholars and religious practitioners alike. Contributing to the confusion, various translations of the Hebrew Bible have indiscriminately rendered both expressions the same (e.g. "in the evening", "at even"). Defining these unique expressions within their proper contexts is essential for understanding when the various holy convocations and offerings were observed, according to their traditionally recorded appointed times/seasons. Particularly, this becomes necessary for determining when Passover was observed, according to the most ancient sources, namely: wholly on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib, slain at twilight and eaten in the night of the same day. Contrariwise, owing to textual synopsis and ambiguity, and late centralizing



4. some of the lamb's blood is to be placed on the two doorposts and lintel of the houses in which it is eaten
5. the whole lamb is to be “roasted יִצְלֶיךָ {‘tzaliy’} with fire” – not “boiled בָּשָׁל {‘basha’}...with water” – with bones unbroken, and eaten that night with unleavened bread
6. do not leave any of the animal until morning (burn the remainder with fire)
7. do not exit the door of the house until morning
8. “[Y]ou shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. When you enter the land which Yahweh will give you...you shall observe this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What is this service to you?’ you shall say, ‘It is a Passover sacrifice to Yahweh because he passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but delivered our homes.’”

Careful readers of Exodus 12 will note the usual repetition and sequential breaks indicative of multiple authorship and redaction. In fact, the compiled traditions now feature a preface of detailed instructions for Passover, followed by an ordinance and detailed instructions for Unleavened Bread (12:1-20), followed by separate Passover instructions with accompanying ordinance (12:21-27). Furthermore, amidst these dueling specifications, the narrative abruptly and ambiguously shifts from the events of Passover night – (and the following day?) – (12:29-36)... to a mass Israelite Exodus from the Egyptian city of Rameses – (by night? which night?)<sup>35</sup> – (12:37-42)... before

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tradition, latter Jewish sources held that the lambs were slain in the afternoon hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day – almost a day later – and eaten into the night beginning the 15<sup>th</sup> day (i.e. the first day of Unleavened Bread).

To define “at evening” {ba’erev}, one may look to Leviticus 23:26-32 where the annual sabbath of the Day of Atonement (“*exactly the tenth day of this seventh month*”) is carefully defined as “*the ninth of the month at evening, {ba’erev} from evening {me’erev} until evening {ad-’erev}...*” Thus, from this and other passages, it can be deduced that each day began and ended with “erev” (i.e. “*from ‘erev’ to ‘erev’*”) – and that the “erev” at the close of one day also started the second day. As such, *ba’erev* refers to sunset, the approximate 3-5 minutes as the solar disc appears to cross beneath the horizon.

*Beyn ha’arbayim* has proven much more controversial to define, partly due to the excess time required to slay the Passover lambs after the formerly domestic festival and sacrificial service became centralized strictly at the Temple in Jerusalem. To define the expression, one may look to Exodus 16:8,12 and the surrounding context “*when Yahweh gives you {the Israelites} flesh to eat in the evening {ba’erev}*” (verse 8)... and “*at twilight {beyn ha’arbayim} you shall eat flesh...*” (verse 12). So, it can be deduced that the period called “between the [two] evenings” took place immediately after sunset (ba’erev). As such, *beyn ha’arbayim* refers to twilight or dusk, the approximate 1 hour – during spring – between sunset and nightfall (i.e. the darkness of night, when stars become visible).

For further detailed research on the linguistic and historical issues of distinguishing and defining “at even” and “between the [two] evenings,” consult Coulter, Fred R., *The Christian Passover: What Does it Mean? When Should it Be Observed—the 14<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup>?* (Revised Expanded Second Edition; York Publishing Co., 1999).

<sup>35</sup> The now composite tradition in Exodus 12 of Passover night and the ensuing Israelite flight/march (i.e. “exodus”) from Rameses out of Egypt offers a rather ambiguous chronology of events. Since ancient times, there exists confusion over when the Exodus began, in relation to the Passover. Furthermore, this controversy manifests itself in the different and rival traditions and interpretations concerning when to observe Passover and the first day of Unleavened Bread – said to commemorate Passover & Exodus (Exodus 12:23-27 & 12:14-20, respectively).

Upon reading Exodus 12, one may ask: Did the Israelites eat the Passover “*in haste,*” ready to travel with “*your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand*” (as commanded in 12:11)? ... Did the Israelites stay inside their houses “*until morning,*” after Yahweh’s midnight killing of the firstborn in Egypt (as commanded in 12:22)? It is said Pharaoh “*called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, ‘Rise up, get out from among my people...’*”

returning to offer yet more specifications: “*This is the ordinance of the Passover...*” (12:43-49). These interleaving ordinances and narratives (along with further Passover traditions yet to be reviewed) have led to much confusion over distinguishing the events of Passover night (as commemorated by the festival of Passover)... and the subsequent Exodus from Egypt (as commemorated by the seven-day festival of Unleavened Bread). As the texts presently exist, and without careful comparison of all traditions and Hebrew phraseology, it is not clear whether Passover evening – the specific time when the lambs were supposed to be killed – marked *the beginning or end of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib*.

This seemingly insignificant issue of when to observe the Passover service – including its killing, door-marking, roasting, eating and burning – will prove central to the present investigation of evolving, Judeo-Israelite cultic practices and legal traditions. Indeed, when these compiled Passover stipulations are considered (e.g. lambs shared between neighboring houses, the entire congregation simultaneously killing the lambs at dusk, blood placed on doors not to be exited until the morning...) it is clear that they depicted an entirely domestic affair – neither officiated by any priest, nor centralized at any altar. Nevertheless, a Priestly statute against unofficial sacrifices (i.e. not overseen/approved by an Aaronite) must be considered:

{P or P-inspired revision} {Yahweh to Moses to Aaron and his sons and to all the sons of Israel:} “**Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat...and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present [it] as an offering to Yahweh before the dwelling place of Yahweh,** bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He...shall be cut off from among his people. **In order that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices...to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to Yahweh.** The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh...and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to Yahweh. **They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot.** This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.”<sup>36</sup>

A few verses later, with no reckoning of time, the sons of Israel are depicted journeying “*from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children...*” baking unleavened dough “*since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay.*” Yet, one may also ask: Did 600,000 men (along with women, children, “*a mixed multitude*” and “*flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock*”) assemble at Rameses to depart Egypt the very same night they put the lambs’ blood on the doors of their houses? Amidst dueling sources and ordinances shifting back and forth between Passover and Unleavened Bread, it is left altogether ambiguous in Exodus 12 whether the “night” described in this following verse is Passover night (beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib)... or the night of the next day (beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Unleavened Bread on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib):

“It is **a night to be observed for Yahweh for having brought them out from the land of Egypt;** this night is for Yahweh, to be observed to all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.” {Exodus 12:42}

Indeed, it becomes evident that Passover night and the first day of Unleavened Bread were conflated by redaction and latter tradition. Note how Numbers 33:3 specifies the Israelites “*journeyed from Rameses **in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover** the sons of Israel started out **with a high hand** in the sight of all the Egyptians, **while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn...**” Surely, the Egyptians were not said to be burying their dead after midnight, the very same night they were found dead! Furthermore, a departure the next day with a high hand (i.e. boldly) is hardly the picture of a hurried flight, having been “*driven out of Egypt*” by night. Nevertheless, the latter tradition in Deuteronomy 16:1 states “*perform the **Passover** to Yahweh your Elohim, for in the month of Abib **Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night.**” Thus, through the reforms of Josiah, “Passover” was incorporated into the obligatory temple pilgrimage of Unleavened Bread, for reasons more fully addressed further in this chapter study.**

<sup>36</sup> From Leviticus 17:3-7. Compare with the latter Deuteronomistic stipulations for slaughtering: “*If the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter of your herd and flock...and*

(Apparently, the Israelites weren't trusted to slaughter their own herd or flock, or to make their offerings strictly to Yahweh, and so were required to bring animals to a priest as "*peace offerings to Yahweh.*") A similar Priestly or Priestly-inspired narrative in Numbers 9 relates the story of the Israelites' second Passover observance in the wilderness of Sinai, as they camped around the newly set up Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting (i.e. the portable "*dwelling place of Yahweh,*" allegedly before Yahweh chose Jerusalem for his exclusive house). The Levites have just been cleansed "*to perform their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons,*" and Yahweh commands: "*On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, {lit. 'between the evenings'} you shall observe it { 'the Passover' } at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.*"<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, in this wilderness scene, depicting millions from every household encamped near Yahweh's central dwelling place, certain unclean men are "*restrained from presenting the offering of Yahweh at its appointed time.*" (Compare the laws for uncleanness and eating the meat of peace offerings presented to the priest in *Numbers 5:2; 19:11; Leviticus 7:20-21.*) Therefore, special stipulations are given for observing a "late" Passover (should one be "*unclean...or...on a distant journey*") "*in the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight...according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.*" Thus, the reader is presented with what may be ambiguous and conflicting references to both an ordinance of domestically killing the lambs within the constraints of twilight... and a statute of sacrificial presentation to a priest as a peace offering. Whether the wilderness Passover is here likened to a centralized peace offering (with the blood sprinkled on Yahweh's altar rather than the lintel and two doorposts) is not explicitly stated.

One may ask how Aaron and his sons could have thus ritually officiated the lambs to feed the millions encamped around Yahweh's tabernacle – all between sunset and nightfall at the start of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib. One may also ask how each household could possibly have observed all the domestic specifications and perpetual ordinances for Passover, as outlined in Exodus 12, particularly after Yahweh's special dwelling place supposedly became the Temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, in the populous and sprawling cities of Israel (and even Judah) each lamb could not have been eaten in each father's house (its blood marking the door thereof) – nor could the entire congregation kill the Passover at twilight – if a priest was required to sprinkle its blood on Yahweh's official altar! Therefore, it is safe to conclude: if the legendary second Passover in the wilderness tacitly offered a priestly ideal of centralization, it proves practically impossible – within the contexts of both the legend and the greater Israelite society at the time of its authorship.

Hence, the peculiar ambiguity in Exodus 12 concerning the chronology of Passover night and the following Exodus – along with related questions as to when and how the lambs were practically offered on the 14<sup>th</sup> day in subsequent Passovers – will begin to make sense. Curiously, the "*appointed times of Yahweh, holy convocations*" reviewed earlier in Leviticus 23 – along with

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*you may eat within your gates... Only your holy things...you shall take and go to the place which Yahweh chooses. And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of Yahweh your Elohim; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of Yahweh your Elohim, and you shall eat the flesh.*" (From Deuteronomy 12:20-27; compare 12:15-18)

<sup>37</sup> Numbers 9:3; subsequent quotation taken from Numbers 9:10,11.

Yahweh's "offerings by fire...at their appointed time" seen detailed in Numbers 28,29 – do not liken Passover as any type of offering for presentation at Yahweh's altar. Amidst these thorough enumerations of multifarious burnt offerings, the appointed time of Passover appears quite understated, given without any sacrificial ordinance:

1. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month **at twilight** is Yahweh's Passover. {Leviticus 23:5}
2. [O]n the fourteenth day of the first month shall be Yahweh's Passover. {Numbers 28:16}

(Nevertheless, immediately following, numerous offerings are required for the feast of Unleavened Bread, which Numbers 28 instructs are to be presented with the morning daily burnt offering.)

It should be noted: Exodus 29:38,39 & Numbers 28:3,4 give the two daily times for the continual burnt offering at Yahweh's altar as "morning" and "twilight" (lit. "between the evenings," the same time as traditional Passover). So, in light of these conflicting times (the twilight when all the people might be expected to kill and/or present the Passover, coinciding with the evening offering at the altar), it is curious the more detailed Numbers 28 has excised the Passover stipulation: "at twilight." Furthermore, it should be noted that nowhere amongst all these pre-Deuteronomistic sacrificial laws (e.g. those detailed in Leviticus 1-7), nor in the various traditions of festival observations (e.g. in the wilderness, at Gilgal, Shiloh, Bethel, Jerusalem...), does a text explicitly state that the Passover lambs were brought to a priest at a central Tabernacle/Temple. That is, until King Hezekiah.

In fact, the biblical record has already demonstrated a long-standing tradition of so-called "high places" בָּמֹת {*bamowth*} in both Israel and Judah, before and after the legendary construction of the Jerusalem Temple or supposed discovery of Deuteronomy. Usually at cities and towns, these high places (lit. "heights") were localized cultic venues set apart for festival, sacrifice, council, tithing or otherwise religious affairs. Early examples include:

- **Bethel**, of North Israelite fame, said to be founded by the patriarch Jacob, with archaic references to a pillar and tithing (**Elohists**; Genesis 28:17-22).
- **Mizpah**, where the celebrated Israelite judge and seer/prophet Samuel is said to offer prayer and a suckling lamb for a burnt offering (**Northern Judges**;<sup>38</sup> 1 Samuel 7:5-11)
- **Ramah/Zuph**, a high place of sacrifice overseen by Samuel "a man of Elohim...held in honor" (**Northern Judges**; 1 Samuel 9:5-25)
- **Gibeath-ha'Elohim** ("the Hill of Elohim"), where Saul, having just been anointed the first King of Israel by Samuel, receives the "Spirit of Elohim" and prophesies with "a group of prophets coming down from the high place." (Additionally, Saul encounters men "going up to Elohim at Bethel.") (**Northern Judges**; 1 Samuel 10:1-13)
- **Gibeon**, the "great high place" of Cainite/Hivite infamy, where King Solomon "offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar," and Yahweh rewards him with wisdom, riches and honor. Note the concession by a post-centralization editor: "The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of Yahweh until those days." Also, despite Yahweh's reward, note the now prefacing criticism: "Now

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<sup>38</sup> See previous notes on the early composition and redaction history of Northern or Proto-Judges (N).

*Solomon loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*” {**Yahwistic & Deuteronomistic**; 1 Kings 3:1-14)

It should be noted that the famous Ark of the Covenant (originally enshrined in the Tabernacle) was later said to be kept at Bethel, then at Shiloh – another notable Northern local shrine, where Samuel first received his calling. (Situated approximately 10 miles north of Bethel, Shiloh was a pre-monarchical religious center of sacrifices and pilgrimage where there was said to be “*a feast of Yahweh from year to year,*” along with the dancing of maidens.)<sup>39</sup> With the house of Saul having been wasted, David ultimately tents the Ark at his new capital in Jebus/Jerusalem, after which Solomon houses it in his newly built temple (i.e. the House of Yahweh). Beginning with Solomon, latter centralizing scribes and priestly redactors would judge every king of Judah and Israel upon whether the exclusive cult of Yahweh at Jerusalem was enforced (e.g. “*turned to Yahweh...according to all the law of Moses*”) – or whether the high places were patronized or even tolerated (e.g. “*did evil in the sight of Yahweh...followed the sins of Jeroboam*”). Of course, based on this impossibly idealistic standard of Judaic insistence, Israel’s kings never stood a chance.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Judges 21:19-23; see also 1 Samuel 2:13,14

<sup>40</sup> Neither the royal administrative scribes in the Books of Kings nor the Chronicler offer positive assessments of any of the northern kings of Israel, namely: Saul, Jeroboam I, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, J(eh)oram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea. Typical criticisms include: “*He did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the way of his father {Jeroboam} and in his sin which he made Israel sin.*” (**Nadab**; 1 Kings 15:26) Similarly, “*He did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel sin.*” (**Baasha**, 1 Kings 15:34) Also, “*Omri did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and acted more wickedly than all who [were] before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and in his sins which he made Israel sin, provoking Yahweh Elohim of Israel with their vanities {i.e. ‘idols’}.*” (1 Kings 16:25,26) Similarly, “*Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of Yahweh more than all who were before him.*” (1 Kings 16:30) Likewise, “*He did evil in the sight of Yahweh and walked in the way of his father {Ahab} and in the way of his mother {Jezebel} and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. So he served Baal and worshiped him and provoked Yahweh Elohim of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.*” (**Ahaziah**; 1 Kings 22:52,53) Similarly, “*He did evil in the sight of Yahweh, though not like his father {Ahab} and his mother; {Jezebel} for he put away the pillar of Baal which his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.*” (**Jehoram**; 2 Kings 3:2,3) Even of **Jehu** – praised and rewarded by Yahweh for the assassination of Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jezebel and the entire house of Ahab, along with the worshippers of Baal (i.e. “*what is right in My eyes*”) – it is said: “*However, the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin, from these Jehu did not depart, [even] the golden calves that [were] at Bethel and that [were] at Dan.*” (2 Kings 10:29)

Meanwhile, some of the Kings of Judah primarily did receive praise in Kings and Chronicles, namely: David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, J(eh)osh, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah. Concerning **David** – who, among other things, delivered 7 of Saul’s sons to the Gibeonite-Hivite Kenites to be sacrificed to Yahweh – it is said he was: “*a man after His {Yahweh’s} own heart*” possessing a heart “*complete with Yahweh his Elohim*” who “*did what was right in the sight of Yahweh...*” (1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 15:3,5) Typical praises include: “*Asa did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, like David his father. ... But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was complete with Yahweh all his days.*” (1 Kings 15:11,14) (Note: Asa bribed Ben-hadad king of Aram with “*silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of Yahweh*” to break a treaty with Baasha king of Israel, resulting in armies being sent to the cities of Israel, conquering several including Dan and those in Naphtali. Compare 1 Kings 15:16-20 & 2 Chronicles 16:1-4.) Similarly, **Jehoshaphat** “*walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the sight of Yahweh. However, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.*” (1 Kings 22:43) (Note: according to 2 Chronicles 17:6, Jehoshaphat’s “*heart was high {i.e. ‘proud’} in the ways of Yahweh and again removed the high places...from Judah.*”)

Still, well after the purported 10<sup>th</sup> century settling down of Yahweh at Jerusalem (i.e. what the late Deuteronomist variously referred to as “*the place where He/Yahweh will choose/chooses...from all your tribes...to establish/put/set His name...to dwell/for a dwelling*”), references to local cults in Israel and Judah continue to abound from one administration to the next. Furthermore, the evidence suggests such high places were formerly recognized as legitimate before the Hezekian & Josianic reforms, culminating with the Deuteronomistic history and tradition. For example, a century after Solomon’s dedication of the legendary Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, Elijah (arguably the most celebrated prophet in the Hebrew Bible, and purported champion of Yahwism in Northern Israel), repeatedly bemoans the destruction of local altars to Yahweh:

“I have been very **zealous for Yahweh**, the Elohim of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, **torn down Your altars** and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, nearly a century and a half later, in the wake of the Assyrian Captivity of Israel, the Chronicler claims Hezekiah held a grand reopening of the Temple in Jerusalem, instituting an epoch-making centralization and Passover observance – after which his invited guests “*pulled*

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Also, **Jehoash** is considered a righteous suppressor of Baal, repairer & reformer of the House of Yahweh and restorer of the House of David, having been anointed by Jehoiada the priest at age seven in a deadly coup d’état against Queen Athaliah of the house of Ahab. “*Jehoash did right in the sight of Yahweh all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*” (2 Kings 12:2,3; compare 2 Chronicles 23) Similarly, **Amaziah** “*did right in the sight of Yahweh, yet not like David his father; he did according to all that J[eh]oash his father had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*” (2 Kings 14:3,4) (Note: Amaziah conquered Edom and fought against Jehoash king of Israel, but was defeated – according to 2 Chronicles 25, for worshipping the gods of the Edomites.) Likewise, **Uzziah** and **Jotham** were considered righteous. Nevertheless, Uzziah proudly “*entered the temple of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense,*” so Azariah the priest and 80 more “*priests of Yahweh, valiant men*” opposed Uzziah: “*It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from Yahweh Elohim.*” (From 2 Chronicles 26:16-18) Similarly, Jotham “*did what was right in the sight of Yahweh; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*” (From 2 Kings 15:34,35; 2 Chronicles 27:2 reads, “*however he did not enter the temple of Yahweh.*”) Finally, the centralizing reforms of the particularly “righteous” **Hezekiah** and **Josiah** – including the destruction of the high places, anti-Israelite religio-political propaganda and military campaigns against the cities of Israel – are outlined at greater length in this study.

(Note: the criticism of tolerating high places – beginning with Solomon in 1 Kings 3:3 and continuing throughout until Hezekiah – is the work of a post-centralization editor, likely the so-called Deuteronomistic Historian, or D2.) When comparing all biblical assessments of the kings of Israel and Judah it becomes clear that anything to do with Israelite religio-political autonomy was judged unfavorable (indeed, murderous anti-Israelite campaigns are praised). Similarly, anything to do with centralizing the religio-political authority of Jerusalem and the Temple of Yahweh was judged favorable (indeed, even the “righteous” kings of Judah are lately censured for tolerating high places and encroaching priestly authority). One may wonder what a northern king of Israel would have had to do – short of abdicating and directing Israel to serve only Yahweh, only David, only Jerusalem – to be considered “*right in the sight of Yahweh*” and not to “*walk in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin.*” Ultimately, it is said both Israel and Judah succumbed to Assyrian and Babylonian captivity in large part because of local high places and non-Yahwist cults.

<sup>41</sup> 1 Kings 19:10; see also 19:14

down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, even to completion (i.e. utterly, or ‘until they had destroyed them all’).<sup>42</sup> (Paradoxically, the very thing Elijah detested, thus betraying the historically belated development of Temple Judaism.) Nearly a century after Hezekiah’s Temple “restoration,” it was Josiah’s reign which both Kings & Chronicles would agree had wrought an epochal centralized Passover, again accompanied by the destruction of local shrines. A brief outline of this new type of Passover will at once reveal the Deuteronomistic legal revisions as the culprit behind the present biblical ambiguity concerning when, where and how to observe Passover.

According to the account of Hezekiah’s reign in 2 Kings: “*he {Hezekiah} removed the high places...*” and even “*broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it.*”<sup>43</sup> Later, a messenger of the King of Assyria reportedly asks: “*is it not He {Yahweh} whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem’?*”<sup>44</sup> Concerning the purported late-8<sup>th</sup> century BCE centralization of cult, unique and revealing elaboration given in 2 Chronicles claims Hezekiah:

- “**opened the doors of the house of Yahweh** and repaired them” (Not unlike earlier Kings of Judah, it is claimed Hezekiah’s immediate predecessor, Ahaz: “*walked in the ways of the kings of Israel...sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree.*” Reportedly, a central Temple priesthood and service had been non-existent, requiring renovation, as Ahaz: “*closed the doors of the house of Yahweh and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem.*”) (28:2,4,24; 29:3)
- gathered the priests and the Levites, commanded their own consecration, their consecration and cleansing of the Temple, and their station “*before {Yahweh}*” at the Temple (29:4-19)
- commanded various priestly assisted burnt offerings and worship at the Temple (29:20-36)
- “*sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should **come to the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem to do the Passover** to Yahweh Elohim of Israel,*” Reportedly, a central Temple Passover had been non-existent, requiring postponement until the 2<sup>nd</sup> month to assemble sufficient priests for gathering and hosting “*all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan... For they had not done [Passover] in great numbers as it was written.*” (30:1-12)
- “*The altars which [were] in Jerusalem*” and “*all the incense altars*” were removed. (30:14)
- “*Then they slaughtered the Passover on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and the Levites...stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses.*” Notably, “***the priests sprinkled the blood** [received] from the hand of the Levites*” and “***the Levites** [were stationed] **over the slaughter of the Passover** for everyone who [was] unclean.” Concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread, “*they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings.*” (30:15-22)*

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<sup>42</sup> From 2 Chronicles 31:1

<sup>43</sup> From 2 Kings 18:4

<sup>44</sup> From 2 Kings 18:22; see also Isaiah 36:7

The curious account of Hezekiah’s centralized Passover/Unleavened Bread concludes with the acknowledgment: *“there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon...”* (30:26) Indeed, this Temple-centric slaughter of the Passover lamb is here depicted as if a ritual sacrifice of a peace offering – requiring that it be presented to the priest for sprinkling its blood on the altar of Yahweh. Note: the account doesn’t specify when the lambs were slaughtered on the 14<sup>th</sup> day (e.g. “at twilight”), as it seems to further conflate the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread, in both name and ritual. Note also the uncanny similarity between the Chronicler’s account of Hezekiah’s Passover and the Priestly account of the second Passover in the wilderness:

<b>Numbers 7-9 (P or P-inspired)</b>	<b>2 Chronicles 29-30 (P-inspired)</b>
<i>“Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle”</i> (7:1)	Hezekiah <i>“opened the doors of the house of Yahweh and repaired them”</i> (29:3)
Moses <i>“consecrated it with all its furnishings”</i> (7:1)	the Levites <i>“cleansed the whole house of Yahweh, the altar of burnt offering with all of its utensils”</i> (29:18)
from every tribe <i>“the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers’ households, made an offering...for the dedication of the altar”</i> (7:2-88)	Hezekiah <i>“assembled the princes of the city and went up to the house of Yahweh”</i> with offerings and <i>“ordered the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer on the altar of Yahweh”</i> (29:20-24)
<i>“Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to Aaron and say to him, ‘When you raise up the lamps...’”</i> (8:1-4)	Hezekiah said to the Levites, <i>“they have...put out the lamps...”</i> (29:4-7)
<i>“Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them... the Levites shall be Mine... to perform the service of the sons of Israel at the tent of meeting...’”</i> (8:5-22)	Hezekiah said to the Levites, <i>“Consecrate yourselves now... My sons, do not be negligent now, for Yahweh has chosen you to stand before Him, to minister to Him...”</i> (29:4-11)
the first memorial Feast of Passover is instituted, with special provisions for anyone <i>“unclean...or...on a distant journey”</i> – and thus <i>“restrained from presenting the offering of Yahweh at its appointed time among the sons of Israel”</i> – to belatedly <i>“observe the Passover to Yahweh...in the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight”</i> (9:1-14)	Hezekiah invites <i>“all Israel and Judah”</i> to observe an epochal <i>“Passover in the second month, since they could not do it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.”</i> So, <i>“they slaughtered the Passover on the fourteenth of the second month... according to the law of Moses...the priests sprinkled the blood...”</i> (30:1-22)

To the careful reader, signs of literary relationship between these Priestly-inspired texts are apparent. First of all, the Priestly account of the second Passover (observed around the Tabernacle in the wilderness) bears signs of a much later authorship: featuring an organized central priesthood, complete with Aaronite and Levitical classes, with references to various ordinances and statutes. More specifically, why would Moses make special stipulations for one *“on a distant journey”* – when all the tribes of Israel were encamped within walking-distance to the Tabernacle... AND ...when at least some archaic ordinances for Passover (Exodus 12) related a domestic observance, requiring no long trek to any specific altar?

Understanding that the original Priestly (P) text itself was written in the wake of the Assyrian Captivity (contemporaneous with Hezekiah’s reign and the ensuing centralization of priesthood at Jerusalem) will put these institutionalizing changes to the Passover observance in proper historical context. Indeed, if all Israelites were expected to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of Unleavened Bread (on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month), then the vast majority of such pilgrims would have had to forego eating the Passover in their homes (less than 24 hours earlier). This institutionalization (requiring the once local or domestic slaughter of Passover to be overseen by a centralized priesthood) simultaneously *necessitated moving the traditional time when Passover*



was slaughtered to later on the afternoon of 14<sup>th</sup> day – rather than within the constraints of twilight the night before. The resultant conflation of Passover with the following feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Abib becomes all the more obvious when comparing Josiah’s epochal Passover nearly a century later, this time authorized by the Deuteronomist.

Reminiscent of Ahaz, 2 Kings reports Manasseh’s “evil” succession to the throne in Jerusalem: “he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed.” The account continues with post-Deuteronomistic commentary: “He built altars in the house of Yahweh... of which Yahweh said to David and to his son Solomon, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever.’”<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, Hezekiah’s great-grandson Josiah is depicted yet again “repairing” the House of Yahweh – the pretext by which Hilkiah presents, and Josiah enforces, the long-lost “Book of the Law/Covenant.” Once again, the local altars and high places are destroyed and defiled in Jerusalem and across the cities of Judah and Israel. (Additionally, this time, graves were defiled and local priests were slaughtered, such acts justifiably portrayed as the righteous fulfillment of prophecy). Next, 2 Kings records:

Then the king commanded all the people saying, “**Celebrate the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim as it is written in this book of the covenant.**” *Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah.*<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, the text concludes with the post-Babylonian commentary: “Yahweh said, ‘I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, “My name shall be there.”’”<sup>47</sup> Concerning this late-7<sup>th</sup> century BCE Passover, the post-Babylonian book of 2 Chronicles yet again elaborates that Josiah:

- “**celebrated the Passover to Yahweh in Jerusalem,** and they slaughtered the Passover on the fourteenth of the first month” (35:1)
- “set the priests in their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of Yahweh” (“He also said **to the Levites...** ‘**Now slaughter the Passover,** sanctify yourselves and prepare for your brethren to do **according to the word of Yahweh by Moses.**’” (35:2-6)
- “contributed to the lay people, to all who were present, flocks of lambs and young goats, all for the **Passover offerings,** {Heb. ‘pesachim’}...**plus 3,000 bulls...**” (35:7-9)
- “**They** {the Levites} **slaughtered the Passover, and while the priests sprinkled** [the blood received] from their hand, the Levites skinned [them]. Then they removed the burnt

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<sup>45</sup> Taken from 2 Kings 21:2-7.

Following the late Deuteronomistic language in these verses, the subsequent explicit threat of captivity (beginning in verse 8 and continuing especially into verses 10-15, concerning Manasseh’s idolatrous reign) bears the distinct signature of a post-Babylonian scribal addition. Indeed, blamed on Manasseh’s high places, altars for Baal, etc., here is a pseudo-prophetic reference to the Babylonian Captivity: “I am bringing calamity on Jerusalem and Judah... I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish... I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies...”

<sup>46</sup> 2 Kings 23:21,22

<sup>47</sup> 2 Kings 23:27

*offerings that [they] might **give them to the sections of the fathers' households of the lay people to present to Yahweh, as it is written in the book of Moses.** [They did] this **also with the bulls.**" (35:11,12)*

- *"So they roasted {Heb. 'basha'; lit. '**boiled**'} the Passover on the fire according to the ordinance, and they **boiled** {Heb. 'basha'} **the holy things in pots, in kettles, in pans, and carried [them] speedily to all the lay people.** Afterwards they prepared for themselves and for **the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, [were] offering the burnt offerings and the fat until night.**" (35:13,14)*
- *"So all the service of Yahweh was **prepared on that day to celebrate the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of Yahweh according to the command of King Josiah.** Thus the sons of Israel who were present celebrated the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days." (35:16,17)*

The account of Josiah's centralized Passover/Unleavened Bread concludes similarly: *"There had not been celebrated a Passover like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; nor had any of the kings of Israel celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did with the priests, the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."* (35:18) (Ironically, Samuel was a patron of various high places; ergo, Passover was apparently NEVER observed like this!) Note again: the account doesn't specify the Passover was slaughtered *"at twilight;"* rather, it says the Levites slaughtered and distributed all the *"Passover offerings"* that were *"prepared that day"* (the 14<sup>th</sup>), and – furthermore – that the Priests were busy offering *"until night"* (i.e. the 15<sup>th</sup>)! Note also the introduction of *"bulls"* (compare 30:23,24 & 35:7-9) and *"boiling in pots, kettles,"* etc. for speedy distribution... while older ordinances strictly defined the Passover as a lamb or goat-kid (*"of the flock"*), roasted (*"not boiled"*). Nevertheless, this new type of Passover was according to the King's command, authorized by a new book – today called Deuteronomy. The following – all taken from Deuteronomy 16:1-8 – are late Deuteronomistic ordinances for *"Passover:"*

1. *"perform the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, for in the month of Abib Yahweh your Elohim **brought you out of Egypt by night**"*
2. *"you shall sacrifice the Passover **in the evening** {Heb. 'ba'erev'} **at sunset**, {Heb. 'ke'bow ha'shemesh'} **at the time that you came out of Egypt**"*
3. *"you shall sacrifice the Passover...in the place where Yahweh chooses to establish His name" (Again, **"you are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your gates...but at the place where Yahweh your Elohim chooses to establish His name."**)*
4. *"you shall cook {Heb. 'basha'; lit. '**boil**'} and eat [the Passover] in the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses"*
5. *"you shall sacrifice the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim **from the flock and the herd**"*
6. *"none of the flesh which **you sacrifice on the evening** {Heb. 'ba'erev'} **of the first day** shall remain overnight until morning"*
7. ***"seven days you shall eat with it** {the Passover} unleavened bread"*

The differences in terminology and ordinance are striking. Here in Deuteronomy 16, the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are together referred to as *"the Passover"* {Heb. *pesach*}, and this *"Passover"* is to be eaten for seven days with unleavened bread. Furthermore and more pointedly, this Deuteronomistic Passover – particularly its first evening – is curiously conflated with the *"night"* of Exodus (i.e. the first day of Unleavened Bread; the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Abib). Thus, the

chronological ambiguity between Passover and Exodus witnessed in Exodus 12 is reflective of this Deuteronomistic change of ordinances for Passover and Unleavened Bread. Now “Passover” is to be sacrificed “*in the evening* {Heb. ‘*ba’erev*} *at sunset*” (properly and descriptively, “*at sunset, as the sun goes [down]*”), with no mention of “twilight” at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Indeed, as seen in the Chronicler’s account of Josiah’s Passover, the day of the 14<sup>th</sup> has become the day of necessary afternoon hours of “*preparation*” to accommodate for all the priestly-officiated sacrifices – absorbed into the first night of Unleavened Bread, commemorating the Exodus. Thus, the new Passover service, redefined and combined with the seven days of Unleavened Bread, now includes allowances for the sacrifice of bulls (i.e. “*from...the herd*”), and boiling the meat. Nevertheless, at the heart of these Deuteronomistic legal revisions is the new prohibition against eating the enforced pilgrimage of “Passover” in any town other than “*the place Yahweh chooses...*” (i.e. the sly Deuteronomistic reference to Jerusalem, as if prophetically prescribed by Moses, almost a millennium before).<sup>48</sup>

<b>Pre-Centralized (Domestic) 14<sup>th</sup> Passover</b>	<b>Deuteronomistic (Temple) 14-15<sup>th</sup> Passover</b>
Lambs concurrently killed domestically, their blood placed on individual doorposts/lintel, at twilight marking the beginning of the 14 <sup>th</sup> day.	Lambs consecutively killed at the temple, their blood sprinkled on the central altar, throughout the preparation/afternoon ending the 14 <sup>th</sup> day.
Lambs eaten on the night of the 14 <sup>th</sup> day, to commemorate the pass over legend, followed the next night by 7 days of unleavened bread.	Lambs eaten on the night of the 15 <sup>th</sup> day, to commemorate the exodus legend, that night beginning the 7 days of unleavened bread.

Upon studying these legal revisions, the careful reader may note several odd parallels between the accounts of Hezekiah’s and Josiah’s “Mosaic,” “Davidic” and “Solomonic” reforms, as purported and elaborated by Kings & **Chronicles**. Note the following compilation:

<b>Hezekiah’s Cultic Reforms (2 Kings 18) (2 Chronicles 29-31)</b>	<b>Josiah’s Cultic Reforms (2 Kings 22,23) (2 Chronicles 34,35)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hezekiah “<i>opened the doors of the house of Yahweh and repaired them,</i>”</li> <li>2. gathering and commanding the Levites, “<i>Consecrate yourselves now, and consecrate the house of Yahweh.</i>” He “<i>appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites...for peace offerings...</i>” also appointing “<i>for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and...for the sabbaths and for the new moons and for the fixed festivals, <u>as it is written in the law of Yahweh.</u></i>”</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Josiah commanded “<i>to repair the breach of the house</i>” (“<i>...to restore and repair the house</i>”),</li> <li>2. gathering and commanding the Priests to cleanse the house of Yahweh. (He commanded the Levites, “<i>Prepare...in your divisions, <u>according to the writing of David king of Israel and according to the writing of his son Solomon</u></i>” and “<i>sanctify yourselves and prepare for your brethren to do <u>according to the word of Yahweh by Moses.</u></i>”)</li> </ol>

<sup>48</sup> See previous note on the Deuteronomistic formula: “*the place where He/Yahweh will choose/chooses...from all your tribes...to establish/put/set His name...to dwell/for a dwelling...*” Similar language appears outside of the Book of Deuteronomy (e.g. 1 Kings 3:2; 8:29; 11:36; 2 Kings 21:4,7; compare 2 Chronicles 33:4,7). As such, at least some of these are likely the work of a late Deuteronomistic editor (e.g. the so-called Deuteronomistic Historian, or D2).

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “He removed the high places” in Judah. (“They arose and removed the altars which [were] <u>in Jerusalem</u>. ... All Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah...and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin,</li> <li>2. <u>as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, even to completion.</u>”)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He “defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense” in Judah. (“He began to purge <u>Judah and Jerusalem</u> of the high places... He burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.”)</li> <li>2. “He broke down...the altar that [was] at Bethel the high place,” defiling it with human bones. He “also removed all the houses of the high places which [were] in <u>the cities of Samaria</u>...as he had done in Bethel,” as “he slaughtered on the altars...all the priests of the high places who [were] there.” (“He also tore down the altars...<u>in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali</u>...”)</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “The king...decided to celebrate the Passover <u>in the second month</u>... {compare Numbers 9}</li> <li>2. <u>there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon</u> the son of David, king of Israel.”</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “The King commanded all the people saying, ‘Celebrate the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim <u>as it is written in this book of the covenant</u>.’ {compare Deuteronomy 16}</li> <li>2. Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated <u>from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah</u>.” (“...since the days of Samuel the prophet; nor had any of the kings of Israel celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did...”)</li> </ol>
<p><u>“After him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he clung to Yahweh; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Yahweh had commanded Moses.”</u></p>	<p><u>“Before him there was no king like him who turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.”</u></p>

Amidst such a synopsis of Kings & Chronicles may be found parallel accounts of Hezekiah’s and Josiah’s (1) Temple construction & Priesthood organization, (2) the destruction of high places in both Judah & Israel, (3) the institution of an epochal Passover, unlike any before, and (4) high praise for a king, unlike any before or after. (Parallel taxation references may also be found.) Nevertheless perhaps most striking, is how *each purported reform respectively appeals to its own contemporaneously unique legal tradition*. Thus, as noted, the account of Hezekiah’s 8<sup>th</sup> century Passover shares an obvious literary relationship to the Priestly account of Passover in Numbers 9 – composed sometime after the 722 BCE fall of Samaria (in the aftermath of such centralizing reforms in Jerusalem)! Likewise, the account of Josiah’s 7<sup>th</sup> century Passover appeals to another legal tradition composed a century later – the “*Book of the Law of Yahweh by the hand of Moses*” (allegedly discovered in 622 BCE)! Finally, the reader will note how the post-Babylonian Chronicler introduces yet another layer of hitherto undocumented legal tradition – appealing to more Levitical/Priestly ordinances (this time, allegedly written by David & Solomon)!<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Post-Deuteronomistic, post-Babylonian tradition of priestly ordinances appealing beyond Moses to the authority of David & Solomon include: “the gatekeepers for the camp of the sons of Levi...whom David and Samuel the seer appointed in their office of trust.” (From 1 Chronicles 9:17-27) Also, David – speaking in the first person, reminiscent of Moses in Deuteronomy – “gave to his son Solomon the plan...of the house of Yahweh...,” and the text curiously adds: “‘All [this],’ [said David], ‘Yahweh made me understand **in writing by His hand upon me**, all the works {i.e. ‘details’} of this pattern.’” (1 Chronicles 28) Similarly, concerning Solomon: “Now according to the ordinance of his father David, he {Solomon} appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their duties of praise and ministering before the priests according to the daily rule, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at every gate; for David the man of Elohim had so commanded.” (2 Chronicles 8:14) Likewise, concerning the priestly-instructed administration of young King Jehoash it reads: “Moreover, Jehoiada [the priest] placed the offices of the house of Yahweh under the hand {i.e. ‘authority’} of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of Yahweh, to offer the burnt offerings of Yahweh, as it is written in the law of Moses—with rejoicing and singing according to the hands of David.” (2 Chronicles 23:18)

(Indeed, comparative analyses of all related texts reveal how much of the legend, legislation and propaganda of the Pentateuch, greater Deuteronomistic History of Samuel & Kings, and beyond... was redacted, composed and/or supplemented during the latter administrations of the Kings of Judah, continuing its expansion and culminating with the Temple restoration of Ezra & Nehemiah. This phenomenon of *administrative sponsorship of what would become sacred textual tradition* was but briefly noted in the layers of Mosaic tradition & Solomonian legend corresponding to the reforms of Hezekiah, Josiah and Ezra. Again, the historical context behind each layer – underlying its historicity – deserves in-depth analysis beyond the scope of this introductory review.)<sup>50</sup>

**THE PROPHET JEREMIAH, PART I**  
**(“THE LYING PEN OF THE SCRIBES...”)**

Initial investigation of the different *mythical and patriarchal/matriarchal traditions in Genesis* has proven useful for introducing the texts of E, J and P. (Their influence continues to expand throughout the Bible.) Now, similarly, an introductory and comparative investigation of the varying layers of “Mosaic” stories and law codes will help to demystify the *cultic and legal traditions far beyond Genesis*. Among the different voices of these muddled texts, it appears each had something unique to communicate concerning the altar of burnt offering and related cultic festivals. The once-domestic sacrificial rite of Passover has proven especially advantageous by way of comparison, as it figures throughout these many layers of tradition. Indeed, both religious and political spheres in the nations of Israel and Judah variously point back to a flight/delivery out of Egypt – appealing to a lawgiver named Moses – for cultic and civil foundations of authority.

As such, a simple comparison of sacrificial traditions and ordinances brings to bear all kinds of original, revised and competing cultic textual traditions beyond Genesis. Their redaction and supplementation progress from the Northern Book of Judges, to the so-called Covenant Code, to the original Yahwist and Priestly texts, to later Yahwistic and Priestly emendations, to the Deuteronomist and associated Deuteronomistic editors/“historian,” and other pre- and post-Babylonian additions... For example, note carefully the legal revision from early to late sources:

<b>“Covenant Code”</b>	<b>Book of the Law (Deuteronomist)</b>
<p><i>“You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; <b>in every place</b> where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones...”</i> (Exodus 20:24,25a)</p>	<p><i>“Be careful that you <u>do not offer your burnt offerings in every place you see, but <b>in the place</b> which Yahweh chooses <b>in one of your tribes</b>, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.”</u></i> (Deuteronomy 12:13,14)</p>

As such, the command of Josiah in 2 Chronicles 35:3,4 “*according to the writing of David king of Israel and according to the writing of his son Solomon*” may well reference the priestly tradition lately codified in 1 Chronicles 23-26, or another textual tradition absent from the biblical record. Indeed, just as the Temple priests & scribes of Josiah’s day introduced their centralizing, Secondary Law (purportedly by the hand of Moses, slipping “*Josiah*” into 1 Kings)... the Second-Temple priests & scribes of Ezra’s day used the same proven propagandist tactic, advancing their Levitical ordinances (purportedly handed down by David and Solomon, then slipping “*Cyrus*” into Deutero-Isaiah).

<sup>50</sup> See previous notes concerning the administrative influences of Kings Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah, along with Ezra and Nehemiah, on the generationally evolving religio-political and legal traditions of Moses, David and Solomon.

So, “*in every place*” became “*in the place*.” This is why and how the celebrated Prophets Samuel & Elijah are depicted operating and passionately supporting the high places... while the celebrated Kings Hezekiah & Josiah are praised for tearing down and defiling them. Again, the increased specificity of tri-annual pilgrimage should be noted accordingly as no coincidence:

“Covenant Code”	Book of the Law (Deuteronomist)
<p>“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh.” (Exodus 23:17)</p>	<p>“Three times in a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim <i>in the place which He chooses...</i>” (Deuteronomy 16:16a)</p>

Composed chronologically somewhere in the midst of these two sources, both Yahwist (e.g. *Exodus 34:24b*) and Priestly (e.g. *Leviticus 17:3,4*) traditions imply festival and sacrificial centralization, while the Deuteronomistic editor lately explicates: “*In this house and in Jerusalem...I {Yahweh} will put My name forever.*” (*2 Kings 21:7b*; also *2 Kings 23:27b*, etc.) Examples of changing sacrificial tradition, additional ordinances for when, where and how to observe festivals and offerings, along with detailed Tabernacle/Temple rituals... are many and various. (Note: any semblance of original Elohist legal tradition is now buried deep within Yahwistic interleaving, and it must be distinguished by peeling back subtle supplementary layers – again, the extent and existence of which are greatly debated.)

Outlined in this study are but a few of the more obvious examples of this accumulation of increasingly centralized and authorized cultic tradition which may be witnessed across the Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. Of course, these traditions also permeate into the contents of the Latter Prophets (where, for example, the altar and high place of Bethel is repeatedly mocked and derided).<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, quite unlike Hezekiah’s Jerusalem-sponsored Court Prophet Isaiah, the Prophet Jeremiah offered a much different message:

“Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘These are **the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh.**’ ... “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. ... Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen [it],” declares Yahweh. “But **go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first**, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness

<sup>51</sup> Note for example the following passage from the Latter Prophets:

The inhabitants of Samaria will fear  
For the calves of **Beth-aven**.  
Indeed, its people will mourn for it,  
And its idolatrous priests will cry out over it,  
Over its glory, since it has departed from it. {Hosea 10:5}

Here in Hosea, **Bethel** is called instead **Beth “Aven”** אָוֶן (often translated House of “Vanity;” *aven* also is said to carry various meanings of: *trouble, sorrow, wickedness* and, specifically, *idolatry*). It should be noted this mysterious root “Aven” is here spelled the same as the Hebrew transliteration for the Egyptian city “On” אֹן or אָן (Heliopolis) in Elohist text, where Joseph was said to have taken the daughter of the priest of On – the mother of the North Israelite patriarchs Ephraim & Manasseh.

Compare also Hosea 4:15; 5:8; Amos 3:14; 7:7-9; Micah 1:5 and context.

of My people Israel. ...I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.”<sup>52</sup>

Here, Jeremiah makes clear that Jerusalem held no exclusive promise; it was no more special than Shiloh of Israel. (Indeed, if Israel fell, so too would Judah – along with the city in which many were falsely claiming Yahweh had set up his eternal abode.) What of the sacrifices that were by Jeremiah’s time being centrally and exclusively enforced at Jerusalem? Jeremiah had more to say:

“Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the Elohim of Israel, **‘Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.’**”<sup>53</sup>

Now here is a most radical statement, cutting through the deception of generations of scribes and priests concerning the mounting “Mosaic” legal tradition. (Indeed, burnt offerings had been added.) Consider how Jeremiah’s declaration directly contradicts the concluding words of the Priestly source, upon detailing all the newly alleged sacrificial laws of Yahweh:

<b>Leviticus 7:37,38 (P)</b>	<b>Jeremiah 7:22</b>
This is the <b>law of the burnt offering</b> , the <b>grain offering</b> and the <b>sin offering</b> and the <b>guilt offering</b> and the <b>ordination offering</b> and the <b>sacrifice of peace offerings</b> , which <u>Yahweh commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai.</u>	<u>‘I {Yahweh} did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.’</u>

Coming from the Benjaminite village of Anathoth – and active beginning just a few years before Josiah’s reforms based on the alleged discovery of the Book of the Law – Jeremiah was afforded a unique firsthand perspective of the Mosaic traditions contemporaneously still in development. This was a time when the Priestly texts were still relatively new, before their synopsis with JE resulting in the formation of the Tetrateuch. As such, Jeremiah was privy to the pre-redacted, pre-canonical controversies between the once distinct JE and P, right alongside the introduction of D. With North Israelite sympathies, Jeremiah was a powerful witness to the politicizing and repackaging of “Moses” in the Judeo-Israelite, religio-political and Jerusalem-centric culture still being forged since the days of Hezekiah. Amidst this merging and emerging of sacred and authoritative “Mosaic” legal codes and traditions, the surviving text of Jeremiah divulged a simple truth:

**‘But My people do not know  
The ordinance of Yahweh.  
How can you say, ‘We are wise,  
And the law {Heb. ‘torah’} of Yahweh is with us’?  
But behold, the lying pen of the scribes  
Has made [it] into a lie.’**”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Taken from Jeremiah 7:4-14; compare Jeremiah 26:4-9

<sup>53</sup> Jeremiah 7:21,22

<sup>54</sup> Jeremiah 8:7b-8



Now, as this investigation into the “Torah of Yahweh” continues, it would be good to bear in mind these pointedly convicting words of Jeremiah. (Indeed, here is a solemn, contemporary and rare testimony to the lying pen of the scribes, as now repeatedly evidenced throughout the chapters of this study of EJPD.) The following are how other translations render these Hebrew poetic lines:

- How dare ye say then: we are wise, we have the law of the LORD among us?  
Behold, the deceitful pen of the scribes, setteth forth lies: {*Coverdale Bible; 1535*}
- How do ye say, We [are] wise, and the law of the LORD [is] with us?  
Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. {*Geneva & King James Bibles; 1560, 1611*}
- How, can ye say, Wise, are, we, And, the law of Yahweh, is with us?  
But indeed, lo! falsely, hath dealt the false pen of the scribes! {*Rotherham's Emphasized Bible; 1902*}
- How can you say, ‘We are wise, for we have the law of the LORD,’  
when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely? {*New International Version; 1973*}
- How can you claim, ‘We are wise; the law of the LORD is with us?’  
In fact, the lying pen of scribes has produced falsehood. {*Holman Christian Standard Bible; 1999*}

### **THE MYSTERY OF THE DECALOGUES (THE EVOLVING TESTIMONY/COVENANT OF “THE TEN COMMANDMENTS”)**

Just as multiple and changing traditions for Passover & Tabernacles may be excavated from the layers of the composite Hebrew Bible, ever more widely differing traditions for the famous “Ten Commandments” are also present in the Pentateuch. Once again (as with the sacrificial ordinances and festivals), an ever elusive original Elohist, the Covenant Code, Yahwistic, Priestly and Deuteronomist texts will all come to bear with even a cursory investigation of these ten most popular biblical precepts. (The Hebrew *עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים* {*aseret ha’devarim*} literally translates to “*the Ten Words*,” later faithfully rendered into the Greek *δέκα λόγοι* {*deka logoi*}, from whence the theological or scholarly designation “Decalogue” is derived.)

Owing to the more subtle redaction of sources therefore not easily identified throughout Exodus, the following review of the extant textual traditions will be presented in canonical order. Efforts to identifiably chronicle the order of authorship/redaction – and therefore the extent of literary dependence from one source to the next – must be researched with due diligence beyond the scope of this introduction.<sup>55</sup> Presently, it will suffice to demonstrate the composite and contradictory

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<sup>55</sup> It should be noted that the authorial attribution of the commandments listed in Exodus 20 (P?, JEP?), along with the story of Moses shattering the tablets and aftermath in Exodus 32,33 (J?, JE?), proves particularly challenging. Some believe the famous 10 commandments in Exodus 20 were an independent document (perhaps used by P, or the late redactor of JEP); however this list may represent an earlier document supplemented with additional commandments (perhaps E, with J and/or P interpolations). Similarly, those willing to identify Yahwistic text beyond Exodus 6 as potentially Elohist might argue most or all of Exodus 32,33 is E; however, most or all of these chapters may be J (despite some curious Elohist language). (The problem of Exodus 20 & 32,33 is further outlined in this study.)

This problem of attribution is compounded by the following J narrative (referring back to and seemingly continuing the previous narrative) of Moses carving a (second?, same?) set of tablets in Exodus 34. That the explicitly identified “*Ten Commandments*” of Exodus 34 (hardly resembling those in Exodus 20 & Deuteronomy 5,9,10) are indeed a second or replacement set “*like the former ones...the words that were on the former tablets...*” may or may not be the work of a third party redactor (e.g. that of JEP). In other words, just as the two Creation accounts of P & J (Elohim



nature of the evolving legend of Moses receiving/delivering the multifarious instructions of the Torah, and the popular example of the Ten Commandments will serve this investigative goal well.

Just as Moses' father-in-law is given the names: "Jethro" (E) and "Reuel" (J) (also later "Hobab," according to Judges), Exodus also introduces and variously refers to the famous setting near Jethro/Reuel's dwelling, where the Israelites traditionally receive the Torah. This place is given the names: "the Mountain of Elohim" {har ha'elohim} (E) and "Mount Sinai" (J & P) (also "Horeb," likely due to Deuteronomistic influence). Once presented with the scene of Elohim/Yahweh uttering commandments atop this Mount Elohim/Sinai, the reader has already waded through several chapters of complex JEP interleaving. It is therefore hardly discernable whether the ten commandments enumerated in Exodus 20 contain (1) any fragments of E or J, (2) are chiefly P, or (3) are even the insertion of a post-Deuteronomistic editor. At this point in the story, these commandments are spoken only (there is no mention of stone tablets). They are given as follows (enumeration added):

{possibly original to E} {possibly late additions} Then 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 slaves.

1. **You shall have no other elohim** {i.e. 'gods'} **before Me** {lit. 'my face'}.
2. **You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**
3. You shall not take the name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain, **for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.**
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; [in it] you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who is in your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.**
5. Honor your father and your mother, **that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your Elohim gives you.**
6. **You shall not murder.**
7. **You shall not commit adultery.** {lit. 'adulterate'}
8. **You shall not steal.**
9. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**
10. **You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**<sup>56</sup>

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in Genesis 1; Yahweh[-Elohim] in Genesis 2) were redacted to appear as if they were the same or consecutive creative event(s)... the original authorial intent of a potentially former Elohist vs. latter Yahwistic set of tablets appears to be subtly redacted in these chapters. Finally, whether original E is present at all in Exodus 20,32,33 – or to what extent – is a matter of consideration and further research.

What can be discerned is that (1) the Yahwist "Ten Commandments" in Exodus 34 appear to be literarily dependent on the Covenant Code in Exodus 23, and (2) the Deuteronomist "Ten Commandments" in Deuteronomy 10 appear to be literarily dependent or related to those in Exodus 20 – which in turn are further identified by the Deuteronomist with those in Exodus 34. (Note, from Deuteronomy 10:1-5, "He wrote on the tablets, **like the former writing, the Ten Commandments which Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly, and Yahweh gave them to me.**" Compare Deuteronomy 5:1-22; Exodus 20:1-18. Indeed, the stories of Exodus 32 & 34 were reiterated and conflated – perhaps even before the redaction of JEP – in Deuteronomy 9 & 10.)

<sup>56</sup> Exodus 20:1-17

(Note: the possible E reconstructions or later additions are here tentatively offered to inspire further research; it is also possible that E, and even J, are unrepresented in the Exodus 20 Decalogue.)

One feature that immediately stands out is the lengthy sabbath commandment's allusion to the Priestly creation myth. This may indicate either Priestly authorship, or Priestly-inspired revision. Nevertheless, immediately following this Decalogue, an Elohist narrative appears to resume (20:18-21), followed by the series of archaic laws known as the Covenant Code (spanning through 23:19, perhaps narrating into parts of Exodus 24). Exodus 24 also includes the Bible's first – apparently Yahwist – reference to the famed, mysterious stone tablets:

{J} Now Yahweh said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there, and I will give you **the stone tablets and the law and the commandment which I have written** for their instruction.”<sup>57</sup>

By the end of chapter 24, a decidedly Priestly text resumes (spanning throughout *Exodus 25-31*). In these Priestly chapters, Yahweh instructs on taking up offerings to construct a sanctuary, including an ark overlaid in “*pure gold*,” gold utensils, a gold menorah, a tabernacle of fine linen, gold, silver and bronze, a bronze altar, bejeweled priestly garments and more... all to exact specifications. Concerning the ark, the text reads, “*You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you*,” and so it is also called: “*the ark of testimony*” אֲדֹתָא { *eduth* } (also translated, “*ark of the covenant*”).<sup>58</sup> After Priestly requirements for sprinkled blood of bulls, rams and lambs (along with burned flesh “*for a soothing aroma before Yahweh*,” among other offerings), chapter 30 concludes with what canonically appears to be a reiteration of the sabbath commandment (now under penalty of death): “*For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest {Heb. shabbath shabbathon}...for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased, and was refreshed.*”<sup>59</sup> Finally, the Priestly text is interrupted, immediately after its own descriptive introduction to these mysterious stone tablets:

{P} When He {Yahweh} had finished speaking with him {Moses} upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses **the two tablets of the testimony**, {Heb. *eduth*} **tablets of stone, written by the finger of Elohim**.<sup>60</sup>

(Note: at no point, thus far in the narrative, does any source explicate what is written on the tablets.)

What follows in chapter 32 is a very curious, chiefly Yahwistic account (including odd signs of late edition and/or redaction with other sources), depicting Aaron fashioning a “*molten calf*” {i.e. “*young bull*”} out of gold, along with the exclamation: “*These are your elohim, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*” Now, this line in Exodus 32:4b will immediately call to mind Jeroboam's expression, upon making “*two golden calves*” in the late Yahwistic propaganda of 1 Kings 12:28b: “*...behold your elohim, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.*”

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<sup>57</sup> Exodus 24:12

<sup>58</sup> Exodus 25:16; see also 25:21.

<sup>59</sup> Taken from 30:12-17

<sup>60</sup> Exodus 31:18

What's more is this Exodus account has Aaron build an altar and proclaim: "Tomorrow [shall be] a feast to Yahweh," just as 1 Kings has Jeroboam institute his own feast and offer upon the altar at Bethel. Because the muddled sources in Exodus are particularly difficult to attribute, the chronology of literary dependency between these "golden bull" episodes is not altogether obvious – excepting that such anti-Aaronite tradition in Exodus 32 hardly originates from Aaronite P!<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, after more Yahwistic narrative, the chapter continues thusly:

{JE?} {*P-inspired redaction?*} Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the **two tablets of the testimony** {Heb. 'eduth} in his hand, **tablets which were written on [both] their sides; they were written on one [side] and the other. The tablets were Elohim's work, and the writing was Elohim's writing engraved on the tablets.**<sup>62</sup>

(Note: "tablets of testimony" is reminiscent of P's vocabulary in Exodus 31:18; however, after that verse, the P narrative doesn't appear to resume until another account of Moses' descent in Exodus 34:29. Not only is this interleaving anti-Aaronite material not indicative of P, but its literary relationship with the anti-Israelite propaganda of 1 Kings also lends hesitation in ascribing its potentially Elohist fragments to E.)

Whatever degree of *arcane Elohist significance* these tablets (along with their unrecorded contents) may have held in original or latter tradition, the canonical composite story relates Moses receiving these tablets – "written by the finger of Elohim" – from Yahweh. Meanwhile, on account of an Elohist bull – "your elohim, O Israel" – Yahweh is desirous, with burning anger, to destroy all the Israelites (*verse 9*). So, Moses intercedes on behalf of Israel, and with burning anger, destroys the Elohist tablets – "Elohim's work...Elohim's writing" – by throwing and shattering them (*verse 19*)! (Note also Aaron's suggestion in 32:24 of the molten bull's divine/preternatural origin.) Indeed, the chiefly Yahwistic narrative continues to concern itself with notions of mediation and intercession between Yahweh/Elohim and Moses/Israel, as an angry Yahweh withdraws from the Israelites, sending "an angel" in his stead (33:1-5).<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, while

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<sup>61</sup> Aaron is the consummate hero in P, yet depicted unfavorably here. Similarly (as with the Yahwistic propaganda in 1 Kings 12,13), Aaron's golden bull/calf and unofficial feast seem to unfavorably project latent, arcane Israelite traditions. Nevertheless, traditionally northern language (particularly, the Elohist tablets in Exodus 32:16) – now followed by alternative Yahwist tablets in chapter 34 – is suggestive of either original E fragments or a Yahwistic author contrasting earlier, Elohist tradition (e.g. as J does in Genesis 3:1-5,22; 6:1-4). In short, the redacted material in Exodus 32 contains Elohist, Yahwistic and Priestly terminology, yet is atypical of E, J and especially P!

<sup>62</sup> Exodus 32:15,16

<sup>63</sup> Note the uncanny, dual traditions concerning a *positive vs. negative angelic/Elohist mediator*. Immediately after the familiar commandments of the Covenant Code in Exodus 23 (reiterated by J in Exodus 34), the narrative continues: "Behold, **I am going to send an angel before you** to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and **obey his voice**; do not be rebellious toward him, for **he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him**. But if you truly **obey his voice and do all that I say**, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For **My angel will go before you** and bring you in to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. ... I will send My terror ahead of you..." (Exodus 23:20-23, 27b) (Note the highly unusual tradition and revealing implications of a leading divine figure other than the chief deity, providing protection and issuing further commandments as an *official and desirable agent of the chief deity*.)

Compare this "angel" with a decidedly alternative tradition found in the equally mysterious text of Exodus 32,33. Concerning the golden bull, Aaron says to Moses, "For they {the Israelites} said to me, **'Make elohim for us who**

“Yahweh used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend” (33:7-11), a few verses later Yahweh explains to Moses: “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live! ...you shall see My back...” (33:18-23).

Thus, the story invites such questions as: *Who, exactly, was Moses speaking with? ... From whom, exactly, did the tablets and engraving originate?* Nevertheless, the mystery of these dueling cultic and textual traditions runs much deeper, as Exodus 34 finally divulges the alleged contents of the stone tablets, namely, “*The Ten Commandments*” (enumeration added):

{J} Now Yahweh said to Moses, “Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. ... So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as Yahweh had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. ...”

Then He {Yahweh} said, “Behold, I am going to make a covenant. ... Observe for yourself what I am commanding you this day... Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But, you are to tear down their altars...

1. —for **you shall not worship any other el**, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous El—otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land...and someone might invite you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their elohim and cause your sons to play the harlot with their elohim.
2. **You shall make for yourself no molten elohim.**

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**will go before us**; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave to me, and I threw it into the fire, and **out came this calf.**” (Exodus 32:23,24) (Note: a divine figure “who will go before” is here explicitly connected with “elohim” – perhaps singular or plural – and considered an *unofficial transgression against the chief deity.*)

Next, Moses instructs the sons of Levi that “Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel” commands them to “kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor...in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today.” Then Moses intercedes and attempts to “make atonement” for the people, and Yahweh says to Moses, “‘But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, **My angel shall go before you**; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.’ Then Yahweh smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.” (From Exodus 32:25-35) Finally, chapter 33 reiterates, “Yahweh spoke to Moses, ‘Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt... **I will send an angel before you** and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. ...**for I will not go up in your midst**, because...I might destroy you on the way. ...should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you.’” (From Exodus 33:1-5) (Note: a leading divine figure – like the one in Exodus 23 – is now sent in consequence of transgression as an *official yet undesirable agent of the chief deity.*) (Compare Exodus 32:14 & 33:4 where “Yahweh changed His mind about the harm {lit. ‘evil’} which He said He would do to His people,” and where news of Yahweh’s withdrawal from “the midst” of Israel and sending “an angel before” them is called an “evil word.”)

Thus, what was a positive development of a mediating, protecting and commanding angel is recast by a Yahwistic author/editor as negatively Elohist, even evil. Furthermore, the composite story of Moses shattering a set of tablets of testimony containing the work and writing of Elohim (Exodus 31:18; 32:16)... to be replaced by another set of commandments written by Yahweh[-Elohim] (Exodus 34:1,27,28; Deuteronomy 9:10; 10:2,4)... is likely a consequential development of this same theme of an ultimately undesirable Elohist tradition being replaced by and/or imperfectly substituting an ideally exclusive Yahwistic tradition. (Note: the same can be said for the related traditions of the veil over Moses’ face after speaking with Yahweh in Exodus 34:29-35 – where the Priestly account resumes again from Exodus 31:18 – and of whether-or-not Yahweh spoke with Moses and Israel “face to face.” Compare Exodus 20:18-21; 33:7-11,18-23; Deuteronomy 5:4; 34:10.)

3. **You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread.** For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, which I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.
4. **The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me,** and all your male livestock, the first offspring from oxen and sheep. You shall redeem with a lamb the first opening {i.e. birth} of a donkey; and if you do not redeem [it], then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. They shall not appear before Me empty-handed.
5. **You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest;** [even] during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.
6. **You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks,** [even] the first fruits of the wheat harvest,
7. **and the Feast of Ingathering** at the turn of the year. Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel. For I will dispossess nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before Yahweh your Elohim.
8. **You shall not slaughter the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread,** nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning.
9. **You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of Yahweh your Elohim.**
10. **You shall not boil a kid {i.e. young goat} in its mother's milk.**"

Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Write for yourself these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he was there with Yahweh forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he {?} wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments {lit. 'Words'}.<sup>64</sup>

(Note: while this tradition explicitly identifies "*these words*" as the covenant written on the tablets – "*the words of the covenant, the Ten Words*" – ambiguity over who engraved them oddly persists.)

Amazingly, the contents of Exodus 34 hardly resemble what are popularly and faithfully believed to be "The Ten Commandments" (e.g. Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5). While the two opening commands of these distinct Decalogues bear similitude, the reader may note that the prohibition against "*graven images*" is here more pointedly "*molten elohim*" (reminiscent of the Elohistic molten calves). Furthermore, what follows here in Exodus 34 strongly signifies literary dependence upon the closing verses of the Covenant Code – specifically, the assorted laws in Exodus 23:12-19, canonically listed as follows:

- "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease..."
- Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt.
- And they shall not appear before Me empty-handed.
- Also the Feast of the Harvest the first fruits of your labors [from] what you sow in the field;
- also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in your labors from the field. Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh.
- You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My festival to remain overnight until morning.
- You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of Yahweh your Elohim.
- You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother."

(Subtle revision and rearrangement may be noted.) Even more pointedly, however, is the growing emphasis on centralization, as a now unmistakably Yahwistic tradition of stone tablets – allegedly

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<sup>64</sup> From Exodus 34:1,4,10-28

“*like the former ones*”<sup>65</sup> – moves steadily away from semblances of original North Israelite religion. Indeed, a cursory, canonical review of the extraordinarily adulterated composite in Exodus posits Moses as *repeatedly ascending-and-descending the mountain of Elohim/Sinai/Horeb, as Yahweh makes, rescinds and renews the testimony/covenant, ultimately with post-Elohistic, centralizing emphases*. As an ever more jealous and blood-thirsty conception of deity is projected, one may ask: *Who is this “el,” and who are these “elohim,” of whom Yahweh (“whose name is Jealous”) should be jealous?*<sup>66</sup>

Finally, the Deuteronomistic source offers yet another layer of adulterous “Mosaic” tradition, an apparent alternative attempt at synopsisizing the multiple sources in Exodus, this time composed as if Moses himself were recalling the events and speaking in the first person (enumeration added):

{D} Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them:

“Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your ears, that you may learn them and observe to do them. Yahweh our Elohim made a covenant with us at Horeb. Yahweh did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, all those of us ourselves alive here today. Yahweh spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, I was standing between Yahweh and you at that time, to declare to you the word of Yahweh; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. saying,

‘I am Yahweh your Elohim who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.

1. You shall have no other elohim besides Me {lit. “*my face*”}.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol, any likeness [of] what is in heaven above or what is on the earth beneath or what is in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
3. You shall not take the name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
4. Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as Yahweh your Elohim commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who is in your gates, so that your male servant and your female servant

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<sup>65</sup> See previous note on the difficulty of discerning dual traditions of “the Ten Commandments” and the possibility that these words (particularly, “*like the former ones*” and/or “*the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered*”) are the work of a third party redactor. If not original to J, they either reconcile once distinct sources of the fate and contents of the stone tablets of Elohim/Yahweh... or edit the J account of a second, Yahwistic set which formerly suggested (contrary to Deuteronomistic tradition) that its contents were distinct from an earlier, Elohistic set.

<sup>66</sup> Many readers of the Bible have noted how certain (earlier) passages curiously recognize the existence of other gods. For example, Exodus 12:12b reads: “...*against all the gods* {Heb. ‘elohim’} *of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am Yahweh.*” As the authors of the earlier sources of the Bible acknowledged many gods, Yahweh/Elohim may say “*you shall have no other elohim before My face* {i.e. ‘besides Me’},” and “*I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a jealous El,*” etc. Nevertheless, as Kenite Yahwism grafted into and supplanted original Syro-Israelite tradition, an ideological shift may be witnessed from Elohistic polytheism or henotheism... to Yahwistic henotheism or monolatry... to Deuteronomistic monolatry or the beginnings of monotheism (e.g. Deuteronomy 6:4 depicts Moses exclaiming the famous mantra: “*Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is one!*”). Finally, full-blown monotheism is evident by the post-Babylonian additions of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. Isaiah 43:10b depicts Yahweh exclaiming “*Before Me* {lit. ‘My face’} *there was no El formed, / And there will be none after Me.*”).

See also Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Deuteronomy 32:8 (DSS; compare LXX; MT corrupts “*sons of (the) elohim*” to “*sons of Israel*”); Psalm 8:5; 82:1; 89:6,7; 95:3; 97:7; 135:5; Isaiah 6:8.

may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore Yahweh your Elohim commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

5. Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which Yahweh your Elohim gives you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery. {lit. “*adulterate*”}
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.’

“**These words Yahweh spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire**, the cloud and the thick gloom, with a great voice, and **He added no more**. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.  
...<sup>67</sup>

Comparisons between these commands in Deuteronomy 5, with those of Exodus 20 & 34, along with their surrounding narrative traditions, will yield many telling signs of literary dependence, redaction and revision. (For example, the second commandment here in verses 9,10 makes allusion to Yahweh’s initial proclamation in Exodus 34:6b,7,14 while delivering the alternative, Yahwistic commandments.) Nevertheless, these commandments clearly resemble those given in Exodus 20, the most notable difference being the completely alternative reasons given for why Yahweh commanded sabbath observance:

<b>Priestly reason for Sabbath</b> <i>(Exod. 20:11; compare Gen. 2:2,3)</i>	<b>Deuteronomistic reason for Sabbath</b> <i>(Deut. 5:11; compare 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22)</i>
<i>For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.</i>	<i>You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore Yahweh your Elohim commanded you to observe the sabbath day.</i>

(Again, subtle rearrangement and revision may be noted.) Still, the first-person “Moses” of Deuteronomy informs that it was Yahweh who spoke these words/commandments (and “*no more*”), and that it was Yahweh who wrote them on two stone tablets...before issuing several chapters of more commandments, statutes and judgments into the following chapters – many of them centralizing! Note, carefully, the alternative synopsis of traditions lately offered by the Deuteronomist:

{D} “Remember, do not forget how... Even at **Horeb** you provoked Yahweh to wrath, and Yahweh was so angry with you that He would have destroyed you. When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, **the tablets of the covenant** which Yahweh had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights; **I neither ate bread nor drank water**. Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone **written by the finger of Elohim**; and on them [were] **all the words which Yahweh had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly**. It came about at the end of forty days and nights that Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. ...

So I turned and came down from the mountain while the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. And I saw that you had indeed sinned against Yahweh your Elohim. You had made for yourselves a molten calf... I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands and smashed them before

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<sup>67</sup> Deuteronomy 5:1-22

your eyes. ... I took **your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook** that came down from the mountain. ...

At that time Yahweh said to me, ‘Cut out for yourself two tablets of stone like the former ones, and come up to Me on the mountain, **and make an ark of wood for yourself. I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered, and you shall put them in the ark.**’ So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut out two tablets of stone like the former ones, and went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. **He wrote on the tablets, like the former writing, the Ten Commandments** {lit. 'Words'} **which Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly;** and Yahweh gave them to me. Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as Yahweh commanded me.”<sup>68</sup>

The Deuteronomistic forging of received traditions is uncanny. Note, there is no accounting of “*The Ten Words*” explicitly identified in Exodus 34; the contents of both sets of stone tablets are now explicitly identified with those listed in Deuteronomy 5 (i.e. the “*words Yahweh spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire*”) – “*The Ten Words.*” (Compare Deuteronomy 5:22; 10:4.) While the Priestly expression “*written by the finger of Elohim*” is again alluded to in reference to “former” tablets, now a second set is explicitly written by Yahweh. Note also how the Priestly “*testimony*” is equated with the Yahwistic “*covenant*” in the combined expression “*tablets of the covenant*” בְּרִית {*b’riyth*}. Further, while the Yahwistic forty-day fast from bread & water is specifically recounted before receiving the “former” tablets (*Deuteronomy 9:9* || *Exodus 34:28*), the Priestly instructions to build an ark to house the tablets are now belatedly given in context to Moses’ re-ascension after cutting a second set of tablets (*Deuteronomy 10:1-5* || *Exodus 25:10-22*)!

Thus, after a cursory review of all these so-called, “Ten Commandments” traditions, fundamental questions remain: *Why is there such peculiar legal, contextual and chronological variation between JEP in Exodus and D in Deuteronomy? ... Can all these sources be critically and historically unraveled?* It is important to consider how the Priestly account of Moses receiving the “*tablets of testimony*” now appears to be interrupted (between Exodus 31:18 & 34:29) with a muddled J or JE account of the stone tablets being shattered and replaced. All things considered, whether there were always two sets of tablets original to J... whether there were any tablets in E... whether the synopsis of D was dependent on the redaction of JE... and/or whether the redaction or late revisions of JEP were dependent on the synopsis of D... may all be matters of scrutiny, built on the following deductions:

The first Deuteronomistic layer was composed:

- sometime around 622 BCE,
- in the midst of Josiah’s centralizing reforms,
- apparently before the redaction of JE and P into JEP.

Indeed, even Moses’ grinding Aaron’s golden bull to dust – specifically thrown into a brook – is ever more reflective of the contemporaneously endorsed acts of Josiah against the common people and priests of Jerusalem, Bethel, etc. (*Deuteronomy 9:21* || *2 Kings 23:6,12,15*) Again, it is important to consider how in *2 Kings 23:8,9* Josiah “*brought all the priests from the cities of Judah,*

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<sup>68</sup> From Deuteronomy 9:7-21; 10:1-5



*and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense... nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.*” Just as Jeremiah rejected the testimony of P (concerning “added” burnt offerings), neither did everyone go along with the latest Judeo-centric alternative of D (the “newfound” Book of the Law). In the height of irony, the “Moses” of Deuteronomy now also commands:

{D} “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you. ... Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.”<sup>69</sup>

As if this adulterous “Mosaic” tradition – *amidst forgotten and maligned Elohist family festivals, politically meddling and textually muddled Yahwisms, alternative and supplementary Priestly stipulations, repeated and murderous anti-Israelite propaganda* – hadn’t been forged all along, right up to and including the late composition of Deuteronomy. Indeed, the next and final sections of this Deuteronomistic introduction will showcase more of the same “adding and taking away.”

### **THE CONTINUED ADULTERATION OF BOTH TEXT AND PEOPLES: OTHER CULTIC AND SOCIAL LAWS CONCERNING RACE (MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISCONSTRUED, BROKEN AND FORGOTTEN)**

Two reasons for observing the sabbath were contrasted between the Exodus 20 & Deuteronomy 5 parallel Decalogues (both allegedly uttered by Yahweh amidst the fire and/or cloud on Mount Sinai/Horeb). The former (canonically first) of these sabbath commandments now alludes to the Priestly creation myth, while the latter alludes to the Exodus in recognizably Deuteronomistic fashion. Nevertheless, in Exodus 31, right before Moses is given “*the tablets of testimony...written by the finger of Elohim,*” the recognizably Priestly concern with holiness and racial purity also manifests itself with an additional sabbatarian reasoning, now enforced with a severe judgment:

{P} {Yahweh to Moses to the sons of Israel:} ““You shall surely observe My sabbaths; **for [this] is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies you.** Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ... So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to do the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’ **It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever;** for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased, and was refreshed.”<sup>70</sup>

Note: while allusion to the Priestly creation is still given, another reason is emphasized: *the sabbath signifies the sanctification of Israel.* In other words, the Priestly author instructs that Elohim/Yahweh instituted the sabbath after six days of creation, yet its observance *exclusively distinguishes Israel from the rest of creation.* The divine title translated “Who Sanctifies You” is מְקַדְּשֶׁךָ {*Megaddishkem*}, from the root קָדַשׁ {*kadash*} meaning “to be set apart” (racially, morally, ceremonially, etc.). The word denotes such meanings as: *to be set apart/separate, hallowed/holy and consecrated/sacred...* more rarely translated as: *dedicate, appoint, purify...*

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<sup>69</sup> Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32

<sup>70</sup> From In Exodus 31:12-17

Next, amidst the mostly cultic applications of ritualistic and sacrificial regulations in Leviticus, P reiterates this same “sanctification” reasoning concerning a more socially applicable list of dietary restrictions:

{P} {Yahweh to Moses and Aaron to the sons of Israel:} “For I am Yahweh your Elohim. **Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.** *שׁוֹרֵי קָדוֹשׁ* {*qadosh*} And **you shall not make yourselves unclean**... For I am Yahweh who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your Elohim; **thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.**”

This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.<sup>71</sup>

Note: this concludes a rather thorough listing of which animals were deemed ritually “clean” versus “unclean” (and, thus, which may or may not be eaten). A parallel Deuteronomistic listing is similarly introduced as follows:

{D} “You are the sons of Yahweh your Elohim... For you are a **holy** {*qadosh*} **people to Yahweh your Elohim**, and Yahweh has **chosen you to be a people for His special treasure** {i.e. treasured possession} **out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.**

You shall not eat any detestable thing. ...”<sup>72</sup>

So, both the P and D prohibitions against work on the seventh day, and against unclean meats, are given in the context of setting Israel apart from other nations. Curiously, any general health benefits often theorized regarding a weekly day of rest, or abstinence from certain meats, do not seem to be at issue here... as both P and D stress the national exclusivity and segregation of Israel as the signification and purpose for such social observances.

Pointedly, in the previous investigation of P, it was noted how the Priestly author presented the pre-Deluvian Adamites as vegetarian, before Elohim granted to Noah and his sons: “*Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you.*” Contrariwise, J depicted Yahweh commanding Noah to bring additional sevens “*of every clean animal*” aboard the ark. Thus, the Kenite-Yahwist conception of dietary restriction did not carry the same emphasis on national distinction. (Note also the peculiar law: “*You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk*” – originally concluding both the Book of the Covenant and the Yahwistic “Ten Commandments” – is now relisted among these Deuteronomistic dietary restrictions, allegedly recounted by Moses in Deuteronomy 14:21b.)

While these societal dietary prohibitions were expressly given to encourage Israelite national separatism, the Priestly author further outlines a list of sexual prohibitions for all the people:

{P} {Yahweh to Moses to the sons of Israel:}

- “None of you shall approach **any relative of his flesh** {i.e. near of kin} to uncover nakedness; I am Yahweh.
  - You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother.  
She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness.

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<sup>71</sup> From Leviticus 11:44-47

<sup>72</sup> From Deuteronomy 14:1-3

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is your father’s nakedness. ...
- The nakedness of your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for they are your nakedness. ...
- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness. ...
- Also you shall not approach **a woman** to uncover her nakedness **during her menstrual impurity**.
- You shall not have intercourse {lit. ‘give your lying to seed’} with **your neighbor’s wife**, to be defiled with her.
- You shall not give any of your offspring {lit. ‘seed’} to pass over to **Molech**, nor shall you profane the name of your Elohim; I am Yahweh.
- You shall not lie with **a male** as those who lie with a female; it is an abomination.
- Also you shall not have intercourse {lit. ‘give your lying’} with **any animal** to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate {lit. ‘to squat/lie’} with it; it is a perversion.”<sup>73</sup>

Several curious things to note: concerning such sexual content, rather than explicit language, occasionally euphemisms were anciently employed. Furthermore, modern Bible translations tend to similarly render euphemistically and/or conceptually, rather than explicitly and literally. This has caused considerable confusion. For example, the Hebrew word denoting “nakedness” is repeatedly used by the Priestly author in reference to the pudenda (i.e. implicitly, the female sexual organ). Hence, the “nakedness” belonging to a man is defined as that of the various women under his patriarchal charge. (As such, these prohibitions in Leviticus 18 begin by *defining one’s father’s nakedness as one’s mother*, as this was ambiguously referenced earlier by P concerning Ham’s father’s nakedness in Genesis 9:20-27.)

Additionally, the words here translated “intercourse” and “seed” carry original denotations lost in various translations. For example, the prohibition concerning one’s neighbor’s wife is much more explicit in Hebrew, literally denoting: “*give...lying...seed*” (i.e. explicitly, the male ejaculate; insemination). (Note: in the above translation these words are omitted altogether, conceptually rendered “*have intercourse*.”) Nevertheless, the word denoting “seed” זָרַע {zera} may in some contexts also imply the fruit of insemination (i.e. offspring, singular or plural; son(s) or daughter(s)). Unfortunately, this dual meaning has facilitated more confusion concerning the all-important prohibition concerning the mysterious transliteration: “*Molech*.”

The careful reader will note that amidst these sexual prohibitions, *giving your seed/offspring to pass over to Molech* – according to most translations – seems oddly out of context. Consider the listing of forbidden sexual activities: (1) uncovering the pudenda of various next of kin (2) or during menstruation, (3) giving “seed” to a neighbor’s wife (4) or to “Molech,” (5) laying with another male (6) or with an animal. Hence, one may ask: *What, exactly, constitutes giving seed to Molech? ... Who/what, exactly, is “Molech?”* Note some of the widely different translations:

Translation Source	“offspring / semen”	“sacrifice / consecrate / serve / inseminate”	“Molech(god) / ruler / foreign woman”
1394 Wycliffe Middle-English	give of thy seed	that it be offered	to the idol Moloch
1535 Coverdale Bible	give of thy seed	to be burnt	unto Moloch
1611 King James Bible	let any of thy seed	pass through [the fire]	to Molech
1750 Douay-Rheims Revision	give any of thy seed	to be consecrated	to the idol Moloch
1851 Brenton’s Septuagint	give of thy seed	to serve	a ruler { ἄρχοντι }
1898 Young’s Literal	of thy seed ... give	to pass over	to the Molech

<sup>73</sup> Taken from Leviticus 18:6-23

1902 Rotherham's Emphasized	none of thy seed ... deliver up	to cause to pass through	to Molech
1917 Jewish Publication Society	give any of thy seed	to set them apart	to Molech
1933 Lamsa's Syriac Peshitta (Ancient Eastern Manuscripts)	let any of thy semen	be cast into ... to cause her to be pregnant	a strange woman
1973 New International Version	give any of your children	to be sacrificed	to Molek

While the emphatically explicit “*give...seed*” (i.e. semen) is deemphasized in many translations of Leviticus 18:20 (the King James renders this “*lie carnally*”)... the equally explicit “*of your seed...give*” here in Leviticus 18:21 is often implied to mean the child (i.e. offspring). As such, despite its linguistic similarities within the surrounding context, this latter and corresponding prohibition may no longer be interpreted as sexual. Furthermore, the word variously translated “*pass through/over/into*” carries meanings of “*to impregnate*” and “*to cover (in copulation)*” according to various Hebrew lexicons<sup>74</sup> (the context making this particularly obvious in Job 21:10). Hence, it is especially revealing how translations have supplied their own descriptive context (as the King James inserts the words “[*the fire*]”). So, the popular interpretation of *child sacrifice by burnt offering* (or consecration by fire, or some other imagined ritual...) is presumed over yet another *forbidden act of insemination*.

To make matters worse, biblical interpreters hardly agree over the meaning of the Hebrew מֹלֵךְ {*molek*} often transliterated “Molech/Molek.” Indeed, because it is directly transliterated – *rather than translated* – the noun is capitalized and presumed to be a proper name (e.g. of an idol/god). According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, “Molech” (as it exists in the *Massoretic Text*) “*is an intentional mispointing of ‘Melek,’ after the analogy of ‘bosheth.*”<sup>75</sup> In other words, just as Baal-Seth was stigmatized with the shameful epithet “bosheth”... latter scribes inserted erroneous vowel points to *melek* (lit. “king”), creating the fictitious idol “Molek.” Hence, the Greek Septuagint translates this ἄρχοντι {*archonti*} “to-a-ruler/magistrate,” rather than the transliteration “to (*the*) Molech.”

Finally, note that only one translation out of the ten cited renders the meaning of this prohibition as sexual (according to its surrounding context), rather than sacrificial. George M. Lamsa was particularly known for two things: (1) translating the Aramaic of the Peshitta biblical texts into English, and (2) taking special care to conceptually render ancient idioms of the Bible, which were

<sup>74</sup> Brown, Francis, [Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon (1906)] *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon: with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic: coded with the numbering system from Strong's Exhaustive concordance of the Bible*, “‘abar” #5674 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

Strong, James, [Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (1890)] *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: With Main Concordance, Appendix to the Main Concordance, Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, Hebrew entry #5674 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

<sup>75</sup> MOLOCH (MOLECH); Singer, Isidore; Barton, George A.; *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906)

Notably, while this entry in the Jewish Encyclopedia assumes no other interpretation for Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5 than that of child sacrifice or consecration, it goes on to say both Jeremiah and Ezekiel “*regarded these human sacrifices as extraordinary offerings to Yhwh. ... The fact, therefore, now generally accepted by critical scholars, is that in the last days of the kingdom human sacrifices were offered to Yhwh as King or Counselor of the nation...*”

otherwise lost in literal translation.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, having but briefly outlined the confusion over this verse, it is especially curious to consider Lamsa's rendering:

{P} [**textual/idiomatic restoration?**]

- “You shall not let any of your semen be cast into [**a strange woman to cause her to be pregnant**].”<sup>77</sup>

Whether this verse contains an idiom or archaic reference whose sexual meaning was intentionally or otherwise corrupted/lost, it behooves the researcher to arrive at its true meaning. As with the sabbath, this prohibition also features Priestly reiteration 2 chapters later – this time enforced with the most severe judgments codified in any “Mosaic” legal tradition of the Bible:

{P} {Yahweh to Moses to the sons of Israel:} ‘Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his seed to Molech, **shall surely be put to death**; the people of the land shall **stone him with stones**. I will also set My face against that man and will **cut him off from among his people**, because he has given some of his seed to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy name. If the people of the land, however, hide their eyes from that man when he gives any of his seed to Molech, *so as not to put him to death*, then I Myself will set My face against *that man and against his family*, and *I will cut off from among their people both him and all those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech*.<sup>78</sup>

Note: the offender is both “*put to death*” AND further “*cut off from among his people*.” (Here, the family of the offender is implied, in his also being “*cut off...*”)<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, those who do not stone the offender to death will themselves – with their families – face judgment, including being “*cut off from among their people*.” Ironically indeed, whoring after “Molech” is simultaneously the most intolerable and the most misunderstood offense of the entire Hebrew Bible! Considering

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<sup>76</sup> George M. Lamsa was raised speaking Aramaic, familiar with Near Eastern customs and manners which facilitated a mastery of Semitic colloquialisms. He became a translator and commentator on the Bible (particularly, the ancient Aramaic Peshitta or Syriac Old & New Testaments, translated by the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries C.E. primarily from a proto-Masoretic text and very early copies of the Christian scriptures). As such, Lamsa specialized in the accurate rendering of idioms, metaphors and figures of speech which modern Bible translators were not privy to and were thus otherwise lost in translation and/or obscured across generations and cultures. Lamsa's books include: The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts: Containing the Old and New Testaments Translated from the Peshitta: The Authorized Bible of the Church of the East (1933) & Idioms in the Bible Explained and a Key to the Original Gospels (1971).

<sup>77</sup> Leviticus 18:21a; [**Lamsa Bible (1933)**] *Holy Bible: From the Ancient Eastern Text: George M. Lamsa's Translation from the Aramaic of the Peshitta* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1985).

<sup>78</sup> Leviticus 20:2b-5

<sup>79</sup> The expression “*cut off (from (the congregation of) Israel)*,” “*(from (among) his/their people)*,” “*(in the sight of the sons of their people)*,” “*(from before Me)*,” etc., is used frequently, particularly in P. For example, after listing the various sexual prohibitions, Leviticus 18:19 concludes: “*For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do shall be cut off from among their people*.” Furthermore, compare the expressions “*cut off...*” & “*die/be childless*” for similar sexual offenses listed in Leviticus 20:17-21. That one may be both “*put to death*” & “*cut off from among his people*” was also witnessed in the sabbath commandment of Exodus 31:14.

Reiterating much of Leviticus 18-20, Deuteronomy 22,23 uses the expressions “*purge the evil (from Israel)*,” “*(from among you)*,” and “*(no...) enter the assembly of Yahweh*.” Careful comparison of context and language reveals these judgements concern both the offending individual and his unacceptable or potential posterity. Thus, the Priestly “*die childless*” is directly reflected in the Deuteronomist “*no...enter the assembly...*,” just as “*cut off from Israel*” is reflected in “*purge the evil from Israel*.” This subject of familial or racial allowance is outlined further in this study.

the repeatedly witnessed sentiment of Aaronite racial consciousness (e.g. *Numbers 3:10; 25:6-8*),<sup>80</sup> such a strict condemnation of miscegenation would not be out of place for the Priestly author. Nevertheless, as with the nationalistic sabbath and dietary prohibitions, the Deuteronomist offers comparable sexual and racial prohibitions beginning with chapter 23:

- {D} **[textual corruption]** {Moses to all Israel:}
- “No one who is **wounded by crushing** [of testicles] or has his **male organ cut off** shall enter the assembly of Yahweh.
  - No **one of illegitimate birth** {Heb. *mamzer*; **‘bastard’**} shall enter the assembly of Yahweh; none of his {lit. ‘him’}, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of Yahweh.
  - No **Ammonite** or **Moabite** shall enter the assembly of Yahweh; none of their {lit. ‘them’}, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of Yahweh...
  - You shall not detest an **Edomite**, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an **Egyptian**, because you were an alien in his land. The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of Yahweh.”<sup>81</sup>

(Note: these laws concerning familial/racial allowance immediately follow the Deuteronomistic listing of sexual prohibitions; therefore, Leviticus 18-20 is paralleled in Deuteronomy 22,23. Also note: the Priestly familial prohibition “*cut off from among his/their people*” is here literally styled “*none to him/them shall enter the assembly of Yahweh.*”) As with the Priestly definition of one’s “nakedness,” here the Deuteronomist begins by defining how one may “enter the assembly.” First, if one is emasculated, he cannot sire sons; hence, he (i.e. his posterity) shall not enter the assembly. Second, a “*bastard*” מַמְזֵר {*mamzer*} shall not enter “*even to the tenth generation.*” Thus, just as “nakedness” did not refer to the individual man to whom it belonged, the Deuteronomist establishes the individual man’s posterity, his racial line of descent, as the object of these prohibitions.

Not surprisingly, “*bastard/mamzer*” (as with “*nakedness*” & “*Molech/melek*”) is found translated in widely different ways, including: “*one born*” (e.g. “*he/a man/child/person*”) “*of a forbidden/illicit marriage/union,*” or “*outside of a legal marriage/wedlock,*” or “*of whoredom/a prostitute/a common woman.*” Again, these euphemistic and/or conceptual translations do not directly and literally reflect the Hebrew or the authorial intent of the Deuteronomist. Nevertheless, various Hebrew lexicons define *mamzer* as: “*From an unused root meaning to alienate; a*

<sup>80</sup> Just as “*Aaron and his sons*” were to “*keep their priesthood, but the stranger who comes near shall be put to death*” (*Numbers 3:10*), curious Priestly additions feature the story of “*Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest*” executing a man of Israel with a Midianite woman, implicitly engaging in sexual relations (*Numbers 25:6-19*). Specifically, Phinehas “*pierced both of them through...the belly*” with a spear, and Yahweh awards him: “*Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; and it shall be for him and his seed after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his Elohim and made atonement for the sons of Israel.*” (Compare *Psalm 106:28-31*.) According to *Joshua 24:33*, Eleazar the priest was buried on the hill of his son Phinehas “*in the hill country of Ephraim*” (i.e. near the high place of Shiloh, where the tabernacle & ark of the covenant were said to be in pre-monarchical times). Furthermore, according to *Judges 20:26,27*, Phinehas the priest “*stood before...the ark of the covenant of Elohim*” (i.e. to minister) at the high place of Bethel (10 miles south of Shiloh) where it was also said to be in those days. Thus, Phinehas is depicted as the legitimate, familial heir to the (high) priesthood – officiating at the northern sanctuaries of Israel – with emphasis on the racial integrity of both the Aaronite dynasty and people of Israel.

<sup>81</sup> Deuteronomy 23:1-3,7,8

*mongrel*” and “*mixed population; born of...a heathen mother.*”<sup>82</sup> Despite such lexical entries, *mamzer* is almost never translated as such here in Deuteronomy 23:2. Nevertheless, the same translations will render the same word in Zechariah 9:6 as: “*mongrel/mixed race/people,*” or “*foreigners/half-breeds/strange people*” (while the King James consistently renders it “*bastard*”).

Partly so as not to offend, modern and Christian translators prefer “born out of wedlock” to “bastard” (or “illegitimate birth” to “mongrel race”) when it comes to this prohibition in the so-called Law of Moses. Indeed, further research demonstrates the very meaning of “*you will not adulterate*” has become “*you will not commit adultery*” (which in the minds of most modern readers means little more than “sex outside of wedlock”). Thus, *adultery* – and its product, the *bastard* – has been redefined as that which crosses the bounds of marriage, rather than the bounds of race.<sup>83</sup> With similar motivations of political correctness, the ancient Hebrew scribes (many of whom were themselves Kenite/Canaanite *mamzerim*) would also obscure and/or relax the meaning of *mamzer*, as Judeo-Israelite society became increasingly adulterated (i.e. bastardized, mongrelized).

<sup>82</sup> Hebrew entry for “*mamzer*” #4464; *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1890); *Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon* (1906).

<sup>83</sup> The underlying themes of racial integrity and rivalry witnessed across EJPD are represented in the centrality of the law against adulteration. Note the famous commandments against murder, adulteration and theft in Exodus 20:

לֹא תִרְצַח	לֹא תִנְאַף	לֹא תִגְנוֹב
{lo’ tirtzach} “no <b>you</b> -murder”	{lo’ tin’af} “no <b>you</b> -adulterate”	{lo’ tignov} “no <b>you</b> -steal”

Canonically listed in the Hebrew Bible between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of what are popularly acknowledged as the Ten Commandments, “*you shall not adulterate*” is typically translated into English as “*you shall not commit adultery,*” obscuring both its meaning and its poetic/emphatic brevity amidst the surrounding context. For a supplementary argument that this canonically 7<sup>th</sup> commandment was once at the center (i.e. the 4<sup>th</sup>) of what were originally a total of seven Elohist commandments, consult Tzemah L. Yoreh, *The First Book of God*, ch. 6.10 *The Seven Commandments (Ex. 20)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010).

Aside from the dietary prohibitions of chapter 11, the otherwise typically ritualistic and cultic chapters of Leviticus are again interrupted by more social restrictions, namely the sexual prohibitions of chapters 18 & 20. Between these two chapters – indeed, flanked by the sexual prohibitions, conceptually at the center of the cultic stipulations of P – are found a series of curious laws (some of them elaborating on the popular Ten Commandments), including:

{Yahweh to Moses to all the congregation of the sons of Israel:} “*You shall not hate your brother {i.e. ‘kinsman,’ ‘fellow son of Israel’} in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**; I am Yahweh. You are to keep My statutes. You shall **not breed together two kinds of your cattle**; you shall **not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.**” {Leviticus 19:17-19}*

Here, immediately following what some call the “greatest commandment” – to love your neighbor (i.e. the “*sons of your people,*” your kindred or same kind) as yourself – are specific statutes elaborating on adulteration. The prohibitions against mixing/crossing/weaving two different kinds (of cattle, of seed, of garments...) are reflective of the overall theme of racial purity and Israelite separatism throughout P. Thus, here are further given non-dietary, non-sexual social examples of bastardization (i.e. the fruit or product of adulteration, encompassing much more than modern translations and interpretations of “commit adultery”). (For more statutes elaborating on adulteration, compare Deuteronomy 22:5,9-11; 23:2,3,7,8.)



Most pointedly (as with “*giving seed to melek*”), such a racial interpretation of the forbidden “*mamzer*” would have condemned the entire nation of Judah, right along with the House of David! The nationalistic laws go on to forbid Ammonites and Moabites, also for ten generations. Meanwhile – according to the Masoretic Text – third generation allowances are given specifically for the “Edomite” and Egyptian.<sup>84</sup> As it happened, this peculiar “Edomite” reference is *a textual corruption perfectly reflective of both the obscurity and motivation of the lying pen of the scribes*. By racial definition (according to both Yahwist & Priestly accounts of Esau’s strange/foreign wives), the Edomites were themselves Kenite/Canaanite *mamzerim*, and could not be naturalized into a racially conscious Israel, after only three generations! Nevertheless, Syro-Israel gave way to Judeo-Israel, reflective in the present reading of the extant Hebrew manuscripts:

{D} You shall not detest an **[Edomite]**, for he is your brother.

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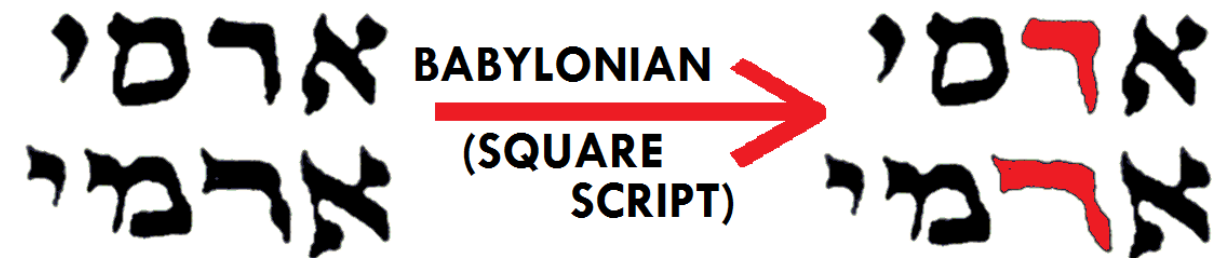
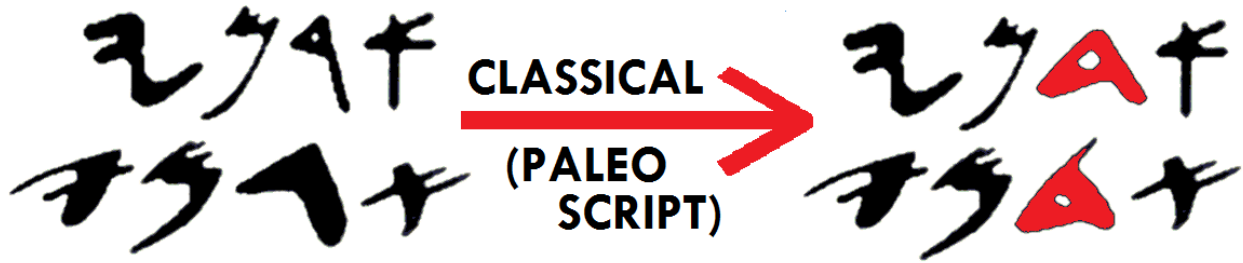
<sup>84</sup> The addition of עַד-עוֹלָם {‘*ad-‘olam*} “forever” to the end of Deuteronomy 23:3 is suggestive that ten generations (forbidden for the mamzer, Ammonite and Moabite) were equated with an indeterminate future (i.e. never allowable). (Again, it is important to note that the individual’s prohibition from entering the assembly of Yahweh “*of his...even to the tenth generation*” – the King James Bible reads: “*even to his tenth generation*” – is in reference to any forbidden and potential posterity, representing the individual long after his own death.) By way of contrast, concerning the individual Aramean/Syrian (corrupted here as “Edomite;” see the following note) and the individual Egyptian: “*the sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of Yahweh.*” Such a racial allowance may have practically been genealogically recorded for the determinate future.

Note also, the reason here given for why the Ammonites & Moabites were forbidden is oddly similar to the offense committed by the Edomites (compare Deuteronomy 23:4 & Numbers 20:14-21). Nevertheless, the corrupted text now reads: “*You shall not detest an **Edomite**, for he is your brother.*” Meanwhile, the latter prophets contain such sentiment as Yahweh exclaiming: “*I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau...the people toward whom Yahweh is indignant forever* {Heb. ‘*ad-‘olam*}.” (Malachi 1:2-4) Thus, while Leviticus 19 instructs not to hate one’s own kind (i.e. “*your brother*,” “*your neighbor*”) – and not to mix two different kinds – the corrupted text of Deuteronomy 23 instructs not to allow mixed kind (i.e. “*a mamzer*”) – yet now also to allow the Edomite (a mamzer, guilty of the same offenses as the forbidden Ammonites & Moabites), “*for he is your brother!*” By such scribal corruption of the defining context, the originally intended racial meanings for “mamzer,” “brother” and “neighbor” were all variously obscured, as Canaanite Edom (later, Gr. Idumaea) was cumulatively absorbed into an increasingly adulterated Judeo-Israelite society in the centuries leading up to the Common Era.



## ARAMEAN (SYRIAN)

## EDOMITE



Contrast carefully the subtle variance between these two patronymic and root words in Hebrew:

אֲרָמִי { <i>Arammiy</i> } “Aramite/Aramean” (Gr. “Syrian”)	אֲרָם { <i>Aram</i> } “Aram” (Gr. “Syria”)
אֲדָמִי { <i>Adomiy</i> } “Edomite”	אֲדָם { <i>Edom</i> } “Edom”

(Note: Biblical Hebrew, at the time of its composition and for many centuries thereafter, featured no vowel points.) Various Hebrew lexicons and commentaries acknowledge the words *Aram* & *Edom* (and their patronymics, e.g. *Arammim* & *Adomim*) were repeatedly and erroneously transposed (one copied for the other) during the course of scribal transmission of the ancient manuscripts. Considering their similarity in appearance, this confusion is typically blamed on “clerical error,” and is conceded in such places where the context is peculiarly indicative of scribal corruption (e.g. *2 Kings 16:6*; *2 Chronicles 20:2*).<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless (as with popular translations of

<sup>85</sup> For lexical references (e.g. *Strong’s (1890)*, *Brown-Driver-Briggs (1906)*, *New American Standard (1981)* and similar Hebrew-Aramaic lexicons of the Old Testament), Strong’s Hebrew entry #726 will variously comment that Syria(-ns) is a “*scribal/clerical error*” or “*Kethiv*” (traditionally received but lately emended text) for Edom(-ites).

For exegetical references, note the following commentary for the entry “Edom:”

“Both Edom and Edomites are mentioned frequently in the Bible; in addition, there are places where, because of the similarity between the letters ד (*d*) and ר (*r*), the text has wrongly read אֲרָם, ‘Aram’ (i.e., Syria), and אֲרָמִים, ‘Arameans’ (i.e., Syrians), for אֲדָם, ‘Edom,’ and אֲדָמִים, ‘Edomites,’ such as *II Kings 16:6*; *II Chr. 20:2*, where the KJV has followed the MT, but the RSV has followed an emended text.”

Buttrick, George Arthur (editor), et alia, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, E-J, vol. 2, p24 (New York / Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962).

For further example, the researcher is told to “read {Edom} for the incorrect {Aram}” in *2 Samuel 8:13* when consulting Tenney, Merrill C. (general editor), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, D-G, vol. 2, p202 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975).

*mamzer* in Zechariah 9:6 vs. Deuteronomy 23:2), despite these extra-Pentateuchal scholarly concessions of textual corruption, “Edomite” is almost never emended to “Aramean/Syrian” here in Deuteronomy 23:7.

Further, it is not coincidence that the only recognized occurrence of “Aramean” in D is coupled with “Egypt” as follows:

{D} {Moses to all Israel:} “You shall answer and say before Yahweh your Elohim,  
**My father** {Jacob} **was a wandering** {or “perishing”} **Aramean**,  
and *he went down to Egypt* and sojourned there, few in number;  
but *there he became a great, mighty and populous nation.*”<sup>86</sup>

Now repeatedly demonstrated across archaeology, ancient history, original Elohist, latter and rival textual traditions... the Israelite majority (i.e. “Joseph/Ephraim”) was thoroughly and uniquely Syrian & Egyptian. Syrians & Egyptians were unquestionably the most racially compatible of all Israel’s neighbors, its national identity having been forged therewith, even before the time of national emergence. Quite simply, the people who became “Israel” shared a collective memory and tradition of being: *of Egypt, of Syria*. Truly, these were brothers. The same, however, could not be said for the Edomites, whose Canaanite admixture plays a central role in the rivalry between Northern Syro-Israel and Southern Canaanite Judah. Projected from history to legend, such *rivalry between Israel/Judah, Syria/Edom, Jacob/Esau, Seth/Cain...* has likewise now been repeatedly demonstrated in these source introductions. (Much more can and should be earnestly researched and thoroughly documented.) It will suffice to close with a restoration of the original authorial intent of the Deuteronomist – before these proud peoples with their texts were further adulterated, creating new mongrel races and reorganized Judeo-religions (some still globally at play):

{D} **You shall not detest an Aramean, for he is your brother;**  
**you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.**  
The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of Yahweh.<sup>87</sup>

## **THE PROPHET JEREMIAH, PART II (“WRITE THIS MAN DOWN CHILDLESS...”)**

Finally, with a goal to conclude this introductory and comparative investigation of the changing post-Genesis religio-political traditions (spanning cultic, legal, social and racial spheres), a return to the Prophet Jeremiah will exemplify the all-pervasive problem of Judaization. Not only did Jeremiah criticize both the so-called “Law/Torah” & “House/Temple” of Yahweh, but the so-called “Anointed/Messiah” of Yahweh – the Davidic King – did not escape similar condemnation. First, note the Deuteronomist’s curious monarchical requirements:

{D} {Moses to all Israel:} “When you enter the land which Yahweh your Elohim gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ **you shall surely set a king**

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<sup>86</sup> Deuteronomy 26:5

<sup>87</sup> Deuteronomy 23:7,8

**over you whom Yahweh your Elohim chooses, from among your brothers you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your brother.**<sup>88</sup>

Now this nationalistic royal requisite is particularly revealing for two reasons:

- 1) While the Deuteronomist specifically forbids a mamzer, Ammonite or Moabite from entering the assembly of Yahweh... both Kings & Chronicles claim King Rehoboam (the son of Solomon, the son of David), had a mother named “**Naamah the Ammonitess**” (*1 Kings 14:21,31; 2 Chronicles 12:13*). Additionally, another late tradition would identify King David himself as having a great-grandmother named “**Ruth the Moabitess**” (*Ruth 1:4,22; 4:18-22*).
- 2) While the Deuteronomist forbids a foreign king “who is not your brother,” specifying “you shall surely set a king over you...from among your brothers”... earlier Yahwistic text depicts an elderly Samuel (the judge and prophet from Shiloh) as displeased when the elders of Israel say to him, “*appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.*” (According to some translations, “*the thing was evil in the sight of Samuel...*”) Furthermore, Yahweh says to Samuel, “**they have rejected Me from being king over them,**” and (despite Yahweh/Samuel’s solemn testimony of warning Israel) “*the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, ‘No, but there shall be a king over us...’*” (*1 Samuel 8:4-9,19,20*).

Aside from raising *serious questions of legitimacy concerning forbidden Ammonite & Moabite matriarchal ancestry of the Kings of Judah*... one may ask why Deuteronomy would offer any instructions for “*surely*” setting an ideally Israelite king over a future Israelite nation when – according to Samuel – that very act amounted to Israelite rejection of Yahweh! Indeed the question must be asked: *How can abiding by “the Book of the Law of Yahweh by the Hand of Moses” be displeasing or evil in the sight of Samuel, or described by Yahweh as rejection and forsaking?* Historical-critical interpretation reveals the simple answer: this is yet another example of legal tradition in D, lately given under the pretense of having been written by Moses hundreds of years earlier. Note how the fundamental religio-political controversy between localized versus centralized governments became confounded as earlier traditions were repeatedly usurped by such anachronistic and ahistorical contrivances typical of the Deuteronomist:

<b>LOCAL IDEAL (earlier, pre-central history)</b>	<b>CENTRAL IDEAL (late pretense)</b>
<b>altars &amp; high places;</b> e.g. Shiloh, Bethel (“ <b><u>every place</u></b> where I cause My name to be remembered”)	<b>House of Yahweh in D (“<b><u>the place</u></b> which Yahweh your Elohim chooses”)</b>
<b>judges &amp; seers</b> (prophets); i.e. <b>no king</b> but Yahweh (“ <i>they have rejected Me from being king over them</i> ”)	<b>House of David in D (“<b><u>a king</u></b>... whom Yahweh your Elohim chooses”)</b>

So, the late propaganda of D (claiming Moses prescribed Judeo-centralization all along) created these uncanny biblical shifts in religious and political ideology. Reminiscent of Samuel, it is therefore no coincidence that Jeremiah was also from the North, likewise concerned with Shiloh as he warned the people about what, wherein and whom they had been deceptively taught to place their trust. According to Jeremiah, these false ideals propagated by priests, scribes and kings

<sup>88</sup> Deuteronomy 17:14,15

included the three proud pillars of state Judaism: (1) *Torah*, the allegedly Mosaic law of Yahweh including burnt offerings and sacrifices; (2) *Temple*, the so-called House of Yahweh as his eternal dwelling in Jerusalem; and (3) *Messiah*, the promise that a man of the House of David would always rule over Israel therefrom. Indeed, at this time, it was widely taught and superstitiously believed that Jerusalem along with its Temple & King – regardless of its wickedness – was under the divine protection of Yahweh and would never fall. As such, it is also not surprising that Jeremiah was not well-received by the King of Judah, a proponent and chief sponsor of such religio-political propaganda. In fact, the Book of Jeremiah includes the reaction of King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, to such prophecy against Jerusalem:

Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Yahweh which He had spoken to him. Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “**I am shut up**; {i.e. ‘detained’, ‘arrested’} I cannot go into the house of Yahweh. So you go and read from the scroll...” ... Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of Yahweh in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe... When they {‘all the officials’} had heard all the words, they turned in fear one to another and said to Baruch, “We will surely report all these words to the king.” ...

Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll... And **Jehudi read it to the king as well as to all the officials who stood beside the king.** ... **When Jehudi had read three or four columns, [King Jehoiakim] cut it with a scribe’s knife and threw [it] into the fire** that was in the brazier, **until all the scroll was consumed in the fire** that was in the brazier. Yet the king and all his servants who heard all these words were not afraid... Even though Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. And **the king commanded...to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet...**<sup>89</sup>

Note: the name “*Jehudi*” literally means “Jew” or “Jewish,” and Jeremiah’s scroll was hardly representative of the sort of Judaism being propagated out of Jerusalem by administrative scribes and court prophets. The narration goes on to say King Jehoiakim “*burned this scroll, saying, ‘Why have you written on it saying the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land...?’*” Thus emerges a literal and archetypal scene of *politically sponsored censorship of ideas judged not Jewish enough*. Such speakers were “*shut up*,” and their speech destroyed. (One may wonder what Israelite prophets, histories and traditions – aside from the Judeo-propaganda officially passed off as the word of Yahweh and Torah of Moses – were lost, having never made it into what would become the composite Hebrew Bible.) If a source did not extol Yahweh over Elohim, the Davidic kings of Judah over Israel, the Jerusalem temple over Samaria, Bethel and the other high places, etc... then the text was either emended, redacted, reinterpreted or completely excised in favor of what Jeremiah called “*the lying pen of the scribes.*” The scene concludes with another scroll being dictated to Baruch, and Jeremiah issuing the following curse upon King Jehoiakim:

“Therefore thus says Yahweh concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah,  
**‘He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David...’**”<sup>90</sup>

If this were not devastating enough, Jeremiah delivered a final blow upon Messianic state Judaism, cursing Coniah (also called Jehoiachin), the son of Jehoiakim:

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<sup>89</sup> Taken from Jeremiah 36:4-26

<sup>90</sup> Jeremiah 36:30a

“As I live,” declares Yahweh...I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. ...

Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel?

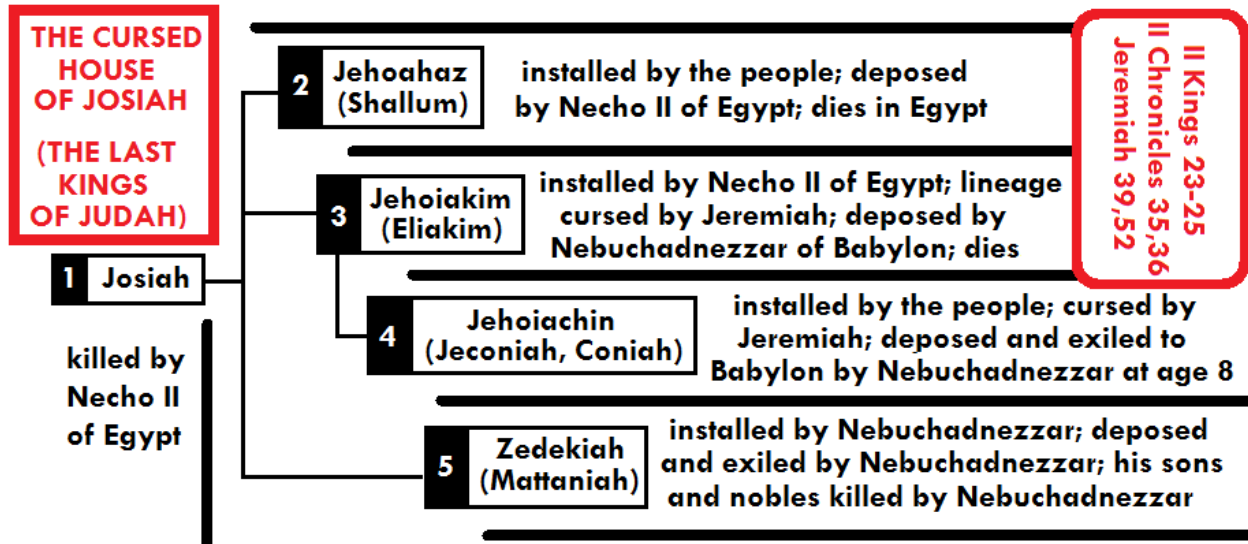
Why have **he and his descendants been hurled out** and cast into a land that they had not known?

O land, land, land, hear the word of Yahweh!

Thus says Yahweh,

**‘Write this man down childless**, a man who will not prosper in his days;

**For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah.**’<sup>91</sup>



Only after the devastating effects of the Babylonian Captivity (e.g. the Temple of Yahweh destroyed, its official sacrifices ceased; the king of Judah carried away, his princes slaughtered) were such prophecies of Jeremiah even somewhat preserved or respected among the Jews. Nevertheless, the salvaged testimony of these curses on the ruling branch of the royal House of David remained so crippling to emergent and post-Babylonian Judaism that latter generations of Judaic prophets and scribes made various attempts to mitigate, circumvent or lift them.<sup>92</sup> It will

<sup>91</sup> Taken from Jeremiah 22:24-30; compare with Jehoiakim’s curse in 22:18-23.

<sup>92</sup> For example, despite Jeremiah’s depiction of Yahweh avowing, “*even though Coniah {i.e. Jehoiachin} the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet on My right hand, yet I would pull you off from there...*” (Jeremiah 22:24), the Book of Haggai, a post-Babylonian prophet, reads, “*I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,’ declares Yahweh, ‘and I will make you like a signet, for I have chosen you.*” (Haggai 2:23) Thus, the author of Haggai – composing during the restoration period of Second Temple Judaism and literarily dependent on Jeremiah – used the same verbiage to communicate a repeal and reversal of the curse on the royal house of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel, etc. (Note: despite certain genealogical inconsistencies between biblical texts, Zerubbabel is recorded as the grandson of Jehoiachin. Compare Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2; Nehemiah 12:1; Haggai 1:1,12,14 & 1 Chronicles 3:17-19.)

Examples from Pharisaic/rabbinic literature include the Babylonian Talmud which, while discussing Jeremiah 22:30, argues that “*exile atones for everything*” and concludes, “*God obtained absolution from His oath*” to punish Jehoiachin with childlessness. {Sanhedrin 37b-38a, Soncino edition, Epstein, Rabbi Dr. Isidore (ed.), (London: The Soncino Press, 1961)} Similarly, the 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Pesikta de-Rab Kahana elaborates that God “*accepted the repentance of {Jehoiachin}*” and concludes, “*in regard to {Jehoiachin}...God consulted the heavenly court, and they released Him from His oath.*” {pp. 376,377, Yale Judaica edition, Braude, William G. and Kapstein, Israel J. (trans.), (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975)}

Finally, it should be noted that a comparison of the Hebrew Massoretic Text, the pre-Massoretic Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q70<sup>a</sup>; 4Q72<sup>c</sup>; 4Q71<sup>b</sup>) and the Greek Septuagint reveals the Book of Jeremiah appears to have been heavily edited

suffice to note that the Book of Jeremiah, as it has been handed down today by generations of Hebrew scribes, represents peculiar editorial work and heavy emendation. Extant manuscript evidences now reveal certain parts of Jeremiah were lately added, including the usual propaganda:

{Additions to Jeremiah:} “Behold, days are coming,” declares Yahweh... **I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.** In those days **Judah will be saved** and **Jerusalem will dwell in safety...** For thus says Yahweh, **“There shall not be cut off for David a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; there shall not be cut off for the Levitical priests a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices all the days.”**

The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying, “Thus says Yahweh, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant may also be broken with **David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers.** As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so **I will multiply the seed of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.**”

And the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying... “Thus says Yahweh, ‘If My covenant [for] day and night [stand] not, [and] the statutes of heaven and earth I have not established, then I would reject the seed of Jacob and David My servant, from **taking from his seed rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.** ...”<sup>93</sup>

(Note the ideological perpetuation of 2 *Samuel* 7:12-16; 1 *Chronicles* 17:11-14; see also 1 *Kings* 2:4; 8:25,26; 9:3-5; 2 *Chronicles* 6:16; compare with the late, grandiose language of *Isaiah* 9:6,7; *Psalms* 89:29-37; etc...) May these sentiments favorable to David, Judah, Jerusalem, and continual burnt offerings... envisioning countless kings and priests, and endless Davidic rulers over Jacob... serve as a final, solemn testimony to the destructive power of religio-political propaganda. As with the centralizing contrivances lately introduced by D, here may be witnessed another responsive confounding of biblical controversies. Indeed, here is a post-Babylonian complete reversal of the original concerns of Jeremiah for a people who were being conditioned to be superstitiously subservient to the Judaizing centralization of powers. (The powers which should never have been, yet were... the powers which were promised to never end, yet did... were once again reinforced, as if prophesied by Jeremiah himself!)

(Finally, note further how these additions to Jeremiah are here, and often, translated: capitalizing not only the pronouns for Yahweh but also for the “righteous ***Branch*** of David” – “...and ***He*** shall execute justice...” Hence, signified by such grammatical stylings, *attributes of deity have often been ascribed to this future Davidic king!*) First excised, then emended, the muddled/Judaized testimony of Jeremiah was finally accepted into the canon of Judeo-Israelite (and later, Judeo-Christian) scripture. Ultimately, the very deceit Jeremiah cautioned against gained the last word, as the Book of Jeremiah was redacted into the Holy Bible. This time, millions of people succumbed to “the lying pen of the scribes,” as countless Judaisms, Christianities and other reinterpretations would variously struggle to fulfill the broken promises and proud aspirations of

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even before the Common Era, including rearrangement and interpolation. Major additions (spanning multiple verses) to the Hebrew text of Jeremiah include: Jeremiah 8:10-12; 10:6-8,10; 11:7-8; 17:1-4; 29:16-20; 30:10-11; 33:14-26; 39:4-13; 48:45-46; 51:44b-49a; 52:2-3,27b-30. (The largest interpolation – that of Jeremiah 33:14-26 – is outlined in the following paragraphs of this study.) This alternative, significantly more lengthy and modified scroll of Jeremiah was ultimately chosen as the official version in Judaism.

<sup>93</sup> Taken from Jeremiah 33:14-26

eternal Davidic rule over Israel, complete with continual burnt offerings – all according to the-called Torah & Prophets of Yahweh.

### CONCLUSION: MESSIAHS, TRUE AND FALSE

The end of this introductory review of D also marks the close of our Old Testament introduction. For three chapters, the first book of the Bible – the compilation of Genesis – served as the primary venue for introducing and unraveling the sources of E, J and P. Only with the study of D – the book of Deuteronomy and greater Deuteronomistic History – have we but glimpsed some of the other diverse and complex textual traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Essential to accurate and meaningful interpretation, the researcher must consider the sources:

First came **original E** and **Northern/Proto-Judges** and the **Covenant Code**; then came **rival J** (including the expansion of the books of Samuel concerning David). The Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. In the aftermath, E & J (along with Northern Judges and the Covenant Code) were combined into **JE**; then the **alternative recapitulation of P** was written (including the book of Leviticus). Meanwhile and subsequently, the Solomonic legend was generationally expanded along with the books of Kings representing the administrative propaganda and reforms of Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah. Ultimately, with Josiah also came the **secondary recapitulation of D**, called the Book of the Law. The Kingdom of Judah was destroyed. In the aftermath, JE & P (along with generational Priestly expansions) were combined into **JEP**. Meanwhile, with the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah came yet another recapitulation called the books of Chronicles. All the while (pre-, mid- and post-captivities), various expansions, redactions and further editing continued throughout. Prophets (Israelite & Judahite, independent & state-approved) contributed their social commentary and/or propaganda... before these and other writings were also expanded and edited over generations (forming Deutero-Isaiah, the additions to Jeremiah, etc.).

This is a most generalized history of the canonical development of the Hebrew Bible, also called the *Torah, Prophets and Writings*. The task of further research – including *distinguishing the sources/authors, their literary dependencies/relationships and the historical contexts/motivations behind their composition and/or editing* – must begin with recognizing the existence of these sources. Many “religious” disciplines won’t even go that far, preferring to believe in such traditions as Mosaic authorship and such theologies as Biblical Inerrancy. Furthermore, even many academic or secular disciplines won’t recognize some of the racial and political motivations behind these compositions (e.g. the distinction between ancient Syro-Israelites & Kenite-Edomite Jews), preferring not to address such controversies presently forbidden by modern restrictions of political correctness. Indeed, the *politically sponsored censorship of ideas judged not Jewish enough* persists with a universalizing goal of adulterating both texts and peoples...from before the days of Jeremiah...up to and including today.

(Note: the research required to unravel these lost histories – to restore the Israelite sources to their pre-redacted, pre-Judaized states – is still censored by both religious and secular interests alike.)

In this chapter study of D, we explored several evolving examples of the ancient politicizing, compromising and obscuring of textual traditions, ultimately found recapitulated in Deuteronomy:

The fall harvest festival of **Ingathering** (lately called **Booths/Tabernacles**):

1. possible original observance in North Israel – including occasionally one-month “late” (i.e. the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, according to Yahwistic royal propaganda) and at various high places/altars (e.g. Bethel), reflective of the alternative climatological & geographical needs and politics of the sovereign Kingdom of Israel before the 722 BCE fall of Samaria,
2. earlier revised observance in Judah – including the addition of various specified offerings (e.g. choice animals, grains, drinks; **P**) and at newly specified times and location (i.e. the Jerusalem altar; **D**), reflective of cultic centralization in Judah, particularly after 722 BCE,
3. later revised observance in Judah – namely the addition of an ordinance to dwell in booths, reflective of the post-Babylonian reforms of Second-Temple Judaism.

The spring commemorative festivals of **Passover & Unleavened Bread** (corresponding to the legend of the first **Passover & Exodus**):

1. possible original observance in North Israel – namely the tradition of a domestic, family-centered rite of killing and eating the Passover (beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month), reflective of a time before religio-political organization of priestly rituals & central altars,
2. earlier revised observance in Judah – including implicit centralization (i.e. the legend of the first Passover memorial in the wilderness surrounding the Tabernacle), reflective of Hezekiah’s central reforms and a new temple priesthood’s authorship of **P** after 722 BCE,
3. later revised observance in Judah – including explicit centralization (i.e. the requirements of the allegedly discovered Book of the Law) and the resultant conflation of Passover with the first day of Unleavened Bread (now ending the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month), reflective of Josiah’s central reforms and the late authorship & enforcement of **D** after 622 BCE.

Hence, the propaganda of (1) Jeroboam’s institution of an idolatrous, out of time and place Ingathering (“*like the feast which is in Judah*”) and of (2) Josiah’s reinstatement of a centralized Passover (“*according to all the law of Moses*” found in the “*Book of the Law*”) both reflect the Judahite royal concern with securing central power and state loyalty. The legendary Jeroboam I is depicted shamefully drawing Israel away from paying homage to Yahweh, Jerusalem and the House of David, while a celebrated Josiah extended his authoritative reach over Israel via cultic reformation. Furthermore, the shifting times of festival observation also reflect historical realities necessitated by distinctions between Israel and Judah. Reference to this 1-month “late” Ingathering in Bethel was due to climatological differences between North and South. Reference to this 1-day “late” Passover in Jerusalem was due to cultic differences between domestic and temple observance. Taken together, these different traditions of Jeroboam’s Harvest Festival, Hezekiah & Josiah’s Passovers, Ezra & Nehemiah’s Harvest Festival (now with “Booths”)... each represent varying degrees of legend, propaganda and historicity, yet all reflect the different generations of different societies with different religio-political necessities and motives.

The legal tradition of the **Words of the Covenant** (also known as **The Ten Commandments**):

1. possible pre-redacted list (E?) – reconstructions of fewer (e.g. 7) original commandments in Exodus 20, excluding supposed Yahwistic influences and/or Priestly-inspired additions,
2. earlier listing of 10 (J) – the originally stated “Ten Commandments” with heavy emphasis on centralization and taxation, reflective of early religio-political ideals in Judah,

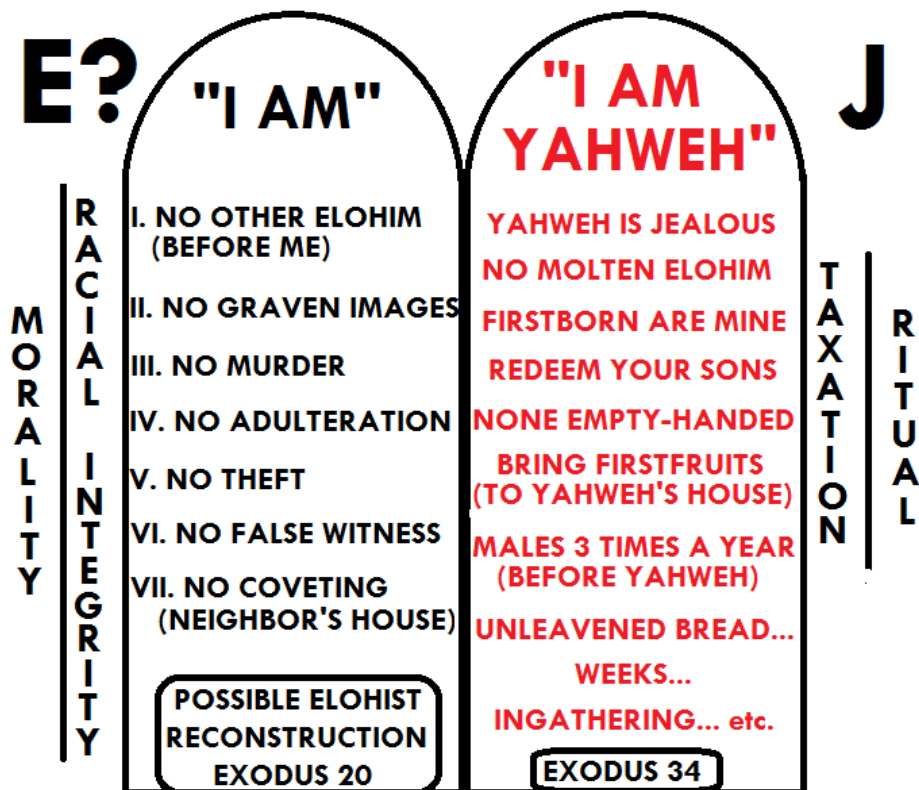


3. later listing of 10 (D) – the synopsized, restated “Ten Commandments” resembling the canonical listing in Exodus 20 (now with and without various Yahwist and Priestly narrative and language), reflective of Deuteronomistic ideals.

The legal tradition of **Separation vs. Miscegenation** (also known as **Adultery**):

1. sabbath & dietary prohibitions (P&D) – reflective of Israelite exclusivist/nationalist ideals,
2. sexual prohibitions (P) – original authorial intent of racial significance obscured by the scribal corruption of “*melek*” to “*Molech*” and resultant reinterpretations & mistranslations,
3. national prohibitions (D) – original authorial intent of racial significance obscured by the scribal corruption of “*Aramean/Syrian*” to “*Edomite*” and resultant reinterpretations & mistranslations, particularly of “*mamzer*” (i.e. bastard, mongrel).

Hence the very denotations for “bastard” and “adultery” were bastardized/adulterated, as the racially conscious peoples formerly represented by these texts merged into an ever more integrated Judeo-Israelite society indicative of Canaanite-Edomite influence and admixture. Any semblance of original Elohist and Israelite legal tradition was buried deep beneath rival and alternative layers of revision, compromise and recapitulation, ultimately bastardized (i.e. redacted) into the general Yahwistic and Jewish tradition of a Mosaic “Torah” (i.e. the Pentateuch). Indeed, the composite canonical tradition of Moses shattering and replacing an original set of stone tablets, written by the finger of Elohim, serves as a perfect allegorical witness to the Kenite-Yahwist usurpation of original North Israelite sacred textual tradition in the formation of the Hebrew Bible. The quest for uncovering the enigmatic nature and extent of pre-redacted E – much like the original “testimony” of these fabled broken tablets – has now been introduced within these chapter studies. The sincere researcher is invited to further this investigation.



Yet one more powerful witness to the usurpation of North Israelite sacred tradition was discovered in a reviled prophet from the north who warned against “*trusting in deceptive words to no avail.*” Concerning Jeremiah, it was noted:

1. First, he warned against confidence in the Temple of Yahweh (what he called “*a den of robbers*”), particularly in that it was God’s exclusive and eternal dwelling...that Jerusalem’s inhabitants were safe from destruction.
2. Next, he warned against confidence in a falsified Torah (what he called “*the lying pen of the scribes*”), particularly the addition of commandments of burnt offerings and sacrifices. (*For his trouble Jeremiah was detained, and a certain “Jew” with a scribe’s knife is depicted excising his scroll until its contents were completely burned – all before the approving eye of the Davidic King of Judah.*)
3. Finally, he warned of the coming destruction of the Kingdom of Judah, prophesying doom for its kings and cursing their offspring to never again rule in Jerusalem. (*Nevertheless, the reader is ultimately met with additions to Jeremiah, promising salvation and safety for Judah and Jerusalem, countless Davidic rulers over Israel, and countless Levitical priests offering endless burnt offerings and sacrifices – all before, and by the word of, Yahweh.*)

Such textual revisions merely reaffirmed the *propaganda of Torah, Temple and Messiah* long promoted by Yahwistic or otherwise Jerusalem-centric administrative scribes and court prophets in Judah. In ever more grandiose and apocalyptic language, the Yahwistic legends and religio-political aspirations of *Yahweh’s covenant (i.e. divine promise) of eternal Davidic rule and Temple service* laid the theological foundations for the resultant development of Messianic Judaism. After the Babylonian captivity, fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple in 586 BCE, great effort was made to justify the cumulatively inherited layers of tradition in the Law and Prophets, to resurrect the *falsified Messianic legacy of David’s rule over Israel from Jerusalem*, complete with the reinstatement of official sacrifices. Renewed hope was placed in the divine providence of a future Jewish “Messiah” (the powerful and glorious coming of a greater Josiah) who would finish the Judaizing task, widely reestablishing Yahwistic religion and reinforcing Judaic rule over Israel and beyond. Hence, the variously redacted biblical promises, legends and aspirations of scribes, prophets, kings and priests – broken and proven false by the events of 586 BCE – were reinterpreted as yet-to-be-fulfilled by potential candidates of this re-envisioned salvific figure. So emerged the growing and rival myths of Yahweh’s *Anointed* (Heb. *Messiah*; Greek *Christ*), spawning new Jewish and Judeo-Christian interpretations of the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, along with a so-called New Covenant (i.e. the New Testament).

Nevertheless, as outlined in the following introduction to the New Testament, history reveals the Davidic dynasty was never reestablished, and a much hoped upon messianic champion of Temple Judaism never arose. The Hebrew Old Testament was largely finished with its last major redactions and revisions performed around the time of Ezra the Aaronite priest and scribe. Despite all the signs of multiple authorship and redaction (the book of Deuteronomy even closing with an account of the death of Moses), the popular tradition of Mosaic authorship spread to include the entire scrolls of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.<sup>94</sup> Despite the racial

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<sup>94</sup> Deuteronomy is the only book in the Hebrew Bible that actually claims to be Moses’ words (Deuteronomy 1:1; styled throughout in the first person; compare also the false attribution of Psalm 90), and – as witnessed in Nehemiah 13:1 – it is quoted as “the book of Moses.” Nevertheless, after the 7<sup>th</sup> century introduction of Deuteronomy, all five

consciousness of leaders like Ezra (allegedly descended from Aaron's grandson, the high priest Phinehas, known for executing an Israelite man and Midianite woman engaged in sexual intermingling), the cities of Judah were overrun with Edomite Jews who would ultimately usurp authority from future King-Priests, also descended from Phinehas. Despite the temple being rebuilt and its sacrifices reinstated, just as "Solomon's Temple" was destroyed in 586 BCE, this second House of Yahweh (ultimately, "Herod's Temple," so named after an Edomite King of the Jews) was likewise destroyed in 70 CE.

Once again, new religious authorities went to work, reinterpreting this turn of events. Hence, the generational jockeying of religious and political power continued with reorganized Judaisms and emergent Judeo-Christianities. The most notable proposed candidate for Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, a Galilean (i.e. from North Israel). In an effort to satisfy all the promises, prophecies and Messianic claims of the composite Old Testament, the biography of this famed Israelite Galilean was posthumously amended (i.e. retroactively force-fit) to include such attributes as "*the son of David*," "*the king of the Jews*" come to "*fulfil...the Law [and] the Prophets*," even "*Christ our Passover [who] has been sacrificed*" and "*great high priest*," etc.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, after becoming the heir of David, Jesus was also uniquely deified as "*the only begotten Son of God*,"<sup>96</sup> and any other Old Testament claims (however contradictory or otherwise left unsatisfied) were again interpreted as yet-to-be-fulfilled – until another re-envisioned powerful and glorious "second coming" to finish the task, to finally "*break/strike down*" and "*rule*" all nations from a "*new Jerusalem*."<sup>97</sup>

Yet not all visions of a Messiah in the Hebrew Bible were the same. Not all were Judaic; not all were Davidic. By the final redaction of EJPD with the other sources into the adulterated universal tradition of the Old Testament, the knowledge of *original (North) Israelite textual traditions and ideals vs. Judaism... the memory of true (North) Israelites vs. the Canaanite-Edomite Jews...* was lost among almost all. It will suffice to close this Old Testament introduction with a final quote

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scrolls (commonly known today from their Greek/Septuagint titles: *Genesis, Exodos, Leueitikon, Arithmoi* and *Deuteronomion*) became traditionally regarded (to varying degrees of religious assumption, defying reason) as the extended composition of Moses. This phenomenon was in large part a consequence of so much of the content in Exodus through Deuteronomy directly relating to the Mosaic tradition of Yahweh speaking to Moses (and Aaron), speaking to the congregation of Israel. Also a consequence of the tradition of Mosaic authorship, the most conservative interpretations would have the reader believe that Moses (amusingly) gave a self-description thusly: "*Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.*" (Numbers 12:3) Furthermore, it was traditionally and conservatively believed that Moses also wrote concerning his own death, burial ("*but no man knows his burial place to this day*") and the ensuing 30 days of weeping and mourning, eulogizing himself thusly: "*Since that time no prophet had risen in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face, for all the signs and wonders which Yahweh sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and for all the mighty hand and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.*" (Deuteronomy 34:1-12) The historical unlikelihood that Moses wrote these and similar passages spawned some of the earliest queries as to the true (and multiple) authorship of the Pentateuch, ultimately resulting in the development of the Documentary & Supplementary Hypotheses – outlined in these chapter studies.

<sup>95</sup> Matthew 1:1; 2:2; 5:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 4:14,15

<sup>96</sup> John 3:16-18

<sup>97</sup> Revelation 2:27; 3:12; 12:5; 19:15; 21:2; compare Psalm 2:1-12.

near the end of Genesis, concerning Jacob's alleged blessing of the infamous impostor "brother" & "tribe" of Judah:

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
**Until Shiloh comes**, {or '**Until he comes to Shiloh**'}  
And to him [shall be] the obedience of the peoples."<sup>98</sup>

As typical, this poetic verse shows manuscript evidence of scribal corruption, the Hebrew name "Shiloh" שִׁילֹהּ {*shiyloh*} being slyly replaced with the phrase "to whom it belongs" שִׁיְלוֹ {*shiylo*}, to obscure any perceived Northern reference (either to the high place at Shiloh, or to a non-Jerusalem, non-Judahite Messiah). The questions may be asked: *Will or has indeed the scepter departed from Judah? ... Who/what is "Shiloh," and to Whom indeed does the "scepter" belong?*

May these chapters serve to inspire the sincere researcher to further investigate and distinguish the lost Elohist-Sethian traditions of the original Syro-Egyptian peoples. Likewise, may the following chapters invite the process of demystifying the complex theologies and reinterpretations posthumously built around the historical person of Jesus. For the historical-critical historian, to understand the Gospels... is to understand their literary dependence on and ideological projection of EJPD. For the faithful, to know the true Messiah... is to know the true Israel.

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<sup>98</sup> Genesis 49:10