

## Literary Analysis of the Pentateuch

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Last modified: December 11, 2019

1. God's Spirit 'hovers' as God creates heaven and earth; God places humanity in a garden land, but they leave in exile and with a corruption in human nature (Gen.6:5 – 6; 8:21); origin of all nations: Gen.1:1 – 11:26
2. Covenant inaugurated with Abraham – blessings and curses: Gen.11:27 – 12:8
3. God's faithfulness to the chosen family: Gen.12:9 – 50:26
4. Deliverance of Israelites (first generation) from Egypt, arrival at Sinai: Ex.1:1 – 18:27
  5. Covenant Inaugurated, Broken, Re-Asserted: Ex.19:1 – 24:11
    - a. *God calls Israel to meet Him on the mountain on the third day: Ex.19:1 – 15*
    - b. *Israel's failure – to come up the mountain: Ex.19:16 – 23*
    - c. *God resumes with Moses and Aaron: Ex.19:24 – 25*
    - d. *God gives Israel the Ten Commandments: Ex.20:1 – 17*
    - e. *Israel's failure – Israel afraid of God's voice: Ex.20:18 – 20*
    - f. *God gives all Israel 49 laws (7x7): Ex.20:21 – 23:19*
    - g. *God and Israel agree to a covenant, and Moses, Aaron, and 70 elders see God, and eat and drink in His presence: Ex.23:20 – 24:11*
  6. Tabernacle instructions given to house the **veiled** presence of God: Ex.24:12 – 31:11
  7. God commands Israel to observe the Sabbath to imitate God's original creation Sabbath, and writes the covenant on stone tablets: Ex.31:12 – 18
    8. Covenant broken; Israel worships Aaron's golden calves: Ex.32:1 – 29
      9. Moses mediates for Israel, sees God's glory, restores the covenant: Ex.32:30 – 33:23
      - 8'. Covenant affirmed: Ex.34:1 – 17
    - 7'. God commands Israel to observe three annual feasts and writes the covenant on stone tablets again; Moses is partially purified and transfigured but **veils** his face as a sign of judgment, hiding God's glory from the nation: Ex.34:18 – 35
  - 6'. Tabernacle built to instructions; presence of God comes **veiled**: Ex.35:1 – 40:38
  - 5'. Covenant Mediation Inaugurated, Covenant Broken, Re-Asserted: Lev.1:1 – 27:34
    - a. *God calls Israel to approach Him, gives priests a Code for sacrifices: Lev.1:1 – 9:24*
    - b. *Priests' failure – two of Aaron's sons offer strange fire, are consumed: Lev.10:1 – 7*
    - c. *God resumes with Aaron's two others sons: Lev.10:8 – 20*
    - d. *God gives Israel's priests a Priestly Code for the community: Lev.11:1 – 16:34*
    - e. *Israel's failure – God addresses worship of goat idols: Lev.17:1 – 9 (cf. Acts 7:42 – 43)*
    - f. *God gives all Israel a Holiness Code: Lev.17:10 – 25:55*
    - g. *God and Israel agree to a covenant: Lev.26:1 – 27:34*
  - 4'. Departure from Sinai, deliverance of Israelites (second generation) from sins (of the first generation): Num.1:1 – 36:13
  - 3'. God's faithfulness forms the basis for Moses' exhortation: Dt.1:1 – 26:19
  2. Covenant offered to Israel – blessings and curses: Dt.27:1 – 29:29
  - 1'. God must circumcise human hearts after Israel's exile (30:6); 'heaven' and 'earth' (32:1) witness destiny of Israel and nations; God's Spirit 'hovers' (32:11) over Israel as they enter garden land: Dt.30:1 – 34:12

## Chiastic Structure of the Pentateuch, Simplified

- A. Introduction (Genesis 1:1 – 2:3)
- B. Ten Genealogies of Israel (Genesis 2:4 – 50:24)
  - C. God Delivers First Generation of Israelites and Teaches Wilderness Lessons (Exodus 1 – 18)
    - D. God Calls Israel Up to Be Purified, Israel Fails in Response (Exodus 19 – 24)
    - E. God Centers the Covenant with Moses; Moses Purified and Bears God's Glory (Exodus 25 – 34)
    - D'. God Provides Purification for Israel Through Sanctuary, Israel Responds (Exodus 35 – Leviticus 27)
  - C'. God Delivers Second Generation of Israelites and Teaches Wilderness Lessons (Numbers 1 – 36)
- B'. Ten Commandments for Israel (Deuteronomy 1 – 31)
- A'. Epilogue (Deuteronomy 32:1 – 34:12)

### Commentary:

1. *God Begins a Covenant Partnership on a Mountain:* God retells His story and reestablishes His patterns. Eden was a mountain (implicitly because of the four diverging rivers in Gen.2:10 – 14, and explicitly because Ezekiel calls it a mountain in Ezk.28:13 – 14). God had intended humanity to bear His image and reproduce human life and garden life rippling out from Eden. Since Adam and Eve sinned and corrupted human nature, God had to begin again: with Noah and his family from the mountains of Ararat (Gen.8:4), then again with Abraham and Sarah on a mountain (Gen.12:8), then again with Israel as a nation from Mount Sinai/Horeb (Ex.19). God invited Israel up onto Mount Sinai, in an encounter meant to retell and recall Adam and Eve on Mount Eden. Israel was then to re-enact and reproduce that covenant moment on Mount Zion.
2. *Israel Fails to Approach God and Make the Covenant:* Israel failed to trust and obey God from Ex.19. Note that Exodus 19:13 reads in the Jerusalem Bible, 'When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up *on* the mountain,' not '*to* the mountain' as they were already encamped around the base of the mountain; this is confirmed by Moses when he reflects on their failure by saying, 'For you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up *the mountain*' (Dt.5:5).<sup>1</sup>
3. *God Makes the Covenant with Moses, as Mediator for Israel:* Moses' mediation allows for the presence of God to remain with Israel, but in a veiled way. Without Moses, God would simply give up on the nation and start over with Moses.
  - a. The impact of Moses' choices on his relationship with God was: He had the intimacy of seeing God's glory 'face to face' (Ex.33:11) yet not quite 'face to face' (Ex.33:20 – 23). The corresponding impact of Moses' choices on his own human nature was: purification and transfiguration. As God's face shone with the glory of the divine light, so also Moses' face shone with the glory of the divine light, to a lesser degree (Ex.34:29 – 35). Moses became 'like' God. This is the closest indication of anyone bearing the 'likeness' of God, which was God's original intention from Genesis 1:26 – 28.
  - b. Israel does not experience God 'face to face' as Moses did. See also 2 Corinthians 3, and Mark's use of the 'veil' motif. The Tabernacle structure is God's Plan B. Plan A was to meet Him on the mountain, as Moses did, face to face (in a manner of speaking). The mediation of Moses is central to the Pentateuch, and to the Mosaic covenant. In fact, the progressive growth of mediation is what stabilizes the covenant between God and Israel.
  - c. However, even Moses dies before entering the promised land and enjoying God's sabbath rest, perhaps symbolic that the Law (represented by Moses) cannot bring one into rest fully (Heb.4:8 – 11).
4. *The Sanctuary is the Way to Reenact Moses' Covenant Renewal:* The Tabernacle (and later, the Temple) was not God's Plan A. It was Plan B. God wanted 'a Temple people', a people with whom He talked face to face. He did not want 'a people with a Temple.' God veiled His glory via the Tabernacle as a concession. And to also express this, Moses veiled his face because his face shone with the glory of God to communicate to Israel that God was also veiling Himself among them.
  - a. *Separations in the Sanctuary:* The horizontal partitions within the Tabernacle represent the different vertical levels of Mount Sinai. Israel as a whole stayed at the foot of the mountain; the elders come up the

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992)

mountain part-way, and Moses alone ascends to be 'near' the Lord at the top (Ex.24:1 – 2). This vertical pattern (Ex.25:40) was reproduced in the sanctuary horizontally: the Israelites could enter the outer court, the priests could enter the holy place, the high priest alone could enter the holy of holies.

- b. *Sacrifices and Blood in the Sanctuary*: The sacrifices offered at the Tabernacle (and later, the Temple), especially on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (Lev.16), retold the story of life flowing out from Eden. The uncorrupted animal blood symbolized a river of life offered by God, for Israel to settle the garden land, and perhaps for the entire Gentile world to remain on the earth. Ezekiel would later envision the Temple originating a river of fresh, life-giving water (Ezk.47).
  - c. *God in the Sanctuary, the Sin-Eater*: In the sanctuary, and especially on the Day of Atonement, God related to Israel like a *dialysis machine* (Lev.1 – 10; 16). God received their impurities (as they laid their hands on animals as if they carried into God the corruption of their human nature) and gave back purity (in the form of uncorrupted animal blood). The animal sacrifices were not legal-penal in nature, but medical-ontological. The sacrifices were for unintentional sins and having an unclean human nature (Lev.12).
  - d. *The Sacrifices Existed to Purify Israel in the Sanctuary, as God Purified Moses on the Mountain*: As Moses made his ascent up Mount Sinai through divine fire (Ex.19:20), and trusted in God to do so, he was purified to some degree, signified by his face reflecting divine light. Therefore, the approach of Israel and her priests annually re-enacted the ascent, where the high priest enters the holy of holies as Moses ascended to the top of the mountain, to re-enact the covenant with God on behalf of Israel. Just as Moses passed through the divine fire, the worshipers at the sanctuary 'passed through' the fire in the bronze altar (Ex.27:1 – 8). Anyone who touched the bronze altar was 'holy' or 'purified' to some degree (Ex.29:37). The bronze laver of washing also signified 'purification,' of course (Ex.30:17 – 21). Just as Moses was purified, so the worshipers were ritually and symbolically 'purified' especially through the sin offering (Lev.4); the animal was partitioned; and the organs which deal with toxins and waste (kidneys, liver, intestinal fat) were burned and this act alone was said to 'soothe' God (Lev.4:31), reflecting God's interest in obtaining human partnership in purifying their own humanity. This purification culminated in the Day of Atonement when the high priest alone entered the holy of holies and saw God, as Moses alone ascended the peak of Mount Sinai and saw God 'face to face.' On the Day of Atonement, the cleansing of the land began, and if it was a jubilee year, the jubilee was announced on the Day of Atonement (Lev.25), so the cleansing brought about renewal of the garden-land inheritance, debt-forgiveness, and liberation from servitude. This means that the cycle of sacrifices were for purification of the worshiper, not the appeasement of God's retributive justice. Through the sanctuary and sacrifices, God was acting like a dialysis machine, taking into Himself impurities, and giving back purified life (blood).
5. *The Sinaitic Laws Were an Echo of the Creation Vision, and Temporary for God's People Until Human Nature Could Be Cleansed*: In response to Israel's failure to come up onto the mountain, God gave Israel laws, as part of 'Plan B.' John H. Sailhamer suggests that the number of laws is disproportionately larger in the latter half of the story because God responds to Israel's progressive failures with more laws.<sup>2</sup> This is ostensibly the apostle Paul's own understanding: 'The Law was added because of [Israel's] transgressions' (Gal.3:19). In other words, laws were God's response to Israel's failure, to point out their sin to them until a future time when God would resolve the situation. The Sinai Law even had the effect of triggering Israel's fallen human resistance (Rom.5:20) so they would diagnose themselves and hope for a cure (Rom.7:7 – 8:4). Law-keeping was never meant to be used as a basis for self-justification (individual self-righteousness) or for ethnic distinctiveness (national self-righteousness). Hence the Pharisees were wrong on both counts. Jesus and the New Testament writers were interpreting the Pentateuch correctly.
- a. There are implicit commandments from Eden that constitute God's original creation vision. Jesus makes clear in his discussion of marriage and divorce that the Sinai Law was God's concession to Israel's hardness of heart (Mt.19:3 – 12). It was not the full restoration of the creation vision. That is why Jesus affirms the creation vision but goes beyond the Sinai Law. For example, Jesus taught in ways that went beyond certain Sinaitic provisions, presumably because they reach behind the expression of Sinai ethics and come from God's original creation vision:
    1. Unlimited giving and resource sharing, beyond the Mosaic family-land inheritance system (compare Lev.25 to Mt.6:19 – 34; 19:13 – 30; Lk.12:13 – 34; 14:7 – 35; 18:15 – 19:10);
    2. Singleness as a kingdom vocation, beyond the assumption of marriage (Mt.19:10 – 12);

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

3. Forgiveness for being persecuted for one's faith, beyond the practice of 'an eye for an eye' as an outer limit of proportional compensation in a restorative justice paradigm (compare Ex.21:22 – 25, Lev.24:17 – 22 and Dt.19:15 – 21 to Mt.5:38 – 48; Lk.6:12 – 49);
  4. Flexibility about the principle of Sabbath rest, beyond the Saturday observance of the principle of Sabbath rest (compare Ex.20:8 – 11 to Col.2:16 – 17; Gal.4:9 – 10);
  5. The decentralization of worship, beyond the centralization of worship, first in the Tabernacle from Mount Sinai and later in the Temple on Mount Zion (compare Ex.35:1 – 40:38; Dt.14:23 – 29 to Mt.11:25 – 12:17; Jn.2:13 – 25; 4:20 – 24), along with all other aspects of worship specifications from Sinai (animal sacrifices, priests, Levites, holy days in the calendar, pilgrimage, exclusion of eunuchs and foreigners from worship); notice that Isaiah, in his prophetic vision of the new Jerusalem (i.e. new Eden), saw that the Sinaitic worship prohibition on eunuchs and foreigners would be forgotten (Isa.56:1 – 8).
- b. The New Testament writers use the phrase 'the Law' or 'Moses' to sometimes mean 'the Pentateuch' as a piece of literature (e.g. Gal.4:21) and sometimes 'the Sinaitic covenant' (Ex.19 – Dt.29) as in both its laws and blessing-curse consequences (e.g. Gal.2:16 – 21; 3:2 – 4:5).
  - c. The traditional Reformed understanding of the Pentateuch, in broad-brush strokes, is that the Sinaitic commandments were placed in the midst of the Pentateuch narrative so that the narrative could serve the commandments. That is, we are simply to keep the commandments; the narrative surrounding them merely provides the historical context in which the commandments were given. This would seem to provide the commandments with the necessary historical underpinnings that make them credible. However, it is more probable that the opposite is true, that *the commandments serve the narrative*.
  - d. The commandments of the Sinaitic covenant are meant to be treated as a unity (e.g. Luther) because they contribute to the stabilization of the Sinai covenant. They are not meant to be broken up into moral, civil, and ceremonial (e.g. Calvin). I side with Luther over Calvin on this point.
6. *Hope for a New Mediator-Messiah*: The literary structure contextualizes all other themes (even 'chosen people,' 'liberation' and 'law-keeping') around the failure of Israel and the necessity of mediation. Moses once mediated the covenant for Israel, but even he had sinned and misrepresented God to the people, resulting in his inability to accompany Israel into the new garden land. The high priest and the rest of the priests stabilized the covenant for a time, but we get the very distinct impression that this arrangement is precarious because of human resistance to God.
    - a. *Circumcision of the Heart*: Moses was the first person to agree with God's early diagnosis that the human heart had become corrupted (Gen.6:5 – 6; 8:21) and needed God to cut away the corruption from it (Dt.30:6). That diagnosis would be repeated by other biblical writers: David (Ps.51:9 – 10), Jeremiah (Jer.4:4; 17:1 – 10; 31:31 – 34), and Ezekiel (Ezk.11:18; 36:26 – 36). From a Christian perspective, this intersects with the theme of the messiah-king from the tribe of Judah (Gen.49:8 – 12; Num.24:15 – 19). God had to solve the problem within human nature within one human person – Jesus as Messiah – in order to offer his new humanity to all humanity. Hence, Jesus is the 'circumcised one' (Col.2:12; Rom.2:28 – 29) who has cut away the corruption of sin from within his own humanity.
    - b. *Supercessionism*: As a piece of literature, the Pentateuch itself expects the Sinai covenant to be 'superceded' in some sense. The Pentateuch also expects Moses as mediator to be 'superceded.' This is apparent because God fundamentally did not make the Sinai covenant with 'Israel' as a community. Fundamentally, God made the Sinai covenant with Moses, who also *failed*. Because Moses mediated for his fellow Israelites, they could participate in the Sinai covenant, but the Pentateuch itself expects them to fail, too. This does not mean that Christians should scorn Jewish attempts to observe the Sinai covenant (Rom.9 – 11), or Jewish Christian gestures to respect it (Rom.14 – 15). But the Pentateuch does give rise to a sense of 'open' and not 'closed supercessionism' as a pattern. As a pattern, God makes His landmark covenants with individual persons, not communities. This was true of Abraham, then Moses, then David. Moreover, the Qumran community recognized this principle of 'open supercessionism' wherein they inherited the promises God made to Israel because they (or their leader, the 'Teacher of Righteousness') represented Israel in such a way that fulfilled the covenant for Israel as they understood it, and therefore made an invitational claim on their kinsmen.
    - c. *Can You Read Yourself into Israel's Story?:* Trying to read yourself into Israel's story today (e.g. as the English Puritans did when they settled North America, or as liberation theology often does in the interests of a particular ethnic group) disregards the interpretation Moses has already given them as events subordinate to other major theological points: the *failure* of the chosen people, the venom of the serpent

internalized into humanity and crying out for a cure, the insufficiency of the exodus to stimulate faith, the negative role of law-keeping, and the necessity for a new mediator. Liberation theology should really focus on deconstructing the ethnocentric assumptions of a dominant culture.

## **Genesis: Introduction and Ten Genealogies**

Introduction: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1 – 2:3)

1. This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
2. This is the book of the generations of Adam (Gen.5:1 – 6:8)
3. These are the records of the generations of Noah (Gen.6:9 – 9:29)
4. Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen.10:1 – 11:9)
5. These are the records of the generations of Shem (Gen.11:10 – 26)
6. Now these are the records of the generations of Terah (Gen.11:27 – 24:67)
7. Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son (Gen.25:12 – 28)
8. Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son (Gen.25:19 – 35:29)
9. Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom) (Gen.36:1 – 37:1)
10. These are the records of the generations of Jacob (Gen.37:2 – 50:24)

### **The Noah Story**

**Genesis 5:1 – 9:29**

#### **Structure of the Noah Story**

- A. The genealogy of Adam to Noah, emphasizing corruption of humanity except Noah (5:1 – 6:8)
- B. Noah is righteous (6:9)
- C. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (6:10)
- D. God will bring an end to all flesh; God tells Noah to build ark for the flood (6:11 – 17)
- E. Covenant with Noah (6:18 – 20)
- F. Food in the ark (6:21 – 22)
- G. Command to enter the ark (7:1 – 3)
- H. 7 days waiting for flood (7:4 – 5)
- I. 7 days waiting for flood (7:6 – 10)
- J. Entry to ark (7:11 – 15)
- K. Yahweh shuts Noah in (7:16)
- L. 40 days flood (7:17a)
- M. Waters increase (7:17b – 18)
- N. Mountains covered (7:19 – 20)
- O. 150 days waters prevail (7:21 – 24)
- P. God remembers Noah (8:1 – 2)
- O'. 150 days waters abate (8:2 – 3)
- N'. Mountains tops visible (8:4 – 5)
- M'. Waters abate (8:5)
- L'. 40 days (end of) (8:6a)
- K'. Noah opens window of ark (8:6b)
- J'. Raven and dove leave ark (8:7 – 9)
- I'. 7 days waiting for waters to subside (8:10 – 11)
- H'. 7 days waiting for waters to subside (8:12 – 13)
- G'. Command to leave the ark, family leaves ark (8:14 – 22)
- F'. Food outside the ark (9:1 – 4)
- E'. Covenant with all flesh (9:5 – 10)
- D'. God will not flood all flesh again; God makes rainbow (9:11 – 17)
- C'. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (9:18)
- B'. Noah repopulates the whole earth (9:19)
- A'. The sons of Noah, emphasizing corruption of Noah and his family (9:20 – 29)

## **The Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar Story**

### **Genesis 11:27 – 22:19**

#### **Structure of the Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar Story<sup>3</sup>**

- A. A. God calls Abram to trust His word, leave his homeland, gives promise of seed (11:27 – 12:3)
- B. Abram builds an altar, calls on the name of the Lord (12:4 – 9)
- C. Abram and Sarai sojourn in Egypt, Abram lies about Sarai (12:10 – 20)
  - Separation of Lot (13:1 – 13)
  - Blessing: God reiterates promise of seed and many descendants (13:14 – 18)
- D. Abram wars on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah, rescues Lot and them (14:1 – 24)
- E. God again promises Abram seed despite Abram's old age; Abram believes (15:1 – 6)  
God promises birth of Israel from a hopeless situation: bondage (15:7 – 21)
- F. Sarai relies on herself and fails (16:1 – 6)  
God hears Hagar (who names God) and promises blessing on Ishmael (16:7 – 16)
- G. God marks Abram with circumcision, symbol of purification back to Eden  
God says, 'I will multiply you exceedingly' (17:1 – 2)  
God renames Abram to Abraham, promises land, kings, nations (17:4 – 8)  
God gives Abraham the sign of circumcision (17:9 – 14)
- F'. God renames Sarai to Sarah, promises Isaac to Sarah, and kings, nations (17:15 – 17)  
God promises blessing on Ishmael (17:18 – 27)
- E'. God again promises Sarah seed despite Sarah's old age; Sarah laughs, believes (18:1 – 15)  
God promises birth of son from a hopeless situation: Sarah's womb
- D'. God wars on Sodom and Gomorrah, rescues Lot (18:16 – 19:38)
- C'. Abraham and Sarah sojourn in Gerar, Abraham lies about Sarah (20:1 – 18)  
Blessing: Isaac is born (21:1 – 7)  
Separation of Ishmael; promised blessing on Ishmael and many descendants (21:8 – 21)
- B'. Abraham plants a tree and calls on the name of the Lord (21:22 – 34)
- A'. God calls Abraham to trust His word, sacrifice his son, gives blessing on the seed (22:1 – 19)

#### **Structure of Genesis 17:1 – 25**

- A. Abram's age (17:1a)
- B. The LORD appears to Abram (17:1b)
- C. God's first speech, regarding 'I will multiply you' (17:1c – 2)
- D. Abram falls on his face (17:3)
  - E. God's second speech, regarding Abraham (emphasizing names/land/ kings/nations) (17:4 – 8)
  - F. God's third/most important speech (emphasizing covenant and circumcision) (17:9 – 14)
  - E'. God's fourth speech, regarding Sarah (emphasizing names/land/kings/ nations) (17:15 – 16)
  - D'. Abraham falls on his face (17:17 – 18)
- C'. God's fifth speech, regarding the choice of Isaac and not Ishmael (17:19 – 21)
- B'. The LORD goes up from Abram (17:22 – 23)
- A'. Abraham's age and household (17:24 – 27)

#### **Genesis 17:19 – 21; God's Fifth Speech<sup>4</sup>**

- A. Sarah will bear a son...Isaac (17:19a)
  - B. I shall confirm my covenant with him (17:19b)
  - C. Ishmael (17:20)
- B'. I shall confirm my covenant with him (17:21)
- A'. Sarah will bear next year (17:22)

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<sup>3</sup> Modified by Mako Nagasawa from Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (2<sup>nd</sup> publishing Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publishing, 2000), p.114

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50* (Waco, Texas; Word, 1994), p.26

## The Jacob, Leah, and Rachel Story

*Genesis 25:19 – 35:29*

### Structure of the Jacob, Leah, and Rachel Story<sup>5</sup>

- A. God makes promise; struggle in childbirth; Jacob and Esau born; Jacob buys birthright (25:19 – 34)
- B. Jacob's mother Rebekah is endangered in a foreign place, Isaac lies about her, makes a pact with foreigners (26:1 – 34)
- C. Jacob tricks Esau, fears him, and flees the Promised Land (27:1 – 28:9)
  - D. At night, God speaks to Jacob in a dream (ladder with angels), Jacob names Bethel, makes deal with God (28:10 – 22)
  - E. Jacob meets Rachel and Laban (29:1 – 14)
    - F. Jacob must acknowledge the rights of the firstborn (Leah) and is vulnerable to Laban, Laban deceives Rachel (29:15 – 30)
    - G. Jacob experiences conflict between his two wives (29:31 – 30:13)
      - H. Rachel stops trying to thwart God's blessings to Leah; Leah bears children (30:14 – 21)
      - H'. God 'remembers' Rachel; Rachel bears Joseph (30:22 – 24)
      - G'. Jacob experiences conflict with Laban but accepts a handicap with his flocks, relinquishes his rights (30:25 – 36)
      - F'. God prospers Jacob and protects him from Laban; Rachel deceives Laban (30:37 – 31:35)
    - E'. Laban departs from Jacob (31:36 – 55)
    - D'. At night, God wrestles Jacob, Jacob named Israel, asks God for blessing (32:1 – 32)
  - C'. Jacob returns to the Promised Land, fears Esau, but is reconciled to him (33:1 – 17)
  - B'. Jacob's daughter Dinah is endangered in foreign place, Jacob's sons lie, make a pact with foreigners, and kill them (33:18 – 34:31)
- A'. God fulfills promise; Jacob named Israel again at Bethel; struggle in childbirth, Rachel dies; Reuben forfeits birthright; Isaac dies, Jacob and Esau bury him (35:1 – 29)

'Three Mirrors for Jacob', noted by Paul Borgman

1. The rights of the firstborn: Jacob took Esau's firstborn rights at Esau's expense; Laban upholds Leah's firstborn rights at Jacob's expense
2. Quarrels between siblings: The brothers Jacob and Esau quarreled; the sisters Rachel and Leah quarreled
3. The duel of the schemers: Jacob vs. Laban

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<sup>5</sup> By Mako Nagasawa using insights from J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), Paul Borgman, *Genesis: The Story We Haven't Heard* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), and Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1986), p.53 – 54.



## The Joseph and Judah Story

### Genesis 37:1 – 50:26

#### Structure of the Joseph and Judah Story<sup>6</sup>

- A. Prologue: The genealogy of Jacob (37:1 – 2)
- B. Jacob favors Joseph, brothers hostile to Joseph (37:3 – 11)
- C. Joseph with Jacob for 17 years in Canaan, brothers sell him into slavery, Jacob mourns (37:12 – 35)
- D. Judah: moral failure and repentance with Tamar (38:1 – 26)
- E. Reversal of the firstborn: Perez before Zerah (38:27 – 30)
- F. Potiphar favors Joseph; Joseph accused unjustly by Potiphar's wife (39:1 – 23)
- G. Jailer favors Joseph; Joseph demonstrates wisdom; interprets dreams (40:1 – 42:57)
  - a. Joseph interprets dreams of cupbearer and baker (40:1 – 23)
  - b. (End of second year of that Pharaoh's reign?): Joseph leaves jail and interprets dreams of Pharaoh (41:1 – 57)
- H. Joseph tests his brothers and father (42:1 – 46:7)
  - a. Jacob sends brothers to Egypt; Joseph imprisons them, takes Simeon to test their brotherhood, demands to see Benjamin, gives silver (42:1 – 38);
  - b. Jacob finally releases Benjamin; Joseph frames Benjamin; Judah offers himself instead of Benjamin (43:1 – 34);
  - c. Joseph reveals himself (44:1 – 45:28);
  - d. Jacob sets out for Egypt (46:1 – 7)
- I. Provision for Jacob's family, all 70 persons (46:8 – 27)
- H'. Joseph reunited with his brothers and father (46:28 – 47:12)
  - a. Jacob arrives in Egypt, but sends Judah ahead (46:28 – 30);
  - b. Joseph reveals his family as shepherds (46:31 – 47:6);
  - c. Joseph welcomes Jacob, introduces him to Pharaoh; Jacob blesses Pharaoh (47:7 – 10);
  - d. Jacob moves to Ramesses in Egypt (47:11 – 12)
- G'. Joseph demonstrates wisdom, cares for Egypt, honors Pharaoh (47:13 – 26)
  - a. Year of severe famine: Joseph gives grain for money and livestock (47:13 – 17)
  - b. Second year of severe famine: Joseph gives grain for land and people (47:18 – 26)
- F'. Joseph elevated and blessed by Jacob (48:1 – 12)
- E'. Reversal of the firstborn: Ephraim before Manasseh (48:13 – 22)
- D'. Judah: Jacob blesses Judah as the firstborn among his brothers (esp. 49:8 – 12)
- C'. Joseph with Jacob for 17 years in Egypt<sup>7</sup>, death of Jacob, Joseph buries him (49:29 – 50:14)
- B'. Brothers afraid of Joseph; Joseph reassures his brothers (50:15 – 21)
- A'. Epilogue: Death of Joseph (50:22 – 26)

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<sup>6</sup> Modified by Mako Nagasawa from Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publishing, 2<sup>nd</sup> publishing 2000), p.115

<sup>7</sup> See Gen.47:28, 'Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.'

## Exodus 1 – 18 and Numbers 1 – 36

Exodus 1 – 18	Numbers 1 – 36
Pharaoh counts Israel and forces them to build cities (Ex.1)	God counts Israel for them to inherit land and cities (Num.1 – 3, 26 – 36)
God appears in a burning bush to Moses (Ex.2)	God appears in the Tabernacle to Israel (Num.4 – 10)
Moses questions his own leadership (Ex.3 – 4)	Others question Moses' leadership (Num.12, 16 – 17)
Pharaoh curses Israel (Ex.5 – 14)	Balaam blesses Israel (Num.22 – 24)
Plagues strike Egypt because of sin (Ex.7 – 14)	Plagues strike Israel because of sin (Num.11, 21, 25)
Miriam sings a song (Ex.15)	Miriam sins, becomes leprous, then dies (Num.12, 20)
Moses calls forth water from a rock (Ex.16)	Moses calls forth water from a rock, sins (Num.20)
God gives manna and quail to Israel (Ex.16)	God gives manna and quail to Israel – curse (Num.11)
Israel defeats Amalekites (Ex.17)	Israel defeats Canaanites, but complain and are struck by serpents and offered healing (Num.21)
Moses is the mediator between God and Israel	The priesthood of Aaron will be the mediators between God and Israel (Num.16 – 20)

### Numbers 1 – 36: Chiastic Structure

1. God numbers Israel for the camp and Tabernacle (Num.1 – 10)
2. Plague breaks out due to complaining about not having meat (Num.11)
3. God defends Moses' leadership (Num.12)
  4. Spies see the land of Canaan; two have faith; Moses intercedes for Israel; Temple sacrifices and teaching are given, presumably as part of the response to Israel's lack of faith (Num.13 – 15)
  5. Korah leads rebellion against Moses; God punishes it; reaffirms Aaron (Num.16 – 17)
    6. Aaron's sons must 'bear the guilt' for the sanctuary (Num.18)
    - 6'. Red heifer ashes and water to cleanse the people (Num.19)
  - 5'. Moses rebels against God; God punishes Moses (Num.20); this reflects a shift from the person of Moses to the institution of the priesthood; high priest as mediator
  - 4'. Israel defeats Canaanites; people complain; serpents strike Israel; Moses lifts bronze serpent for healing, to shape Israel's faith (Num.21)
- 3'. God defends Israel from cursing (Num.22 – 24)
- 2'. Plague breaks out due to worshipping Baal of Peor (Num.25)
- 1'. God numbers Israel for inheriting the land and cities of Canaan (Num.26 – 36)

### Narrative Themes: The Magicians of Pharaoh (Ex.1 – 15) and Balaam the Magician (Num.21 – 24)

The Pentateuch parallels these two sections in many ways. First is the presence of the serpent. In Exodus, God freed the first generation of Israelites from power symbolized by a serpent. Pharaoh wore a serpent on his crown, and the first plague-miracle of Moses was for his staff to turn into a serpent and devour the serpent-staffs of Pharaoh's magicians (Ex.7:7 – 12). In Numbers, God freed the second generation of Israelites from a powerful desire symbolized by a serpent. The Israelites wanted to return to Egypt, partly because they feared the future and partly because of the kings opposing them. So God sent serpents to bite the Israelites, but instructed Moses to lift a bronze serpent on a pole to receive God's healing (Num.21:4 – 7). The use of serpents in this regard probably is meant to trigger thoughts of being poisoned by venom. It reflects and mutually interprets the primal sin in the garden when a serpent 'bit' Adam and Eve with a lie and they corrupted human nature in themselves and in their descendants.

Second, Pharaoh and Balak oppose Israel for their increased numbers. Pharaoh saw that Israel had become much too numerous (Ex.1:7, 9). Pharaoh's plans were to stop Israel from returning to their land (Ex.1:10). His plan was to block the blessing of God (Gen.15:6). Thus, the blessings of humankind channeled through the covenant to Abraham were beginning to be fulfilled in Israel's sojourn in Egypt, and the nations were set on thwarting that promise. Similarly, Balak's plans were motivated by Israel being 'too numerous' (Num.22:6). And he was intent on keeping Israel out of the land.

Third, both Pharaoh and Balak made three attempts to counteract God's blessing and decrease Israel's numbers. Pharaoh put slave masters over them to oppress them (Ex.1:11 – 14). He commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the male children (Ex.1:15 – 21). And he commanded that every male child be thrown into the Nile (1:22). Yet as the narrative unfolds, Pharaoh's scheme was turned into a blessing for Israel. By means of Pharaoh's third plan, the narrator introduces the birth of God's chosen deliverer, Moses. Similarly, Balak also made three attempts to thwart God's blessing for Israel (23:1 – 12, 23:13 – 26, 23:27 – 24:9). Each attempt was turned into a blessing. Even though Balaam gave more than three oracles, the narrative has arranged the oracles into three attempts to curse Israel. Balak himself verbalized the narrator's own interest when he said, 'I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times.' (Nu.24:10). After Balak's third attempt, the author turns to the question of the birth of God's chosen deliverer, the prophecy of the star that was to arise from Jacob (Nu.24:12-25).

Fourth, the larger arrangement of literary genres supports a parallel.

- Exodus narrative (Ex.1 – 14), poetry (Ex.15:1 – 18), epilogue (Ex.15:19 – 21)
- Balaam narrative (Num.22:1 – 24:2), poetry (Num.24:3 – 9; 15 – 24), epilogue (Num.24:25)

Fifth, the Exodus narrative, including the victorious Song of the Sea, precedes God bringing Israel out of Egypt and *into the wilderness* (Ex.16:1 – Num.21:25). The Balaam narrative, including the victorious song of the Star of Jacob, precedes God bringing Israel *out of the wilderness* and into the garden land.

## Deuteronomy: Introduction and Ten Commandments

Introduction: These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel (Dt.1:1 – 3:29)

- Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments, and Inheriting the Garden Land (Dt.4:1 – 11:32)
- Expansion on the Ten Commandments (Dt.12:1 – 26:19)<sup>8</sup>

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Commandment</i>	<i>Expanded Discussion</i>
12:1 – 14:21	1, 2, 3 (monotheism, idols & swearing)	Purity of worship, exclusion of foreign gods, name of God (12:3, 5, 11, 21)
14:22 – 16:17	4 (sabbath)	Holy rhythms of daily life and concern for the poor
16:18 – 18:22	5 (honoring parents)	Respect for legitimate human authority: judge, king, priest, prophet
19:1 – 21:9	6 (murder)	Situations dealing with loss of human life
21:10 – 14	7 (adultery)	Marriage to a woman taken captive from wartime
21:15 – 22:4	8 (theft)	Various commands instilling a community ethos of care and compassion towards the weak and the poor
22:5 – 23:14	9 (false witness)	Various commands about representing one's self or others accurately
23:15 – 26:19	10 (covetousness)	Various commands about greed, protection of the vulnerable

- Covenant Between God and Israel (Dt.27:1 – 29:29)
- God's Faithfulness to the Covenant, Israel's Return from Exile (30:1 – 31:30)
- Songs: Heaven and Earth, Israel and the Nations (Dt.32:1 – 34:12)

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<sup>8</sup> Modified by Mako A. Nagasawa from Robert I. Bradshaw, *The Book of Deuteronomy*; [http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/article\\_deuteronomy.html](http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_deuteronomy.html); last accessed May 5, 2015

## Major Literary Structures from Sailhamer's *The Pentateuch as Narrative*

### A Literary Pattern: Narrative – Poetry – Epilogue

- Creation narrative (Gen.1:1 – 26), poetry (1:27), and epilogue (1:28 – 2:3)
- Garden narrative (Gen.2:4 – 22), poetry (2:23), and epilogue (2:24)
- Fall narrative (Gen.3:1 – 13), poetry (3:14 – 19), epilogue (3:20 – 24)
- Cain narrative (Gen.4:1 – 22), poetry (4:23), epilogue (4:24-26)
- Noah narrative (Gen.6:8 – 9:24), poetry (9:25 – 27), epilogue (9:28 – 29)
- Abraham narrative (Gen.11:27 – 24:59), poetry (24:60), epilogue (24:61 – 67)
- Jacob narrative (Gen.25 – 36), poetry (49:1 –27), epilogue (49:28 – 33)
- Joseph narrative (Gen.37 – 48), poetry (48:15 – 16), epilogue (48:17 – 22)
- Exodus narrative (Ex.1 – 14), poetry (Ex.15:1 – 18), epilogue (Ex.15:19 – 21)
- Balaam narrative (Num.22:1 – 24:2), poetry (Num.24:3 – 9; 15 – 24), epilogue (Num.24:25)
- Moses narrative (Dt.1 – 31), poetry (Dt.32:1 – 33:29), epilogue (Dt.34:1 – 12)

### Narrative Themes: Abraham in Egypt (Gen.12:10 – 20) and Israel in Egypt (Gen.45 – Ex.12)

There was a famine in the land (12:10)	There was a famine in all the lands (45:54)
When he drew near to go into Egypt (12:11)	When they came toward the land of Goshen (46:28)
He said to Sarai his wife (12:11)	Joseph said to his brothers (46:31)
I know that...(12:11)	I will go up and say to Pharaoh (46:31)
And it shall come to pass when the Egyptians see you, they will say (12:12)	And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh calls you, he will say (46:33)
Say (12:13)	Say (46:34)
That it might be well with me on account of you (12:13)	That you might dwell in the land of Goshen (46:34)
And the officers of Pharaoh saw her and declared it to Pharaoh (12:15)	And Joseph came and declared it to Pharaoh (47:1)
And the wife was taken into the house of Pharaoh (12:15)	And Pharaoh said, '...settle your father and brothers in the best part of the land.' (47:5)
And Abraham acquired sheep and cattle (12:15)	Put them in charge of my livestock (47:6), They acquired property and were fruitful and increased greatly (46:27)
And the Lord struck Pharaoh with great plagues (12:17)	One more plague I will bring against Pharaoh (Ex.11:1)
And Pharaoh called Abram and said (12:18)	And Pharaoh called to Moses and Aaron and said (12:31)
Take and go (12:19)	Take and go (12:32)
And sent them away (12:20)	To send them away (12:33)
And Abram went up from Egypt toward the Negev (13:1)	And the sons of Israel traveled from Rameses toward Succoth (12:37)
And Lot went with him (13:1)	And also a great mixed multitude went with him (12:38)
And Abram was very rich with livestock, silver, and gold (13:2)	And they had very much livestock (12:38), silver and gold (12:35)
Returned to the altar and worshiped God (13:4)	Passover (12:42)

## Narrative Themes: The Spread of Sin in Gen.1 – 11 and the Defilement of the Camp in Lev.11 – 16

The purpose of the narrative's structure is to portray the spread of ritual defilement in Israel's camp as a reversal of God's plan of blessing. And, to view the matter from another perspective, the early narratives of Genesis, by paralleling the later rituals dealing with contamination, shows that the first sin in the garden was a form of contamination in God's good creation. This illustrates the spread of sin in both the created world and in the covenant community. This reinforces the sense that the Holiness Laws of Leviticus 18 – 20, when we come to them, are, in part, retroactively critiquing even the patriarchs. Even some of their decisions were influenced by the 'wickedness' and 'confusion' of Babel.

Distinctions in the created world and animal life in Gen.1 and between good and evil in Gen.2	Distinctions between clean and unclean animals in Lev.11
Pains in childbirth in Gen.3	Impurity at childbirth in Lev.12
Nakedness, attention drawn to skin in Gen.3	Graphic horror of skin diseases to depict humanity's state of uncleanness before a holy God in Lev.13
Adam and Eve banished from the garden	Unclean person must live outside the camp in Lev.13:46
Waters of the flood used in cleansing the land of 'all flesh' that had 'corrupted His way.' (Gen.6:12)	Water is the primary means of cleansing diseased flesh. Water appears 7 times in Lev.14 (v.5, 6, 8, 9, 50, 51, 52)
The ark was plastered with pitch, inside and out in (Gen.6:14)	The house was plastered with clay after the soiled material was removed inside and taken out of the city (Lev.14:41-42). The house was atoned for (Lev.14:53b).
Noah waited at the door of the ark for seven days (Gen.7:4, 10)	The priest was to wait at the door of the house for seven days (Lev.14:38)
Noah waited for the bird in the ark for two series of sevens (Gen.8:10, 12)	The one to be cleansed waited for two series of sevens (Lev.14:7, 8)
Two birds were sent out of the ark. One, the raven, flew out over the water and the other, a dove, flew over the dry land (Gen.8:7 – 12). The raven was unclean and the dove was clean.	Two 'clean birds' were taken: one was slain 'over water' and the other was released over the face of the field. The slain bird was a sin offering (Lev.14:52), took away the uncleanness; the other bird went free.
A sacrifice was offered at the conclusion (Gen.8:20)	A sacrifice was offered at the conclusion (Lev.14:10, 21)
Noah offered a 'clean animal' and a 'clean bird' on the altar. (Gen.8:20)	The one to be cleansed offered a male lamb and two doves on the altar (Lev.14:21 – 22)
Noah was given dietary regulations (Gen.9:3) and warned about consuming the blood (Gen.9:4)	Dietary regulations have been given (Lev.11), along with a strict warning about consuming the blood (Lev.17, cf.7:26).
God established a covenant with Noah (Gen.9:9)	God established a covenant with Israel (Lev.26:44)
The sign of the covenant was the rainbow in the clouds (Gen.9:14-15)	The sign of God's presence in the covenant was the cloud over the atonement cover (Lev.16:2)
Noah drank wine and became drunk and lay in his tent (Gen.9:21)	Aaron and his sons were warned not to drink wine or fermented drink when they went into the Tent of Meeting (Lev.10:9)
Noah's two sons/descendants, Ham and Canaan, were cursed (Gen.9:24-27)	Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were cursed (Lev.10:1)
Noah's son Ham saw his father's nakedness (Gen.9:22)	'Do not uncover the nakedness of your father.' (Lev.18:7) Uncovering nakedness is called the defilement of the Canaanites (Lev.18:24 – 30)
Humanity plans and brings confusion at Babel (Gen.11:1 – 9). At Babel, God's concern was that nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them'	The holiness laws in Lev.18 – 20 were intended to insure that there would be no wickedness (noun root of verb 'to plan') or confusion (noun root similar to 'Babel') in the land. The nouns are used only here in the Pentateuch
Abram married Sarai, his half-sister (Gen.11:29, 20:12)	The holiness laws prohibited marriage to one's half sister (Lev.18:11, 20:17)
Jacob married two sisters.	The holiness laws prohibit marrying two sisters (Lev.18:18).