

A Study of Documentary Hypothesis

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Preface: In the 19th century (or so), some intellectuals had determined that Moses lived during a time when writing was unknown. Therefore, he could not have written the books of Moses. As a result, one of the most convoluted theories in theological history was developed, known as Documentary Hypothesis or the JEPD Theory (I may have come up with the latter designation for it). So that there is no confusion, Moses did write Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; and he may have written down Genesis, which already existed in its completed form when Moses was born. The JEPD theory, which is taught in many seminaries throughout the world, is based upon a false premise (Moses was able to write; people did write during his time and much earlier), and upon that false premise, a false theory was built, but not fully abandoned when the premise for it was determined to be false.

There is no reason to think that various sections of Deuteronomy (or other parts of the books of Moses) were just haphazardly and randomly thrown together, from a variety of sources, only to be later woven into a semi-cohesive narrative. That is known as **Documentary Hypothesis** (also known as the JEPD theory), which is found extensively in resource material like the **Cambridge Bible Commentary**. It is a misguided theory, originally based upon some faulty premises (that Moses lived during a time when there was no writing in his area). The premise of this theory has been debunked; yet the resulting theory continues on, decades later.¹

Authorship credit: Much of this information was taken primarily from Josh McDowell's book *More Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. For those who have been taken in by either of these theories need to read this book. For those who think that I am beating a dead horse with this summary, Josh would be too thorough for you. While I am mentioning Josh's name, I should point out that his first book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* or his compilation book *A Ready Defense* are excellent for the new Christian, who questions the rationality and the validity of the basic beliefs of Christianity. Some people when they are saved buy into Christianity hook line and sinker. Others, like myself, wonder *what the hell did I just do—am I acting rationally and do I believe in something which is even close to logical?* If you question the beliefs of Christianity, there are few books as well organized and as thorough as his.

Ironically enough, I have taken my first treatise on this topic, which is primarily a paraphrase from Josh McDowell's work; and then have woven in my own writings on this topic spanning a period of perhaps 10 years.

Topics

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Documentary Hypothesis: Documentary Hypothesis simply asserts that the Pentateuch was not authored by Moses but written 1000 years after Moses by several authors who wrote portions here and there and then other men have performed extensive revisions and editing after them. This is also known as the JEPD hypothesis. The primary authors of the Pentateuch are thought to be four: J is the Yahwist, who is completely unknown, who continually used God's name, YHWH throughout his writings. He recorded the legends, stories, myths, and oral traditions from several cultures and wove this into the history of the Jews. E is the Elohist, because this person so often used the name Elohim. He allegedly wrote his portion of Scripture in 700 B.C., recording the traditions of his day. As we have seen, these two names for God are used continually, but not interchangeably throughout Genesis. Because of this problem, these two sources are often combined as producers of the JE document. It is thought that another unknown author combined the works of both of these men, thus accounting for the apparent (but not real) differences in some stories (such as the creation account in chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis). D is the Deuteronomic Law, confined primarily to Deuteronomy (although J and E both contributed small portions here and there), and discovered in 621 B.C.. P stands for a priest or a group of priest who recorded the priestly code, which were a set of laws or codes dealing with the holiness of the people. They later worked in the J and E (or the JE) document(s), as editors, into their own work.

The rationalization for documentary hypothesis is simple: some people do not want to believe that the Bible is God's Word. There are several reasons for taking this position: (1) they do not fully comprehend the symbiotic and synchronic relationship between human and divine authorship or they do not accept it; (2) although most would readily agree that God has the ability to author the Bible (that is, those that believe in God), they do not believe that He has; and, (3) they just do not believe in the Biblically supernatural, which would therefore preclude prophecy and the recording of divine intervention into human history, which would eliminate creation, miracles, and God speaking to the saints. (4) Historians like to believe that man began worshipping nature and natural forces, generalized this into a pantheon of gods, and narrowed this down to one God. Perhaps the next logical step in this progression is the reduction to no God. Nevertheless, this is purely hypothesis, but it does not jive with Mosaic authorship; therefore, they reject Mosaic authorship.

¹Taken from **Deuteronomy 4** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Objections to Documentary Hypothesis:

1. *There are no literary references, no extant manuscripts of any kind, which mention the J, E, E or P documents, either singly or as a group. They have been created...* G. Herbert Livingston, PhD, professor of Old Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary.
2. There is cultural and historical information found throughout the Pentateuch (particularly in Genesis) which would have been unknown outside of that time period (these are things which have recently become known to us through Archeology). As we have gone through Genesis, I have pointed these things out from time to time. Refer to Gen. 14:18 31:30 36:20 by way of examples. One of the many examples is Lot's heavy door—this fits in precisely with his time period. Had this been written down 1000 years later, as has been supposed the those who support documentary hypothesis, during a time of archways and no doors, how would they have known the about the conditions a millennium previous? Another examples: archeology supports that the area around Jordan was fertile and heavily populated around 2065 BC, a soon thereafter abandoned, which is in accord with the information in Genesis which we have concerning Sodom, Gomorrah and the other three cities of the circle of Jordan.²
3. George Mendenhall, PhD from John Hopkins University, professor of Near Eastern languages and literature at the University of Michigan: *Wellhausen's [a strong proponent of documentary hypothesis] theory of the history of Israelite religion was very largely based on a Hegelian philosophy of history, not upon his literary analysis. It was an a priori evolutionary scheme which guided him in the utilization of his sources.*
4. James Burton Coffman: *[I]t should be noted that the documentary theories do absolutely nothing to change that situation. If there ever had been any documents (which is not supported by any evidence at all); and, even if there had been an editor or redactor who put it all together just as it appears in Genesis (again an unproved and unprovable proposition), it is undeniable that such an imaginary person (whoever he was) gave it to us as we have it.*³
5. Those supporting documentary hypothesis try to reverse the order of the Bible, claiming the prophets preceded the Law, but all of the prophets consistently appeal to a body of law in existence and well-known during their times (e.g., Amos 2:4).
6. As cited in our study of inspiration, 4 books of the Law cite Mosaic authorship specifically innumerable times. Other Old Testament writers of Scripture bear witness of this (Joshua 1:7, 8 I Kings 2:3 II Kings 14:6 I Chron. 22:13 Ezra 3:2 Neh. 8:1 Dan. 9:11 Mal. 4:4 (see p. 93 in *More Evidence* for additional references). Those from the New Testament also cite Moses as the author of at least four of the books of the Pentateuch (Luke 2:22 20:28 John 1:45 Rom. 10:4 Heb. 9:19 Rev. 15:3 (pp. 93–94). We have the tradition of the Jews as recorded in the Apocrypha and the Talmud, quotes by Philo and Josephus; and similar traditions in the early Christian church.
7. To make the facts fit their theories, documentarians even divide up close to 100 individual verses from the Pentateuch into two or more sources (a list is given in *More Evidence* p. 129). In doing research, I can personally testify that is not only unbelievably tedious but the chances of producing a single manuscript from all of that which is soon thereafter accepted as God's Word strains credibility. That would be a divine miracle.
8. Josh McDowell deals further with the claims of documentarians with regards to style, diction and vocabulary and soundly refutes those claims. However, there are a small number of people who are seriously challenged by this pseudo-intellectual viewpoint and I recommend Josh's book to them for further personal edification.
9. The College Press writes: *The student should not forget that these hypothetical "writers" [that is, J, E, P and D] are all hypothetical; that the hypothetical Codes are likewise hypothetical, since no external evidence can be produced to confirm their existence or that of their authors or "redactors." All phases of the Documentary Theory of the Pentateuch are completely without benefit of evidential support externally, and there is little or no agreement among the critics themselves in the matter of allocating verses, sentences and phrases*

²Merill Unger, *Archeology and the Old Testament*, 1954

³From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

to the various respective writers and redactors.⁴ This sounds a lot like evolutionists. They all believe it happened, but they cannot agree on any of the particulars.

Assertions by Documentary Hypothesis Proponents and Answers:

1. **Assertion:** Monotheism was not a part of the early history of Israel; it began with Amos. **Answer:** Monotheism was found in Egypt between 1400 and 1350 BC; in Babylonia between 1500-1200 BC. Gleason Archer Jr., PhD⁵, chairman of Old Testament studies and instructor at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: "It is an uncontestable fact of history that no other nation (apart from those influence by the Hebrew faith) ever did develop a true monotheistic religion which commanded the general allegiance of its people....it remains incontrovertible that neither the Egyptians, nor the Babylonians, nor the Greeks ever embrace a monotheistic faith on a national basis."
2. **Assertion:** The religious tenets of Israel were borrowed from surrounding countries and cultures. **Answer:** Whereas the Babylonian creation myths are filled with the supernatural and surreal; and crude polytheism, Genesis presents God as the one Creator and Ruler of the Universe. There is not a trace of battles between the gods in the creation account given in Genesis as we find in pagan myths. The male-female duality often found in the deities of other religions are totally absent from fundamental Judaism.
3. **Assertion:** The second commandment could not have been given during the time of Moses; mankind was infatuation with religious images. **Answer:** There is no archeological evidence of any YHWH images found among the ruins of the olden cities. Had the people been polytheistic, we would have evidence of that fact.
4. **Assertion:** On the one hand, documentary hypothesis claims that the laws of Moses were too advance for any culture of his day (it does not fit their model of evolution); furthermore, they were copied from similar sets of laws in the ancient world **Answer:** You can't have it both ways. If other lands had relatively sophisticated laws (e.g., the Code of Hammurabi⁶), then there is no reason that Israel could not. On the other hand, there is no reason to think that these laws originated outside of Israel.
5. **Assertion:** Writing was virtually unknown in Israel during the time of Moses. **Answer:** We have throughout Genesis made reference to archeological discoveries of writings found in nearby lands prior to and coterminous with Moses. British Assyriologist A. H. Sayce: *Centuries before Abraham was born Egypt and Babylonia were alike full of schools and libraries, of teachers and pupils, of poets an prose-writers, and of the literary works which they had composed.* W. F. Albright, PhD, cites five different kinds of languages committed to written form and their usages as discovered by archeology found in Palestine and Syria alone during the times of the Patriarchs.
6. **Assertion:** The Old Testaments if filled with both fictional characters and types (e.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham) and actual historical figures (King David, Nehemiah). **Answer:** *Dossin and Jean are editing the thousands of tablets from Mari; every new publication of theirs helps us better to understand the life and times of the Hebrew Patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob no longer seem isolated figures, much less reflections of later Israelite history; they appear as true children of their age, bearing the same names, moving about over the same territory, visiting the same towns (especially Haran and Nahor), practicing the same customs as their contemporaries. In other words, the patriarchal narratives have a historical nucleus throughout, although it is like the a long oral transmission of the original poems and later prose sagas which underlie the present text of Genesis has considerably refracted the original events.* May I add that there is actually nothing which indicates that all of Genesis was transmitted orally until the time of Moses. There is no reason in the world to suppose that the events of Genesis were recorded centuries after their occurrence. G. E. Wright from *Present State of Biblical Archeology* (1947): *Some of the patriarchal episodes seem unusual, even to the later Israelites but this find at Nuzu [Nuzi] clears the picture.*

Addendum

⁴The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 27:1–45.

⁵Archer's BA, MA and PhD all originate from Harvard; he also has an LLB from the Suffolk University Law School and a BD from Princeton Seminary.

⁶To be studied when we arrive at the Law of Moses

Many of the doctrines below came from exegetical studies in the Pentateuch.

The next few doctrines are taken from the **Introduction to Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). They primarily deal with the authorship of Genesis, and how this book was not written by Moses or by 4 sets of authors thousands of years later (the JEPD theory).

Before we carefully examine the authorship of Genesis, let me give you the false theories: (1) Moses wrote the book of Genesis or (2) 4 person or groups of people were involved in the authorship of the Pentateuch.

False Theories About the Authorship of Genesis

Moses is the Author:

From the NIV Study Bible: *Historically, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the OT.*¹

The Open Bible writes: *Although Genesis does not directly name its author, and although Genesis ends some three centuries before Moses was born, the whole of Scripture and church history are unified in their adherence to the Mosaic authorship of Genesis... The early church openly held to the Mosaic authorship, as does the first-century Jewish historian Josephus. As would be expected, the Jerusalem Talmud supports Moses as author.*²

The NASB: *No man can claim to know with absolute assurance who wrote the Book of Genesis. Since Genesis is a necessary foundation for Exodus to Deuteronomy, and since the available evidence indicates that Moses wrote these four books, Moses is likely the author of Genesis itself. The New Testament evidence points in the same direction (cf. Especially John 5:46, 47 Luke 16:31 24:44).*³

The Pentateuch is a Compilation of Authors:

Liberal theologians, for the most part, came up with the idea that there are 4 influences on the final compilation of the Pentateuch: the Yawehist (J), who wrote the portions which primarily name God with the name Jehovah/Yaweh; the Elohimist (E), who usually speaks of God using the title *Elohim*; the Deuteronomist (D), who composed most of the book of Deuteronomy; and the Priest (s) (P) who wrote portions which favor the Levitical priesthood. Various editors in years to follow (R, for Redactor), intertwined these texts. This is called *Documentary Hypothesis* or the JEPD (JEDP) theory. The idea that there were several documents which were later woven together (long after the time of Moses) is a theory which is presented by scholars and intellectuals and is taught in many of our seminaries. Even the original source material is said to have been written long after the events actually occurred.

This theory contradicts common sense, what the Bible says about itself, and what Jesus says about the Mosaic authorship. So, if you hold to this theory (if you have heard about it before), many scholars will agree with you, but Jesus does not.

I do not want to spend any serious time with a false theory of authorship, but if you believe this, or if you are intrigued by this notion, let me recommend Josh McDowell, *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, ©1975 by Campus Crusade for Christ, pp. 117–292. I am quite sure that this has been reprinted in other compilations which McDowell has put together more recently. McDowell very methodically destroys this false view of authorship.

¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 2.

² *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 1.

³ *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition*; A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 2.

It probably would not hurt if I quoted a better source on the false JEPD theory.

Theopedia on the JEPD Theory of Authorship

The JEPD theory seeks to understand the authorship of the Pentateuch in light of the Documentary Hypothesis. This view believes that the Pentateuch represents the conflation of four different sources rather than the work of primarily one author, traditionally Moses. The results of Source Criticism first proposed two authors (or sources) for the Pentateuch supposedly distinguishable by the use of the terms Yahweh and Elohim. Two additional sources were later proposed as P for Priestly, and D for Deuteronomistic resulting in the JEPD theory of authorship, most notably associated with German scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918).

JEPD are initials representing the four hypothetical sources as follows:

- Jawist (or Yahwist, from Yahweh) - describes God as Yahweh, starting in Gen 2:4, it includes much of Genesis and parts of Exodus and Numbers. It is dated around 850 B.C.
- Elohist (from Elohim) - primarily describes God as El or Elohim. Starting with Gen 15, it covers material similar to "J". It is dated around 750 B.C. (J and E are said to be difficult to distinguish).
- Deuteronomy - a different source (or author) is associated with Deuteronomy alone, and is usually dated around 621 B.C.
- Priestly - this encompasses writings scattered from Gen 1 through the notice of Moses' death at the end of Deuteronomy. It is supposedly dated around 500 B.C.

Traditionally, Moses is viewed as the author of the Pentateuch, and this has caused proponents of the JEPD theory to question: what role did Moses play? Some have suggested that his role was minimal, with the majority of the Pentateuch having been written after his death. On the other hand, it has been put forth that Moses developed the core of the Pentateuch, or in other words, the basis for which all other material would follow. There are examples in the Pentateuch of other known sources, for instance, "the Book of the Wars of the LORD" (Num 21:14) that may have been used. So although a different writing style or varying language-use may be found, scholars still believe that Moses composed the more essential and theological portions of the Pentateuch.

From http://www.theopedia.com/JEPD_theory accessed January 16, 2013.

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After writing most of this lesson, I did an internet search on what people seem to believe today on the authorship of Genesis. Much to my pleasant surprise, many people have taken the view that Genesis was originally written by several authors, and that Genesis pretty much existed in its completed form by the time of Moses or that Moses may possibly have been the final editor of these documents.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet

Author

Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis

[Answers in Genesis](#)

They dismantle the JEPD theory, and they take a position sort of halfway between the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and multiple historical authors of Genesis. I have a [chart](#) listing the possible authors of the book of Genesis (which would have been written in the mid to late 1990's). There is a very similar chart on this page.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet

Author	Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis
Biblical Hermeneutics	This is a mishmash of ideas and opinions, not necessarily from scholars, but some from people who just had a thought and decided to share it (like the guy who thinks Genesis was written during the exile). However, on this page we have the interesting thought <i>P.J. Wiseman posits the theory that the 'toledoth' indicates authors who were eyewitnesses to the events mentioned in Genesis. This is based on the pattern of writing found on ancient Babylonian tablets predating Abraham where the word translated 'generations of' is used to indicate the ownership or authorship of the clay tablet.</i> ⁷ This is essentially what I believe, but with some modifications.
Lay evangelism	Teaches that Moses is the author of Genesis.
Russell Grigg	Documentary Hypothesis is false; Moses probably compiled the book of Genesis from existing records. This short piece covers the JEPD theory in more depth than I do; and his opinion of the possible Mosaic authorship of Genesis is not far from mine (I certainly allow for the possibility that Moses compiled Genesis from existing documents; however, I lean more towards Genesis to already existing in completed form by the time Moses comes along).
Dr. David Livingston	Moses wrote the book of Genesis, possibly from a direct dictation from God on Mount Sinai.
Peter Salemi	Salemi appears to build upon the 1936 work of P. J. Wiseman, which attributes authorship of Genesis to several eyewitnesses.
Don Stewart	Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, with some slight wiggle room when it comes to Genesis.
Wikipedia	As one would expect, the weirdest and most liberal theories of the authorship of Genesis are offered up, almost uncritically. The day that I checked, ⁸ Mosaic authorship or the <i>toledoth theory</i> were not even mentioned. This being Wikipedia, that could change tomorrow.

Hundreds of articles can be found on this subject. These are just a representative few.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I am of the opinion that the original narratives were written (or, more likely, memorized) by the people who experienced them. For many years, I thought was mostly alone in this theory, but the internet has revealed a number of people who believe roughly the same thing. What I have not seen is the theory proven from the Scriptures.

Moses is clearly called the author of the books of the Pentateuch other than Genesis. Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6. Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18. The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44. Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47). Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very

⁷From <http://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/1255/was-moses-the-probable-author-of-genesis> accessed January 14, 2013.

⁸From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis accessed January 14, 2013.

least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).

This is taken from **Genesis 11** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Writing is Quite Ancient

We now have no reason to doubt that Abram had the ability to read and write. At one time, so-called scholars of a century ago doubted that Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible) because they claimed that writing did not exist during his time. A bizarre theory of authorship was borne out of this, called the JEPD theory or documentary hypothesis. They claimed that, 1000 years after Moses died, one author wrote a lot of stuff using the word *Elohim* in it (E); another wrote a lot of stuff using the word *Jehovah* in it (J); another put together the Deuteronomic code (D); and then some priest took all of this and compiled it, putting the finishing touches on the Old Testament (P). Now, the Elohimist and the Jehovahist did not write separate books—no—that would be too easy. They wrote various lines and chapters, and all of this was later woven together. And, of course, the Elohimist used the word *Jehovah* and the Jehovahist used the word *Elohim*. The idea was preponderance of usage. If you have never heard of this theory before, no doubt it sounds pretty bizarre and convoluted to you. This all came about because most *scientists, historians* and *archaeologists* agreed (i.e., there was a consensus) that Moses could not read and write because no one could read and write way back then. So, theologians, knowing that scientists, historians and archaeologists are always honest and forthright (tongue-in-cheek), adopted theories to account for the idea that Moses could not read or write. I mention this because this goofy theory is now taught in most seminaries, even though it was based on false theories of history. Now, we have all kinds of writings from the era of Moses, and from before his time, and virtually all historians and archaeologists agree that Moses could read and write. I mention this because (1) you may come across this theory in the future and think it sounds pretty cool (it can be presented persuasively) and because (2) this is the theory which predominates most Protestant seminaries today.

This is an illustration of one way that Satan works. He takes a consensus and builds lies around it, and manages to somehow foist this upon the theological world. The Bible is not clear as to how Satan is able to influence our thinking, but the Bible is clear that he is able to. 1Tim. 4:1–2: **Now the Spirit expressly says that, in later times, some will depart from the faith [the sound teachings of Bible doctrine] by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.** 2Cor. 11:13–15: **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.**

Since then, we have found that writing and various mediums for writing, existed long before Moses. In fact, according to Will Durant, written history is at least 6000 years old and can be traced back to the Near East⁹ (which area includes the Fertile Crescent, the area where Terah and his family lived).

⁹*The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 116.

Writing is Quite Ancient

Durant writes: *In this rough theater of teeming peoples and conflicting cultures were developed the agriculture and commerce, the horse and wagon, the coinage and letters of credit, the crafts and industries, the law and government, the mathematics and medicine, the enemas and drainage systems, the geometry and astronomy, the calendar and clock and zodiac, the alphabet and writing, the paper and ink, the books and libraries and schools, the literature and music, the sculpture and architecture, the glazed pottery and fine furniture, the monotheism and monogamy, the cosmetics and jewelry, the checkers and dice, the te-pins and income-tax, the wet-nurses and beer, from which our own European and American culture derive by a continuous succession through the mediation of Crete and Greece and Rome. The "Aryans" did not establish civilization—they took it from Babylonia and Egypt; Greece did not begin civilization—it inherited far more civilization than it began; it was the spoiled heir of three millenniums of arts and sciences brought to its cities from the Near East by the fortunes of trade and war. In studying and honoring the Near East, we shall be acknowledging a debt long due to the real founders of European and American civilization.*¹⁰ Durant goes on to say that we have discovered advanced cultures as old as 4500 B.C.¹¹

It probably does not hurt to have the opinion of a great historian as to when writing began.

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This is taken from **1Chron. 6** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Aaron and the JEPD Theory

It is quite interesting what the JEPD theory did to Aaron. Aaron is mentioned 350 times in Scripture—300 in the Pentateuch. However, many of the proponents of that flawed theory claim that Aaron is simply a concoction of a fertile imagination. They claim that Aaron is missing from J (the author who used the name *Jehovah* a great deal); and that he is only incidental to E (the author who uses the name of *Elohim* the most often). Now, how do you have the mention of Aaron 300 times, and yet some theologian tells us that he does not appear at all in the J documents? Their explanation is that the phrase *and Aaron* was added by whoever wove these documents together. In the E documents, Aaron's name occurs 21 times, and mostly in connection to rebellion against Moses (Ex. 32, the golden calf incident; and Num. 12, Moses' marriage to the Ethiopian woman). The claim is that Aaron is mentioned primarily in the P documents, which are the documents written by a priest hundreds of years later (it is claimed the P documents are post-exilic).

¹⁰*The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 116.

¹¹*The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 117. Even though the Biblical timeline puts advanced civilization after the flood 1000–2000 years later, we are still very roughly in the same ballpark when it comes to a clearly advanced society.

Aaron and the JEPD Theory

In order to make the Pentateuch fit their theory, the JEPD proponents delete *and Aaron* when it is convenient and fits their theory and leave it in when leaving his name in fits their theory. ZPEB: *This handling of the text requires a remarkable disregard of consistency, to say the least, and is forthrightly rejected by conservative scholarship.*¹² Proponents of this theory simply change whatever they do not like in Scripture, so that it completely agrees with their theory. When you are first presented with this theory, it seems to be moderately convincing: “We have noticed that there are some passages in which the Tetragrammaton YHWH is found *almost exclusively*; and other passages where we find the name *Elohim*. When we separate these passages, we seem to find two different traditions which must have been later woven together.” The problem is, when other tests are put to these same groups of Scriptures, they fail. Therefore, “someone at one time added Aaron’s name dozens of times in order to hide the fact that these passages were woven together from separate traditions.” This reasoning begs the question. The considerable evidence against this theory is rationalized away; and the small amount of evidence which might support such a theory is made abnormally prominent (even though it is not consistent).

It appears pretty obvious to me: Aaron was the first High Priest, so we should expect to hear his name mentioned in connection with the function of the High Priest and with the function of the priests. As I have mentioned many times previously, this JEPD theory is a goofy theory which does nothing but detract from the inspiration of Scripture (which is what Satan designed it to do).

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This is taken from **Psalm 19** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

¹²*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 4. Much of the information on Aaron and other characters found in this chapter come mainly from ZPEB.

Applying the JEPD Theory to Psalm 19

David was the author of this psalm, as the inscription tells us (we will discuss that further when we get to it). One of the very goofy theories of Old Testament authorship is that there were a variety of writers for the books of Moses.¹³ Even entire books are divided into pieces, and that, in part, is determined by the name for God that is used in that portion of the book. For instance, it is suggested that one writer wrote portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers and used the name *Elohim* for God. Another writer did other portions of these same books, but he used *Jehovah* for the name of God. Then another writer came along, wove these two documents together, adding some of his own thoughts, and the result is the Pentateuch. And very serious and academically-oriented theologians hold to this theory of authorship.¹⁴ In this psalm, in the first half, we find the name of *Elohim* used with respect to the creation of all things; in the second half of this psalm, we find the name *Jehovah* used seven times—however, none of these scholars suggest that the *Elohimist* wrote the first half of this psalm and that the *Jehovist* wrote the second half. They would not suggest such a thing because (1) it would be stupid; and, (2) it would not advance their theory, because it is a stupid suggestion.¹⁵ However, the exact arguments used to promote the JEPD theory could be applied to this little psalm. The vocabulary of the first half and the second half are different; there are different names used for God in each half; and the writer expresses completely different thoughts in the first and second halves of this psalm. However, there is no real reason to assume that anyone other than David wrote the entirety of this psalm. I only mention this to indicate that the general JEPD arguments are only applied as it benefits them (that is, when said theory weakens the authority of the Word of God), but they do not apply these arguments uniformly and consistently to all Scripture. Applying their theory here would make them appear silly and weaken the arguments applied elsewhere. Therefore, psalms like this are conveniently ignored.¹⁶

Starting out with a false assumption leads you to a whole lot of false conclusions.

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I came across this example when exegeting [Deuteronomy 16 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Example of a Weird Explanation Based Upon the JEPD Theory

Moses explains how the people should observe the Passover, and then celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Deut. 16:1–8 "Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there. You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, but at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD

¹³There were for the book of Genesis, but we covered that in our study of Genesis.

¹⁴In fact, many, if not most, seminaries teach this as truth.

¹⁵Now, interestingly enough, some orthodox theologians have actually suggested that this is actually two separate psalms written at two separate times and then united. Rosenmüller and De Wette both took this position, although Rosenmüller later retracted his opinion.

¹⁶Much of what I write is not entirely original. J. Vernon McGee made this point, albeit in a more abbreviated form, in *Psalms Volume 1*; Thru the Bible Books, ©1977, p. 100.

Example of a Weird Explanation Based Upon the JEPD Theory

your God. You shall do no work on it.”

Do you know what got the Cambridge Bible all confused here? The people were to return to their *tents*, which the Cambridge Bible understood to mean *homes*, and so this confused them. People were to gather in a centralized location (like Jerusalem) to observe the Passover; then they were to go home (which would have been a long, arduous trip), and then, a week later, they would have to make the trek back. That made no sense to the Cambridge Bible people.

The explanation is really quite simple. The men, and often their households, packed up, and moved temporarily to the place determined by God, to observe the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which took place over a week's time). They would pitch a tent and live in that tent for that week. So, when the Bible says that, after the Passover, they are to return to their tents the next morning, that means, they are literally to return to the tent that they pitched in the vicinity of the Tabernacle or Temple. Hopefully, the explanation is so simple and easy to follow, that you wonder, *how can anyone screw this up?* Well, the Cambridge Bible did. Here is their understanding of this matter:

[F]ixing the Feast for one day after which the people are to return home, is difficult to harmonise with the seven days of Deut. 16:3 f. and Deut. 16:8. Two explanations are possible;—(1) D's law originally consisted of Deut. 16:1 f., Deut. 16:5–7, and dealt only with the Passover; and the vv. on Maççôth are from an editor. But there is no reason why the original code of D should ignore Maççôth—for which certainly E has a law, Ex. 23:15 a, and (Steuern. notwithstanding) J also, Ex. 34:18 a—unless Maççôth, a purely agricultural feast, had become too closely associated with the cults of the Baalim. (2) More probably we have here a compilation of two laws of D, originally separate, one on Passover and one on Maççôth. In either case the combination of Passover and Maççôth, which was not original and is not accepted even by H in Leviticus 23 (Lev. 23:5; Lev. 23:9 ff.; Lev. 23:6–8 are added by P), took place between the date of the original code of D and that of the final composition of the Book of Deuteronomy.

Their opinion on this passage is almost indecipherable. Sometimes, a theologian can be too smart.

From *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Deut. 16:8.

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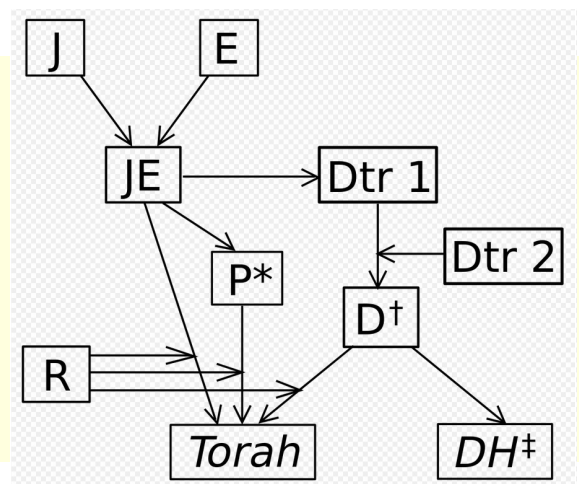
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Taken from **Exodus 13** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

The JEPD theory or documentary hypothesis.

This is a false theory of authorship of the books of Moses.

From Wikipedia: *The documentary hypothesis is one of the models used by biblical scholars to explain the origins and composition of the Torah. A version of the documentary hypothesis, frequently identified with the German scholar Julius Wellhausen, was almost universally accepted for most of the 20th century.*¹⁷



¹⁷From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis accessed October 13, 2021.

The JEPD chart (a graphic); from [Wikipedia](#); accessed October 13, 2021.

The general explanation of what they believe is summarized by Wikipedia:

J: Yahwist (10th–9th century BCE)[1][2]

E: Elohist (9th century BCE)[1]

Dtr1: early (7th century BCE) Deuteronomist historian

Dtr2: later (6th century BCE) Deuteronomist historian

P: Priestly (6th–5th century BCE)[3][2]*

D†: Deuteronomist

R: redactor

DH: Deuteronomistic history (books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings).¹⁸

This is where the Bible came from—in particular, the books of Moses—according to those who believe in documentary hypothesis. It is one of the weirdest theories that I am aware of, and I was exposed to it first through the 2nd *Evidence Which Requires a Verdict* by Josh McDowell. I will admit, when reading this section, I kept saying to myself, *what is he going on and on about?* Come to find, years later, that this is commonly believed by and taught in many (most) seminaries throughout the United States.

What makes far more sense is, this history found in the Bible takes place side-by-side the historical observations (celebrations, feast days) demanded by God. This is extremely important and is a foundational tenet of the Scriptures.

Liberal theologians try to convince us that the books of Moses were written by several sources over a period of many centuries, long after the purported Moses was to have existed. What this would mean is, at some point in time, a group of **priests** and Levites (who would have been undefined up to that point, as there was no book of Leviticus), would suddenly say, “Hey, we have this book that God gave to us 500 years ago (or whatever) which we need to obey.” So, somehow, these people somehow seize religious authority by suddenly producing books which give them this religious authority. Then these books tell about the feasts which have been celebrated all the way back to the founding of nation Israel. What I am describing to you should not make logical sense, yet it is taught in most seminaries.

Let’s approach this from another direction: if the books of Moses did not already exist, then where did the feasts and the Levites come from? Is Israel’s history suddenly made up (or made up over a period of hundreds of years), and then this is somehow sold to millions of people? “Hey, we have these books—we have had them all along—and this is where our authority comes from to tell you about these books. From hereon in, these are your laws, because they have always been your laws!” Or so would the Levites claim, according to the liberal theologians. Do you see how little sense this makes?

And if this priestly class developed a set of books which gave them authority; why not seize more authority? When people desire authority, they rarely look to self-regulate. Did all of these priests get together and say, “We want to have a well-defined, *but very limited*, authority”? Their authority in Scriptures is far from absolute, and there are many black marks against the Aaronic priesthood in these records.

However, this is what we know: the ultimate authority rests in the written Word of God; not in the Aaronic priesthood. The priests of Israel are not always presented in a favorable light in the Scriptures. If this is made-up history written by the priests, or exaggerated history written by the priests, why don’t they come off better as historical figures? The first two sons of Aaron—who would become the first priests after Aaron—will die the sin

¹⁸From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis accessed October 13, 2021.

unto death. That is not a very stellar beginning for the Old Testament priesthood. Aaron himself, as we will soon study, will do something deserving of death.

This interpretation of Israel's history, that the books of Moses were not written by Moses, has absolutely no historical foundation. Their chief *evidence* is the observation that the two primary names for God are not evenly distributed in every chapter of the books of Moses. Sometimes Moses used the name *Y^ehowah* more than *Elohim*; and sometimes it is the other way around. This is the proof given by liberal theologians that the books written by Moses were written by two different people, and then woven together at a later date by a third party.

This explanation subjects us to this whole chicken versus egg beginning. What is there first? The Scriptures or the complex system of the Hebrew faith? When we accept a false theory, then the chicken-egg problem immediately presents itself. Were the people already engaged in these practices? Well, if they were, why did they need *Scriptures*? And if these complex practices had not existed until these Scriptures suddenly show up on the scene, just how exactly do you get virtually the entire nation to follow what is written if they were not doing these things already?

The same thing is true of evolution. This is a false theory presented by *so-called scientists*; but their fundamental problem has always been, which came first, the chicken or the egg?

It makes very little sense to have hundreds of traditions and celebrations and systems of religious authority, to essentially come from nowhere (according to liberal theologians). But later, hundreds of years later, the authority for those things, which Israel observes, somehow is written and produced; or someone claims to have found it. But, it is not necessarily found, because, these books were written by Moses and engraved on rocks hundreds of years prior to them being discovered. This liberal view is very illogical, and yet it is taught in seminaries.

It cannot be overemphasized just how prevalent and widespread the observation of these Old Testament Scriptures were in the Hebrew culture. Today, in the United States, perhaps 50% of the population believe in God and possibly in Jesus; and some of these people attend church regularly and some do not. The Hebrew culture was not like that. Their God and their relationship to their God was fundamental in their culture. God chose Abraham; God chose Isaac, God chose Jacob; God led the people into Egypt; God led the people out of Egypt; God gave the land of Canaan to the Hebrew people. These concepts are foundational to nation Israel and the people all understood and knew—for 2000 years or so—all of these concepts.

Today, in the United States, most Christians do not know the most fundamental procedures of the Christian life (such as, how to get in and out of fellowship; or our relationship to the Holy Spirit).

Now, thinking about Israel, does it make sense that, half way through their existence as a people, all of this stuff was suddenly introduced? Or somehow for some reason these things were practiced, but then, it was somehow codified and/or modified by Scriptures which did not begin to exist until hundreds of years after these events. How does that make any logical sense?

This would be analogous to a religious cult, in 2021 America, suddenly appearing (or maybe they have been around for awhile), and they have these Scriptures, these words from God—but they claim to have actually had these Scriptures for hundreds of years, but are just now going public...and these are a list of the celebrations and religious hierarchy that everyone in the United States should be following (because, we are already following these things). And then, suddenly, all of America—or all of the Christians in America—suddenly begin following these new Scriptures. Does that make any sort of sense to you? Certainly, if you are not very smart, you might think something like this could occur and that, all Christians could somehow be convinced of all this—but that would mean that you have never argued with a Christian about his faith before. Or witnessed a Protestant and a Catholic disagree about some of the tenets of their faiths. Christians cannot be fed some line of bull, and, then, suddenly, they are converted to some cult. Yes, of course, some people can be convinced. There are the Mormons; there are those of the Jones' cult; there are the JW's. Some phony set of Scriptures can be produced and a small

percentage of people—including Christians—can be peeled off and led astray. But all Christians? That is absurd! It is even more absurd to suggest that this happened to the Hebrew people.

Yet that is what is being taught by liberal theologians about the writings of Moses. They teach that Moses did not write these books and that they appeared hundreds of years later, as the work of many contributors (which contributors do not actually exist in any record of Israel's history).

Could new *traditions* have been foisted on the Jews? Could you foist a whole complex set of *traditions* suddenly upon the American people? Of course you couldn't! Neither could this have been done to the Hebrew people at some point in their culture.

I hope that you understand that, the liberal view of this—that Moses did not write these books—is not logical., The Hebrew people came from a very complex tradition involving the entire nation of Israel. You simply cannot foist that upon a national entity hundreds of years after the fact. What makes far more sense is, Moses spoke these words to the people, after God spoke the words to him. All of the Hebrew traditions and celebrations began simultaneously with the historical events that we are studying. At the same time, Moss was teaching the things that he heard from God. And, at the same time, Moses was writing of these books (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

The people of Jacob actually experienced these things. They heard Moses speak the Word of God to them; they later saw and heard the Scriptures which Moses wrote (they would be engraved on a set of rocks upon their taking the land of Canaan). And the generation of Hebrew people that we are studying actually experienced all of this firsthand (the generation of promise did; Gen X did not); and their sons and daughters experienced the same traditions in the next generation.

Moses has authority by the power of God. This hardheaded people recognize Moses' authority because of God's power and because of what they have all experienced. Nevertheless, even back then, about half of them resisted Moses; and about half of them accepted his authority.

This is taken from **Genesis 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Links to the JEPD Theory (also known as Documentary Hypothesis)

Description	Link
Basic one page description	http://imp.lss.wisc.edu/~rltroxel/Intro/hypoth.html
My coverage of this topic	Documentary Hypothesis (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)
More detailed approach; author favors this theory	http://www.cs.umd.edu/~mvz/bible/doc-hyp.pdf
A detailed analysis; seems to be a fair assessment	http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/09/24/the-documentary-hypothesis.aspx
What it is; and a strong criticism of this theory	http://www.gotquestions.org/documentary-hypothesis.html
Debunking the Documentary Hypothesis	http://creation.com/debunking-the-documentary-hypothesis
A Critical Assessment of the Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis	http://vintage.aomin.org/JEDP.html

Essentially, the JEPD theory does not believe that the authors of Scripture are who they had traditionally been believed to be; that much of the Old Testament is fabricated; and that the supernatural is a result of imaginative authors and those who wrote long after these books were assume to have been written. Essentially, this is a theory which rejected the orthodox understanding of the inspiration of Scriptures. However, it is found on many seminary campuses and often presented as the intellectual approach to the Word of God.

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The Abbreviated Doctrine of Documentary Hypothesis (the JEPD Theory)

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