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Structure of the Hexateuch

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By Albert J. Croft.

Less than a century ago it was the common belief even among scholars that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible. The word Pentateuch was applied to this set of books. It is incomparatively recent times that Joshua has been added and the word Hexateuch has been substituted for Pentateuch. The reason for this change is found in the results of modern biblical criticism. It has been discovered that these six books rather than the first five books of the Bible form a complete literary whole. Such a conclusion does not deny in any way the critical contention that all of the books of the Old Testament has undergone many revisions. In fact, it is evident at every step of the way that these books are the result of a complicated literary process, extending over a long period of time.

About the first suggestion that Joshua belongs with the pentateuch is found in the preface of Geddes Translation of the Bible in 1792. He says, "To the pentateuch I have joined the book of Joshua, both because I conceive it to be compiled by the same

author and because it is^a/necessary appendix to the history contained in the former books." DeWette in 1808 and Bleek in 1822 after long years of investigation and vacillation between theories decided that the evidence was sufficient to ~~want~~^{ref} the documentary hypothesis which had already been suggested by Geddes. Following in the foot-steps of these pioneers have been Schraeder, Hollenverg, Wellhausen, ~~Watke~~, Driver, Bennett and Adde~~s~~. Although differing in regard to details, all these men have in the main agreed that all the documents found in the Pentateuch are likewise found in Joshua, and that all the marks of unity which are found in the penteteuch are likewise evident in the book of Jushua. It is true that the penteteuch is traditionally associated with the name of Moses, and that the death of Moses seems to fittingly conclude the narration of his life and work. But the promises and hope of the early part of the penteteuch are yet unrealized. The land of Canaan had been promised time and again. The principal theme of the book of Joshua is the possession and settlement of Canaan. Thus Jos. complements the theme of the penteteuch and a unity is discovered

in the first six books of the Bible.

But the unity of which we speak is ^{not} one of authorship, for there are inconsistencies; contradictions, incoherences, obscurities and reduplications, as well as other differentiating characteristics which would preclude such a conclusion. This unity of characteristics would therefore seem a very proper theme for critical research and serves as a chord to bind together the various elements which go to make up the structure of the hexateuch.

We have already implied that the Hex. in its present form is the result of more than one author. Let us now make an examination of the evidence which would warrant such a conclusion.

Unnecessary repetitions and duplications.

Scores of illustrations might be cited but we must confine ourselves to the consideration of the more prominent ones. In Gen. I:21--25 the creation of beasts and birds is recorded. The same fact is repeated in 2:19. The creation of man is referred to in 1:27 and again in 2:7. We have the story of Abraham's departure from his native country told in 11:31 and also in 12:4. In another case we find the priestly historian giving two explanations to the name

Beersheba. In Gen. 21:31 the name is explained in the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech. In Gen. 26:33 an explanation is given concerning the very same treaty between Isaac and Abimelech. In both cases the wealth and power of the patriarch made his friendship a thing to be desired.

The duplications are often seen in the etymology of a word. For instance, Isaac means laughter. In Gen. 18:12 reference is made to the laugh of Sarah when she hears the promise made to Abraham by the divine visitors. In Gen. 21:6 the name is supposed to be derived from the laugh of Sarah when the child was born. And again in Gen. 17:17 the laugh of Abraham when he thinks he is too old to be the father of a child. In Ex. 3:13 ff Moses does not know the name of the God of his fathers, but the name of Jehovah comes to him as a special revelation. Ex. 6:3 ff says precisely the same thing. The story of Israel's murmuring and the giving of the quails is told in Ex. 16 and again in Nu. 14. In Jos. 12:1--6 and in 13:8--12 we find two distinct descriptions of the territory beyond the Jordan, and both of these references are separate from a detailed account which is given in 15:15--31. The method by which Caleb obtained his

portion of the land is narrated in Jos.14:6--15 and introduced again as for the first time in 15:13 and more fully described in 15:14--19. These are only a few illustrations of the useless repetitions and duplications of the Hex. To be sure the above does not mathematically prove that these books are the work of more than one hand, but they do create a problem the only solution of which is the documentary hypothesis of the Hex.

Contradictions and Inconsistencies.

According to the story of creation in Ex.I plants and animals were created first and man and woman was created last. In ch II man was created and then plants and animals and woman was created last. According to Ex.7:12--17 and 8:6, 16, 12 the flood lasted fifty-four days but according to 7:24 and 8:3 it lasted one hundred and fifty days. In Gen.17:17 and in 18:11 it is considered an unheard of miracle for Abraham, on account of his age, to beget Isaac but in 25:1--6 after Sarah's death he is married again and has several children. Contradictions often appear in the explanation of names. Issacher is supposed to have been connected with the hire of the love apple given by Leah to Rachael in 30:15--16. But in 30:18

it appears that Issacher is connected with the hire which God gave to Leah for giving her hand maid to her husband.

One of the most noted contradictions is found in the account of the tabernacle. In Ex.33:7 it is located outside the camp and is guarded by Joshua (v 11). But in Nu it is in the center of the encampment and is in charge of the Levites. In Ex 18 the committee appointed to aid Moses in the affairs of administration comes from a suggestion given by Jethro, his father-in-law. But in Deut.1:9--18 the proposal seems to come from Moses himself. In Nu.13:21 the spies go from the Southern wilderness to the North of Palistine. In the next verse they only go as far as Hebron in Judah. Again in Gen.35:19 Benjamin was born near Bethlehem. A few verses farther it is recorded that all of Jacobs children including Benjamin were born in Paddan-aram. Again in Gen.6:19 two animals of every kind go into the ark. In Gen.7:2 only the unclean go into the arch by pairs while the clean enter in by seven pairs. We also find in the story of Hagar when she leaves Abraham's household in Gen. 21, Ishmael is a child which she can carry on her shoulder (21:14 LXX). But according to chronology

he should be quite a man as his father is now over one hundred (17:17 and 24) as he was eighty-six at Ishmael's birth (16:16). Hundreds of similar illustrations could be gathered.

The want of continuity and order also argues against the traditional view. In Ex.19 Moses ascends and descends the mount to talk with God at least four times. Immediately following in Ch.20 Moses ascends the mountain once and in Ch.24 three times without any record of descent. Moses' pleading with God marks the close of Semitic legislation. And yet other records of the same legislation are found later Ch.27. Still another conclusion is found in 27:34. In Nu.7:1--9 we find that Israel prepared to leave Sinai immediately after the completion of the tabernacle. There seems to be little space left for all the legislation of Leviticus. In the Book of Jos. we find two characteristics but they are scarcely sufficient to build a conclusive argument. In one case it seems that the inhabitants of Canaan were completely destroyed and driven out by Israel. Another set of references make it appear that the conquest was gradual and by tribes and that the land was never completely conquered till the time of the Kings.

Differences in Style.

We have two accounts of the creation story. In the first we have the events taking place in a systematic and orderly way. The heavens and earth are made and finally the culmination is reached in the creation of man and woman. Everything is made out of nothing. God wills and the thing is done. In the second record all things belonging to the earth are created after man and last of all woman is created out of the rib of man. In this account God walks and talks as a man. The style is picturesque and dramatic while in the first record the style is rythmatical and artificial. In Ex.15:22 and 4:10--17 Moses is pictured as being an able leader but a poor orator. He secures Aaron to speak for him while in Deut. he appears to be the most fluent and eloquent speaker of the Bible.

These meaningless repetitions, duplications, contradictions, inconsistencies and the lack of continuity and order, together with differences in style form ample evidence to the open mind that the Hex. was compiled from a variety of sources. Some have suggested that Moses compiled Gen. and wrote the remainder of the Pent. But the evidence of compila-

tion is quite as evident in Ex., Levit., Nu. and Du. as in Gen.

Now what was the probable method of compilation. Three hypotheses have been offered. (1). Conglomeration, that fragments were handed down by oral and written tradition and that these were collected at a single time and put into something like a literary unit. (2). The second hypothesis is that there were a small original document and that this was enlarged upon and expanded at different times by succeeding generations. (3). The third hypothesis is that of stratification. This implies that different documents were written about the same event by different men at different times and that these documents were eventually collected and edited and later incorporated into the Hex. as we now have it. The majority of scholars agree that the third theory comes the nearest to the truth. It is quite probable, however, that each document before its incorporation was subject to revision by the redactor or by previous editors. Each stratum or document was undoubtedly the result of a gradual process; and that the whole was subject to a final revision. It also appears that there were certain fragments which did not belong to any of the original documents

but which crept in to the final compilation.

There are well defined reasons for accepting this last theory. According to their literary characteristics the documents seem to arrange themselves into few groups. And yet the characteristics are distinct in each group. A patch-work quilt is a good illustration of the blending of these documents. The quilt itself is arranged according to a systematic pattern. The various blocks of the quilt likewise have their own individual pattern. And by examination of each block we find that it is composed of pieces of different kinds of cloth and that these small pieces have individual characteristics. If these small pieces were put together they would form a complete pattern of their own.

This view of the Hex. can be supported by an examination of the several books. Du. differs from the rest of the Hex. It is highly spiritual and appeals to the emotions. In Ex. and Lev. and a large part of Nu. we find a series of religious and civil laws. We find ritualism developed to a high degree. The emphasis is placed upon ceremonial observance. Here may be found the distinct codes which differ in tone, spirit and detail in both civil and religious

legislation. The codes are known as (C C) Code of the Covenant, (D) Deuteronomic, (P) or Levitical or Priestly Code. Let us examine briefly some of the characteristics of these codes. In CC Ex.20:24--26, the altar is composed of earth and stone. While in P. Ex.27:1--8 the altar is of acacia wood overlaid with brass. The offerer was apparently himself the priest in CC Ex.20:24. In D. all priests and levites (Du.18:1) could offer the sacrifice. While in P. throughout Lev. the emphasis is placed upon the high priest.

Let us give another illustration of the differences of these codes. In CC we find three feasts, viz: unleaven^{ed} bread, harvest and ingathering. All of which are distinctively agricultural. In D. we again find three, but are different in their nature. The passover is a memorial of Israel's escape from Egypt. The last two in D. are agricultural-weeks and booths. In P. we have six holy seasons or feasts--passover, wave sheaf, weeks, trumpets, day of atonement and booths (Lv.23). In this list we have religious history and agriculture represented. Many illustrations of this kind might be saved but these are sufficient to show there are distinct differences in the various codes.

Let us now examine the relation of the code to the general narrative. We may begin with Gen. We find the mass of the book is composed of paragraphs, passages and chapters which use either the word Elohim or Jehovah as the word for God. As Jehovah is the word which is generally used in the O.T. and in as much as Jehovah was the word which was revealed to Moses as the name of God (Ex.3:15, 6:2--8.) it would appear that there must be some purpose in this irregular use of Elohim. Some have claimed that Elohim was used to represent a God of power and Jehovah a God of love. But this theory falls when we examine the facts. In the two narratives of creation and the two narratives dealing with Abraham and Sarah's deceit, E. is used in one and J. in the other. In fact the two names seem to be used interchangeably. On further examination it is revealed that each group has its own characteristics. J. is used consistent in style and character. E. is divided into two distinct groups. One group resembling J. and the other somewhat like P. P. reveals peculiar characteristics in style and vocabulary. In Gen.1 and 2 we often find repeated "After his (her or their) kind" (Gen. 6:20, 7:14, Lev.11:14--29). These words occur nine

times. "Be fruitful and multiply," is another favorite expression. (Gen.1:22--28, 8:17, 9:7, Lev.26:9). E² and P. are considered by many as having a common source. The similarity between E. & J. has led to the J.E.classification which mean that in the final form it is the combination of the J. and E. sources. The main arguments for the belief that the codes and documents have distinct characteristics is that in many cases when they are pieced together they form a consecutive story. An account of Abraham's life is found in the P. document, pieced together (Gen.11:22--32, 12:4--5, 13:6a--11b, 16:1 & 3, 15, 16, 17, 18:2, 29, 21:1a & 2b--5, 23, 25:7--11a.). This is a good illustration of the tenacity with which the redactors held to the original documents. All through the Hex. signs of these three sources may be found. P.D. & J.E.

It would now be proper to examine more in detail the characteristics of the different sources. Nothing like an exhaustive examination can be made in our brief space. But we hope to indicate the principal characteristics resulting from critical study. The characteristics of D. are easily recognized. It is distinct from all other sources. No careful observer could

fail to note its hortatory nature. God as a spirit (Du.4:12) pleads with man and man pleads with God. Love is the true expression of man's relation to God (16:5, 10:12). This element is so prominent that some have called Dt. the gospel of the Hex. Ceremony makes up a very small part of the book. The aim of Dt. is to establish the worship of one God. In Dt 6:4 he seeks to destroy the Heathen Gods, 7:25. Every Levite is a priest without distinction, 17:9, 18:1. The style of Dt. is smooth and flowing. He seems to enjoy the repetition of certain words and phrases. "Hear, O Israel", "Jehovah, Thy (or your) God," "That it may be well with thee," all of these phrases will be recognized as being in Deut. and scarcely nowhere else. Now criticism has revealed that Deut. is not composed entirely of D. but that traces of D is found in other parts of the Hex. There are passages in Deut. which seem to be rewritten by D. In other sources D. seems to have expanded his original sources. These, together with traces of D. elsewhere, has led to various opinions among critics.

It is generally believed that Deut. is the book which was found in the temple (2K.22) in the reign of Josiah. The reform of this king carries out the

spirit of Deut. The destruction of the high places (2K.23:8--9) and the establishment of only one place of worship, the destruction of all idolatrous images, stress laid upon the prophetic order, all are evidences in favor of the above position. Spiritual circumcision Deut.10:16, 30:6, is in accord with this idea. And yet certain ideas of Deut. is found in Isaiah. This would seem to aid the contention, that Deut. was written either in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah. If the date is the reign of Manasseh it was probably written by some priest in seclusion and highly colored by the religious ideas of the times based upon the law as he interpreted it. If this be true, it was probably hidden in the temple in hope that it would some time be discovered and put in force. Some claim that such an explanation would involve a moral difficulty. Others have held that it was a pious fraud to get the king to accept these laws. In either case the difficulties would disappear in the light of the times in which the thing was done.

We will now examine the general characteristics of P. 1. We discover a love for ceremonial law prominent in Lev., Ex. and Nu. Gen.2:2, Ex.16:21--30, prohibitions of eating blood. Gen.4, passover Ex.12:1--

20, Jos.5:10--12. 2. Fondness for statistical details. Exact length of lives of patriarchs, Gen.5, Age of the father at birth of first born, Gen.11:10--26, Exact detail of the ark, 6:14--17, details of tabernacle Ex.25:31--17. 3. Tendency to symmetry and similarity of phraseology in describing events Gen.1, repetition "God said", "God saw that it was good," "The eve and the morning of the first day." Gen.5 & 11 are like recurring formulas, except dates and names. Also in conclusion and introduction. Introductions: Gen.1:1, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1; Conclusions, 10:5, 20, 3; Ex.25:9, 50; Jos.13:3. The stories of P are but dry framework of dates and facts and details. His style is stiff and formal, poetry and feeling are conspicuously absent. A large portion of Gen.1--11 belong to P. and several short historical references in the latter part of the book. Without question Ex.24:15--18, 25:1--31:17 and possibly 35--40 can be ascribed to P. Also the whole of Lev. and the most of Nu. evidently belong to P. also several short historical references in the latter part of the book. It is also probable that Ex.24:15--18, 25:1--31 and possibly 35--40 can best be ascribed to P. Also the whole of Lev. and the most of Nu belong to the same. Deut. 4:41--43,

32:48--52, 34:1, 7--9 and 34:7 is usually ascribed to P. In Jos. it is somewhat more difficult to trace P. but traces are found in various places.

The date of P. could not have been later than Solomon's temple. The condition of religious worship in Jud. and Sam. would warrant such a conclusion. Others than priests could sacrifice I Sam.7:9, 10:8. The Levitical law is disregarded by Elijah and Elisha. Sacrifice and worship was not confined to one place as in the law of P. Then, too, by comparison of codes P. appears to be an elaboration of CC and D. The artificiality of the style of E. shows the author is conscious, that he is dealing with a dead past. There seems to be no historical event which would account for P. before the exile. The custom, and usage and laws established and codified by P. probably were put in order about this time.

We will now glance at the J.E. sources. When D. & P. is taken from the Hex. we have a somewhat complete and connected history of Israel from Creation to the settlement in Canaan. It covers practically the same ground as P. Some of the passages may be easily determined as belonging to J.E. by the name of God which is used. But other passages where the name

of God does not appear the source must be determined, for the most part, by literary characteristic. Now J. & E. are each composed of subdivisions. But a study of these subdivisions would require more time and space than is allowed to this discussion. But when all the passages which can be definitely ascribed to D, P, J. or E., there are still a number of passages whose sources are uncertain.

J.E. stands in marked contrast to P. There is movement and local color in their narratives. The life is real and natural. The stories never lose their individual interest. The author appears familiar with the scenes about which he writes. In E. God usually reveals himself by a voice or an angle, Gen.21:17. J. is anthropomorphic. E. makes God spiritual. In J, Jehovah indeed was the God of heaven and of earth but at times he had the form of a man walking and talking with men. Gen.3:8, 18:1, 28:13. Jacob mistook God for man and wrestled with him. In another case God went down to see the city and tower which man had built. E. has much to say about religious worship in connection with certain places. E. mentions the holy tent of meeting, Ex. 33:7-11. The above, together with many other distinctions

might be enumerated.

The fact that Amos and Hosea often refer to J.E. makes it quite certain that these sources originated before their time. But it is possible that the reference was simply a ~~to~~ oral tradition. E. disapproved of human sacrifice and yet God accepts such sacrifice. Gen.22. The reference to Abraham and Moses as prophets seem to limit the composition to the time when the profits were in the ascendancy. It is probable that J.E. was an oral tradition for many centuries before it came into its present form. This seems quite reasonable for if the sources were placed in the time of Jereboan II, it would make the story of Joseph nothing but fiction. As a matter of fact, the story is probably a legend handed down from generation to generation. Evidently J.E. was two distinct documents. It is quite likely that the distinction between them is due to the Jewish compositor who placed them in the form in which they were found by the editor of the present books. And yet it is possible they were blended together before they were used by the later editor.

Anything like a complete study of the evolution and development of these various sources is beyond

the purpose and limits of this paper. But we will make a general summary as to the probable method by which these well identified sources came to their present form. All literature begins with songs and poems. The experiences of the nation, the principal events of the tribe was treasured in the memory of the people in songs and ballads. The deliverance of the Red Sea was incorporated in the song of Moses, Ex. 15. The victory of Joshua over his enemies, Jos.10; 12--13 and the triumphs of Deborah and Barak (Jud.5) were handed down to posterity in folklore which was held as a great treasure. The story of war and heroic deeds found permanency likewise in the form of ballads. That old life was fierce and vicious, as is revealed in the song of Lamech, Gen.4:23, and the triumphant song of Sampton, Jud.15:16. Thus it is little wonder that one of the first books of Hebrew poetry was called "The Wars of Jehovah", Nu.21:14. Jehovah is pictured going before his people to battle and returning with them from victory. There is also the old book of Jashar which sang of Jehovah, (Jos.10:13) and David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan. These poems were undoubtedly a part of the early religious worship.

It was probably in the eighth or ninth centuries

B.C. when the first attempt was made to collect these early sources into anything like a connected history of Israel. The movement probably was started in the school of the prophets. There seems to be two distinct accounts of these ancient events (J & E), and sometime in about the seventh century B.C. these two documents seemed to be fused together with such cleverness that it is hard to separate one from the other. A little later a code of laws, regulations and customs were found in the temple at Jerusalem and believed to have been written by Moses. These were published by Josiah and put in force. This was known as D. Some little time later a historical setting was given to this law together with the settlement of Canaan and all forged into a whole which may be called J.E.D. This work was likely done by the same prophetic school at Jerusalem. Some time later during the time of the exile some priest or priests with a high church tendency drew up another set of laws distinctively priestly and ritualistic in their nature. And later still, under Ezra and Nehemiah, a new revision of the whole history and legislation took place. This revision gave expression to a hierarchical tendency. This was united with P. in the

third or fourth century B.C. and presents us with
the Hex. as we now have it.