



From Temple to Text: **Josiah, Reform, and the** **Making of the Hebrew Bible**





Review of Lesson one insights. Genesis 1-3:

Evolution by Devine Design Creation, The image of God Is Unity in the Masculine and Devine Order, and the Birth of Sacred Humanity.

When Truth Towers Collapse

Relearning Scripture After the Loss of Familiar Categories



- ✦ We build early belief structures to survive complexity.
- ✦ New information can destabilize those structures
- ✦ Collapse feels like loss, but creates room for clarity.
- ✦ Ancient texts must be read on their own terms.

Truth does not disappear when a structure falls. It waits to be rebuilt correctly.

ANE Parallels to the Genesis Serpent

✦ Epic of Gilgamesh • "A serpent smelled the fragrance of the plant. • The serpent came silently and carried off the plant. • As it turned away, it shed its skin. Serpent as agent of renewal and wisdom. No moral evil.	✦ Ancient Near Eastern Imagery • Serpent linked to wisdom, renewal, and life-force • Serpent linked to sacred trees and generative waters • Tree is source of life and knowledge Early cosmology associates divine feminine, sacred tree, and serpent directly with wisdom and life – <i>not evil</i>.
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CLASS TWO Complete Overview

The Formation of the Hebrew Bible

How Revelation Moves Through History, Culture, and Language

SECTION 1

How the Hebrew Bible Was Formed

Subtitle

From Reform to Redaction

Core Aim

To explain how the Hebrew Bible came into its written form before asking what it contains.

Teaching Flow

- *The Hebrew Bible was not written all at once*
- *It emerges through political crisis, exile, and reconstruction*
- *Writing scripture is an act of preservation under pressure*

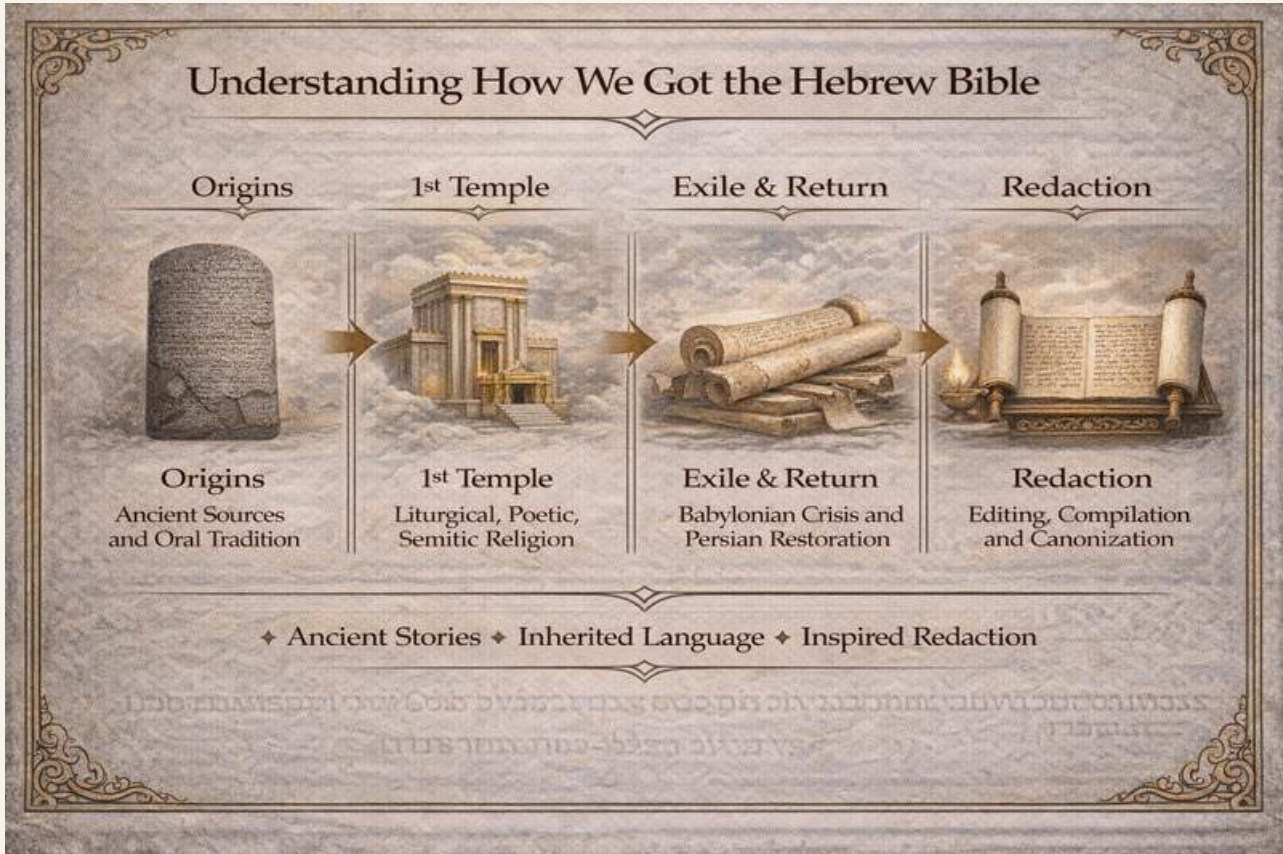
Historical Narrative (Chronological)

- *c. 640–609 BCE*
- *King Josiah's reforms*
 - *Centralization of worship in Jerusalem*
 - *Suppression of regional shrines*
 - *Promotion of Deuteronomic theology*
- *722 BCE*
- *Fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)*
- *586 BCE*
- *Destruction of Jerusalem*
- *Babylonian exile begins*
- *539 BCE*
- *Persian conquest of Babylon*
- *Late 6th–5th century BCE*
- *Return from exile*
- *Alphabetic Hebrew becomes dominant*
- *Traditions begin to be written, edited, and preserved*



Slide References

- From Twelve Tribes to Two Kingdoms
- Political Division Precedes Theological Reform



Political Division Precedes Theological Reform

Historical Framework

- ♦ United monarchy fractures after Solomon (c. 930 BCE)
- ♦ Tribal confederation becomes two political states
- ♦ Power relocates. Memory follows.

Historical Narrative (Chronological)

- ♦ c. 640–609 BCE
 - ♦ King Josiah's reforms
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 - ♦ Promotion of Deuteronomic theology

• Israel Finkelstein & Neil Asher Silberman,
• William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*

Primary Text Witness

- ♦ 1 Kings 12:19
"So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day."



The Bible Unearthed

Political division precedes theological reform.

From Twelve Tribes to Two Kingdoms

Historical Orientation (Short Overview for Students)

After the reign of Solomon, the Israelite tribal confederation fractured into two political kingdoms. This division was not theological at first. It was political, geographic, and economic. Only later did theology reorganize itself around these new centers of power. **Read: From Reform to Redaction**

Prompt:

Take note of what happens before major theological reform? What does that suggest about how belief develops?

3. Textual Witness Analysis

Primary Text:

1 Kings 12:19

"So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day."

Questions:

- Study 1 Kings and try and decide what does the text describe as the cause of division?
- Is the language theological or political?

4. Conceptual Insight

Power relocates. Memory follows.

Explain what this phrase means in your own words.

How might political control influence which religious memories are preserved?

5. Scholarly Sources:

- Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*
- William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* CT

Historical Framework

- **Northern Kingdom. Israel**
- **Southern Kingdom. Judah**

Key consequences:

- Israel retains older divine plurality longer
- Judah becomes the site of reform, centralization, and textual control

Sources:

- Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman. *The Bible Unearthed*
- William Dever. *Did God Have a Wife?*

Geography and Power

How might geography influence which voices control history, law, and memory?

SECTION II

How Do We Know the Text Was Edited or Reframed?

Subtitle

Memory Leaves Traces

Core Claim

Even when theology changes, language preserves older worlds.

Teaching Flow

- *Editors can reinterpret, but they cannot fully erase inherited language*
- *Contradictions, redundancies, and poetic residues reveal earlier beliefs*
- *Divine plurality, councils, maternal imagery, and chaos language persist*

SECTION III

The Source Traditions Behind the Hebrew Bible

Subtitle

God Teaches Through Inherited Language

This is where we pivot backward in time.

Israel's God Remembered as Divine Family

Textual Grammar and Archaeological Memory

Psalms 82:1 אלוהים בַּעֲדַת אֵל בְּקֶרֶב אֱלֹהִים שָׁבַט <i>Elohim</i> stands in the council of <i>El</i> in the midst of the <i>elohim</i> he renders judgment • El functions as the council authority • Elohim remains grammatically plural • Judgment occurs within a populated divine assembly	Deuteronomy 32:8–9 בְּהִילָּעֵלֹן נָחִים בְּפָרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם עָבַד גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים לִלְטָפוֹ בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים כְּלוֹנִיטַר בּוֹ אֱלֹהִים When <i>Elyon</i> apportioned the nations when he separated the children of humanity he fixed the boundaries of <u>the sons of God</u>	Kuntillet 'Ajrud  'Yahweh of Samaria and his <i>Asherah</i>' • The inscription preserves a lived memory of Yahweh worshipped alongside a divine consort • This reflects a divine family framework consistent with
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Hebrew grammar and archaeological memory preserve Israel's understanding of God within a

We examine how Israel's earliest scriptures maintain a memory of God understood within a divine family and council structure. Reading the Hebrew grammar of texts like Psalm 82 and Deuteronomy 32, we see El functioning as a presiding authority, Elohim is maintained as a plural category, and the sons of God participating in the governance of the nations. These linguistic patterns show the First Temple worldview where divine plurality and monolatry were still in use and not fully erased. Archaeological evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud confirms that this understanding was continued into the monotheistic recesses, and survived as part of lived religious practice, where Yahweh was remembered alongside a divine consort. Together, linguistic analysis of the text and artifacts show that Israel's theology developed within a family structured vision of the divine world, a vision that later reforms would reshape but never fully remove from the biblical record.

Readings:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/august-2010/joseph-smith-and-the-biblical-council-of-gods

We use this article to show Joseph Smith's teaching on creation occurred where a divine council and shows how that idea aligns with language already present in the Hebrew Bible. Drawing on Joseph Smith's sermons and revelations, the author explains that Smith understood God as presiding among other divine beings and never acting in isolation. In the King Follett discourse, Joseph Smith taught that "in the beginning, the head of the gods called a council of the gods, and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it." Rather than introducing a foreign doctrine, Smith believed he was restoring an ancient worldview in which God's creative and governing work was carried out in council form, a pattern reflected in later revelations that describe events occurring "in the midst of the council of the Eternal God and of all the holy ones."

The article then situates these teachings alongside biblical texts that preserve similar imagery, most notably Psalm 82, which declares that God "stands in the council of El" and "judges among the gods." Modern biblical scholarship increasingly recognizes these passages as remnants of an earlier Israelite understanding of divine assembly rather than poetic metaphor. The author argues that Joseph Smith's restoration reframes these texts as evidence of an older revelatory structure that was later flattened by monotheistic reform. Read together, Joseph Smith's teachings and the Hebrew Bible show that divine truth was once communicated through a shared family framework, preserved imperfectly in scripture and clarified through continuing revelation.

<https://scripturecentral.org/archive/books/book-chapter/ye-are-gods-psalm-82-and-john-10-witnesses-divine-nature-humankind>

Ye are Gods: Psalm 82 and John 10 Witnesses to the Divine Nature of Humankind. Read introduction to the sections Sôd/Council/Counsel. "The latter phenomenon, that of the council of the gods, goes under various names, and occasionally undergoes various metamorphoses, but one can easily discern it across the spectrum of adjacent cultures beneath its shifting titles. It is evident in the civilizations nearest to the authors of the biblical record. "The concept of the divine council, or the assembly of the gods," Mullen explains, the leading authority on the subject, "was a common religious motif in the cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan, Phoenicia, and Israel."⁶² We can easily see how this concept showed a uniformity across considerable distances of time and space. It is a clear feature, for example, of the relatively late Dead Sea Scrolls: He judges in the council of gods and men. In the heights of the heavens (is) his reproach and in all the foundations of the earth the judgments of his hand."

Oral Traditions by John Miles Foley shows us the use of oral traditions without a written language. "the oral singers tell us at least five things. First, memory in oral tradition is emphatically not a static retrieval mechanisms for data. Second, it is very often a kinetic, emergent, creative activity. Third, in many cases it is linked to performance, without which it has no meaning. Fourth, memory typically entails an oral/aural communication requiring an auditor and audience. Fifth, and as a consequence of the first four qualities, memory in oral tradition is phenomenologically distinct from "our memory."

<https://adrieltrott.com/2016/05/19/philosophy-and-monotheism-politics-and-democracy/>

Jan Assmann in The Price of Monotheism shows us the evolution of Council of Gods or Sons of God that shifts to becomes other man made gods: This shift that Jan Assmann calls the Mosaic distinction, due to it is in the writings of Moses that the charge to have no other gods is laid down, a charge that begins as a charge to claim Yahweh to the exclusion of the other gods and develops into the view that Yahweh alone is a god and none of the others are. It is a good deep dive into the evolution of the understanding of the scriptures concerning monotheism.



"You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me"
(Exodus 20:3)

לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים פָּנִין

עַל-פָּנַי
'al pānay
"In My Presence
Before My Face
In Relational Priority

*The commandment regulates loyalty within a divine hierarchy.
Other gods are assumed to exist within the shared category of elohim.
Yahweh alone stands unmatched and receives Israel's exclusive devotion.*

Early Israelite religion evolved organically from its West Semitic understanding, adopting and adapting the divine council motif. The key innovation of Israel was never that other gods exist, but the insistence on exclusive loyalty to Yahweh. Even the Ten Commandments don't deny other deities outright "You shall have no other gods before Me" implying other gods were known but forbidden to be worshipped above Yahweh. Cross's point is that the Hebrew Shema ("Yahweh our God, Yahweh alone") is about exclusive devotion, and not a philosophical oneness of the "blob" god. Thus, First Temple theology included a divine plurality under Yahweh's authority. Always emphasizing Yahweh is the God of this world.

Read Frank Moore Cross ppg. 45-56

https://urhistorien.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/frank_moore_cross_conversations_with_a_bible_scholar.pdf#:~:text=of%20other%20gods%20or%20divine,2

III.A

Law Before Sinai

The Code of Hammurabi

Purpose

To show line upon line revelation in ethical development.

Teaching Emphases

- *Lex talionis as restraint, not cruelty*
- *Protection of widows, orphans, and dependents*
- *Monetary compensation as moral advancement*
- *Shared legal grammar, refined theological purpose*

Slides Used

- *Lex Talionis as Legal Principle*
- *When Lex Talionis Becomes Compensation*
- *Protection of the Vulnerable as Legal Ideal*
- *God Teaches Through Inherited Language*

Ancient Codes of Divine Authority



The Code of Hammurabi

- ✦ Babylon, circa 1750 BCE
- ✦ Divine authority as basis for law
- ✦ Codified societal and legal norms



The Epic of Gilgamesh

- ✦ Sumerian legends collected circa 1800 BCE
- ✦ Heroic journey rooted in divine order
- ✦ Themes of kingship, mortality, and wisdom



The Enuma Elish

- ✦ Babylonian creation myth, 18th–12th century BCE
- ✦ Cosmogony based on divine kingship
- ✦ Gods organize chaos into order

From the beginning, divine authority shaped law, mythology, and memory in the ancient world.

As we have seen, early Israelite religion does not begin in monotheism. This realization challenges our traditional assumptions, but the linguistic and historical evidence consistently points to this truth. And God is in the details. Israel's earliest traditions start within a shared ancient Near Eastern understanding shaped by monolatrous hierarchy, divine councils, and relational loyalty. These features are embedded directly in the grammar, narrative structures, and legal language of the text itself. Because of this, early monolatry is nearly impossible to erase. Even as theology becomes more centralized over time, older frameworks continue to surface through inherited language, law, and story.

This raises an important question: if Israel preserves these earlier structures, where did they originate?

To answer this, we step briefly outside the biblical text, so as to better understand it within its historical environment. In the ancient Near East, revelation develops through existing legal systems, mythic narratives, and shared moral vocabularies. This is God's pattern (D&C 1:24).

The Code of Hammurabi illustrates the development of law toward restraint and justice. But is just one of many that did this. The Epic of Gilgamesh shows mortality, wisdom, and the loss of eternal life. The Enuma Elish presents early conceptions of creation, chaos, and how divine authority worked. Israel receives these traditions, reframes them, and redirects them toward covenant, moral responsibility, and a distinct understanding of God.

As you work through these materials, approach them as part of the shared linguistic and cultural world through which revealed truth was first communicated.



The Code of Hammurabi

Babylon, c. 1754 BCE

- One of the earliest written law codes in human history
- Inscribed in Akkadian using cuneiform script
- Public law meant to be seen, read, and enforced
- Uses case law structure: “If ... then ...”
- Teaches proportional justice (*eye for eye*)
- Includes monetary compensation and legal protections
- Influenced later Near Eastern legal traditions

Parallels later biblical law in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*

God teaches within existing legal worlds and then refines them.

Reading: <https://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/ham/index.htm>



God Teaches Through the World We Inhabit

Law, Language, and Line-upon-Line Revelation

“Behold, I am God and have spoken it;
these commandments are of me, and were given unto
my servants in their weakness,
after the manner of their language,
that they might come to understanding.”

Doctrine and Covenants 1:24

“Line upon line, precept upon precept.”

Doctrine and Covenants 98:12

Divine instruction unfolds through accommodation, patience, and progression.

God speaks to us according to our own language and level of understanding. Then God ushers us in the direction of that perfection that is God or Elohim. Lex talionis in the Hebrew Bible participates in an established Near Eastern legal tradition where proportionality, compensation, and protection of the vulnerable function together. But while the linguistic analysis of the biblical law shows that it inherits the form of Hammurabi it proves that it is reshaping its outcomes, expanding mercy, limiting violence, and increasing protections for dependents. Small steps towards what is right.

We can see how the text is brought over from the Lex Talionis in a very obvious re-creation

The Hebrew Bible does not absorb earlier legal texts wholesale, nor does it reproduce them verbatim. What we see instead is the use of a shared legal language operating within a common ancient moral world, which is then reshaped and redirected within Israel's covenantal framework.

The phrase lex talionis or "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" is a formula in the ancient Near East and is what is known as a legal limiter. It establishes proportional boundaries so that retaliation does not escalate beyond the original harm.

This principle appears clearly in the Code of Hammurabi. Bodily language is used rhetorically to define proportional justice, but in practice outcomes are determined by social status, monetary compensation, and restitution. When we turn to Exodus 21, the same legal grammar is used but modified. The repetition of body parts signals proportionality, and is not indicating a literal punishment. What is new is the direction the law takes: Israel's legal tradition increasingly moves toward financial compensation and medical restoration in place of physical retaliation.

So no need to ask whether Israel "copied" these laws, because of course they did. The more productive question is this: How does Israel receive a shared legal language and gradually transform it into a distinct theological ethic?

As Elder Neal A. Maxwell often taught, God works with us patiently, shaping our souls over time, teaching us as quickly as we are willing to learn and as slowly as we need to grow. Divine law reveals a God who teaches patiently, corrects gently, and leads humanity forward one faithful step at a time.

III.B

Flood, Mortality, and Human Limitation

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Purpose

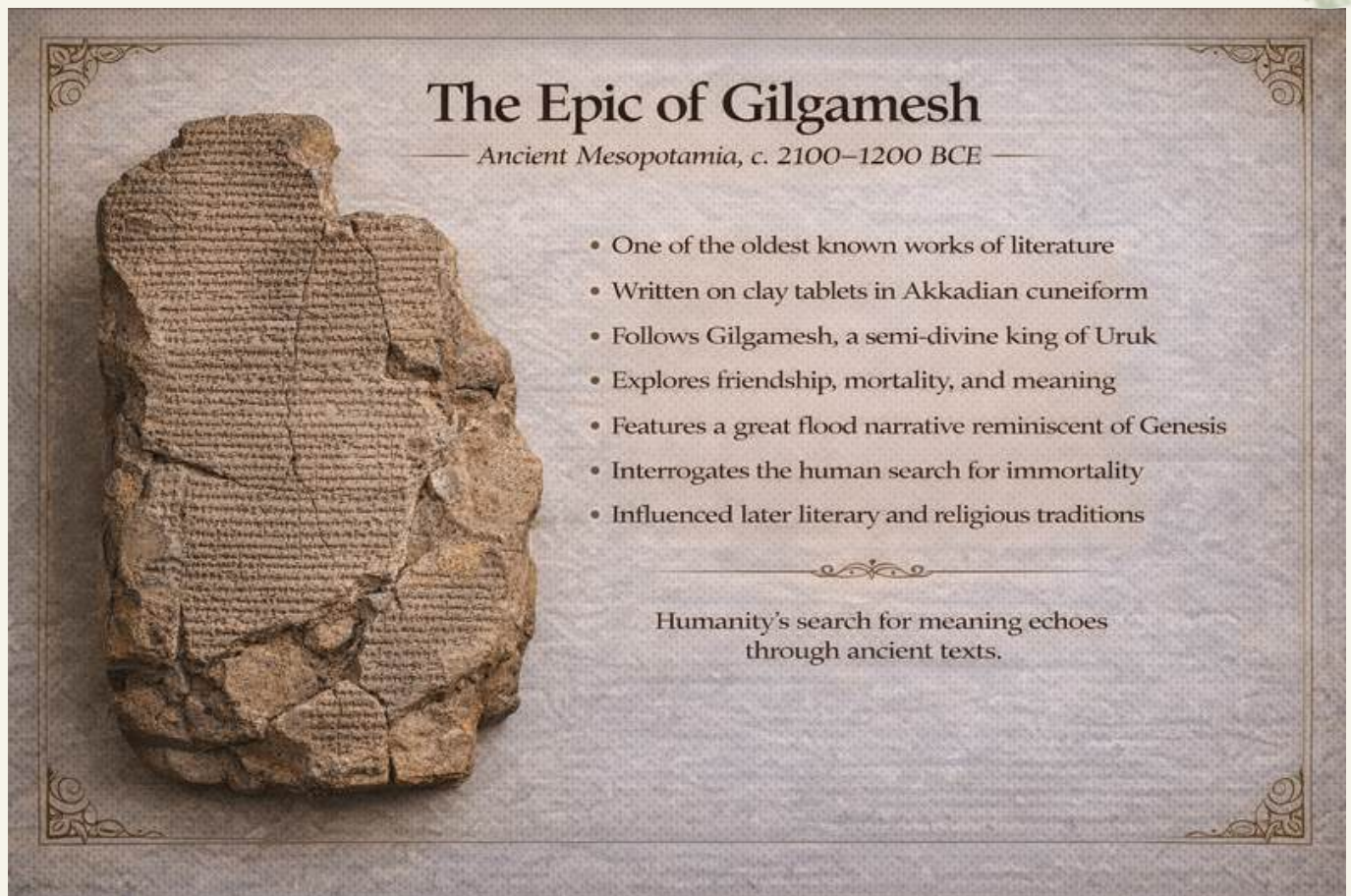
To show narrative inheritance before Israel exists.

Teaching Emphases

- *Flood tradition predates Hebrew scripture*
- *Long lives correlate with proximity to the divine*
- *Humanity grapples with mortality and meaning*
- *Noah stands within a much older story-world*

Slides Used

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh — Introductory Slide*
- *Gilgamesh and Genesis: Flood Parallels*



The Epic of Gilgamesh

— Ancient Mesopotamia, c. 2100–1200 BCE —

- One of the oldest known works of literature
- Written on clay tablets in Akkadian cuneiform
- Follows Gilgamesh, a semi-divine king of Uruk
- Explores friendship, mortality, and meaning
- Features a great flood narrative reminiscent of Genesis
- Interrogates the human search for immortality
- Influenced later literary and religious traditions

Humanity's search for meaning echoes
through ancient texts.

Reading: <https://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/gilgamesh.htm>

The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the oldest known works of literature, originating in ancient Mesopotamia between roughly 2100 and 1200 BCE. Preserved on clay tablets written in Akkadian cuneiform, the epic follows Gilgamesh, a semi-divine king, as he confronts themes of friendship, mortality, wisdom, and the human desire for eternal life.

Several elements of the epic closely parallel later biblical narratives. Long life is associated with proximity to the divine, a catastrophic flood reshapes humanity's future, and wisdom is gained through loss, pain and suffering. These themes appear in Genesis as theological reinterpretations revealed to them at their level of understanding.

The question we need to ask is how Israel reframed inherited narratives to teach covenantal responsibility, moral accountability, and relationship with God. The Epic of Gilgamesh helps us see that the Hebrew Bible participates in a much older storytelling tradition. A tradition that God uses as a vehicle for progressive revelation then and now.

The Epic of Gilgamesh and the Hebrew Bible

— Shared Language, Reframed Meaning —

Epic of Gilgamesh (Standard Akkadian Version)

— Standard Akkadian Version —

Flood Narrative • Tablet XI

"Six days and seven nights
the wind blew, flood and tempest overwhelmed the land.
When the seventh day arrived,
the flood and tempest grew quiet."

Humanity's Loss of Immortality

"Gilgamesh sat down and wept.
Tears ran down his face.
"For whom have I labored?"
For whom have I journeyed?"

Tree of Life Motif

"There is a plant like a thorn,
whose prickles are like a rose.
If you grasp it, you will have life again."
Later taken by a serpent.

Genesis

Flood Narrative Genesis 7:10, 8:2

After seven days,
the waters of the flood came upon the earth...
and the rain from heaven was restrained.

Humanity and Mortality Genesis 3:19

"For dust you are,
and to dust you shall return."

Tree and Serpent Genesis 3:22–24

"Lest he put forth his hand
and take also of the tree of life,
and eat, and live forever.

Shared narrative language expresses universal human questions while revealing distinct theological answers.

SECTION IV

Creation, Chaos, and the Divine Council

Subtitle

Life Emerges from the Deep

Teaching Emphases

- Creation begins in living waters, not inert matter
- Chaos is generative, not evil
- Divine plurality is assumed
- Order arises through conflict and balance

Slides Used

- Creation Begins in the Waters
- The Divine Wind Over the Deep
- Assigning Order to Time and Space

Enuma Elish

Babylonian Creation Epic, c. 12th century BCE



- Ancient Babylonian creation epic
- Written in Akkadian cuneiform
- Composed on seven clay tablets
- Describes the origins of the gods and the cosmos
- Begins with primordial waters and divine chaos
- Centers on the rise of Marduk as chief deity
- Establishes cosmic order through separation and structure

The Enuma Elish preserves the cosmological language of the ancient Near East.

The Enuma Elish is the Babylonian creation epic, composed in Akkadian cuneiform and preserved on seven clay tablets. It describes the origin of the gods and the cosmos, beginning with primordial waters and divine chaos. Creation unfolds through separation, structure, and the establishment of cosmic order, culminating in the elevation of Marduk as chief deity. These themes form the shared cosmological language of the ancient Near East. When Genesis opens with creation emerging from the deep and order being imposed upon the waters, it is entering an existing one and again reshaping it theologically.

Genesis reframes the same structure through speech, intentionality, and moral purpose. Chaos is no longer a rival to be defeated, but a medium through which God brings order. The Enuma Elish helps us see that the Hebrew Bible does not reject ancient cosmology. It inherits its structure and redirects its meaning, revealing how God teaches through familiar forms while transforming their purpose.

Reading: The Enuma Elish <https://sacred-texts.com/ane/enuma.htm>



What we call concordism is not the attempt to force modern science into ancient texts, but the recognition that the same truths are expressed through different languages across time. Ancient creation traditions taught that life was not created from nothing but organized from preexisting reality. In the Enuma Elish, creation occurs as the gods bring order to primordial chaos, symbolized by the waters.

Modern science expresses this same principle by teaching that matter is not destroyed but reorganized, and that life develops through ordered process. Hebrew scripture reflects this cosmology when it describes the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the deep and affirms that creation itself declares divine meaning and order (Psalm 19:1).

The New Testament extends this pattern through Christ, who grows into wisdom and understanding over time (Luke 2:52) and teaches by drawing attention to how life unfolds naturally within creation (Matthew 6:28). Across myth, scripture, and science, divine truth is revealed progressively, line upon line, through the structure of the world itself.

Creation Begins in the Waters

— God's Truth Moves in One Eternal Round —

Enuma Elish, Tablet I



Enuma Elish, Tablet I

*"When on high the heaven had not been named...
naught but primordial Apsu and Tiamat...
their waters commingling as a single body."*

Genesis 1:2



Genesis 1:2

*"Darkness was upon the face of the deep...
and the spirit of God moved upon
the face of the waters."*

Creation emerges from the Deities transformed into unformed
(Chaotic) waters in both traditions.



What we see here is not a direct copy and paste of the text, God modifies it through revelation. Shared linguistic and conceptual roots within the ancient Semitic world preserves an early creation grammar in which life begins in the waters similar to the adopted account in the Hebrew Bible but the waters are projected as a living, generative force. When Genesis 1:2 describes darkness upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moving upon the waters, it is operating within that same ancient framework.

When studying this text try and use the comparative Semitic methods shown in class. Compare how the text show how the Hebrew text maintains this older structure even as it reframes its theology. The Hebrew *tehom* corresponds conceptually to Tiamat, maintained as the primordial deep. Likewise, *ruah* functions as wind, breath, and spirit, echoing older Near Eastern understandings of divine animation.

What this reveals most clearly is the age of the First Temple tradition. We will dive into this more in class but pay attention to the preserved linguistic memories. The Hebrew Bible disciplines these memories, refines it, and reorients it toward covenantal language of the Elohim while retaining the inherited language through which creation itself was first understood.

The Divine Wind Over the Deep

Enuma Elish

*"He sent forth the wind...
her face he split."*

Enuma Elish, Tablet I

*"He sent forth the wind...
her face he split."*

Genesis 1:2

*"The Spirit of God moved upon
the face of the waters."*

- Akkadian *šāru* = wind
- Hebrew *ruah* = wind, breath, spirit

- Akkadian *šāru* = wind
- Hebrew *ruah* = wind, breath, spirit

Divine breath initiates creation.

Assigning Order to Time and Space

Enuma Elish, Tablet V

*"He established stations
for the great gods...
He fixed the year
and marked off the divisions."*

Genesis 1:14

*"Let there be lights...
for signs, and
for seasons, and
for days, and years."*

Creation includes time, rhythm,
and purpose.

SECTION V

The Divine Mother, Chaos, and the Serpent

Subtitle

Life, Power, and Transformation

Core Claim

What later theology recasts as “evil” originally functioned as life-bearing power.

Teaching Emphases

- *Tiamat as primordial mother*
- *Serpents originate from her, not against her*
- *Chaos produces both life and destruction*
- *The serpent is pre-moral, not satanic*

Slides Used

- *Serpents Born from the Primordial Mother*
- *The Dual Priesthoods of Creation*

This is where we intentionally destabilize the Lucifer assumption.

Humanity's Role in Creation	
Purpose: To show theological divergence within a shared cosmological framework.	
Enuma Elish, Tablet VI	Genesis 1:26
"I will create humankind... They shall bear the burden of the gods."	"Let us make man in our image... and let them have dominion."
Shared structure, transformed theology.	

God Teaches Through Inherited Language

- ❖ Shared cosmological grammar
- ❖ Different theological conclusions
- ❖ Revelation refines meaning
- ❖ Structure remains, purpose shifts

God speaks in familiar patterns
and redirects them toward higher truth.



The Dual Priesthoods of Creation

רוח אלוהים מרתחלת על פני המיים

"The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

- ❖ **ruah** Grammatically feminine noun
 - Semantic range includes wind, breath, spirit, animating force
- ❖ **merahepet** From the root *r-h-p*
 - Used elsewhere of birds brooding over their young
 - Conveys hovering, nurturing, protective motion
- ❖ **hammayim** Waters function as a generative medium, not inert matter
 - Parallels primordial waters in earlier Near Eastern cosmologies

The Hebrew creation account preserves an older cosmological grammar in which life emerges through living waters animated by a hovering, generative presence. While later monotheistic reform reshaped divine imagery, the linguistic structure itself could not be erased. Instead, earlier divine roles were transformed into elemental forces, preserving fund identity.



Serpents Born from the Primordial Mother

Enuma Elish — Tablet I

- ✦ Ummu-Hubur [Tiamat],
who formed all things,
made in addition weapons invincible;
she spawned monster-serpents,
sharp of tooth and merciless of fang.
- ✦ With poison instead of blood she filled
their bodies.
- ✦ Fierce monster-vipers she clothed with terror.
...She set up vipers and dragons.

Key observations:

- ✦ Serpents originate from the primordial mother,
not as rebels against her
- ✦ Serpents are embodiments of *chaotic vitality*,
not moral evil

Hebrew Bible Parallels

Primordial Serpent Imagery

- ✦ *Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan the twisting serpent,
the dragon that is in the sea.*
✦ Isaiah 27:1

Serpent within Sacred Space

- ✦ *Now the serpent was more subtle
than any beast of the field
which the Lord God had made.*
✦ Genesis 3:1

Key observation:

- ✦ The serpent is *created*, not *fallen*, and appears
within the divine garden, not outside it.

The serpent originates in the maternal deep as a *force of chaos and vitality*, later
reframed—but not erased—within Israel's scriptures.

In the Enuma Elish, serpents originate from the primordial mother, Tiamat. They are expressions of chaotic vitality and creative power, not moral evil. Serpent imagery in this original context is connected to life, the image of salvation and healing, and the untamed forces of the cosmos. When we turn to the Hebrew Bible, this imagery is not abandoned. Instead, it is repositioned. In Genesis 3, the serpent appears within the garden itself and is described as a representative being. It is not portrayed as fallen, demonic, or inherently evil. Instead, it operates within the sacred space and participates in the unfolding narrative of human choice as an image of salvation but also an agent of chaos. Holding its roots to the original narrative.

This continuity shows us that Israel preserved older cosmological symbols while reinterpreting their meaning through revelation. The serpent moves from a force of primordial chaos that bring vitality and new life to a narrative agent within a similar moral framework. The focus shifts away from divine conflict and toward human responsibility, wisdom, and consequence. The presence of serpent imagery across these traditions shows that biblical theology begins by reshaping inherited symbols into a new ethical and theological vision. How it does that and then how that evolves is what is most important to understand.

Dualism Before Scripture

Order and Chaos, Rock and Water



- ✦ Masculine and feminine principles exist globally
- ✦ Stability and fluidity form cosmic balance
- ✦ Dualism precedes Israel, Babylon, and Persia
- ✦ Cosmology and asterisms encode these truths

These patterns existed long before scripture gave them names.

Josiah and the Removal of the First Temple Tradition

– Reform Through Centralization and Suppression –

Before Josiah

First Temple World

- ✦ Divine Council Imagery
- ✦ Heavenly Family Language
- ✦ Multiple Divine Agents
- ✦ Local Shrines & Priesthoods
- ✦ Ritual and Oral Tradition



Josiah's Reforms

(c. 640–609 BCE)

- ✦ Worship Centralized in Jerusalem
- ✦ Regional Shrines Destroyed
- ✦ Deuteronomic Theology Promoted
- ✦ Exclusive YHWH Worship
- ✦ Scripture Over Temple Memory



The First Temple tradition was not destroyed. It was displaced.

Cyrus the Great and the Liberation of the Hebrews

— Return from Babylonian Captivity • Foundations for Rebuilding —

The Hebrews in Exile

- ✦ Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed
- ✦ Hebrew elite in Babylon (586–538 BCE)
- ✦ Loss of homeland and freedom
- ✦ Influence of Persian beliefs rising



Cyrus of Persia

- ✦ Conquered Babylon in 539 BCE
- ✦ Allowed Hebrews to return to Judah
- ✦ Mandated the rebuilding of the Temple
- ✦ Called the “anointed” (Isaiah 45:1)



By decree of Cyrus, the Hebrews returned to their land and to temple worship.

Reading: https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/04/05/three-persian-inscriptions-related-to-jewish-history/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The Hebrew Bible as a Conglomeration of Traditions



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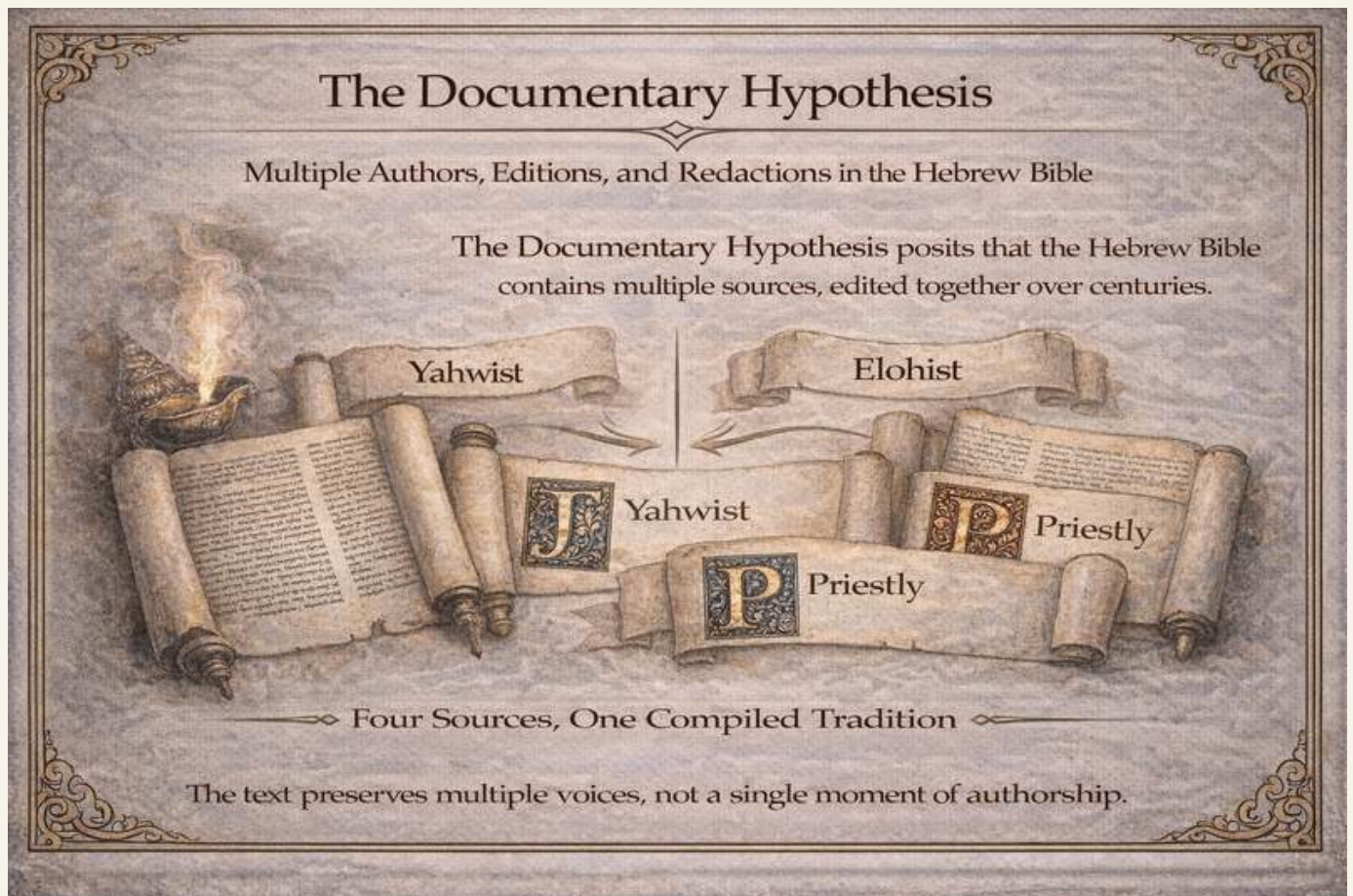
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The Hebrew Bible as a Conglomeration of Traditions



What impact does this have on my belief?
Where truth towers coming down?



The Hebrew Bible Instead, it is a carefully preserved collection of traditions, voices, and editorial layers brought together over centuries. Scholars refer to this process as the Documentary Hypothesis.

At its core, the Documentary Hypothesis observes that the biblical text shows consistent linguistic, stylistic, and theological differences that point to multiple sources. These sources were not erased or flattened by later editors. They were intentionally preserved, woven together into a single sacred text while retaining their distinct voices.

This approach does not argue that the Bible is fragmented or unreliable. Rather, it explains why the text sometimes speaks in multiple registers, uses different divine names, repeats stories with variation, or shifts theological emphasis. These features are not mistakes. They are evidence of a long process of transmission, reflection, and revelation within Israel's community.

As you work through this section, the goal is not to memorize labels, but to learn how to recognize patterns. By identifying these layers, we gain a clearer picture of how Israel understood God over time and how sacred tradition was faithfully preserved rather than rewritten into uniformity.

The result is not a diminished text, but a richer one. The Hebrew Bible speaks with many voices, yet tells a coherent story precisely because those voices were allowed to remain.

Reading: https://www.thetorah.com/article/documentary-hypothesis-the-revelation-of-yhwahs-name-continues-to-enlighten?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Redaction of Scripture in Genesis 1-3

First Temple Destruction		Final Redaction
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים בְּעֶדְם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ na'ašeh 'ādām beʔalmeinu <i>Let us make humankind in our image.</i> Genesis 1:26	→	יִבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּאִלְמוֹ wayyibra 'elōhīm 'et-hā 'ādām beʔalmō <i>And God created man in his image.</i> Genesis 1:27
וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחַשׁ אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אֵל-תֹּאכְלוּ wayyōmer hannāhāš 'el-hā 'iśšā ki 'tālūn <i>The serpent said to the woman, "When you (both) eat of it..."</i> Genesis 3:4-5	→	וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחַשׁ אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה כֹּן תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ wayyōmer hannāhāš 'el-hā 'iśšā ki 'tō'kāl mimrenu <i>"The serpent said to the woman, "When you eat of it..."</i> Genesis 3:4-5
וְהִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע wehīyitem ke'elōhīm yōde'ē tōb wārā' <i>You shall be like gods, knowing good</i> Genesis 3:5	→	וְהִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע wehīyitem ke'elōhīm yōde'ē tōb wārā' <i>You shall be like God, knowing good and evil.</i> Genesis 3:5

First Temple language was adjusted and reduced as scripture took its final form.

We can see how redaction functions within Genesis 1-3 very clearly. The redaction is not pushing a completely new creation theology and cosmology, but instead is a clear attempt at a careful shaping of inherited language into the scripture and traditional narrative that is familiar to us in its final form.

In Genesis 1:26, the phrase "Let us make humankind in our image" our first example preserves plural divine language consistent with an earlier council framework. you see how the language reflects an earlier divine council worldview. Like "Let us make humankind in our image." The Plural language. Shared divine action. A world where God is understood within a heavenly assembly creating humankind in the direct image of God as the masculine and feminine. But at the same time you can see how that language is narrowed in it's final form of the text. Incongruent with the modifications of the linguistics used "GOD created HUMANKIND in HIS image." Singular. Focused. More tightly framed. But leaving linguistic traces of vocabulary that either could not be changed due to grammatical inconsistencies that would follow or just idiomatic palimpsests that were over looked due to the cultural persecutions and colloquialisms of the time.

A corroborating pattern appears in Genesis 3. Helping us see how the linguistics provide our thesis to be studied throughout the course. Earlier layers retain plural address and broader divine categories, while later redaction refines grammatical forms and theological goals. So the thesis becomes: How does this work in continued scripture? Can I find linguistic patterns in my studies that corroborates this theory? Israel did not rewrite its past into this perfect uniformity. It was impossible to do so. So instead It preserved its memory faithfully, allowing multiple narrative streams to exist at the same time. Even when that memory came from an earlier theological world that had been rejected by their king. The destruction of the First Temple and the shaping of Israel's scriptures in exile and post-exilic contexts reveal importantly, the earlier language that could not or purposefully was not erased. It is preserved, revised, and carried forward.

This should be a guide for you. a central example and principle of biblical formation. Scripture was never flattened into a single voice. For whatever reason, it was shaped through careful preservation of earlier traditions alongside later theological framing. Allowing for an accurate historical linguist analysis to present a clear picture of the past. As we go throughout this course you will be able to start recognizing this process. It will allow you to see the contradictory text of the Old Testament, as a layered witness to Israel's understanding of God over time. Measurable in the diachronic study of language that results in a richer understanding of scripture, shaped by memory, revelation, and those faithful in creating an accurate transmission of the revelations of God in their time.

Palimpsest Redaction in Genesis 6:1–4

Surviving Early Theological Language Amid Later Framing

Genesis 6:2: “The sons of God (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים) saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves.”

Genesis 6:4: “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days.... when the sons of God went in to the daughters of A humankind.”

Immediately following: “The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth...”

Earlier Layer Preserved

- The phrase “sons of God” (*bene ha’elohim*) is a technical divine-council term. It appears elsewhere in:
 - Job 1–2
 - Job 38:7
 - Psalm 82
- In all cases, it refers to divine beings, not humans.
- The grammar is unambiguous and cannot be reinterpreted without breaking the language.

Later Framing Applied

- Immediately after the mythic episode, the narrative shifts tone.
- The divine council framework disappears.
- Moral causality is re-centered on human wickedness.
- The flood is framed as a response to human corruption, not divine transgression.

Redaction adjusts and reframes the text, but ancient language remains.

Here is another example that shows what redaction actually looks like on the page. So you can start diving in yourself.

Genesis 6:1–4 is one of the clearest places where we can see an older theological world preserved inside a later editorial frame.

At the top of the slide, notice the language that survives untouched. The phrase ‘sons of God’ in Hebrew, *bene ha’elohim*, is a technical term for the literal children of God who inherit the earth from the old council language of the age of the first temple down in Psalms 82. We see it elsewhere, it appears in the Hebrew Bible, such as Job 1–2, Job 38:7, and Psalm 82. Grammatically and contextually, it refers directly to the humans as children of God without breaking the language itself. Others without this belief concept have to account for it somehow? You cannot just ignore it. Why is it in this text if it was not part of their earlier belief system?

That tells us something really important. This has to be inherited theological language from an earlier worldview of the original prophets like Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Mariam etc. For them God was a relationship populated with Mother and Father at the head of Their children the divine assembly.

Now look at what happens immediately after this mythic episode. The narrative pivots sharply. The divine council disappears from view, and the text reframes the problem as the revealed human wickedness. The heart of the revelation is left intact where the Lord sees that humanity is corrupt, and the flood is introduced as a response to moral failure, not the act of a vengeful god. God allows them their free agency and does not stop the consequences of their actions to destroy them. But mercifully saves a remnant. That shift is not all bad but it's linguistically provable as redaction at work.

The editors did not remove the original revelation completely. Breadcrumbs in the form of the grammar was left behind. The linguistics show how the narrative is rewritten as the floods coming from God but they could not change the descriptive to imperative without a complete rewrite of the idiomatic expression everyone then knew by heart in the original oral tradition. Instead, they adjusted the framing around it. The earlier layer remains intact as linguistic breadcrumbs, while the theological emphasis is redirected.

The Older traditions remains visible beneath later interpretation. The text preserves memory even when theology changes. And that's the key takeaway here. Redaction in the Hebrew Bible is not erasure. It is restraint. The editors honor inherited language while guiding the reader toward a new theological conclusion.

This prepares us for what we're about to do next. Because once you can see how redaction works, you can begin to distinguish different voices within the text. That's where we turn next, as we start separating Priestly and Yahwist language and watching how each source shapes theology in its own distinct way.

Reading:

<https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/those-elusive-sons-god-genesis-61-4-revisited>

Priestly Creation: Order Through Speech

Genesis 1:1–5

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא הַיָּמִים וְאֶרֶץ הָאָרֶץ
וּבִאֲרָהָהּ הָיָה וּבִישֹׁרָהּ בִּירְעָנָהּ לִבְנֵי הַמָּךְ
עַל-פִּנֶּךְ עַל יָמוֹם וְרוֹם יָפוֹם עַל בֶּכֶךְ הַמַּיִם
וְרוּחַ אֲרָחִית עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם

Genesis 1:1–5

In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of Elohim was hovering over the waters.

And Elohim said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Elohim saw that the light was good; and Elohim separated the light from the darkness.

Linguistic Markers:

- ♦ Divine name: *ēlōhim*
- ♦ Repetitive formula
- ♦ No body parts
- ♦ No dialogue
- ♦ Cosmic scope

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי וַיְהִי-אֹרֶךְ

וּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ יִטְוֹבָה שָׁוֶה-ב-לֹא-רָ:

וּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֹרֶךְ בֵּין הָאֱמֶרֶךְ בֵּין הַשָּׁכֶךְ

וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב בִּקְרִי יוֹם אֶחָד:

Genesis 1:27

Creation occurs through ordered speech, not physical action.

Let's look at another example we have looked at before but this time let's try and focus in on who the redactor is. So Genesis 1:1-5 is one of the clearest textual examples that scholars call Priestly language, usually labeled P in the Documentary Hypothesis.

We see that it is not written like a story with characters moving around. But instead is written like liturgical proclamation. This is your biggest clue for a priestly account.

Notice first the divine name used throughout this passage. The text consistently uses Elohim. There is no personal name, no relational dialogue, and no bodily description. God does not walk, shape, touch, or breathe here. God only speaks.

That brings us to the most important marker on this slide: creation happens through speech. The word of God creates. A repeated formula "And Elohim said... and it was so... and Elohim saw that it was good" is theological structure indicative of our priestly editors. Speech that creates order. Language that separates light from darkness, day from night, chaos from structure.

Also notice what is absent. There are no body parts, no emotions, no conversations with other beings, and no local geography. The scope is cosmic. The concern is classification, boundaries, and stability.

This is not about how creation physically happened. It's about what creation means. The Priestly writers are teaching that the universe is ordered, intentional, and sustained by divine word and hand no commentary on the divine struggle needed for growth.

This becomes even clearer when we compare it to Genesis 2. In Genesis 1, God speaks and order appears. In Genesis 2, God forms, breathes, plants, and walks. That contrast is very intentional. It tells us we are hearing different theological voices preserved side by side.

So the takeaway here is simple but very important to understand what they preceded as priesthood:

Genesis 1 reflects a Priestly worldview where God governs the cosmos only through the authorized priestly and ordered speech, structure, and sacred time. It is theology expressed as liturgy.

And once you learn to see those markers, you can begin to distinguish Priestly language anywhere it appears in the text. But this is just the start.

Activity Instructions

Read the passages below. For each one, answer three questions:

1. What divine name is used?
2. Does God act through speech or physical action?
3. Is the focus cosmic/orderly or local/narrative?

Then decide whether the passage is likely **Priestly (P)** or **not Priestly**.

Passage Set A

1. Genesis 1:6–10

(Separation of waters)

Clues to notice:

- “And Elohim said...”
- Repeated separations
- No narrative characters
- Cosmic structure

Expected conclusion: **Priestly**

2. Genesis 1:14–19

(Creation of lights and sacred time)

Clues:

- Concern with days, seasons, years
- No mythic conflict
- Lights are functional, not divine beings

Expected conclusion: **Priestly**

3. Exodus 40:16–33

(Tabernacle completion)

Clues:

- Exact repetition of commands and fulfillment
- Formal, almost mechanical structure
- Focus on sacred space and order

Expected conclusion: **Priestly**

Passage Set B

4. Genesis 2:7 (God forms the human)

Clues:

- YHWH Elohim
- Physical action
- Intimate, embodied imagery

Expected conclusion: **Not Priestly (Yahwist)**

5. Genesis 18:1-8 (God visits Abraham)

Clues:

- Walking, eating
- Dialogue
- Local geography

Expected conclusion: **Not Priestly (Yahwist)**

Reflection Question (Key for your course)

What theological values seem most important to the Priestly writers based on the passages you identified?



Let's step back and look at the big picture of what we've been doing so far. Genesis 1 through 3 is not a single, flat story written in one sitting. It is a carefully preserved composition that brings together multiple linguistic and theological layers. Notice in the text, we begin with Genesis 1:1-2:4a. This section is widely recognized by scholars as Priestly. The language here is liturgical and cosmic. God is called Elohim (a big give away that it was written as Priestly). Creation happens through speech, repetition, and structured sequence. There is no physical interaction, no dialogue, and no local setting. The concern is order, boundaries, and sacred time.

Immediately after that, beginning in Genesis 2:4b through chapter 3, the language changes dramatically. This is where we encounter what scholars call the Yahwist tradition. The narrative becomes intimate and embodied. God forms, plants, breathes, walks, and speaks directly with humans (a big giveaway that it is written by Yahwhist). The divine name shifts to YHWH Elohim. The setting is not cosmic but now local, in a garden, a landscape, with relationships.

These two accounts are not blended into one. They are placed side by side on purpose to allow for the tension and disagreement. That is important to understand. Redaction during this time will not erase differences. It preserves it. Emphasizes it.

You'll also notice something subtle but important. While Genesis 1 is clearly Priestly and Genesis 2–3 is clearly Yahwist, there are conceptual residues that do not belong neatly to one source alone. Themes like moral awakening, knowledge, and responsibility echo concerns we later associate with the Elohist tradition, even if the Elohist source itself is not directly responsible for these chapters. But don't worry, we will dive into that later. Just have it on your radar.

Finally, there is evidence of later framing, particularly moral interpretation that becomes more pronounced in Deuteronomistic theology. Again, no need to focus on this. Just know it is there for now. These later voices do not rewrite the earlier stories. They interpret them. And your job is just to start noticing the patterns they hold.

So what is the takeaway?

The redactors preserved multiple voices. You should be able to see priestly pretty easily now. Genesis 1–3 speaks with more than one voice because Israel's memory of God was not singular or static. It developed over time, and the text faithfully preserves that development. Note keys try and identify the Yahwist language.



Yahwist Creation: God in the Garden

Genesis 2:7

וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָמָה
וַיָּבֶח בְּתִי בְּאֶפְיוֹ בְּאֶפְיוֹ חַיִּים נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים
הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

Genesis 2:7

Then YHWH *Ēlohim* formed the man
of dust from the ground and breathed
into his nostrils the breath of life,
and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

Then YHWH *Ēlohim* formed the man of dust from
the ground and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

God forms, breathes, walks, and speaks like a living being.

Linguistic Markers:

- ♦ Divine name: YHWH
- ♦ Anthropomorphic verbs
- ♦ Physical interaction
- ♦ Narrative flow
- ♦ Local geography

Applying What We've Learned: Identifying Yahwist Language

Now let's apply everything we've just learned and look closely at a Yahwist passage.

Up to this point, we have seen how Genesis 1 reflects Priestly language: structured, liturgical, and cosmic, with creation occurring through speech. Beginning in Genesis 2:4b, the text shifts dramatically. Genesis 2:7 is one of the clearest examples of what scholars identify as Yahwist language.

The first marker is the divine name. Here, the text consistently uses YHWH Elohim. This signals that we are no longer in a purely Priestly register. We are entering a narrative tradition that is relational and embodied.

Next, notice how God acts. Unlike Genesis 1, God does not create through speech alone. God forms the human from dust and breathes life into the man's nostrils. These are physical, tactile actions. The verbs themselves are anthropomorphic, portraying God as interacting directly with the material world.

The narrative style also changes. This passage flows like a story rather than a liturgy. Events unfold sequentially. God responds to conditions in the garden. The setting is no longer cosmic. It is local geography: a garden, a ground that can be worked, a human placed within a specific environment.

It is important to emphasize that this is not a contradiction of Genesis 1. It is a different theological voice. The Yahwist tradition is not focused on how the cosmos is ordered, but on how humans relate to God, to the land, and to one another.

Although the language is anthropomorphic, it is not primitive or careless. The imagery is intentional. The Yahwist writers teach that God is near, involved, and relational. God is not distant. God engages.

The key Yahwist indicators are therefore clear: the use of YHWH, physical verbs, narrative flow, embodied interaction, and a local setting.

This is why Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 feel so different. They are not meant to sound the same. Redaction does not flatten these traditions. It preserves them side by side so that both theological perspectives remain intact.

Workbook Exercise: Spotting Yahwist Language

Read each passage and answer the following questions:

1. What divine name is used?
2. Does God speak only, or does God act physically?
3. Is the setting cosmic or local?
4. Does the passage feel liturgical or narrative?

Circle the passages that display *Yahwist characteristics*.

Student Practice: Identifying Yahwist Language

Passage Set 1 (Very Clear, Intro-Level)

Genesis 2:8–9

“And YHWH Elohim planted a garden in Eden...

And YHWH Elohim made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food...”

Genesis 3:8

“And they heard the sound of YHWH Elohim walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze...”

Take notice:

- God walks
- Sensory imagery (sound)
- Time of day
- Intimate, relational setting

This is one of the clearest Yahwist passages in the Hebrew Bible.

Passage Set 2 (Still Clear, Slightly More Advanced)

Genesis 11:5

"And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built."

- Anthropomorphic movement ("came down")
- Narrative response to human action
- Relational judgment rather than cosmic decree

Exodus 3:7-8

"Then YHWH said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people... and I have come down to deliver them.'"

- Emotional language (seen, heard)
- God responds to human suffering
- Relational, covenantal concern
- Embodied divine presence

Genesis 1:14-18

Does this passage look more like Genesis 1 or Genesis 2? Why?

Your Task Going Forward

As we move forward, your goal is to practice **identifying Yahwist language** on your own. Look for touch. Look for movement. Look for relationship.
Look for God acting within space and time.

Once you can recognize these markers clearly, you will be able to identify Yahwist material anywhere it appears in the text.

Priestly vs. Yahwist

Diagnostic Chart

How to Identify Linguistic and Theological Layers in the Text

Priestly (P)		Yahwist (J)	
Primary Sections	Genesis 1:1-2:4a	Genesis 2:4b-3:24	
Divine Name	♦ <i>Elohim</i>	♦ YHWH (often YHWH <i>ēlohim</i> in Genesis)	
Literary Style	♦ Liturgical, formal, repetitive	♦ Narrative, fluid, story-driven	
Mode of Creation / Action	Creation <i>through "speech"</i> ♦ "And Elohim said..."	♦ Creation through <i>action</i> , YHWH formed, <i>planted</i> , <i>breathed</i> , walked...	
Key Verbs	♦ "God said," "God separated,"	♦ "God formed," "God planted," "God breathed," "God walked..."	
Anthropomorphism	♦ Absent	♦ Central	
Physical Interaction	♦ None	♦ Direct and tactile	
Dialogue	♦ Minimal or none	♦ Frequent	
Setting		♦ Local, geographic (garden, land)	
Concern / Emphasis	♦ Order, boundaries, sacred time, classification	♦ Relationship, responsibility, moral choice	
Structure	♦ Highly ordered, symmetrical	♦ Sequential, responsive	
Humanity's Role	♦ Humanity as part of cosmic order	♦ Humanity in relationship with God and land	
Tone	♦ Declarative, authoritative	♦ Intimate, relational	

When examining a passage, ask:
Which markers align most strongly in one column?



Which 1 divine name is used?



Does God create by 'speaking' or by acting physically?



Is the setting cosmic or local?



Is the passage structured like a ritual or like a story?



Are there bodily actions, emotions, or dialogue?

Next Class:

The Divine Feminine and the Role of the Mother
in Ancient Source Texts, Hebrew Incorporation, and Removal
from the Scriptural Record



Next week, we will examine the symbolism and eventual
suppression of the Mother in the Hebrew Bible.