

1. The Primeval History

i. Genesis 1-10 according to the Documentary Hypothesis

	“P” Source	“J” Source
Cosmogony and Anthropogony	1:1-2:4a – Story of Creation in six days	
		2:4b-3:24 – Story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
		4:1-16 – Story of Cain and Abel
The Lines of the First Humans		4:17-26 – Genealogy, from Cain to Lamech + Birth-notice of Seth from Adam
	5:1-32 – Genealogy, from Seth to Lamech + birth of Noah from Lamech	
The Flood, its Causes, and its Effects		6:1-4 – Story of the “sons of God” and daughters of men
	6:5-9:29 – Story of the Flood and the survival of Noah and his sons	
Geographical Spread and Diversification of Humankind	10:1-32 – Genealogy, from Noah’s sons (Shem, Ham, Japheth) to the nations born from them	
		11:1-9 – Story of the Tower of Babel
The Lines Leading to Abraham	11:10-32 – Genealogies, from Shem to Abraham	

Torah, Pentateuch – Terms to refer to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). “Torah” is the Hebrew term, used in the context of the Jewish biblical canon (i.e., the “T” of the acronym TaNaKh), whereas “Pentateuch” is the Greek term, which originated in the context of Christian biblical canons. Today, both terms are used by biblical scholars. Since the term “Torah” also has other meanings, I will primarily use the term “Pentateuch” in this course to refer to the first five biblical books.

Redaction – A technical term for the process of editing that shaped biblical and other sources; this term is used especially in the sense of the interweaving and reworking of different sources (written or oral) in ancient literature

Source-criticism – Modern, scholarly approaches to biblical literature that are oriented towards recovering the sources behind the present form of the text. This approach is often critiqued by scholars who adopt more literary approaches, for its atomization of the text (i.e., the focus on individual passages and lines in isolation from one another and from the whole) and for a lack of attention to the literary structures, narrative progression, and making of meanings of the text in its final form, as a redacted whole created out of composite artistry.

Documentary Hypothesis – A modern, source-critical theory about the sources for the Pentateuch: “J” (Yahwist), “P” (Priestly), “E” (Elohist), “D” (Deuteronomist); for a handy and brief summary see <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rs/2/Judaism/jepd.html>

“J” – The “Yahwist”; one of the hypothetical sources of the Pentateuch according to the Documentary Hypothesis, dated around the 10th century BCE and distinguished by its use of Tetragrammaton (YHWH) as name for God as well as its folkloristic character and anthropomorphic descriptions of the divine.

“P” – The Priestly source; one of the hypothetical sources of the Pentateuch according to the Documentary Hypothesis, characterized by its use of *Elohim* [Hebrew for “God”] as a name for God (i.e., up until the story of the revelation of the name YHWH in Exodus 3), its interest in genealogies, lists, hierarchies, and cultic themes. As for its date, it is clear that this source comes from centuries later than “J” and that it reflects one of the final phases in the redaction of the Pentateuch. Scholars debate the exact date, and some place it very late, even after the Babylonian Exile (586 BCE); this source is possibly the product of a priestly school, rather than a single author, and thus reflects a long history, from monarchic to post-exilic.

iii. Literary Structures & Narrative Progression in the Redacted Form of Genesis 1-10

Main Figures	Aetiological Information	Humankind and God
<i>1:1, In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...</i>		
	<p>The cosmogonic week (1:1-2:4a)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Separation of light from darkness 2. Separation of waters above from waters below; creation of firmament 3. Separation of water (sea) from land (earth); creation of plant-life 4. Creation of celestial lights: sun, moon, stars 5. Creation of birds (creatures of the air) and fishes (creatures of the waters) 6. Creation of animals (creatures of the land) and humankind as steward for Creation 7. Day of rest = sanctified as first Sabbath 	
<i>2:4, These are the generations [toledot] of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens...</i>		
2:4b-3:24, Adam and Eve	Marriage; serpent crawling on its belly; women's antipathy to serpents; women's pain in childbirth; women's subordinate position to men in social hierarchy; men's need for difficult labor to grow food from the earth; clothing	The first act of human disobedience to God: Eve and Adam eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden; moreover, both are punished (see left), and <i>ground is cursed</i>
4:1-16, Cain and Abel, first two sons of Adam and Eve	Cain = first farmer Abel = first shepherd	The first murder: Abel killed by Cain; <i>Cain cursed and banished from the ground</i> that opened its mouth to receive Abel's blood; he is fated to wander
4:17-24, Progeny of Cain	Cain's progeny invent cities, tents, animal husbandry, music, metalworking	
4:25-26, Birth of Seth, third son of Adam		
<i>5:1, This is the book of the generations [toledot] of Adam/man/humankind. When God created Adam/man/humankind, he made him in the likeness of God. 5:2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Adam/man/humankind when they were created.</i>		
5:1-32 - Line of Adam, through Seth, leading to Noah		
		6:1-4, "Sons of God" mate with daughters of men; disruption of boundaries between heaven and earth embodied by hybrid "Giants"
		6:1-5, Wickedness multiplies such that God is sorry that he created humankind; only Noah finds favor in God's eyes.

Main Figures	Aetiological Information	Humankind and God
6:9, <i>These are the generations [toledot] of Noah....</i>		
6:9-11, Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth		
		6:11-9:29 – The Flood destroys the earth, only the righteous Noah and his family saved.
10:1, <i>These are the generations [toledot] of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth ...</i>		
10:1-32, Sons of Noah and their descendants (i.e., “Table of Nations”)		
		11:1-9, Tower of Babel, disruption of boundaries between heaven and earth (on human initiative; cf. “Sons of God”) resolved through God’s scattering of humankind
11:10, <i>These are the descendants [toledot] of Shem. When Shem was a hundred years old, he became the father of Arpach'shad two years after the Flood...</i>		
11:10-32, Descendants of Shem leading to Abram/Abraham		

Aetiology (also spelled “Etiology”) – Story explaining how something came to be.

Anthropogony – Story about the creation of humankind.

Hexaemeron – The six days of Creation.

Cosmogony – Story about the creation of the cosmos.

Toledot – Hebrew word meaning “generations” or “descendants.”