

Source Essay (750 + words)

This week, we learned about the Documentary hypothesis, which posits that all the books from Genesis through Deuteronomy were written by a minimum of four authors and were woven together by a series of redactors or editors. **Using Friedman's *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, which is on 2-hour reserve in the library (I suggest you make copies from the part you need)**, examine one of the following passages, each of which has selections which Friedman believes were written by **at least three authors** (Note: Because Leviticus and Deuteronomy were written chiefly by either the Priestly or the Deuteronomist author, examining them would be less interesting.)

- Genesis: 12:2-3; 15 (esp 15:9); 17:1-22; 22:15-18. These four passages each tell a different version of God's covenant with Abraham.
- Genesis 20-23. This selection covers God's commands to Abraham about the well-being of his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.
- Genesis 41-47. This section tells of Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph's triumph over his older brothers, a death outside the homeland, and a chronicle of Canaanites living in Egypt—the "bridge" between the peaceful coexistence narrative and the military conquest narrative that give competing stories of the settling of Jews in Israel.
- Exodus 6-9. This passage relates God's struggle with the Pharaoh of Egypt to free the Hebrew people from slavery.
- Exodus 15- 20. This selection includes the part of the bible up to and including the recitation of the ten commandments.
- Numbers 13-16. This passage relates God's commands to Moses and his people during his forty years wandering in the wilderness.

Begin with what we already know about the four authors and the redactor (see our Harris text for more information on J, E, and P). Think about when they were writing, the audiences they addressed, and their overall concerns or tendencies.

Now look at the different authors for the passage you chose (above), making a note of certain themes or tendencies. Without understanding Hebrew, can we make generalizations about the concerns of each writer? (For example, we know that J and E use different place names and that P is interested in the hereditary role of the priest). How would the passages change if unwoven? What are the implications of what you've learned for those who try to interpret these passages?

Be specific: Use actual quotes from the passages. Your goal should be to show 1) what insights you get from each source and how they relate to what we already know about each author from our textbook 2) how the passages are woven together 3) the implications of what you've learned for those trying to interpret these passages.

Organization: You can organize your essay in at least two ways.

1. By theme. In each of these passages, God interacts with a single major character. What concerns are included in this passage, and how does each author handle them differently?
2. By source. You could break down the material according to the kinds of information supplied by each author (begin with the earliest, and end with the redactors, if you discuss them).

I will grade your paper on these factors:

1. The quality of your observations as they relate to what we've learned about the authors
2. The organization of your essay
3. Your use of specific, interesting examples to support your argument
4. Your mechanics, grammar, and clear citation of passages

Note: you should stick close to the text itself. Avoid reading this passage or story in terms of the New Testament or according to received church Doctrine.