

Exodus 19–20

Literary Seams in Exodus: Multiple Authors

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. ¹⁹ As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. ²⁰ When the LORD descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

ELOHIST
922-722 BCE
Scribes of the
Northern Kingdom
of Israel
They use Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)—
literally “the gods,”
but usually translated “God”

YAHWIST
1000-700 BCE
Scribes of the
United, then the
Southern, Kingdom
of Judah
They use Yahweh (יהוה),
translated “LORD”
in most Bibles

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The Documentary Hypothesis: The hypothesis that the duplicated stories, repetitions and contradictions in the Torah exist because the Torah was compiled from four documents or sources:

- **The Yahwist (J) source** 1000-700 BCE, South
- **The Elohist (E) source** 922-722 BCE, North
- **The Deuteronomist (D) source** 622, Reunited country
- **The Priestly (P) source** 400s, after the return
from Babylonian Exile

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Other Versions of the Ten Commandments

J	E	D	P
Exod 20:4-5 34:10-28	Exod 20:1-3, 6-14	Deut 5:6-18 [6-21]	Lev 19:1-18
<i>Grounded in acts of divine conquest</i>	<i>Grounded in escape from Egypt</i>	<i>Grounded in disobedience</i>	<i>Grounded in holiness</i>
<i>More ritual emphasis</i>			<i>More concern for social justice</i>
<i>Danger of making covenants with surrounding pagans</i>	<i>In class, we listed the various themes of each “source” to help differentiate them across their writings</i>		
