



THE LEGENDS OF GENESIS

HERMANN GUNKEL

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THE BIBLICAL SAGA AND HISTORY

BY
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P's religious criticism of mixed marriages also, especially those with Canaanitish women, whereby the blessing of Abraham was forfeited (xxviii. 1-9) connect with the same time, when the Jews, living in the Dispersion, had no more zealous desire than to keep their blood and their religion pure.

Much more characteristic than these evidences taken from Genesis are the others derived from the legal sections of the following books. Finally there is to be added to all these arguments the late origin of the style of P¹. And in accordance with this the fixing of the date of P as coming from the time of the exile is one of the surest results of criticism.

We need not attempt to determine here in just what century P wrote; but this much may be said, that the Law-book of Ezra, in the opinion of many scholars, upon which the congregation took the oath in 444, and in the composition of which Ezra was in some way involved, was P. Hence we may place the composition of the book in the period from 500 to 444. P, too, was not completed all at once, though this is hardly a matter of importance so far as Genesis goes.

THE FINAL REDACTOR.

The final redactor, who combined the older work of JE and P, and designated as R^{JEP}, probably belongs, therefore, to the time after Ezra, and surely before the time of the separation of the Samaritan congregation, which carried the complete Pentateuch along with it--though we are unable, indeed, to give the exact date of this event. The fact that such a combination of the older and the later collections was necessary shows us that the old legends had been planted too deep in the popular heart to be supplanted by the new spirit.

Great historical storms had in the meantime desecrated the old sacred places; the whole past seemed to the men of the new time to be sinful. And yet the old legends which glorified these places and which gave such a naive reflexion of the olden time, could not be destroyed. The attempt of P to

¹ Wellhausen, *Prologomena*, p. 393, ff. Ryssel, *De elohista pentateuchici sermone*, 1878. Giesebrecht, *ZAW*, 1881, p. 177 ff. Driver, *Journal of Philology*, 1882, p. 201 ff.

