

the J and the E and show that the characteristics are there.

2) *This consensus shows not the truth of the hypothesis but its most defensible form.*

The consensus is not perfect and never was. That was our first point. Our second point is a little more complex than this one, but is worth noting: our contention is that this consensus shows not the truth of the hypothesis but its most defensible form. This is a somewhat complex argument, but I think it is worth noting.

They started on the basis that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are distinct documents. Starting on that basis, or with the obvious facts that two different names of God were used, then going through it and trying to arrange it according to the names of God, you have the original law, the Elohim document going all through. Thus, they claimed to find a separate document, the E document. Then the second Elohist – a document that had a style now said to be more like J than like the former Elohist (later called P) even though for fifty years nearly all the critical scholars considered that it was part of the P document.

Given this starting point, what arrangement can you make? You take a certain verse and you say, “This verse has the name Jehovah in it, therefore it must be part of the J document.” On the other hand, you say if you take this verse out of the passage, which is a P passage, it just does not make sense. Now what are you going to do? Are you going to take it out and have the passage make no sense? Or are you going to say that the word Jehovah was put in by a redactor? It is easy to see that you will have a consensus soon that the word Jehovah was put in by a redactor. There may be some discussion about it for awhile, but what has been done by hundreds of men, spending hundreds of hours, and working over every word of the Pentateuch, has been to determine the most defensible form of the theory. It is not that this is necessarily correct, but it is the attempt to construct something along these lines and they have probably constructed the best arrangement that can be worked out, and yet we have found that it is far from perfect. Very far from perfect. So the consensus shows,