Hermann Gunkel, The Legends of Genesis, Schocken Books, New York 1964
(Translated by W. H. Carruth) (First published in 1901)

Pages 15-16   MONOTHEISM HOSTILE TO MYTHS

" * * * . The fundamental trait of the religion of Jahveh is unfavorable to myths.
For this religion from its very beginning tends toward monotheism. But for a story of
the gods at least two gods are essential. Therefore the Israel which we observe in the
Old Testament could not tolerate genuine and unmodified myths, at least not in prose.
The poet was excused for occasional allusions to myths. Hence in poetry we find
preserved traces of a point of view older than that of the tradition of Genesis, one
frankly familiar with myths. But the primitive legends preserved to us are all
dominated by this unspoken aversion to mythology."

Pages 23-24   ANTIQUITY OF THE LEGENDS

"These legends have not hitherto received full justice, even when it has been
recognised that they are legends. Even the most superficial reader can distinguish for
himself the chief original sources in Genesis from which the present redaction was
constructed, now commonly called the writings of the Elohist, of the Jahvist, and of the
Priestly Code. Since the sources of the Elohist and the Jahvist were written down in
the ninth or eighth century B.C., some commentators have been disposed to think that the
legends themselves originated in the main in the age of the Israelitish kingdom and
furnished therefore no revelations of primitive history. But in reality these legends
are much older. The tribal and race names which they preserve are almost all forgotten
in other records: we know nothing of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, of Abel and Cain, or Esau
and Jacob, nothing of Hagar and scarcely anything of Ishmael, from the historical
records of Israel. Hence we must conclude that these races all belong to prehistoric
times. This is particularly evident in the case of Jacob and Esau, who were, to be
sure, identified later with Israel and Edom. But this very lapping of names, as well as