

life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us.' Reuben replied: 'Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now, we must give accounting for his blood.'" Notice this dialogue implies: (1) that the brothers had done Joseph some great wrong; (2) that Joseph had pleaded with them not to do it; and (3) Reuben was in some sense not as involved in what happened. Does not this imply the traditional interpretation? On the other hand if we have to distinguish between E and J accounts, we have here, in a passage which is supposedly E, a passage which seems to presuppose the scenario found in J.

Much has been made of Joseph's remark to the chief cupbearer "I was forcibly carried off [kidnapped] from the land of the Hebrews" (Gen 40:15), which as an E passage presupposes the E scenario, viz. that the Midianites came along, discovered Joseph in the pit and pulled him out and took him down to Egypt. However, it seems to me that this interpretation of Gen 40:15 is callously insensitive to the psychological reality of Joseph's situation: could we really expect Joseph, deeply traumatized by what his brothers had done to him to blurt out to a comparative stranger and foreigner the real truth about what had happened in his family? Would we not expect Joseph to resort to some vague euphemistic reference to cover what had happened? I think this is precisely what Joseph can be expected to have done in such circumstances. To return now to the main argument of this paper: (1) In approaching the question "Who sold Joseph into Egypt?" I first of all sketched the Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir to Lowenthal reconstruction of the scene, then the higher critical dissection of the passage into J and E accounts. Both the Lowenthal and the E scenarios assumed that the Midianites came by as interlopers. In Lowenthal's account (which respects the unity of the story) the Midianites sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites. In the higher critical reconstruction, E has the Midianites discovering Joseph and taking him as a slave to Egypt, while J has the brothers selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt. It is also supposed here that E features Reuben while J features Judah, and that E refers to "Jacob," while J refers to "Israel."

(2) An examination of the macrostructure of Joseph reveals that it is above all, a story of divine providence, but that it is embedded in the *toledôt ya'aqob* whose overall macrostructure emphasizes the preeminence of Judah and Joseph as individuals and as clans. In regard to the latter, we noted that this encourages us to regard the Joseph story as the story of the three J's: Jacob, Joseph, and Judah. A sub-plot of the Joseph story (but very important in the macrostructure of the *toledôt ya'aqob*) is the waning of Reuben's influence and the waxing of Judah's. From this point of view both the Reuben passages (E) and the Judah passages (J) are demanded by the overall structure -- which exhaustively explains their presence without resort to source criticism.

(3) In examining the recursive constituent structure of this story we identified various episodes which contain embedded narratives (sub-narratives), then took note of the thrust and function of chap. 37 as inciting incident. This, in turn, prepared us to accept certain other-than routine features in the chapter.

(4) The conventions of participant reference of Biblical Hebrew, as