52 It was YHWH or God, who created all life-forms in the first place. Gen 1:11–27 [P]; Gen 2:6–23 [J].

53 Both the CC and Genesis 22 probably were included in Eastern or Northern tradition, collected and written down between 950 and 850 BCE. In that tradition, the Genesis 22 story may have functioned as case law (or common law), construing the sacrificial ordinance set out in Exod 22:29–30.

54 See part V of this article.

55 Compare Deut 17:1, to the same effect.


57 See also Num 18:14–19; compare Exod 22:29b–30.

58 See also Num 3:41a, 45a; 18:6.

59 That story tells how Hannah, out of gratitude to God for granting her prayer for a son, “loaned” this son, Samuel, to God by giving him as an assistant to the priest Eli.

60 Compare Gen 22:1–14.

61 “You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with the leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of Passover be left until morning.” Both of these provisions relate to Passover observance.

62 “You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, or let the fat of my feast remain until morning.”

63 See note 83 of this paper as to Deut 21:1–9.


65 Israelites did not succeed in occupying Jerusalem until the time of David, some 200 years after their settlement or conquest of the rest of the land; and the temple was not built until the time of Solomon, c. 950 BCE, nearly 300 years, according to tradition, after God gave Moses “the law” on Mt. Sinai.

66 Deut 12:5–7, 11–14, 17–19, 26–28. This “one place,” the Jerusalem temple,


68 See Deut 16:2, 5–6, 7, 10–11, 15, 16.

69 Compare Exod 34:13.

70 Deut 12:31: “For every abominable thing which YHWH hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.”


73 Deut 12:27 provided that when animal offerings were presented at the central shrine, their blood was to be “poured out on the altar of YHWH,” thereby returning the animals’ lives directly to YHWH. Deut 12:20–21 allowed that animals might be slaughtered locally, without religious ceremony at the central shrine, but only if the trip to Jerusalem was “too far.” Deut 12:15, however, gives permission for secular slaughter “within any of your towns” without further qualification.

74 Presumably, the same procedures were to apply when wild animals were killed for food. See Deut 12:15, 22; compare Lev 17:13–14.

75 See Gen 9:3–4; Lev 17:10–11.

76 Thus also Sir 16:29–30; 40:11.


78 The tent of meeting or tabernacle and its elaborate furnishings probably represented a glorified version of what had been Solomon’s temple as remembered or imagined and projected back into the wilderness period by P writers in later times.

79 See, Lev 1, 3–8; Numbers 7, 15, 28–29.

See 1 Kings 5–8.

Compare Tob 6:4, 6–8 (fish heart, liver, and gall used for exorcism and healing).

Compare Deut 21:1–9, which prescribes a ceremony for “purging the guilt of innocent blood” in circumstances where someone has been killed, but the murderer remains undetected. Elders of the nearest city were to take a young heifer to an uncultivated valley with running water, break its neck, and then wash their hands over it. Although this ceremony is not described as a sacrifice, its stated intent was to provide forgiveness for the community that might otherwise be held accountable for the guilt of innocent blood (Deut 21:7–9). As in the case of animals sacrificed in lieu of first-born sons, the underlying sense may have been that the life of the animal somehow is of the same value as the life of the human.

Whether Azazel was thought to be a place in the wilderness or a spirit of some sort is not certain, though the latter meaning is commonly assumed. It is unclear whether the goat sent into the wilderness was expected to survive there.

Deut 12:15–16. See part IV. B. 1. b. of this article.

Compare Lev 17:8–9.

See also Lev 7:26–27; compare Deut 12:15–16, 20–25.


Compare Gen 2:7, 19: like the first man, in J tradition, all “beasts” and birds were made from the ground—to which, all alike would return. See also Sir 40:1, 11.

See also Deut 15:19–23 and Ezek 33:25. However, killing animals by causing their blood to drain out may not be the most humane method of slaughter now available. For descriptions and critiques of Jewish and Muslim slaughter procedures, see Rolston, Environmental Ethics, 83–84, and Singer, Animal Liberation, 153–57. It appears that reverence for life of the slaughtered animals has given way to concern to avoid contamination by consuming the animals’ blood, an entirely anthropocentric matter, and in the process, religiously grounded ethical care for the animals' interests may have disappeared altogether.
Later Christian theology moved away from biblical tradition's recognition that humans and nonhumans were not only different, but in many respects similar. See Barbour, Religion in An Age of Science, vol. 1, 205: "Only in the early centuries of the Christian church were the differences accentuated and absolutized by the introduction of the Greek idea of an immortal soul. . . . I will suggest that by drawing an absolute line between humanity and other creatures, later Christianity contributed to the attitudes that encouraged environmental destruction."

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Schweitzer developed what he called the "philosophy" or "ethic" of "reverence for life" in The Philosophy of Civilization. See also his essay, "The Ethics of Reverence for Life," in The Ethical Mysticism of Albert Schweitzer, Henry Clark

107 See note 54 of this paper.

108 The Holiness Code contains no provisions for sacrificing firstborns, whether animal or human.

109 No age limits are indicated. Lev 22:27 says that the young animal may be offered as a burnt offering on the eighth day, but that practice was not mandated. The lambs to be presented as burnt offerings in Lev 23:12, 18–19, were to be a year old.


112 See Gaster, Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament, 250–51. Gaster also considered sources or parallels in other cultures (id., 251–63). See von Rad, Deuteronomy, 102 (citing a Ugaritic milk spell). A law or practice may serve more than one purpose or function. For example, the law of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5–10) provides both for perpetuating the name of the deceased, and for his widow's welfare.

113 See also Deut 22:6–7; 25:4.

114 The text also refers to eggs, but does not say whether they may be taken. Perhaps it was assumed that taking eggs was permissible.


116 See parts VI. A. and VI. B of this article. See also von Rad, Deuteronomy, 141: "[T]he ordinance ... can probably be attributed only to humane motives and hardly to considerations of utility."

117 See Berry, The Gift of the Good Land, 273: "This, obviously, is a perfect paradigm of ecological and agricultural discipline. ... The inflexible rule is that the source must be preserved. You may take the young, but you must save the breeding stock." See also von Rad, Deuteronomy, 141.

118 See notes 29–34 of this paper.

119 Compare Paul, in 1 Cor 9:8–11, who interprets the text allegorically to mean that a missionary is worthy of the benefits of his office. See also, 1 Tim 5:18.
These texts represent a shift from theocentric to anthropocentric faith. See note 124 of this paper.
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The common law recognized no rights in . . . animals, and punished no cruelty to them, except in so far as it affected the rights of individuals to such property. Such statutes [as that in question] remedy this defect, and exhibit the spirit of that divine law which is so mindful of dumb brutes as to teach and command, not to muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn; not to plow with an ox and an ass together; not to take the bird that sitteth on its young or its eggs; and not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk. To disregard the rights and feelings of equals, is unjust and ungenerous, but to willfully or wantonly injure or oppress the weak and helpless, is mean and cowardly. Human beings have at least some means of protecting themselves against the inhumanity of man . . . but dumb brutes have none . . . Animals whose lives are devoted to our use and pleasure, and which are capable, perhaps, of feeling as great physical pain or pleasure as ourselves, deserve, for these considerations alone, kindly treatment.
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123 Compare Deut 5:14, which also refers specifically to oxen and asses.
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125 See part VII. B. of this article.
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126 Compare 2 Kings 19:29–31, which refers to a two-year period when, after the Assyrians withdrew from Jerusalem, the people of Judah would "eat what grows of itself."
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127 In reference to God providing food for wildlife, see Job 38:39–41; 39:5–8; Pss 104:26–28; 145:15–16.
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