

repeat it: “And all that was on the face of the ground died, and everything that had the breath of life in it was destroyed.” You repeat it in order to stress its tremendous nature. In any sort of discussion it is natural to do that sort of thing. The fact that a thought is repeated in such a way that each part could stand by itself is not really a valid argument for parallel passages, though it can be important in considering the argument for continuous narrative. But you notice there that it is not really a strong argument for continuous narrative, because you will find that in every sort of discussion. It is inevitable. Very little that has ever been written will fail to have a certain amount of this sort of repetition. In anything that is meant to make things vivid and living there is sure to be a great deal of it. You separate it into J and P documents and then even in J you still have this kind of repetition. I just opened here at the very beginning of J, “When no plant of the earth was yet in the earth and no herb of the field was yet sprung up...” You see how that could be divided: “No plant of the field was yet on the earth. No herb of the field had yet sprung up.” Either one of them gives you substantially the whole idea. You could divide up these two documents that way. So this type of argument from parallel passages – the fact that you find two phrases or two sentences, which repeat almost, or perhaps even exactly, the same idea, is not in itself much of an argument for a diversity of documents, though when you get into a certain frame of mind you can become tremendously convinced by it. Looked at in any logical way it is not in itself much of an argument.

In going through the material in the P document from Genesis 20 on you must have noticed how very little is assigned to the P document, aside from the list of the kings of Edom and one or two genealogies. To a very large extent the material in the P document is just a sentence or half a sentence, which can be taken out from a place without particularly disturbing the context. The P document is very incomplete in that section. It does not give a very full story.

2) The second type of parallel passage is a type that is made up by combining phrases. Selecting an occasional phrase or a brief statement, they assign one to one document and one to another and claim to have two stories. This second type is where there is a