

# Judaism and Story

*The Evidence of The Fathers  
According to Rabbi Nathan*

Jacob Neusner

The University of Chicago Press  
*Chicago and London*

---

# Contents

Preface	xi
Introduction: From Aphorism to Story and from Epistle to Gospel in Judaism and Christianity	xv
<i>From Aphorism to Story</i>	xv
<i>From Epistle to Gospel</i>	xvi
<i>Narrative as a Medium for Making a Religious Statement</i>	xvii
<i>The Sage-Story and the Advent of the Sage</i>	xix

## Part One

### *Rhetoric and Topic: The Comparison of Literary and Programmatic Traits*

1

1. The Structure of The Fathers and of The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan	3
<i>From Aphorism to Story: The Transformation of     The Fathers</i>	3
<i>The Principles of Composition: Comparison and Contrast</i>	5
<i>Comparing The Fathers to The Fathers According to     Rabbi Nathan</i>	7
<i>Comparing The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan XXIV-XXX     to The Fathers</i>	9
<i>One Program of Composition: The Shared Structure of     The Fathers and The Fathers According to     Rabbi Nathan</i>	12
2. The Matter of Rhetoric: The Forms of the Fathers and of The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan	14
<i>Consensual Authorship and Formalized Rhetoric</i>	14
<i>What We Learn from Analyzing Rhetorical Form</i>	16

- The Forms of The Fathers* 19
- The Forms of The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* 21
- The Forms of The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan Compared to The Forms of The Fathers* 27
- Comparison and Contrast in the Literary Programs of the Two Documents* 28
3. The Matter of Topic: The Topical Program of The Fathers and of The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan 30
- From Style to Substance* 30
- Points in Common, Points of Difference* 30
- Comparison and Contrast in the Topical Programs of the Two Documents* 31
- Where The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan Differs from The Fathers* 35
- The Advent of the Holy Sage and of Episodes in the Lives of the Saints* 37
- The Sage, the Story, and the Advent of History* 38

## Part Two

### *Logic and Proposition: Narratives in The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*

41

4. The Matter of Logic and Proposition: The Burden of Narrative in the Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan 43
- The Three Logics of Intelligible Discourse and the Importance of Narrative* 43
- Narrative as Mode of Thought, Medium, and Message* 45
- An Inductive Taxonomy of Narrative in The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* 46
- An Inductive Taxonomy of the Story in The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* 60
- Scripture-Stories Concerning the Creation* 61
- Scripture-Stories Concerning Moses and Israel* 68
- Indicative Traits of the Scripture-Story* 72
5. The Sage-Story in Particular 75
- From Aphorism to Story* 75
- The Scripture-Story and the Sage-Story: Differences in Narrative Convention* 76
- The Repertoire of Sage-Stories* 78
- The Propositions of Sage-Stories* 107
- Names Not Celebrated, Stories Not Told* 110

## Part Three

*Comparisons and Contrasts: The Story in The Fathers  
According to Rabbi Nathan in Canonical Context*

113

6. These Stories in Particular: The Stories in The Fathers  
According to Rabbi Nathan in Comparison to Their Use  
in Other Compositions 115
- The Canonical Context* 115
- Stories That Matter* 116
- Old or New?* 118
- If New, Then What Changes?* 134
- If Old, Then How Different?* 135
- The Contribution of the Story: Why Was This Medium Chosen  
for This Particular Message?* 136
- The Documentary Perspective on the Advent of the Story* 137
7. The Story in General: Its Function in The Fathers According to Rabbi  
Nathan and in Other Compositions 138
- Contradiction and Conundrum* 138
- What Is at Stake?* 139
- Differentiating the Varied Uses of the Story in Diverse Documents  
of the Dual Torah* 142
- The Singular Stories Revisited: The New and the Old* 146
- The Story in General* 154
8. Judaism and Story 156

## Appendices

1. The Sayings of the Fathers 161
2. Appendix to Chapter One: Comparing The Fathers to The Fathers  
According to Rabbi Nathan 173
3. The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan Chapters XXIV–XXX  
Compared to The Fathers 200
4. The Repertoire of Formal Rhetoric of The Fathers According to  
Rabbi Nathan 209
5. Topics Treated in The Fathers and Not in The Fathers According to  
Rabbi Nathan 212
6. Topics Treated in The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan and Not in  
The Fathers 221
7. Life, Death, and Torah Study 226
- Abbreviations 229
- Index of Biblical and Talmudic References 231
- General Index 239