

OBJECTIVES of OLD TESTAMENT COURSES

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AT OUR WORLD MISSION TRAINING SCHOOLS

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We're here these days with a specific burden from God on our hearts. He has said to us as Paul once said to Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me ... the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Ti 2:2). The specific assignment of this essay is to suggest areas of Old Testament study which the students in our World Mission seminaries should undertake before entering the work of the public ministry.

This is an area which it will be profitable for us to explore. It may be that exploring this topic may be embarrassing when we are confronted with evidence of our own neglect. The New Testament writers, e.g., consistently assume in their readers an acquaintance with the Old Testament considerably beyond that possessed by many preachers today. There are 75 references to Abraham alone in the New Testament. The New Testament is a thoroughly Jewish book, and the better the graduates of our World Mission seminaries understand the Old Testament the better equipped they will be to understand and preach the New Testament.

The Old Testament courses which we offer at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and which we will want to offer at our World Mission seminaries are of two different kinds. There are certain OT books which we'll want to study thoroughly, in exegetical courses. The remaining OT books we'll want to survey, in what we call Isagogics (Introduction) courses. But as we plan our OT work we'll want to give special consideration to the

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(Since in every seminary classroom the important person is not the instructor but the student, these objectives will be stated in terms of the student, not in terms of the instructor).

I

It goes without saying that the first and absolutely basic objective for all our OT courses will be that the student understand God's plan of salvation centering in the promise of the Savior. And for this an exegetical study of

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the first half of the Book of Genesis is absolutely indispensable. At WLS the exegesis of Genesis 1-24 occupies two periods/week (and in one quarter three periods/week) during all three quarters of the Junior year. Genesis 25-50, together with the rest of the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, is then surveyed in the Middler Isagogics course.

What are the emphases in the Book of Genesis that we want every future pastor to recognize and to adopt as his own? Think of how God reveals Himself, first of all, as Elohim, the wise, powerful, loving Creator-God, who wants nothing more than to share His love with children whom He created for himself. In Genesis 2 we meet God as Yahweh, which is His OT Savior-name. It's significant that the Hebrew name for this, YHWH, is a verb form, a form of the verb "to be." He is the great "I AM." That name describes Him, first of all, as a God of absolute independence. By contrast, we creatures are totally dependent; "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Ac 17:28). He depends on nothing and no one. Apply this truth to God's grace, and we see that His grace is absolutely free, that it's self-determined, not in the least dependent on any response from man. This name YHWH emphasizes the monergism of grace, in sharp distinction to present-day "decision theology," which tells a person: "If you decide to surrender yourself to the Lord Jesus in faith, then your sin will be forgiven."

That verb form YHWH which the merciful LORD chose as His OT Savior-name is significant for another reason. It's not only a form of the verb "to be," but it's the imperfect tense of that verb, a tense which describes the action of the verb as continuing. Jehovah is the God of absolute constancy. He is the God of free grace, but also the God of faithful grace, who cannot be moved from faithfulness to His promises.

The subsequent chapters of Genesis are an elaboration of this constancy. Even after the LORD was rebuffed by His children in the Garden of Eden, His powerful grace moved into action. With His promise of a Savior He moved to undo the results of their rebellion and to restore them to Himself. When the descendants of Seth turned their backs on the Promise and intermarried with the godless Cainites, calling down upon themselves the judgment of the Flood, the God of free and faithful grace preserved His family through the line of Noah. After the Flood, when Noah's descendants with their tower-building project rebelled against the Savior's gentle leading, the same steady Savior-love moved into ac-

tion. Instead of letting a sinful world continue its headlong plunge into darkness and judgment, the God of grace revealed Himself to Abraham. In the history of Abraham, as well as in all of God's dealings with people throughout the OT, we see repeated illustrations of the truth which Jesus expressed in the words: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (Jn 15:16).

In a group such as this this thesis need not be elaborated further. Every man here agrees that God's plan of salvation centering in the promise of the Savior is the heart of the entire OT, and that teaching this must be a prime objective in our World Mission seminary programs. The instructors at these seminaries will be alert to use the vast resources of the OT to shed light on God's marvelous plan for gathering His family. Think of the OT emphasis on the fact that sin separates from God, and that the sinner needs a mediator. Think of how Moses (e.g., after the Golden Calf incident) served as mediator between sinful people and an offended God. Why, the entire ministry of the OT priesthood announced to God's OT children: "The way to God lies through the priest!" Or think of how throughout the OT God taught His people the principle of substitution. When, e.g., a firstborn donkey colt was born on a Jewish farm, as the firstborn it belonged to the Lord. Since a colt was an unacceptable animal for sacrifice, the farmer was commanded to break its neck, unless he chose instead to sacrifice a lamb as substitute, and thus spare the donkey.

Courses

A prime emphasis in our OT ^{courses} must be to search out those elements which illustrate that God's plan for rescuing the fallen world has not changed essentially through all of history. Think of how St. Paul teaches the doctrine of justification by faith in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. He takes us back to Genesis 15, where God pointed Abraham to the star-filled sky and announced: "That's how many your descendants are going to be." And we're told: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (15:6). To establish the important truth that man is justified by faith without the works of the Law Paul refers to this context, where Abraham does nothing. Here is the prime emphasis of our OT teaching: that the student understand God's plan of salvation centering in the promise of the Savior.

II.

God's one great purpose remained unchanged throughout the Old Testament as well

as the New Testament. This is not to say that the procedures He followed in His ongoing attempt to win a people for Himself remained unchanged. At Mt. Sinai God gave Abraham's descendants a message which was destined to play a major role for the rest of their history. The covenant which God established with the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai has been variously understood by religious scholars. Even worse, its role in the life of NT Christians has been tragically misinterpreted, usually with one of two results: legalism on the one hand, or antinomianism on the other. Here, surely, is a second major objective of the OT instruction at our World Mission seminaries: that our national preachers understand the Sinaitic law covenant as a vital discipline for God's people, serving (and not displacing) the Abrahamitic covenant of pure grace until its fulfillment in Christ.

Surely you have already heard somebody who should've known better caricature this teaching by saying: "The OT was the Law covenant; the NT is the Gospel covenant." What a cruel distortion!

The people whom God addressed at Mt. Sinai were not a group of insurgents to whom God was reading the riot act; they were children who stood under His grace. The first words He spoke to them at Sinai were: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex 20:2). Prof. August Pieper once commented: "There is no purer, more heart-warming Gospel in the whole Scripture than this." Gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai were Abraham's descendants, beneficiaries of that covenant of pure grace which God had made with Abraham, and God addressed them as such.

But St. Paul helps us to look at those people in another aspect. Children of God they were, but immature children. In Galatians 4 Paul compares them with minor children, who because they are not yet responsible must for a time be placed under restraints. It's in this light that students at our seminaries must be helped to view the Sinaitic law covenant.

Think of the context in which the Sinaitic covenant was originally given. The Israelites were journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land; they'd been on the road less than three months. But the record of those months was almost constant complaining against God, questioning His love, impugning His motives, and rebelling against His good guidance. And so, when the Israelites reached Sinai,

God told them: "Stop here; I want to speak to you."

What God said to Israel during the nearly 40 years they spent at Sinai is called a covenant. But it's important that our students recognize that the Sinaitic covenant did not annul the earlier covenant of grace God had made with Abraham five centuries before. Far from replacing it, the Sinaitic covenant served the Abrahamic covenant. Certain provisions of the Sinaitic covenant (think, e.g., of the ritual of the blood sacrifices) illustrated God's gracious plan for restoring the sinner to Himself. Without the Abrahamic covenant -- all promise and nothing but promise -- the religion of the OT would indeed be an essentially different religion from that of the NT.

The Sinaitic covenant was never intended to be final. It was a temporary discipline placed on God's OT people during the period of their minority. All of Israel's religious, social, and political life was regulated by laws and ordinances, which were dropped when Christ came. They had then outlived their usefulness. While they were in force, they served a threefold purpose:

1. They were a mirror, helping the covenant people to realize their sinfulness and their inability to live lives of perfect love for God and for people;
2. They were a hedge, setting the nation of Israel apart from the idolatry and wickedness of the surrounding heathen, and keeping the nation intact to foster the worship of Jehovah and to preserve the Messianic promises;
3. They were to foreshadow the blessings Christ would bring.

As we train our future pastors for World Mission fields, we'll want to make clear that the Sinaitic code was given to one people, ancient Israel, and that this law code is abrogated. At the same time we'll want to make clear that although many provisions of the Sinaitic law code are purely ceremonial (e.g., the laws regarding clean/unclean foods), yet some of the laws written down by Moses at Sinai represent the immutable will of God (e.g., "Love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself"). This immutable will of God is not abrogated, although the wording of this immutable will of God as formulated through Moses is abrogated.

Only if these considerations are kept in mind will our national pastors be able to avoid putting a yoke on the neck of Christ's 20th Century disciples

which they're not able to bear. Only then will they be able to give credit to Christ, who has abolished the law of ordinances which was in ordinances (Eph 2:14f). And only then will our mission work stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made them free.

III.

The history of the church in the 20th Century shows an unusual interest in the doctrine of eschatology. As you know, the ancient nation of Israel plays a significant role in the eschatologies of those church bodies today which have millennialistic tendencies. Dispensationalist premillennialists, e.g., hold that in the millennium Israel will be restored to the land of Palestine. Jesus will sit upon the literal throne of David and will rule the world from Jerusalem, which will be the center of the world.

Since our understanding of the New Testament will be determined by our understanding of the Old Testament, it is important that the national workers in World Mission fields gain a clear understanding of the establishment of the theocratic kingdom in the promised land of Canaan.

From the time that God first established His covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai, He made it clear that that chosen nation was something special to Him. Ancient Israel was Jehovah's servant and stood in closest possible relation to Him. Israel was religiously distinct (cf the First Table); ethically distinct (cf the Second Table); ceremonially distinct (cf Leviticus); geographically distinct (God dwelt among them). For several millennia it was through circumcision and entry into the nation of Israel that a person became a member of God's family. It was through Israel that God gave the light of the Gospel to a darkened ancient world. It was through Israel that God gave His written Word to the world. And it was through Israel that God later gave a Savior to the world. Psalmist and prophet alike cite Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery and from Babylonian captivity as types of the greater deliverance to be effected by Jesus Christ.

It follows, then, that the earthly head of this "kingdom of priests," this "holy nation" (Ex 19:6) was himself to be a type of Jesus Christ, great David's greater Son. God's model for Israel's king was not that of a passer of laws or a collector of taxes, or even that of a ruler over people, but that of a

shepherd, one who was concerned about the welfare of God's flock and who was willing to expend himself to safeguard that flock in body and soul.

A related skill which the OT instructor will seek to develop in his students is the ability to identify the particular phase of redemptive history into which the various episodes of the OT fit. Unless our students see that, they will fail to see Christ in the OT, and their preaching will degenerate into thin moralizing. Several examples may help to make this clear.

When you're preaching on 1 Samuel 17 (David and Goliath), is the purpose of the sermon to present David as a brave shepherd boy who is a dead shot with a sling? Then we have reduced this pericope to the level^{of} a sacred Jack and the Beanstalk episode. Or do we move a step higher and stress David's trust and God's faithfulness in granting him victory over the giant? That would be forgetting the significance of the king in the development of the Israelite theocracy. By granting David victory over Goliath, God was publicly indicating David as the divinely endowed savior of God's people. David was concerned not about himself but about the glory of God's name and the welfare of God's people, the very qualities Jesus Christ demonstrated as our Savior-King.

Or think of the account of Elijah's stay in the home of the widow at Zarephath (1 Kg 17: 8-24). When we preach on the miracle of how the barrel of flour never got empty and the jug never lacked olive oil, do we treat this simply as an instance of God's miraculous provision -- similar to feeding the Israelites with manna in the wilderness, or feeding the 5000 with five barley loaves and two fish? To do that would be to divorce the Elijah narrative from its place in the history of redemption. And once you do that, all sorts of arbitrariness and mischief will enter one's teaching and preaching.

When studying any of the Elijah/Elisha narratives, one dare not forget that these prophets lived in a late hour of Israel's history, at a time of apostasy, a time in which one could well expect the Lord to step in with judgment. In 1 Kings 17, God's judgment on Israel's apostasy was to send one of Israel's prophets out of the country to neighboring Phoenicia, a heathen land. God did this for two reasons: as a rebuke to Israel, and as a blessing to the nations. Our national pastors-to-be need to be helped to fit the narratives of the OT into their proper place in redemptive history. This is the way the Lord Jesus preached on the OT. You remember the conclusion to His sermon in the synagog at Nazareth after His townspeople had rejected Him: "I tell you the

truth. No prophet is accepted in his home town. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years, and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian" (Lk 4: 24-27).

IV.

Any attempt to appreciate the life and literature of a people must take into account the physical environment in which they live. Geographical and climatic factors have a significant influence on a community's and a nation's history. This is especially true of ancient Israel. Under God Israel's history was in large part shaped by its geographical setting. Furthermore, its literature is full of symbols and imagery and references taken from the culture of its day. Here is another area of OT studies which deserves emphasis in our World Mission worker training schools. The student needs to understand the geographical and historical background on which the OT narrative has been revealed to us.

How do you explain "a land flowing with milk and honey?" How do you define "wilderness?" There are a number of reasons -- and some of them geographical -- why the Northern Kingdom fell into idolatry and went into captivity more than a century before the Southern Kingdom did. Our OT course offerings should be designed to provide students with information like this, information which they need in order to appreciate the OT properly. This essay can only sketch a few basic considerations and attempt to illustrate their significance for understanding the OT.

The larger geographical context in which the OT was written is the Fertile Crescent, that huge sickle of arable land extending from the Persian Gulf northward up the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and then arching southward down the eastern Mediterranean seaboard toward Egypt. The Fertile Crescent was enclosed by three great barriers to movement: mountains east and north (in present-day Iran and Turkey), the arid Arabian Desert, and the sea to the west. The land God chose for His covenant people was a narrow strip of land which served as a corridor joining the continents of Asia and Africa. In the fertile lands to the north and east lay the great civilization center called Mesopotamia. To the south of Palestine was another civilization

center located along the Nile River

What difference will this knowledge make to the student of the OT? The student who has recognized Palestine's strategic location on the intercontinental routes between Asia and Africa and between Asia and Europe will, for one thing, be quick to recognize what an advantage this location was for spreading the Gospel.

Or think of this. Since the nation of Israel was located in a narrow corridor of land between powerful nations, the story of Palestine is pretty much the history of the struggle between Mesopotamia and Egypt to control this land bridge.

A geographical term which occurs frequently in the sacred record is the term "wilderness." When you're discussing, say, Israel's 40-year wilderness wandering, and a student asks: "What was the wilderness like?" what do you answer? Do you compare it, perhaps, to the wilderness which America's early pioneers conquered? A study of Palestinian geography will reveal that there's just no comparison between the two. Was the wilderness perhaps a desert, like the Sahara? The wilderness in the Negev and in the Sinai contains only small patches of sand.

Wherever we meet "wilderness" in the Scripture, it's a wasteland; it is never a place to be desired. In his farewell address to the Israelites Moses referred to the wilderness as a "howling waste" (Dt 32:10), as "that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought" (Dt 8:15). It was that barren area east and south of Palestine with insufficient precipitation for rain-fed agriculture. Isaiah calls the wilderness "a land of terror" (21:1), a fitting place for Jesus to meet Satan. Additionally, there was always danger from wild beasts. The traveler in the wilderness was also faced with the danger of becoming disoriented and getting hopelessly lost. The Israelites may therefore have felt they had good reason to be concerned when, after leaving Egypt with its irrigation culture, they traveled for three days into the wilderness without finding an oasis. An understanding of geography makes it seem all the more miraculous that the Israelites didn't starve during forty years in the wilderness but found both food and water. And they didn't get lost, either, but were confronted by the Savior every step of the way.

Permit me one more example of the value to the OT student of a study of Palestinian geography. After the split in the Kingdom of Israel and the civil war which followed the reign of Solomon, why do you suppose it was that the northern kingdom, with ten of the twelve tribes and the lion's share of the territory, lasted only 200 years, whereas the smaller kingdom of Judah to the south managed to survive 350 years before falling to the Babylonians and going into captivity? Now to be sure, there were a number of reasons, but several very important ones were geographical. The southern kingdom of Judah was situated in mountains which served to isolate it. Those mountains may have been only 3500 feet above sea level, but they did for Judah what the German language did for the Wisconsin Synod in the first decades of this century; it isolated the synod from trends which could have derailed it.

By way of contrast, the northern kingdom of Israel was criss-crossed by a number of valleys and plains which provided a ready-made access for the culture and commerce -- and for the idol-worship and the invading armies -- of neighboring nations..

Another part of the background that will assist the national pastor in his OT study is the historical and cultural background of the nations with whom Israel interacted during the OT period. Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God gave them strict orders to wipe out the Canaanites. Immediately some questions arise. Exactly who were these Canaanites? And why were they to be annihilated?

Archeology has provided some useful information on the culture and especially the religion of the Canaanites, which centered in the so-called fertility cult. This was a religious system consisting pretty largely of sympathetic magic, by which the Canaanite deities Baal and Ashteroth were prevailed upon to grant the blessing of fertility -- to the soil, to animals, and to humankind. A means commonly used by fertility cult devotees to persuade the Canaanite deities was "sacred marriage," sexual activity of every homosexual and heterosexual variety. With this background it becomes clear that Elijah's killing the 450 prophets of Baal and God's command to eradicate the Canaanites were not ~~remnants~~ remnants of an earlier, cave-man morality, but a moral necessity. This was not bloodthirst; this was radical surgery, absolutely necessary if the covenant people were not to be engulfed in a tide of heathenism, infected with venereal disease, and ultimately lost to God's family.

One of the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant was: "You shall not boil a kid in his mother's milk" (Ex 23:19). Our Bible was written 45 years ago in the region due north of Palestine have now shown that this custom was another Canaanite practice to try to persuade the gods to grant their blessing.

When Jacob left Mesopotamia with his wives and children, Rachel stole her father's household gods. Why do you suppose she did this? Only because she still believed in the gods of her childhood? The archeological data from this area shows that there was economic significance to possession of the father's household gods; the child who got them was considered head of the clan after the father's death.

The development of Israel as a nation was not a vacuum-packed miracle. The culture of the surrounding nations exercised a substantial influence on the life of God's people. Our future pastors need help in recognizing that.

Another area of scriptural backgrounds which they need help in understanding is the area of the historical. Since another essay at this conference deals with the need for history courses in our worker training program, permit just a single illustration of how a knowledge of history can help in understanding the OT record.

The student who reads 2 Kings 23 and 24 without some knowledge of the historical background is going to be perplexed. In 23:30 we're told that good king Josiah was killed in battle, and that the people of Judah anointed his son Jehoahaz as his successor. Verse 33 tells us that the Egyptian pharaoh deposed King Jehoahaz, put him in chains, exacted tribute from Judah, and then installed another of Josiah's sons on the throne under the name Jehoiakim. 24:1, however, tells us that Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. 24:12 tells us that Jehoiakim's son and successor Jehoiachin was carried off to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, who then installed the puppet Zedekiah on the throne of Judah as Judah's 20th -- and last -- king.

Some perceptive student is going to wonder: if the Egyptian pharaoh was appointing kings to the throne of Judah, obviously Egypt must have been dominating Judah; so far no problem. But if Judah was a vassal to Egypt, how did it happen that Jehoiakim, the Egyptian puppet, paid tribute to Babylon, Egypt's mortal enemy? And how did it happen that in the last days of the

kingdom of Judah Babylon was calling the shots, deporting one king and installing a puppet on the throne in Jerusalem. The key to the problem is that in 605 B.C. a major battle was fought between Egypt and Babylon at Carchemish, a city on the Euphrates. Egypt was decisively defeated, and the balance of power in the Fertile Crescent swung over to Babylon.

V.

Reference was made earlier to the fact that OT courses at our World Mission worker training schools will be of two kinds. We'll want our students to study the most important portions of the OT in exegetical courses. The remaining books we'll want to survey in courses in Isagogics (Introduction). Biblical Introduction has traditionally been divided into two areas: General Introduction and Special Introduction. The second of these disciplines, Special Introduction, deals with the authorship and the line of thought of the individual Bible books. General Introduction, on the other hand, treats another area which deserves a place in our OT curricula. We want our future pastors to have basic information about the gathering of the OT Canon and the transmission of the original text. A few comments on the need for instruction in these two subjects will bring this essay to a close.

A question which is unavoidably going to be asked somewhere along the line in OT studies is the question: How do we happen to have 39 books in our Old Testament? How did these 39 happen to find their way into the sacred collection we call the Canon? Whose word do we have for just these 39? What do we respond to the claim, e.g., of the Roman Catholic Church, that the Apocrypha belong in the OT Canon?

These are legitimate questions, and our national pastors ought to be equipped to answer them. We'll therefore need to search out information from the Scripture about how the original documents of the Pentateuch were preserved, how a copy of the sacred writings was presented to the king on the day of his coronation, how the psalms of David and the proverbs of Solomon were gathered, were found in book form, and were used in the OT worship services. Our future pastors deserve to know what the Jewish church, the original custodian of the sacred writings, says about which books belong in the OT Canon. The voice of Josephus, that prominent Jewish spokesman in the first Century A.D., is a witness to the Canon which we ought not ignore. And of course we want to know

Re: Change in the last paragraph on page 13

The paragraph as amended should read:

Our future pastors need to know the two premises from which the historical-critical method operates. The basic premise of the historical-critical method is that the Bible is a human book that is not inerrant, and that therefore we must determine by critical study which statements of the Bible are correct and which are false. The first premise of the most radical historical-critical school is that there is nothing supernatural in the Scripture, and that any account which claims to be supernatural is contrived and spurious. The second premise is that since the Scripture is a totally human book, there is an evolutionary development which provides a rational explanation for every phenomenon reported in the Scripture.

While we reject the historical-critical method, our students need to become aware of the importance of history and grammar and the correctness and importance of the historical-grammatical method.

what testimony Christ and His apostles bore to the OT Canon, as well as the foremost Christian writers of the first several centuries of the Christian era.

The other subject included in what we call General Introduction is the history of the text, the history of the Hebrew and Aramaic documents originally written down over a thousand-year period from roughly 1450 B.C. to 400 **B.C.** It is no secret that all of the original documents of the OT books, the so-called autographs, have been lost, and that the earliest complete manuscript we have of the entire Hebrew Bible is dated at ca 1000 A.D., nearly 2500 years after Moses originally wrote the first five books of the Bible. Anybody who takes the Old Testament seriously, and that surely includes the men training to be pastors in our World Mission fields, must ask: "If we have none of the original documents, then how did we ever get the text of the OT books?"

Our World Mission seminaries owe these men information about the most important early manuscripts and versions of the OT that have come down to us -- the copies of the original, the copies of copies, and the translations of copies. Our future pastors need to know that the Septuagint, a Greek Old Testament prepared for Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt about 250 B.C., is an important witness to the Hebrew original. The Septuagint is the Bible by which, for the first time, the knowledge of God's Old Testament revelation came to the Greek-speaking world. Our students need to know that the OT manuscripts and fragments and translations, written on brittle papyrus and on elegant, long-lasting parchment are the vehicle by which a gracious God conveyed to us the revelation He originally gave to Moses and the prophets.

One more matter. Our national pastors are going to do wider reading in the field of the Old Testament, and they're going to meet the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation. Anybody who has done any serious reading in contemporary OT materials has met the denial of Mosaic authorship. He has been confronted with an interpretation of the OT historical narrative which completely eliminates every miraculous element.

Our future pastors need to know the two premises from which the historical-critical method operates. The first premise is that there is nothing supernatural in the Scripture, and that any account which claims to be supernatural is contrived and spurious. The second premise is that since the Scripture is a totally human book, there is an evolutionary development which provides a rational explanation for every phenomenon reported in the Scripture.

It follows, then, that since the Bible is a totally human book, it must be read in the same way as we read any book. It must be evaluated and interpreted in the light of whatever data we have that is relevant to the matter under discussion. The men who will be the leaders of our national churches need to know, and to know well, that if those two premises are permitted to determine our Bible interpretation, then the Old Testament has been robbed of its divine authority, and that then we have been robbed of any divine assurance the Old Testament offers us.

Much of the current crop of exegetical and isagogical literature is shallow, as is much of the preaching being done in the world today. There are many reasons for that, but a very basic one is that if a man is off on the Old Testament, he's going to be off on the New. You can't ignore what God says in the first three-quarters of the Bible and understand what He has to say in the remaining one-quarter. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rm 15:4).

John C. Jeske

SUGGESTED BASIC OT REFERENCE WORKS

- Archer, Gleason A., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Moody)
Baly, Denis, The Geography of the Bible (Harper)
Harrison, Roland K., Introduction to the Old Testament (Eerdmans)
Macmillan Bible Atlas (for the instructor)
Oxford Bible Atlas (for the student)
Unger, Merrill, Archeology and the Old Testament (Zondervan)
Young, Edward J., Introduction to the Old Testament (Eerdmans)