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Higher Criticism

1. Explain higher criticism. What is its role in understanding the Bible? Explain its negative characteristics.

Higher Criticism is a secular rationalistic approach to the origin and production of the Bible. It is based on reason and is extremely speculative. Its role in understanding the Bible is by applying critical methods. Higher Criticism has many negative characteristics. It is deeply connected with rationalism and naturalism, can be viewed as extremely liberal and secular, and its methods were started in conjunction with the already existing philosophical trends to de-historicize Scripture.

2. Who is Jean Astruc? What was his role in the development of higher criticism?

Jean Astruc was a French professor who played a major part in higher criticism. He contributed to the rise of critical textual analysis of The Bible. Astruc believed that he could find the real sources of Moses' books by using the divine names Yahweh and Elohim as a guide to the "truth".

3. Who is Julius Wellhausen? What was his role in the development of higher criticism?

Julius Wellhausen was a German scholar who contributed to the authorship of the JEDP theory. His role in higher criticism was the ushering in of The Documentary Hypothesis and JEDP theory. His theory was based on a discredited evolutionary philosophy

4. Explain the tenets of JEDP hypothesis. What positive value, if any, does it offer when interpreting the Old Testament? If no positive value, explain.

J-Jawist is the oldest source and begins at Gen. 2:4b. It refers to God as Yahweh.

E-Elohists is after J and refers to God as Elohim. It begins at Gen. 15 and focuses more on moral issues. It views God as distant from man.

D-Deuteronomy is the book of Deuteronomy and does not have a divine name listed.

P-Priestly was the last to be produced in the period of exile. It begins at Genesis 1:1. It refers to God as Elohim because it assumes that the divine name Yahweh was first revealed at the exodus.

It adds negative value to interpreting the Old Testament because it opens the door to many other theories that think they can just come up with a formula or explanation to anything. Thus, how this higher criticism came into play.

5. How does the documentary hypothesis explain the names of God? What Scripture is associated with each of His names in the Old Testament?

The Documentary Hypothesis explains the names of God as guides and sources. Yahweh and Elohim. Yahweh is mentioned in Gen 4:26 and Ex. 3:15, and Elohim in Ex. 6:3.

6. What should we look for to determine if Christian books are influenced by views of higher critics?

When determining if Christian books are influenced by views of higher critics, we should look for presumptions and skepticism. It is okay to exercise caution when reading the works of higher critic Christian books, use the higher critical method tools to look for reverence in the work.