

Alliance Theological Seminary
OT503 OA/OB – Reading The Old Testament
Spring 2021 (Online)

Course Instructor: Dr. David Emanuel
Lesson 7 – Critical Methodologies, Part 1 Essay. Hill and Walton, A Survey of The Old Testament
Lois B. Stewart March 20, 2021

Diachronic Methodologies concerns itself with the study of changes occurring over a period of time as with historical developments. It attempts to reconstruct the ways and means by which a text came to be in its present form. It explores the history and meaning of the text and looks for meaning in previous forms and setting of portions of the text (pg. 754).

Synchronic Methodologies concerns itself with what is occurring at a given point in time without reference to the historical developments. Recognizing that there is history but seeking meaning in the form the text currently possesses. These approaches view the text as self-sufficient, not requiring outside information for interpretation (pg. 754).

2. The main theory for the composition of The Pentateuch held that Moses was the sole human author; both the Old Testament and The New Testament held and maintained this, with the exception of the account of his own death (Deut. 34). This view allows for preexisting written sources by Moses, and is traditionally held by Hebrew and Christian scholars this also allows for divine inspiration and supernatural origin of the original documents attributed to Moses (pg. 762). The weight of this traditional approach relies heavy on eyewitness detail, familiarity with the Egyptian language and culture and the accuracy of history as reported in the five books of The Pentateuch (pg.762)

The Age of Reason, the “enlightened” period of Western civilization called into question the traditional view of the Pentateuch and the understanding of both The Old Testament and New Testament, challenging among other thing authorship and dating. Bringing forth an era of critical study of the Bible rooted in humanistic and scientific worldview. Hill and Walton maintain that, “It was presumed that human beings were capable of a reasonable and natural understanding of themselves, the physical world,

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law, religion and philosophy. External authorities and nonrational assessments of nature, history, religious experience and science were rejected”. They go on to say, “This concurrent rise of the scientific method (i.e empiricism and scientific positivism), deistic theology in religion and evolutionary theory in respect to origins has thoroughly influenced customary views on Pentateuchal authorship” (pg 761)

The only comparison between these 2 opposing views is The Pentateuch itself. Even in the 5 hypotheses that came from the “enlightened” period’s critical study, there is no room for divine inspiration, much less the sole human authorship of Moses. In the Multiple Authors and later Editors Hypotheses: Source Theory, did not allow for God to be actively engaged in the affairs of his creation, divine inspiration is replaced by evolution, reducing the entire Bible to a human literary product, a Hebrew Religious Anthology(pg767

The One Author Hypotheses, without the later Editors is the only theory that works in tandem with divine inspiration of the scriptures. Throughout the five books of The Pentateuch the author places God first, he calls on, relies on and cleaves to God and God responds just as he promises to do in his Covenant promise to his people which was given before the foundation of the world.

3. Questions sparked by Bryan Wibdin’s article, “Historical-Cultural Crises in Ancient Israel, Calling Forth The Hebrew Bible”. Under Urbanization: Text Response. I wonder how much longer we have as a nation to continue in moral corruption, support of corrupt leaders’ religious and political, social and economic injustice before the full weight of God’s justice comes upon us? Will this pandemic cause The Church to awaken, repent and take her rightful place of leadership, in Christ Jesus?