Ps. 119:105

BIBLICAL STUOIES SERIES

A CASE STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

THE EXODUS ACCOUNT

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I. THE HISTORICAL CRITICAL APPROACH

The use of the historical critical method is basic for much of contemporary Biblical interpretation. Basic to this method is the presupposition which excludes the divine revelatory aspect in the Biblical sense.[1]

Applied to the Old Testament, the historical critical method posits multiple strands of tradition which are identified and sorted out (<u>Literary Criticism</u>).   On the basis of literary form and style it seeks to get at the original units of what happened (<u>Form Criticism</u>) and to explain why and how various assumed traditions originated and developed into the present canonical text (<u>Tradition</u> and <u>Redaction Criticism</u>).   See Appendix I for further definitions.

As he looks at a given Old Testament text, the practitioner of the historical critical method makes it his task "to discern the inner units and unities that elude the average reader."[2] He seeks to establish the social context of the text and also pays close attention to the special thrust of the kind of literary form that it is. In so doing, he tries "to distinguish the context out of which the literature comes from that to which it speaks."[3]

The basic concern of the historical critical method is to establish the function of the text. Its overriding concern is to establish why a text was included in the record and what it was to accomplish in the lives of people at the time. The practitioner of the historical critical method is not overly concerned with the facticity of the event as such, since he normally looks upon the text as interpreted history.

In the Exodus account, for example, God allegedly did not want to give us an account of what happened, accurate to the final detail. Rather He wished to indicate that what He did there should be meaningful for our faith today.

The historical critical method assumes that the books of the Old Testament as we have them today represent the final edition of a long period of creative, literary activity. Accordingly the books from Genesis to Malachi reflect for the most part the post-exilic interpretation, inherited from past generations.

The various traditions of pre-exilic times in turn are considered to be the result of creative interpretations and reinterpretations as these traditions were molded and passed on in oral and written form. Each generation of Israelites e.g. is said to have received more from the past than the bare facts of the crossing of the Red Sea. In addition, they fell heir to various interpretations of the event. In view of this process, it is extremely difficult to ascertain with certainty what actually happened.[4]

A. Various Histories in the Old Testament

On the basis of literary analysis, historical criticism holds that at least three histories of major proportions underlie the Old Testament: The Priestly History (Genesis through Numbers), The Deuteronomic History (Deuteronomy through 2 Kings), and The Chronicler's History (1 - 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). Each of these is thought to be based on a variety of sources, presumably both oral and written.

The dates assigned to these traditions vary among the practitioners of the historical critical method. Opinions differ especially with respect to a firm date for the priestly tradition.

The Priestly History

The Priestly History is said to comprise the books of Genesis through Numbers. It is thought to be a combination of the Yahwist tradition (J, ca 950 B.C.). the Elohist tradition (E, ca 850-750 B.C.), and the priestly tradition (P, not before the exile in the sixth century but perhaps in the fifth or even the fourth century B.C.). These traditions are broken down into smaller units in the attempt to establish their original form and content.

The Deuteronomic History

The Deuteronomic History (D) is conjectured to form the theological base for a history extending from

The Yahwist tradition is conjectured to begin with Genesis 2:4b: "In the day that the Lord (Yahweh) God made the heaven and the earth." It is found in Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers.

The Yahwist is thought to have made three great contributions: 1. history writing is a confession of faith, e.g., his stress in Genesis 12:1-3 is on blessing and promise; 2. his use of theological criteria to evaluate the world in which he lives; e.g., the tower of Babel story in Genesis 11; 3. in Genesis 2-3 he provides an interpretative insight into history in stressing that conflict and evil resulted from man's break with God.[10]

The Elohist (E) Tradition

The second layer, the Elohist (E), is considered more difficult to trace because, as noted above, a later editor (JE) is said to have combined the Elohist with the Yahwist tradition. He used the Elohist tradition merely to complement and supplement the Yahwist material. As a result, some practitioners of the higher critical method work mainly with what is assumed to be the end result of these two traditions in the combined form of JE, although both are seen to depend on the same basic oral tradition.[11]

The term Elohist comes from the assumption that this tradition used the Hebrew name "Elohim" for God,[12] beginning at Genesis 1:1 and continuing until the name Yahweh is said to have been revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 3: 14-15). Thereafter the Elohist used both names Elohim and Yahweh for God.

As for the time of the Elohist, some feel that he wrote under the influence of Elijah and Elisha in the ninth century B. C. Others suggest that the silver era of Jeroboam II in the eighth century would be a better date, i. e., around 750 B. C.

It is assumed that the Elohist stressed the significance of Jacob and Joseph. The latter's sons Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted by Jacob (Gen. 48) and their descendants later received most of the land north of Jerusalem stretching up to the Esdraelon Plain, the heartland of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Josh. 16 - 17).

The Elohist is said to stress sanctuaries in this area associated especially with Jacob, such as Bethel (Gen. 28; 35) and Shechem (Gen. 33: 18-20; 50:22-26). He is thought to emphasize also the importance of Moses in contradistinction to the Yahwist's stress on David. In view of these features, it is surmised that the Elohist lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

The Elohist allegedly centered his message on Israel's covenant election by God and her obligation to live in obedience within this relationship. The climax of his narrative is reached in the words of Exodus 19:5-6: "If you will obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My own possession among all peoples . . . and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The Elohist's two key words are "faith" and "obedience".[13] His basic thrust is that Israel must be the church.[14] The Elohist is said to stress also the distance separating God from man. He shuns anthropomorphisms, preferring to let God speak more indirectly through dreams, visions, and angels rather than directly with man.

The Priestly (P) Tradition

The priestly (P) layer presupposes the combined traditions of the Yahwist and the Elohist, of JE, and of the Deuteronomist. Presumably based on a long oral tradition, it is thought to have been recorded during Judah's exile in Babylonia, perhaps after 550 B. C. Some feel that it may have been written after some of the people had returned to Judah in 538 B. C. Others suggest a much later date.

An alleged feature of the priestly writer is his tendency to interpret the tradition of God's covenant people in such a way as to speak encouragingly to them. He did so because after 538 B. C. some of them returned to the homeland, but most of them lived in Mesopotamia and spread out from there. Life in Judah was difficult and frustrating. And this continued during the years of the Persian overlord, followed by Alexander and his successors.

The priestly writer can be identified also, it is claimed, by his stress on the structure and organization of God's plan, as manifested in creation, salvation, and the provisions for living out the covenant faith. Thus geneaologies and their importance for Israel are emphasized in his record, written in characteristically formal language.

The priestly tradition is said to begin with the creation account as found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. It includes the flood and God's covenant with Noah. After highlighting the primeval history, the writer concentrates on Israel's prehistory and leads up to Moses. Another distinguishable feature is found in his stress on God's eternal covenant with Abraham and his descendants and on the covenant land as an eternal possession (Gen. 15:17). Since God made this promise out of grace, it is unconditional.

For God's covenant people of his day in the exilic and the post-exilic period, the priestly writer had this message: "God will keep His covenant promise. You will need to live as a worshiping community with God as your center. Your whole life is to be lived as a service to Him according to directives received through divine revelation by Moses and Aaron. This is God's program for you."[15]

The practitioner of the historical critical method needs to keep in mind these assumed layers of traditions of the Priestly History especially as he works with the first four books of the Pentateuch. As he reads a given passage, he will need to note the supposed characteristics and purposes of each of these layers of tradition to gain the distinctive insights presumably to be derived from the passage.

Questions From the Viewpoint of Literary, Form, and Tradition Criticism

What happens to a text when it is studied in the light of the historical critical method? What does the practitioner of this method need to ask himself? What new insights are to be gained in using this method and what are the results?

The story of the crossing of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus may be used as a case in point. In approaching this text, the practitioner of the historical critical method will need to ask himself questions such as those given below. Since three kinds of "criticisms" are involved, they will be listed under the appropriate headings.[16]

a. Literary Criticism

1. What is the literary plan or structure of this passage?

2. Is this passage a literary whole?

3. Can certain literary units be isolated?

4. Do these have a major focus from different perspectives?

5. Would this suggest several stages in literary composition, i. e., different layers of tradition?

6. Are they independent traditions or do they complement and supplement each other?

7. Are they parts of larger literary works?

b. Form Criticism

1. Did the text or a part of it, once exist in oral form?

2. Can the form be identified as a common mode of oral communication in the ancient world?

3. Does the text contain a hymn or a legend that may have been transmitted orally for a period of time?

4. What human situation gave rise to the form in question? Was it a worship context? a victory celebration hymn? a court setting?

c. Tradition Criticism

1. Are there signs that later interpreters modified original units, be they oral or written? Why? In what way?

2. How did the various units come to be arranged as they are in the text as it has come down to us?

3. Is this due to the Priestly writer and his school of thought?

To gain a better understanding of the crossing of the Red Sea pericope, it is essential to look at the setting. In considering its various aspects, some of the questions listed above will come into play.

II. THE HISTORICAL CRITICAL APPROACH TO EXODUS 13:17-15:21

A. Setting of the Exodus Event

Historicity of the Event

One of the most fundamental and oft repeated statements of faith in the Old Testament is that Yahweh "led Israel out of Egypt." In Israel's short historical credo, this phrase appears as the major act of God in her election (Deut. 6:21-23; 26:8; Josh. 24:6-7).[17] It stands at the very center of her confession of faith.[18]

From the viewpoint of the historical critical method, the Exodus account with special emphasis on the crossing of the Red Sea as found in the Book of Exodus is not a "photographic report."[19] Commenting on this, Von Rad says:

> The final point at which all such expansions were exhausted is the Hexateuch's picture in Ex. 1ff., for there, through the conscription of every available tradition, the simple theme has been theologically worked up into a sublime chorale. In the deliverance from Egypt Israel saw the guarantee for all the future, the absolute surety for Jahweh's will to save, something like a warrant to which faith could appeal in times of trial (Ps. LXXIV. 2). In its oldest form this confession glorifies an act of Jahweh's unaccompanied by any divine utterance. And Israel too, the object of this event, is silent. But when the tellers of the story come to describe it, they introduce a plethora of words, some allegedly spoken by Jahweh and some by Israel. Important as these are, the event which took place still remains the basic thing that happened. This datum ancient Israel never spiritualised.[20]

Practitioners of the higher critical method believe that underlying the account of the Yahwist, and many would also say behind that of the Elohist, is the original tradition of what actually happened. However what it was remains shrouded in mystery because the various traditions have added interpretations and re-interpretations of the event.

Many practitioners of this method consider it very important to penetrate through these assumed interpretations in order to establish which facets of the biblical narrative of the Exodus never happened. Then resorting to tradition and redaction criticism, they seek to establish why and how layer upon layer of interpretations were added to fit the needs of each generation. The basic purpose is thought to be to teach that God liberates His people. This, then, is also God's message for us today.[21]

Historicity of Moses

Before analyzing the Exodus account from the viewpoint of the historical critical method, it is essential to look at the key aspects of the setting, such as, the historicity of Moses, of Israel, the Passover, the meaning of the term commonly translated as "Red Sea," and the miraculous features of the crossing of the Sea.

What role did Moses play in the Exodus event? Has his role as recorded come about as the result of creative interpretations of Israel's basic tradition?

Noth, in A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, asks "in which of the various Pentateuchal themes was the figure of Moses actually at home, from which only subsequently, in the process of the merging of the Pentateuchal themes he came to dominate such a wide narrative sphere?"[22]

Von Rad notes that the interest is in Moses' sacral office rather than in his person,[23] but concludes: "Critical historical scholarship . . . holds the picture of Moses and his leadership drawn in the traditions of the Book of Exodus to be as unhistorical as the function which the Deuteronomistic book of Judges ascribes to the 'judges.'"[24]

In his recently revised A History of Israel, John Bright finds attempts such as Noth's to be extremely unconvincing.[25] Rowley concludes in his Faith of Israel, "In any event it was through the work of Moses that God's choice of Israel was renewed and confirmed, and through the deliverance of the Exodus that his claim upon her was established . . ."[26] Davidson notes that the interpretation of the Exodus event is "rooted in a personal encounter between Moses and God."[27] Although he attributes some parts of Moses' life as depicted to popular legend, Harrelson regards much of the biblical account to be more or less historical.[28]

This survey of critical literature reveals that those who use the historical critical method do not agree on how much of what the Scriptures tell us about Moses is historical fact.

8

Historicity of the Term "Israel"

The sacred narrative portrays Moses as the leader of the people of Israel. Are these the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob who entered Egypt at the time of Joseph to live in the land of Goshen (Gen. 46-47)? Were only some of the tribes of Israel represented? Was Israel only a small group augmented by other elements or tribes already in the land of Canaan? Is "Israel" actually a much later term projected back into the time of the Exodus?

The historical critical method yields no certain answer. Sidney H. Hooke holds that "Israel at this point of its history is an ideal in the minds of the editors of the sagas, not a real entity."[29]

Von Rad states categorically that "historical investigation has made it clear that 'Israel' was the name given to the sacral alliance of the tribes which was only constituted in Palestine, after the Settlement . . . the idea of a 'people of Israel' already in existence in Egypt, at Sinai, and in the wilderness, is due to an understandable anachronism of a later age—when it had passed out of mind that at that time there was as yet no such thing as Israel, but only tribes and tribal groups which afterwards entered the Israel that was to be and lost their independent identity in it."[30]

Bright suggests the group could not have been large. Its composition is hard to establish but it was a mixed aggregation of Hebrews and non-Hebrews. As time went on it grew in numbers. Thus Israel came into being through an exceedingly complex process.[31]

Harrelson suggests that at the time of the Exodus Israel consisted primarily of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in addition to some Levites and a sprinkling from other Israelite tribes.[32] Rowley is more or less of the same mind.[33] May holds out two alternatives: Israel was primarily composed of the tribes of Joseph (Phraim and Manasseh) and Benjamin plus some Levites, or the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Reuben and some Levites.[34] Glock speaks of the people present at Mount Sinai as "some Hebrews, . . . originally a disinherited social group,"[35]

While opinions differ on the composition of Israel at the time of the Exodus, there is agreement that it was a comparatively small group. Figures such as those given in Exodus 38:26; Number 1:46; 26:51 are considered grossly inaccurate.[36]

The Passover and Its Origins

Exodus 12 and 13 record God's instructions on the Passover and the observance of the Passover meal. This episode is said to be the product of the priestly tradition and that of the Deuteronomic Historian (D).[37]

Behind the Passover is said to be a very ancient, springtime fertility festival, practiced by shepherds in part to assure fertility and prosperity in their flocks. It is also thought to have elements of customs practiced by nomads and semi-nomads before the time of the Exodus.[38]

Presumably this festival was incorporated in the Yahwist tradition and later embellished by both the priestly layer and the Deuteronomic historian.[39]

The Red Sea

The climactic event of the Exodus took place at the Red Sea, in Hebrew "yam suf". "Yam" means sea and "suf" may mean reedy. "Yam suf" may then also refer to a body of water in which reeds abound.

The Old Testament uses the term "yam suf" in several ways. 1 Kings 9:26-27 and 10:11, 22 tell us that Solomon sailed his fleet from Ezion-geber to Ophir on the "yam suf", the Red Sea. In the ancient period, the term Red Sea included the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.[40]

The term "yam suf" occurs frequently in the account of the Exodus. The historical critical point of view assumes that it originally meant Reed Sea. The reference to the Red Sea in connection with Solomon's maritime activities is said to be a much later meaning. Hence when Israel crossed the Reed Sea, a basically shallow body of water was involved, it is claimed. Some deny even that the escaped slaves passed through water, since the conjectured account of the Yahwist, presumably the oldest, does not explicitly say so. Later embellishments are thought to have been added to heighten the miraculous aspects of the event.

Involved in identifying the place of the crossing is the question of the route taken by the Israelites as detailed especially in Exodus 13:17-14:9. The lack of specific information as to the exact location of each place and of the meaning of every term creates the difficulties which, in turn, produce

Three areas are suggested for the site of the crossing. The first is Lake Manzala and/or Lake Bardawil, shallow bodies of water lying to the west and east of the present Suez Canal and separated from the Mediterranean by narrow strips of land. Anderson and Finegan find this suggested location hard to square with the Biblical data.[42]

The second site is the area between the south end of Lake Timsah and the north end of the large Bitter Lake. The third is between the lower end of the smaller Bitter Lake and the head of the Gulf of Suez.

Some years ago a marine officer connected with the Suez Canal organization made an extensive study of the area and found that seemingly the ancient levels of the Bitter Lakes and the Gulf of Suez were not much different. Marine shells were found along the banks of both areas.

Accordingly it is thought that the Bitter Lakes and the Gulf of Suez were connected by a shallow body of water. At one point the water is said to have been narrow and more shallow, permitting it to be used as a ford under favorable conditions. A strong northeast wind together with a strong outgoing tide is suggested to have made the crossing possible. A turn of the wind or lack of it plus a strong incoming tide would then constitute the phenomena of nature which destroyed the Egyptians.[43]

The Miraculous Aspects of the Exodus Event

Miracles are an important feature of the Exodus account. God did many signs and wonders in behalf of His covenant people such as the ten plagues, crossing the Red Sea, sweet water at Marah, manna, and the like. Did these actually happen or are they to be accounted for by a tendency to heighten the miraculous elements as the tradition was told and retold, interpreted and reinterpreted, through the generations in order to glorify Yahweh for His mighty acts?[44]

Regarding miracles in general, Rowley says in The Faith of Israel: "If a miracle be defined as divine activity within the world, a belief in its possibility would seem to be fundamental to a belief in God."[45] He goes on to point out that some of the miracles in the Old Testament are examples of divine activity in what we call nature while others are manifestations of divine activity through events contrary to nature. He concludes: "The miracle stories can neither be uncritically accepted as historical, nor uncritically rejected as fancy. Each example must be examined for itself, in the light of the character of the narrative in which it stands and the purpose for which it appears to have been written. But that there is a truly miraculous element in the story I am fully persuaded."[46]

In Understanding the Old Testament, Bernhard Anderson defines a miracle in the Biblical sense as "an indication of God's purposive activity, but never a final proof. God gives evidence of his presence and redemptive purpose, but in an ambiguous way that demands faith and trust."[47]

In applying this definition to the Exodus event, he goes on to say: "Every reader of the Bible has to make up his mind about the historical nucleus which lies at the heart of the tradition that has been elaborated and colored by Israel's faith over a period of generations. Some miracles are more central to the Exodus story, more native to the Mosaic period, than others. Other aspects of the story are an artistic and imaginative expression of the conviction that Yahweh was active in history, delivering his people from servitude and calling them to serve his purpose. Since the whole account is interpretative, it is very difficult to separate sharply the central elements of the tradition from later accretions. Nevertheless, Israel's ancient faith undoubtedly was based on the experience of actual events which facilitated the escape of slaves from Egypt, events in which they perceived in moments of faith the word of God. The clearest historical evidence for this is found in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea. No event was fixed more firmly in Israel's memory."[48]

These examples illustrate the results of the historical critical method as it is applied to the miraculous aspects of the Exodus event. Essentially the truthfulness of the historical narrative is questioned and the exact nature of what actually happened becomes exceedingly difficult to establish.

B.   Selected Parallel Passages

Many references to the crossing of the Red Sea in the Old as well as in the New Testament assume that the Exodus event happened precisely in the way the Scriptures say it happened.

The practitioners of the historical critical method see these passages as part of the ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation extending into the New Testament era. In the references to the sea some also detect a connection with the mythological role which the sea played, for example, in the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh Epic.[49]

1.   The Exodus event as God's central act of redemption in the Old Testament

    a.   Texts referring to the Exodus event as a whole

Deut. 4:20, 32-40; 5:6; 6:7-10; 13, 20-25; 26:5-9; Judg. 2:12; Ps. 81:5, 10; 105:26-38; 135:8-12; Amos 2:10; 3:1-2; 9:7; Jer. 31:31-32; 32:20-22; 34:13; Hos. 11:1-2; Mic. 6:4; 7:15

b.   Texts emphasizing the crossing of the Red Sea

Ps. 78:11-13, 53; 106:7-12; 136:10-22; Is. 10:24-27; 11:15-16; 43:14-21; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Heb. 11:29

c.   Theological emphases

Ex. 6:6; Ps. 77:15; Is. 43:14; Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Col. 1:13-14; Titus 2:13-14

2.   The crossing of the Red Sea portrayed in various ways

a.   Creation and symbols for it

Gen. 1:6-10; Job 26:11-13; Ps. 74:12-17; 77:16; 89:8-12; 104:5-9; 106:9; Is. 50:2-3, 51:9-11

b.   Parallel events in Israel's history

Joshue 3-5; Judges 4-5

c.   Phenomena in nature

Judg. 5:20-21; Ps. 77:15-20; 114:4-7

C. Allocation of Sources According to the Historical Critical Approach

As stated above, the text of the crossing of the Red Sea is thought to be composed of three layers of tradition, comprising the Priestly History. However practitioners of the historical critical method do not agree on all details in assigning verses or parts of a verse to each tradition. North, for example, considers Exodus 14:9a "The Egyptians pursued them" to come from the earlier Elohist (E) tradition rather than from the priestly (P) tradition. Some follow S. R. Driver in considering Exodus 13:20 part of the P tradition. Some prefer not to make a distinction between the Yahwist (J) and the Elohist (E) traditions but work simply with a combined JE tradition.

In Appendix II the text is arranged in three columns, indicating the three conjectured strands of tradition. This analysis draws directly or indirectly on the views of George N. Anderson, Bernhard W. Anderson, Umberto Casuto, Samuel R. Driver, Otto Eissfeldt, Peter F. Ellis, Jack Finegan, Georg Fohrer, Terrence E. Fretheim, Albert E. Glock, Walter Harrelson, Gerald A. Larue, Herbert G. May, A. H. McNeile, Martin Noth, Harold H. Rowley, J. Coert Rylaarsdam, D. M. G. Stalker, and Gerhard Von Rad.[50]

A glance at the J verses and those of P suggest that these accounts are considered to be separate narratives. The E tradition at best presents a fragmentary report.

The Yahwist (J) Account

The Yahwist account resumes the narrative interrupted at Exodus 12:39. Verse 37 of that chapter informs us that "the sons of Israel left Rameses for Succoth." Exodus 13:29-22 sketches the journey to Etham. God shows His protecting presence through a pillar of cloud, which led and gave them light on the way. Note that throughout the account, the Yahwist uses "Yahweh", the Lord, as God's name.

Exodus 14:5-6 tells of Pharaoh's change of heart and Israel's terrified reaction to the Egyptian military might (vv. 10, 13-14). Moses tells them to "fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord." One of the Yahwist's characteristics is said to be his consistent stress on God's personal, saving action in behalf of Israel. Some point out that he merely records what the Israelites see and how they react to it. Their role throughout is passive, as Yahweh, their covenant God, personally delivers them from the Egyptians.

The Yahwist also stresses God's making the sea "dry land" (v. 21b), His disruptive and destructive actions against the Egyptians (vv. 24-25, 27), and repeated time references: "all night" (v. 20, 21b), "in the morning watch" (v. 24), "when morning appeared" (v. 27).

Verse 31 emphasizes Israel's reaction to all they say that God had done for them. "They believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses."

These characteristics of the Yahwist account are said to be found also in other parts of Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers which have their origin in the J tradition.[51]

The Priestly (P) Tradition

In chapter 12, the P tradition records how Israel was to carry out Moses' instructions for the observance of the Passover (12:28). The reaction of the Egyptians to the tenth plague and the journey to Succoth (12:29-39) are omitted, but the length of Israel's stay in Egypt (vv. 40-42) is included in keeping with P's conjectured chronological interest. The ordinance of the Passover festival as given by Moses and Aaron is carefully recorded, betraying P's stress on worship and on the transcendence of God (vv. 43-51).

Beginning with Exodus 14:1, this tradition is arranged so as to give a glowing account of God's action in half of His people through Moses who leads them safely through the Reed Sea and destroys Pharaoh's military might. The heavy stress on the role of Moses is said to be a characteristic of this tradition.

Another distinctive feature of the P tradition in this account is said to be the three imperatives or commands of God: 1. "Tell the people . . ." (v. 2); 2. "Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it . . ." (vv. 15-16); 3. "Stretch out your hand over the sea . . ." (v. 26).

A further trait of P is said to be the manner in which he states that God's command is fulfilled and His purpose is realized. The resulting action is reported in terms of what God wanted done. As in Genesis 1:3, part of the conjectured P creation account, the text reads, "Let there be light. and there was light," so in our pericope also the execution of God's order is told in the same expressions as the command itself. Compare, for example, the third and the simplest of the three commands, found in v. 26 with its execution as found in vv. 27a and 28. The command is: "Stretch out your hand" and the execution reads: "Moses stretched forth his hand." Note too that the effect of this action is anticipated in God's command: "that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." Compare this statement with the result: "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." (v. 28)

Similarly God declares His intention in verse 4: "And I will make Pharaoh's heart obstinate and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and over all his forces, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." Verses 8-9 report the initial phase of the realization of God's purpose: "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army . . . ." In verses 17-18 God repeats His design and verse 23 records the second phase of its fulfillment. The final realization of His purpose is given in verse 28.

The J and E Traditions Compared

As noted above, some practitioners of the historical critical method prefer to work with a combined JE account rather than with two separate strands because the Elohist tradition in this instance seems to be fragmentary.

The opening words of verse 17 "When Pharaoh let the people go" is seen as an editorial clause inserted by a later editor to connect the following with the preceding narrative.

E is thought to be concerned to explain why Israel did not take the direct route to Canaan. In so doing, he is said to make an anachronistic reference to "the land of the Philistines" who, it is said, did not settle in southern Canaan until the twelfth century B. C.[52]

In keeping with an assumed characteristic, E uses the term "Elohim" for God (13:17-18), whereas J and P consistently refer to Him as Yahweh, His covenant name, usually translated as the Lord.

J emphasizes the saving action of Yahweh in behalf of His covenant people by describing the protecting and reassuring presence of God through the pillar of cloud. He Himself is guiding the journey and takes an active part in the events along the way. Thus the theme of blessing and promise comes into full play (see for example Gen. 12:6-7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21).

E, on the other hand, exhibits a more formal and distant relationship of God with men. Hence he speaks of the "pillar of cloud" as "the angel of God" (Ex. 14:19).

Some regard this symbol of God's presence as an adaptation from an ancient custom of carrying a brazier before a caravan or army.[53] Others associate it with aspects of the fire and smoke at Mt. Sinai.[54]

E records that "the angel of the Lord" moved behind Israel to protect her (Ex. 14:19). The J accounts speaks of God's saving action in a more personal way. In the form of "the pillar of cloud" He moves between Israel and the Egyptians to assure the former's safety (Ex. 14:19b-20).

Noth points out that the Elohist stresses three themes: the exodus from Egypt, the journey into the wilderness, and the entry into the Promised Land.[55] The last of these is implied in Ex. 13:19, which records that Israel took along Joseph's body in order to bury it in Canaan (see Gen. 50:24-26, considered an E account). Note also that presumably one of E's emphases, that of Joseph and his descendants, comes into play here.

Exodus 14:5a states "When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled". Noth sees the use of the term "fled" as part of E's traditional theme of flight (see Jacob fleeing from Laban, Gen. 31:20ff.).[56]

The J, E, and P Traditions Compared

The J and P traditions are said to refer to Egypt's ruler as "Pharaoh", while the E account calls him "king of Egypt" (Ex. 14:5a).

The practitioners of the historical critical method look upon Exodus 14:6-7 as a doublet. Verse 7 is thought not only to repeat verse 6 but also to amplify the account. Hence verse 6 is assigned to J and verse 7 to the later E account. It should be noted that verse 9 further expands and embellishes the account, betraying a characteristic of P.

In verse 10b, J records the Israelite reaction to the coming of the Egyptian army, amplified in the P account (vv. 8-10). The Israelites reproach their leader Moses, an assumed emphasis of E. Their reproach echoes the journey-into-the-wilderness theme, which is thought to be a major concern of E (vv. 11-12).

Next Israel's great fear is contrasted with the calm reply of Moses who has learned to trust in Yahweh (vv. 13-14, J) and reassures the people that Yahweh "will work for you" and "will fight for you." This stress on the personal, saving action of Yahweh in behalf of His elect people and on the close relationship between God and man is a suggested emphasis of the J tradition.

According to the Yahwist, Yahweh saves His people by using forces of nature (v. 21b). He sends a strong easterly wind to blow all night and push the water westward. The result of this natural phenomenon is "dry land." The priestly tradition heightens the event into a miracle. Moses is ordered to raise his rod and stretch it over the sea. As a result, the sea is divided at once so that Israel may walk through this ford on "dry ground" (vv. 21-22). Other differences are observed. J uses the term "dry land" in v. 21b; P says "dry ground" in vv. 22 and 29. In keeping with P's supposed emphasis, God uses Moses to perform this miracle. In the J account the water is pushed back; the P account has the water dividing and standing as a wall on each side (v. 21b, J; vs. 21a, 21c, 22, P).

According to the J account (vv. 24-25, 27) Yahweh throws the Egyptian forces into confusion as they follow Israel on the "dry land." He clogs their chariot wheels so that they move heavily, or, according to the Hebrew, removes their wheels. The effect of this experience forces the Egyptians to try to retreat. The P account (vv. 22-23), however, knows nothing of difficulties encountered by the Egyptians as they hurry after Israel in swift pursuit "on dry ground."

When Israel safely reached the eastern shore, the J account implies that the easterly wind stopped blowing and the waters covered the Egyptians (v. 27b). Not so in the P account (vv. 26-29). The walls of water break and cascade over the Egyptians when "Moses stretched his hand over the sea." Thus the P tradition again heightens a natural event into an astounding miracle and emphasizes the role of Moses as God's chosen leader of His people.

From the viewpoint of J (vv. 30-31), the rout of the Egyptians results in a firmer faith and a greater trust of Israel in their covenant God and in Moses, His spokesman (vv. 13-14, 31). In the P tradition, however, the purpose is to demonstrate that Yahweh is the Lord of the universe (vv. 17-18). For Israel at P's time endured hardship and oppression after 550 B. C. and needed to be assured of God's power to keep His promise in spite of the difficult and frustrating conditions under which they lived. Hence P's reinterpretation of the event was designed to meet the specific needs of the covenant people of his day.

The Song of Moses and the Song of Miriam - Exodus 15:1-21

From the viewpoint of the historical critical method, Exodus 15:1-18 is usually referred to as the Song of Moses and Exodus 15:20-21 as the Song of Miriam. Verse 19 is seen as an editorial introduction to the latter.

The Song of Miriam is considered to represent the most ancient and reliable tradition of the crossing of the Reed Sea. Verse 21 is thought to suggest an eyewitness account and to offer evidence of what actually happened in the Exodus event. Some would grant that verse 21 may actually have been sung at that time.[57]

Exodus 15:1-18 is variously dated. Wright suggests that it is an old poem, in its original form dating to a time not long after the events described.[58] On the basis of his study of Ugaritic literary materials, Albright feels that this song developed not later than right after the thirteenth century B. C. The usual date suggested by the proponents of the historical critical method is 1290 B. C.[59]

Some label this section as being part of the Yahwist tradition. Others feel it may have come into being as part of the Deuteronomist History in the seventh century B. C. since it seems to stress Yahweh's universal role in Jerusalem. Still others suggest that it was part of the P tradition. Some proponents of the hypothesis of an annual enthronement festival in Israel feel that this song was used as part of the ritual on that occasion.[60]

What Actually Happened?

From the viewpoint of the historical critical method, the actual event of the Exodus lies behind the three interpretative traditions: the Yahwist, the Elohist, and the priestly writer. Some see the J and E accounts reflecting this original tradition to a greater degree than the P account.[61] Bernhard Anderson points out: "Since the whole account is interpretative, it is very difficult to separate sharply the central events of the tradition from later accretions."[62]

In Israel's short historical credo, the phrase Yahweh "led Israel out of Egypt" appears as the major act of God in her election (Deut. 6:21-23; 26:8; Joshua 24:6-7).[63] "The clearest historical evidence for this is found in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea. No event was fixed more firmly in Israel's history."[64]

But what exactly happened cannot be established because of the mass of interpretations, accretions, and embellishments which, according to the practitioners of the historical critical method, have been added to the original account. Perhaps all that can be said is that somehow, in some way, God liberated "Israel" from the slavery of Egypt. Whether this included the actual crossing of the Red Sea may be doubtful since, as some point out, J, the oldest of the three traditions, does not explicitly say that Israel walked through the sea. Miriam's song also only states: "Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."

D. Alleged Purposes of the Three Traditions

The Yahwist's Purpose

As noted above, the Yahwist is said to have written during the golden age of the Israelite empire, established by God through David and Solomon. For this writer "blessing and promise" are crucial. These were first given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). His "name" was to be "great and his descendants were to be a "great" nation. Later God expanded the covenant to include the land of Canaan.

Writing around 950 B. C., the Yahwist shows that God kept His word. In the golden age of the United Kingdom, Israel could see that Yahweh, the covenant God, had worked out the fulfillment of His promise. The Exodus event is a shining example of His faithfulness and saving activity.

However as recipients of God's blessing, Israel had a most sacred obligation, namely to mediate this blessing to others. Of special significance at this time was Israel's relationship with nations outside the promise. Some of these had caused her much suffering and hardship in the past. How would Israel respond to the painful memories of yesteryear? The Yahwist has the answer. He reminds Israel at the height of her temporal power and glory: "through you shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3b).[65]

The Elohist's Purpose

As pointed out above, the Elohist tradition of the Exodus account is said to be rather brief and somewhat fragmentary. In fact, some practitioners of the higher critical method prefer to work with a combined JE account.

The Elohist is thought to have recorded the E tradition sometime between 850-750 B. C. This was a time of great apostasy in the Northern Kingdom where this tradition is thought to have been developed.

To God's people largely failing to live her faith in and her obedience to the covenant God, the Elohist brings this message in the Exodus 13-15 pericope:

1. The words of the dying Joseph reminded Israel of the great faith of one of its illustrious ancestors in God's promise expressed in Genesis 15:13-16 which He kept in the Exodus event (Gen. 59:22-26; Ex. 13:19).

2. Israel's lack of faith and trust in God at the time of the Exodus in a way mirrors the disobedience and unfaithfulness of the Israel of the Elohist's day.[66]

The Priestly Writer's Purpose

As noted above, there is no agreement on the exact time when the priestly tradition was first recorded. Whether it was around 550 B. C. or some years thereafter, the purpose is thought to be clear. For a downtrodden people, the priestly tradition stressed that God still had a future for His people. His purpose included a return to their covenant land. For long ago God had made an "everlasting" covenant which included the gift of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:1-21).

For a people living in the shadow of an unfilled promise and under distressing circumstances, the P tradition of the Exodus account had a tremendous message. As God had mightily brought deliverance to Israel through Moses in carrying out His promise, its full dimension would be realized in the Israel of P's time. God had not forgotten them but would faithfully keep His covenant promises.[67]

III. THE TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

The traditional method of Biblical interpretation approaches the Scriptures as God's inspired Word (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-2) in the usual Biblical understanding of the full dimension of the term "inspiration." An interpreter using this method approaches the Scripture with the very basic assumption that what it records is historically true in every sense as God's divine Word for man (2 Tim. 3:15-17). To distinguish it from the historical-critical method it can be described as the historical-grammatical method. It seeks, on the basis of a very careful examination of the text of Scripture, to expound its full meaning. This, as Dr. Franzmann put it in a series of essays on hermeneutics, involves the circles of language, history, and theology.[68]

The interpreter using this method of interpretation is concerned with the circle of language: the meaning of the words used in the original, the nuances of grammar and their implications for interpretation, and also their literary form. The circle of history requires a careful study of the historical setting and the total context of a given passage. The circle of theology is concerned with the theological meaning of a passage and its relationship to the various doctrines of Scripture, paying particular attention to Law and Gospel.

These concerns are shared to a greater or lesser degree with the historical-critical method, depending on the particular predilections of its individual practitioner. But the historical-critical method adds other presuppositions and dimensions as spelled out in Part I above. Its basic approach is that Biblical criticism has replaced the doctrine of verbal inspiration.[69]

IV. THE HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL APPROACH TO EXODUS 13:17-15:21

A. The Setting

The Historicity of the Exodus Event

The historical-grammatical method approaches this pericope with the basic assumption that it records the account of Moses, an eyewitness of the event and God's chosen leader of the Children of Israel. It also assumes in accordance with the witness of Scripture that God through His Holy Spirit moved and inspired Moses to record this event.

Since the historical-grammatical method assumes it to be an actual occurrence in history and avoids speculative theories as to its setting and content, this part of the case study need not be as lengthy and extensive as Part I.

A perusal of the selected parallel passages in both the Old and the New Testaments as given above, not to mention other references in the Scriptures, stress that the Exodus and especially the crossing of the Red Sea was a very crucial event in the history of Israel. God's saving action at the Red Sea in

behalf of His covenant people is as it were "the hinge of the Old Testament." Imagery recalling this
event is also reflected in the New Testament (see especially 1 Cor. 10:1-5). Rylaarsdam says, "The
event is for the Old Testament what Jesus as Christ is for the New Testament."[70]

Historicity of Moses

The sacred record, beginning with Exodus 2 and continuing through Deuteronomy into Joshua 1, gives
much information on the person and role of Moses as the leader of God's covenant people. Other references
in Scripture shed light on his life and significance in the history of Israel. The Scriptures explicitly
and repeatedly speak of Moses as the one whom God used as His instrument to work out His purposes in
Israel's history.

Numbers 12:6-8 and Deuteronomy 18:15-18 describe Moses as the prophet without a peer in the Old
Testament and as a type of that prophet greater than Moses, who would come in the future. Acts 3:22-26
and 7:37 declare that in Jesus Christ this prophecy was fulfilled.

Historicity of Israel at This Time

The use of the historical-critical method as pointed out above results in grave uncertainty as to
the nature of Israel at this time. Some practitioners of this method even question whether historically
the term "Israel" may be used to describe the people delivered by God in the Exodus event.[71] What results
when the traditional-grammatical method is used in seeking to define "Israel"?

In Genesis 15:13 God told Abraham, "Your descendants will be exiles in a land not their own, where
they will be slaves and oppressed for four hundred years." But He also promised that He would bring them
back to the land of Canaan and give them this land to be their own possession (vv. 13-21). Years later
God repeated His covenant and promised that He would give Canaan to Abraham's descendants as "an ever-
lasting possession" (Gen. 17:7-8)

At Beersheba God promised Jacob that in Egypt "I will make you a great nation" (Gen. 46:3). Exodus
1:7 indicates that through the centuries Jacob's descendants increased greatly in numbers. They continued
to multiply despite the Egyptian attempts at genocide.

Several references in Exodus and Numbers give an indication as to the number of Israelites and
those who accompanied them out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 12:37; 38:26; Num. 1:46; 2:32;
11:21; 26:51). That all of the twelve tribes of Israel were involved in the Exodus event is a fact
that the sacred writers never forgot.

The Passover and Its Origins

Before sending the tenth plague, the killing of the Egyptian firstborn, God gave detailed instructions
for the Passover. This sacred, covenant meal was to remind His people Israel through the years of His
mighty act in delivering them from the slavery of Egypt (Hosea 2:15).

Exodus 12 and 13 record God's instructions for the Passover and for its observance in the future.
He ordained that it was to inaugurate the beginning of the religious year (Ex. 12:2, 18; Lev. 23:5).
The symbolism of this festival was to remind them of its deep significance in terms of the past and
of the future.

The lambs slaughtered at the first Passover substituted for the lives of the firstborn. Jesus
Christ as the perfect Passover lamb shed His blood for the salvation of mankind (Heb. 7:25-27). The
Passover was the covenant meal of the Old Testament. Jesus used its elements to institute the Lord's
Supper, the covenant meal of the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:24-26).

Whether the festival had a parallel in ancient customs is basically unimportant. As Cassuto points
out, God here attached a very specific form and meaning to this meal and to the festival which was to
be observed in future years.[72]

The Red Sea

As pointed out above, the Hebrew term is "yam suf". It is used in the Old Testament to refer to the
Red Sea, e. g. Num. 33:10-11. The Greek term used in the Septuagint also reflects this usage.[73] Thus
Solomon sailed his fleet from Ezion-geber on the Red Sea to Ophir (1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:11, 22). In
antiquity both the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf as well as the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba were included
in the term Red Sea.

Another meaning of "suf" is "reedy." Hence a "yam suf" may within a given context refer to a body of water with reeds. In Jonah 2:5 "suf" means "sea weed." Ancient writers such as Diodorus and Artemidorus speak of the weeds of the Arabian Gulf.[74]

The accounts of Exodus 14-15 presuppose that the crossing of the Red Sea was a tremendous miracle. The narrative, in both prose and poetic form, preclude a shallow, reedy area but presuppose deep water. This is true also of parallel passages.

A cursory reading of some resources may suggest that each place mentioned in Exodus 13-14 has been identified with certainty. However, a careful examination of evidence currently available indicates that, with the exception of Succoth (Tell el-Maskhuta), the identity and location of the sites mentioned are far from certain.

A careful study of the sacred narrative indicates that Israel under Moses' leadership moved southward from Succoth. There is evidence to warrant the conclusion that the crossing of the Red Sea may have taken place somewhere at the north end of the Gulf of Suez although the Scriptures themselves do not expressly say so.[75]

B. A Brief Exegetical Study of the Pericope

Exodus 13:17-22

The opening words of verse 17 briefly connect this episode with Exodus 12:37-42. Israel left Egypt not as fleeing slaves but in "orderly array" with dignity.

Some have found the mention of "the Way of the Land of the Philistines" to be anachronistic, claiming that the Philistines did not settle in Canaan until ca 1175 B. C. after the defeat by Rameses III of the "Sea People" of whom they were a part. Recent information indicates that references to the Philistines here and in Genesis 12:32, 34 and Genesis 26 reflect true history. The final wave of these people was settled in Canaan in the early twelfth century, but some had settled there many centuries earlier.[76]

The text stresses why the Israelites were to avoid the land of the Philistines. In view of their many years as state slaves, Israel was not yet ready to take Canaan by force and needed time to mature into nationhood as a free people and above all as God's covenant people (Ex. 13:17-18; 14:10-14).

Although Moses was God's spokesman and the chosen leader of Israel, it was psychologically very important that the covenant God assure them of His continued presence. He did this through the pillar of cloud; also called "the angel of the Lord" in Ex. 14:19. This pillar of cloud later was part of His saving action when Israel was threatened by the Egyptian military might. God continued to show His presence with His people in this way in the years that followed (Num. 10:11, 34-36; Deut. 1:33).

It should be noted that the historical grammatical method regards the pillar of cloud as an actual occurrence, whereas the historical critical method considers it to be merely symbolic.

Exodus 14:1-14

Pharaoh earlier had hardened his heart against God's demand that he let Israel go (Ex. 8-12 passim). From the Egyptian point of view the Israelites were state slaves, creatures like animals without souls and emotions.[77] The fact that they were forced to carry out Pharaoh's wishes indicated to him that his gods were greater and more powerful than the God of these state slaves (Ex. 5:2).

Through the plagues God had demonstrated to Pharaoh that He was more powerful than the Egyptian gods, who were basically personified forces of nature. But God, the Creator, is the Lord of nature.[78]

When Pharaoh recovered from the shock of losing his firstborn and heard that Israel had gone, he ordered his war chariots to pursue after them and return them. God ordered Moses to have the Israelites appear to turn back. This ruse resulted ultimately in the destruction of Pharaoh's military might. In his blindness Pharaoh failed to see that God was his real antagonist (see especially Ex. 14:3-4).

In the meantime Israel arrived at the Red Sea. They seemed to be hemmed in by the sea and other natural barriers as Pharaoh's forces rushed at them from one side. Israel's frenzied reaction to this threat demonstrates their lack of preparation to face danger and their need for trust in God and in His spokesman Moses (Ex. 5:20-21; 14:10-12).

Moses' calm confidence stands in sharp contrast to their terror. He assured them that Yahweh, their covenant God, would win the victory for them. Note the antithetic parallel between the Egyptian threat and God's saving action.[79]

Exodus 14:15-31

In response to Moses' appeal for help, God informed him that the time for divine action had come. He would provide an avenue of escape for Israel and bring about the destruction of the Egyptians.

When Moses stretched his rod over the sea, God caused an east wind to blow all night. The Hebrew term can refer to any wind coming from an easterly direction, be it directly east, northeast, or southeast. The result was a broad avenue of dry land with walls of water standing up on both sides. Some conjecture that the ebb of a tide may also have been a factor.

The pillar of cloud moved between the Israelites and the Egyptians. It was light on the Israelite side and dark and threatening on the Egyptian side. Israel walked through on dry land (Heb. 11:29). The pursuers unknowingly followed into certain destruction.

During the morning watch (2-6 a.m.), God brought confusion and consternation to the Egyptians. The Hebrew verb indicates that God caused the wheels to come off the axles. Terror filled the Egyptians. They recognized Israel's God was destroying them and tried to flee. Again Moses raised his staff. The waters of the sea cascaded down upon the Egyptians from both sides, destroying them.

Verses 30-31 emphasize two results of this tremendous, miraculous event: 1. Israel recognized Yahweh's mighty act of deliverance and believed in Him; 2. Their faith and trust in Him and in Moses, His chosen leader, was strengthened.[80]

Exodus 15:1-21

The form and contents of this song bespeak its Mosaic authorship. Moses and Israel praised God for His judgment: destruction for the Egyptians and salvation for Israel (v. 1b).

The song consists of three strophes. Each of these is echoed in parallel passages of the Scriptures. Some things that the women under Miriam's leadership sang verse 21 as a happy refrain.

Verses 2-5 form the first strophe and stress God's omnipotence, manifested in His judgment of the Egyptians. Verse 5 expresses Israel's ardent praise of God.

The second strophe (vv. 6-10) echoes basically the same thoughts. Verse 10 stresses God's mighty miracle.

The third strophe (vv. 11-18) prophetically describes the consequences of God's mighty miracle. His covenant promise will be realized; Canaan will become Israel's heritage. Verse 17 proclaims the significance of the covenant people. They will worship the covenant God at His temple, where He will reign as the Eternal King.

Note that in verses 20-21 Miriam is ranked as subordinate to Moses. This fact would later be dramatically demonstrated in the sad events recorded in Numbers 12.

The role played by Miriam and the women is echoed in other events recorded in the Scriptures (Judg. 11:34; 1 Sam. 18:6-7; 21:12; 29:5).[81]

C. The Place of the Exodus in God's Promise to Abraham

In Genesis 15:13-21 God told Abraham that his descendants would be strangers in a strange land for 400 years. In the latter part of that period, they would be enslaved, but after some years, God would bring them to the land of Canaan and make of them a mighty nation (v. 18).

As part of God's plan for Abraham's descendants, Joseph was taken to Egypt to be sold as a slave and later to become the Grand Vizier of Egypt. Because of the drought, he urged his father, brothers, and their families to move to Egypt. On the way God assured Jacob that in Egypt his descendants would become a great nation. Shortly before his death, Joseph recalled God's promise to bring His people back to Canaan, which would then become their covenant land (Gen. 37-50).

When God called Moses at Mount Sinai, He stated His firm intent to make him the leader of Israel in bringing His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand (Ex. 3-4). He repeated this divine intention a number of times. Through the plagues and the events of the Exodus, He manifested His power as the Lord of the Universe to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Through these mighty acts, God revealed in a most dramatic manner the meaning of His covenant name Yahweh as one who lives savingly with His people (see Ex. 6:1-8). He continued to demonstrate His providing

and protecting care for His chosen people through their experiences on the journey to Mount Sinai (Ex. 16-18) and during the years of the wanderings to the land of Canaan.

The Exodus culminating in the crossing of the Red Sea was part of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. As detailed above, Exodus 13:17-15:21 gives us the inspired eyewitness account of Moses, the chosen leader of God's covenant people. The factual details of this historical event underline the greatness of the covenant God and the certainty of His promises. This is also stressed by the many references to this event in other passages of Scripture.

The use of the historical grammatical method, delving carefully into the total context of the pericope, results in seeing in a fuller dimension the "happenedness" of the event and the certainty and relevancy of its message also for us today.

V. A COMPARATIVE RESUME OF THE TWO METHODS AND OF THEIR EFFECT

ON THE CONTENT AND MESSAGE OF EXODUS 13:17-15:21

Historical Grammatical	Historical Critical

A. Assumptions

The historical grammatical method accepts on the basis of Biblical witness	The historical critical method on the basis of literary analysis operates with the following assumptions:
1. That this account is God's true Word to us as part of His inspired Scriptures;	1. That the crossing of the Red Sea account as we have it today in Exodus 13:17-15:21 reflects for the most part the post-exilic interpretation of the event, inherited from past generations;
2. That through the Holy Spirit, Moses was moved and inspired to record this eyewitness account of the crossing of the Red Sea as part of God's mighty act of the Exodus.	2. That Biblical criticism has replaced verbal inspiration as the basic approach to Scripture.[82]

B. Conclusions

1. The historical grammatical method accepts that the record in Exodus 13:17-15:21 as a true account of what happened at the crossing of the Red Sea.	1. The historical critical account concludes
	a. That the account reflects three different layers of tradition which need to be identified and sorted out, not only to establish the original tradition (what actually happened), but also to understand why the tradition was meaningful in interpreted and reinterpreted form for succeeding generations;
	b. That each layer of tradition is based on an oral tradition passed on from one generation to the next, interpreted and reinterpreted in the process, and eventually recorded and given an interpretation to fit the needs of the people for which it was written;
	1) That the Yahwist (J) tradition was recorded for Israel during the time of the United Kingdom (around 950 B.C.) to remind Israel of the implications of God's covenant with Abraham for them and their need in response to mediate the blessing to other nations;
	2) That the Elohist (E) tradition was written for the Northern Kingdom of Israel sometime around 850-750 B.C. to remind Israel in a time of extensive idolatry of her covenant election

Historical Grammatical (cont'd)

Historical Critical (cont'd)

and her need to live in faith and
obedience within this relationship;

3)   That the priestly (P) tradition was
recorded sometime after 550 B.C. in
a time of deep trouble and frustra-
tion in order to speak encouragingly
to God's covenant people and to
remind them of His unconditional
promise to their great ancestor
Abraham to give them the land of
Canaan as an eternal possession;

c.   That after the various layers of the J, E,
and P traditions are identified and sorted
out, it is possible to say only that in
some way God delivered His people from the
Egyptians.

2.   The historical grammatical method accepts as
true what the Pentateuch and the rest of
Scripture tell us about Moses and his role as
the leader of God's covenant people.

2.   The historical critical method results in un-
certainty as to the true role of Moses. At
least part of what the Scriptures tell about
him is considered to be in the realm of folk-
lore. Some even consider him a Paul Bunyon-
like legendary character.

3.   The historical grammatical method accepts
the witness of Scriptures that by the term
"Israel" is meant the descendants of Jacob,
the twelve tribes of Israel, and that these
were delivered by God from state slavery in
Egypt through the Exodus event.

3.   The historical critical method results in
great uncertainty as to the identity and num-
ber of people involved in the Exodus event.
There is common agreement among its practition-
ers that only a comparatively small group was
involved and that historically the term "Israel"
for this group is hardly applicable at this
time.

4.   The historical grammatical method accepts
the Scriptural account of the origin and
nature of the Passover meal as the covenant
meal.

4.   The historical critical method results in the
view that the Passover was an adaptation by
the Yahwist tradition of a nomadic fertility
rite, greatly embellished by the Deuteronomist
Historian and the priestly tradition.

5.   The historical grammatical method accepts
that the crossing of the Red Sea involved a
great miracle of God.

5.   The historical critical method results in the
view that at best only a crossing of a shallow
body of water took place. Because the Yahwist
(J) tradition does not explicitly say that
Israel walked through the "yam suf" (Reed Sea),
the people may merely have stood quietly by
while the Egyptian military force was destroyed
in the Reed Sea.

6.   The historical grammatical method accepts
what the Exodus account states and what par-
allel passages say, namely that through this
mighty miracle God led His people safely
through the Red Sea into the Wilderness of
Sinai as part of the larger Exodus event and
demonstrated to both Israel and Pharaoh that
He is the Lord of the Universe and the Cove-
nant God of Israel.

6.   The historical critical method can only deter-
mine that in some unknown way God delivered
His people from the Egyptians. Nothing more
certain can be established.

7.   The careful use of the historical grammatical
method results in a better understanding of a
factually and historically true Word of God
and of its meaning not only for people of that
time but also for us today.

7.   Mainly concerned to establish the function of
this text and in the process to show what did
not take place, the historical critical method
results at best in an uncertain message, namely
that God in some way delivered some people in
the Exodus event and that in some way this is
to be meaningful to people today.

APPENDIX I: DEFINITIONS

Form Criticism

"Form criticism strives to isolate the primitive oral traditions which underline the written text, classify them according to their typical forms, and reconstruct the life situations (Sitzen-im-Leben) in which they arose."[83]

"Form criticism is an attempt to make precise observations about the kinds of literature out of which the various units of the Bible are composed. It pressed biblical literary criticism well beyond earlier questions of authorship and composition into prior questions about the smaller literary units which the earliest authors used, and by which the early believer communities (early Israel and early church) passed on the traditions about themselves, and about what they considered important to their identity as believing communities.   Form criticism has enabled biblical scholarship to press back behind early Israel and early church to some of the myths, sagas, aphorisms, proverbs, and legends which those communities adapted from their surroundings for their own peculiar cultic traditions and needs."[84]

Traditions and Redaction Criticism

"Tradition criticism--in the New Testament studies the preferred term is 'redaction criticism'--responds to a new urge to tell the whole story.   Its intentions are synthetic and presuppose the analytic work of both literary and form criticism.   Since it follows in the wake of both, it assumes that both oral and written continuities play a role in the shaping of the traditions that finally culminated in Scripture.   Individual historians of tradition will vary with respect to the emphasis they place upon one or the other."[85]

" . . . the whole community, in all expressions of its existence, participated in giving shape to the tradition and in handing it on, generation after generation."[86]

"Redaction criticism, as distinct from tradition history, deals with the very last stages of the editing that present Scripture in its fixed or final form.   Tradition criticism is interested in all the stages that lie in between form and redaction criticism, the history of a tradition which, in the Old Testament, spans more than a millenium."[87]

"Following form criticism, which is by no means waning in importance came redaction criticism--the effort to recover the leading ideas, theological and otherwise, of those later men who pulled together and gave shape to the earlier materials. Redaction criticism followed on the crucial observation that the editors who had composed the larger literary units out of the smaller ones themselves had something to say; their editing had purpose and direction."[88]

"One of the results of form critcisms was a special type of investigation of the appearance of certain crucial traditions in the works of more than one early biblical author, editor, prophet, or psalmist. The name given such exercises is tradition criticism. It compares and relates the several interpretations or understandings of that tradition. By taking the crossing of the Reed Sea tradition and tracing its formulations and functions at several junctures of biblical letters, for example, one might sketch a history of the interpretations or understandings given to that early episode of the epic story of ancient Israel.   How did the Old Testament source we call J use and understand it? Why did the one we call P apparently enjoin it with the exodus event rather than with the wilderness tradition? At what point in Israel's theological, political, and cultic history did the tradition of crossing the Reed Sea out of Egypt become typologically related to the tradition of crossing the Jordan into Canaan? How do the several early poems and psalms which mention the Reed Sea crossing use it? What function does such a tradition have in the Prophets? Tradition criticism traces the life or history of an early idea or concept in the hands of more than one editor, composer, or writer, or in more than one segment of period of the ongoing life of the believing community."[89]

APPENDIX II: EXODUS 13:17 - 14:31 ACCORDING TO THE HISTORICAL CRITICAL METHOD

J	E	P
XIII	XIII	XIII

E column:

XIII

17   When Pharaoh let the people
go, God did not lead them
by way of the land of the
Philistines, although that
was near;   for God said,
"Lest the people repent
when they see war, and re-
turn to Egypt."

18   So God made the people go
around by the route of the
wilderness toward the Red
Sea.   And the people of
Israel went up out of the
land of Egypt equipped for
battle.

19   And Moses took the bones
of Joseph with him;   for
Joseph had solemnly sworn
the people of Israel, say-
ing, "God will visit you;
then you must carry my
bones with you from here."

J column:

20   And they moved on from Succoth,
and encamped at Etham, on the
edge of the wilderness.

21   And the Lord went before them
by day in a pillar of cloud to
lead them along the way, and by
night in a pillar of fire to
give them light, that they might
travel by day and by night;

22   the pillar of cloud by day and
the pillar of fire by night
did not depart from before
the people.

XIV

E column:

XIV

P column:

XIV

1   Then the Lord said to Moses,

2   "Tell the people of Israel to
turn back and encamp in front
of Phiahiroth between Migdol
and the sea, in front of Baal-
zephon;   you shall encamp over
against it, by the sea.

3   For Pharaoh will say of the
people of Israel, 'They are
entangled in the land;   the
wilderness has shut them in.

4   And I will make Pharaoh's heart
obstinate and he will pursue
them, and I will get glory
over Pharaoh and over all his
forces, and the Egyptians shall
know that I am the Lord.'   And
they did so.

J   E   P

XIV   XIV   XIV

5   When the king of Egypt was
    told that the people had
    fled,

5   the mind of Pharaoh and his
    servants was changed toward
    the people, and they said,
    "What is this we have done,
    that we have let Israel go
    from serving us?"

6   So he made ready his chariot
    and took his army with him,

7   and took six hundred picked
    chariots and all the other
    chariots of Egypt with offi-
    cers over all of them.

8   And the Lord hardened the heart
    of Pharaoh king of Egypt and
    he pursued the people of Israel
    as they went forth defiantly.

9   The Egyptians pursued them, all
    Pharaoh's horses and chariots
    and his horsemen and his army,
    and overtook them encamped at
    the sea, by Pi-ha-hiroth, in
    front of Baal-zephon.

10 When Pharaoh drew near,

10 the people of Israel lifted
    up their eyes, and behold,
    the Egyptians were marching
    after them; and they were
    in great fear.

10 And the people of Israel cried
    out to the Lord;

11 and they said to Moses,
    "Is it because there are
    no graves in Egypt that
    you have taken us away to
    die in the wilderness?
    What have you done to us,
    in bringing us out of
    Egypt?

12 Is not this what we said
    to you in Egypt, 'Let us
    alone and let us serve the
    Egyptians'? For it would
    have been better for us to
    serve the Egyptians than
    to die in the wilderness."

13 And Moses said to the people,
    "Fear not, stand firm, and see
    the salvation of the Lord,
    which he will work for you to-
    day; for the Egyptians whom
    you see today, you shall never
    see again.

J   E   P

XIV   XIV   XIV

14 The Lord will fight for you,
and you have only to be
still."

15 The Lord said to Moses, "Why
do you cry to me? Tell the
people of Israel to go forward.

16 Lift up your rod, and stretch
out your hand over the sea and
divide it, that the people of
Israel may go on dry ground
through the sea.

17 And I will harden the hearts
of the Egyptians so that they
shall go in after them, and
I will get glory over Pharaoh
and all his host, his chariots,
and his horsemen.

18 And the Egyptians shall know
that I am the Lord, when I
have gotten glory over Pharaoh,
his chariots, and his horsemen."

19 Then the angel of God who went
before the host of Israel
moved and moved behind them;

19 and the pillar of cloud moved
from before them and stood
behind them,

20 coming between the host of
Egypt and the host of Israel.
And there was the cloud and
the darkness; and it lit up
the night (GK: and the night
passed) without one coming
near the other all night.

21 Then Moses stretched out his
hand over the sea;

21 and the Lord drove the sea
back by a strong east wind
all night, and made the sea
dry land,

21 and the waters were divided.

22 And the people of Israel went
into the midst of the sea on
dry ground, the waters being
a wall to them on their right
hand and on their left.

23 The Egyptians pursued, and went
in after them into the midst
of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses,
his chariots, and his horsemen.

24 And in the morning watch the
Lord in the pillar of fire
and of cloud looked down upon
the host of the Egyptians,
and discomfited the host of
the Egyptians,

J   E   P

XIV   XIV   XIV

25 removing (Gk Syr: clogging)
    their chariot wheels so that
    they drove heavily; and the
    Egyptians said, "Let us flee
    from before Israel; for the
    Lord fights for them against
    the Egyptians."

26 Then the Lord said to Moses,
   "Stretch out your hand over
   the sea, that the water may
   come back upon the Egyptians,
   upon their chariots, and upon
   their horsemen."

27 So Moses stretched forth his
   hand over the sea

27 and the sea returned to its
    wonted flow when the morning
    appeared; and the Egyptians
    fled into it, and the Lord
    routed the Egyptians in the
    midst of the sea.

28 The waters returned and covered
   the chariots and the horsemen
   and all the host (Hb: to all
   the host) of Pharaoh that had
   followed them into the sea;
   not so much as one of them
   remained.

29 But the people of Israel
   walked on dry ground through
   the sea, the waters being a
   wall to them on their right
   hand and on their left.

30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that
    day from the hand of the
    Egyptians; and Israel saw the
    Egyptians dead upon the sea-
    shore.

31 And Israel saw the great work
    which the Lord did against the
    Egyptians, and the people
    feared the Lord; and they
    believed in the Lord and in
    his servant Moses.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Gerhard Hasel, Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 16, n. 18. See also Chapters I and II. See also Langdon B. Gilkey, Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), especially Part I: The Challenge to God-Language.

[2]Albert E. Glock, "The Study and Interpretation of the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVIII, 2 (February 1967), p. 92.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Terrence E. Fretheim, "Jacob, the Church," Luther Theological Review, 11, 1 (May 1972), pp. 6-8.

[5]Glock, pp. 96-100.

[6]Ibid., p. 98.

[7]Ibid., pp. 98-100; Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 238-248.

[8]Fretheim, p. 8.

[9]Fohrer, p. 152.

[10]Glock, pp. 97-98; Fretheim, pp. 10-14; Fohrer, pp. 146-151; Norman Habel, Literary Criticism of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 43-64; Gerhard Von Rad, Old Testament Theology-The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1970), I, pp. 3-68.

[11]Fretheim, p. 14; Fohrer, pp. 130-131, 152-155; Habel, pp. 1-5; Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 199-204.

[12]Sometimes also "El," singular form of "Elohim"; common nouns, they are used to refer also to the gods or idols of other nations.

[13]Fretheim, pp. 14-15.

[14]Ibid., pp. 14-18; Fohrer, pp. 155-158.

[15]Ibid., pp. 204-208; Fohrer, pp. 178-186; Fretheim, 18-21; Habel, pp. 65-84; Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 2nd ed., 1966), pp. 380-393.

[16]Habel, pp. 2, 5, 6.

[17]Martin Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 47-48.

[18]John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 2nd ed., 1972), p. 120.

[19]Anderson, p. 46.

[20]Von Rad, p. 176.

[21]James A. Sanders, Torah and Canon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. xii-xiii. See quotations in Appendix I.

[22]Noth, p. 156; see also pp. 156-175.

[23]Von Rad, p. 14.

[24]Ibid., p. 107.

[25]Bright, p. 124.

[26]Harold H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel: Aspects of Old Testament Thought (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 56.

[27]Robert Davidson, The Old Testament (New York: Lippincott, 1964), p. 26.

[28]Walter Harrelson, Interpreting the Old Testament (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 76ff.

[29]Sidney H. Hooke, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (New York: Nelson, rev. 1962), p. 143.

[30]Von Rad, p. 6.

[31]Bright, pp. 130-139.

[32]Harrelson, p. 85.

[33]Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua (London: Oxford, 1950), pp. 140 ff.

[34]Herbert G. May, "History of Israel--I, To the Exile," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (New York: Nelson, rev. 1962), p. 118.

[35]Glock, p. 91.

[36]Jack Finegan, Let My People Go, A Journey Through Exodus (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 90-94.

[37]Noth, p. 67; Harrelson, pp. 82-83; Von Rad, pp. 15-16, 253.

[38]Roland De Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), pp. 488-489.

[39]Noth, pp. 65-71; Harrelson, pp. 82-83; Von Rad, pp. 15-16, 253.

[40]Mihelic, J. L. "Red Sea," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George A, Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, pp. 19-21.

[41]Finegan, pp. 77-89.

[42]Ibid., p. 80; Anderson, p. 52.

[43]Finegan, pp. 78-89; Bright, pp. 120-121; Von Rad, p. 13; Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Exodus (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967), p. 159; Noth, Exodus, A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 108; J. Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament (Leiden: Brill, 1959), pp. 234-251.

[44]Von Rad, p. 177; James King West, Introduction to the Old Testament - "Hear, O Lord," (New York: MacMillan, 1971), pp. 128-134.

[45]Rowley, The Faith of Israel, p. 58.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Anderson, p. 49.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Cassuto, pp. 177-181.

[50]See bibliography.

[51]For the principles applied in this section and in the following, see among others Fretheim, pp. 10-21; Glock, pp. 97-98; Habel, especially pp. 43-84; Fohrer, pp. 164-186.

[52]Anderson, p. 52; George E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation: The Origins of Biblical Traditions (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1973).

[53]Cassuto, p. 158.

[54]Noth, p. 109.

[55]Ibid., p. 108.

[56]Ibid., p. 111.

[57]Finegan, p. 88.

[58]G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God - Contemporary Scholarship Interprets the Bible (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 179.

[59]William F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican, 1949), p.233.

[60]J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "Introduction and Exegesis, The Book of Exodus," The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, pp. 940-942; Samuel R. Driver, The Book of Exodus (Cambridge: University Press, rev.), 1953, pp. 129-132; A. H. McNeile, The Book of Exodus (London: Methuen, 3rd ed., 1931), pp. 88-89; D. M. G. Stalker, "Exodus," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (New York: Nelson, rev., 1962), pp. 222-223.

[61]Fohrer, pp. 146-165.

[62]Anderson, p. 52.

[63]Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, pp. 47-48.

[64]Anderson, p. 52.

[65]Fretheim, pp. 10-14; Habel, pp. 43-64; Fohrer, pp. 146-152.

[66]Fretheim, pp. 14-18; Fohrer, pp. 152-158.

[67]Fretheim, pp. 18-21; Fohrer, pp. 178-186; Habel, pp. 65-84.

[68]Martin H. Franzmann, "Essays in Hermeneutics," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIX, 8 (August 1948), pp. 595-605. See also XIX, 9 (September 1948), pp. 741-652; XIX, 10 (October 1948), pp. 738-746; Carl F. D. Walther, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church, The True Visible Church of God on Earth," in Walther and the Church, ed. William Dallmann, W. H. T. Dau, and Theodore Engelder (St. Louis: CPH, 1938), Thesis XIII -XXI, pp. 122-127; A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies - Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (St. Louis: Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1965), "Part Two, Summary Statements," pp. 8-10; Answers to Questions Raised Regarding the Document "A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies.

[69]Hasel, pp. cit.; Gilkey, op. cit.

[70]Rylaarsdam, p. 935.

[71]Hooke, p. 143; Von Rad, p. 6; Bright, pp. 130-139; Harrelson, p. 85; Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 140 ff.; May, p. 118; Glock, p. 91.

[72]Cassuto, p. 138-140. See also C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, The Pentateuch - Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans reprint), II, pp. 9 ff., R. A. Stewart, "Passover," The New Bible Dictionary, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 936-937.

[73]Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, "Eruthros," A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, 1897), I, p. 548; William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, "Eruthros," A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), p. 310.

[74]J. L. Mihelic, "Red Sea," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, pp. 14-20; Henry Snyder Gehman, The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1944), p. 510; Wilhelm Gesenius, "Suf," Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über des Alte Testament, rev. Frants Buhl (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 17th ed., 1921), p. 539; Ludwig Koehler und Walter Baumgartner, ed., "Suf," A Dictionary of the Hebrew Old Testament in English and German (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 652.

[75]Cassuto, pp. 155 ff.; Finegan, pp. 77-89; Mihelic, pp. 19-21; Edward Robinson, Later Biblical Researches in Palestine and in the Adjacent Regions (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1857), I, pp. 54-59; John McClintock and James Strong, "Red Sea," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), VIII, pp. 961-972; Keil, pp. 38 ff.

[76]Cassuto, A Commentary on Genesis: From Noah to Abraham (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), pp. 206-208; Kenneth A. Kitchen, Ancient Orient and Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), pp. 80-81; Mendenhall, op. cit.

[77]Andre Neher, Moses and the Vocation of the Jewish People (New Yorker: Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 73-75.

[78]Finegan, pp. 47-57.

[79]Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Exodus, pp. 94 ff., 159-165; Rylaarsdam, pp. 932-935; Keil, pp. 42-45; Noth, Exodus, A Commentary, pp. 109-113.

[80]Cassuto, pp. 165-173; Rylaarsdam, pp. 936-939; Noth, pp. 113-120; Keil, op. cit.

[81]Cassuto, pp. 173-182; Rylaarsdam, pp. 940-946; Noth, pp. 120-126; Keil, pp. 49-57.

[82]Hasel, _op. cit._; Gilkey, _op. cit._

[83]West, p. 13.

[84]Sanders, pp. xi–xii.

[85]J. Coert Rylaarsdam in Habel, p. vii.

[86]_Ibid._

[87]_Ibid._

[88]Sanders, p. xii.

[89]Sanders, pp. xii–xiii.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On the basis of your study of the Exodus account, identify the assumptions underlying the historical critical method which harmonize with the Biblical view of inspiration.

2. On the basis of your study of the Exodus account, what similarities in approach and assumptions do you find inherent in both the historical critical and the historical grammatical methods? the dissimilarities?

3. What view of history is inherent in the historical critical method and how does this affect, for example, the outcome of the study of the Exodus account?

4. What view of history is inherent in the historical grammatical method and how does this, for example affect the outcome of the study of the Exodus account?

5. Can the historical critical method be used with "Lutheran presuppositions" in the study of the Exodus account? Identify such "Lutheran presuppositions" and describe how their use within the framework of the historical critical method affect the outcome of a careful study of the Exodus account.

6. What effect does the use of the historical critical method have on the identity and function of Moses as detailed in the Exodus account? of Israel?

7. In looking at the Exodus account, why does the historical critical method lay so much stress on translating yam suf as the "Reed Sea"?

8. Is the proposal of the historical critical method that the priestly (P) tradition heightens the miraculous in the crossing of the Red Sea in harmony with the view of Scripture?

9. Contrast what happened in the Exodus account from the viewpoint of the historical critical and the historical grammatical methods.

10. Does the use of the historical critical method in the study of the Exodus account result in a more certain and relevant message?

11. Is it fair to evaluate a method of Biblical interpretation in terms of the results it yields, for example, through a study of the Exodus account?

12. What light do the selected parallel passages shed on the Exodus event from the viewpoint of the historical critical method? the historical grammatical method?