

Luther And The Ministry

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Luther: Right or Wrong

EUGENE F. KLUG

A Response To The Leuenberg Concord

TRANSLATED BY JOHN DRICKAMER

The Outside Limits Of Lutheran
Confessionalism In Contemporary
Biblical Interpretation

TUE #1
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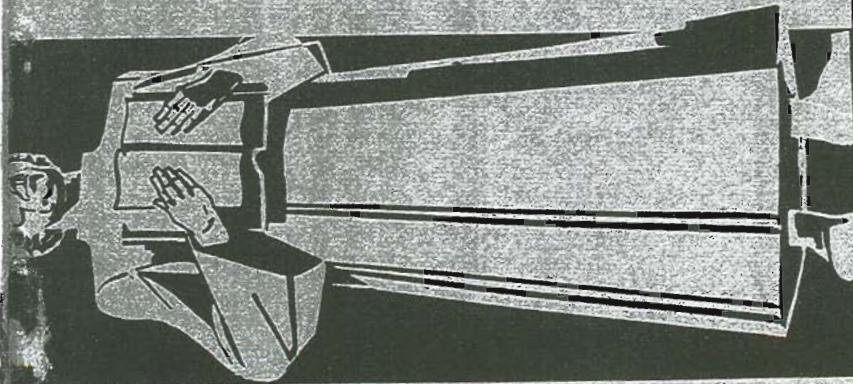
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REINTRODUCING MOSES

A BRIEF LITERARY CRITICAL STUDY

Current Semitic scholarship is fortunate in having at its disposal an array of archaeological and literary material that was previously buried in the sands and caves of the Near East. These most recent discoveries promise to reward the investigator with many helpful insights into the Old Testament. One example might whet the reader's appetite for some additional, exploratory reading.

The Hittites, an ancient Near Eastern people of the mid-second-millennium BC, have left us examples of what the international covenants or treaties were like during that period. Extensive analysis by scholars has indicated that these treaties differ in form and content both with the treaties of the early second-millennium and with the treaties that date from after 1200 B.C.

Now this fact becomes of interest to the student of the Old Testament when he learns that this Hittite covenant form has many affinities with the Sinai covenant in Exodus 20 to 31 and the renewal of that covenant in Deuteronomy 1 to 32. This striking similarity has led many scholars to re-evaluate the position that Exodus and Deuteronomy did not come from Moses, but rather received their final form only in the ninth to sixth centuries B. C.

K. A. Kitchen, lecturer in the School of Oriental Studies at Liverpool University, has asked the question in this manner:

If these works [Exodus and Deuteronomy] first took fixed literary form only in the ninth to sixth centuries B.C. and onward, why and how should their writers (or redactors) so easily be able to reproduce covenant-forms that had fallen out of customary use 300 to 600 years earlier (i.e. after about 1200 B.C.), and entirely fail to reflect the first-millennium covenant-forms that were commonly used in their own day?

This question, in contemporary terms, is akin to someone asking us if we were really the authors of a Shakespearian play that was written in flawless, Elizabethan English. It's hard to conceive that even our most inventive literary genius would purport to be capable of such a task. Shakespeare alone could fashion such a work. Kitchen is saying that neither should we expect such flawless reproduction from some later redactor of the Pentateuch. How much more natural it is to view the material (in this case, Exodus and Deuteronomy), as having been written by someone in milieu of the 16th-13th century B.C.—exactly that time in which this type of literary form was being employed! Scholars must now consider the possibility, even the probability that the Judaic covenant has its origins in the Mosaic era.