

Otwell, John H., I Will Be Your God (Abingdon Press:Nashville) 1967

p. 24 The second method of higher criticism is called historical criticism ((The first was called literary criticism)). This unfolds in three stages.

((1. The reports of events preserved in the O.T. are tested for their accuracy)) Some of the rules used to determine the reliability of a report of an event are as follows. A reliable report is not written before the event happened. Details which did not exist when the event is said to have happened imply that the report was written at the time of the latest of the details. Trustworthy reports of the same event will agree in many ways, and their disagreements can be explained. Internal contradictions indicate either an unreliable narrative, or a narrative made by blending two or more, once independent and conflicting, stories. All materials reflecting a strong, consistent bias must have the bias discounted. The presence of fantastic, fanciful elements - features which contradict our knowledge of the way in which the universe operates - makes a narrative questionable.

p.25 ((2. Prepare the factual narrative)) Old Testament historians constantly must deal with narratives lacking bits and pieces - and sometimes chunks and blocks. This need not be the result of slanted reporting. Accident in passing the report from generation to generation can be the cause of the loss of important information. Whatever the cause for it, the biblical historian usually has only a part of the story. He has reports of some of the events, he can date some of the events in relationship to other events, and he can see some of the kinships that exist between events.

p. 26 ((3. The attempt to date passages which do not refer to events.)) Two methods dominate here. First, when a unique style and viewpoint is shared by several passages, one of which can be dated, the date given the dated passage is given all like material. Isaiah 44.24-45.8 refers to the invasion of Babylonia by Cyrus the Great in 536 B.C. Since Isaiah 40-55 has the same style and viewpoint, all sixteen chapters are given the date assigned Isaiah 44.24-45.8. Second, when only hints to events are present, a passage is given the date which seems most suitable in the light of known history.