

Otwell, John H., I Will Be Your God, 1967

p. 32 We have many different forms, proper ways of saying certain things under certain circumstances. We could write a lease in the form of a Christmas carol, but it would be easier and clearer to use the lease form. . . .

There is no one to tell us what these forms were, since the Jews themselves forgot centuries ago. It gets to be a little like hunting a black cat in the dark.

p. 36 One of the results of the use of historical criticism has been the discovery that it cannot be applied as often in the study of the Old Testament as scholars had hoped. Part of the work of the historical critic is to decide whether or not a passage of scripture contains reliable information about the past. There are certain kinds of literature called legend, which do not lend themselves to study by the tools used by the historian. Such writings may or may not report the events of the past accurately. The historian has no way of determining this from the legends themselves. His conclusion has to be "no verdict."

Much of the Old Testament falls into categories the historians cannot use. This is true of the stories in the Pentateuch as well as such books as Ruth and Jonah .

The discovery that these methods often could not be used seemed to mean that there were many periods of biblical history which would always remain closed to us, and many passages in the Old Testament which could not be studied by means of higher criticism. A little thought, however, made the nature of the problem clear. Historical criticism had not been "disproved"; the limits of its usefulness had been learned. Some of the Old Testament could not be studied fruitfully with this tool. In other parts, there was so little information that the results of the use of historical criticism was unsure. What was needed was new, independent material to study, material which the historian could examine and to which he could apply his methods.

Archaeology fills this need.