

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

p. 44 These ten rules are only a small part of the laws of the Hexateuch, and Scholars now believe that there are at least three different sets of laws, each with its own history: the Covenant Code (Ex. 20.22-23.33; 34) which the Israelites borrowed from the Canaanites, the people living in Palestine when the Israelites entered; the laws in Deuteronomy; and the Priestly Code made up of the balance of the laws in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

Many Christians find the stories in the Hexateuch fascinating . . . Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden . . . Noah's Ark . . . , the Tower of Babel . . . , the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. . . , Jacob and Esau. . . , Rachel at the Well . . . , Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors. . . , the Infancy of Moses . . . , Moses and ^{p. 45} the Burning Bush . . . , the Golden Calf . . . , and many others.

Interest and value, however, are different matters. Christians have always enjoyed the stories of the Hexateuch, but they also have always tried to find meaning there. This has usually raised two problems: Are the laws of the Hexateuch still in force . . . ? And, does the Hexateuch predict or foreshadow the coming of Christ? . . .

Many Christians still debate these questions, but higher criticism has given an understanding of the Hexateuch which many scholars believe to be far closer to the original meaning than those just described. We are interested here in this newer view.

p. 46 When form criticism was used in the Hexateuch, so much was learned that only a few of the general results can be described here. The first of these was that the sources already mentioned (the Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly Document) were found to be collections of passages which originally had been independent of one another. This was so surprising that some scholars decided that the sources themselves had never really ^{p. 47} existed. Others continued to believe that there were sources such as the Yahwist, but they were convinced that the "authors" of these sources really were only editors. A third group of scholars came to believe that the authors of the sources were true authors, and that it was important to study the once independent passages and also the collecting of them into sources such as the Yahwist. One form of the third position is called the "History of Traditions School" and is the position which is followed here.