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Agreement with Morgenstern

Frederick V. Winnett, "Re-examining the Foundations" JBL, Vol LXXXIV, March 1965

p. 3 I turn now to the question of the date of the primeval history. On this matter there is almost complete unanimity of opinion among scholars. They date it to the middle of the ninth century B.C. There is even a pronounced tendency now to date it a century earlier, to the time of David and Solomon.⁴ Some years ago a distinguished and beloved member of this Society, and its president in the year 1941, Julian Morgenstern, dared to raise his voice in opposition to the majority opinion. In an article on "The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," published in the Hebrew Union College Annual for 1939, he wrote as follows: "For many and to me cogent considerations I can not share in the opinion of practically all biblical scholars that the several J strata of Gen. 1-11 must necessarily be pre-exilic by virtue of their being indisputably a part of J." He goes on to date this J material to "the universalistic period of Jewish thought and practice, 516-485 B.C."⁵ / ^{p. 4} Morgenstern's view thus stands in striking contrast to that of most scholars.

It needs to be pointed out that the early dating advocated by the majority is based not on internal evidence but on an assumption, the assumption that the J author of the primeval history is the same person as the J author of the early parts of the patriarchal narratives. The internal evidence, if taken at its face value, is definitely against this assumption and tends to support the late date which Morgenstern proposed. . . .

Those who maintain a tenth- or ninth-century B. C. date for the primeval history are compelled to regard as later interpolations, or to assign to P, all evidence which is contrary to their theory - a procedure which is highly questionable, to say the least. One would have thought that proper procedure would require acceptance of a date in line with the internal evidence.

4 See Artur Weiser, Introduction to the OT, pp. 108, and C. Kuhl, The OT, p. 72

5 Vol. 14, p. 93, n. 114.

((Winnett aligns himself with Morgenstern on the matter of date, and places this material in the time of Deutero-Isaiah or a little later))