

Ringgren, Helmer, Israelite Religion trans by D. R. Green (Fortress Press: Phila) 1966  
A trans. of Israelitische Religion pub. by Verlag, Stuttgart, 1963

p. 17 (cont'd) To be sure, the extreme views of the pan-Babylonian school, which interpreted the patriarchs as figures out of astral mythology, are rejected universally today. Yet in spite of the unprecedented progress of modern archaeology, there is still complete disagreement as to the historical reality underlying the patriarchal narratives.<sup>1</sup>

One fact seems to have been pretty well established: the twelve sons of Jacob are not merely individual tribal ancestors; they stand as actual representatives of the later tribes of Israel.

p. 18 . . . In any event, there does seem to be at least a kernel of historical fact in the patriarchal narratives.

This of course raises a question: To what extent may we regard as historical the picture of the religion of these ancestors of Israel as portrayed in the patriarchal narratives? Do these narratives presuppose and reflect a religion that actually existed at the time, or do they simply mirror the views of later periods? On this point, too, present day scholars are in complete disagreement. Rost, for example, thinks that the three source-documents in Genesis present merely their own idealized pictures of the patriarchs' worship of God, and that they contain hardly anything of historical value.<sup>4</sup> A scholar like Albright, on the other hand, is inclined to view the religious data in the patriarchal narratives as generally trustworthy and historically valuable.<sup>5</sup> Maag finds the basic traits of the patriarchs' religion accurately depicted.<sup>6</sup>

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1 See M. Noth, The History of Israel . . . (2nd ed.; . . . Harper, 1960), pp. 110 ff; J. Bright, A History of Israel (. . . 1959), pp. 60 ff.; also H.H. Rowley, "Recent Discovery and the Patriarchal Age," BJRL, XXXII (1949-50), 44 ff. (reprinted in The Servant of the Lord [ . . . 1952], pp. 271 ff.); V. Maag, "Der Hirte Israels," STU, XXVIII (1958), 2 ff.

4 L. Rost "Die Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen," SVT, VII (Congress Volume, 1960), 346 ff.

5 W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (2nd ed., Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 243 ff

6 Maag, loc. cit.