

Whatever it says in these areas is true, but it makes no attempt to cover them fully. Information gained from archaeology or ancient history can add to our understanding of Bible history but is not necessary for the fulfillment of the Bible's purpose.

Even a subject that takes up so much space in the Bible as the history of Israel is not in itself a part of the Bible's specific purpose. There is a great deal in the Scripture about this history, but thousands of facts that would be essential for a full history of that nation are not mentioned in the Bible and may never be known to us. It is valuable to learn all we can about this area from archaeological studies or from material contained in other documents, and it is interesting to try to relate this material to what is known of the history of Israel from the Bible, but this is apart from God's direct purpose of giving His Word, and we have no reason to expect that we will ever have sufficient material to construct a complete history of Israel.

In line with the belief of the Reformers and their great battle cry, "sola scriptura," the Bible is sufficient for the purpose for which God gave it. There are inexhaustible riches contained in its statements, if studied carefully in the original and compared with contexts in all parts of the Scripture. I wish that the word "hermeneutics" could be restricted to this one area--the finding of the message that God has placed in the Scripture, a message simple in its primary features but extensive enough and involved enough to warrant our whole attention.

When we say that it is sufficient for its purpose we include the idea that it is sufficient as to fullness of content. Almost every sentence that anyone ever writes depends for its full understanding on other sentences that