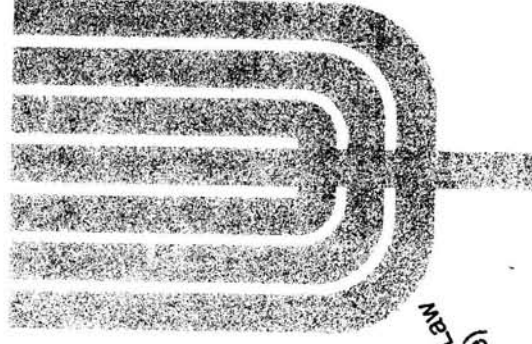


Toward an Old Testament Theology

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engender. In that unity of goal and method unfolded a march of events which the writers described and in a series of interconnected interpretations they likewise boldly announced God's normative views on those events for that generation and those to come.

Chapter 3

The Development of an Outline for Old Testament Theology

An adequate treatment of the conceptual groupings of OT theology necessitates an awareness of the sequence of historical events in the life of Israel. Israel's theology—and ours—is rooted in history. Thus Hebrews 1:1-2 continued that sequence when it affirmed that "God, who in many and various ways had spoken to our fathers in the past by the prophets, had in these last days spoken to us in His Son."

Contrary to the prestigious opinion of Gerhard von Rad and his school, the OT did reflect on Israel's history according to a pre-announced principle of selectivity.¹ That principle by which historical incidents were included or rejected was the consistent prophetic statement: "Thus says the Lord."

This was far from being a mere syncretistic assimilator of traditions which mechanically or charismatically collated existing traditions and interpreted them in the light of the present day. Rather, there was a single principle, a single understanding of all revelation, which sorted things out for writers. It was God's revealed "promise"

¹Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 1:116ff.

in which He would be the hope of all men and effect divine work of universal implications.

Such a stress is not that of a fideistic imposition on the text of a later Christian faith nor the result of a scientifically assured minimum from destructive types of historical and literary criticism. It is rather the claim of the canon itself as it now exists.

Moreover, a definite order of key events and meanings become the repeated subject of numerous sections in the Psalms (136, 105, 78) and the prophets (Jer. 2; Ezek. 16, 20, 23). Beginning either with Creation or the call of Abraham, the narrative usually followed the same pattern of selectivity¹ and emphasis.

The main substance of those events specially selected and interpreted by the writers of the OT could also be recorded in short summaries which Gerhard von Rad designated as an early Israelite Credo—Deuteronomy 26:5-9:

A wandering Aramean was my father; he went down with a few people into Egypt and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. But the Egyptians treated us harshly, they afflicted us, and laid hard toil upon us. Then we cried to Jahweh, the God of our fathers, and Jahweh heard us, and saw our affliction, our toil, and oppression. And Jahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders, and brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.²

Similarly, Joshua 24:2-13 rehearsed much the same history in a form which took on legal status as the citizens of Israel together served as "witnesses against themselves" (v. 22) as to the truthfulness and significance of this historical sequence of events (cf. v. 27).

Therein lies the inner unity to Israel's history and theology. It was more than a "strong tendency towards unification";³ it was a fact of life and the life of the faithful. It was strung out on the washline of history, but it contained accompanying conceptual motifs which the writers claimed were not of their own invention but of God's devising. His was the sole right to interpret, set values, see significances, and to point out meanings for the times and the future.

But what of this historical sequence? How shall the events be grouped? Is there a conceptual convention which can be borrowed from systematics for organizing OT theology? And if there is a method of study which best suits the needs of a new responsible type of exegetical theology which carefully marks the writer's use of language first in the light of his inherited set of terms and concepts

²Ibid., p. 122.

³Ibid., p. 118.

from Scripture antecedent to his day, what are its division points in history? These questions we seek to answer.

THE HISTORIC PERIODS OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Just as the NT apostles and their epistles were in many ways the interpreters of the Acts and Gospels, so OT theology could likewise begin with the prophets for much the same reason. However, even for the phenomenon of biblical prophecy, there was the ever-present reality of Israel's history. All of God's previous saving activity had to be acknowledged and confessed before one could see more steadily and more holistically the further revelation of God. Therefore, we must start where God began: in history—real history—with its attendant geography, men, and events.

Prolegomena to the Promise: Prepatristical Era

The Abrahamic covenant is first given in Genesis 12:1-3. It marks the beginning of both God's election of the man by whom He would deliver the whole world if men would believe and also of Israel's history and theology.

Abraham did, of course, occupy a central place in the climax of revelation. But one must not trade off the moments that led to it as being insignificant or even nonexistent. The text moves from the wideness of all creation to the provincialism and strictures resulting from the successive sins of mankind. Yet it also moves from the threefold plight of man as a result of the Fall, the Flood, and the founding of Babel to the universality of God's new provision of salvation to all men through Abraham's seed.

Furthermore, the key word and concept is the repeated "blessing" of God—a "blessing" existent in only an embryonic state at first but interconnected with subsequent blessings and words of promise from the hands of a gracious and loving God. At first it is the "blessing" of the created order. Then it is the blessing of family and nation in Adam and Noah. The climax came in the fivefold blessing to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 which included material and spiritual blessings.

In the sense, then, of being a word before a word, of running ahead in germinative form, these blessings of the revelation in Genesis 1-11 could be called a prolegomena to the promise.

The spirit of modernity has found serious objections to treating Genesis 1-11 in a straightforward way. However, we believe such objections are poorly grounded and inadequately defended. Our own stance has been to treat the records for what they claim to be

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until they are proven otherwise by artifacts, epigraphs, or related evidential facts.⁴

Provisions in the Promise: Patriarchal Era

So significant was this era that God announced Himself as the "God of the patriarchs" (i.e., "fathers"), or the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moreover, the patriarchs were regarded as "prophets" (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15). Apparently this was because they personally received the word of God. Frequently the word of the Lord "came" to them directly (Gen. 12:1; 13:14; 21:12; 22:1) or the Lord "appeared" to them in a vision (12:7; 15:1; 17:1; 18:1) or in the personage of the Angel of the Lord (22:11,15).

The lifetimes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob form another distinct time in the flow of history. These three privileged recipients of revelation saw, experienced, and heard as much as or more in their combined two centuries of life than all those who lived in the preceding millennia! Consequently, we may safely mark off Genesis 12-50 as our second historic period in the unfolding of OT theology just as was done by later generations who had the written Scripture record.

People of the Promise: Mosaic Era

A son (Gen. 3:15) born to a Semite (Gen. 11:10-27) named Abraham was to be used to form a people and eventually a separate nation. Such a call to nationhood meant that "holiness," or separation unto God, was not an optional feature. Therefore, both concepts were to receive major attention in this era of revelation.

Israel was then called a "kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). Lovingly, God outlined the moral, ceremonial, and civil means of accomplishing such a high calling. It would come in the primary act of the Exodus with God's gracious deliverance of Israel from Egypt, Israel's subsequent obedience of faith to the Ten Commandments, the theology of the tabernacle and sacrifices, and the likes of the covenant code (Exod. 21-23) for civil government.

All the discussion about being a new people of God was elaborated from Exodus 1-40; Leviticus 1-27; and Numbers 1-36. During this whole era, God's prophet was Moses—a prophet who had no equal among mankind (Num. 12:6-8). Indeed, Moses was the pattern for that great Prophet who was to come, the Messiah (Deut. 18:15,18).

⁴See our study, "The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Payne (Waco, Texas: Word, 1970), pp. 48-65.

Place of the Promise: Premonarchical Era

One of the parts of the promise of God that received a full enactment in the events of history and on the pages of Scripture was the conquest of the land of Canaan. The promise of the land as a place where God would cause His *name* to rest was by this time already six centuries old. The ancient word given to Abraham was now to receive at least a seminal fulfillment. Therefore Deuteronomy with its concern about this place of rest (12:8-11) and the book of Joshua with its description of the conquest of that land are clearly joined in concept and act.

But do we have a clear unit of history which can be set off as sharply as the patriarchal or Mosaic eras were by Scripture's own claims? And should this history extend through the period of the Judges to include the theology of the ark-of-the-covenant-of-God narratives in 1 Samuel 4-7? These questions do not admit any decisive conclusions—the times became so distorted and all appeared to be in such flux due to the moral declension of man and the sparsity of the revelation of God. Indeed, the word of God did become "rare" in those days when God spoke to Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1). Consequently, the lines of demarcation are not as sharply drawn even though the central themes of theology and the key events are historically well-recorded.

Our plan, then, is to allow for an overlap during this period of the conquest and occupation of the land. This overlap is between the theme of the place of rest and the emerging demand for a king to rule a nation tired of its experiment with theocracy as it had been practiced by a rebellious nation. At best, the premonarchical era was a time of transition.

However, the history of Joshua, Judges, and even Samuel and Kings was assessed from the viewpoint of the moral standard of Deuteronomy. And its chief connecting points were easily discerned: Deuteronomy 28,31; Joshua 1,12,24; Judges 2; 1 Samuel 12; 2 Samuel 12; 1 Kings 8; and 2 Kings 17. These significant moments in the history of revelation of this period are usually conceded by most biblical theologians today.

King of the Promise: Davidic Era

What Genesis 12:1-3 was to the patriarchal era, 2 Samuel 7 is to the times of David. The forty years of David's reign compare in length to the Mosaic era, but their importance for generations to come defies comparison.

As a prelude to the history of this period, the early signs of regal aspirations in Gideon's son Abimelech, the peoples' request for a

king during the judgeship of Samuel (1 Sam. 8-10), and even the reign of Saul prepare us negatively for the grand reign of David (1 Sam. 11-2 Sam. 24; 1 Kings 1-2; and royal Davidic psalms like Pss. 2, 110, 132, 145).

History and theology combined to emphasize the themes of a continuing royal dynasty and a perpetual kingdom with a rule and realm that would become universal in extent and influence. Yet each of these regal motifs were painstakingly connected to ideas and words from an earlier time: a "seed," a "name" which "dwelt" in a place of "rest," a "blessing" to all mankind, and a "king" who now ruled over a kingdom which would last forever.

Life in the Promise: Sapiential Era

Solomon's forty years were marked by the erection of the temple and by another flurry of divine revelation. In part, this period is much like the premonarchical times in that it too is partially transitional in nature. Yet it also had its own distinctive character as well.

No period of time is more difficult to relate to the whole of a continuing OT theology than that of the wisdom literature of this era found in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and the Wisdom Psalms. Nevertheless, as the Mosaic law presumed and built upon patriarchal promise, so Solomon's wisdom likewise presupposed both Abrahamic-Davidic promise and Mosaic law.

The key concept of the sapiential era was "the fear of the Lord"—an idea already begun in the patriarchal era as the *response* of believing faith (Gen. 22:12; 42:18; Job 1:1, 8-9; 2:3). It was this connecting link that tied the promise and the law into the beauty and fullness of all of man's living in the here and now. The temporal became more than a mere existence; living could now be meaningful, enjoyable, and unified with eternal values and commitments.

Day of the Promise: Ninth Century

The "Day of the Promise" is the first of five great prophetic eras, each with their own basic emphases ranging from the division of the kingdom in 931 B.C. to the postexilic situation.

Now that David's "house" and Solomon's temple had been established, the subjects of each of the multifaceted promises had reached a provisional plateau in their development. God's future ruler was now visible in the line of David and God's personal presence in the midst of his worshipping subjects was dramatized in the temple.

Accordingly, the prophets could now turn their focus on God's world-wide plan and kingdom. Alas, however, Israel's sin also

claimed much of the prophets' attention. Nevertheless, mingled with these words of judgment were the persistently inserted bright prospects of another day when God's everlasting realm and rule, as announced so long ago, would receive its fullest realization.

Many place Joel and Obadiah in the ninth century as the earliest of the writing prophets. While Obadiah could be placed at any of three different times in Judah's history, the best would probably be in the reign of Jehoram (853-841 B.C.), when Edom revolted against Judah along with the Arabians and Philistines (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chron. 21:8-10, 16-17).⁵

Likewise, Joel is usually dated in the reign of Joash of Judah (835-796 B.C.) because there is no mention of Assyria, Babylon, or Persia among the long list of Israel's enemies—presumably because they were not yet on the historical scene.⁶ If this reign be the general time period, then the book must come early in the reign, say from 835-820, while the godly high priest Jehoiada acted as advisor to the youthful King Joash.

Regardless of Joel's and Obadiah's final dating, their theology is clear: it is the day of the Lord. A day is coming in which Yahweh will vindicate Himself by such great works of salvation and judgment that all men will instantaneously recognize these works as divine in their cause. At that time, God will complete what all the prophets anticipated and the believing remnant had hoped for.

Joel's locust plague and Obadiah's concern over Edom's lack of brotherly love were occasions for God's ancient word of promise to be renewed and enlarged.

Servant of the Promise: Eighth Century

The quintessence of OT theology reached its peak during the eighth century. It included the works of such prophets as Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah. Graciously, each was sent a decade or so in advance of the threatened judgment on Damascus, capital of Syria, which fell in 732 B.C., and Samaria, the capital of the northern ten tribes of Israel, which fell in 722 B.C.

Nothing can adequately describe the dizzy heights each of these prophets attained in his writings. Indeed, "To whom shall we liken our God? and to what shall we compare Him?" queried Isaiah of his

⁵The other options are: (1) during Abaz's reign (743-715 B.C.); (2) when Edom invaded Judah (2 Chron. 28:16-18); and (3) during the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chron. 36:15-20).

⁶However, it is puzzling why the Arameans of Damascus are not mentioned also since they put Joash under heavy tribute *late* in his reign (2 Kings 12:17-18; 2 Chron. 24:23-24).

day and ours (Isa. 40:18). Similarly, Micah asked, "Who is a pardoning God like Thee?" (Mic. 7:18). And Amos announced pointedly that God would "raise up the fallen hut of David" again (Amos 9:11).

But dominating the whole era was that magnificent mini-OT theology of Isaiah 40-66 with its key personage the Servant of the Lord from the seed of Abraham and David.

Renewal of the Promise: Seventh Century

At the close of the seventh century came another succession of writing prophets: Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Nahum, and Jeremiah. Again Nahum warned (as had Jonah more than a century earlier) of the imminent destruction that would come on the Assyrian city of Nineveh (which did come in 611 B.C.). The other three prophets likewise warned Judah's capital, Jerusalem, which was hit in 606, 598, and finally fell in 586 B.C. If only men would repent, they could save themselves from the horrors and realities of impending desolation.

Nevertheless, the bleak gloom was not the only word for Judah; there was the joyous prospect of a renewed covenant for a believing remnant. Jeremiah entitled it God's "New covenant" and built around it a program for the rejuvenation of all men, nations, and nature in his little book of comfort (Jer. 30-33). And for Zephaniah there was more light on that coming day of the Lord. In the meantime, Habakkuk thundered out his solution to his own moments of despair and doubt: the just would live by faith.

Yet the ancient themes were also clearly and prominently present in this new advance. The lines of continuity stretched out especially to those days when the tripartite formula first heard by the patriarchs and Moses would be a total reality: "I will be your God, you shall be My people and I will dwell in the midst of you." So it was to be then and in the future.

Kingdom of the Promise: Exilic Times

Ezekiel and Daniel, while living in Babylonian Exile, continued to sharpen even more clearly how it was that the coming "Good Shepherd" would one day reign over a reunited twelve-tribed Israel in Canaan. Yes, the Son of man would come with the clouds of heaven and would be given a dominion, glory, and kingdom wherein all people, nations, and languages would serve Him. His dominion would be an everlasting dominion which would not pass away, and His kingdom would be such that would not be destroyed. Earthly kingdoms would come and go, but His would never succumb.

The Development of an Outline for Old Testament Theology

In this regal note these two exiled prophets led Israel into the sixth century and new day for all mankind. The scope and majesty of what had been so anciently promised to Abraham and David was staggering.

Triumph of the Promise: Postexilic Times

Together, the histories of Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Chronicles, and the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi make up the final note of revelation in the OT canon.

They move from the despondency of conditions in Israel after their return from the seventy years of Babylonian Exile to the complete triumph of God's person, word, and work. What seemed to be small and insignificant to them in a day like 520 B.C. was directly connected in glory and durability with God's final wrap-up of history. Was the rebuilt temple small and insignificant in their eyes? Yet it was *that* very temple whose glory would be even greater than the Solomonic temple. No work done at the urging of God's prophets could be regarded solely on empirical grounds. There was the larger connection of the part to the whole of God's total finale in history. Men must now look up, believe, and work. Their King was coming, riding on a donkey, bringing salvation (Zech. 9:9). He would even go forth and fight all the nations of the earth, which one final day would gather to do battle against Jerusalem (Zech. 14).

And as if to reestablish the validity of the roots of this messianic vision of the kingdom of God on earth, the chronicler used Israel's past history to show the normality of this vision after the pattern of the Davidic "house" and the Solomonic temple and worship.

So the history of Israel lengthened, but the seminal roots of her theology remained intact as the plant grew into a fully developed tree with each new growth.

THE KEY ITEMS IN EACH HISTORIC PERIOD

The situation is just what Patrick Fairbairn assessed it to be:

In this outline, which we present, chiefly because of the happy manner in which it connects together the beginning and the end, and exhibits the analogy that subsists between God's method of working in nature and in grace, only some of the more obvious links are noticed. When the matter is looked at more closely, far more is discovered of the progressive unfolding of the first promise and the interconnection between it and subsequent prophecies and of these again with each other.⁷

⁷Patrick Fairbairn, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1856), p. 185.

So the first of God's word of blessing-promise in the Creation was followed by that embryonic word in Eden given to the woman's seed: there would be a victorious Seed over a sniping seed of Satan. Before we reach the time of Abraham, this word is enlarged in the benediction of Noah on Shem to a whole race or a line in whose tents God would dwell. Hence, the key items in this prepatristal time were "blessing," "seed," and a race in the midst of whom God "dwelt."

The patriarchs also freely received God's benediction in an heir ("seed"), an inheritance ("land"), and a heritage ("all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"—the gospel according to Gal. 3:8).

The Mosaic era at first stressed Israel as God's "son," His "firstborn." With the Exodus, God called the Israelites jointly into being "a royal priesthood and a holy nation" to Him. Subordinate to this high election to privilege was an election to service. Israel was to be holy and clean. The former meant she was to be totally and entirely separated unto God body, soul, and life. The latter called her to be prepared and fit for the worship of God. Adequate instruction in proper morality was linked to God's abiding character and His work in the Exodus. Likewise, provision for restoration to divine favor in case of any human failure to meet that moral standard was given in the sacrificial system.

The themes of the premonarchical era revolve around the "rest" of God, Spirit of God, ark of the covenant, and the injunction to love, fear, and serve God with all of one's heart, soul, strength, and mind.

For David, it was a dynasty ("a house"), a "throne," and a "kingdom." For Solomon it was the "fear of God" as the beginning of wisdom, living, knowing, and acting. As the palace was the symbol of the former era of the monarchy, especially under the glorious days of David, so the temple and the house built by wisdom were the marks of the Solomonic era.

The prophets then took up in sequence the themes of the day of the Lord, the Servant of the Lord, the New covenant, the kingdom of God, and the triumph of God's plan.

But it all belonged to one plan. As Carl Paul Caspari summarized it:

The Old Testament prophets form a regular succession; they are members of an unbroken continuous chain . . . When, therefore, the Spirit of God came upon a prophet and irresistibly impelled him to prophesy (Amos 3:8), it naturally happened first, that here and there, sometimes more sometimes less, he clothed what the Spirit imparted to him in words of one or other of the prophets he had heard or read—the words of his prophetic forerunner thus

cleaving to his memory and forming part of the materials of utterance of which the Spirit availed himself; and second, that the later prophet attached himself to the prophetic views of the earlier, and in the power of the prophetic Spirit . . . either confirmed them anew by a fresh promulgation, or expanded and completed them.⁸

And so it could be said for the whole OT canon.

THE PROVISION FOR UNIQUE ITEMS

Not everything was a bland repetition nor a recasting in a new situation of the words of one or more of the writer's forerunners. There was, to again use Caspari's words, "a fresh promulgation" which developed almost completely new areas of thought in that single plan of God's promise.

While each of these fresh branches of teaching were frequently linked by historical antecedents or by way of response to the accumulated canon up to that point, often they were so startling in their novelty as to threaten later attempts at tracing their continuity with the existing canon. The best example of this is, no doubt, the wisdom literature. It was so disparate and diverse from the revelation which claimed to precede it that many to the present day still cannot see any connection at all. Consequently, it can be used as a sure sign of a unique and innovative item if some are willing to conclude that it is a novel, unattached oddity.

Second only to wisdom literature is the law and its placement alongside the Abrahamic-Davidic promise. But again, the text insists on its points of continuity, especially with the patriarchal era. But the massiveness of original revelation which develops what it means to be a people of God is staggering. It too must go down as being another key instance of a major new item in the revelation of God's single plan. In fact, it is so new that most again question its continuity rather than its innovative abilities.

But more should be listed here than wisdom and law. On the one hand, there was the constant narrowing and making more specific of what the ultimate fulfillment was to be. It was a sort of election within the election, i.e., a man David from a tribe of Judah, from a nation Israel, from a race of Semites, from the seed of a woman. On the other hand there was a constant expansion and completion of the nascent projections in event, thought, and expression. In this process there was a constant lifting of the technical terms, hopes, and concepts of the writer's forerunners as he con-

⁸As cited by Fairbairn, *ibid.*, p. 199.

tinued the unbroken, continuous chain in the emerging details of the plan of God: His promise. But each writer added to the theme. The writers of the OT were more than mere parrots. They were participants in a long line of revelation, true, but they were also recipients of additional revelation *par excellence*.

THE RESULTING OUTLINE

The resulting shape that emerges for OT theology with its "long-cut" diachronic base and normative implications for exegetical theology or expository preaching is as follows:

I. Prolegomena to the Promise: Patriarchal Era

- A. Word of Creation
- B. Word of Blessing
- C. First Word of Promise: A Seed
- D. Second Word of Promise: The God of Shem
- E. Third Word of Promise: A Blessing to All the Nations

II. Provisions in the Promise: Patriarchal Era

- A. Word of Revelation
- B. Word of Promise
 - 1. An Heir
 - 2. An Inheritance
 - 3. A Heritage
- C. Word of Assurance
- D. Ruler of Promise
- E. God of Promise

III. People of the Promise: Mosaic Era

- A. My Son, My Firstborn
- B. My People, My Possession
- C. Kingly Priests
- D. An Holy Nation
- E. The Law of God
- F. The Tabernacled God

IV. Place of the Promise: Premonarchical Era

- A. Inheritance of the Land
- B. Rest in the Land
- C. Chosen Place in the Land
- D. Name Dwelling in the Land
- E. Conquest of the Land

- F. Prophetic History in the Land
 - 1. Repentance and Blessing
 - 2. Predictive Word and Fulfilled Event
 - 3. A Prophet like Moses

V. King of the Promise: Davidic Era

- A. A Promised King
 - 1. A Usurping Ruler
 - 2. A Rejected Ruler
 - 3. An Anointed Ruler
- B. A Promised Dynasty
 - 1. A House
 - 2. A Seed
 - 3. A Kingdom
 - 4. A Son of God
- C. A Charter for Humanity
- D. A Promised Kingdom
 - 1. The Ark and the Kingdom
 - 2. The Royal Psalms and the Kingdom
 - 3. The Succession Narrative and the Kingdom

VI. Life in the Promise: Sapiential Era

- A. The Fear of the Lord
- B. Life in the Lord
- C. Integration of Life and Truth in the Lord
- D. Wisdom from the Lord
- E. Eudaemonism and the Lord

VII. Day of the Promise: Ninth Century

- A. The Prophets and the Promise
- B. The Promise in the Ninth Century
- C. Edom and the Promise: Obadiah
- D. The Day of the Lord: Joel

VIII. Servant of the Promise: Eighth Century

- A. Rebuilding David's Fallen Hut: Amos
- B. Freely Loving Israel: Hosea
- C. Mission to the Gentiles: Jonah
- D. Ruler of Israel: Micah
- E. The Promise Theologian: Isaiah

IX. Renewal of the Promise: Seventh Century

- A. Mission to Gentiles Revisited: Nahum
- B. The Day of the Lord: Zephaniah

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- C. The Just Shall Live by Faith: Habakkuk
- D. The Word of the Lord: Jeremiah
- X. Kingdom of the Promise: Exilic Times
 - A. The Good Shepherd's Reign: Ezekiel
 - B. The Promised Kingdom's Success: Daniel
- XI. Triumph of the Promise: Postexilic Times
 - A. God's Signet Ring: Haggai
 - B. God's Conquering Hero: Zechariah
 - C. God's Messenger of the Covenant: Malachi
 - D. The Kingdom Is the Lord's: Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther

Chapter 4

The Connections Across Historical Epochs of Emerging Themes in Old Testament Theology

Whenever biblical theologians have identified some key terms or category as a theological center for organizing the developing theology of either or both testaments (as we have also done here), immediately they are confronted with the mass of diverse emphases in Scripture. For some, it is more than a diversity of subject matter. The multiplicity of ideas amounts to nothing less than contradictions and reversals of opinion between the successive writers of Scripture. Even when the text is treated fairly in its final canonical shape,¹ the

¹We shall avoid the discussion that belongs to OT introduction or to the history of Israelite religion, viz., the process in the formation of that text, the results of literary criticism, and tradition-historical criticism. Suffice it here to say that evangelicals do believe in and utilize higher criticism, form criticism, etc. What they cannot agree with is the use of imaginary or hypothetical sources (Chronicles and Kings refer to many *real* sources, cf. Luke 1:1-4) and philosophical or sociological presuppositions which cannot stand the test when applied to epigraphical materials uncovered by the archaeologists of comparable age, style, and character as the biblical texts since the antiquity and authorship of many of the excavated texts are secure on other grounds! Cf. W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Present State of Old Testament Studies," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 18(1975): 69-79.