

**Lecture 27- Discussion of *The Art of Biblical History* (II)**

*The Art of Biblical History* seeks to address basic questions that all Bible readers might ask: Is the Bible a history book? What do we mean by “history” anyway? In what sense, if at all, is biblical historicity important to faith? Are there guidelines for discovering what historical truth claims a particular passage might be making?

**Key Terms**

History & truth, historical-critical approach, social-scientific approach, modern literary approach

**Lecture Objectives**

- Briefly identify and explain major issues associated with the relationship between history and truth.
- Identify implications of one’s understanding of the relationship between history, truth, and historiography for one’s Christian life and service.

**Preliminary Questions**

- Consider again the narrative of the walls of Jericho falling. If it were discovered that, in fact, Jericho had not been razed, how would your faith be impacted? If you say your faith would have been in vain, why? If you said your faith would not be affected, why?

**Discussion of *The Art of Biblical History* (II)**

I. Title/Preface

II. Introduction

III. History and the Genre(s) of the Bible: Is the Bible a History Book? (Chpt. 1)

IV. History and Fiction: What is History? (Chpt. 2)

V. History and Truth: Is Historicity Important? (chpt. 3) (cont.)

A. Why is historicity important?

1. What you think about the importance of the historicity of the biblical text says a lot about what you conceive to be the essence of the Christian faith.
2. Gerhardus Vos -
3. George Ramsey - “If Jericho was not razed, is our faith in vain?”
4. If a truth claim of Scripture can be shown to be wrong, what credibility do the other truth claims have?
5. D.F. Strauss- criteria for establishing non-historicity of biblical accounts moved scholarship in a bad direction

How would you answer this question? What’s lost if it is given up?

VI. History and Modern Scholarship: Why do Scholars Disagree? (Chpt. 4)

Modern approaches err by being one-sided

A. Historical critical approach

Ernst Troelstch - 3 principles of historical-critical method

1. Criticism - initial skepticism of one’s sources
2. Analogy - experience in the present is the key to the past
  - \* William J. Abraham *Divine Intervention and the Limits of Historical Criticism*
3. Correlation - one event prepares for and leads to another event.
  - a. Natural event
  - b. Human personal agency
  - \* The traditional practice of the historical-critical method has been anti-theological.

B. Social-scientific approaches

1. Sociological approaches
2. New archeological approaches

a. These approaches have low regard for ideographic narratives. Rather, these approaches are nomothetic

C. Modern literary approaches

\* Problem: an anti-historical tendency in some literary approaches

VII. History and Hermeneutics: How Then Should We Read the Bible “Historically?” (Chpt. 5)

A. Worldview issues

1. Know where I am coming from
2. Know where other people are coming from
3. Know where the Bible is coming from

B. Methods

1. Listen carefully
2. Test the truth claims for truth value
3. Present arguments

VIII. An Extended Example: The Rise of Saul (Chpt. 6)

Can a Christian glean anything useful from these approaches?