

# HOSEA LESSON 36

## The Foibles of Scholarship

It is fascinating, and sometimes aggravating, to watch academic scholarship do its work with the Bible. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw prodigious energy poured into source criticism, which splits Bible books into smaller pieces. ... The tendency has been to tear Bible books apart. Now a movement comes along that wants to combine parts of the Bible that were intended to be separate. It is as if the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme.

Partly at fault is scholarship's compulsion to always come up with something new. Seemingly, you cannot be a respected scholar by simply holding to the tried and true findings of the past. Also at fault, when thinking of the Bible, is the fact that many prominent biblical scholars are not interested in reading the Bible as a message from God to direct our faith and life. Since they are blind to the spiritual purpose of the Bible, they become preoccupied with external matters.

## Evangelicals and Messianic Prophecy

Also disturbing ... is the fact that there are contemporary evangelicals who "reject the idea that the Hebrew Bible has specific predictions of the Messiah." They say that the Old Testament prophets had only their contemporary situation in mind and did not write with messianic intent. They claim that New Testament writers later applied the words of the prophets to Christ, even though Christ was not originally envisioned in the text. ... Evangelicals who read the Old Testament in this way hold to the inspiration of the Bible, but on this topic, they give the impression that they have been influenced by historical criticism. ... An example of the retrospective approach is Peter C. Craigie's commentary on the Psalms. In regard to Psalm 16, Craigie says: "The psalm, with respect to its initial meaning, is neither messianic nor eschatological in nature. Yet it is apparent that in the earliest Christian community, the psalm was given a messianic interpretation with respect to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." ... Did David intend that his words would guide people of his day to think about the coming Messiah? Or did David write only about himself, and then when the Messiah came, the early Christians noticed the correspondence?

Scripture answers these questions. In his Pentecost sermon, Peter said this about David: "Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on this throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah" (Acts 2:30-31). Philip told Nathanael, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth" (John 1:45). About Isaiah, the apostle John wrote, "Isaiah said these things because he saw his [Christ's] glory and spoke about him" (John 12:41). The Bible says that the Old Testament writers spoke and wrote about Jesus.

Tragically, what is lost in ... the other systems is exactly the same: Christ vanishes from the Old Testament. Christ and his atoning work are minimized. Christ does not receive the glory. Here is the prize jewel ... : **Christ is always front and center, even in the Old Testament.**

