**The Bible and Higher Criticism – BD39-02**

We will consider the liberal view of Scripture and how it came to that view. We have been tracing the manuscript records of the Old and New Testaments. We have followed the background of our English Bible through the Old English period and then as the language developed in to the Middle English with the various translators in each section, and we have come to the first translator of the English Bible John Wycliffe. Middle English continued to evolve into our modern English of today, and in time another translation was needed into English that was readable to people since the time that Wycliffe did his work.

We found that that time arrived in the day of a man named William Tyndale. It was an opportune time because of certain great things which had taken place in the world. One was the invention of the printing press in 1450 which now made it possible, instead of taking ten months to make a copy of Wycliffe’s Bible, in a short time hundreds and hundreds of copies could be made at a fraction of the cost.

Also there was the capture of Constantinople by the Turks which resulted in driving out Christian scholars, and with them went their learning and their valuable manuscripts.

Then there was the printing of Erasmus’s Greek testament, the first Greek testament in print in 1516. This was one year before the Protestant Reformation began in Wittenberg, Germany. Of course, the Protestant Reformation, being based upon the authority of the Word of God, it was crucial to have this printed testament.

Then there were the various discoveries of exploration which were broadening the outlook of people all over the civilized world.

**William Tyndale**

So the scene was now set for the translating of our English Bible into modern English. This was done by a man named William Tyndale. He was born in 1484 and he died in 1536. William Tyndale determined to make a new English translation to replace the one that Wycliffe had made. Wycliffe translated the Bible into English, not from Greek and Hebrew, but he translated it from the Latin Vulgate version. Tyndale wanted a Bible translated from the original languages. He prepared himself to do this. He had studied under Erasmus who had prepared what became the Textus Receptus, the first printed copy of the Greek New Testament. Erasmus agreed with Tyndale that the Bible should be translated into the language of the people. Tyndale also had a teacher, a professor … who had stressed the exposition of the Word from the original Greek and Hebrew languages. This professor was in the habit of gathering people together and explaining the Bible to them on the basis of what the original said. He was an expository preacher. This had a deep influence upon William Tyndale.

The opposition to the Roman Catholic Church errors and the abuses and the sympathy with the Protestant Reformation which was taking place on the continent all served to make William Tyndale a marked man in England. It was illegal at this time to publish the English Bible in England. So consequently he left England and went to Germany where he went to work in 1525 and completed in secrecy the English translation of the New Testament. He had to smuggle this back into England in one way or another. Hidden in sacks and luggage and baggage of one kind or another it was being shipped into the country. The King of England at this time was the famous Henry VIII. He was opposed to the circulation of the Tyndale New Testament but, do what he could, the King could not stop the copies flowing in and people buying up the testaments as quickly as they were made available. As a matter of fact, the king’s agents made contacts with people on the continent who had access to the printing of the Tyndale Bible, and the King’s agents made arrangements to buy the printed copies of Tyndale’s Bible in order to burn them. The agents were very glad to make this deal because they jacked the price up and charged the king’s agents enough to be able to produce twice as many Bibles after they burned the ones that they had sole them. So the king himself contributed in a great way to the circulation of the Tyndale Bible by providing ample profits for its continued reprinting.

In time Tyndale, while living Antwerp, was betrayed one night when going out to dinner with a friend, a man he thought was his friend. As they left the lodging where Tyndale lived, the king’s agents, under the order of Charles V, king of Spain and king of most of Europe in 1535—the king’s agents were there and they arrested William Tyndale because of his work of translating the Bible. He was held in prison for 16 months. During that time he worked on his translation of the Old Testament which he was never able to complete. Many efforts were made to secure the release of this brilliant and dedicated godly man, translator of the Word of God, but the efforts were to no avail. Finally he was tried, condemned, and executed in 1536. Since he was not a Baptist, he was not burned alive. Only Baptists (Anti-Baptists) were burned alive. Since he was not an Anti-Baptist, he was strangled first and then his body was burned at the stake. Just before he died, he lifted his eyes heavenward and he said, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” Three years later, Henry VIII ordered Tyndale’s New Testament to be read in England.

Now our King James Version that many of you hold in your hand this morning, just to show you how good a translation that Tyndale produced: Our King James translation is in effect a fifth revision of the translation of Tyndale. How much indeed we owe to this godly scholar who gave his life to make Bible doctrine available in a language that we can understand.

From the time of Tyndale to the King James translation there were a series of English Bibles that came along. The first one was the Coverdale Bible in 1535. This was a translation from German and Italian versions, so it was again a translation of a translation. In 1537 came the Matthews Bible. This was actually a combination of the parts of the New Testament and Old Testament that Tyndale had translation, and then the Coverdale version was added to fill in those areas in the Old Testament that Tyndale had not completed. It was in effect the first revision of the Tyndale Bible. In 1539 came the Great Bible. This was a revision of the Matthews Bible. It was called the Great Bible because the pages were so large—13.5 inches by 7.5 inches. It was the first English Bible officially authorized by Henry VIII. It was the second Tyndale revision. Then in 1539 came the Taverner’s Bible which was a slight revision again of the Matthews Bible.

In 1560 came a Bible that really took hold in England. It was called the Geneva Bible because it was done by English reformers who had been driven into exile, so they went to Geneva in Switzerland, the stomping ground of John Calvin and the reformed theologians. This was the time of persecution in England under Bloody Mary. From Greek and Hebrew, which had now become very popular in England, with the sympathetic surrounding of Geneva, they translated the Bible into English and made a very good translation. This translation was quietly approved by Queen Elizabeth. It held sway stronger and stronger among the people.

In 1568 the Bishops Bible was translated. It was done by the clergy in order to counter the popularity of the Geneva Bible. It wasn’t entirely the Bible translation itself that disturbed them, but the translators in those days had a way of putting commentaries in the notes, so when you bought a Bible, you not only received the translation but you received comments in the notes, sort of like your Scofield Bible. You have the translation but you have certain notes that are inserted along with it. These notes were often not complimentary to the clergy nor to the divine rights of kings. The Bishops Bible was the fourth Tyndale version and it was never really very popular. It did not succeed in replacing the Geneva Bible.

Elizabeth I, Queen of England, in Elizabethan era had a cousin, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. Mary was a Roman Catholic. She married Lord Darnley. They had a son who became James who became James VI of Scotland. Mary in time was driven from Scotland and the throne was given to her son James. James was reared a staunch Calvinistic Protestant. There were many conspiracies on the part of sympathizers with Mary Stuart to assassinate her cousin Elizabeth. In time, in order to put an end to this, it was necessary for Elizabeth to order the execution of Mary Stuart which she did in 1587. When Elizabeth I died, James VI of Scotland became James I of the united empire of England and Scotland. One of the first things he did on assuming the throne was to call a meeting of a thousand Puritan clergymen to discuss the matters of church reform. During their discussions, nothing particular came of those discussion, but one idea did come out. The recommendation was made that a new English translation of the Bible be undertaken under the royal auspices. This appealed very much to James I who was no mean scholar in his own right.

So during the Elizabethan era there had been great advancement in English literature, in style. There had also been much progress in Greek and Hebrew scholarship. So the idea pleased the king and it was a timely thought, so in 1604 he appointed 54 men—men of various backgrounds but all who had good scholarship. By and large, as far as we can tell, they were men who respected the Bible as the written Word of God. They translated it with that respect. Forty seven of them finally finished in 1611. They worked in six teams—two at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. The translation was not at all well-received. The first printing was filled with many errors, but the king was pleased with it. He indicated that it was *the* version, so it came to be known as the Authorized Version. For over 300 years it was the favorite in the English-speaking world, and is a prime translation in our day. Since then there have been other attempts to update the King James Version but none have been able to put together what these 47 men finally produced in the way of the flow of the English language, the style, and the conveying of the accuracy of the Word. It is a very accurate translation, especially when it has been updated with words that have changed meaning. As in your New Scofield Bible, these words are corrected right in the text itself, and the old word is put out in the margin so as you read along you read the corrected word.

One problem that they did have was that in their desire to rise to the literary style of the age in which they lived, they did follow the policy of using different English words for the same Greek word, and this is not always desirable. You have some places where you have three consecutive verses that use the identical Greek word in each verse, and in each verse they used a different English word to translate it. So you miss some of the significance of what the Scriptures say because they varied these words. However, this was a magnificent achievement. They did not have all of the manuscripts that we have today. They worked from the Textus Receptus which originated with the text that Erasmus had put together. Their manuscripts actually didn’t go back farther than the 10th century. However, since then the later manuscripts have not appreciably changed, by and large, the text of the New Testament, and certainly has not vitally affected any doctrinal area.

So we come with the King James Version. Since then of course there have been all kinds, and we can’t take time this morning to run through all of them. In 1881 to 1885 the English Revised Version was produced. This was an attempt to retain as much the flavor and color of the King James Version, but to correct it on the basis of later manuscripts. This never seemed to take hold too well. The American Standard Revised Version in 1901 was an American expression of this English version.

The Revised Standard Version in 1946 was produced in this country as a result of liberal scholarship. The New English Bible in 1961 was produced in England, also the result of liberal scholarship. Both of those translations you will notice that in the preface they say that whenever they refer to deity they will use the word “thou” and “thee,” and when refer to people they will use the English word “you.” Then you will discover that as you read about the Lord Jesus Christ as He went about His ministry on this earth, you will discover the word “you” being referred to Him. This is a subtle way that liberal scholarship has of conveying their viewpoint of the humanity of Christ and of stripping Him of His deity. So, therefore, you have to be careful as you read these Scriptures that there is a liberal bias that has been injected.

When Isaiah says that a virgin shall conceive, they translate it as a “young woman” on the basis that the Hebrew word “almah” can be translated “young woman” as well as “virgin.” However, when that same verse is quoted in the New Testament Scriptures, the Greek word “parthenos” is used, and that can only mean “virgin.” It can’t mean anything else, which indicates to us what God the Holy Spirit meant back there in the Old Testament when that Hebrew word was used. The translators should therefor had taken their clue, if they had respected the supernatural origin of the Bible and the superintendency of God the Holy Spirit, they should have taken their clue from the New Testament as to how to translate that variable word in the Old Testament.

So this is the sort of thing that you need to be aware of. We won’t go into that, but there are many many translations, and they’re coming out regularly. There is one that is a paraphrase that perhaps we should mention. It’s called Good News for Modern Man. That does not identify itself as a paraphrase, but it is a paraphrase. It is always important that you recognize that when you read a paraphrase you are not reading the Word of God. I think it is unfortunate when volumes are written that the authors will sometimes quote from paraphrased editions. Paraphrased editions have a way of conveying an impression to people that the Word of God as translated from the original text as a translation is dead, but when somebody comes along who has a knack for words and he puts what the Bible says in his own words, it comes alive and becomes a living Bible. But this is deceptive and it gives people the wrong impression. Only people who are not versed in Bible doctrine find a true translation to be dead. It is people who are not versed in the Word of God that find a paraphrase to be living. But a paraphrase is a commentary. It’s how an author express this in his own words.

Somebody came up to me last Sunday morning and said, “You know it’s strange. You mentioned that once before about paraphrases. For a long time I noticed that I’d read a paraphrased edition and it would leave me cold. I’d go to the Word of God and my heart would be blessed.” She said, “I didn’t really why. I didn’t fully understand that a paraphrase was no the Word of God.” So don’t get in the habit of saying, “I’m going to spend time with the Lord,” and you reach over and pick up a paraphrase. You pick up a paraphrase when you study the Word of God just like you pick up a commentary and read what a writer has said.

Now let’s take a look at the modern view of the Bible because this is important to see where we are today. There are certain basic views that you may hold now toward this translation that has come to you over the scene of history in so many ups and down. One view is that the Bible is authoritative and that it is an inerrant revelation. That means that it has no mistakes in it. Also that it is from God and consequently it has the right to command and to enforce obedience. This means that you view the Bible as a supernatural product of divine inspiration. This is of course what the Bible claims for itself that it is. In this case a student of the Bible will subject to the teachings of Scripture and he will follow those teachings wherever they may lead. Now that’s one attitude toward the Bible.

Another attitude toward the Bible is that the Bible is a purely human production filled with errors, myths, and inventions. This is the attitude which is most prevalent in our day. This is the attitude that by far the majority of ministers hold to concerning the Bible, that it is a book filled with errors, myths, and inventions—yet a book that has valuable instruction and ideals. But you must understand that the majority of religious leaders hold this second view, or you will be deceived because somebody who is a prominent religious leader will get up and open his mouth on some religious subject, and if you don’t know how to classify him, you’ll be inclined to take what he says as gospel truth rather than being prepared to have some insidious little error slipped in to you.

**Higher Criticism**

This is the viewpoint which has come to be called higher criticism. Higher, or historical, criticism is a study of the date, the composition, the nature, and the origin of the books of the Bible. We have already been looking somewhat at what is called lower criticism, or textual criticism, which is a study of the text itself to determine how the books originally were written—what the original manuscripts look like. Higher criticism today, while in itself is not an objectionable study. We do want to know who wrote these books. We do want to know something about their composition, and so on. But higher criticism, as it is constituted today, has a deep liberal bias, so it has come to be called and identified as destructive higher criticism. This is Satan’s effort to destroy the Word of God. Satan must destroy the effectiveness of the Word of God toward the unbeliever just as he must neutralize it relative to its doctrinal instruction to you as a believer.

So higher criticism rejects the statements of the Scripture as being authoritative, and instead it submits them to human judgment. It treats the Bible, in other words, on a par with any other piece of written literature.

Now the theory of higher criticism is one that perhaps you ought to know about because those of you who have students who take Bible courses in secular universities, you have friends who have friends who have gone to college where they have studied the Bible as literature are going to be confronted with certain ideas that will throw you if you’ve never heard about them before. Higher criticism began in the 18th century, the age of reason. It was based upon three principles of rationalism. Here they are:

Number 1: Things are go be accepted not because of their age or custom, but because of their reasonableness. “I do not believe a thing because it has always been believed; because my parents held this; because this historically has been accepted. I only believe now what is reasonable to me.”

Principle number 2 was that the elevation of reason—reason was to be elevated as the supreme judge as the supreme judge in all affairs of human interest. What is best for humanity is to be determined, rationalism says, by reason—by sitting down and thinking through. Here’s a problem in society. We do not go to some authority like the Bible and say, “Well, what does the Bible teach about war so we will know what to do in Vietnam? No.” We will not take a look at poverty and say, “No what does the Bible teach, of principles, relative to poverty so that we will know what to do with poverty in this country?” Rationalism says we will determine these questions and solutions entirely on our reason and our thinking.

The third principle was to give a high estimate to the moral qualities of man, as a man, minimizing the necessity of the grace of God. That man had a great spark of good in him. That man, if he were given the right conditions would blossom out and would welcome that man who was given an opportunity to solve his poverty problems would welcome it. That man who was given an opportunity to solve his criminal tendencies would welcome it. That man who was given an opportunity to solve his problems of human conflict in international affairs, he would welcome it. He would act with integrity. There is a good in man. The boy is good. Why does he steal your car? Because you were bad enough to leave your keys in it when you walked into the store. That’s why that good boy stole your car. Now that’s rationalism. That’s intelligence of the highest kind.

Now rationalism, of course, had some pretty sharp boys leading it. Let’s take a look at them briefly. It started with a man name Semler. Mr. Semler was not too bad in a way. He was a professor of theology. He is called the father of German rationalism. He proposed a theory called the accommodation theory. This was that Jesus Christ and the apostles accommodated themselves to the prejudices, the errors, and the superstition of the people in the time in which they lived. That is, Jesus knew that there was no such thing as miracles. Jesus knew that there was no such thing as demon possession or resurrection, but He accommodated Himself because people believed that these things were true, and he was trying to lead them into a better way of life. One of the original social gospel concepts was interjected here by Semler.

So the attempt was here to make the Bible acceptable to an age of rationalism. In other words, so you didn’t have to condemn the Bible for what it said relative to what is supernatural. Semler says, “The Bible doesn’t really teach that. The Bible is only explaining how Jesus and the apostles accommodated themselves with those ideas, but they weren’t really teaching that. As a result he also rejected several Old Testament books as non-canonical simply because these books violated these three principles of rationalism.

The second man that came along was a man named Eichhorn (1752 – 1826). He was also a professor and he is called the father of higher criticism. Eichhorn proposed three principles which became the basis of the higher critical analysis of Scripture, and it tore the Bible to shreds. One: Eichhorn declared that ancient people attributed to the direct action of God whatever awed them and whatever was beyond their power of understanding. So he said this is what the people of the Bible did. They found something they couldn’t understand or something that frightened them, and they said, “Oh, god did that.”

Secondly, he said there was a principle of exaggeration among Oriental people, which is the norm. Therefore, what they say is not to be taken as literal fact, and rationalism decides what is exaggerated.

Third, he said the Hebrew’s thinking in terms of the supernatural working of God omitted details which would show events as being purely natural. Because they were looking for supernatural explanations, Eichhorn said, they described things in a way that made it look like it was supernatural. But if they had given us all the historical details we would say, “Well, you see it wasn’t supernatural. It was natural.” He declared that Genesis chapters 1 through 3 and the miracles of the Old Testament were consequently poetic descriptions, symbolic pictures, oriental imagery, and rhetorical exaggeration. Now Eichhorn hesitated to attack the New Testament writers. Their miracles, he said, were a misunderstanding of the readers, not of what they wrote. This way, by removing the supernatural elements from the Bible, he hoped to make the Bible acceptable to rationalism.

The next man was Paulus (1761 – 1851), another professor. He accepted Eichhorn’s view of Bible miracles but he pressed it toward the New Testament writers as well. He said they intended to give the idea that these were miracles. So he proposed, as a defense for the apostles, what is called the hallucination theory—that the New Testament writers were unbalanced and they suffered from illusions and hallucinations, and they imagined that they saw visions and heard voices. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ surrounded himself with a bunch of nuts. Every one of them was a mental offbeat. Consequently they were able to produce a New Testament with all these ideas in it. It makes you wonder who the real nut is.

Now all this was done by Paulus, mind you, as by these other men, to try to defend the Bible against rationalism. They decided supernaturalism is out. Miracles are supernatural do they’re out. Revelation from God is supernatural. It’s out. Prophecy from God, the book of Daniel telling you how world empires were going to come along, Daniel written in the time of the exile when he was living in the first of those empires, three of them not even on the scene, that’s impossible, that’s prophecy—it’s out. Daniel was written later by somebody who used Daniel’s name.

Alright, another man that came along was de Wette (1780 – 1840). He was a professor. He rejected the idea that all the New Testament writers were lunatics and unbalanced. At least he did the right thing there. He proposed another theory called the myth theory. He said that these writers were simply using fables and folklore and projecting them as history.

The next man was Jean Astruc (1684 – 1766). Now this man was a doozy. He was a French physician, a man of great learning, a Roman Catholic, a free thinker, and just as immoral and low-living as they come. He published a book in 1753. You wonder why a man like this would even be interested in studying the Bible. He accepted the Mosaic authorship of Genesis, but he denied any inspiration or authority. As he read through the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the books of Moses, it irritated him that Moses would monotonously use the name for God “Elohim” 31 times in 31 verses in the first chapter of Genesis. It would seem to Astruc that Moses would have some other name for God than “Elohim.” Then he noticed when he started reading Genesis 2 and 3 that Moses used another name for God, “Jehovah Elohim.” When he got to Genesis 4 he noticed that Moses was calling God “Jehovah.” So he said, “Aha, here I smell a rat. Moses didn’t write these things. Moses found some documents by different writers, and these different writers called God by different names, and Moses sat down with a piece of paper and a bottle of rubber cement and he glued the thing together. He put the story in with a pair of scissors and he just patched it all up into a nice orderly fashion.

So, all of a sudden God is called “Elohim,” and you get to someplace else and He’s called “Jehovah Elohim,” and He’s called “Jehovah,” and he came up with what is known as the documentary hypothesis—that there was a writer called the “Elohists,” the “E” document; the “J” document by the Jehovahists; and the “JE,” the “Jehovahist Elohim” writer. Also, Astruc claimed that there were ten minor documents. This theory was later accepted by Eichhorn who elaborated it, maintaining all the time Mosaic authorship. Later the principle of documents was extended to take in the whole Pentateuch. Then it was extended to the whole Old Testament. Higher criticism began with an attack on the books of Moses and then spread all the way through the New Testament.

Now the Mosaic authorship final was abandoned because the time of the writing of these books was brought down from the 15th century B. C. to the 5th century B. C., long after Moses lived. Now the later date was welcomed by de Wette because his myth theory fit this better. Since the Bible incidents and the teachings which were written were so many years after their supposed occurrence, it was easy to view them as folklore which had been handed down. This was the idea—that people were really handing down folklore, and then you get to the centuries about the time Amos and the Jews begin writing down this folklore and pretending that Moses wrote it back there. And what they’re writing also included these documents that came down by different writers who wrote and now they’re patching them together and presenting them as consistent books from Moses.

So in this way inspiration and the supernatural were eliminated and the Bible was shredded. However, they felt in this way they were protecting the writers from fraud. What they were saying was that they were just gullible.

The next man that came along was K. H. Graf (1815 – 1869). He was a professor and he popularized this documentary hypothesis of Astruc with some writings in 1866. He claimed that the Pentateuch had been written way after the Babylonian exile by various writers. This came to be known as the Graf-Keenan theory. Biblical history began with the time of Amos, 800 to 700 B. C. Everything before that was fiction. There was no real Jewish history such as is described in the books of the Pentateuch. Certain anonymous writers who were identifiable by the use of their name for God and their literary style were the ones who were responsible for these writings. So the Pentateuch is a product of interweaving these documents and circulating them separately.

Centuries later there was a “D” document written which was the farewell address of Moses in Deuteronomy. “D” was combined at the end of these “JE” documents. Then there was a “P” document written by the priest at the time of the exile. It paralleled the events in the “JE” document. Later “P” was cut up into sections and it produced the “JED” document which was beginning to piece it together. Those are very famous letters well worth remembering because they are the initials of my name, among other things. But I had no responsibility for this.

So what happened was that the Pentateuch ended up not being Mosaic literature, but a literary Mosaic. Some concepts of legend and myth were then extended into the New Testament and into the areas of the gospel history—no miracles and no resurrection of Christ. The same thing was applied.

The last man is Julius Wellhausen (1844 – 1918). He was a rationalistic radical theologian of the University of Marburg in Germany. These are the men who set the tenor of German society which set the scene for the acceptance of Hitler and his ideas. In 1878 Wellhausen published a book that applied the theory of evolution to the Jewish religion. It was called The History of Israel. This had an enormous impact and it saved the Graf-Keenan hypothesis which was beginning to fall into discredit. It was combined as the Graff-Wellhausen theory. What it did was that it said that Moses had no concept of one God, monotheism. He lived too early for that. But what Moses did was to persuade the Jews to choose one of their idols as the only god. So the Jews selected the god (the idol) named Jehovah and He became their tribal God. Later on the Jews elevated Jehovah to the point where He was the god greater than all the gods of the nation. Finally, in the time of Amos and Hosea, they declared He was the only God in existence, so full monotheism developed.

Wellhausen declared that the religion of Israel was merely a human creation evolved by natural stages from heathenism, and it has passages with high ideals and spiritual concepts but they’re all of later date. So Wellhausen called his idea The Developmental Hypotheses, and he tied this to The Documentary Hypotheses of Graf for the Graf-Wellhausen theory. The “JEDP Documentary Hypotheses” became the standard thinking of the liberal theologians and the higher critics—religion evolving—concepts of God evolving.

Well, today this Developmental Hypotheses about the Jewish religion is by and large rejected, but the Documentary Theory is still held. That’s what I want you to understand—that most ministers you will come in contact with… (Sometimes you will not understand. I can tell when people ask me certain questions that if they understood this they would know what that preacher meant by what he said.) Most ministers hold this documentary view of the origin of Scriptures.

Now the finds of archaeology have shown that the higher critics have operated on limited and wrong information—false presupposition. Though the Mosaic authorship is still rejected, there is no good ground for doing it except these theories of being able to analyze the style. They reject the supernatural. They reject the miracles. The same myth evolvement idea was taken to the New Testament. Jesus was a man with natural birth so miracles are impossible. This is what’s known as the study of the historical Jesus. He was a traveling preacher who had popular appeal and he ran afoul of the Roman authorities, so he suffered martyrdom for his revolutionary views. The higher critics claim that the ideas we find about Christ and resurrection in the New Testament were added by his apostles, his disciples, in a burst of religious fervor.

Also the book of Isaiah is viewed as written by two authors. From chapter 40 you enter the millennial scene. The subject matter makes it sound like a different person is writing—naturally it’s because he has a different theme. Anybody who writes a letter will find that he writes differently in one part of his letter than in another depending on the subject that he’s dealing with. Daniel is dated so late because of its accurate predictions.

Well what were the conclusions of the higher critics? Their conclusions are a fiasco. Their assured results are constantly changing. … Someone has … said that the higher critics were people who sat in the dark and chirped. Well they’re still sitting in the dark and chirping—these higher critics.

However, it has been interesting to see their attempts in our day to return to a theological basis for a message in the Bible. They still view the Scripture as a human product but they want to find a message now. So the higher critics who destroyed all ground for authority are struggling now to find ground for authority. A person cannot subscribe to the views of higher criticism and to orthodox biblical Christianity at the same time. Get that straight. Once a man tells you he has this higher critical view, you know that he cannot hold to orthodox biblical Christianity. They may use orthodox terminology but they mean different things by it.

The Bible is rejected by them as a permanent divine statement or a revelation of truth to be believed. Conservative Christianity has historically viewed the Bible as God’s completed revelation for faith and practice. Liberalism rejects it as a collection for theological doctrine or for any record of historical events. Now this is very significant. They do not want to view the Bible as a book of propositions of truth. They say that the Bible is not a systematic theology. Well, that’s true, but the Bible gives us the materials by which we may categorized doctrine. The Bible is a book filled with doctrines that fall into various categories. Liberalism does not believe that God is still speaking through the Bible to men today. They say it’s a record of His past dealings with men, so it’s a dead record. So while the Bible is a record of marvelous revelations from God to a sinful race, it itself is rejected as being a current revelation. This is not the view that the Bible holds for itself and we reject this. The Bible is a book given in history once and for all. What it has said in the past it speaks to us today. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that it is living and powerful. It is not a dead revelation. The liberal says that the Bible is not a collection of infallible doctrines, and that it is not a series of propositions of truth or beliefs about God and man, and we reject that. The Bible presents itself as, indeed, a book filled with propositions of truth.

Now you just start reading through your Bible—that statements that God makes about Himself; the statements that He makes about life; the statements that He makes about people; and, the explanations He gives. These are all doctrinal propositional statements of truth.

So the idea that the Bible is not a series of propositions of truth or doctrine has even contaminated some evangelicals, particularly in the neo-evangelical camp. They shy off from viewing the Bible as propositions of truth.

Now next week we’re going to look at a few great ideas that most college students pick up, especially if they go to state schools, and sometimes even from Christian schools. They have certain attitudes toward absolutes, toward relativism, and toward truth and non-truth. They don’t realize that someplace along the line they have been poisoned, even in a Christian school they can be insidiously poisoned by four or five men who came onto the scene of history in the last century and who made philosophical declarations that have permeated our educational systems, even down to the elementary school level. Next week we’re going to explain to you why your college student friend thinks what he does on certain matters relative to love, to sex, to family, to authority, and right on down the line. Once you get this and then you realize how this poison also took hold in theological circles, then you will understand all of this human encounter junk which is being cranked out for Christians to get emotional over and to relate to one another on all of these false bases. We will look at the origin of the liberal’s biblical views beginning next Sunday morning.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971