

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR OUR
WORLDVIEW TODAY

Thomas Whitehouse, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair of the Department of Biblical Worldview Studies

Edinburg Theological Seminary

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First, I want to thank you all for the great privilege of standing here today. It is commonly thought that professors in higher education speak from an “ivory tower,” but I know better. Christian educators in this field are on the front line of the greatest battle of our time: the war for the minds, affections, and hearts, and therefore the direction, of the next generation.

Today's educational landscape can often be a frigid and dry wasteland. C. S. Lewis observed that “[f]or every one pupil who needs to be guarded from a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.”¹ It is an axiom of good teaching that “students only truly learn what they feel they truly need.”² It is therefore incumbent upon us as teachers not only to impart the facts and propositions of a Christian and biblical worldview, but to show them why they need to operate from such a platform. We must touch their palates with the glory of God in Christ: “Oh taste and see that YHVH is good” (Ps. 34:8)!

In my own country a great cry is heard in the name of “academic freedom.” But, as shown in Ben Stein’s excellent documentary, *Expelled*³, this “freedom” exists only within the box of a naturalistic worldview. In a moment of candor, Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin made this now famous statement:

¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), p. 12.

² Bruce Wilkinson, *The Seven Laws of the Learner: How to Teach Almost Anything to Practically Anyone*, Textbook Edition (Sisters: Multnomah Press, 1992), pp. 223ff, “The Law of Need.”

³ Ben Stein, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, DVD (Universal City: Vivendi Entertainment, 2008).

Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.⁴

He does not, of course, speak for every scientist. In a very entertaining and readable book adapted from his university lectures, five time Nobel Chemistry Prize nominee Henry F. Schaefer III traces the Christian faith of many of the world's leading scientists, both in history and today⁵. That being said, in science and the Academy as a whole, it can be fairly stated that it is a battle of worldviews. And the front line of this battle falls squarely on the Old Testament and its view of God. Perhaps none has put it as clearly as biologist Richard Dawkins:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.⁶

⁴ Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," a review of Carl Sagan's book, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a candle in the Dark*, in *The New York review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 31. Emphasis author's. The review is available online at www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1997/jan/09/billions-and-billions-of-demons.

⁵ Henry F. Schaefer, *Science and Christianity: Conflict or Coherence*, fourth printing with additions (Athens: The Apollos Trust, 2006).

⁶ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), p. 31.

This position, or something like it (though usually more gently stated), will assail our students at some point in their college education. Dawkins's portrait of the God of the Old Testament is calculated to leave the bitter taste of bile in the students' mouths. If we want them to taste the goodness of YHVH, we will have to think seriously about the conformation of our own worldview to the Old Testament and its God.

The two Dangers in Dealing with the Old Testament

It has been said that humans are often like a drunk swaying on a donkey. In trying to avoid falling off the left side, he falls off to the right. It is important that we as educators sit straight in the saddle. The temptation for many today is to run from the Old Testament, especially the "problem passages," and focus on the "Jesus of the Gospels." But in so doing, they cut Jesus and His message off from His entire context of covenant-promise fulfillment. Jesus is linked inseparably to the Old Testament from the moment of His conception to His ascension into Heaven. He says, "*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me*" (John 5:39). The gospel of the Kingdom is planted squarely in the soil of the Old Testament. As Ridderbos observed:

"[T]he kingdom of heaven" was not unknown to those to whom [Jesus'] message was addressed, but was rather calculated to find an immediate response with them. The exceptional and spectacular part of . . . Jesus' appearance was not that [he] spoke of the "kingdom of heaven," but that they announced to Israel that this kingdom was near at hand.⁷

Diminishing its Value.

The swampy ground on the left side of the donkey is that tendency, so prevalent

⁷ Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), p. 3.

today, to neglect or devalue the complete and accurate preaching and teaching of the Old Testament. There are various ways to do this:

Demythologization. Since the rise of nineteenth century rationalistic liberalism, and especially under the impetus of Bultmann in the middle of the twentieth, the tendency in mainstream denominational Christianity has been the tendency to minimize the reality of the miraculous elements of the Old Testament, and to see them only as storytelling device put to the service of the Old Testament's ethical teachings. Thus, for Liberation Theology, it doesn't matter if the sea really and historically parted for Moses. What matters is the ethical maxim that God is somehow on the side of the poor and the oppressed.

This, of course, is but another flavor of Lewontin's naturalism. The “divine foot” cannot be allowed in the door. God may be “on the side of the oppressed,” but He is not going to intervene directly. We have to make it happen. There will be no Moses. Marx will have to do!

For if God cannot intervene miraculously, neither can He intervene providentially. That, too, would be a “Divine foot,” not explainable by the laws of science and reason. History becomes an accident and we are left once again with Lessing's famous ditch:

[T]he accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason. . . . [This is] the ugly broad ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap. . . . Since the truth of these miracles has completely ceased to be demonstrable by miracles still happening now, since they are no more than reports of miracles, I deny that they should bind me in the least to a faith in the other teachings of Christ.⁸

⁸ Gotthold Lessing, “on the Proof of the Spirit and of Power,” in *Lessing's Theological Writings* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1956), pp. 51-55.

In other words, unless God truly and historically delivered Moses through the sea, how can one use the story even to prove that “God is on the side of the oppressed”? It may have emotional appeal as propaganda, but no binding force on the conscience.

Limiting its importance to Israel. Currently about 73% of Latin American protestants are Pentecostal or Charismatic,⁹ with a large percentage of the remainder being Baptist. A large number of the pastors in these traditions were trained in Bible Colleges and Institutes holding to traditional Scofieldian dispensationalism. Many of the faith missions agencies that work in Mexico's interior are also of that doctrinal persuasion.

Through dialog with other streams of theology, Academic Dispensationalism today (as represented by much of the current faculty at Dallas Theological Seminary, for instance) has become much more nuanced in its treatment of the Old Testament, and the relationship of Israel and the Church to God's Kingdom plan (see, for example, Eugene Merrill's excellent *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament*¹⁰). However the books on Dispensationalism's “cutting edge” are not available in Spanish, and the typical pastor still sees the church as a “mystery parenthesis,” an oasis of Grace having

⁹ “Overview: Pentecostalism in Latin America,” in *The Pew Forum*, a project of the Pew Research Center, <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Overview-Pentecostalism-in-Latin-America.aspx>

¹⁰ Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2006). The movement called “Progressive Dispensationalism” has especially benefitted from its interactions with Reformed and Covenant Theology. See Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), and *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: the Search for Definition*, Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, editors (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

little or nothing to do with the “desert” of “law” that went before. In this atmosphere, preaching from the Old Testament often boils down to four main categories: (1) “Heroes of the Faith” stories, (2) Prophecy, specifically Messianic and “End-times,” (3) Devotional and practical teaching from Psalms and Proverbs and, especially in more urban contexts, (4) defense of six-day creation science as against the humanism of evolution. But the whole scope of God's centuries-long dealing with his people, especially in Israel, is seen as superseded, and therefore largely irrelevant.

Not struggling with its problem passages. A third danger is that of minimizing the Old Testament by trying to “sanitize” it. This is partially due to Bible stories being “cleaned up” for children as “Heroes of the faith” (see above):

The Bible stories we read to children, like those we listened to as children ourselves, are edited. . . . In 1 Kings 18:16-40, the Hebrew prophet Elijah engages in a contest against hundreds of prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The humble Elijah wins the contest by praying successfully for YHWH to send fire from heaven to consume a sacrificial offering that he soaked with water. For children, the story almost always ends with v. 39, when all the people in the audience fall down and worship YHWH. It can be a shock for adolescents or adults who come to this story later in life and, reading all the way through v. 40, discover that the people, under the leadership of Elijah, brutally murder the 450 prophets of Baal.¹¹

It is debatable whether McIntire is correct in calling Elijah's act “murder.” The Law called for capital punishment of false prophets (Dt. 13:5). On the other hand, Elijah did not represent the established government in “bearing the sword” (Ro. 13:4), and the act was certainly bloody and brutal.

The truth is, the Old Testament presents man in his naked sinfulness, and the violence, pain and death that accompany it are painted red on the surface. But where sin

¹¹ Mark McIntyre, *Dangerous Worlds: Living and Dying in Biblical Texts* (Macon: Smith and Helwys, 2004), p. 2.

abounds, grace abounds all the more (Ro. 5:20). It is refreshing to see the thorny issues dealt with in books such as *Preaching Hard Texts of the Old Testament*¹², or the excellent *Flawed Families in the Bible*¹³.

Part of the plausibility of quotations like Dawkins's evil caricature of God is the modern illusion and belief that man is *good*. But James calls the Old Testament a “mirror” (Ja. 1:1-23-24), and the real problem is, we don't like what we see. Technology and “civilization” have not diminished sin, they have only made it easier to hide. C. S. Lewis called pain God's “megaphone¹⁴” said that “God whispers to us in our joys . . . but shouts to us in our pains.” Science and technology have quieted the megaphone, put a veil over the mirror. The Old Testament removes the veil and shows us that the spirit of Moloch is still alive today, only now the idol's name is “pragmatism.” Instead of the public burning of a few hundred infants to the sound of beating drums in the sweltering heat of the Valley of Hinnom, “civilized” postmodern man rips them from the very sanctuary of the womb to the tune of one and a half million a year (in the USA alone), in the cool, quiet comfort of the offices of “healers.”

Humans presume to put God in the seat of the accused, but the truth is put clearly by Christopher Wright:

We are the creatures whom God has made in His own image to love Him, to love one another, and to care for the earth He put us in. Instead, we have used the

¹² Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Preaching Hard Texts of the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998).

¹³ David E. Garland and Diana R. Garland, *Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works Through Imperfect Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007).

¹⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, 1962), p. 95.

capabilities inherent in bearing that image to deface it and to dethrone the one whose image it is. We reject God's authority, distrust God's word, mock God's love, break God's laws, and trash God's world. In the process we deceive, cheat, exploit, brutalize, crush, and kill one another.¹⁵

If the Old Testament is truly to shape the worldview of believers today, it must be allowed to speak in the voice in which it was written and not in the inoffensive pietistic “holy-speak” so common in our churches. Modern man, whether in or out of the church, must not be allowed to bask in the smugness of his “progress.” Paul taught that the Law brought the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20). People like Abraham, David, Samson, Jephthah, all men of faith (He. 11), were also, in one way or another, flawed and troubled men. James emphasizes that the great Elijah was a “man subject to like passions as we are¹⁶.” We dare not dress them in a Superman shirt, lest in so doing we lose sight of the fact that “they” are “us” (Heb. 12:1)

Separating it from its fulfillment in Christ.

However, the mirror of the Old Testament was meant to show us not only the ugliness of ourselves, but also the glory of Christ and, in so doing, to transform us “from glory to glory (2 Co. 3:18). The rocky ground on the right side of the donkey is to try and interpret and apply the Old Testament without its fulfillment in the New, and specifically in Christ. “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds*” (He. 1:1-2). Christ

¹⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The God I don't Understand: Reflections of Tough Questions of Faith*, Kindle Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2008), p. 112.

¹⁶ James 5:17, KJV.

Himself chided the Pharisees with this very thing: “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me*” (John 5:39), and He expanded on this theme, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

In his massive and detailed work, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, Gerard Van Groningen begins by expressing his “profound wonder and a growing appreciation for what God has revealed throughout the ages before Jesus actually appeared on earth.¹⁷” The scope of messianic revelation in the ancient Scriptures of Israel is both broad and varied. There are promises and prophecies, types and symbols, songs and stories, history and art, theophany and Tabernacle. It assaulted all five senses in the sound of harp and shofar and the bleating of lambs, the smell of cooking lamb and the taste of wine and unleavened bread, the cool shade of tabernacles lived in one week each year, the sight of a bronze serpent lifted on a pole.

Graeme Goldsworthy mentions that a “feature of biblical salvation history is that the importance of events is determined by the purposes of God and not on the empirical evidence of the impact of humankind.¹⁸” Biblical history is emphatically *salvation* history, not merely, in Henry Ford's famous words, “one damned thing after another.” As such, it is to be read, not as merely a chain of natural and human cause and effect. It is ordered around the unique historical event of the coming, dying, and rising of Jesus. He is, truly and historically Immanuel, God with us, whom to know is eternal life (Jn. 17:3).

¹⁷ Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 9.

¹⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), p. 98.

Failure to relate every aspect of the Old Testament to its consummation in the living Christ will lead now, as it did in Christ's own day, to a legalistic Pharisaism.

As teachers we must especially beware. We love mnemonic lists and charts and graphs, “everything in its place and a place for everything.” But we forget that, behind a biblical worldview there's a story and that, as C. S. Lewis said, “He is not a *tame* Lion.”

The Old Testament and the Battle of Worldviews

It is well beyond the scope of this paper to detail the many ways that the Old Testament can inform our worldview, but the basic direction must be clear. It is a battle of stories.

We live in the age of Carl Sagan's “pale blue dot.”¹⁹ In 1990, at Sagan's request, the spacecraft *Voyager 1* took a picture of earth from a distance of about 6 billion kilometers away. It appears as an almost invisible dot in the darkness of the void.

This picture, and the tale it seems to tell, form the backdrop of the postmodern worldview: an incidental and accidental earth full of fleeting and accidental beings, whirling on the edge of a galaxy, small and alone against the cold blackness of empty space. On that dot we tell our stories and live our lives, build our cities and fight our wars, but in the context of the entire whole, they mean nothing. Thomas Howard calls this the “new myth,” as opposed to the “old myth” that there really is a story and a meaning for all that happens on the dot. “The myth sovereign in the old age was that

¹⁹ Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot, a Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random House, 1994). For a reading by Sagan himself, which truly shows the emotional strength of the story, see YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p86BPM1GV8M>

everything means everything. The myth sovereign in the new is that nothing *means* anything.²⁰” As teachers, Christians must realize what Sagan and Lewontin saw; that, behind the clash of worldviews is a clash of stories, or rather the clash of a story and an accident.

Worldview grows from story.

A worldview is “the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things.”²¹ That is, it is a series of basic propositions about the way things are in the world and the universe, that we believe to be true.

But worldviews do not come in a vacuum. People construct a worldview because they believe and embrace a *story*. Thus Lewontin constructs a worldview that is naturalistic, by his own admission—in spite of the evidence, because he has chosen to believe the story that it all came about by accident. Likewise a Christian builds a worldview because he or she has already embraced the story of God's creation of the universe and His loving redemption of man and Creation in Christ. The Bible certainly presents a worldview, but it presents it in a story.

The Biblical worldview is not given to us in the discursive and analytical language of philosophy and science, but in the rich and compact language of symbolism and art. It is pictured in ritual and architecture, in numerical structures and geographical directions, in symbols and types, in trees and stars.²²

The Old Testament is God's record of the development of that story, which then

²⁰ Thomas Howard, *Chance or the Dance* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1969), p. 14.

²¹ Albert M Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basis for a Reformational Worldview*, second edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), p. 2.

²² James Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 1.

climaxes in the coming of Christ. It is only as the structure and direction of that story are accurately understood, that a biblical worldview can be constructed.

But the worldview is not an end in itself, and neither is it merely an exercise in apologetics or correct doctrine. It is the framework from which *we* enter the story.²³

“Theology is not an intellectual exercise of mentally constructing an accurate picture of reality in our ideas It is . . . where Christians participate in God's story of redemption.”²⁴

Setting the stage: Can God Trusted to Do the Right Thing? The story starts in Genesis, but the stage is set in Job. The traditional date for the writing of the book of Job in the patriarchal period makes it the earliest written book of Scripture. While most contemporary scholarship places it much later, the archaeologically confirmed accuracy of such things as place names, units of money, and other such relatively trivial details would have been hard for a non-specialist to get right had it been written hundreds of years later²⁵.

Now Job is, of course, about apparently undeserved suffering, and it is interesting that God would start His written revelation with that question. It is even more interesting that Job repents, though God has not given him a specific answer (job 42:1-2) Only

²³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), p. 71. “To become a Christian is to be taken up into the drama of God's plan for creation.”

²⁴ Briam Godawa, *Word Pictures: Knowing God through Story and Imagination*, Kindle Edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), Loc. 457.

²⁵ For a good general presentation of the evidence, see Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, updated and revised edition (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), pp. 505-511, also R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 1022-1046, and Robert L. Alden, *Job* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993), pp. 25-28.

much later, and in bits and pieces, is the answer given in the unfolding covenant and Messianic hope which forms the Old Testament story.

However, the substance of the answer Job is given from the whirlwind is clear: (1) “God is powerful enough to do anything He wants [Job 38:4-38], and (2) He is compassionate enough to do it right, even in the case of the beasts and their helpless young [Job. 38:39]. For Job, it was enough, and set the stage for the outworking of that power and compassion in the rest of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament gives specific detail of certain historical events that the New Testament simply assumes. The worldview and story of the Old Testament is assumed by the New Testament writers. They do not “reinvent the wheel,” They merely work out its implications in the light of its fulfillment in Christ. For details on the *history* of such things as Creation and the fall, the basic answers will be found in Moses, not Paul.

In Genesis, the creation story is presented in opposition to contrasting stories that led to competing worldviews. Gordon Wenham observes that:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” introduces one God, not a pantheon, who takes the initiative and orders all that happens in the whole universe. The implied monotheism of Genesis 1 is one example of the persistent critique of Near Eastern Theology that runs throughout Genesis 1-11 culminating in its trenchant attack on the religious pretensions of Babylon and its tower.²⁶

Many have pointed out the similarities between the Genesis account and the Babylonian ones and tried to prove dependence of the one upon the other. But the

²⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), p. 24.

relationship, then as now, is not one of dependence but of debate. The *Enuma Elish* is the Babylonian equivalent of the pale blue dot. Genesis does not imitate it, but answer it.

It gives a wider historical perspective. The New Testament (leaving aside futuristic interpretations of the Apocalypse) covers in detail a period of about 35 years or one generation. In contrast, the Old Testament details about 43 times that (approximately 1500 years of history from Abraham to Malachi). This panoramic sweep of history allows the reader to see much more clearly the trans-generational consequences of following one side or another in the clash of worldviews. It puts historically empirical examples to Galatians 6:7's principles of sowing and reaping, showing indeed that "God is not mocked." Ideas have consequences. False stories lead to false worldviews, and those inevitably lead to disastrous results, whether they be administered by Moloch or Mao.

It gives a view of God's righteous dealings in the sphere of nations and politics. This battle of stories is especially clear in the political sphere. Alternative worldviews, whether from old Babylon, Greece (Plato's *Republic*), or modern naturalism generally assume that man is innately good or at least neutral, and is evolving, progressing in virtue. In many of these cases, the state is seen as the instrument that has the power to bring about this societal perfection. However, the biblical story is that the descendants of Adam are, in Budziszewski's words, a "fallen city²⁷." He goes on to say: "Falleness is a paradox. We are neither simply good nor simply bad, but created good and broken. We are not a sheep ugliness, nothing so plain, but a beauty ruined.²⁸"

²⁷ J. Budziszewski, *Revenge of Conscience: Politics and the Fall of Man* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999), p. 5.

²⁸ Ibid.

Budziszewski then catalogues the tools available to the State for dealing with this fallenness, and shows their painful inadequacy. In so doing, he reinforces the Old Testament story that the kingdoms of men are incomplete and incapable of fruition until they submit to the King of men. Thus the Old Testament gives historical legs to a Reformational biblical worldview.

Historically, a belief in the self-perfectibility of man has led to a utopianism of the State. In the Old Testament, the consequences of this idolatrous worldview begin to show themselves in the tower of Babel (Ge. 11). The dual meaning of the name בָּבֶל (*babel*) sets the tone for the biblical discussion of this theme. To those building the Tower, it was seen as “the gate of God,” but the biblical story shows what it truly is in the eyes of the Author of the story: “Confusion.”

The Old Testament traces the actions of the King of Kings among the nations as they struggle through history. Major players (Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia) and a host of smaller nations such as Moab and Edom and Midian rise and fall and struggle to assert their autonomy in history. The prophets show each in their turn that “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whoever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Da. 4:17).

The is nowhere more evident than in the Old Testament's treatment of God's chosen nation of Israel. Jacque Ellul chronicles its fall as recounted in the book of 2 Kings, tracing the mysterious interface between divine sovereignty and human agency. He says:

It is impossible to ignore the fact of the unity of revelation and its movement. Everything leads to Jesus Christ, just as everything comes from him. Hence Jesus

Christ is not absent from the somber adventure of the Second Book of Kings.²⁹

The Challenge for Today.

And so we return to where we began. As educators, the task at hand is to aid our students in bringing “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Co. 10:5). The is true whether we teach mathematics, physics or art. Again, C. S. Lewis made it practical:

We must attack the enemy’s line of communication. What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more . . . books by Christians on other subjects—with their Christianity latent.

It is not books on Christianity that will really trouble [the unbeliever]. But he would be troubled if, whenever he wanted a cheap popular introduction to some science, the best work on the market was always by a Christian.³⁰

It is time that Christian educators, and Christians as a whole, move beyond defensive apologetics. The Old Testament is not a defensive apologetic. It is a positive presentation of God's creative and redemptive acts in the realms and kingdoms of men, and God's people must have the courage to see and use it as such. We will not be loved by the academia of the pale blue dot any more than the writers of the *Enuma Elish* loved the competing worldview of Genesis, but that is of no consequence, because Yahweh is King of history. Babylon's false “gate of God” will always, in the end, prove to be “confusion.”

Our task is to think deeply through the implications of the story of the Testaments, both Old and New, and present their implications in a consistent worldview where Christ is the center.

²⁹ Jacques Ellul, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 9.

³⁰ C. S. Lewis, “Christian Apologetics,” in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994) p. 93.

And then we must live it out, consistently, fully, joyously. Not only our writings but our lives must give a compelling reason for those on the pale blue dot to “taste and see that the LORD is good.”