

- H. Occasionally we meet people who frown on interpretation. But interpretation is as very necessary part of any literary study and you will remember the point of it is not to remove any teaching but to make emphatic and meaningful what is taught. I will probably ramble on this point and give a lot of free advice that is not even needed..but it is free!

V. Critical Problems in or Regarding the Psalter

This is not a critical course and we will not devote a lot of time to critical studies but a few notes in orientation on this line may or may not be helpful but are academically necessary in the fulfillment of our goals.

A. About the Text

The text of the Psalms, like the rest of the Hebrew Bible, is much more recent than the time of composition. We speak of it as the "Massoretic Text" (sometimes spelled with one "s") meaning that it is the traditional text of the Hebrew religious community. Our most complete texts are from about 1,000 AD but there have been a lot of fragments from Qumran and such places that tend to show the traditional text to be a very good text and one consistent with earlier data.

We have earlier copies of the Greek translation (the Septuagint) and from Qumran a Greek translation that is seemingly independent of the Septuagint.

The Vulgate text of Jerome does not help us much as he used the Septuagint as the basis for his translation. Jerome was thoroughly knowledgeable about Hebrew but felt the superiority of the Septuagint in the Psalms made that his choice text.

So most of us feel pretty good about the Psalm text..that it is accurate, carefully preserved, and competent for our findings.

B. The Origination of the Psalms

I will briefly mention the ideas that speak of the Psalms as originating in cultic circles, folk tale circles, and as part of the kingly/priestly/prophetic controversies. If you pursue Old Testament studies to any great degree