

so what was written was for some particular purpose-- if that purpose can be learned certainly something of value about the narrative will be discovered.

b. The historical processes of selection and retention as opposed to those of dismissal and disuse, assist us in connecting a narrative in its context. The heart of this is the position of determining the reason for which material is kept. Answering this provides a big key to understanding much of the Old Testament. It is a special help to those of us who think the record of the Old Testament is very much one of redemptive history. We may then ask of every section: "What does it show or teach about redemption?" The main facts and the implications of passages become very important in this light. The concept of "selection", etc., suggests that things are not kept simply because there is nothing better to do with them...but that they are kept to complete some aspect of the narrative.

c. The Progress of history allows us to chart out the courses of time and events. In this class we broadly follow the conical theory of history that is espoused in better form by J.W. Montgomery. The idea is that history repeats but does so in cyclic form of a cone...reaching the "top" and the fulfillment of the intentional historical goal. We study events, history suggests, to see progress toward an ultimate end...in this case, the consummation of all things by God.

3. Miscellaneous studies

a. Geography helps in giving us a more adequate picture of the topography of the lands of the Bible and of the physical world in which the Biblical cultures thrived and were depicted.

Suggest Turner: THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

b. Literature helps in providing a better understanding of the background. Literary criticism is a development in the literature studies and it seeks, through analysis of form and content, to determine probable authorship, source of writing, form of writing, etc. It is a difficult discipline and has not had great value in many other literary fields...although it gets great press in biblical studies.

c. The natural sciences (botany, biology) do not greatly further our understanding of the Old Testament although some knowledge of the flora and fauna of biblical lands is valuable.