

Debate on Biblical Israel vs. Historical Israel summarized by Jintae Kim, Nyack College on 4/6/1998

	<i>Davies (N. Criticism): for Extra-biblical</i>	<i>Other Scholars</i>	
Conflicts between biblical & historical Israel (Critical Problems)	1) Bible does not give a clear picture of biblical Israel → Can't use it for comparison. a. At least 3 definitions : ethnic, political, religious. None of them works. b. No clear distinction between Canaanites and Israelites c. N. Kingdom or both kingdoms together.	Bright: Total negation vs. general acceptance of historicity.	1) Similarities a. Use of sociological model : Alt's theory of personal clan gods & Mendenhall's theory of Conquest as peasant revolt . b. The only point they may agree will be the admission on the part of Bright that not everything is historical.
	d. Concept is ideological . (Why else would Israel be defined in terms of returnees from exile, not those who remained in Babylon?)		2) Differences: General trustworthiness and historicity of the ancient biblical accounts. → Seeks to combine biblical tradition with archaeology. a. Existence of 3 patriarchs in Geneses, Moses . b. Yahwism was developed not in Persian period, but out of social revolutionary forces of Israelite uprising .
	2) Extra-biblical evidence of historical Israel does not resemble anything like it. a. Very incomplete : No continuity between Merenptah Stele (1230) & Mesha & Shalmaneser inscriptions (840, 853). b. 7 pieces of evidence: Only for Northern Kingdom , which lasted only for 2 centuries and whose people, religion, and culture are very different from "biblical" Israel.		Wilson: Sociological approach<-- Assume some measure of historicity.
	3) Biblical concept of exile does not make sense. Exile that usually destroys nationality actually presented nationality and produced much of the OT Lit.	2) Direct against Davies' position Davies would say that such an approach is flawed from the beginning, since the theory is built on the biblical text itself, the historicity of which simply cannot be established given the limited extra-biblical data we have.	
	His paradigm: New Criticism	Bible: Literary artifact , not historical document. Biblical Israel: Fictional .	Van Seters: Minimalist vs. total negation.
	Contradiction, inconsistencies, and other characteristics of the OT are perfectly acceptable for a piece of literature.		
Biblical Israel	1) Dating : Creation of post-exilic scribes. 2) Purpose : Etiological legends – historiography to create a new national identity and raison-d'être for themselves and their bosses.	Differences 1) Follow Historical-Critical reconstruction about Dt. History. 2) Greater focus on use of comparative studies to discern compositional patterns of Yahwist. (Davies even questions about existence of such a person as the Yahwist.) 3) Still willing to call Genesis " ancient history ." (national tradition of Israel)	
	1) A minority document of scribal caste. It does not represent the belief system of " community ."	Childs : Directly Opposite.	1) Bible is a faith document of the community . Community & canon: reciprocal.

<p><i>Bible as canon</i></p>	<p>2) Canonization very late. When it was written, it was not seen in any way as normative, as canonical, as authoritative, as religious. Only later did these writings start to achieve some measure of religious authority and “canonicity.”</p>	<p>2) Canon functions at the outset to give the OT normativity for that faith community. Theological motivation behind the process which Davies would outright reject. 3) Clear coherence and unity of Bible. 4) The OT has always been a part of Scripture.</p>
<p><i>Conclusion</i></p>	<p>Better to keep the biblical Israel and the historical Israel separate.</p>	