

## **How to Study the Bible**

### **Session 3: Torah and Deuteronomistic History**

#### 1. Genres and cultural contexts: *Dei Verbum* 12

However, since God speaks in Sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, *should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words.*

To search out the intention of the sacred writers, *attention should be given, among other things, to 'literary forms.'* For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or of other forms of discourse. The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture. *For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another.*

But, since Holy Scripture must be read and interpreted in the sacred spirit in which it was written, *no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly worked out. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith.* It is the task of exegetes to work according to these rules toward a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture, so that through preparatory study the judgment of the Church may mature. *For all of what has been said about the way of interpreting Scripture is subject finally to the judgment of the Church, which carries out the divine commission and ministry of guarding and interpreting the word of God.*

#### 2. Why study the Old Testament?

### 3. Tanakh

- a. Torah (Law)
- b. Nevi'im (Prophets)
- c. Ketuvim (Writings)

### 4. Pentateuch/Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

- a. Heart of the Old Testament
- b. Authorship

### 5. Sections/Genres of the Pentateuch

- a. Primeval History (Genesis 1-11)
  - i. Biblical myth/legend
  - ii. Genesis 11:1-9**
- b. Patriarchs, Matriarchs, and Joseph (Genesis 12-50)
  - i. Blend of myth and history
  - ii. Patriarchs and matriarchs (Genesis 12-35)
  - iii. Joseph “novella” (Genesis 36-50)
  - iv. Genesis 17:1-22**

- c. Exodus from Egypt (Parts of Exodus and Numbers)
    - i. Blend of myth and history
    - ii. Introduction of Moses
    - iii. Exodus 14:5-31**
  - d. Law Codes
    - i. Creation of a holy people
    - ii. Ten Commandments (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5)
    - iii. Covenant Code: (Exodus 21-23)
    - iv. Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)
    - v. Deuteronomy Code (Deuteronomy 12-26)
    - vi. Leviticus 19:1-18**
6. Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings)
- a. "The Deuteronomist"
  - b. Theological history
  - c. 1 Kings 11:1-13**