

Pentateuch to demonstrate this development in Israel by assigning dates to the sources that reflected this alleged development. In the process he said ideas from later times were projected into earlier periods by the writers of the Old Testament, and he not only denied the reliability of many historical sections of the Old Testament, but even went further to claim that it included many deliberate fabrications. This approach of course was not without consequences for the message of the Old Testament. The major concern of Wellhausen and his followers, however, ceased to be the message of the Old Testament or its meaning for us today, but rather their interest was in the reconstruction by means of the *historical-critical method* of what they considered to be the *history of Israel's religious development* based on an evolutionary presupposition. Wellhausen himself resigned from his Professorship on the theological faculty at Griefswald because he did not feel adequate to prepare students for service in the Protestant Church (unfortunately many of his students did not follow his example).^12

### **Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932)**

Although H. Gunkel did not abandon the source documents of Wellhausen, his interest lay elsewhere. He directed his attention for the most part to what he viewed as the antecedent oral traditions that lay behind Wellhausen's documents. In doing this he developed what has come to be known as "form criticism" (as compared with the "literary criticism" of Wellhausen) by trying to isolate story units, determine their literary genre (*Gattung*), and the Situation in life (*Sitz im Leben*) that originally produced the form in question. According to Gunkel's analysis most of the narratives of Genesis are to be viewed as legends of various kinds.^13 It is right at this point, however, that a significant difference between Gunkel and Wellhausen becomes apparent. Even though Gunkel viewed the stories of Genesis as legend and not history he felt that he was still able to preserve their religious value and meaning because in his view *what actually happened is not the important thing in a legend -- but the message conveyed by the story is the significant thing*.^14 He says for example: "Think of the force with which in the Cain story, murder is set forth as the basal crime; the charm of the Joseph story, eloquent of fraternal envy and fraternal love, and full of faith in an over-ruling Providence ..."^15 So even though Gunkel abandoned the historical value of the Old Testament, he tried to hold on to its religious-moral value. This represents a reaction against the sterile theological attitude generated by the Wellhausen school in which the religious value of the OT was swallowed up by a purely literary and history-of-religions approach. But notice that having abandoned the supernaturalism and objectivity of divine revelation in the Old Testament materials, Gunkel begins to move toward a divided field of knowledge in biblical studies in which *historical truth* is separated from *religious truth*.

### **Gerhard von Rad (1901-1971)**

Hermann Gunkel's form critical method had great influence on Gerhard