

Some of you may get the magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review*. It often has interesting stuff in it, for the non-specialists. Here's the announcement of a recent article of possible interest.

[Biblical Views: The Value of Methodological Doubt](#)

Ron Hendel Defends Critical Biblical Scholarship

What's the use of critical Biblical scholarship? If you asked evangelical Calvinist philosopher Alvin Plantinga, he'd probably say "not much." He compares the endeavor to mowing the lawn with nail clippers. Instead he believes only in the inerrancy of scripture, trusting that the Holy Spirit will reveal everything one needs to understand the Bible. Ron Hendel, on the other hand, the Norma and Sam Dabby Professor of Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, believes that critical Biblical scholarship and the methodological doubt that accompanies it are valuable tools for understanding and appreciating the Biblical text. Unlike the certainty that accompanies Plantinga's belief in the inerrancy of scripture, the questioning of authority and tradition that comprises methodological doubt can ultimately lead to greater clarity and more solid faith, Hendel says. "Only a position that survives the scrutiny of methodological doubt can be regarded as reliable, and even then it is subject to future testing."

Ron Hendel adds that the belief in the inerrancy of scripture is a fairly recent development of contemporary evangelical theology. Even in the 16th century John Calvin noted "erroneous views 'of the humble and unlearned'" in certain Biblical passages, as did Martin Luther and other Reformers. For them the divine inspiration of scripture did not equate to an inerrancy of scripture.

Read more in Ron Hendel's Biblical Views column "[Critical Biblical Scholarship: What's the Use?](#)" as it appears in the July/August 2012 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.



[Some Questions on the Greek
The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men](#)