

“Knowing the Heart of Strangers”**The OT Laws on Treating Strangers, Interpreted with a Historical Incident***(Abstract)***Jonathan T.P. TSOI***

How can the Old Testament be related to the societies that come afterwards, so that God continually proclaims His words to people through the ages? This is a perpetual question faced by every exegete of the Bible. Nevertheless, how can these ancient stories be corresponded to societies in the postmodern period with different values? In this essay we shall study the laws of strangers in the Old Testament, interpreting the message in the related passages in different contexts. Finally we shall investigate why God asks His people to be benevolent to the strangers. The answer to these questions is related to the background of the formation of the Old Testament canon. At that time the tolerance to strangers was an important issue. Finally by studying the response to the Nazi Aryan clause, made by the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer during the Second World War, we show that his viewpoint resembles in many places the laws concerning strangers.

* Jonathan T.P. Tsoi is Associate Professor of Old Testament of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong.