

A Light unto My Path

**OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES
IN HONOR OF
JACOB M. MYERS**

Edited by
Howard N. Bream
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Gettysburg Theological Studies IV

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Preface

This Festschrift is an unusual case of poetic justice. Jacob Myers himself helped set in motion a project that has now culminated in making him its final target.

Nearly fifteen years ago, a three-man committee conceived the idea of a series, to be known as "Gettysburg Theological Studies," in honor of outstanding faculty members of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Jacob Myers supplied necessary experience and knowledge, while the junior members of the partnership, Otto Reimherr and Howard N. Bream, gladly followed his leadership. Professor Myers even contributed an article to that initial Festschrift, *Biblical Studies in Memory of H. C. Alleman*, which came out in 1960.

Two books followed later: *Theological and Missionary Studies in Memory of John Aberly* in 1965, and *Search the Scriptures: New Testament Studies in Honor of Raymond T. Stamm* in 1969.

Now the Myers name stands, on what will probably be the omega of that series, not among the editors but emblazoned in the title. And how rightly so! For while he cannot be said to have authored this book, Jacob Myers has in a real sense fathered it.

The present editors found, to their joy, that invitations to take part in this project met with enthusiastic responses. It was as if the idea of honoring J. M. Myers had been quietly germinating in the field of Old Testament scholarship, waiting for the right moment to spring up. To the busy and earnest people who took time to prepare papers, the editors here gladly record their gratitude.

The day of the unstructured Festschrift, with essays on subjects chosen more or less at random by the several authors, seems to be waning. However, in the case of this book, heterogeneity offers a means of showing the nature of Myers' influence. The wide variety of topics selected and the diverse backgrounds of the contributors fittingly reflect the breadth of viewpoint, the multiple gifts, and the manifold accomplishments of Myers himself.

A word about the occasion of the Festschrift: The editors did not plan to mark a special birthday anniversary or to give particular recognition to the fact that in 1972 Myers completed thirty years as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament literature and theology at the seminary. They simply felt that the fullness of time had come, when the harvest of years of productive toil, unattended by fanfare, deserved some fitting recognition. Thanks to the efforts of those whose articles make up the volume, and those who have supported it financially, the honor has taken form in a contribution to biblical scholarship, which is exactly what Professor Myers himself would want the most.

Nearly all the papers in this volume were written in 1970. This means that some time has passed between the time of their composition and their publication, a fact that the reader should keep in mind.

It should be noted and acknowledged that a former student of Professor Myers has presented an anonymous gift to make possible the publication of this Festschrift.

The Editors

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Jacob Martin Myers

Every productive scholar creates his own autobiography, for he records his life and thought inevitably in his formal publications, and less tangibly, but just as importantly, he leaves his mark upon the minds and lives of his students, friends, and fellow scholars. We have chronicled below the major facts and achievements in Professor Myers' life—what he did, and when—yet these offer but the skeletal outline. To understand who he really is, how he thinks, and what he believes, one must go on to read his books and articles, and talk with those who know him personally.

Jacob M. Myers is the West Pennsylvania Synod professor of Hebrew and Old Testament language, literature, and theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (LCA), a position he has held with great distinction since 1942. Prior to that appointment, he served the seminary, first as a lecturer in New Testament studies (1937–40) and then as instructor in the Old Testament department (1940–42). Thus his service to the seminary spans a period of more than three decades. Myers has also been a visiting professor at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, the Washington Theological Consortium, and the Gettysburg-Lancaster postgraduate program at York College. This briefly sets forth one facet of his life: his career in teaching.

The son of Harvey A. and Annie (nee Seiffert) Myers, Jacob Myers was born October 25, 1904, on a Pennsylvania farm in West Manchester township. Myers likes to refer to himself as a "York County Dutchman," and still dreams occasionally of buying "a little farm on which to retire." In any case, he has constantly manifested virtues highly prized in rural America: industry, simplicity of habit, friendliness, and helpfulness.