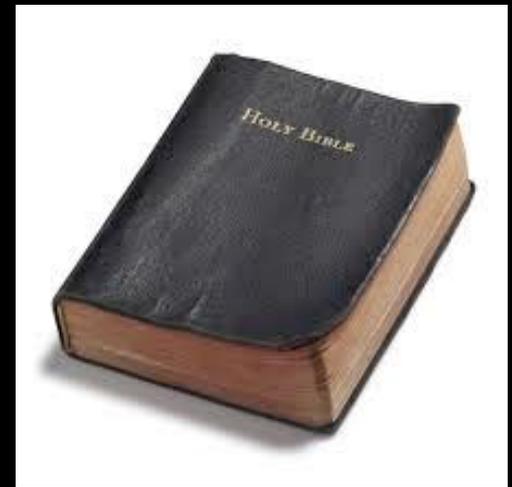


Reading the Bible

afresh

Bible 1.0



The Bible is the sole possession of
the clergy.

It is unavailable in the vernacular.

It adds credibility to the primary
authority structure of elite men
(magisterium)

Bible 2.0

The Bible becomes universally available.

It exists in nearly all languages, in many translations.

It is interpreted by the primary authority structure of elite men, who form 3 main parties:



Bible 2.0

1. The traditionalists: the Bible means what the church says it means.
2. The conservatives: the Bible means simply what it says.
3. The liberals: the Bible means what critical scholarship concludes after applying correct hermeneutical technique.

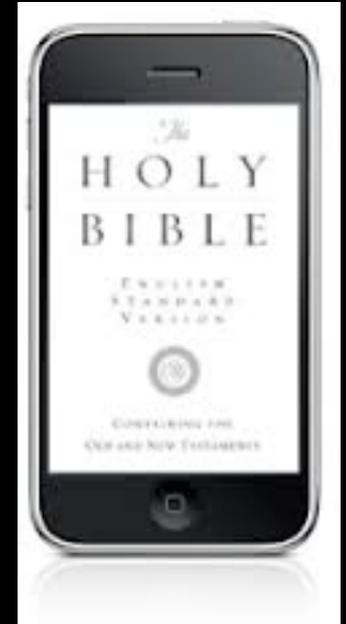
Bible 3.0



The Bible is universally available.

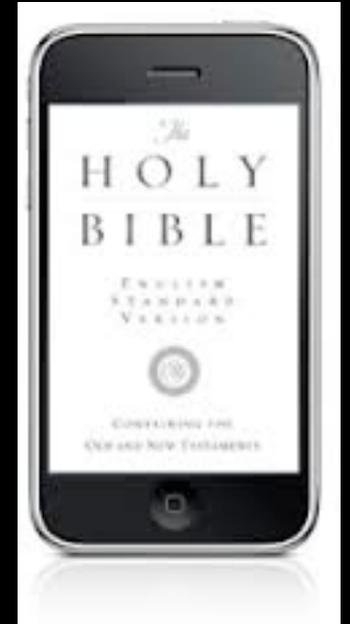
It exists in nearly all languages,
and formats.

It is interpreted by a wide variety
of people - including those
formerly excluded, whose
interpretations are universally
available digitally.



Bible 3.0

feminist
liberation
post-colonial
indigenous
queer
black
latino
asian
ecological
multitude



In the 21st century ...

It's an exciting time to read
the Bible.

Just as some think it is passe

...

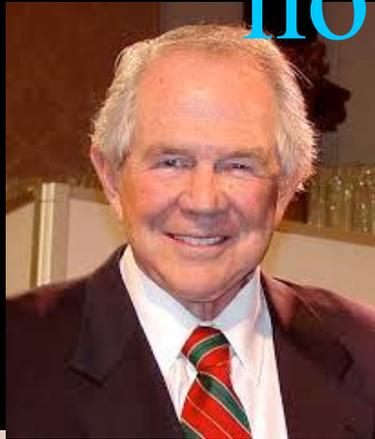
it is coming back with
renewed vigor, fascination,
and power.

5 reflections ...



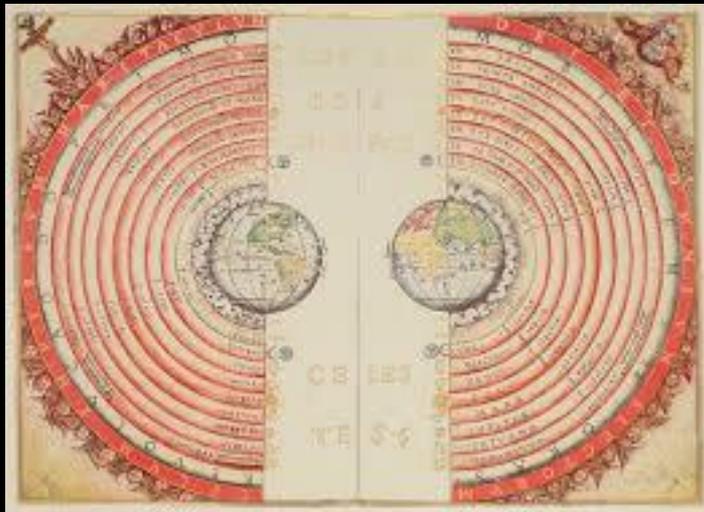
In the 21st century ...

1. Inerrancy/infallibility is
no longer an asset.



Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (1616):

“...the doctrine attributed to Copernicus, that the Earth moves around the Sun, and that the Sun is stationary in the center of the world and does not move from East to West, is contrary to Holy Scripture and therefore cannot be defended or held.”



"The LORD said to Moses, 'Send some men to explore the land of Canaan...' (Num 13.1)

?????

"Then all of you came to me and said 'Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us...' (Dt 1.22)

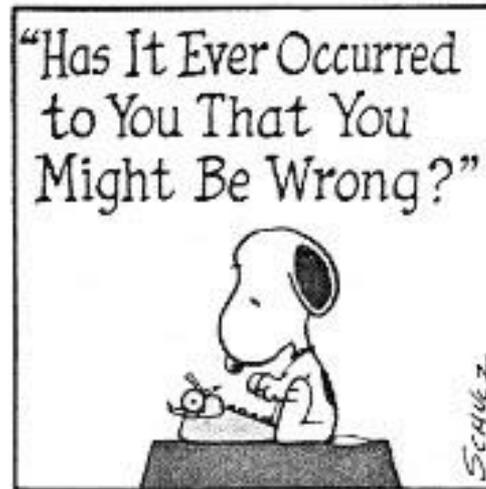
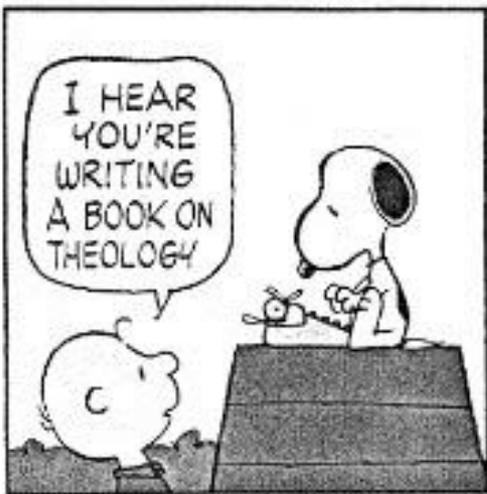
2Samuel 24

Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go, count the people of Israel and Judah.'

?????

1Chronicles 21

Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel.



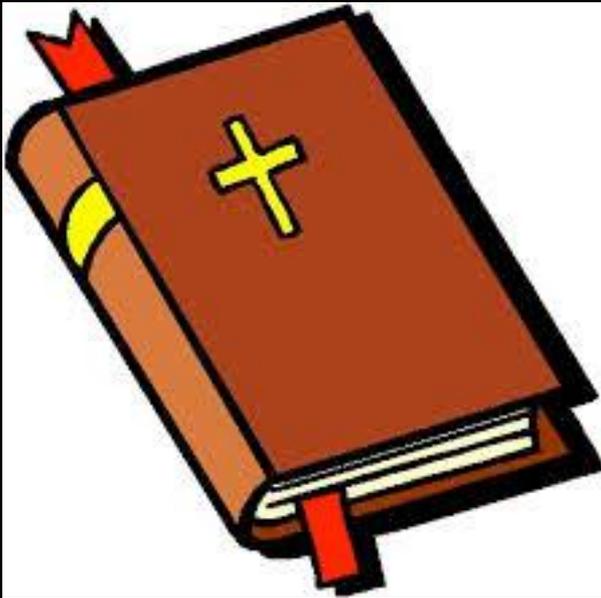
In the 21st Century ...
1. Inerrancy is no longer an asset.
Corrigibility is.

In the 21st century ...

2. Interpretation is
everywhere.



In the 21st century ...



2. Interpretation is everywhere.

a. Interpretation of the Text ...

Dear Dr. Laura:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination... End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some other elements of God's Laws and how to follow them.



1. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

3. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness - Lev.15:19-24. The problem is how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

4. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is, my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

5. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?

6. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination - Lev. 11:10, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this? Are there 'degrees' of abomination?



7. Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?

8. Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?

9. I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?



10. My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev.19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? Lev.24:10-16. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair, like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively and thus enjoy considerable expertise in such matters, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.

Your adoring fan.

James M. Kauffman, Ed.D. Professor Emeritus Dept. of
Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
University of Virginia

In the 21st century ...

2. Interpretation is everywhere.

b. Interpretation of the authors' interests, agendas, limitations, assets, or biases ...

In the 21st century ...

2. Interpretation is everywhere.

c. Interpretation of the interpreters' interests, agendas, limitations, assets, or biases ...

In the 21st century ...

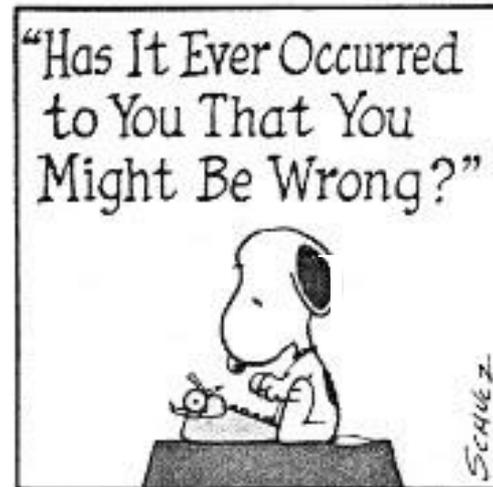
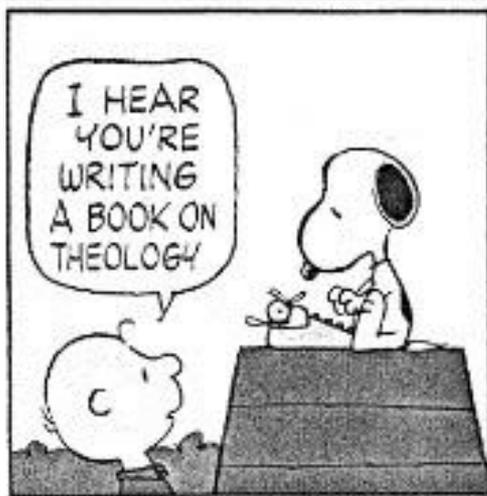
2. Interpretation is everywhere.

d. Interpretation of the
community's interests, agendas,
limitations, assets, or biases ...

In the 21st century ...

2. Interpretation is everywhere.

e. Interpretation of the individual reader's interests, agendas, limitations, assets, or biases ...

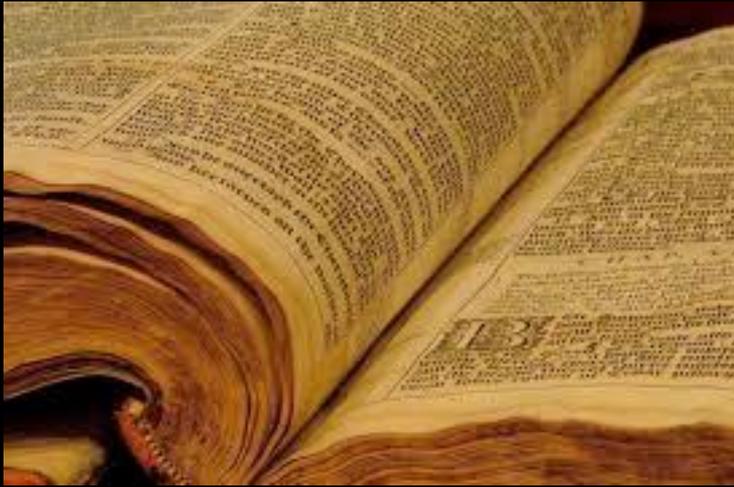


The 21st Century

...

1. Inerrancy is no longer an asset.

3. Narratives encompass systems.



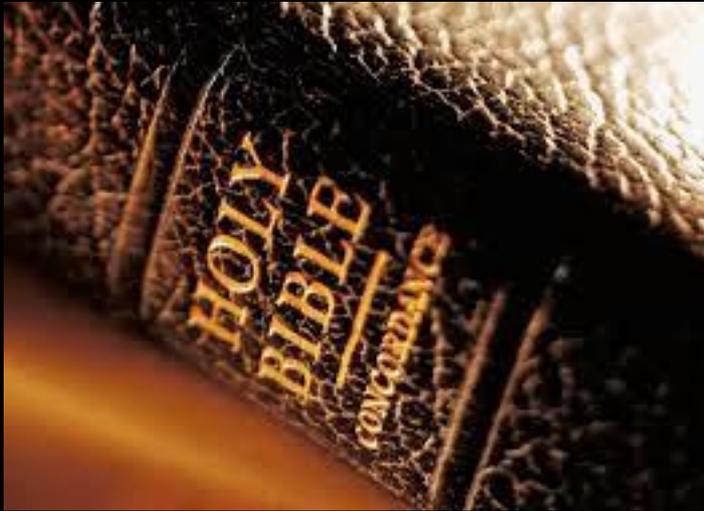
3. Narratives encompass systems.

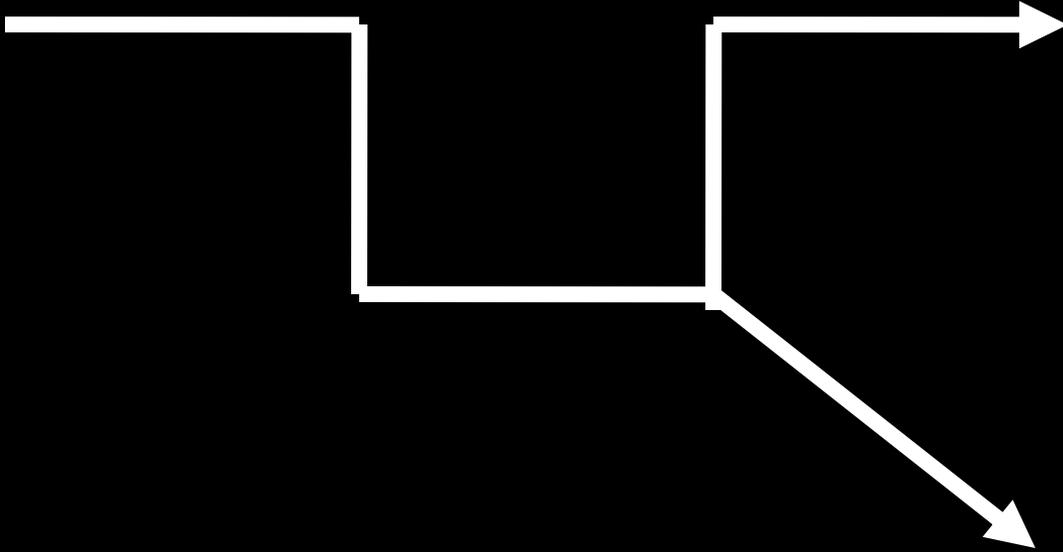
Theological systems have a backstory ... to tell that story is to deconstruct the system (to reveal it as a human construction).

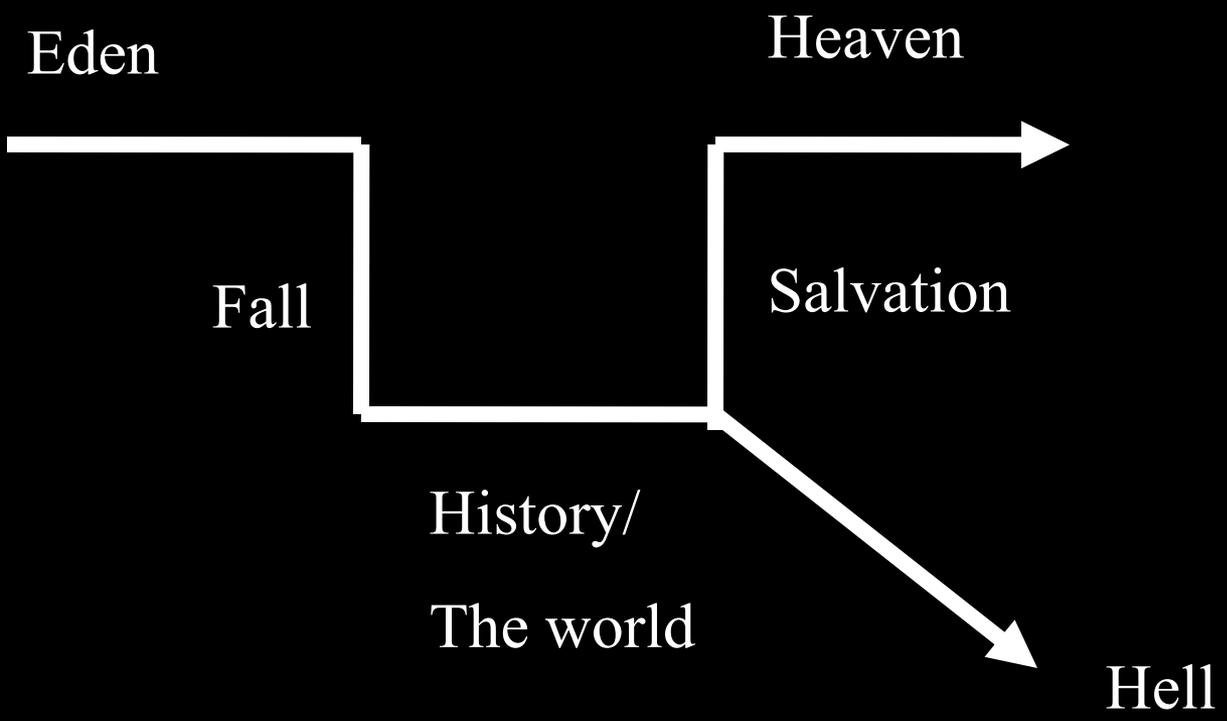
Deconstruction is not destruction.
It is loving and honest attention.

What is the shape of the biblical narrative?

(A pre-critical question)







Platonic Ideal

Platonic Ideal



Fall

Into

Atonement,
purification

Aristotelian
Real

Aristotelian
Real

Hades

Pax Romana

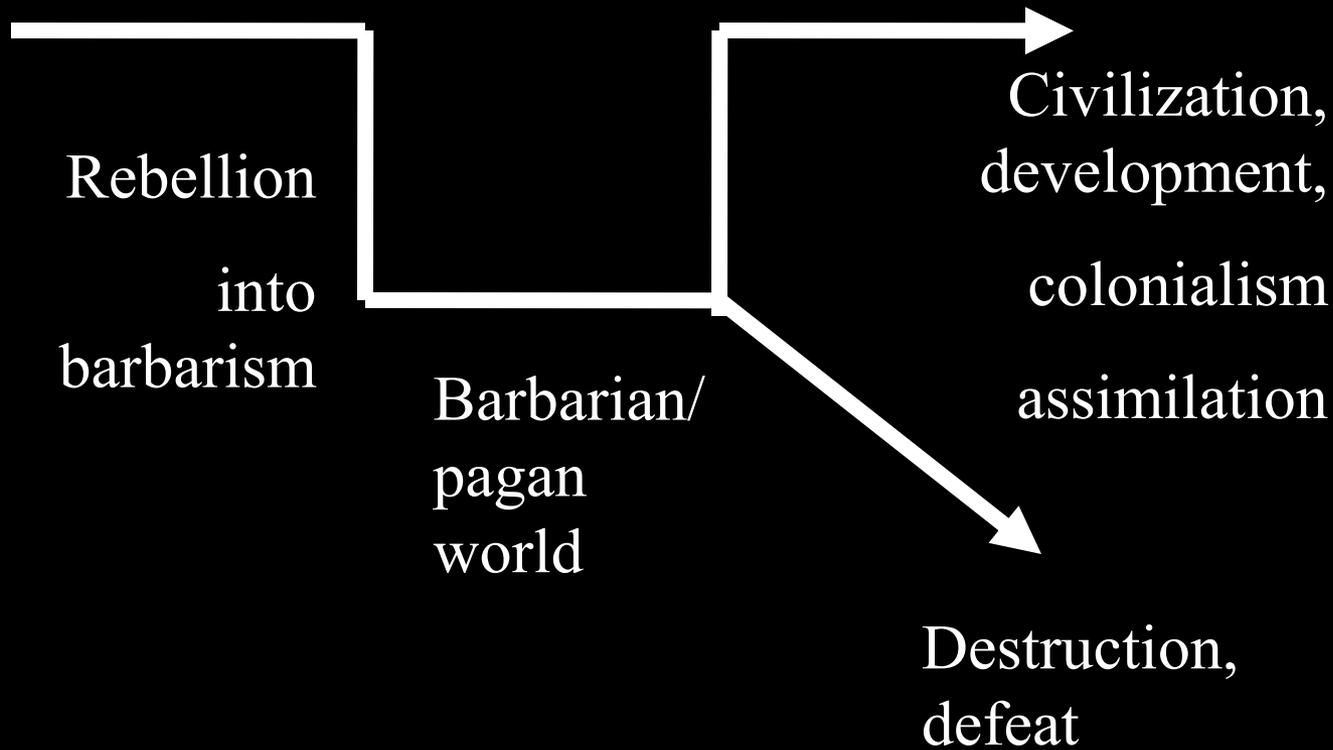
Pax Romana

Rebellion
into
barbarism

Barbarian/
pagan
world

Civilization,
development,
colonialism
assimilation

Destruction,
defeat



Is there an
alternative
understanding?

sdrawkcab gnidaer

Rick Warren, Billy Graham, Charles Finney, John Wesley (or Calvin), Luther, Aquinas, Augustine, Paul, Jesus



reading forwards

Adam, Eve, Sarah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary, Jesus



Exodus: Liberation & Formation

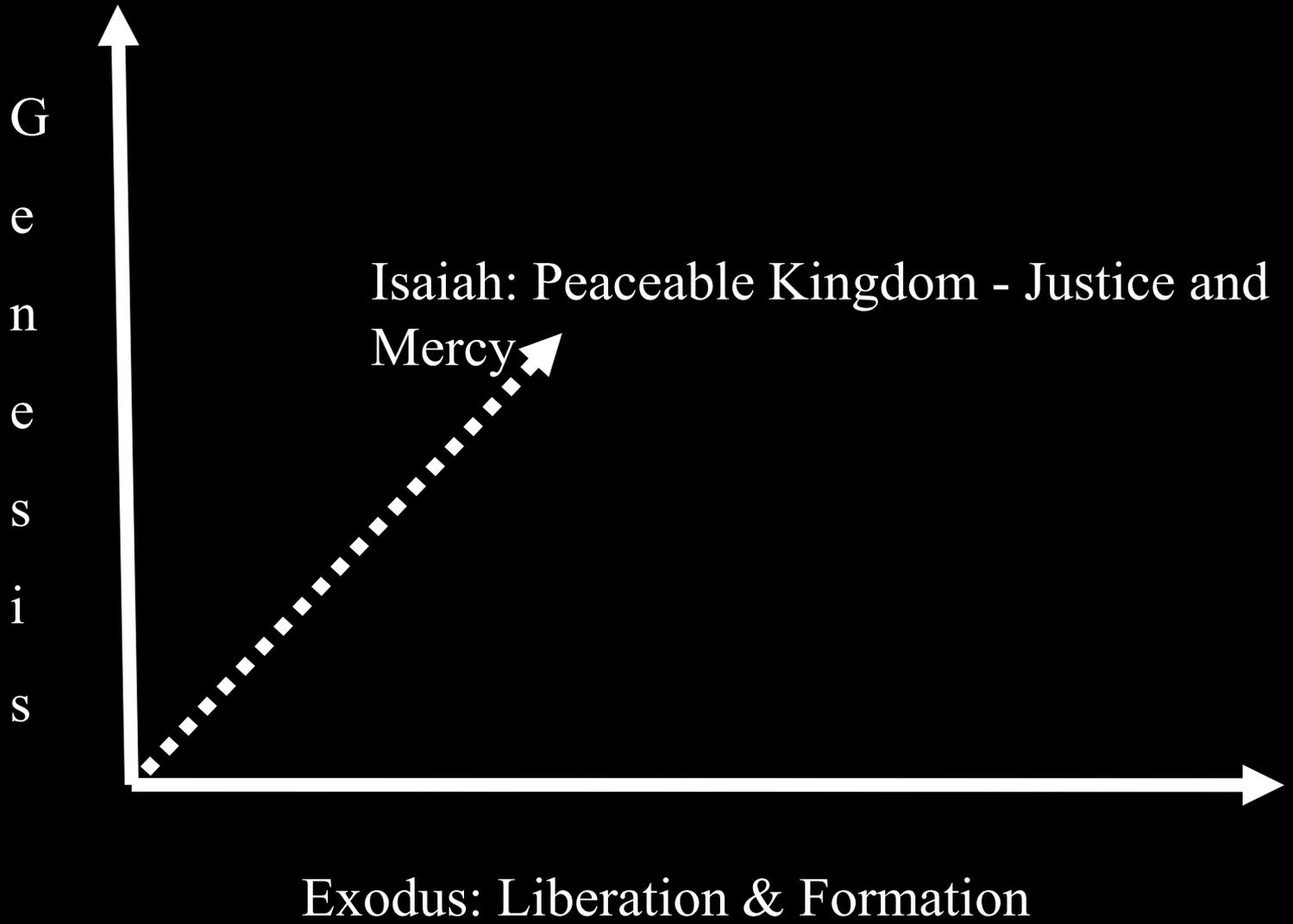
Exodus: Liberation & Formation

Genesis: Creation and Reconciliation

Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and
Mercy

Exodus: Liberation & Formation

Genesis: Creation and Reconciliation



HUMAN DESTRUCTION

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Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and
Mercy

HUMAN VIOLENCE

HUMAN EXPLOITATION

Exodus: Liberation & Formation



HUMAN DESTRUCTION

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Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and
Mercy

HUMAN VIOLENCE

HUMAN EXPLOITATION

Exodus: Liberation & Formation



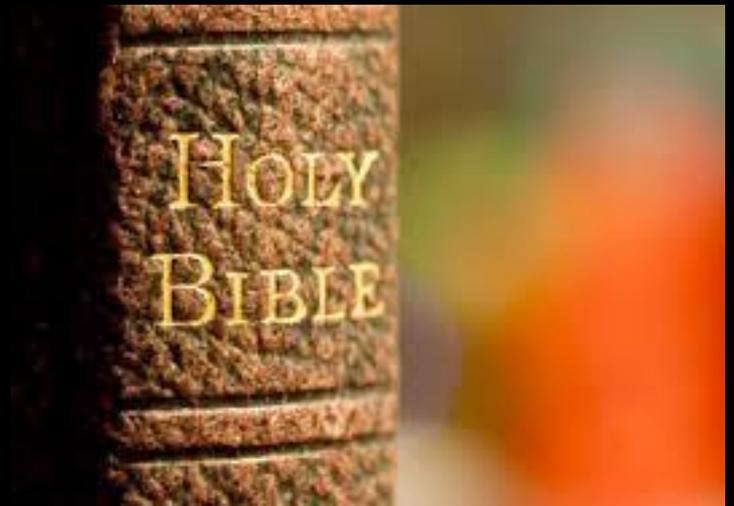
In the 21st century ...

3. Narratives encompass
systems.

Creation

Liberation

Reconciliation



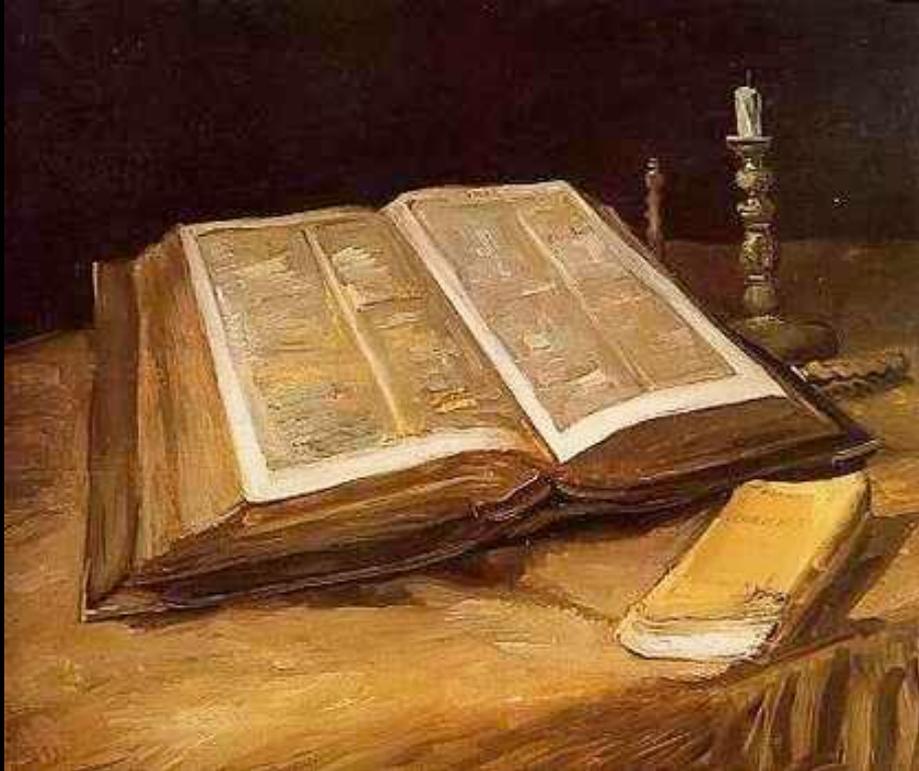
In the 21st century ...

4. Tensions reveal deeper truths.

Not contradictions to be “resolved” or exposed ... but statements, counter-statements, new insights, new counter-statements, etc.



Constitution?



Library?

The Bible as Constitution/Charter/ Contract

- What purposes do constitutions (or social contracts) fulfill?
- How is the Bible like a constitution?
- What problems arise with this approach?



Bible as Library

- Culture as community united by arguments
- Library as preserver of minority opinions and ongoing arguments
- Meaning emerges among stories in tension



Stories in tension ...

David, Goliath, and the Temple

Two Arks

Pharaoh, Hagar, Solomon

Ezra, Ruth

Judges, Ruth

Call of Abraham, Blessing for cursing

Joshua, Jesus, and the Canaanites



LEGAL CONSTITUTION	COMMUNITY LIBRARY
Uniformity	Diversity
Preserve order	Preserve diversity
agreement	argument
enforcement	encouragement

LEGAL CONSTITUTION	COMMUNITY LIBRARY
Rules to live by, Conformity	Stories to live by, Creativity
One publication date	Many publication dates
Analyze, interpret, argue	Enter, inhabit, practice
amendments?	new acquisitions

Inspiration

- what would an inspired constitution look like?
- what would an inspired community library look like?
- how would we engage with the Bible as an inspired library?

In the 21st century ...

4. Tensions reveal deeper truths.

Not contradictions ... but contractions.



1. Inerrancy is no longer
an asset.

Transparency,
conversationality, and
corrigibility become more
important than inerrancy.

2. Interpretation is everywhere:

- texts
- interpreters
- authors/producers
- communities who read texts
by authors aided by
interpreters
- individuals...

3. Narratives encompass systems.

Creation

Liberation

Reconciliation

4. Tensions reveal deeper truths.

Not contradictions to be “resolved” or exposed ... but statements, counter-statements, new insights, new counter-statements, etc.



In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Narrative theology

Liberation theology

Mimetic theory

Orality/Aurality

Prophetic theology

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Narrative theology

The text records the evolutionary emergence of new ways of thinking about God and life ... and reveals a trajectory that continues today.

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Liberation theology

The primary storyline is an audacious claim that God takes the side of the oppressed, and that salvation is God's liberation from all that oppresses the goodness of creation.

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Mimetic (Girardian) theory

Sacrifice (human, animal) was an early anthropological means of reducing violence. The Bible reveals a new way of peace ... a new “covenant” to replace violence with peace.

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Orality/Aurality

The Bible was a spoken and heard composition before it was a written text. It should be rediscovered as “performance art” in a communal experience.

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Prophetic theology

Jesus was a radical in the prophetic tradition who introduced a new way of interpreting ancient texts, thus opening up new possibilities for humanity.

Go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” (Matthew 9:13)

Mercy - compassion, love, empathy,
human kindness, nonviolence

Not sacrifice - blood, death, fear,
violence, priesthood, temple, holy city,
sacrifice industrial complex

Derek Flood graphically displays Paul's edited quotation of Psalm 18:41-49 and Deuteronomy 32:43 in Romans 15:8-10. Notice what Paul picks to retain and what he chooses to reject:

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: ~~“I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—to the LORD, but he did not answer.... He is the God who avenges me, who puts the Gentiles under me.... Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.”~~ (Ps. 18:41–49).

Again, it says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles,
with his people, ~~for he will avenge the
blood of his servants; he will take
vengeance on his enemies and make
atonement for his land and people.~~”
(Deut. 32:43)

Flood concludes: “Paul is making a very different point from the original intent of these Psalms. In fact, he is making the *opposite* point—we should not cry out for God’s wrath and judgment [on the other], because we are all sinners in need of mercy.” He concludes, “This is not a case of careless out-of-context proof-texting; it is an artful and deliberate reshaping of these verses ... from their original cry for divine violence into a confession of universal culpability that highlights our need for mercy.”

FLAT

DESCENDING

ASCENDING

MOUNTAIN RANGE

In the 21st century ...

5. Convergence happens.

Narrative theology

Liberation theology

Mimetic theory

Orality/Aurality

Prophetic theology

In the 21st century ...

It's an exciting time to read the
Bible.

So read it!

Study it!

Preach it!

Converse about it!

And don't leave it to
those who refuse to
think

critically about it!

