

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Vocabulary

Colophon
Cosmogony
Creatio ex nihilo
Cuneiform
Fall, *The*
Immanence
Lingua franca
Merism (or merismus)
Ontology
Orthodoxy
Pentateuch
String Theory
Theodicy
Toledoth
Type, Antitype, Typology
Worldview

Key Passages

Gen. 1.26 (NIV) Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image**, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen. 12.2 (NIV) “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**”

Gen. 22.13 (NIV) Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

Gen. 50.18 (NASB) Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” 19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? 20 As for you, **you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good** in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

Acts 17.24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 28 **‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’** As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

John 1.1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.** 4 **In him was life**, and that life was the light of men.

Col. 1.15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.**

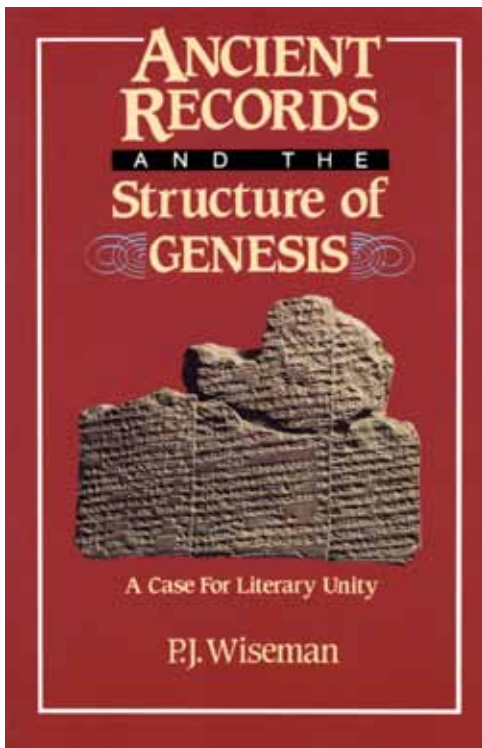
toledot

= [written] origins (or histories)

תולדות

A COLOPHON is a note added at the end of an account, giving particulars of the title, date, name of writer or owner, together with other details relating to the contents of a tablet, manuscript or book. When used on ancient tablets its purpose was similar to that which may be seen in old manuscripts and books. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “the inscription or device, formerly placed at the end of a book or manuscript, and containing the title, the scribe’s or printer’s name, date and place of printing etc.”

Gen. 5.1 (NIV) This is the **written account** of Adam’s line.



Published by Thomas Nelson, 1985

GENESIS

2.4

5.1

6.9

10.1

11.10

11.27

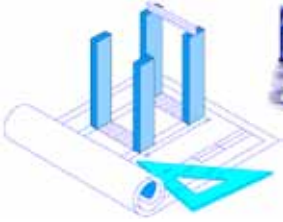
25.19

36.1

36.9

37.2

Compare:
Numbers 3.1;
Ruth 4.18.

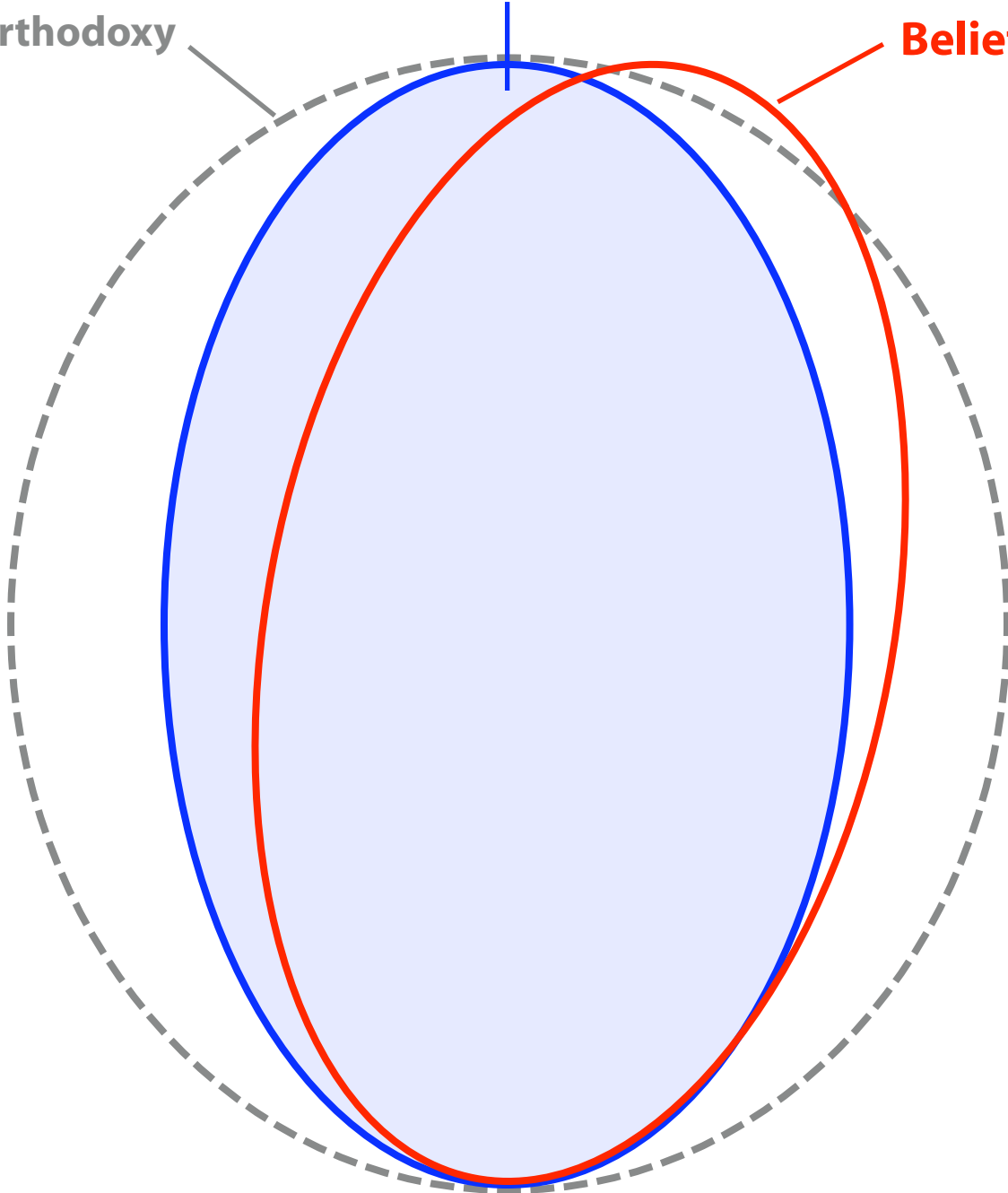


Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Christian
Orthodoxy

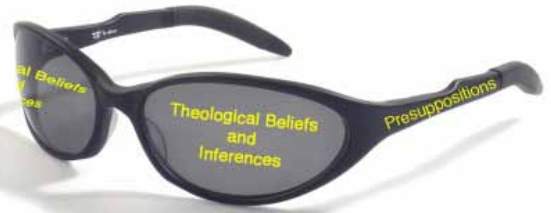
Pure Biblical Truth

Our
Beliefs



Christian Orthodoxy: The set of all beliefs which one can hold and still be considered “Christian,” in the historical sense of the word. From the Greek, *orthodoxia* (from *orthos*, “right,” and *doxa*, “opinion”).

A WORLDVIEW SHOULD ADDRESS THESE ULTIMATE QUESTIONS:



- 1. Ontology**
 - A. What is the nature of existence and being?**
 - B. What was the origin of life?**

 - C. What motivates man to act as he does? Is his will free?**
 - D. Is there a supernatural realm?**

- 2. Theology: What is God's nature and character?**

- 3. Ethics: What is right and what is wrong?**

- 4. Teleology: What is the purpose and meaning of life?**

- 5. Epistemology**
 - A. What forms of knowledge are reliable?**

 - B. Is the universe rational, i.e., can we think about the universe and expect to arrive at rational truths?**

- 6. History**
 - A. What is the origin of competing religious myths?**

 - B. Why is there evil in the world?**

- 7. Happiness: What is the path to greatest fulfillment?**



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A PROFOUND THOUGHT: One cannot disprove God without first assuming something about God.

—Cornelius G. Hunter, *Darwin's God*, p.128.

| | GNOSTICISM 100 BC to AD 200 | DEISM AD 1650 to 1750+ | DARWINISM AD 1860 to Present |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Separate God From Creation By | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethan Allen Ben Franklin Thomas Jefferson | |
| Problem of Evil Solved By | | | |

When people say, “How can God allow cruelty? How can God allow suffering?” the problem they have is that they already have a belief and a commitment and a devotion to goodness. Now, if you’re going to believe in God, he’d better be as good as you, otherwise you don’t accept him. So really your devotion to goodness is your God, and then God has to match that. God has to obey the dictates of goodness, and for a spiritual person God has to obey the dictates of spirituality. Otherwise he’s not acceptable. So it’s like we’re creating God in our own image, or we have an ideal that is greater than our God, and God is acceptable only because he reaches the same ideal that I already have. The ironic thing is, God created those ideals, and now we’re making him suffer for it. See, God comes along and says, “I want you to be good,” and we turn around and tell God to be good. So we take his commandment, turn it into God, and then turn him into a worshiper. And he has to worship at the altar of his commandments. So what is God? God is that reality which existed before any of your reality existed. He’s the creator. He created everything out of nothing. So before you had your ideology, before you had your virtues and your principles and your values, before you had your religion, there was God. And he created all that. He created goodness, he created spirituality, he created heaven, he created all that. And therefore none of those things can be God. They’re all creations...

—Philip L. Berman, *The Search for Meaning*, pp. 384,385, quote from a Hasidic Jew.

Discussion Questions

1. What happened before the beginning?

- **Psalm 90.2:**
- **Proverbs 8.23:**
- **John 17.5:**
- **John 17.24:**
- **Ephesians 1.4-5:**
- **2 Timothy 1.9:**
- **Titus 1.2:**
- **1 Peter 1.20; Acts 2.23:**

2. What does Genesis tell us about the essence of the natural universe?

3. Based on what Genesis tells us of God, what can we infer about human nature and purpose?

4. The story of Noah's sons (Gen. 9.18-27) confirms mankind's continuing fallenness. What is human fallenness, and how is it passed down from generation to generation?

5. What is the solution for human fallenness?

— Do you believe in fate, Neo?
— No.
— Why not?
— Because I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life.
— I know exactly what you mean. ... Let me tell you why you're here. You're here because you know something. What you know you can't explain, but you feel it. You've felt it your entire life, that there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is, but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad. ... you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind.

Morpheus and Neo, in *The Matrix*



Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Vocabulary

Apology, apologetics
Aramaic (language)
Axiom, axiomatic
Consecrate, consecration
Goel
Hebrew (language)
Imago Dei
Lingua franca
Septuagint (LXX)
Torah
Tetragrammaton
Theophany
Vulgate
YHVH

Key Passages

Ex. 19.9 The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, **so that the people will hear me speaking** with you and will always put their trust in you.” ...

Ex. 19.10 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes 11 and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai **in the sight of all the people.**”

Ex. 20.22 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: **‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you** from heaven: 23 Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.

Ex. 24.9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and **saw the God of Israel.** Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. 11 But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

Deut. 5.22 These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

23 When **you heard the voice out of the darkness**, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. 24 And you said, **“The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him.** 25 But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. 26 For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived?

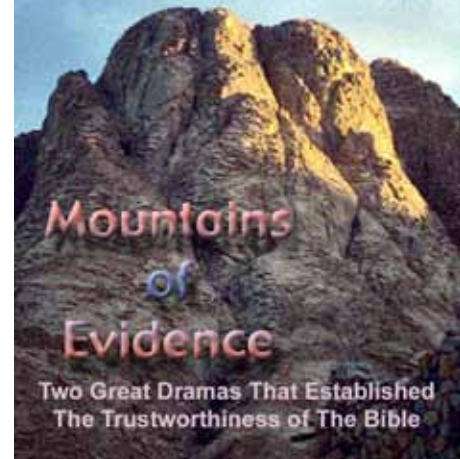
Num. 14.26 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: 27 “How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. ... 29 **In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more** who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.”

Is. 8.19 When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, **should not a people inquire of their God?** Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 **To the law and to the testimony!** If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we believe the New Testament?

Please download this related article at www.tmin.org



2. Why do we believe the prophets?

3. Why do we believe the Old Testament history books?

4. What is the ultimate basis for confidence in a written revelation?

Why don't we accept the Qur'an or the Book of Mormon?

5. Why is the world indebted to a crowd of teenagers?



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Vocabulary

Antithesis
Axiom, Axiomatic
Consecrate, Consecration
Dialectic
Discernment
Grammatical-Historical
Method
Hegel, Georg W. F.
Metanarrative
Postmodern Thought
Qur'an
Social Construct
Syncretism
Synthesis
Theophany
Thesis

Key Passages

Gen. 2.17 "...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of **good and evil**, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Gen. 4.7 If you do **what is right**, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Ex. 9.27 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "**The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.**"

Ex. 15.26 He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right **in his eyes**, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

Ex. 20.16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Lev. 10.10 **You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean...**

Lev. 11.47 **You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten."**

Lev. 19.11 "Do not steal. **Do not lie.** Do not deceive one another."

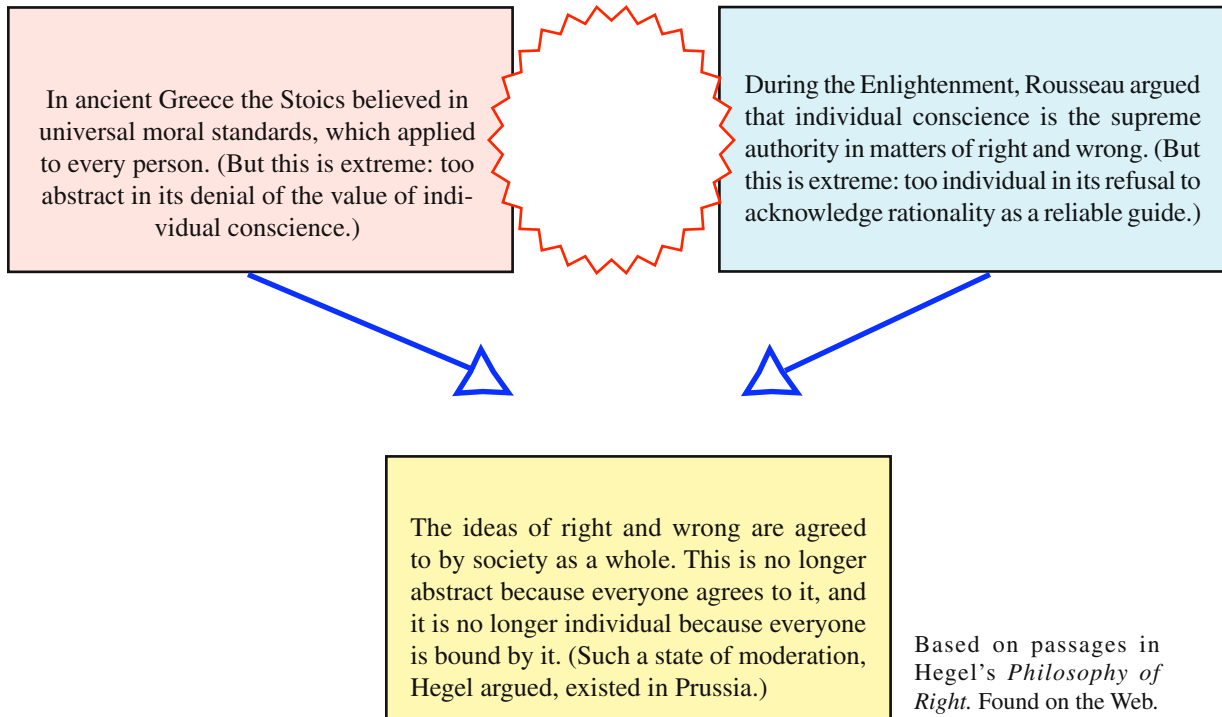
Lev. 21.6 They must be holy to their God and must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the offerings made to the LORD by fire, the food of their God, they are to be holy.

Deut. 12.28 Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because **you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God.**

Deut. 32.4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God **who does no wrong, upright and just is he.**

Discussion Questions

1. What is a Hegelian synthesis?



2. What's the essence of postmodern thought with regard to moral truth?

3. What is the basis for antithetical truth?

4. What other worldview principles are taught by the complex system of sacrifices?



Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Vocabulary

Creatio ex nihilo
 Cuneiform
 Discernment
 Epistemology
 Ethics
 Fall, *The*
 Fertile Crescent
 Keystone
 Mishnah
 Mnemonic Device
 Progressive Revelation
 Social Construct
 Syncretism
 Talmud
 Teleology

Key Passages

1 Cor. 10.2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the **spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.**



Luke 20.17 Jesus looked directly at them and asked, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become **the capstone** [or keystone]’? 18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Deut. 32.4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God **who does no wrong, upright and just is he.**

Rev. 2.14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of **Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.**

Num. 12.3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, **more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.**)

Num. 14.28 So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: 29 In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. ...33 **Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness,** until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. 34 For forty years — one year for each of the forty days you explored the land — you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’

Num. 15.38 ... ‘Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, **that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.** 40 Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.’”

Discussion Questions



Please
download the
related
article, "Gardener's
Priority," at:
[http://www.tmin.org/
tminpages/archive.html](http://www.tmin.org/tminpages/archive.html)

1. What did Jesus mean in his saying about falling on the stone? (Luke 20.17,18)

2. How was YHVH radically different from the gods of the pagans?

3. What can we learn from the swift judgments that came upon the people in the book of Numbers? And why did God make the children suffer for their parents' sin (Num. 14.33)?

4. What was the only way the pagans could defeat the Israelites? (Consider Numbers 14.9.)

5. What is humility? (Read Numbers, ch. 12.)



Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Vocabulary

Antithesis
Apocrypha
Creatio ex nihilo
Cuneiform
Fertile Crescent
Grammatical-Historical
Method
Lingua franca
Magna Carta
Rule of Law
Synthesis
Theophany
Thesis
Toledoth
Type & Antitype

Key Passages

Gen. 21.1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had **promised**.

Ex. 23.9 “**Do not oppress** an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt.

Num. 23.19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? **Does he promise and not fulfill?**

Deut. 34.4 Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ **I have let you see it with your eyes**, but you will not cross over into it.”

Josh. 21.45 **Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.**

Josh. 23.14 “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. **You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.**”

1Kings 8.56 “**Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.**”

Psa. 9.9 **The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed**, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Psa. 146.6 ...the LORD, who remains faithful forever. **7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed** and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free...

Psa. 138.2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, **for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.**

Matt. 5.17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of God speaking to Moses from within the burning bush (Exodus 3.1-4)?



- • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
- Douglas Taylor-Weiss, rector of St. •
- Andrew's Episcopal Church in Day- •
- ton, Ohio, has proposed a new set of •
- Ten Commandments based on obser- •
- vations of our culture: •
- 1. Have a good day. •
- 2. Shop. •
- 3. Eliminate pain. •
- 4. Be up-to-date. •
- 5. Relax. •
- 6. Express yourself. •
- 7. Have a happy family. •
- 8. Be entertaining. •
- 9. Be entertained. •
- 10. Buy entertainment. •
- He forgot 11. Get in touch with your •
- feelings. — Martin E. Marty •
- • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

2. Practically speaking, what is an oppressor?

3. How was the law of the Medes and Persians a little superior to the law of other non-Israelite cultures? (Dan. 6.15)

4. How did the Magna Carta (AD 1215) make English (and eventually American) law superior to the law of the Medes and Persians?

5. Does God submit to a rule of law?

Nothingness On Furlough

Colossians 1.17

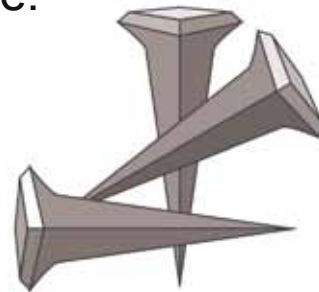
In the beginning,
Word decreed strings,
And set them each singing,
Forming visible things.

But ex nihilo nihil fit,
Unless Creator fasten it,
And so with Strong Force far and nigh,
Word binds the like-charged nuclei,

Sustaining each and every atom
Of such rebellious sons of Adam,
Who stubbornly autonomous,
Nailed the Word upon a cross,

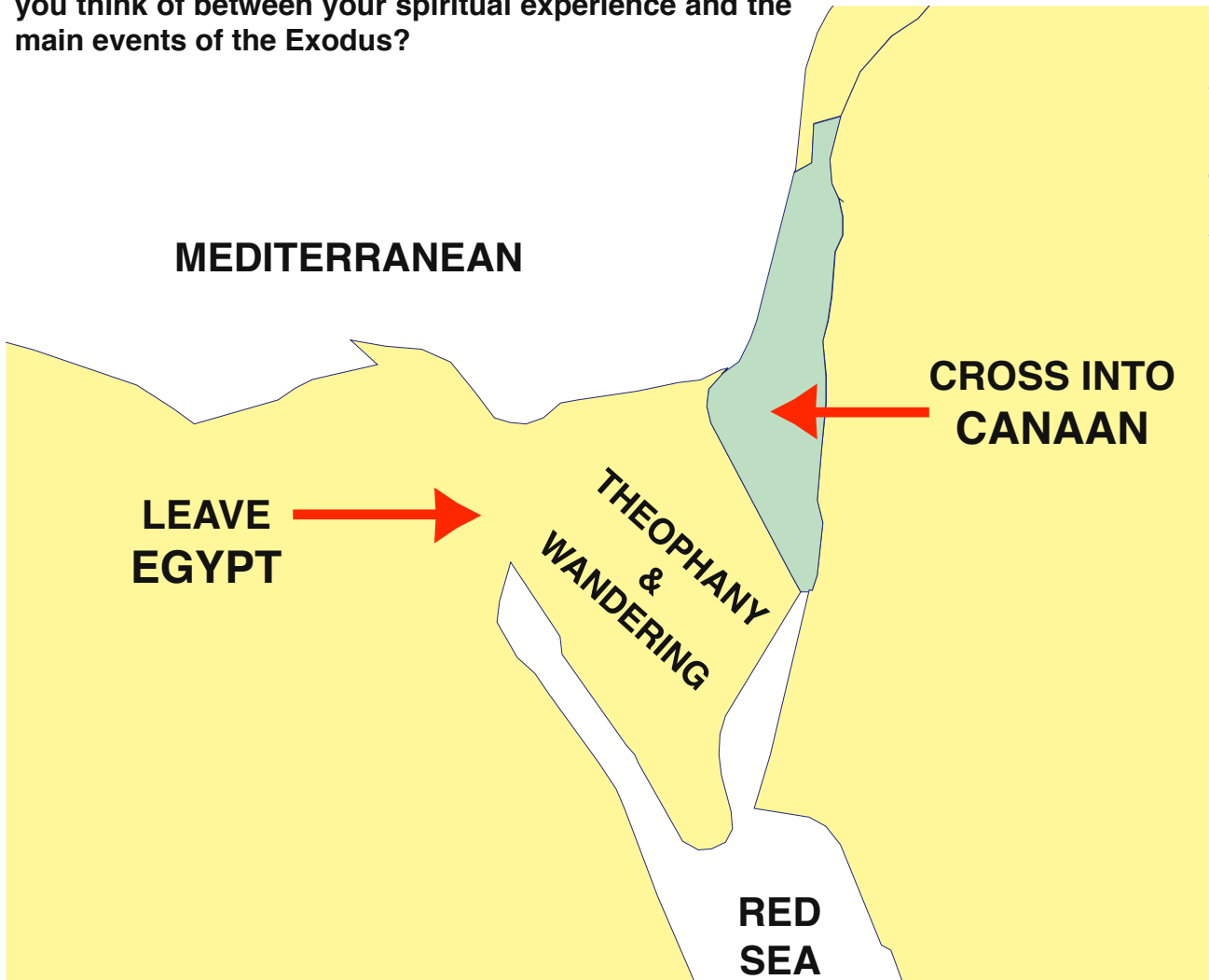
Perceiving not: 'twas Love ideal,
The Word who suffered bleeding, bare;
He played the strings that sang like steel,
And in obedience pinned him there.

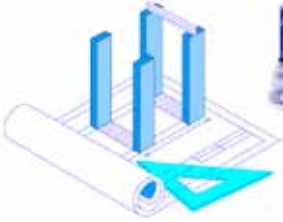
Roderick A. Graciano
Christmas Eve, 2003



Discussion Questions

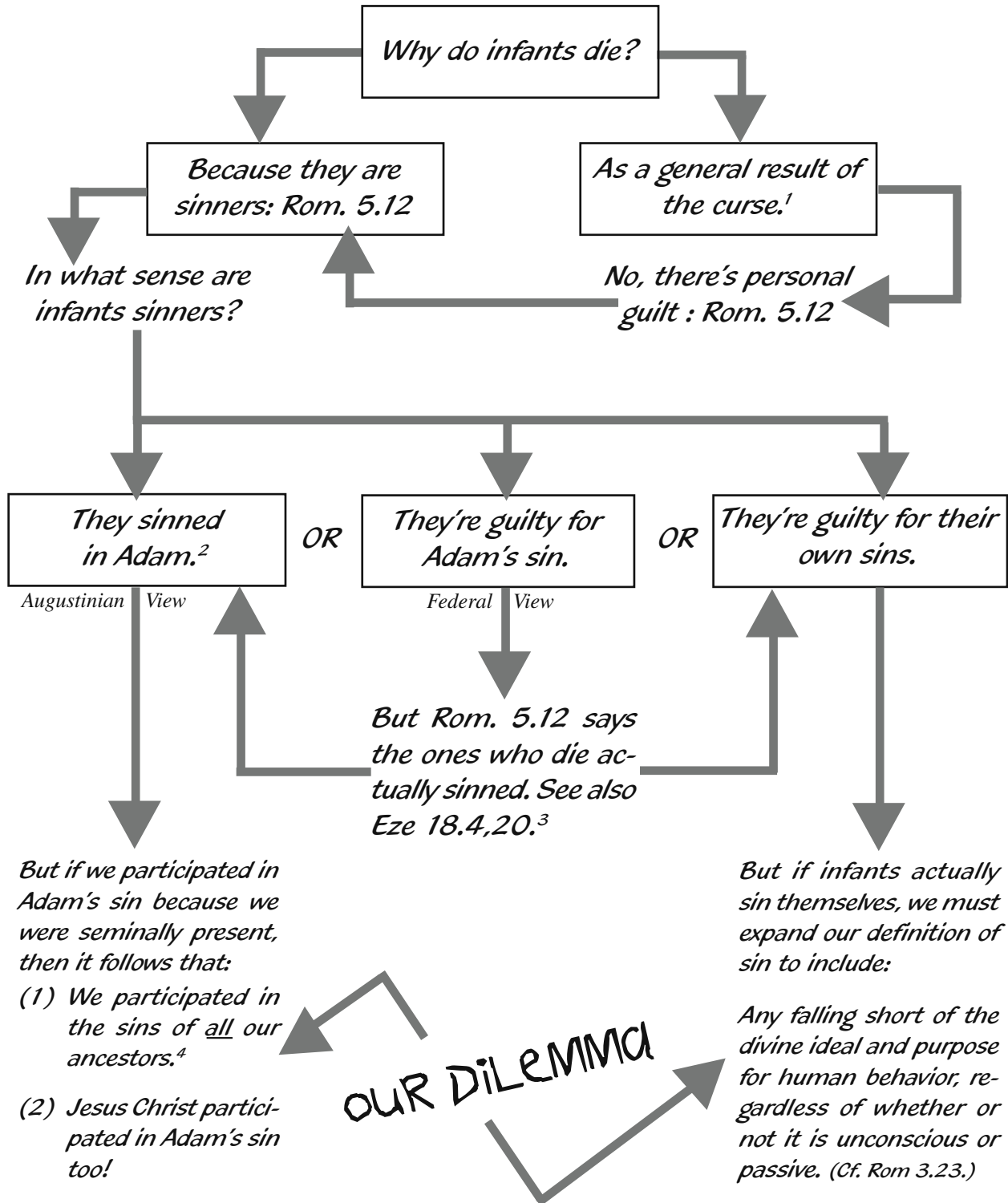
Romans 15.4 says that “everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The Exodus events were all literal happenings, but they are also typological, foreshadowing the stages of a typical believer’s spiritual life. What parallels can you think of between your spiritual experience and the main events of the Exodus?





WHY DO INFANTS DIE?

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

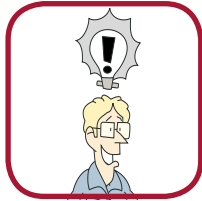


Discussion Questions



ANCHOR TRUTHS

- All human beings have sinned and the proof of this is that all human beings die.
- This corruption of the entire human race resulted from one man's sin, and its consequences for the individual can be reversed by one Man's act of righteousness.

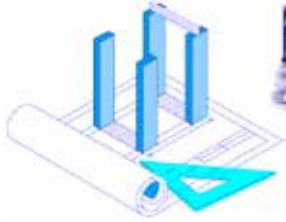


FOR DISCUSSION

Why do infants die?

Notes for the flow chart on the preceding page:

- (1) Any attempt to make infant mortality *only* an impersonal consequence of the fall, such as the suggestion that they only die because people no longer have access to the “tree of life,” flies in the face of the plain meaning of Romans 5.12. Paul makes death a personal consequence of every man's sin.
- (2) The Augustinian view runs aground immediately on bad exegesis. The proof text for the idea that one person can act “seminally” in an ancestor is Hebrews 7.9,10, but in that passage the writer uses a disclaimer, ὡς ἔπειτα εἶπεν (= *so to say*, or *so to speak*) indicating that he is writing analogously or allegorically. A. T. Robertson makes this Hebrews passage “a rabbinical imaginative refinement appealing to Jews.” I know of no other scriptural support for the idea that we act in and through our ancestors.
- (3) The federal view has the added problems of explaining why, if Adam's guilt was imputed to his descendants, Adam's presumed subsequent forgiveness and justification were not. There is also the problem of explaining why Adam's guilt was not imputed to Jesus Christ who was a true descendant.
- (4) Augustine labored to be consistent in his development of this “seminal” view. In ch. 46 of his *Enchiridion*, he writes: “...and further, because there are other sins of the immediate parents, which though they have not the same effect in producing a change in nature, yet subject the children to guilt unless the divine grace and mercy interpose to rescue them.” Augustine's solution to the inherited *guilt* of Adam and of our nearer ancestors was apparently infant baptism.



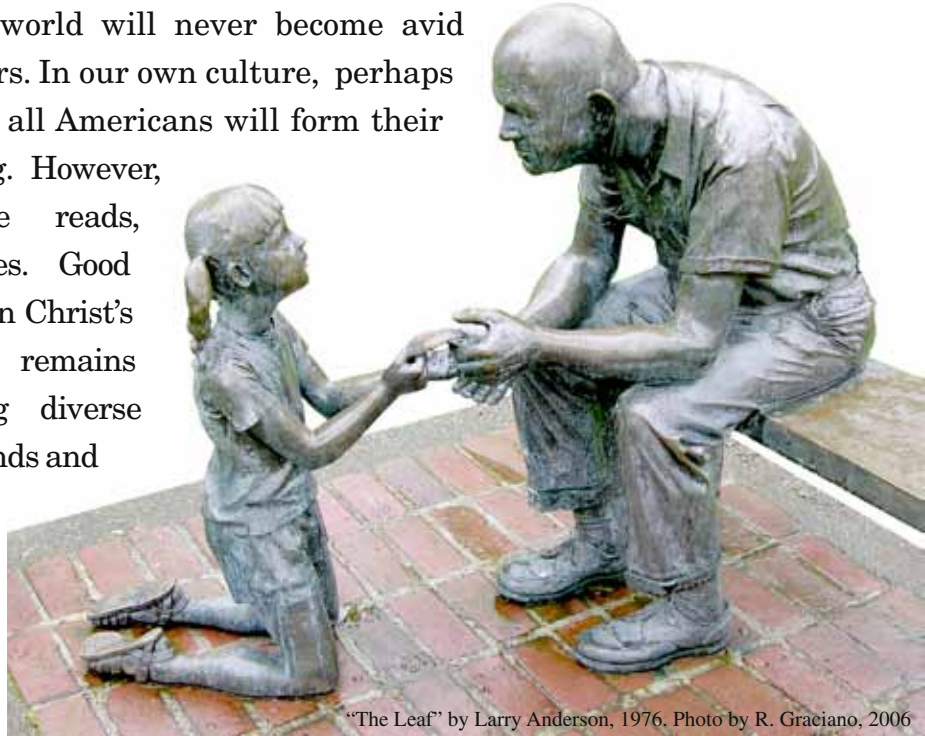
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The Power of Story

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Most of our world will never become avid Bible readers. In our own culture, perhaps only half of all Americans will form their worldview by reading. However, while not everyone reads, everyone loves stories. Good story-telling was vital in Christ's earthly ministry, and remains essential to reaching diverse cultures today. Our friends and neighbors may not be interested in reading the Bible or having it read to them, but they'll listen to a 3-minute story!



"The Leaf" by Larry Anderson, 1976. Photo by R. Graciano, 2006

Choose one of the titles on pages 21 and 22. Write and present a 2 to 3-minute (300-500 word) Bible story that summarizes the Bible narrative. The story should emphasize key events, but does not need to explain the importance of those events. Don't preach, just tell the story. The significance of the events in the story should emerge from subsequent discussion with your audience. Use dynamic language and imaginative structure to make the story interesting, but don't distort the facts! Avoid theological terms and religious clichés.

Not all of the Bible is story (narrative). Much of Scripture is propositions, poems or prophecies. However, sometimes even non-narrative scriptures involve or imply a story. I have pieced together Old and New Testament propositions to form the 520-word introductory story that follows. I had to use my imagination for this story, though I believe I have preserved the essential facts from God's word. Your story will involve more concrete and familiar images. Have fun!

The Genesis Stories

1. Introduction: Before the Beginning

Before the beginning, in the incomprehensible void of space and time, an eternal mind burned with Father-love. The only Entity, all that existed, was spirit and the Spirit was rational, self-conscious, volitional and relational. Utterly one, yet three, the Father loved the Son in an endlessly present moment, and surrounded Him with blazing glory, a glory that was no thing, no substance but a love-radiance greater than the atomic furnaces of a thousand suns.

Emanating from the Father and the Son, the Spirit of Wisdom, ever contemplating the ideal plan for multiplying the already immeasurable glory, danced in the aurora of the Father-Son love. The Spirit of Wisdom sang a craftsman's song. He sang a song of tiny strings that would sing as He did, but with manifold melodies swelling in a symphony of being. He sang a song of measuring out heavens, of scattering stars, of marking out great deeps and of founding worlds, but most of all He sang of crafting a creature in the image of the One.

The Father and Son rejoiced in Wisdom's song, and they sang also, singing that the creature in their image should be holy, and enjoy sonship even as the Eternal One did.

The Spirit sang again asking, "How shall a mere creature know sonship like the One?"

"Creature shall beget creature," sang the Father, "and the begetter shall love and nurture the begotten."

"Yet no creature can fully reveal You," sang the Son.

"Then I shall adopt the image-bearers," sang the Father. "The One Son shall have siblings, and they shall know my Father-love."

And the Spirit of Wisdom sang again, asking, "How shall the image-bearers know holiness?"

And the Father sang, "They shall embrace darkness, and afterward truly love the light!"

"But having walked in darkness, how shall they return to the light?" sang Father, Son and Holy Spirit together. Their harmony formed a minor chord, and they sang, "The image bearers' embrace of darkness will make them unworthy to bask in our radiance, and unable to endure it!"

The voice of Wisdom rose above the others, "To know our glory after walking in darkness, they shall be bathed in our love and showered by our grace."

"Then We give them that grace from eternity!" sang the Father and the Son. "Before we call them forth, we call them to be holy, to become our sons and daughters, and we give them long life that they might plumb the depths of our love."

"How long must they live?" sang the Spirit and the Son.

"Forever!" sang the Father.

"And who shall bathe them in our love?" sang the Spirit. "Who shall enter their river of darkness to wash them?"

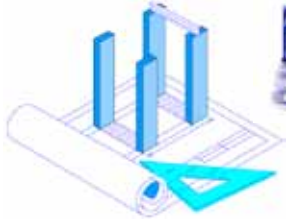
"I shall wash them," sang the Son. "I shall be immersed in their darkness."

"Will you endure the killing cold of the Father's hidden face?" asked the Spirit, no longer singing.

"Yes! I shall wash them!" sang the Son, as rays of countless colors filled the eternal mind with brilliant light.

"My Son shall wash them," sang the Father, and the light rays all turned crimson.

[Note: The biblical basis for the above story is on page 6.]



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The Power of Story

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

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4. **Serpent 1, Man 0: The Battle For Human Hearts Begins**
5. **Water World: God Reboots Civilization**
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7. **Trusting Man: The Spiritual Journey of Abram and Sarai**
8. **Wild Donkey Man: The Birth And Life of Esau**
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10. **Man of Promise: The Birth And Life of Isaac**
11. **Crafty Man: The Life of Jacob**
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A Paradoxical Objective

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Strange as it may seem, in **BC to AD** we endeavor to understand our Bible well enough to articulate its message *in secular terms*. In other words, we seek to understand the essence of God’s revelation, so that we can translate it into the vernacular of our non-Christian and biblically illiterate culture.

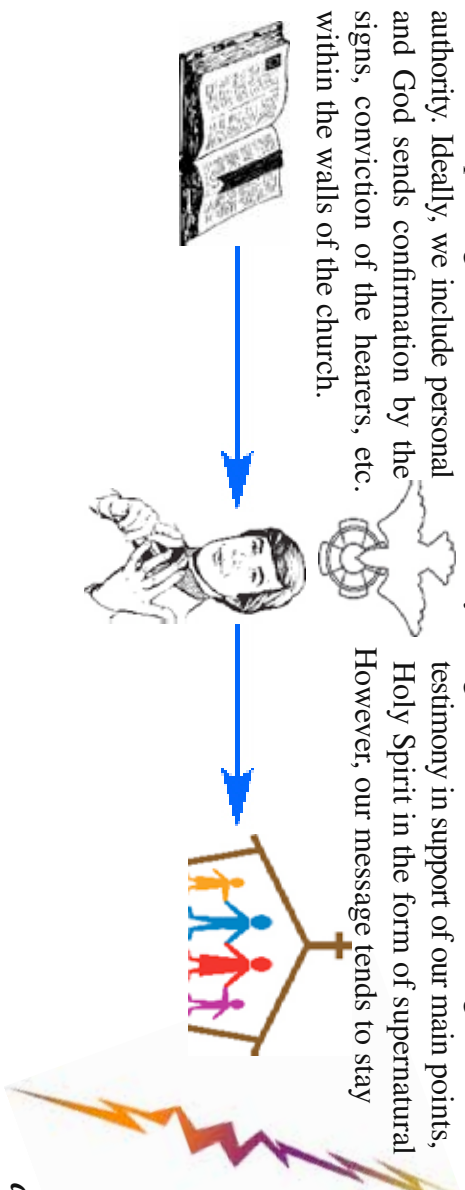
The end goal, of course, is to tell our secularized neighbor the Good News without expecting him or her to understand our religious dialect — *and without assuming that he or she accepts the authority of the Bible*. In order to do this, we must understand our Bible, but we must also understand our local culture.

Our Lord Jesus modeled this in His approach to the lost people of His society. A person did not have to be a synagogue attender or Torah reader in order to understand the stories Jesus told about building houses on sand, planting crops, and finding treasures. And yet, the stories Jesus told conveyed the deepest truths of God’s biblical revelation! No wonder “the common people heard Him gladly” (Mark 12.37, NKJV).

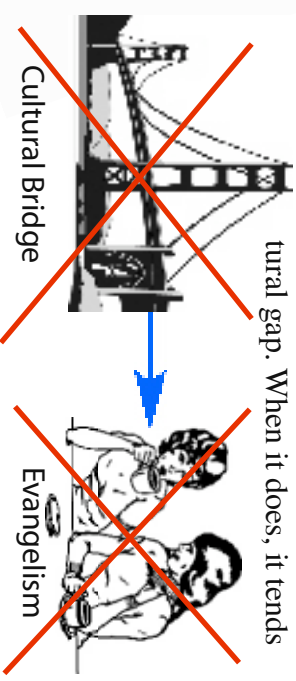


How the Church Ministers To A Jerusalem Audience

As Peter did on the Day of Pentecost, we typically begin our message with the Scriptures, speaking to an audience that already recognizes the Bible as having divine authority. Ideally, we include personal testimony in support of our main points, and God sends confirmation by the signs, conviction of the hearers, etc. within the walls of the church.

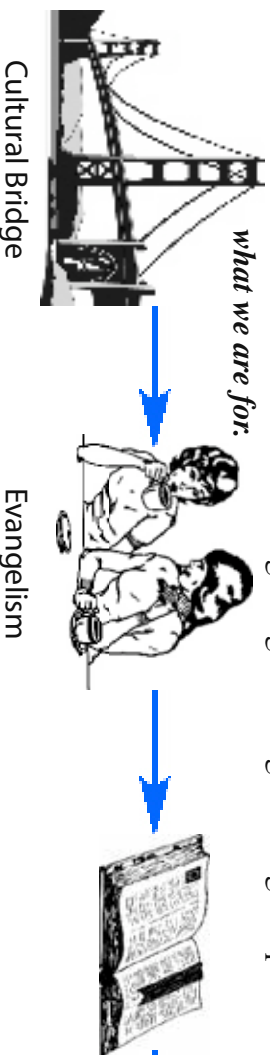


Our message tends to stop at the church walls because we no longer live in a culture for whom biblical authority is a given. We forget this reality and so our message rarely bridges the cultural gap. When it does, it tends to take the form of telling our culture *what we are against*. After we have witnessed to our family and immediate friends, we forget how to evangelize: we learn only how to relate to and minister to church people.

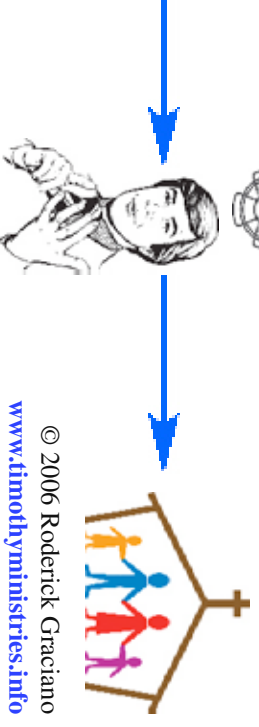


How the Church Can Minister To An Athens Audience

Like Paul with the pagans on Mars Hill, we can begin with a cultural bridge built from the arts and sciences of our culture. Having connected with our non-Christian friends on the common ground of universal problems and principles (e.g., worldview questions), we can then share the Gospel, offering God's word as confirmation and illumination of the message. A good bridge message emphasizes *what we are for*.



Personal testimony and confirmation by the Holy Spirit remain essential, contributing both in evangelism *and* in the discipleship of new believers within the church.





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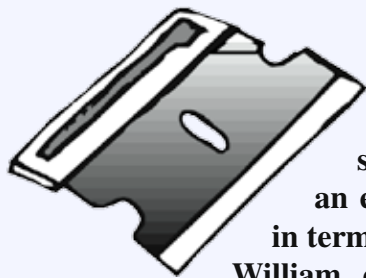
The Nature Of Proof

Exploring the Origins of Redemption In The Pentateuch

Proof, properly speaking, is something found exclusively in the domains of logic and mathematics where one can begin with a premise that is given or self-evident. Based on logical premises, certain present realities can also be proved to our satisfaction by direct observation—whether or not the kettle has boiled, for example. However, if we were to try to corroborate or elucidate an event from history, like say the martyrdom of St. Peter, we cannot travel back in time to observe such an event firsthand. Therefore, unless we can agree on a historical source as absolutely reliable and make it our mutually agreed-upon premise, we cannot expect to *prove* that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero, nor even that he was martyred at all. Historians and scientists whose work it is to extrapolate information about the past from the data they presently study in their labs and libraries must content themselves with establishing the *likelihood* of a given event having occurred. Like the courtroom attorney attempting to reconstruct a crime scene, we must deal with *varying degrees of probability and doubt*: we have to admit that the best of human witnesses can give false testimony, and that artifactual evidence is always open to multiple interpretations. As scientist, Norman D. Newell observes, we must ultimately settle for those theories about the past that account for “a maximum number of observations with a minimum number of assumptions.”*

It is the contention of Christian apologists that the gospel records of the Holy Bible best account for the subsequent unfolding of Christian history and the impact of Christianity upon civilization. Furthermore, Christian historians insist that if we accept a figure like Julius Caesar as a historical personage (which all historians do), then we must accept the historicity of Jesus Christ and the apostles as far more abundantly corroborated. In short, though “proof” is a very subjective thing, by normally accepted standards, if anything at all from history can be proven, the foremost events of the New Testament can!

* Newell, Norman D., *Creation and Evolution: Myth or Reality?* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1982), p. 56. This is an application of Ockham’s Razor (see below).






Ockham’s Razor

A rule in science and philosophy stating that entities should not be multiplied needlessly. This rule is interpreted to mean that the simplest of two or more competing theories is preferable and that an explanation for unknown phenomena should first be attempted in terms of what is already known. Also called law of parsimony. [After William of Ockham.]—*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*

Three Arenas

In the Quest for Truth

| ARENA | THE LAB | HISTORY | THE MIND |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| EXAMPLES | Math, Technical Experiments | Courtroom Trials, Historical Religions | <hr/> Logic <hr/> Mystical Philosophy |
| INITIAL RESULTS | PROOF | EVIDENCE | <hr/> PROOF <hr/> PERSONAL SATISFACTION |
| FINAL RESULTS | TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE  | INTELLIGENT FAITH  | <hr/> ASSURANCE <hr/> BLIND FAITH  |