



CPC's
Leadership Seminar:
Bible Interpretation

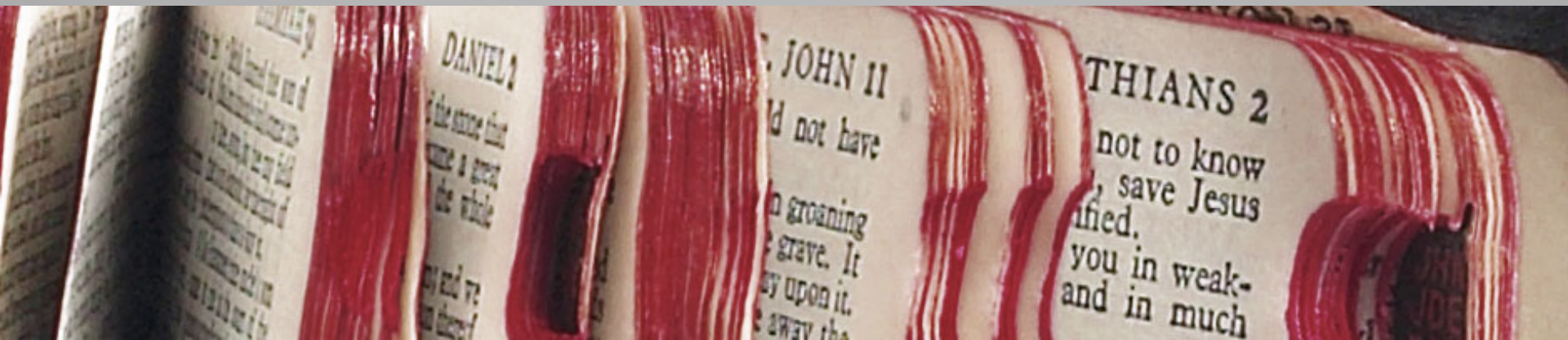
**The Reliability,
Sufficiency and
Usability of Scripture**

Why A Seminar on Bible Interpretation?

- **Christ's Warnings**

A low view of the functions of the ministry will naturally carry with it a low conception of the training necessary for it... A high view of the functions of the ministry on evangelical lines inevitably produces a high conception of the training which is needed to prepare men for the exercise of these high functions... for here we have, of course, an infinitely higher conception-- as merely an enthusiastic Christian eager to do work for Christ... we might as well seek recruits for the ministry among the capable young fellows about town, zeal their highest spiritual attainment.

B. B. Warfield



The Duty of Every Christian

That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women and men of high standing.

Acts 17:10-12

Sir, Bring Us To Jesus!



Rogier van der Weyden
1399/1400 – 1464
The Vision of the Magi

PART 1: A GROWING CRISIS IN BIBLICAL AUTHORITY



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn 1606 – 1669
Doubting Thomas

Popular Trends That Undermine Biblical Authority AS EXPECTED

*You must understand this, that in the last days
distressing times will come. 2Tim. 3:1*

- *Individualism*
- *Populism*
- *Anti-Intellectualism*

C.f. Handout

Underlying Roots and Growing Skepticism

- Historical Criticism:
- New Hermeneutic:
- Growing Skepticism:



Vincent van Gogh, *The Raising of Lazarus* 1890

Concerns About The Reliability of The Bible

To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and 'improved' by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries.

Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion

Concerns about Canon

Two Christianities? Which Bible?

the recent recovery of the original Gnostic compositions, has provided the wedge to challenge the traditional canon, and with it, the traditional construction of Christian identity... The implicit argument embedded in much scholarly and popular work is that historic orthodox Christianity is little more than a power-hungry conspiracy.

Timothy Luke Johnson

CONCERNS ABOUT SUFFICIENCY AND THE DESIRE FOR CONTINUED REVELATION



Botticelli (Sandro Filipepi): The Temptation of Christ

Concerns about the Usability/ Interpretability of Scripture

We are now going through a interpretation crisis perhaps as significant in its importance and outcome as that of the reformation...if our generation were to be noted as the generation that contested most earnestly for the sole authority and inerrancy of Scripture as its confessional stand, but which generation also effectively denied that stance by its own hermeneutical practice and method of interpretation.

Walter Kaiser

The confusion and proliferation of answers that evangelicals are giving, all from the same Bible are disconcerting to students. So the quickest and safest way out of this uncertainty and confusion is to resort to religious experience. Again, this in nothing new. The history of liberalism documents it, and evangelicals are reliving it in their own experience.

Scott Hafeman

The Bible On Biblical Reliability

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2Pet. 1:16-21

The Underlying Roots: Enlightenment Assumptions Exposed

When it comes to our approach to Bible hermeneutics, it is sometimes easy to forget the obvious. But if scripture IS a communication from God to us, it is not to obscure His will for us and our salvation but to clarify it; it is not to diminish God's sovereignty over us but to expand it; it is not to blunt God's glory but to amplify it. Any theory or practice in the interpretation of scripture that denies the obvious refutes it's own usefulness in this endeavor.

Vern Poythress

c.f. handout

THREE ISSUES:



- **HISTORICAL ACCURACY: The Issue of Archeology**
- **OTHER CHRISTIANITIES: The Issue of Canon**
- **INTERNAL INCONSISTENCIES: The Issue of Inerrancy**

HISTORICAL ACCURACY: The Issue of Archeology

During the past 150 years, critics have scrutinized the Bible. They have created an atmosphere of unbelief and promoted the idea that the Bible is only as true as any ancient mythology.

Don't get Duped!

The Absence of Evidence

is NOT

The Evidence of Absence

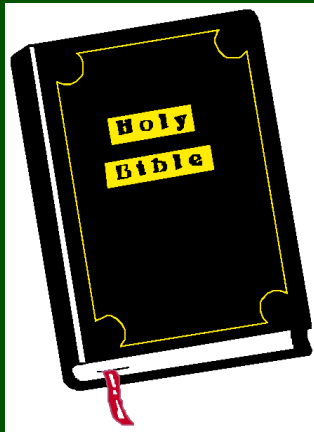
Evidences for The Historicity of the Bible

Faith does not mean believing what
you know is not true!

Yet many scholars doubt that the early heroes of the Bible, such as Abraham or Moses, ever existed.



The following is a comprehensive list of every archaeological discovery that conclusively disproves the accuracy of the Bible:



1)

That's right! There have been **NO** such archaeological discoveries!

This is not to suggest that every factual detail of the Bible has now been confirmed. An enormous number of such details, however, have had archaeological confirmation.



Some scholars
complain that no
inscription has ever
been found that
mentions Abraham.

December 18, 1995

TIME

**IS THE
BIBLE
FACT or
FICTION?**



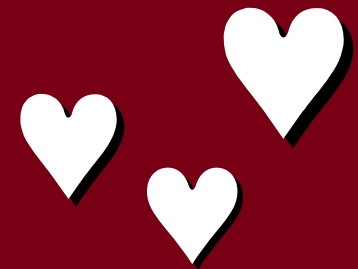
Should archaeologists
expect to find something
like the following
inscription



Dear Sarah:

I think you're gorgeous,
even though you're 90!
Happy birthday.

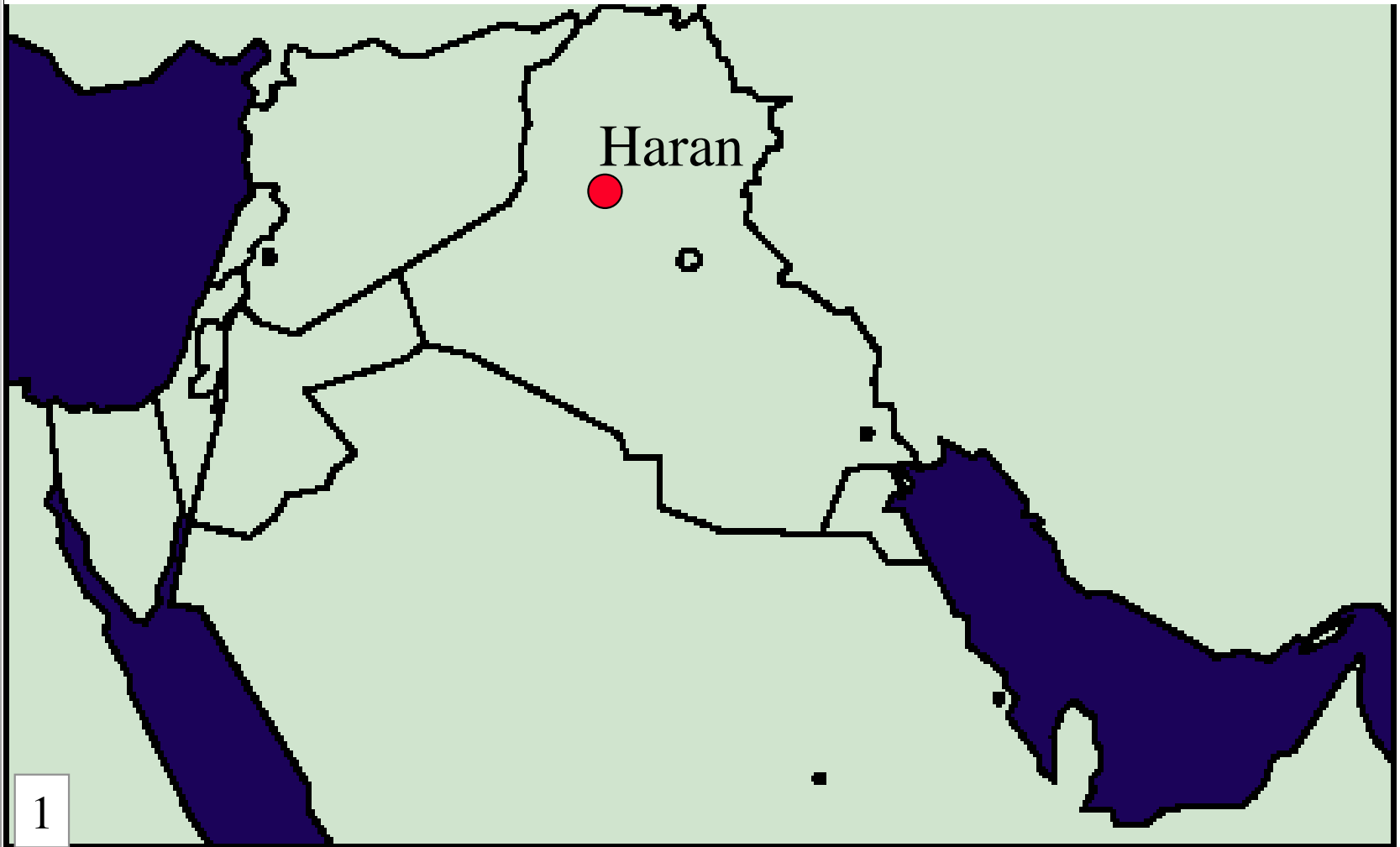
Hugs and kisses,
Abraham

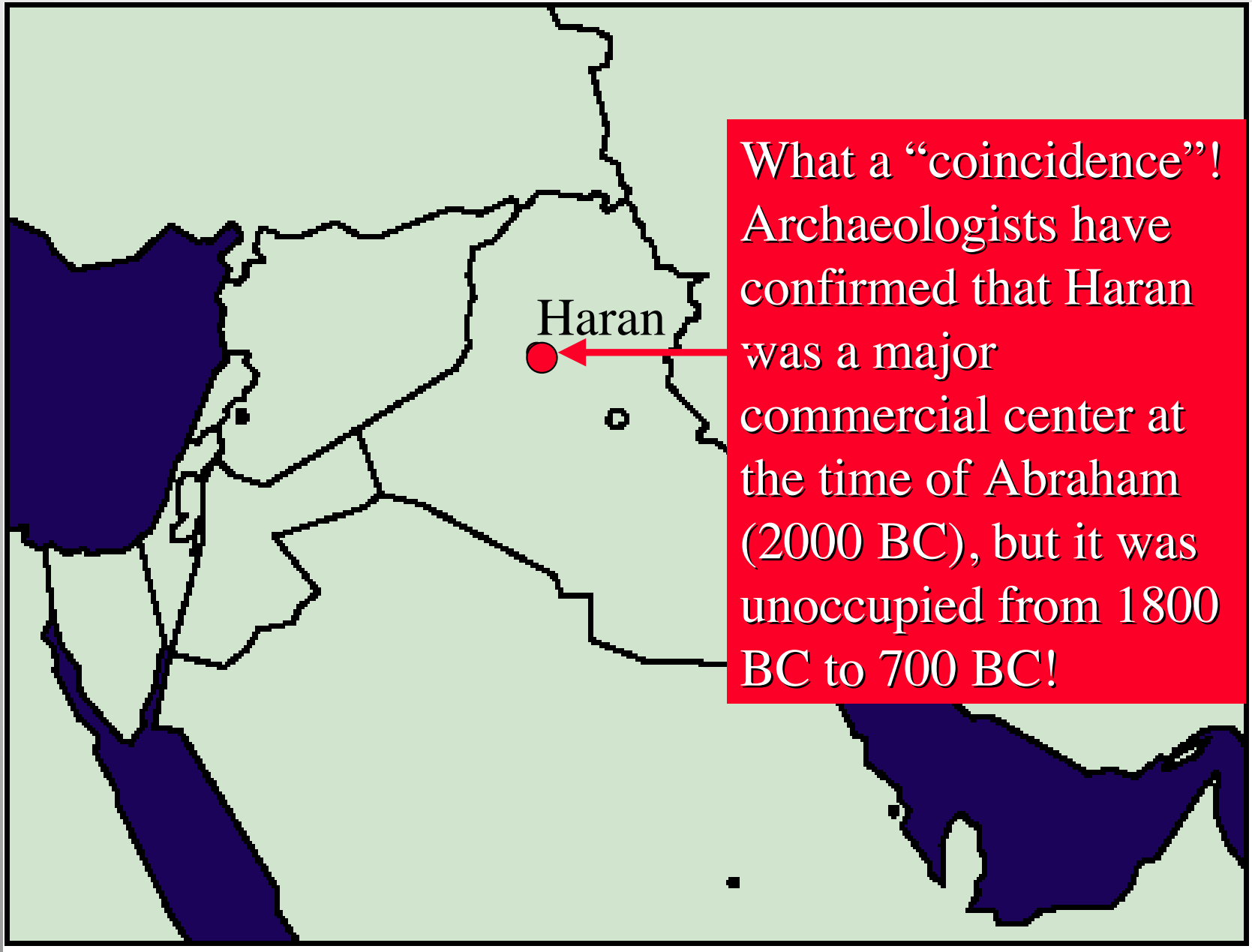


In fact, there have been many archaeological discoveries that support the historicity of the Bible's account of Abraham and the other patriarchs.



According to the Bible Abraham came from Haran about 2000 BC. But some critical scholars assume that the story of Abraham was invented about 1000 BC. Is this likely?





What a “coincidence”!
Archaeologists have confirmed that Haran was a major commercial center at the time of Abraham (2000 BC), but it was unoccupied from 1800 BC to 700 BC!

Inflation

- Saving for retirement? Inflation is not just an invention of the 21st century. It's been around for millennia!

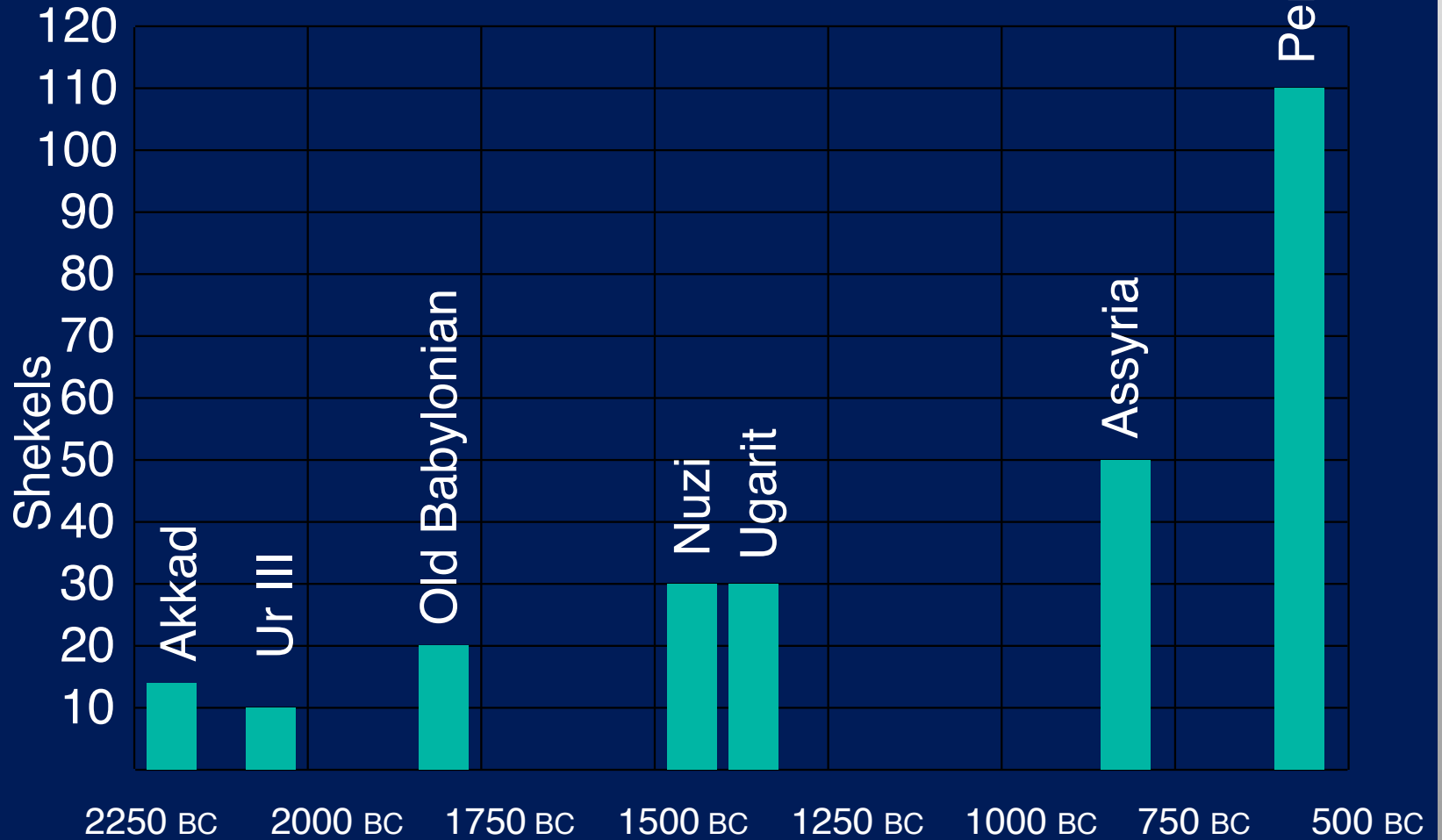


The Price of Slaves



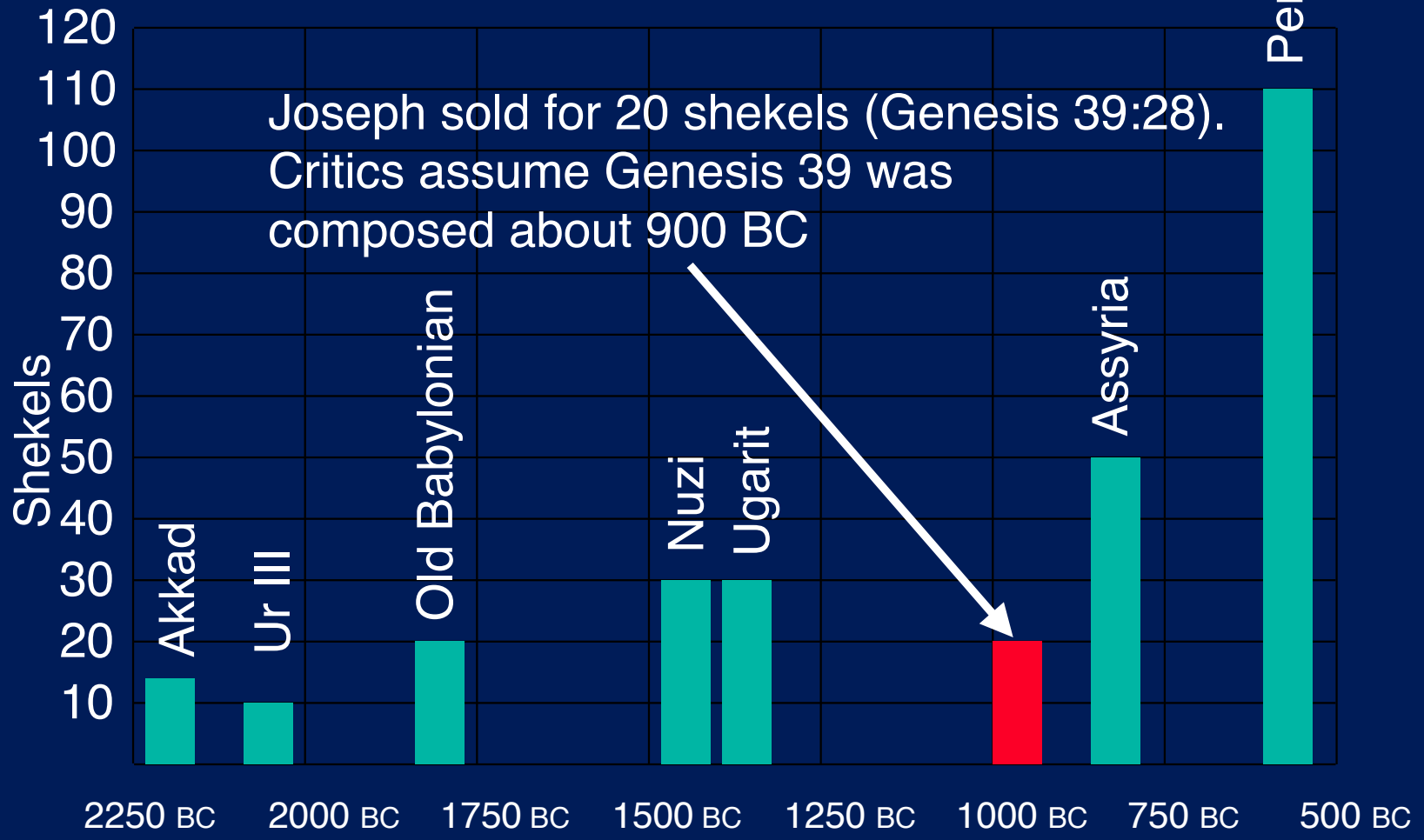
K.A. Kitchen, "Genesis 12-50 in the Near Eastern World," in *He Swore an Oath*, R.S. Hess, et al. eds. (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1993) 67-92, at 79-80.

The Price of Slaves

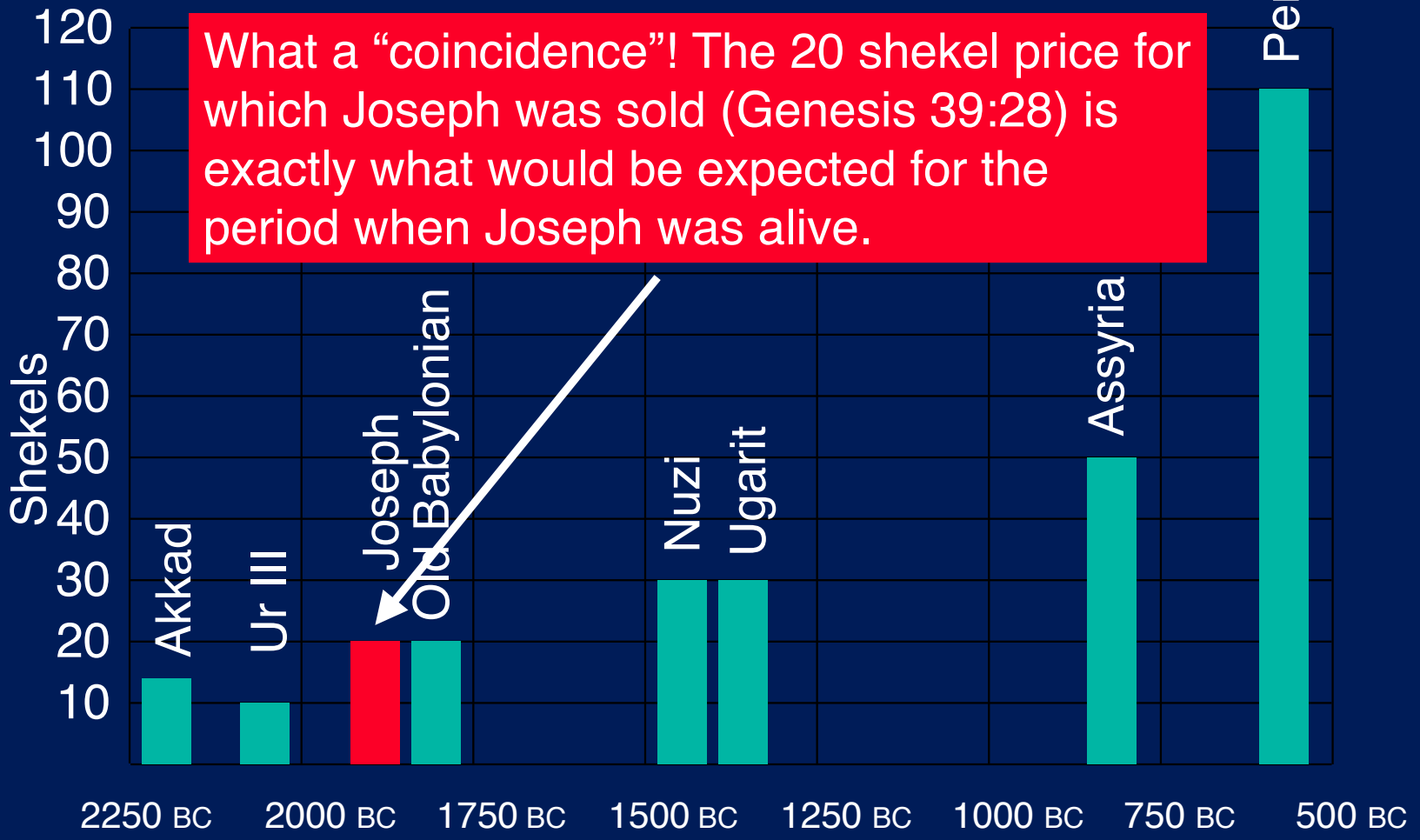


based on K.A. Kitchen

The Price of Slaves



The Price of Slaves



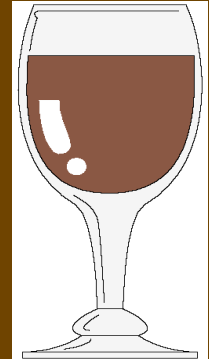
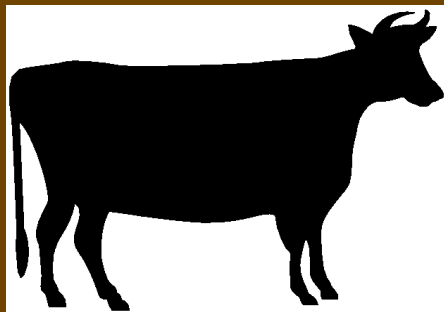
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Details of Israel's Worship

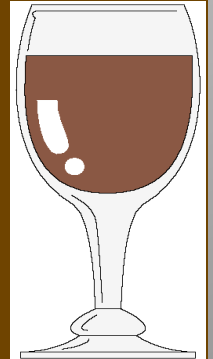
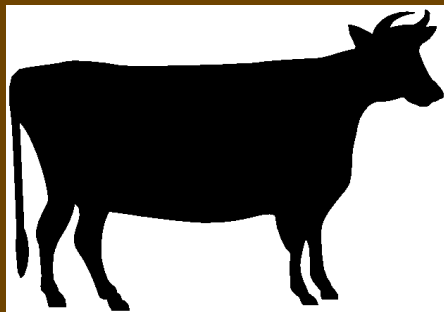
- Critical scholars assume that the cultic details of Israel's worship did not come from the time of Moses (about 1400 BC), but were invented much later (perhaps as late as 600 BC).

Feast of Trumpets

- So, for example, many scholars suppose that the required offerings at the Feast of Trumpets in Numbers 29:2f. came from about 600 BC, rather than from the time of Moses (1400 BC): “one bull... seven lambs... one goat... a meal offering and wine libation”



- But what a “coincidence”! A Hittite text from the mid-2nd millennium BC (the time of Moses) has been discovered that specifies the exact same sequence of offerings as in Numbers 29:2f.: one bull... seven lambs... one goat... a meal offering and wine libation.



Covenant Forms

- Since the discovery and first publication of a few Hittite treaties, or covenant documents, in the 1920's, some 57 treaties from the ancient Near East have now been discovered and published (about a dozen of which are fragmentary).

Covenant Forms

- The Bible gives a very full account of two covenants from the time of Moses:
- the covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20)
- the covenant renewal in the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy)

Covenant Forms

1) Title: Exod. 20:1; Deut. 1:1-5

2) Historical Prologue (past relations reviewed):
Exod. 20:2; Deut. 1:6-4:49

3) Stipulations

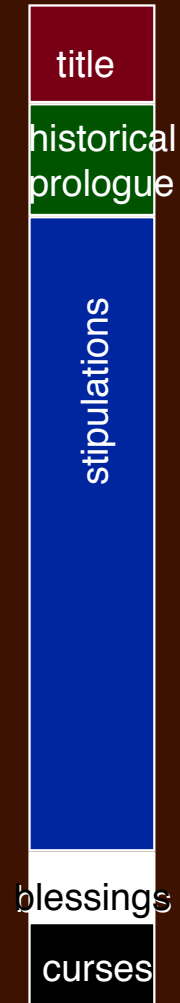
General: Exod. 20:3-11 (or 20:3-17); Deut.
5:1-11:32

Specific: Exod. 20:12-17 (or 20:21-26 and
21:1-23:33); Deut. 12:1-26:19

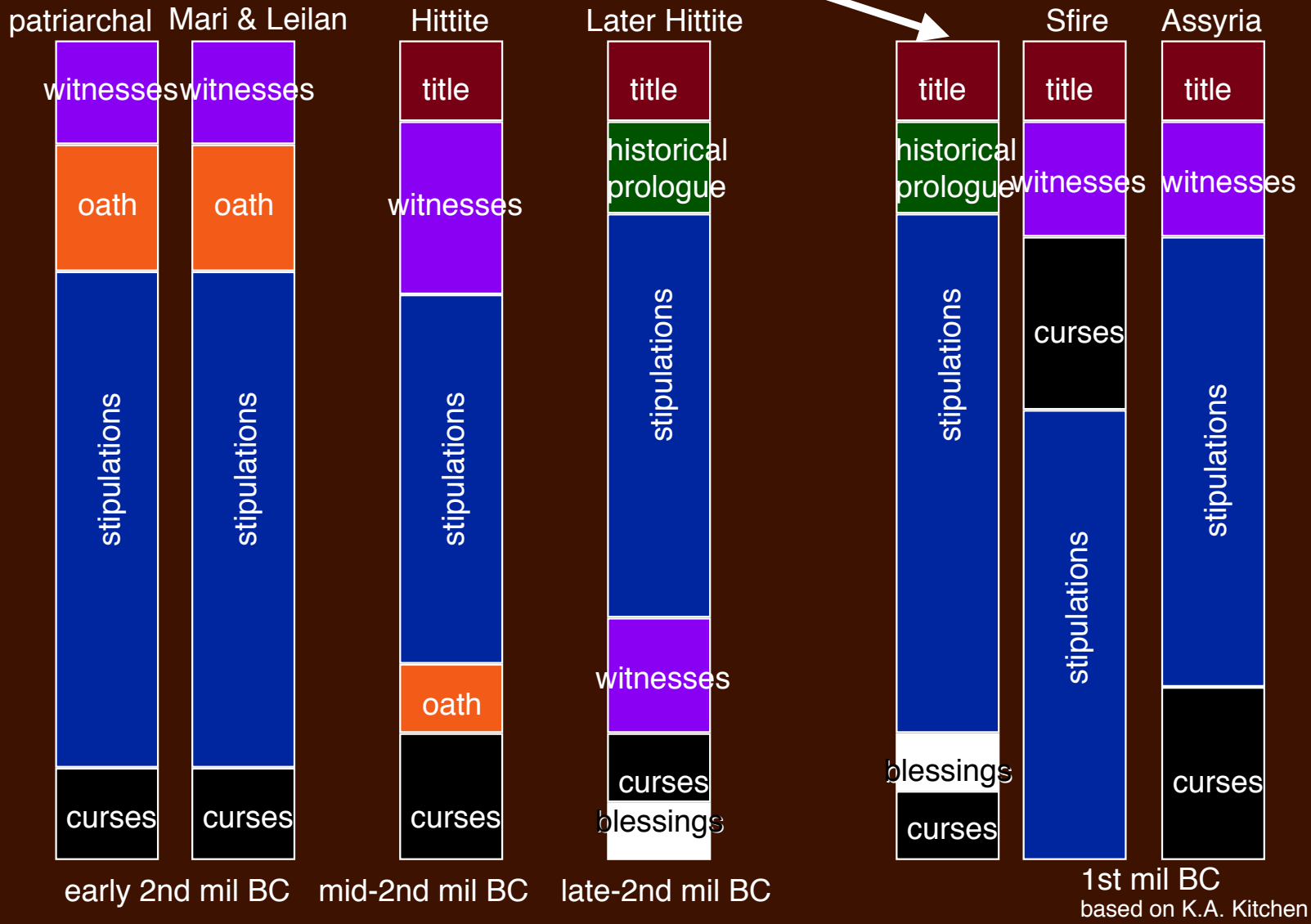
4) Sanctions

Blessings: Exod. 20:6, 12; Deut. 28:1-14

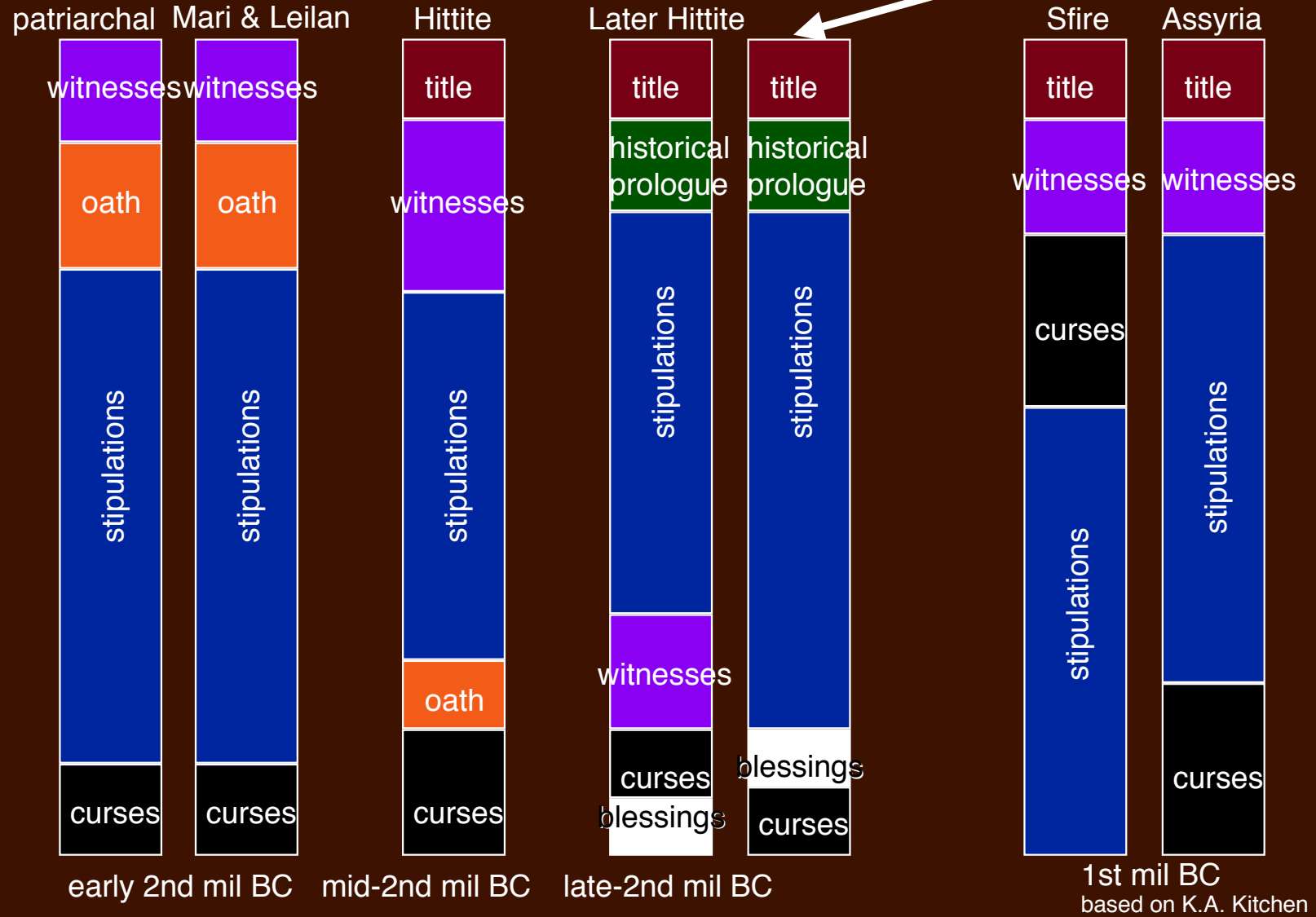
Curses: Exod. 20:5; Deut. 28:15-68



Critics assume that the Mosaic covenants were composed in the 1st mil. BC



What a “coincidence”! The Mosaic covenant forms in Exod. 20 and Deut. match almost exactly the standard covenant form of the late-2nd mill. BC, when Moses lived!



Critics assume that the patriarchal covenants were composed in the 1st mil. BC



Mari & Leilan



early 2nd mil BC

Hittite



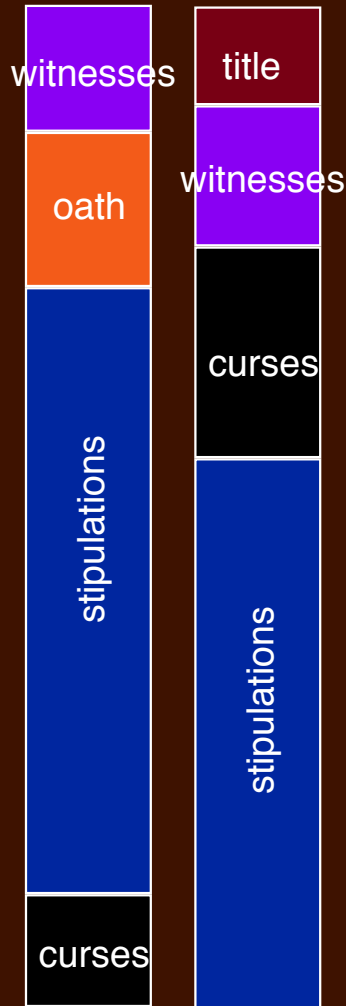
mid-2nd mil BC

Later Hittite



late-2nd mil BC

Sfire

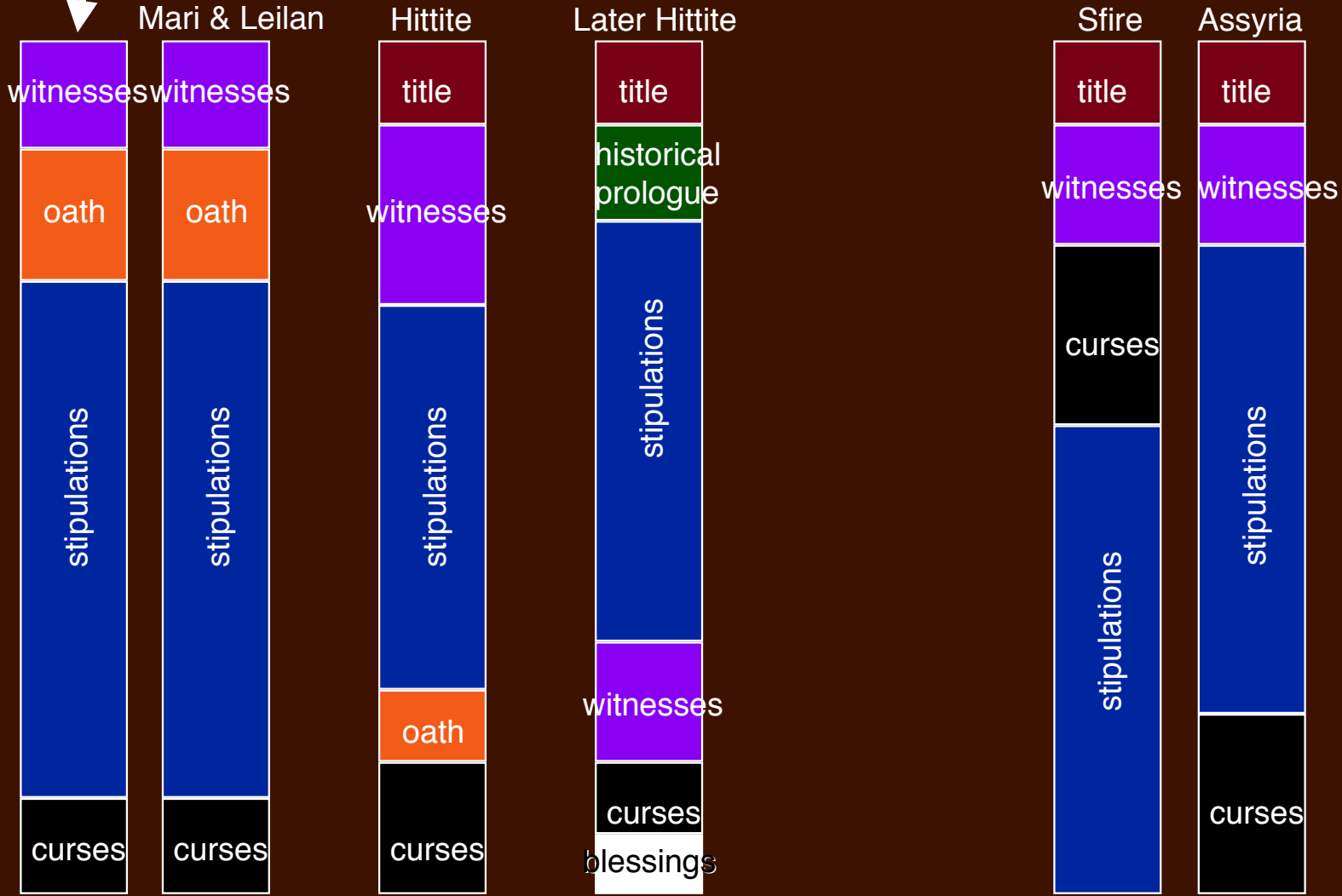


Assyria



1st mil BC
based on K.A. Kitchen

What a "coincidence"! The patriarchal covenants most resemble what is known of early 2nd mil. BC covenants.



early 2nd mil BC

mid-2nd mil BC

late-2nd mil BC

1st mil BC
based on K.A. Kitchen

Jumping ahead to the New Testament

Some people imagine that the Gospel accounts about Jesus were written long after the events they report or that the copies we have of the original books of the New Testament are late and unreliable. If so, the record of Jesus' claim to be the Son of God or His miracles could be the result of much later pious exaggeration or legend.

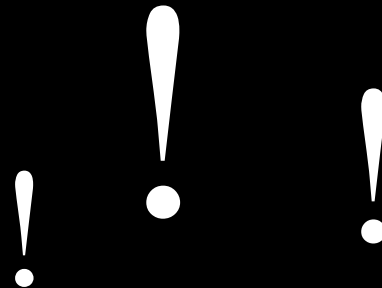


What a coincidence! Scholars are now convinced that the entire New Testament was written within the lifetime of those who personally knew Jesus.

[This is why, for example, the New Testament nowhere reports the martyrdoms of James (62 AD), Paul (64 AD), or Peter (65 AD), or the burning of Rome (64 AD) or the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD), in spite of the importance of these events.]

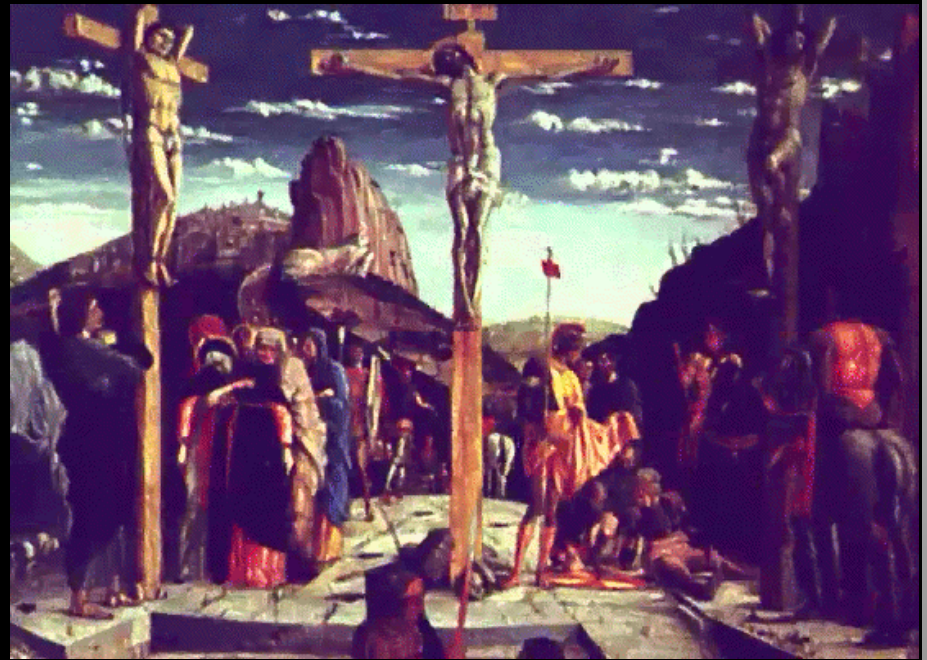
Furthermore, the copies that we now have of each of the books of the New Testament could hardly be more numerous or more reliable.

F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*
(5th rev. ed.; London: InterVarsity Press, 1960)

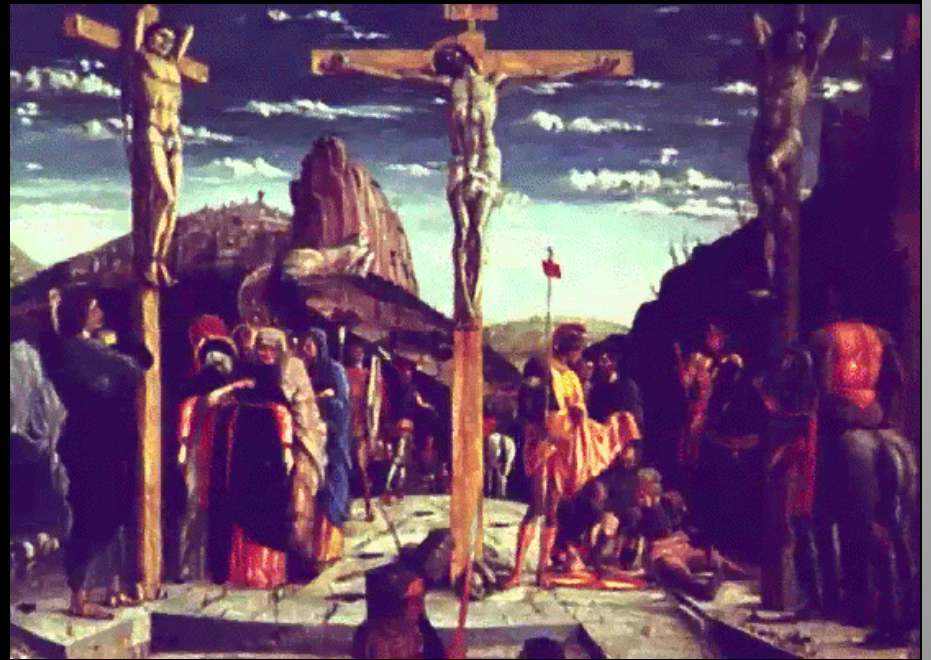
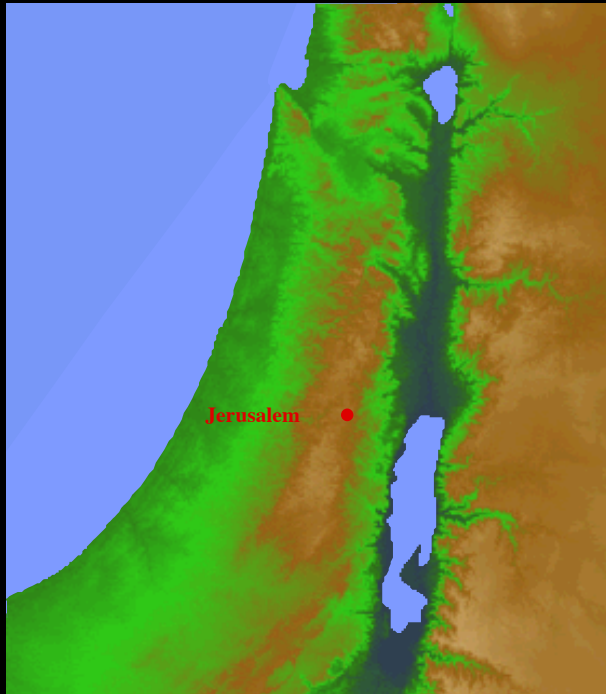


The Crucifixion

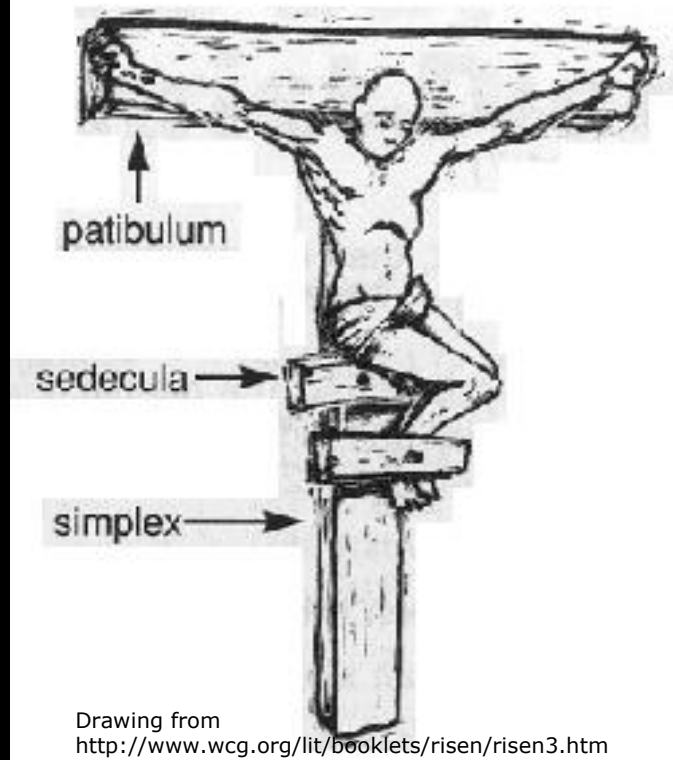
Critical scholars have disputed the likelihood that Jesus was nailed to the cross based on the assumption that Roman practice was to tie victims to a cross, not nail them.



Until 1968, when on Ammunition Hill outside Jerusalem the first and only skeletal remains of a crucified individual were found.



What a “coincidence”! This 5’6” man, whose name was John, was crucified sometime before 70 AD. Still embedded in his decomposing ankle bone was a 7” iron nail. The right radius also has a scratch where another nail was used.



?

? The history of Biblical Criticism is a history of how yesterday's confident claims made about "errors" in the Bible are destroyed by today's unexpected archaeological discoveries.

?

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?
?

This incontrovertible evidence serves to demonstrate an important archaeological principle:

“the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence.”

Textual Reliability: The Question of Canon

In his book, *Can I Trust My Bible*, R. Laird Harris concluded, "We can now be sure that copyists worked with great care and accuracy on the Old Testament, even back to 225 B.C. . . . indeed, it would be rash skepticism that would now deny that we have our Old Testament in a form very close to that used by Ezra when he taught the word of the Lord to those who had returned from the Babylonian captivity.

Textual Reliability:

OT Text:

- Spring 1947: An Amazing Discovery in Wadi Qumran (near the north end of the Dead Sea) by a 15 year old Bedouin following a stray goat.
- the most sensational discoveries of modern biblical archaeology - a complete copy of the book of Isaiah, and fragments of almost every book in the Old Testament
- 2,000 years old and coincided almost word for word with the text of our present version.

The Septuagint: Greek Old Testament

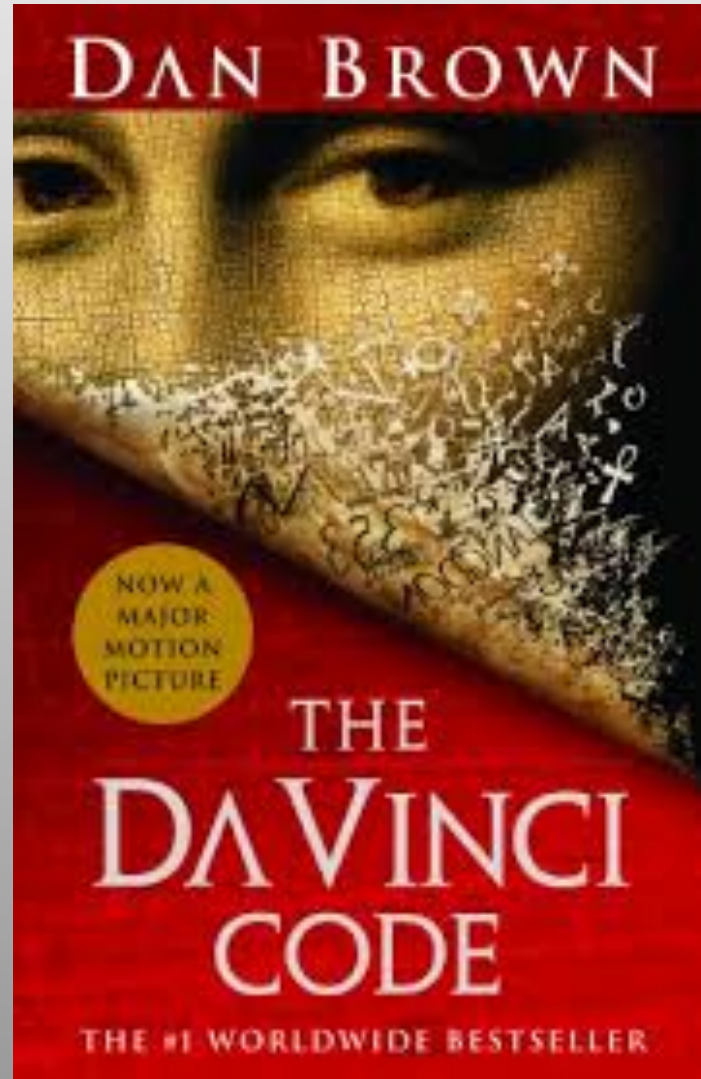
- The Septuagint is often referred to as the LXX because it was reputedly done by seventy Jewish scholars in Alexandria around 200 B.C.
- The LXX is an almost word for word literal translation from the Hebrew that confirms the accuracy of the copyists who ultimately gave us the Massoretic text, the most complete manuscript that our modern Bible is based upon.

Textual Reliability:

NT Text

- During the early Christian era, the writing material most commonly used was *papyrus*. This highly durable reed from the Nile Valley was glued together much like plywood and then allowed to dry in the sun.
- Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus: Two excellent parchment copies of the entire New Testament which date from the 4th century (325-450 A.D.).
- Earlier still, fragments and papyrus copies of portions of the New Testament date from 100 to 200 years (180-225 A.D.) before Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The outstanding ones are the Chester Beatty Papyrus (P45, P46, P47) and the Bodmer Papyrus II, XIV, XV (P46, P75).
- From these five manuscripts alone, we can construct a most of our current NT.

OTHER CHRISTIANITIES: The Issue of Canon



*Excerpts from Dan Brown's
DaVinci Code, chapter 55:
About The Orthodox Scriptures*

- *A product of man, not God”*
- *False testimony*
- *By men who possessed a political agenda to solidify their power base*
- *Commissioned and financed by Constantine*
- *“the gospels they attempted to destroy have been discovered as a part of an ancient library of Coptic Scrolls and highlight the glaring discrepancies and fabrications of the modern Bible*



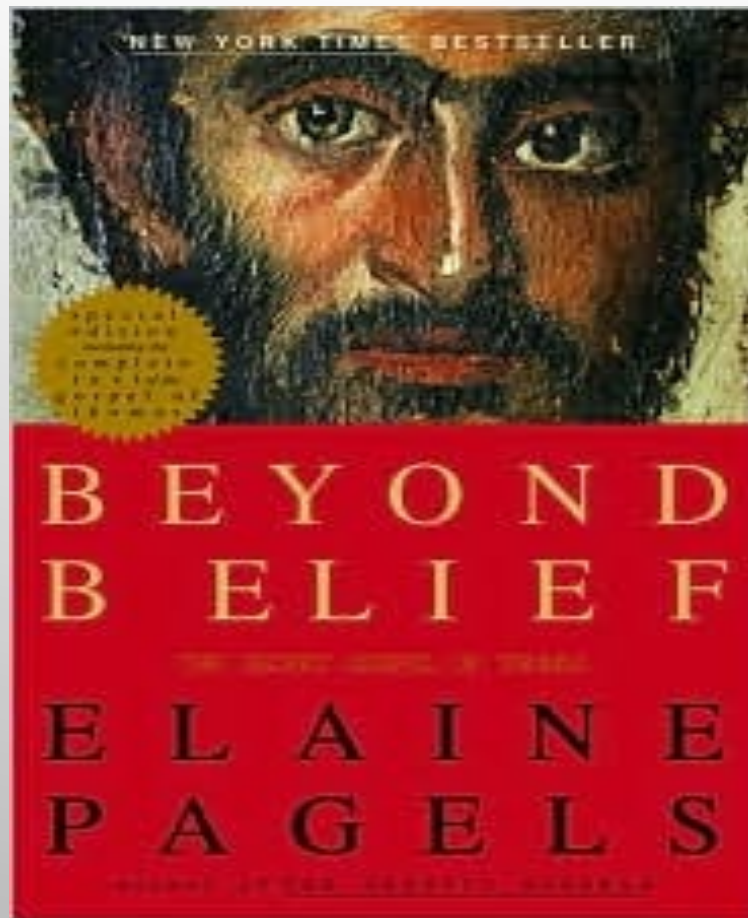
Two Bibles?

**Two
Christianities?**

**Canonization Revisited: A Response
To The Proposed Nag Hammadi
Version of an “Alternative
Christianity”**

The Gnostic Gospels

- The serendipitous discovery of a library of Coptic texts in Upper Egypt near the village of Nag Hammadi in 1947
- The fifty-two Coptic scrolls, only five of which are called “gospels,” were translated into English in 1977.



Thesis of Critics: Now that scholars have begun to place the sources discovered at Nag Hammadi, like newly discovered pieces of a complex puzzle, next to what we have long known from tradition, we find that these remarkable texts, only now becoming widely available, are transforming what we know as Christianity.

Elaine Pagels. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*

Two Christianities?

- Before Nag Hammadi, all discussions about Christianity would have inevitably assumed a set of twenty-seven ancient books compiled into a recognized New Testament *canon* against which the claim of authentic Christianity could be measured.
- And on the basis of the traditional New Testament *canon*, there would have been relative unanimity of agreement across every known denomination about all the major beliefs of Christian Faith.
- Predicated upon a new perspective based on Nag Hammadi being promoted by some today, all of this has supposedly changed and the above assumptions are in need of revision- or so it is argued.

the recent recovery of the original Gnostic compositions, has provided the wedge to challenge the traditional canon, and with it, the traditional construction of Christian identity... The implicit argument embedded in much scholarly and popular work is that historic orthodox Christianity is little more than a power-hungry conspiracy.

Two Christianities?

- Based upon Nag Hammadi, we now know that there were *two* versions of Christianity that developed along side of each other during the first through third centuries.
- The discovery of the more pure and authentic interpretation of Christ fell victim to the patriarchal power plays of the fourth century bishops.
- In the *Secret Gospel of John* we can draw “connections to Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, kabbalistic Judaism, and Sufism...”
- [An] ardent call for self-awareness and introspection, and the empowering message that divine wholeness will be restored not by worshiping false gods in an illusory material world but by our recognition of the inherent divinity within ourselves.”
- We are called not to a savior, but to a “deeper insight” wherein “the distinction between savior and saved ceases to exist” such that “you must save yourself and in doing so save God.”

The Secret Book of John: The Gnostic Gospel, Annotated & Explained, Translated and Annotated by Stevan Davies

The Faithful Version Of Christianity Won The Orthodox Debate Then, and It Should Again!

- **Orthodox Response (c.f. Canon Revisited... CPC Study Center/Resources)**
 - **Recognized vs. Conferred by Church**
 - **Test of OT Witness: “the prior rule of faith” already in tact by 1st century (Marcion Controversy settled in mid-second century! C.f. Thus the importance of the OT Interpretation of Christ ministry and message! (c.f. OT of OT: Ex.20:1, NT of OT: Mt.4:1-11,**
 - **Test of Apostolicity: (c.f. 2 Peter, Eph. 2,)**
 - *John 15:26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, 27 and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”*
 - **Bottom up vs. Top Down—“the battle was waged not in the fourth century but in the middle of the second century, wherein the “winners” were not the politically advantaged BUT disadvantaged... e.g. AD 140**
 - **Canon mostly “settled” by 200 AD and formally ratified ecumenically in 350 AD at the synod of Laodicea.**

The “Problem” of Inerrancy



Jacques de Létin

1597 – 1661

Moses at Mount Sinai

Six Categories of Errors that People Claim are in Scriptures

- **“False” Descriptions of Cosmology**
- **Discrepancies in Chronology**
- **Mis-Quotes**
- **OT Morality**
- **Issues in Authorship**

“False” Descriptions of Cosmology

- Use of Imagery- Psm 67:7, 72:8, 93:1, Eccl. 1:4,5, Matt.13:6
 - Ex. *The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.*
- Response:
 - Point of view ie. Anthropocentric– written as from the vantage point of human perspective
 - Genre– poetry IS feeling vs. fact, apocalyptic IS signs and symbols vs. propositions. Etc.

Discrepancies in Chronology

- Chronology and Balance- Synoptic gospel, some events appear in different order or places. Ex. Mt.4:1-11 vs. Lk.4:1-13
- Response: Chron.- Must be careful to discern whether authors intend to give Chronology. (one topical vs. one chron.)
 - Gospels are NOT primarily chronological history, but history written to communicate theology—e.g. the order of the events are intentionally arranged to make a point consistent to the theological intent of the gospel.
 - Certain people or events given different emphasis by author.

Mis-Quotes

- Reported: Speech or "Mis-Quotes"
- Response: Today words have become possessions that can be stolen whereas ancient world didn't lock on words this way. To give the sense of what someone said is okay.
- Often quotes are meant to insert the whole context/passage quoted from... including the whole of redemptive history (a progressive revelation)

OT Morality

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*](#)

Response:

- **Does author intend to endorse or simply describe. (Harams? Polygamy?)**
- **How does the redemptive/historical location of the passage resolve the moral issue?**

E.g. Imprecatory Prayers (prayers for God’s vengeance upon enemies)—are they prayers that God would kill *our* enemies—or are they prayers of a civil state vis-à-vis their king (David) for protection—the difference between praying for personal vengeance vs. civil justice. And how does the state Israel related to the church today—what would an imprecatory prayer look like for for church?

Issues in Authorship

- Issues of Authorship, dating and historicity of facts due to source and form criticism:
- Reliability of authorship and facts are often called into question by various “fragmentary hypothesis” and the proposal of “proto-sources” and the so called “source-documentary approach...
- E.g. It is pretty certain that Moses didn't significant portions the Penteteuch, at least not in the present form... nor for instance Exodus... Example: It is probably true that the process by which the book of Exodus came into its present canonical form began as early as the time of Moses and continued at least unto the 3rd century B.C.... the end result is merely the certainty of what we do in fact have...

Issues in Authorship

- Response: However it comes together, it did not come together haphazardly or without a guiding theological purpose...
 - it is no less believable to think that God's published his word through an edited compilation under the pseudonym of say Moses, in so far as it represented a "mosaic" influence and perspective, than that it all came together via Moses... etc.
 - whatever inconsistencies or discrepancies or shifts of style and emphasis that we so quickly detect were not invisible to the editors who put the book together... they just weren't important given their otherwise theological agenda...

Issues in Authorship

- Response con't:
 - While Genesis itself gives no indication as to its authorship, from the authority of the NT (e.g. Jn. 1:45; 5:46; 7:19; Lk. 24:27, 44), which supports the prevailing first century Jewish belief that Moses authored the Pentateuch, we may be confident that Moses is the principal author/editor of the first five books of the Bible, including the Book of Genesis. Of course, our belief in the traditional view of Mosaic authorship does not deny that Moses made use of various oral and written sources, nor does it deny that there were, under divine inspiration, later additions and revisions (such as the account of Moses' death in Deut. 34).
-

Bottom Line:

The Bible is true and reliable in all matters it intends to address.

(Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy, Article 9)

The Importance of Biblical “Intention” Illustrated



Michelangelo Buonarroti 1475 – 1564
The Creation of the Sun, the Moon and the
Plants

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated: Creation For Faith or Science?

Clues:

1) Why two creation Stories?

- How does Genesis fit into the Covenantal Context?
 - ANE Covenant Treaties:
 - Preamble– Defines the Covenant Maker- Who is HE?
 - Historical Prologue– History of the Covenant Maker– What are his accomplishments
 - Genesis:
 - Gen 1:1-2:4– Preamble
 - Gen 2:5ff– 10 “Redemptive Histories” (These are the generations of” starting creation and the covenant headship of Adam and Eve

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

What A Coincidence!

- 1) Redemption language everywhere in Creation account!
(not cosmological, empirical based)

Gen 1:1-2

- Hebrew “yhu”— chaos, void— language elsewhere used to describe a context void of God’s grace/lordship (Dt. 32:10, Is 24:10, 1 Sam.12:21 and in Is. 29:21, 41:29, 44:9, 45:19,
- Hebrew “tohu”- the despair of separation from God-lit. “emptines”
- Combination of these exact two worlds elsewhere to a situation that is “cursed” not just “non-existent” as to require God’s salvation (Jer 4:23ff, Is 34:11ff)

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

What A Coincidence!

2) Gen 1:2-- the spirit “hovering”-- (fluttering as in the image of a great bird)

- Same Image in subsequent NEW creation stories in relation to a salvation history.
 - Flood
 - Exodus
 - Tabernacle
 - Christ’s Baptism
 - Pentacost

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues That Something MORE than Cosmology is in View:

2) Dual use of "day" (Heb "yom") within even one verse of this passage

(5) And God called the light "day" and called the darkness "night" and so the evening and morning were the first day.

- **"yom"**-- refers both to that period of "light" over against "dark" (literally we would think of a 12 hrs period) but then immediately in the same passage "yom" also used for that period which contains both darkness and light-- (i.e. if literally trans. would be a 24 hrs period.)
- Note: "evening and morning" (order corresponding the Hebrew concept of when the calendar day begins-- in the evening)

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues:

3) We have "light" on the 1st day, but the source of light consisting of the Sun and moon not till the fourth day frame. Yes, could be supernatural "light"- but why no reference?

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues:

4) The Same expressions closes each "day frame" illustrative of the poetic symmetry that is maintained through this passage.

"and it was so"

"and there was evening and morning on the x day..."

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues:

5) Peculiar things are commanded of otherwise inanimate and even irrational things... So for instance-- "ruling" language attributed to the inanimate creation of

vs.14-19: Sun and Moon, *"The greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night"*

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues:

6) *When we get to the creation of humanity*-- we discover a repetition of both the directive to "govern" (yet as over all other creatures who had been ordered to "rule") and orders to "be fruitful and multiply" yet as over the other creatures who were give to posses their respective spheres...

- I.e. our clue that something "Hierarchical" is going on here...
- *And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and govern over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on earth.*

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Clues:

7) The uniqueness of the seventh day Seventh day is unique

A. Blessed: So God blessed the seventh day

B. Sanctified and hallowed it

C. No "evening and morning" A day different from the other days, in that it has no end. It is as everlasting as the One who dwells there.

D. No realm created; no ruler created. A day unlike the other six.

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

What's *REALLY* Going On Here?

As A Covenant Preamble (less a modern science textbook)-- Pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself as the one for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise.

(Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue)

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Genesis 1:1-13, First three day-frames describes the origin of three vast spheres over which rule is to be exercised. -- three spheres to be redeemed and governed

- **Day-Frame 1:** vs.1-5: Day and night
- **Day-Frame 2:** vs. 6-8: Water below and sky above
- **Day-Frame 3:** vs. 9-13: Dry Land and vegetation

The Intent of Scripture Illustrated

Creation: Faith or Science?

Genesis 1:14-31, Day frames 4-6 describes the rulers (governors/kings) placed over each of the created spheres of days 1-3 and in the same exact order

- **Day-Frame 4:** vs.14-19: As over the day and the night-- Sun and Moon, *"The greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night"*
- **Day-Frame 5:** vs.20-23: As over the water below and sky above-- Fish and Birds given to possess their spheres, *"be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters... and earth.*
- **Day-Frame 6:** vs.24-31: as over the dry land-- Land animals and most especially humanity as "clothed" with the royal investiture of the creator himself! (Gen.1:26-29) Humanity, as such, is established as the highest of all created kings...and yet-- not so as to usurp the Creator king-- this as clearly established by the Sabbath day frame...

Genesis 2:1-3, Seventh day frame describes the supreme rule of Him who is Lord of the Sabbath.

The Intent of Genesis Creation Story:

As Preamble of a great redemptive covenant,
we are introduced to God as the great:

- Redeemer of the Cosmos,
- King of Subordinate Kings
- Lord of all Spheres of Life

*Who better to enter into a covenant
relationship with that the God of creation?*

Christian View of Faith and Science?

- The Red Herring of Darwinianism:

Does the scientific theory of evolution include, not merely the idea that the living world has been produced by a process in which natural selection is the chief mechanism, but the vastly more ambitious idea that this process has been unsupervised, unplanned, unintended by God or any other intelligent agent (Darwinian Materialism)? That hardly seems to be an appropriate part of an empirical scientific theory. It looks instead like a metaphysical or theological add-on.

Alvin Plantinga

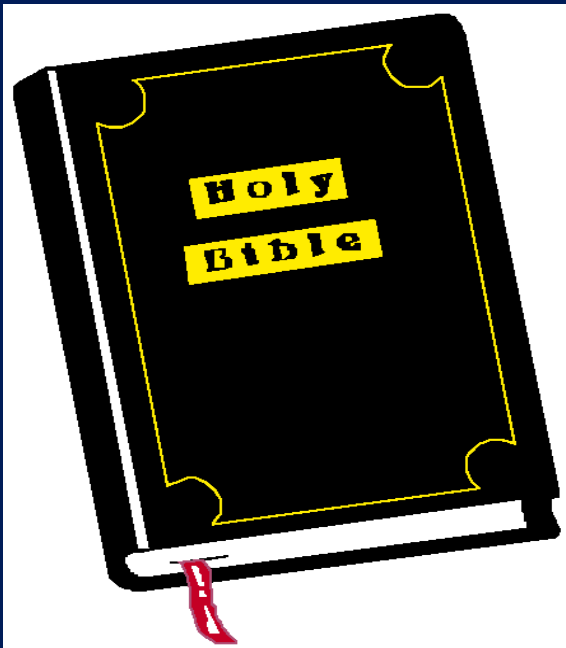
Christian View of Faith and Science?

2. The Affirmation of TWO equally infallible books of Revelation interpreted by two fallible readers :

The book of revelation and the book of nature are both from God and will be found when both are adequately interpreted to coincide perfectly.... The one (revelation in the bible) was designed and is admirably adapted to lay the foundation of an intelligent faith in Jehovah as the absolute Creator and the immediate former and providential ruler of all things. But it was not designed either to prevent or to take the place of scientific interpretation of all existing phenomena and of all traces of the past history of the world which God allows men to discover. Apparent discrepancies in established truths can have their ground only in perfect knowledge. God requires us both to believe and to learn. He imposes upon us at present the necessity of humility and patience.

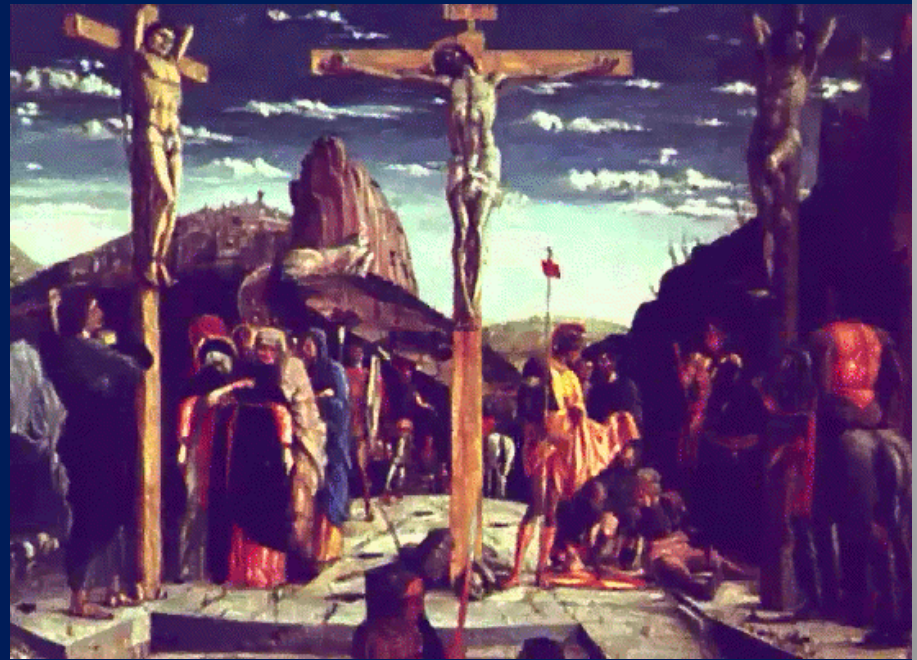
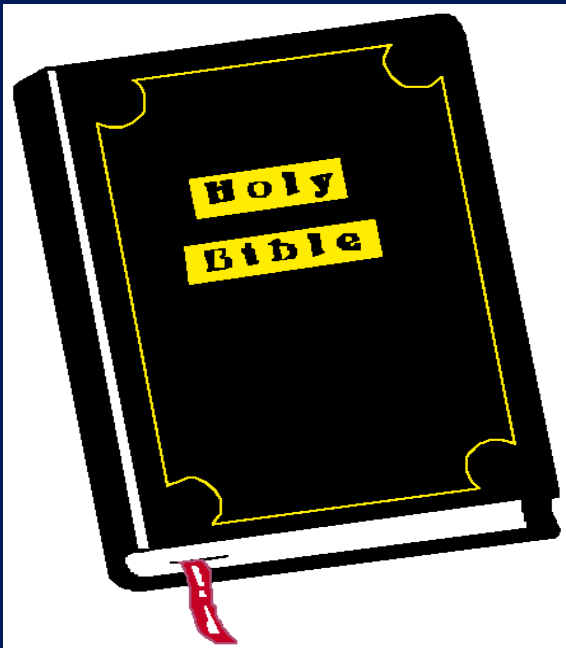
A. A. Hodge (19th century Princeton)

We have every reason to have confidence in the Bible. But such confidence by itself is not enough. Jesus once said to the Bible scholars experts of his day:



“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”
(John 5:39-40).

May it not be so for us!



Conclusions:

Overwhelming Church Consensus

Westminster Confession of Faith'

- *Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these... All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. WCF 1.2*
- *... it is to be received because it is the Word of God (1.4),*
- *... high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture... (1.5)*

Part 2: The SUFFICIENCY and USABILITY of Scripture Rediscovered

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that we may be competent, equipped for every good work

The Great Challenges OR Helps To The Sufficiency of Scripture

- **The Issue of Continuing Revelation:**

... those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased...(1.1b), ... unto which nothing at any times is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men..." (1.6)

1. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Interpreting Scripture (c.f.HO)
2. The Role of the Community/Church in Interpreting Scripture (c.f. HO)

- **The Issue of Inspiration Applied to Biblical Interpretation:**

- The Role of Scripture In Interpreting Scripture (c.f. HO)
- The Role of Inspiration in Interpreting Scripture (c.f. HO)
- The Role of Covenant and Redemptive History in Interpreting Scripture (c.f HO)

Clarification:

Revelation vs. Illumination

Westminster Confession of Faith, Section 6

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

Confusion About the Role of the Holy Spirit



Anthony Van Dyck

1599 – 1641

**The Descent of the Holy
Spirit**

The Role of Holy Spirit In Interpreting Scripture

1 Cor. 2:12, 14–15. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.... But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- **Role of Holy Spirit:** What the Spirit Does and Does not do in Interpretation:
 - Does: *we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word*
 - Does NOT: *unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit...*

The Role of Holy Spirit In Interpreting Scripture

- It is a false dichotomy to pit the “Holy Spirit” filled life and the Scripture filled life—why?
2Pet. 1:19 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- *Apostolic Foundation Is Contained to Scripture:*
Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching
Eph 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone
Note again: John 15:26-27 --When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.
- Warning
Rev. 22:18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

The Role of the Church In Interpretation



Domenico Ghirlandaio 1449 – 1494
The Calling of Peter and Andrew

What The Church Doesn't and Does In Interpretation

- **It Does not** add to the revelation in scripture: "unto which nothing at any time is to be added, ...nor traditions of men."
- **It Does:** To the degree that more qualified Biblical study and simply more of it over a greater period of time has the advantage of being a better instructor than the single untrained individual at one particular time, then the Church has the advantage of better translating the Bible, especially regarding those things "not alike plain in themselves nor alike clear unto all" (section7).

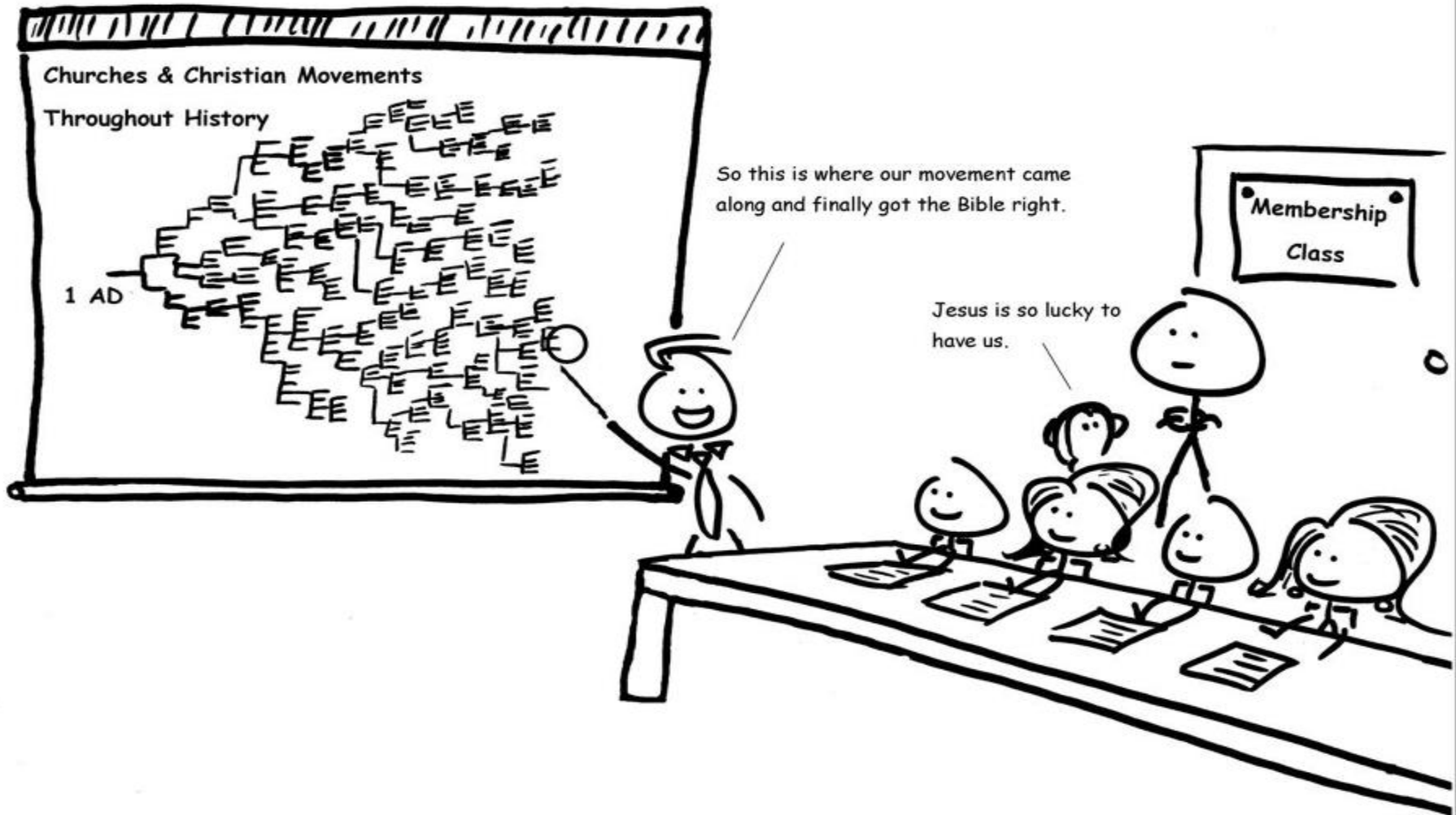
The church then becomes a function of illumination vs. Revelation!

***1 Timothy 3:15**, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of god, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.*

The Role of the Multi-Generational/Cultural Church In Interpreting Scripture

Tom's Doubts, #14

by Saji



The Role of the Multi-Generational/Cultural Church In Interpreting Scripture

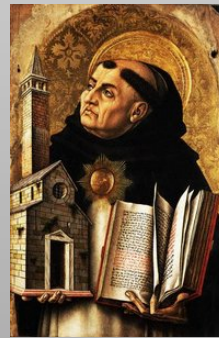
There are Generally 3 Options In How To Interpret the Bible:

- **Read it Individually: Susceptible to MY own socio-cultural and sinful bias. (Individual)**
1 Tim. 4:16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.
- **Read it Sectarianly: Within my particular and local community as to be susceptible to OUR social-cultural and sinful biases. (Sect) BEARE OF STUDY BIBLES THAT INTERPRET THROUGHT LENS OF GENDER, VOCATION, ETC.**
Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- **Read it Confessionally with the community of faith of every age and place. Albeit fallible, with the added advantage of a consensus that transcends the bias of a particular time and/or culture.**
1Tim. 3:15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a **pillar** and buttress of the truth.
2Th. 3:6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the **tradition** that you received from us.

Role of the Church In Interpreting Scripture

Roman Catholicism

SCRIPTURE → TRADITION → US

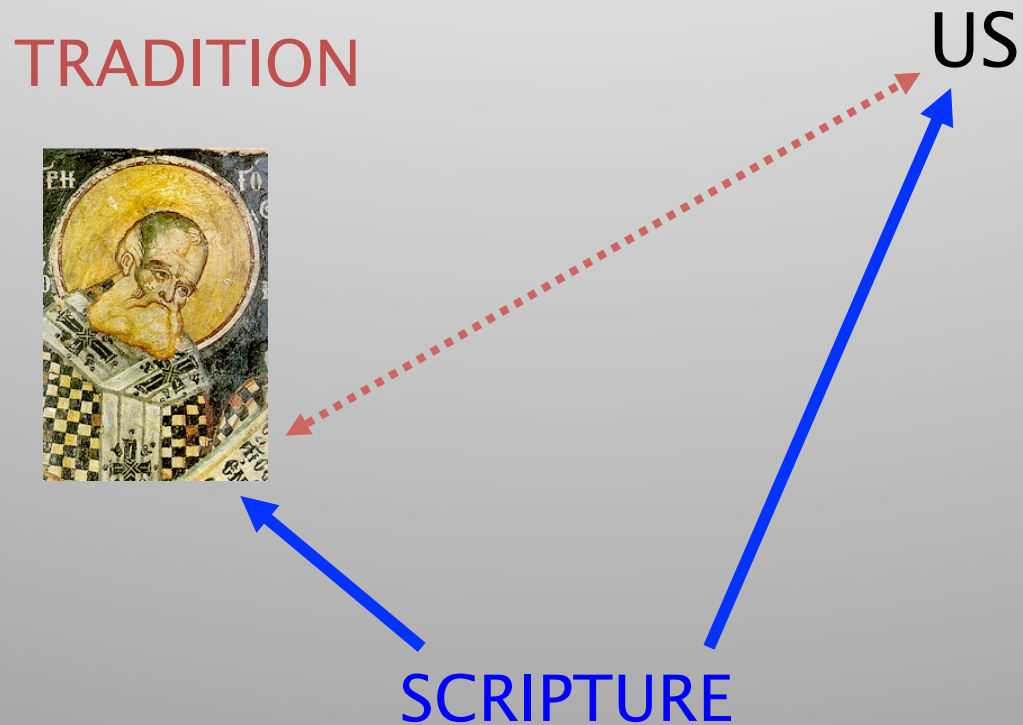


Role of the Church In Interpreting Scripture

Anabaptist

SCRIPTURE  US

Role of the Church In Interpreting Scripture



Classical Protestant

The Use of Creeds In Interpretation

- C.f. Handout

The
Westminster
Assembly,
1643
by
[John Rogers
Herbert](#),
1969



Reformed Confessions

The Scots Confession (1560)—approved by Reformation Parliament and Church of Scotland, attaining full legal status with the departure of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1567.

The Genevan Confession (1536)—together with a translation of Calvin's Catechism (1541)

The Second Helvetic Confession (1561) and approved by General Assembly in 1566 in the Reformed Scottish Church.

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Westminster Confession (1646)

Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675 A.D.)

PART 3: The Usability of Scripture Inspiration Applied (c.f. Handout)



**Michelangelo Buonarroti 1475 –
1564 The Conversion of Saul**

The Role of Scripture in Interpreting Scripture

The only infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

WCF 1:9

- The Issue of Redemptive-Historical vs. “Proof-texting” in Interpretation:

WCF1.1 “therefore it pleased God at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself and to declare...”

Inspiration Doctrine Applied To Interpretation

c.f. Handout

- Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration Clarified
- The Nature of Scripture Clarified

The Word of God in the words of men

- In the words of men: WE take the Biblical text seriously– c.f. “Asking Good Questions”
- The Bible as the Word of God– We take the Biblical Context Seriously- c.f. Covenantal Hermeneutic

The Role of Inspiration in Interpreting Scripture

...to commit the wholly into writing... (1.1b)

...being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic... (1.8)

- The unique work/gift of Holy Spirit. It IS God by the Holy Spirit speaking vis-à-vis the words of scripture!

John 15:26-27 --When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.

- Verbal Inspiration: God created/breathed out of by the Holy Spirit in the words of the people
 - Distinguished from **inspiration of author**: Thus the “words” becoming a window into the subjective experience of the author of which we are to follow after. (Liberalism)
 - Distinguished from **inspiration of the reader**: Thus the “words” are interpreted through the lens of our own subjective experience— neo-orthodox

-

The Role of Scripture in Interpreting Scripture

A Covenantal Way of Reading the Scripture vs. proof-texting—

- *There is many “texts” but one context—The redemptive history of God*
- *NT and OT—not a new religion, but a progressive revelation of redemption wherein the Old is developmentally mature in the New....*
 - c.f. Emmaus Road: Luke 24: 27* Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.
 - c.f. Heb. 1:1-3 Heb. 1:1* Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,
- *We must learn to read the Bible backwards and forwards looking to locate each text into the trajectory or context of the whole of redemptive history and the working out of God’s covenant with Adam ultimately...*
 - 1. Step One: To relate the text to its immediate covenantal context*
 - 2. Step Two: To understand the text in light of God's total revelation especially as ultimately revealed in the New Covenant*

A Basic Method: The Hermeneutic Circle

Context to Text to Context



Discerning the Voice of God in Scripture:

A To L

Dabney's "Seven Cardinal Requisites" IN SACRED RHETORIC

- Textual Fidelity
- Unity
- Evangelical Tone
- Instructiveness
- Movement
- Point
- Order

From Text To Small Group Bible Study



Point of Contact

Investigation

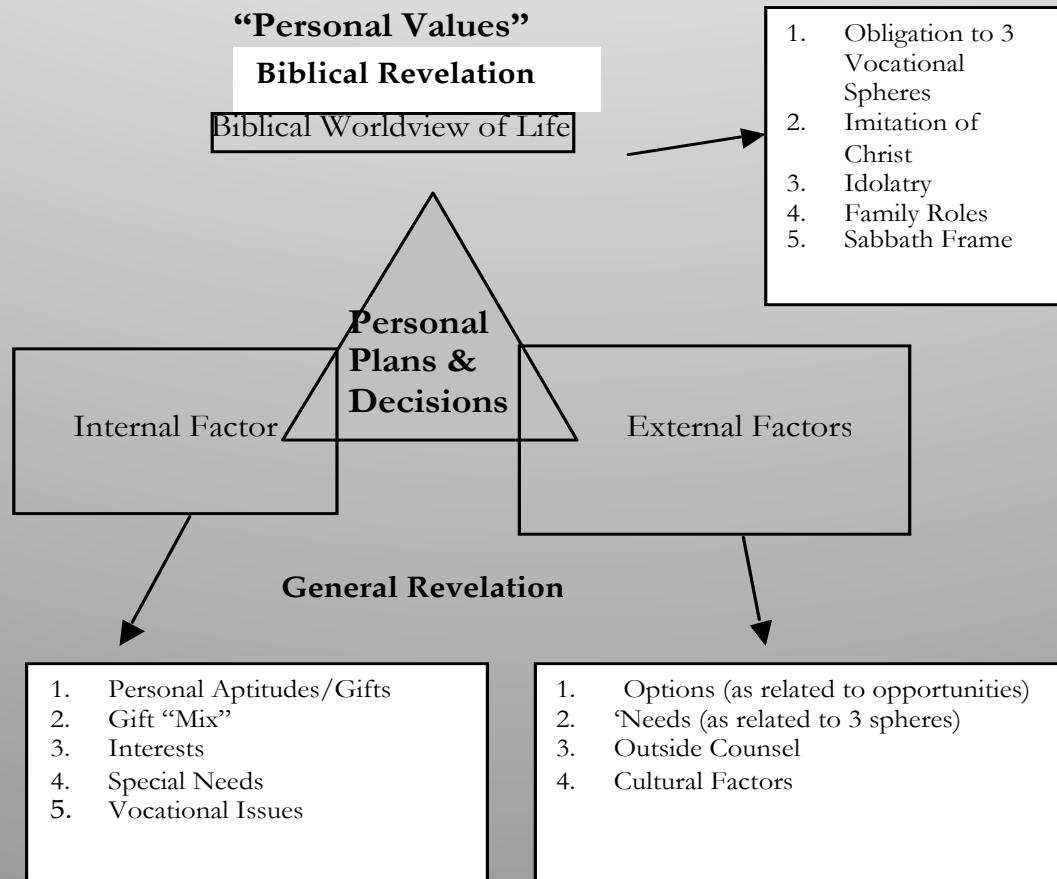
Discovery

So What?



From Text To Personal Discipleship

Three Dynamics in Personal Decision Making (Work the Triangle)



Resources

- Covenant
- Genre
- Policies
- Articles

Conclusions:

Overwhelming Church Consensus

Westminster Confession of Faith'

- ***1.6 The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.***