

The Shepherd in the Hands of the Exegetes

Non-Biblical Concepts of Scripture

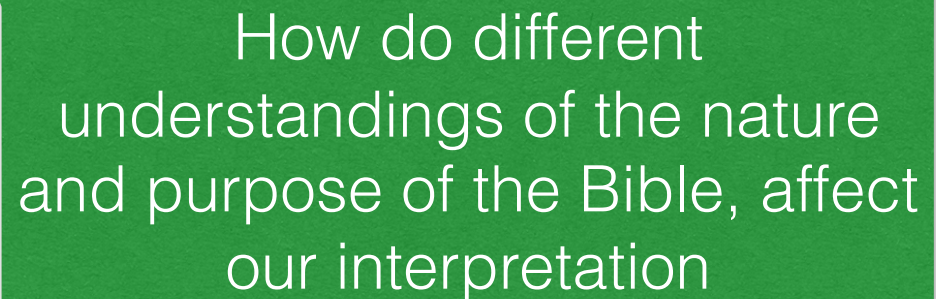
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Andrews University

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relationship to it.

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Psalm 23 as an example



How do different understandings of the nature and purpose of the Bible, affect our interpretation

Map of the Presentation

- What is Bible?
- Psalm 23 through Medieval Eyes
- Psalm 23 through Modern Eyes
- Psalm 23 through Postmodern Eyes

A text is
“a group of entities, used as signs, which are
selected, arranged, and intended by an author
in a certain context to convey some specific
meaning.”

—Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*
(Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 4.

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Signs

Arranged

Context

Intention

Signs

If you change the **words** you change the text.

Arranged

If you change the **order** you change the text.

Context

If you change the **context** you change the text.

Intention

If you change the **purpose** you change the text.

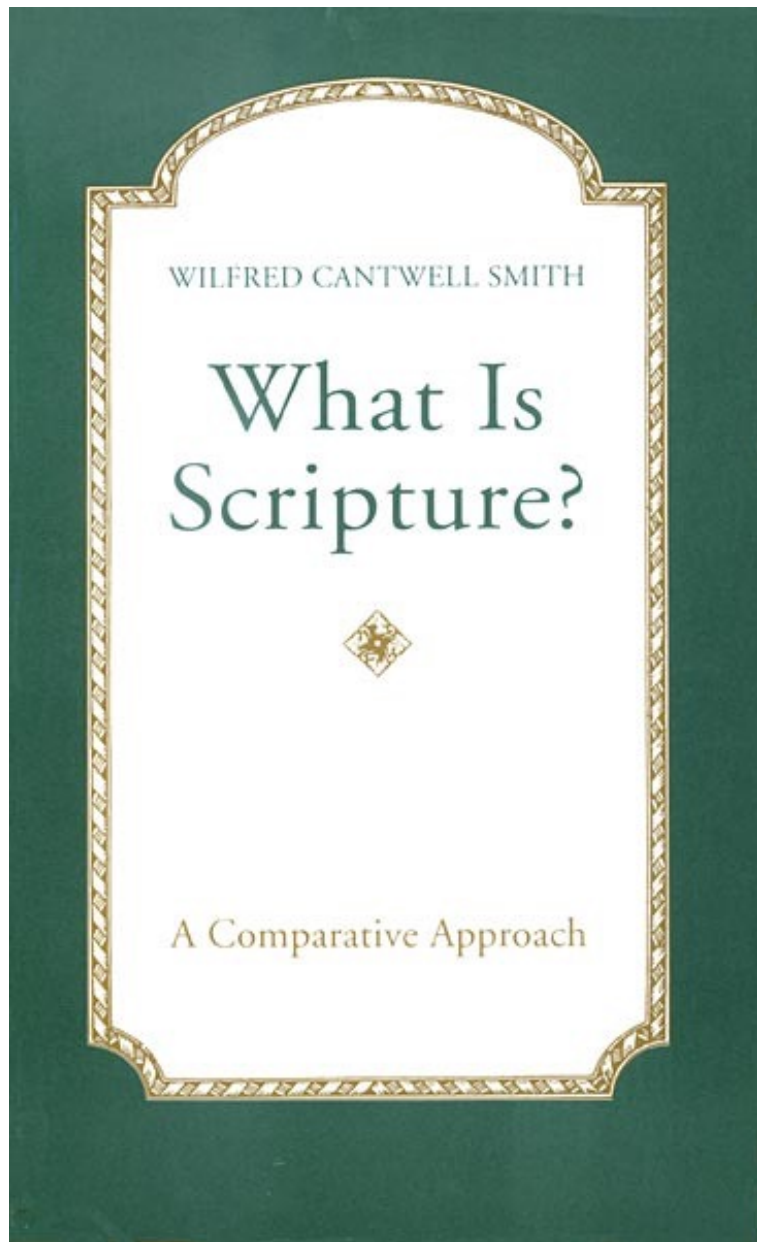
Context

Intention

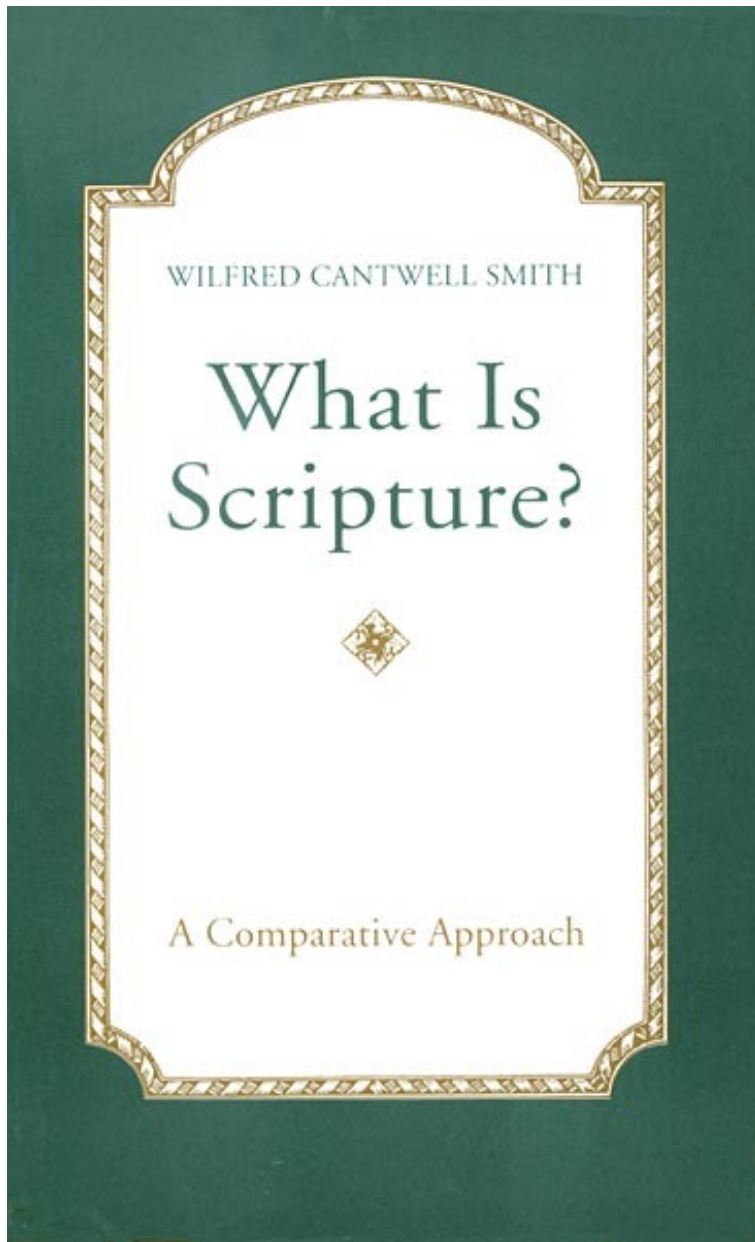
“If you touch that I
will kill you”

Teenage
girl to her
friend

Police man to
thief caught *in
flagrante*



There is no ontology of scripture. The concept has no metaphysical, nor logical, referent; there is nothing that scripture finally 'is' ... [A]t issue is not the texts of scripture that are to be understood and about which a theory is to be sought, but the dynamic of human involvement with them ... Scripture has been ... a human activity: it has been also a human propensity, a potentiality.



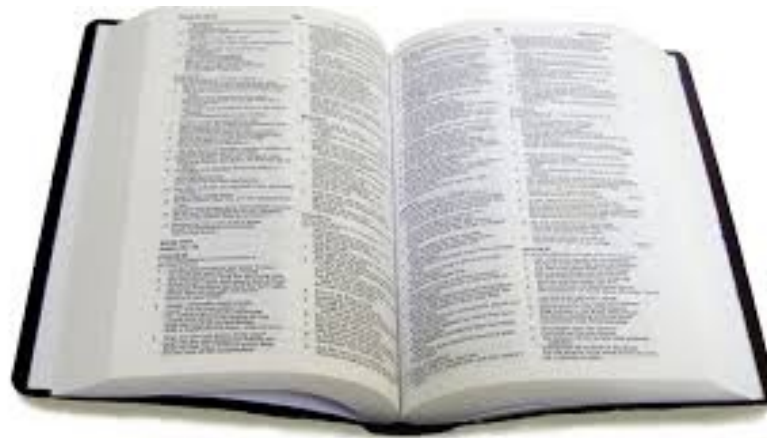
There is no ontology of scripture; just as, at a lower level, there is no ontology of art, nor of language, nor of other things that we human beings do, and are. Rather than existing independently of us, **all these are subsections of the ontology of our being persons**" (emphasis mine).

W. Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture?: A Comparative Approach* (London: SCM, 1993), 237. Quoted in John Webster, *Holy Scripture* (Kindle, ed; Current Issues in Theology 1; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

... an
extension of a
human author or
authors?

Bible is...

... an
extension of the
reader?



... an
extension of the
believer?

... an
extension of the
Divine Author?

... an
extension of the
Church?

The Shepherd through Medieval Eyes

Psalm 23 through medieval
eyes



Allegory

- Concrete details in a text— people, events, places in which things occur— are explained as representing abstract entities, ideas, or virtues or vices or philosophical doctrines.
- It probably originated in the use of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greek education (Kugel, 661).
- The result of Neoplatonism dualism: The idea (spiritual reality) is more important than the symbol.

Allegory



An extension of
the Church

The Church defines what truth is and the
“faithful” reader **imposes it**, or **“finds” it**, in
the text.

The Story of David and Bathsheba

“[But] that one desired by all the nations, nonetheless, loved the Church, who was bathing on the rooftop, that is, cleansing herself from the filth of the world and rising above and trampling upon its house of clay by spiritual contemplation. And, after having come to know her through his first encounter with her, he afterward completely removed the devil from her, killed him, and united her to himself in perpetual marriage. Let us hate the sin but not destroy the prophecy.”

–Augustine, *Faust*. 22.87.

“Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep”

(Song of Solomon 4:2)

“Just as the teeth are whiter than the rest of the body, so the monks are the purest members of the church. As the teeth are shut in by the lips, so are monks shut in by the walls of the monastery. The teeth don’t enjoy the delicious foods they chew; so, too, monks don’t receive credit for the good works they perform. The teeth don’t decay easily, and in the same way perseverance is one of the qualities of life in the cloister. The teeth are set and fixed in a specific

“order; thus, there is no other place with such order as in a monastery. There are superior and inferior teeth, and the monastery also has dignitaries and subordinate members united in a harmonious effort. When the inferior teeth move, the superior ones remain still, denoting the calm with which superiors should govern, even when there’s commotion in the inferior ranks of the community. The teeth of the bride are compared to shorn sheep; the shearing represents the innocent meditations that cut off external things such as love of the world and the desire for worldly wisdom.

“They emerge from the washing of contrition,
and penitential tears produce twin offspring,
because they develop both contemplation and
action, or teach precept and example.”

–St. Bernard of Clairvaux, sixty-third sermon on Song of Songs (out of eighty-six), 17th century.

Psalm 23 in Medieval Times

- “Still waters” (v. 2) = Baptism
- The “rod” and the “staff” (v. 4) = the cross which is formed of two rods.
 - The “upright” staff comforts and directs the believer
 - The crossbar is used against demons
- The “table” (v. 5) = The altar of the Eucharist.
- The view of Theodoret of Cyr, Augustine, and Cassiodorus.

Allegory



An extension of
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The Shepherd through Modern Eyes

Psalm 23 after the
reformation



quod virtus putat. Magna charitas fuit cōcorditer ad afflictū amicum
venisse. longanimitas cū eo tam diu tacuisse. humilitas in terra sedisse. cō
passio capira pulvere cōspersisse. sed qz incaute locuti bene inceptū in fine
factū est malū. 7 nisi sacrificio purgent. puniendi sunt. **C. III.**

Post hec aperuit 2c. Attentos facit quasi ad occulta que clausis
vasculis tegebant. s3 apto ore eoz detegūt vt eoz itimo odore recreentur.

Huc vsqz triplex expositio. hinc put singula expectent loca. **Maledi**
xit diei. Ecce hoc n̄

fin hystorie supficiem
qz 7 malū est hoc. 7 im
possibile. Dies ei quo
natus fuit iam n̄ erat.
7 ociosus est maledice
re rei nō existenti. pni
ciosus vero si existeret
nec iam pōt dies pteri
tus verti in tenebras.
nec ei possunt puenire
cetera que sequūt. nec
abortiunt (qđ p^o ait)
requie frueret. ideo h̄
nichil scdm litteram.
Post hec. i. p^o oīa
p̄dicta que passus est
tacentibz etiā amicis.

Cū ergo patienter in
omnibus gratias egit

7 bene docuit. nūc nullo instigante nō est credendus. ex ipatientia ad ma
ledictōez prumpere. sed quic? hoc dicit. qz iter mala laudauit 2cū.

Maledixit. Maledictū duobz modis dicit. iudicio iusticie. vel liuo
re vindicte. Illud laudat. hoc phibetur. Illo vitur deus. vt maledicta
terra in ope t. Maledicam maledicentibus tibi. Sancti etiā iudicium dei
intus vidētes nō voto vltionis. sed iusticie dei maledicunt. unde petrus.
Pecunia tua tecū sit in perdi. Et belias. duobus quinquagenarijs. si hō
dei sum. defendat ignis. 7 consumat vos. Contra alterū qđ malicia agit.
Post apls. Nolite maledicere. Ex maledici regnū dei non possi. **Maledi**
ctio igitur iob. non est malicia sed iusticia. non cōmotio sed doctrina. **Vi**
det enī amicos flere. 7 fm se (qui prospera mundi querebant) cum fractum
malicie. 7 nescia interne salutis euz mo hia reserare et flere. **C. III.**

C. III.
Post hec ape
ruit iob os suuz. 7 ma

ledixit diei suo. 7 locutus ē. Pere
t s prius de die post de nocte. s qđ ita intelliga
tur. s. p̄pera que p̄mittit. aduersa intelligenz. qz
at dies in qua natus sum. 7 nox i
qualis est hostis seuiens talis est blandiens.
qua dictū est. cōceptus est homo.

Dies illa vertatur i tenebras. nec
requirat euz deus desuper. 7 non

requirat eā. Deus in iudicio vt puniat 7 nō illustrabit. Illustrat imā
ne qui arguit. s3 quasi tegit qui i memoria iudicis non reuocat. Vn quoz
tecta sunt peccata. ne tunc i cōspectu omniū monstrēt. **Non illustret**
sed obscurent eū. i. diem delectatōis. ne ab eo qui omnia videt. videa
tur. **Tenebre.** Id ē. lamēta pgnitēz. vel occulta dei iudicia quibz p̄p
uenti grā absoluiunt. q̄ nos mereri nescimus. **Et ūbra mortis.** Id ē.
mors xpi fm carnē que nostraz culpaz destruxit. Vn vno die 7 duabz no

ctibus in sepulcro fuit
qz lucē suz simple mor
tis. n̄ culpaz tenebris
adiunxit. vera mors dē
qua sepat aia a do.
ymbra q̄ caro ab aia.
Aliter dē ymbra mbr
tis obliuio. q̄ agit vt
nō sit res i memoria sic
mors agit. vt n̄ sit qđ
capit i vita. **Ad dya**
bolus mors dē. 7 mu
tatio eius que d̄ specie
eius ē. vt ymbra a cor
pore. ymbra mortis.
qz aut nullū peccatū
est inultū. in quo mi
sericordia subuenit.
hoc homo puniat. vn
de sequitur. **Occu**

pet eum cali. Id ē. mentis confusio de qua dicitur. est confusio addu
cens gloriā. **Et inuoluatur.** omni parte. **Amaritudine.** pgnitēz.
Sed si dies. i. delectatio peccati sic punit qđ nox. i. confusio ad culpam
Noctē igitur illā tene. tur. pos. Quasi turbo tēpestatis est cōcitā
spūs meroris. qui mentē tristitia obnubilat. **Iste ē spūs** qui cōterit naues
tharlis. i. uis compūctōis que mētes mari. id ē. mūdo deditas. salubri ter
rore confundit.

Nec requirat. Homo redimit. qz cū caro 7 spūs sit infirmū habuit
aliquid vt peccaret qđ nō angelus. p̄terea angelus. p̄p̄ia. homo aliena
perijt malicia. dicit ergo nō requirat 7 quia tenebras inuit. toleret sine fine
qđ fecit. nec lumen recipiat. qđ nō suus p̄didit.

Occu
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qđ fecit. nec lumen recipiat. qđ nō suus p̄didit.

D^E III.
Dit hec aperuit iob os suus: et ma-

ledixit diei suo: et locutus est. Pere
† s. prius de die post de nocte. s. qd ita intelligatur: s. p. spera que p. mittit: aduersa intelligant: qz
atq. dies in qua natus sum: et nox i
qualis est hostis seu iens talis est blandiens.
qua dictum est: conceptus est homo.

Dies illa vertatur in tenebras: nec
requirat eum deus desuper: et non

fid. e. sic cu erroris sui cecitas obmatet vterius
ad lucē penitentie per dei memoriā nō resurgat.
illustret lumine. Obscurent eum
fid. e. obliuio que delet memoriā vt mors vitam.
† s. nūc qz a luce cecidit: nunc in tenebris caligine con
funditur

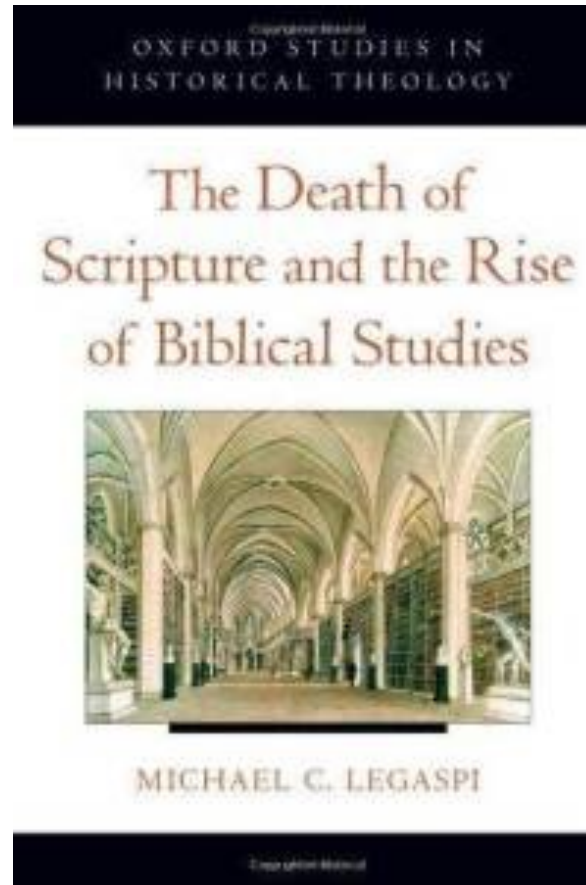
tenebre et tenebre mortis. † Occupet
† s. post finito gehenne supplicio cruciabitur: vt
qd inuolutū est finē suū non indicat que pena ita
piet cum iudei veniet.

eum caligo: et inuoluatur amaritu
s. apostatam angelū a conspectu iudicis ad
supplicia tēpestas rapiat q. qua dicit. et in circūi
dine. Noctem illā tenebrosus tur
eius. tempes. valida.

bo possideat. Non cōputei dieb⁹

When I was a monk, I was an expert at allegorizing Scripture, but now my best skill is only to give **the literal, simple sense** of Scripture, from which comes power, life, comfort, and instruction.

Martin Luther, quoted in Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1985), 3.



Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*
(Oxford University Press, 2010)

Reason / Science / Wissenschaft

Reason / Science

D^{E. III.}ixt hec aperuit iob os suuz: ⁊ maledixit diei suo. ⁊ locutus ē. Pere
† s̄ prius de die post de nocte. s̄ qđ ita intelligatur. s̄ p̄spera que p̄mittit. aduersa intelligant: qz atq̄ dies in qua natus sum: ⁊ nox i qualis est hostis seuiens talis est blandiens.
qua dictū est. cōceptus est homo.
Dies illa vertatur i tenebras: nec requirat euz deus desuper. ⁊ non

fid ē sic cū erroris sui cecitas obmatet vterius ad lucē penitentie per dei memoriā nō resurgat. illustret lumine. Obscurent eum fid ē obliuio que delet memoriā vt mors vitam. † s̄ nūc. qz a luce cecidit: nunc in tenebris caligine confunditur
tenebre ⁊ tūbre mortis. † Occupet
† s̄ post finito gehenne supplicio cruciabitur: vt qđ inuolutū est finē suū non indicat que pena īcipiet cum iudez veniet.
eum caligo: ⁊ inuoluatur amaritudo
s̄ apostatam angelū a conspectu iudicis ad supplicia cōpeltas rapiat d̄ qua dicit. ⁊ in circūdine. Noctem illā tenebrosus turbo eius. tempes. valida.
bo possideat. Non cōputeſi dieb⁹

Reason / Science

Reason / Science / Wissenschaft

“One must read the Bible in human terms [menschlich], since it is a book written by humans and for humans. Human is the language, human the [physical] means by which it was written down and preserved; human finally is the sense in which it is to be understood, [indeed, human also must be] every aid that illuminates it, as well as the purpose and use to which it is to be applied.”

–Herder (1877– 1913, vol. 10: p. 7); quoted in Kugel, James L. *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), Kindle Location 16160.

Rational Study of the Bible

The purpose of the historical-critical approaches is to arrive at the “plain” or “natural” sense of Scripture, which is the “historical” or “original” sense of Scripture.

(John Barton, *Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, 17)

- *Principle of Criticism*: Methodological doubt in which every assertion to rigorous testing and verification by accepted methods of scientific investigation.
- *Principle of analogy*: “historical knowledge is possible because all events are similar in principle.” (The present is key to the past)
- *Principle of correlation*: “the phenomena of history are inter-related and inter-dependent and no event can be isolated from the sequence of historical cause and effect.”
- *Principle of autonomy*: “Neither church nor state can prescribe for the scholar which conclusions should be reached.””

“Holy Scripture, as given by divine inspiration to holy prophets, lies buried beneath the rubbish of centuries. It is covered over with the débris of the traditional interpretations of the multitudinous schools and sects . . .

Historical criticism is digging through this mass of rubbish. Historical criticism is searching for the rock-bed of the Divine word, *in order to recover the real Bible.*” (emphasis mine).

Charles Augustus Briggs, quoted in James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture Then and Now*” (Kindle Edition), 16126–

In the process, learning from the Bible gradually turned to learning about it. Such a shift might seem slight at first, but ultimately it changed a great deal. The person who seeks to learn from the Bible is smaller than the text; he crouches at its feet, waiting for its instructions or insights.

Learning about the text generates the opposite posture. The text moves from subject to object; it no longer speaks but is spoken about, analyzed, and acted upon.

James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture Then and Now*” (Kindle Edition), 16189–93.

Psalm 23 in Modern Times

- Psalm not written by David but by an unknown believer who was celebrating his acquittal at the court. Thus, Taylor and McCullough explain:
 - “It is clear from the reference to **the house of the Lord** (vs. 6) that the psalm is not Davidic.
- The individualism of the psalm points to a date in the postexilic period when the relations of the Lord to the individual claimed special attention.
- The class to which this psalm belongs appears to be a late development in the history of Hebrew psalmody.

Modernity: Rational Study of the Bible



The Bible is an extension of the author. (This is a human book.)

It is necessary first to remove the “debris” of traditions accumulated through history to reach the original event as it really happened.

The Shepherd through Postmodern Eyes

Psalm 23 after Modernity



Characteristics of Postmodernism

Antifoundational



There is not, and there cannot be, an unassailable starting point to establish truth

Antitotalizing



Any theory that claims to account for everything is suppressing examples or applying warped criteria

Demystifying



Any claim based upon assumptions that are “natural” or “objective” conceals in fact ideological agendas

Postmodernity is no more (but no less either) than the modern mind taking a long attentive and sober look at itself, at its conditions and its past works, not fully liking what it sees and sensing the urge to change. Postmodernity is modernity coming of age:

modernity looking at itself at a distance
rather than from inside, making a full
inventory of its gains and losses,
psychoanalyzing itself, discovering the
intentions it never before spelled out,
finding them mutually canceling and
incongruous.

Postmodernity is modernity coming to terms with its own impossibility; a self-monitoring modernity, one that consciously discards what it was once unconsciously doing .

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 272.



EVERYBODY LIES.

HOUSETM
M.D.

Deconstruction

- Life vs death
- Shepherd = Life
- Is really the Shepherd on the side of life?
 - The sheep arrives at the House of Yahweh

Gender Criticism

- Shepherd = Male
- Sheep = Female
- Is David trying to uphold the ideology of male dominance?

Materialist Criticism

- Shepherd and sheep devotion
- Is it disinterested devotion?
 - Has something been hidden from the sheep
- The devotion of the original writer
- Is it disinterested devotion?
 - Has something been hidden from the reader?

Postcolonial Criticism

- The shepherd guides and takes care of the sheep
- He acts solely in the interest of the sheep
 - Or, is He manipulating the sheep?
 - Is the “dark valley” really necessary?

Postmodern Approaches



The Bible is an extension of the reader.

Every reader or author has political motivations that is necessary to expose. The text is like a mirror in which we can understand ourselves better.



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Hermeneutics of Suspicion

“And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and **slow of heart to believe** all that the prophets have spoken!’ (emphasis mine).

–Luke 24:25

By no means! **Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true**, as it is written,
“So that you may be justified in your words,
and prevail in your judging” (emphasis
mine).

Rom 3:4

“By faith we understand ...”

–Heb 11:3