

## Themes in Biblical Theology

- Salvation history
- Nature of Scripture
- Nature of God
- Salvation
- Covenant community
- Gift and task

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## Salvation History

- Salvation history = story of God's acts through history to achieve redemption.
- See handout from N. T. Wright.
- See theology in terms of salvation history.
  - Content of doctrines changes.
  - Where you start from influences what your doctrine looks like.
  - Example: Augustine vs. Irenaeus.

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## Salvation History

- Theologians make assumptions about salvation history.
  - What should we expect from Christians?
  - What is the role of women?
  - Are we responsible for creation?
- How might salvation history be relevant to counseling?

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## Nature of Scripture

- How does Brueggemann describe the Bible?

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## Nature of Scripture

- Models of the Bible he rejects:
  - Modern-industrial-scientific model.
  - Existentialist model.
  - Transcendentalist model.
  - Good luck piece, answer book, collection of doctrines, set of rules.
- What do you think?
- Relevance to counseling?

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## Nature of Scripture

- Brueggemann's own perspective:
  - Covenantal-historical model.
  - Covenantal = "enduring commitment between God and God's people based on mutual vows of loyalty and mutual obligation through which both parties have their life radically affected and empowered" (1).
  - Historical = the "precious memories of decisive interactions" they share.

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## Nature of Scripture

- How would this model affect how we view our relationship with God?

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## Nature of Scripture

- How do we read the Bible as insiders?
  - From within the faith community.
  - By using historical imagination.
  - Apply biblical symbols to our own contexts.
- Different kinds of material in the Bible.
  - Primal narrative.
  - Other material deriving from this narrative.
  - See diagram on page 31.

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## Nature of God

- What does the biblical story show about God?
  - God isn't the kind of God we would be....

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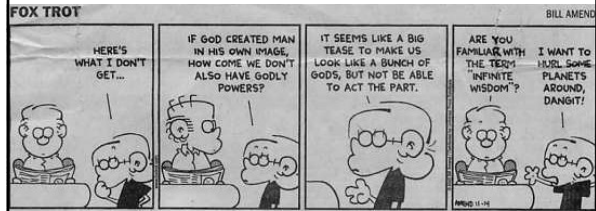
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## Nature of God



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## Nature of God

- In what way is the biblical God “strange”?

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## Nature of God

- What does it mean that God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God?

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## Nature of God

- What difference does it make that the Bible is oriented toward the future?
- God's characteristic actions on our behalf.
  - God wills “freedom, at-homeness, and life.”
  - God opposes “slavery, exile, and death.”
- Relevance to counseling?

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## Salvation

- Relationship of conversion to covenant?
- Gospel is good news to some, bad news to others.

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## Salvation

- Life = relatedness, embrace of community.
- Death = unrelatedness, leaving community.
- Alienation as the human condition.
- Why Christian community is important.
  - Is an agent of life or death.
  - Applies to counselors as representatives of the community.

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## Salvation

- Significance of Jesus' resurrection:
  - Jesus has defeated death; can give new life.
  - Overcame forces of alienation to provide reconciliation.
  - We should have hope.
  - The world is “in love with death.”
  - But it's the “joyous task” of Christians to “love [others] in ways that heal and transform” (72).

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## Salvation

- What does it mean that Christians live between Good Friday and Easter Sunday?

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## Covenant Community

- Relationship between individual and community in salvation?

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## Gift and Task

- How is salvation both gift and task?
- Protestants think of it as a gift only.
- How is wholeness in counseling both gift and task?

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David comes to you after a series of failed relationships. In each case, the relationship was going well until the woman began to want some kind of commitment from him. David would then back away or break off the relationship outright. He admits that he has trouble trusting people; he is afraid of being hurt. He has no contact with either of his parents. His father abandoned the family when he was small, and his mother remarried. She had more children with her new husband, and she openly preferred her new family to David. He moved out of the house at eighteen. Although he remembers believing in Jesus and going to church as a child, David has not attended church in many years. He still believes in God, but he doesn't believe that God has any interest in his life. The church is full of legalistic hypocrites, and the Bible is a book of rules he doesn't need. If he really is the cause of his own relationship problems, he says to you, what hope does he have? People can't change. What theological framework will you need?

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## Case Study

- What does David need to understand...
  - About God?
  - About the human situation?
  - About the Bible?
  - About the church?
- How does the idea of covenant speak to his situation?
- How does Scripture speak to his idea that people can't change?

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