

# Biblical Theology:

## Background:

The term was used in a particularly protestant evangelical setting historically, attempting to explore important themes included: 1) The Bible as a theological resource; 2) The unity of the Bible; 3) The revelation of God in history; 4) The Bible's distinctly Hebraic mentality; and 5) The uniqueness of biblical revelation.<sup>1</sup>



Photo by Taylor Wilcox on Unsplash  
The unveiling of the new Torah display at Trinity International University

## Definition(s):

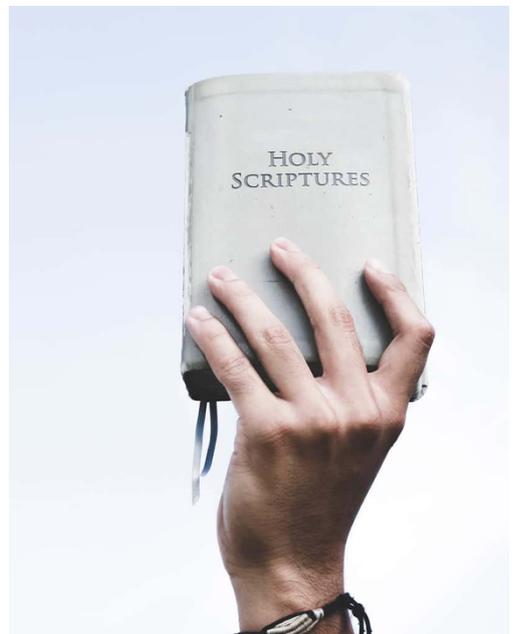
1) <sup>2</sup>Geerhardus Vos, defined biblical theology this way: "Biblical Theology is that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible."

2) Steve Wellum says that biblical theology "contends that to read the Bible as unified Scripture is not just one interpretive option among others, but that which best corresponds to the nature of the text itself, given its divine inspiration."

3) <sup>3</sup>Graeme Goldsworthy: Biblical theology is not concerned to state the final doctrines which go to make up the content of Christian belief, but rather to describe the *process* by which revelation unfolds and moves toward the goal which is God's final revelation of his purposes in Jesus Christ.

## Some Problems

- 1) It may not be possible structurally, we no longer speak the language of the Bible, and so may not be able to hear it.
- 2) It risks becoming a slightly more sophisticated form of Idolatry.<sup>4</sup>
- 3) Biblical Theology as expressed usually sees Scripture as being fundamentally one voiced. Modifying this view more modern biblical theologians will talk about the theology of Paul or the Psalmist.



<sup>1</sup>[https://web.archive.org/web/20180619193905/http://www.thearda.com/timeline/movements/movement\\_52.asp](https://web.archive.org/web/20180619193905/http://www.thearda.com/timeline/movements/movement_52.asp)

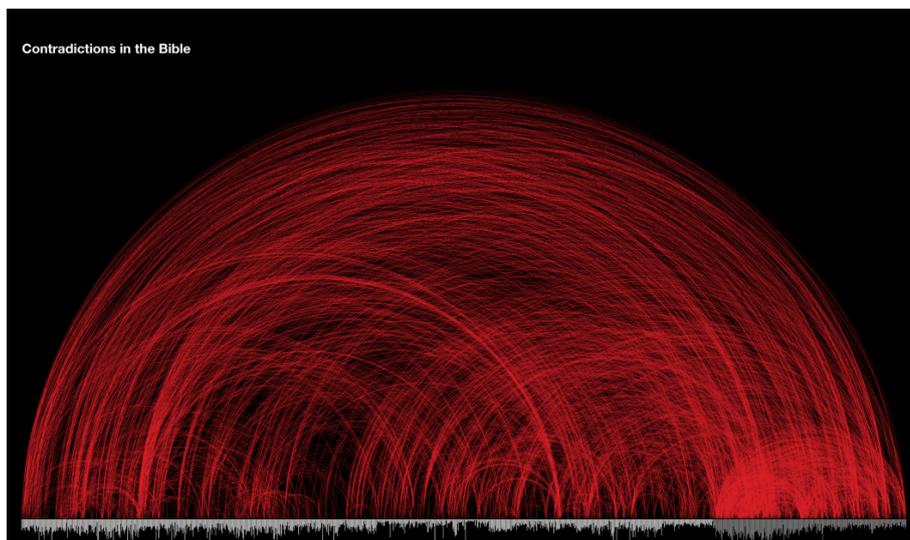
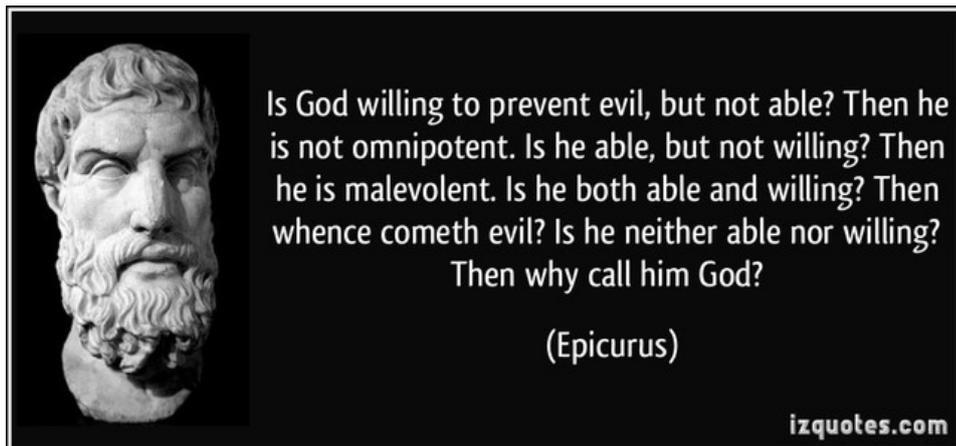
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/3-ways-to-define-biblical-theology/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_theology)

<sup>4</sup> <https://relevantmagazine.com/god/have-we-made-bible-idol-0/>

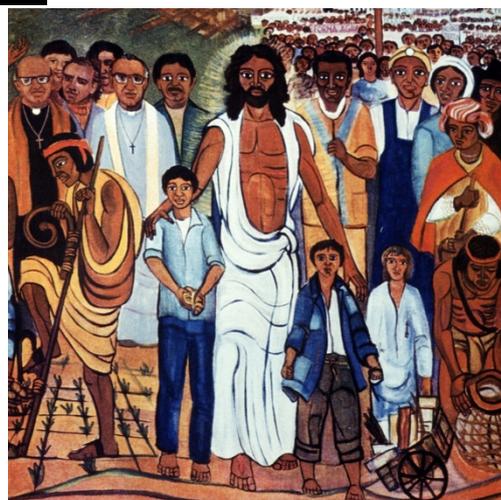
## Why might we do biblical theology?

- 1) Historical Conversation partners: In the early years as Christian theology was developing it engaged with Greek philosophy. This led to certain theological structures. These structures have dominated theological conversation. In more recent years the conversation partners have changed, but that fact that the conversation partner gets to define the topic to a certain extent means that the language is from within their discipline.



- 2) Fresh insights: Personal experience leads me to affirm that the multivalent structure of scripture means that it is a rich source for different viewpoints. This graphic is from project reason, created by Sam Harris<sup>5</sup>.

- 3) Many of the most productive theological schools of the modern era come from reading the Bible and taking its' contents very seriously. Examples would include liberation theology, process theology and even radical theology. Liberation theology has shaped the world, and could be interpreted as an attempt to return to the gospel of the early church where Christianity is politically and culturally decentralized<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>5</sup> <https://sciencebasedlife.wordpress.com/2011/03/20/a-visual-representation-of-biblical-contradictions/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation\\_theology#Theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation_theology#Theology)