



Introducing the Bible *The Drama of Scripture*

Week 2

1



Overview of this week

- ❖ Methodists and the Bible
- ❖ Why the Old Testament?
- ❖ Beginning our story
 - Act 1 -- Creation
 - Act 2
 - Rebellion and the Fall
 - Noah – uncreation, creation, and fall



Methodists and the Bible

- ❖ Authority of scripture and the Methodists
 - John Wesley
 - Our founding documents
- ❖ The Book of Discipline
 - The Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith
- ❖ Our Theological Task
 - Scripture as the “primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine”
 - “We properly read Scripture within the believing community”
 - “We are aided by scholarly inquiry and personal insight, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”
- ❖ The role of the Holy Spirit and the community
- ❖ No bumper sticker interpretation!



Why the Old Testament?

- ❖ The OT was the Bible of Jesus and all the early Christians
 - All the NT writers, except one (Luke), were Jewish. They were all, including Luke, steeped in the Jewish scriptures (our OT).
- ❖ The NT writers quote/use the OT extensively
 - Fully 1/3 of the NT quotes or alludes to the OT.
- ❖ The New Testament makes little sense without the Old Testament!
 - The OT is the first three acts of our six-act play!
 - Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's hope. Jesus' story makes no sense if ripped away from the OT story. In the first half of the book of Acts, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of Scripture.



Why don't we pay more attention to the OT?

- ❖ Much of it doesn't make much sense to us!
 - The historical and cultural distances are profound
- ❖ Much of it is offensive to us.
 - The whole notion of a wrathful and judging God
 - There are acts ascribed to God that we find reprehensible
 - Israel's notions of God's providence
 - The story of Marcion – an early Christian who wanted to dump the Old Testament!
- ❖ Christian churches have done a poor job of teaching the Old Testament.



Organization of the Old Testament

- ❖ The Law – (aka The Pentateuch, the Torah)
- ❖ The Writings
 - History
 - Joshua to Esther
 - Poetical and Wisdom books
 - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- ❖ The Prophets
 - Major prophets (major only in length!)
 - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
 - Minor prophets (minor only in length!)
 - 12 books in our Bible
- ❖ *??What is the Apocrypha??*



The Story of Creation – Act One

- ❖ Two creation stories
 - The first one (Genesis 1:1 – 2:3) is written from God’s perspective
 - The second story (Genesis 2:4b – 25) is written from humankind’s perspective
- ❖ Key parts of the story
 - God creates everything that is – and it is good!
 - God creates humans in his image
 - What might this mean?
 - God give humans “dominion” over all creatures
 - What are our responsibilities?
 - God creates man and woman as husband and wife – “one flesh”
- ❖ The beginnings of covenant
 - Covenant lies at the heart of meaningful relationships



The Fall – Act Two

- ❖ In our desire to be like gods ourselves, we break this covenant.
 - A cosmic dislocation!
 - The notion of original sin => separation from God; the loss of communion with God. Think of original sin as a flaw in our moral DNA.
 - Genesis 3:8-10 – a poignant depiction of God’s searching for Adam
- ❖ Because we broke this covenant, God sends the humans into exile.
 - Our relationship with God is ruptured, affecting all of creation.
 - Exile from the garden brings death. Adam and Eve cannot eat from the tree of life.
 - The six-act play will now to turn to the challenge of renewing and restoring us and the entire cosmos.



The Story of Noah

- "Uncreation"
- New creation
- New humanity
- New covenant
 - Genesis 9:8 - 17

- Yet again . . . Humans screw it up
- Tower of Babel
- Scattering/exile

Look for the patterns . . . FOLLOW THE STORY!!