



# *Introducing the Bible: The Drama of Scripture*

Week 5

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## *Overview of this week*

- ❖ Bible study tools
- ❖ Organization of the Old Testament
- ❖ Where are we in the story
- ❖ God judges and restores the people!
- ❖ The kingdom and the exile
- ❖ Prophecy
- ❖ David and the Kingdom of God
- ❖ The temple of God

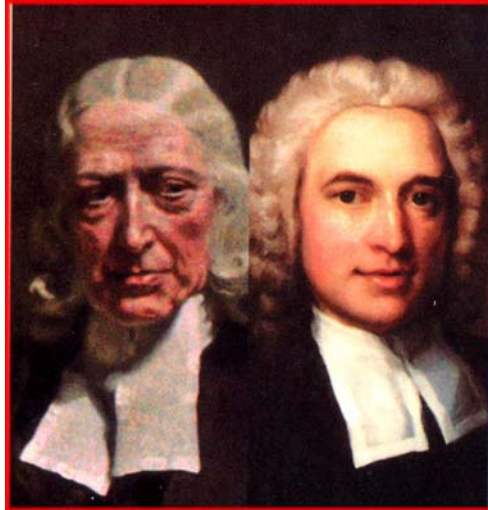
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## *The Wesleys*

John Wesley



Charles Wesley

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## *John Wesley & Scripture*

- ❖ Who was John Wesley?
  - An 18<sup>th</sup>-century ordained minister in the Church of England
  - Brother of Charles, who wrote more than 6500 hymns!
- ❖ What world did he live in?
  - A world in which “being a Christian” had become divorced from the realities of living a Christian life
- ❖ What was the role of the Bible in Wesley’s life and worldview?
  - Wesley called himself a “man of one book”
- ❖ What role did Wesley want for the Bible among the Methodists?
  - Wesley’s people were to be a people of that book – the Bible! This is embodied the UMC “constitution.”

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## *Wesley's Doctrine of Scripture*

- ❖ The authority and inspiration of scripture
  - "I allow no other rule, whether of faith or scripture, than the Holy Scriptures."
- ❖ The plain sense of scripture
  - "You depart ever so little from . . . The **plain, literal meaning** of any text, taken in connection with that **context**."
- ❖ Use the clearer texts to illuminate the obscure
  - The analogy of faith
- ❖ Use **all** of the bible!



## *Biblical Prophecy – enforcing the covenant*

- ❖ Forthtelling v. foretelling
- ❖ Biblical prophets are conveyors of God's moral will
  - Not a new message, but the re-expression of Moses
  - Oracles are messages from God
    - Much of the prophetic books is simply a collection of oracles – can't be read as a narrative
- ❖ How to tell if a prophet is genuine
  - Deuteronomy 18:15-22
- ❖ Let the NT, only, guide you to second meanings of the oracles



## *Biblical poetry*

- ❖ How are we do find God's word *for* us in these words spoken *to* God?
- ❖ They are poetry! – Psalm 19:1-2

### Poetry

### Prose

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.  Day to day pours forth speech,  and night to night declares knowledge.	God is revealed in his creation, especially in the heavenly bodies.
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## *Biblical wisdom -- examples*

- ❖ Proverbs
  - The literary legacy of Israel's wise teachers
  - Principles, not promises
  - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
  - Wisdom leads to an understanding of the retribution principle. (*But the wise always remember Job!*)
- ❖ Song of Solomon
  - The goodness of humanity
  - The dignity of human affections
  - The sanctity and virtue of human sexual expression in marriage
  - Some suggest that it is an extended allegory of the love between God and his people – but this has probably been overdone.
    - Always start with the plain meaning!



## *Between the Testaments – The Apocrypha*

- ❖ 14 or 15 books that appear in the Greek OT (the Septuagint) but not the Hebrew Bible
- ❖ A wide variety of books: historical, devotional, prophetic, teaching
- ❖ Valuable – but never quoted as Scripture, not even by Greek writers
  - The NT writers used the Septuagint, but never quoted from the apocryphal books
- ❖ Became books of the church, but not of the canon
- ❖ The historical books provide us information about the events between the Testaments, particularly the time of the Maccabees.



## *Between the Testaments – the History*

- ❖ A period of 450 years or so when the Jews traded one oppressor for another
  - A story of tension and tragedy
  - On-going pressure for the Jews to assimilate into the larger culture – Greek, after Alexander the Great
- ❖ Antiochus Epiphanes
  - Trying to control the Jews, he took over the Temple on Dec 25, 167BC, desecrating it and making it a place where he would be worshipped.
  - The Jewish reaction – see the story of Daniel!



## *The Maccabees*

- ❖ The desecrations by Antiochus Epiphanies prompted a successful Jewish revolt led by a family called the Maccabees, “the hammerer” (their proper name was Hasmonean). Their story is recorded in the historical books of the apocrypha. This family ruled Judea for about 100 years, until the arrival of Rome.
- ❖ The successful revolt (the Temple was restored in 164BC and Hanukkah celebrates it) brought a sense of vindication to the Jews, but they soon came to question whether this was really the keeping of the covenant.
  - Though Jewish, the Maccabeans were not of the house of David and combined the offices of high priest and king.
  - They also embraced the Hellenistic influences, threatening the distinctiveness of the Jews.



## *Herod the Great*

- ❖ His family had risen to power under the Maccabees and had aligned themselves with the Romans. With Mark Antony (yes, Cleopatra’s Antony!), he defeated the last of the Hasmonean rulers and took Jerusalem in 37BC.
- ❖ Herod became “king” under the Romans, but never achieved the devotion or respect of the Jewish people, despite his efforts.
  - Married into the Hasmonean family
  - Rebuilt the temple into a huge, grand building
- ❖ Herod the Great ruled from 37BC to 4BC.
- ❖ His son, Herod Antipas, got control of Galilee after Dad’s death and is the most-mentioned Herod in the Bible.



## Approaching Jesus – a few things to keep in mind

- ❖ The unresolved tension in the story
  - The one true God, who chose Israel to be the means by which he would renew all creation, made a covenant with Israel – but it sure didn't look much like it! What could Israel do to bring the story to its long-awaited climax?
- ❖ Key Symbols of Judaism – still!
  - Torah
  - Temple
  - The land
  - Their racial identity



## Old Testament Timeline

