B. Historical-Critical Method

Evaluating modern scholarship

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Reading Assignments

- Optional:
  - Marshall, *New Testament Interpretation* 11-18.
  - Rise of historical-critical method, Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics* 28-39.

Definitions

- Key term: “historical-critical.”
- To many scholars it mean careful research.
- Antisupernaturalism affects the mainstream.
- “Historical-critical” includes antisupernaturalism.

Definitions

- The key term is “historical-critical.”
- To many within the mainstream of scholarship, it connotes simply careful, controlled scholarly research.
- But since the Reformation a long history of antisupernaturalism affects this mainstream.
- At Westminster, “historical-critical” denotes the dominant framework of 19th and 20th century biblical research, <u>including</u> the presuppositions of an antisupernaturalistic worldview.

Antisupernaturalism

- Ernst Troeltsch's principles of historical investigation.
  - Criticism. Only probabilistic judgments.
  - Analogy. Present and past are alike.
  - Correlation. Closed continuum of causes.

History is brute fact, without miracle.

Common but erroneous.

Antisupernaturalism

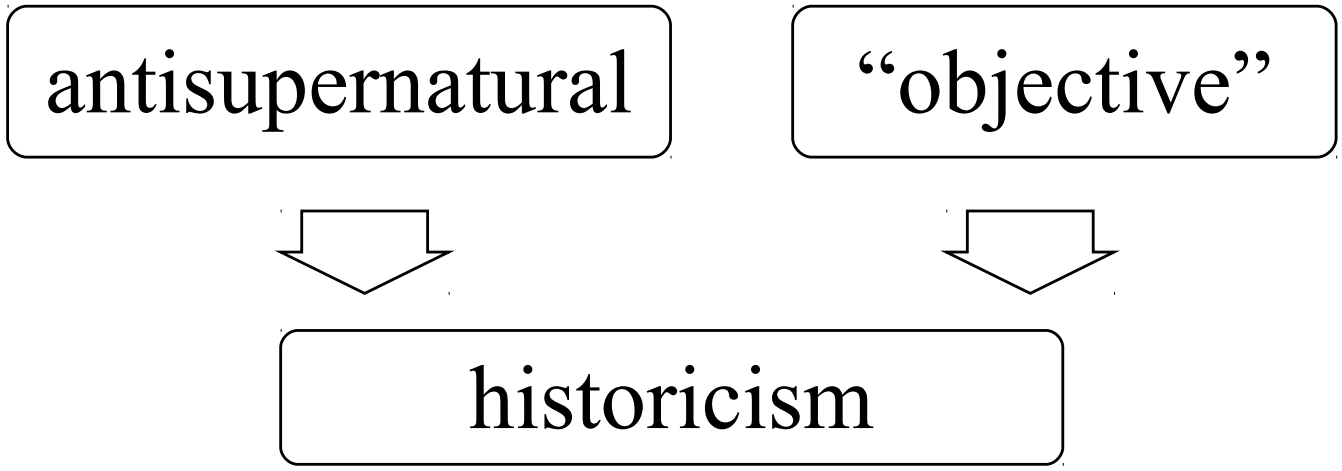
- Summarized in Ernst Troeltsch's view of principles of historical investigation.
  - Criticism. Only probabilistic judgments.
  - Analogy. Present and past are alike.
  - Correlation. Closed continuum of causes.

Assumes history is brute fact, without miracle.

Common but erroneous.

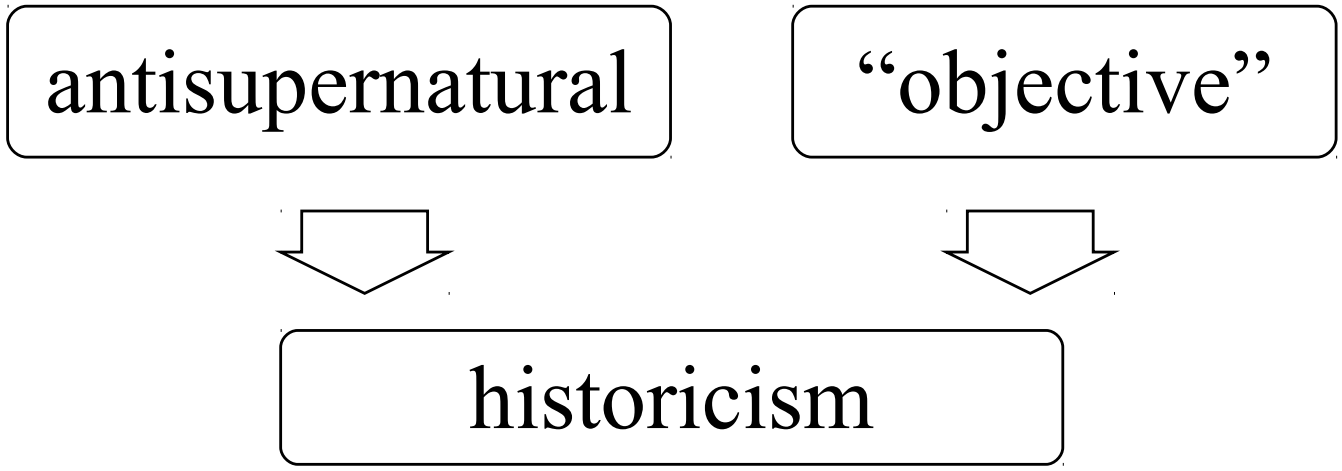
Historicism

- “Historicism” is antisupernaturalism plus recording pure objective facts.



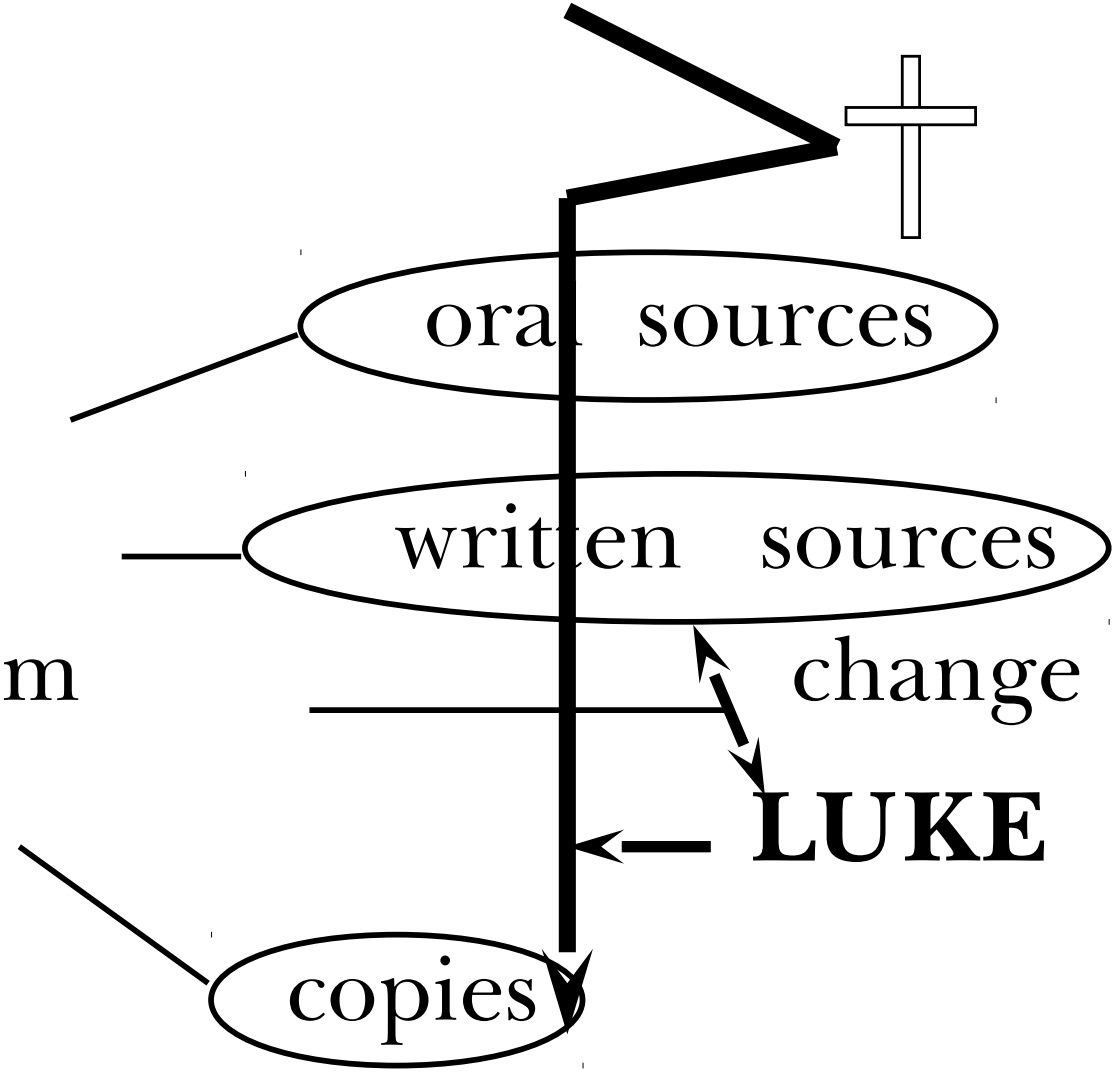
Historicism

- “Historicism” combines Troeltsch’s antisupernaturalism with the view that historians should record facts with pure objectivity.



Main Critical Tools

- Form criticism
- Source criticism
- Redaction criticism
- Text criticism



Potential of Critical Tools

- Text criticism valuable for autograph.
- All others involve legitimate questions.
- Useful for apologetics.
- Reconstruct OT/NT environment
  (a contribution to “introduction”).

Potential of Critical Tools

- Text criticism is justified by our focus on the autograph.
- All others involve theoretically legitimate questions expressing human curiosity.
- Useful now and then for apologetics.
- Reconstruct OT/NT environment (a contribution to “introduction”).

Problems with Critical Tools

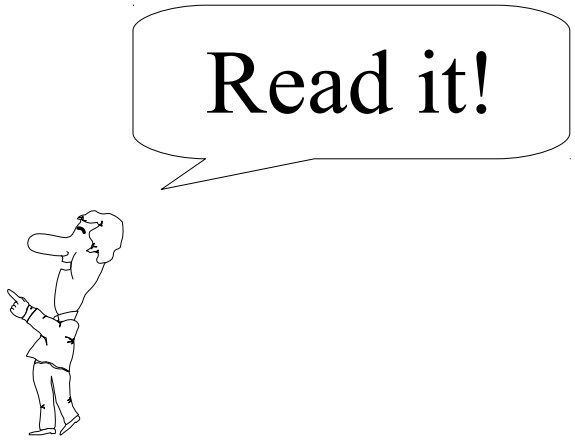
- Highly speculative.
- Skeptical because of antisupernaturalism.
- False principles of reconstruction.
- Even if they worked, so what?

Problems with Critical Tools

- Highly speculative.
- In practice, overly skeptical because of antisupernaturalism.
- In practice, using false principles of reconstruction.
- Even if they worked, would they pay off? **The meaning of a text is what it says, not the history of its origin.**

Irrelevance of Sources

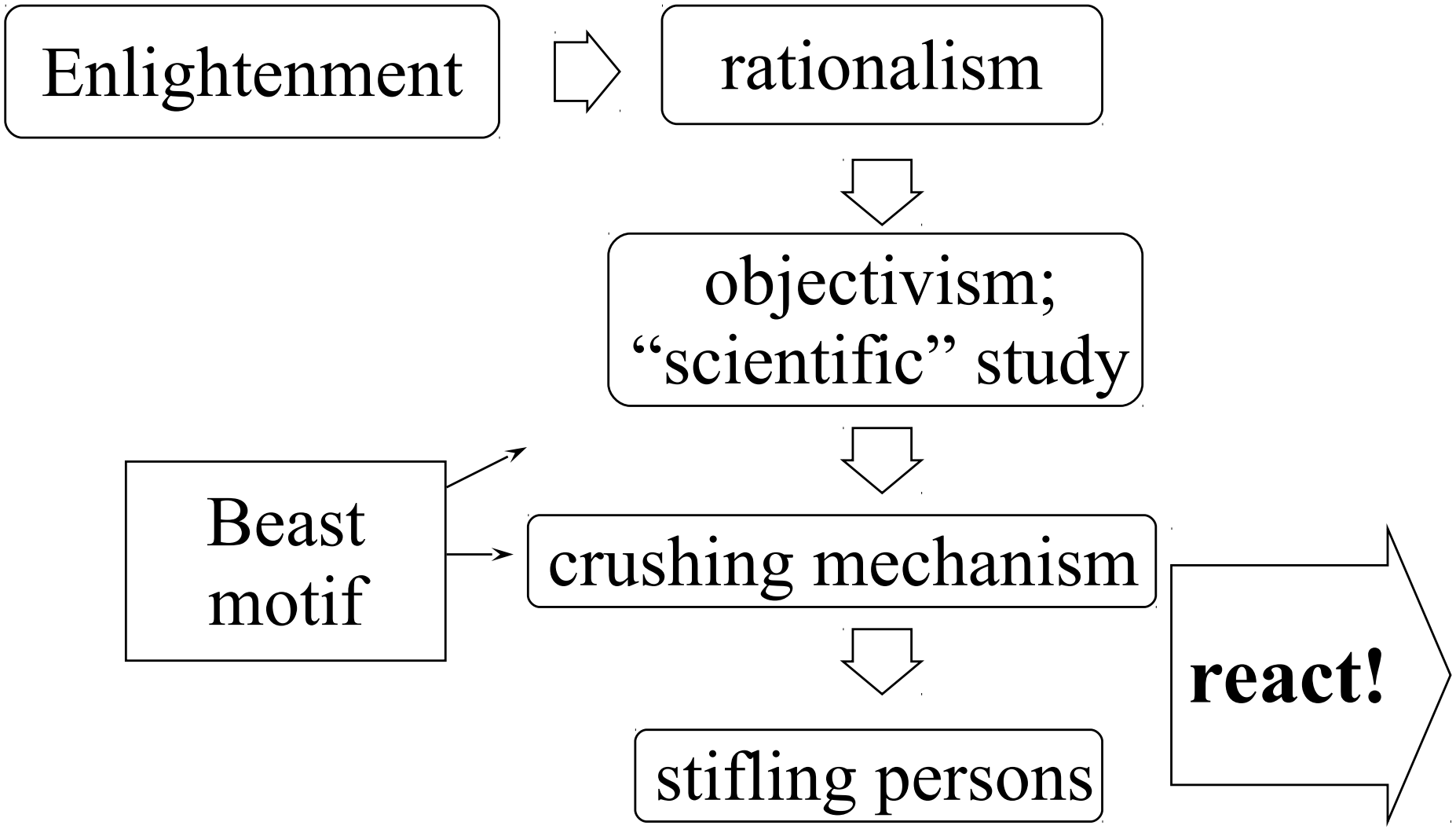
- **<u>The meaning of a text is what it says, not the history of its origin.</u>**



C. Situationist and Subjectivist Hermeneutics

1. The Motive: Reaction to Rationalism

The Road to Reaction



Modern Subjectivism

irrationalism;
Harlot motif

I am free (unrestrained), above law

free meaning:
reader creates

free ethics:
existential

free truth:
relativism

free
religion:
whatever
works

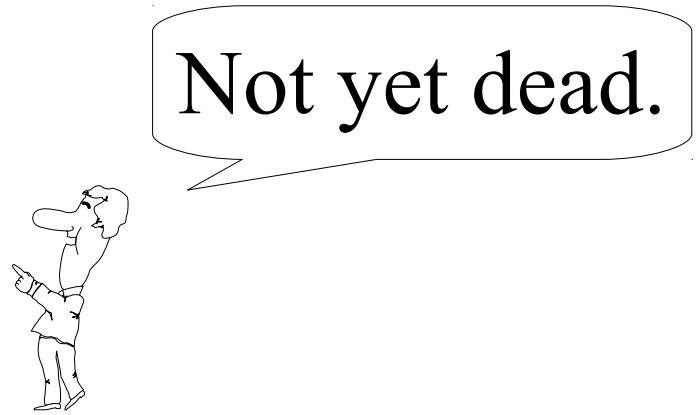
Sounds familiar.

2. Marxism

including liberation theology

Variations of Marxism

- Classic Marxism (Cuba)
- Theology of liberation
- Political correctness movement



Marxism as Compassionate and Zealous for Justice

- Looking for suffering minorities and socially and economically disadvantaged people
- Looking at ways in which the powerless are exploited by those in power

Marxism as Counterfeit

- Theology
- Sin
- Gospel
- Church
- Deliverance
- Consummation
- God

- Dialectical materialism
- Economic oppression
- Marxist call to workers
- Communist party
- Communist revolution
- Communist utopia
- Abstract laws of history; “humanity”

Marxist Biblical Interpretation

- Antithesis: “hermeneutic of suspicion” sees economic motives, not meaning.
  - Rejects opponents’ arguments a priori, because they have wrong motives.
- Common grace: impose Marxist motifs on all literature.

Marxist Biblical Interpretation

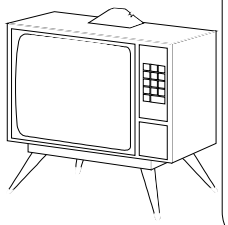
- Antithesis: “hermeneutic of suspicion” examines economic motives behind texts, rather than straightforward meaning.
  - Rejects opponents’ arguments a priori, because they have wrong motives.
- Common grace: impose Marxist motifs on all literature.

Marxist Epistemological Release

truths of history

blocked by ideology (corporate "sin")

illumination of communist "gospel"



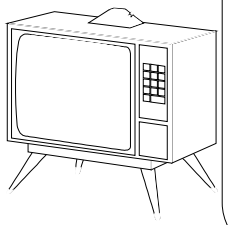
Now I can critique ideology.

Marxist Epistemological Dilemma

truths of history

universal ideology

supposed enlightenment masks new oppression



Now I can critique ideology.

So I can seize control.

Marxist Ethical Satisfaction

- Alienation
- Meaninglessness
- Disorientation from multiple views
- Guilt over privilege

- Identification with a cause
- Purpose of “salvation”
- Exhilaration in superior understanding
- Righteousness in commitment to justice
  - righteousness by

Ethical Bankruptcy

- Ultimacy of material universe (god).
- Any ethics?
- Historical law worthy of allegiance?
  - Fight against it, as existentialists?
- Man, chance protoplasm, worthy of allegiance?

Ethical Bankruptcy

- Ultimacy of material universe (god).
- So where do we get any ethics at all?
- Why should impersonal historical law be worthy of my allegiance?
  - Why not just as well fight against it, as existentialists propose to do?
- Why is man worthy of allegiance, if he is a chance product of protoplasm?

Theology of Liberation

- Finds liberation in the Bible.
- Marxism as tool for social ills.
- Biblical liberation for Marxist “sins.”
- Marxism distorts biblical teaching. (find Marxist motifs anywhere).

Theology of Liberation

- Finds liberation motifs in the Bible.
- Uses Marxism as the fundamental tool for analyzing social ills.
- Applies biblical liberation to Marxist "sins."
- In the process, Marxist counterfeits distort biblical teaching. As with generic Marxism, it can find Marxist motifs anywhere.

Political Correctness as Variation

- Analyze by gender, race, economic class.
- Restructure society to achieve righteousness.
- “Hermeneutics of suspicion.”
- Ethical self-righteousness.

Political Correctness as Variation

- Analyze people, movements, communication, etc., in terms of membership in social classes: gender, race, economic class
- Restructure society to achieve righteousness
- “Hermeneutics of suspicion”
- Ethical self-righteousness

3. Feminism

Feminism as Compassionate

- Concern for women's value and distinctiveness

Feminism Parallel to Correctness

- Specializes political correctness to gender.
- Analysis by classes of male and female.
- Deliverance through alteration of power.
- Appeals to compassion for the underdog.
- Evaluates texts for class motives.

Feminism Parallel to Correctness

- A specialization of political correctness to the issue of gender.
- Analysis by class membership, specifically now the classes of male and female.
- Deliverance through alteration of power relations.
- Appeals to compassion for the underdog.
- Evaluates texts on the basis of class motives.

Feminism as Counterfeit

- Theology
- Sin
- Gospel
- Church
- Deliverance

- Consummation
- God

- Egalitarianism
- Oppression of women
- Maleability of gender
- Egalitarians
- Remove past stereotypes remove authority

- Universal freedom
- Humanity

4. Evaluation

Positive Aspects

- Identify some real sins.
- Unconscious sins and corporate sinful ideologies.
  - Sins against the weak unnoticed.
- Asks new questions:
  notices new aspects.
- All are in God's image.

Positive Aspects

- Identify some real sins.
- Promote awareness of unconscious sins and corporate sinful ideologies, including what takes place among Christians.
  - Sins against the weak tend to go unnoticed.
- Asks new questions of texts and leads to noticing new aspects and new details.
- Egalitarianism feeds on the truth that all people are created in God's image and deserve respect.

Negative Aspects

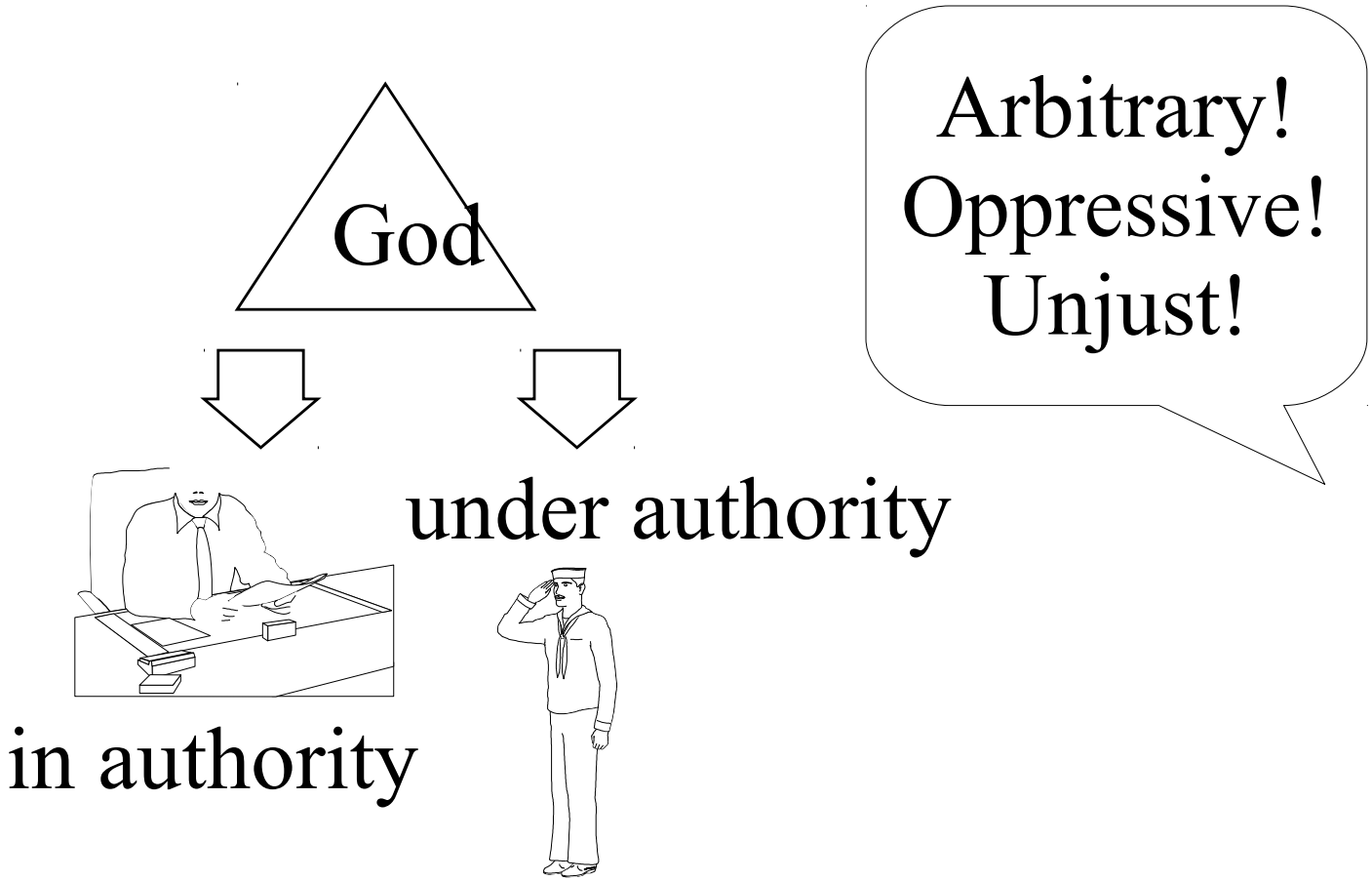
- Misidentifies sin.
- False way of salvation.
- Reads what is not there.
- Rebels against differences:
  age, personality, sex, wealth, skills, culture, giftedness, and status in authority.

Negative Aspects

- Misidentifies some things as sin.
- Offers false, easy way of salvation.
- Can read into texts what is not there.
- Egalitarianism rebels against the many differences that God has ordained: age, personality, sex, wealth, skills, culture, giftedness, and status in authority.

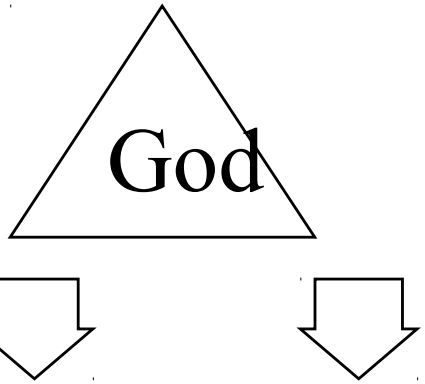
Mystery of Differences

- Intellectuals deny nonrational difference.



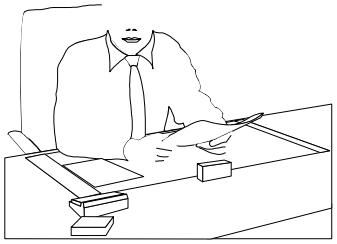
Mystery of Differences

- Intellectuals lack a rational bottom for differences, and so want their disappearance.

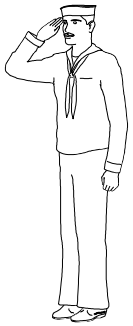


Arbitrary!
Oppressive!
Unjust!

under authority

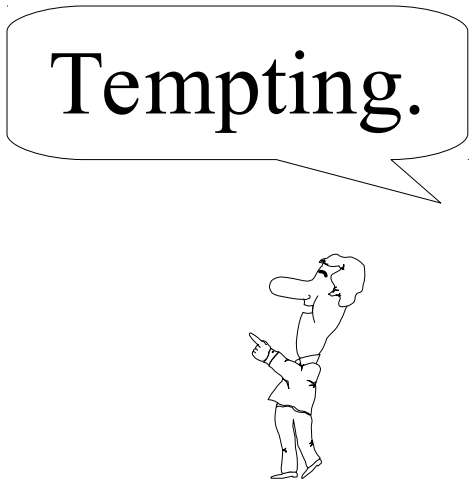


in authority



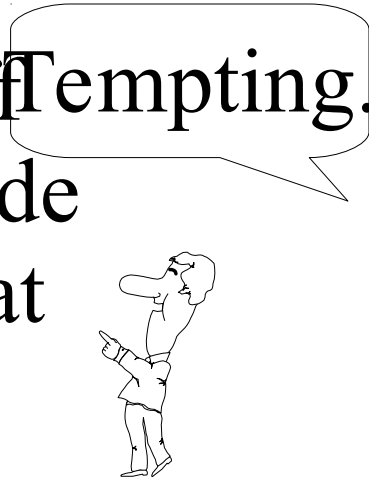
Appeal for Relief

- Everyone is guilty about sex and money.
- Everyone has been sinned against.
- Sin is deep, painful, and complex.
- Promise simple relief:
  - "Let us solve your problem."



Appeal for Relief

- Everyone is guilty about sex and money.
- Everyone has been sinned against.
- Our entanglement with sin in these areas is deep, painful, and complex.
- Promises of simple relief are attractive.
  - "Let us, the elite, take the problem off your hands. Let the government decide who gets the money and who has what sexual privileges."



Particular False Solutions

- Strong husbands dominate
- weak abdicate leadership.
- Strong wives push “rights”
- weak just conform.

Eph. 5:22-33 and Matt. 20:25-28 advocate Christ-like servanthood. Destroys selfishness.

Particular False Solutions

- Strong husbands dominate
- weak abdicate leadership.
- Strong wives push “rights”
- weak just conform.

Eph. 5:22-33 and Matt. 20:25-28 advocate being a servant after the model of Christ. This destroys the selfishness and idolatry in false solutions.

Breaking Chauvinism and Egalitarianism in the Family

God is Husband to Israel — Hosea

⇩

Christ is Husband to church — Eph. 5:23, 32

⇩

Husband is head in love

Eph. 5:22-33

marriage expresses love, not domineering or identity of roles

Breaking Chauvinism and Egalitarianism in the Church

God is Father to the Son

God-centered salvation.

God is Father to saints

church is family of God 1 Tim. 3:15

family has fathers (elders)

1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:1-7

family expresses love, not identity of roles

5. Postmodern Contextualism

Features of Contextualism

- Humans dependent on language and culture
- Inaccessible transcendent truth
- Solution to cultural conflicts by banishing dogmatism

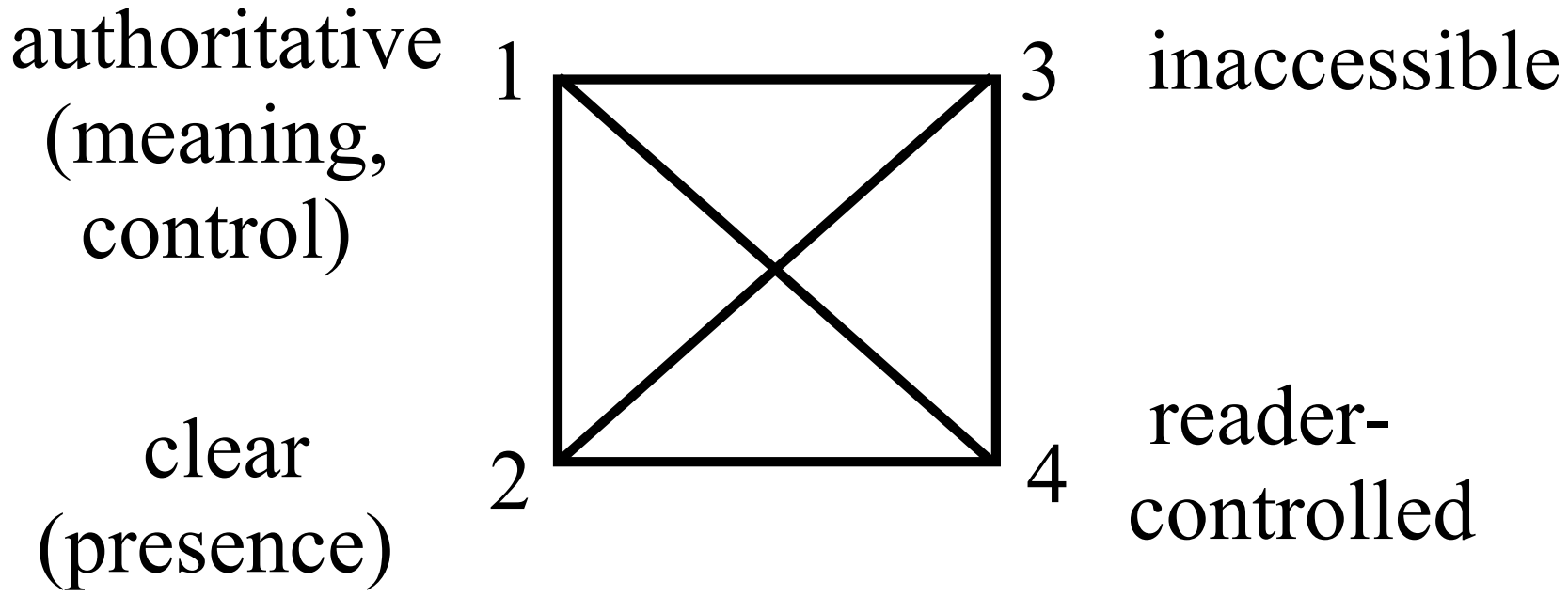
Features of Contextualism

- Humans dependent on language and culture: we think we know because of linguistic and cultural training
- Inaccessible transcendent truth: we experience reality only through the grid of language and culture
- Solution to cultural conflicts by banishing dogmatism

Positive Desires in Contextualism

- No snap judgments about others.
- No forced conformity for other individuals or cultures.
- Desire for freedom for differences.
- Relief from oppressive power.

Epistemology:
Frame's Square for God's Word



Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, p. 14.

Postmodern Contextualism as Counterfeit

- Theology
- Sin
- Gospel
- Church
- Deliverance

- Consummation
- God

- Prison of finiteness
- Dogmatism
- Tolerance
- Postmodern gnostics
- Dogma demoted to opinion
- Universal peace
- Humanity

Evaluation

Notices:

<u>Positive</u>

- Finiteness
- Sin
- Corporate aspect
- Diversity in individuals and cultures

<u>Negative</u>

- God absent
- Sin excused as finiteness
- Individual free to create his own morality
- Clarity labeled dogmatism
- Authority labeled oppression

Central Challenge

modernism	postmodern	Christian
• universal rationalism (one)	• reason within local culture (many)	• divine reason (one and many)
• human sameness	• human differences	• same and different in the body
• oppression from reason	• freedom to recreate man	• freedom under God

D. Dispensationalism

Is a dispensationalist approach correct? How may we learn from it? How do we talk to those holding this approach?

Reading on Dispensationalism

- Required:
  - Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*
  - Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* chap. 5
- Optional:
  - Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, chap. 2 (16-54) (dispensational hermeneutics)
  - Fairbairn, *Interpretation of Prophecy*
  - note Blaising and Bock on progressive dispensationalism

E. Typology

Reading Assignment on Typology

- Required:
  - Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* 98-112
  - Vos, *Biblical Theology*, the part of chap. 8 on typology, 161-172 (1948) or 143-155 (1975).

1. Bibliography of Typology

- Fairbairn, Patrick. *The Typology of Scripture* (classic).
- Davidson, Richard M. *Typology in Scripture*, 1981.
- Meek, James A. "Toward a Biblical Typology," Th.M. thesis, WTS, 1981.

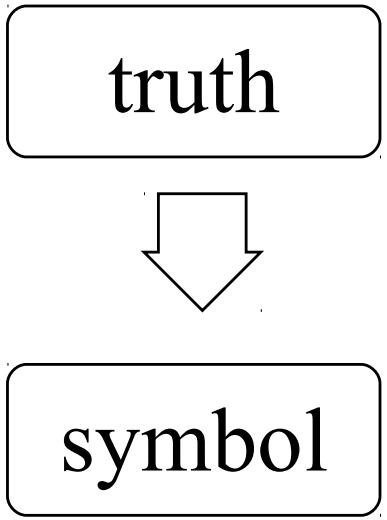
2. Definitions of Key Terms

Analogy

- Robertson: “similarity of circumstances.”
- “likeness of persons, events, places, etc.”
- A recurrent principle in redemptive history.

- Does not require NT fulfillment.
- Illustrations:
  - –Compare Gen. 50:20 to Acts 2:23
  - –Heb. 11

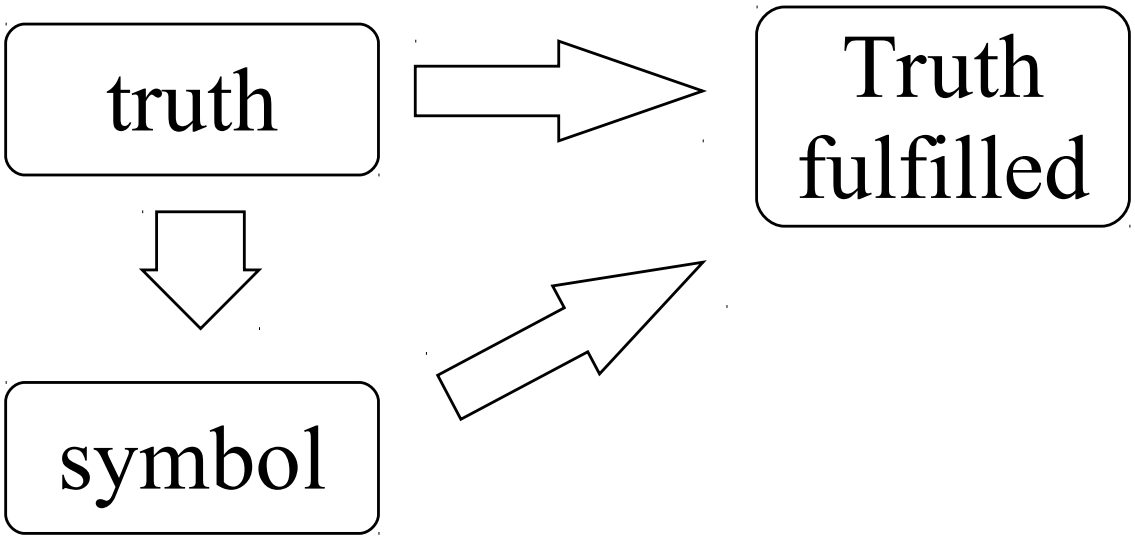
Symbolism



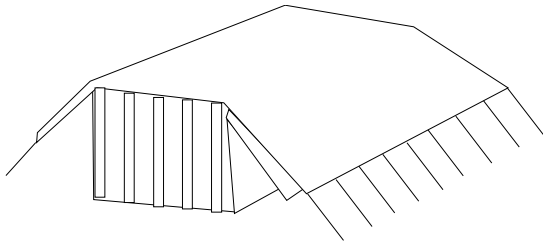
- Robertson: “A material representation of redemptive truth.”
- “An earthly representation of divine truth.”
- Has meaning at the time.
- Illustration: manna symbolizes God’s daily care.

Type

- Robertson: “a prophetical embodiment of redemptive truth anticipating the history and consummation of God’s purposes”
- “A symbol pointing to a fulfillment”



- Illustration: the tabernacle



The Tabernacle as a Type

truth

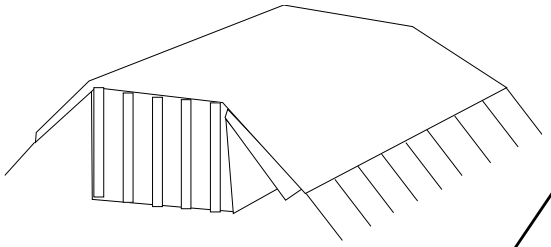
God dwells with his people

Truth fulfilled

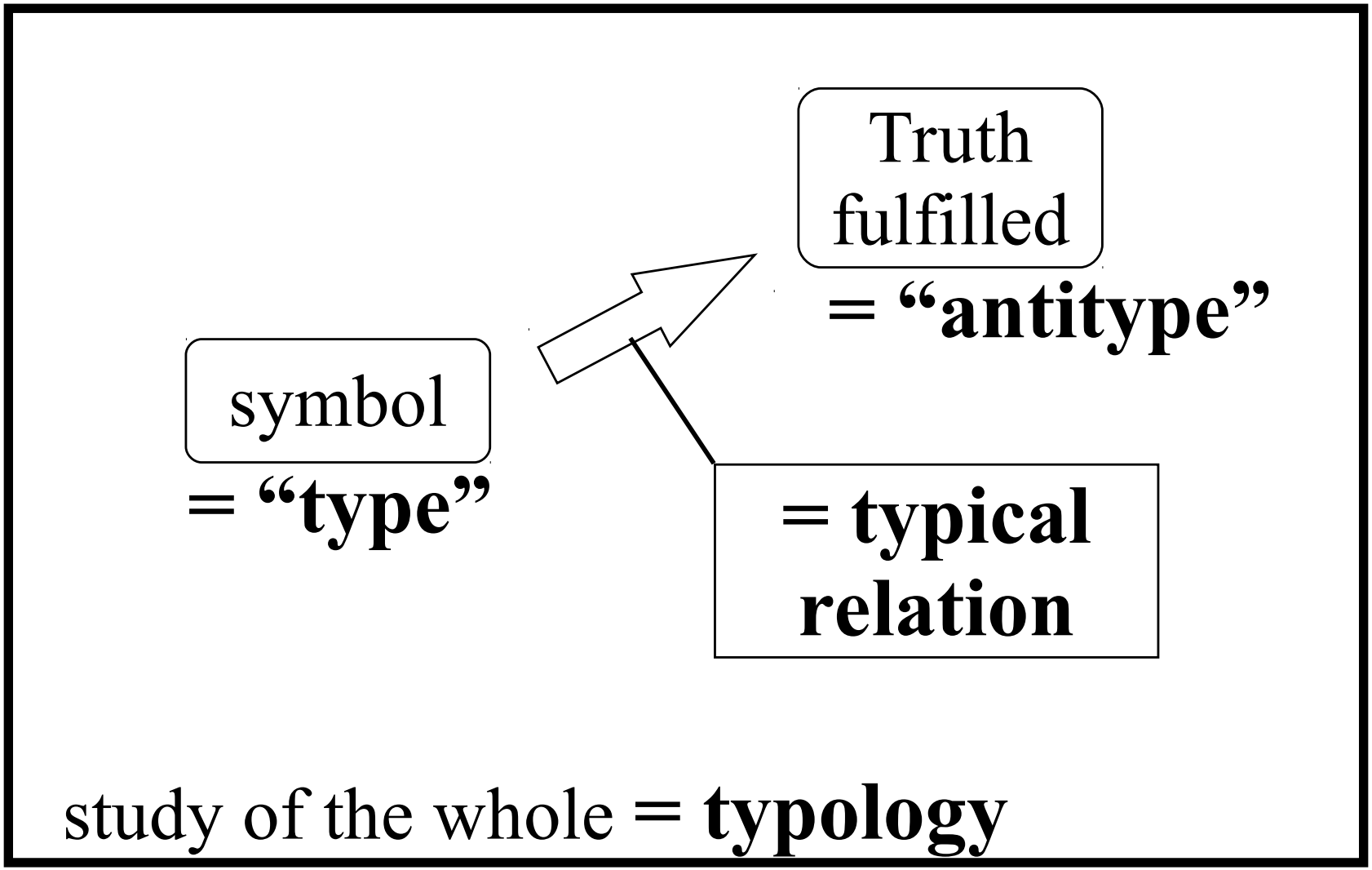
God dwells with us through Christ

symbol

tabernacle as tent dwelling



Terms in Typology

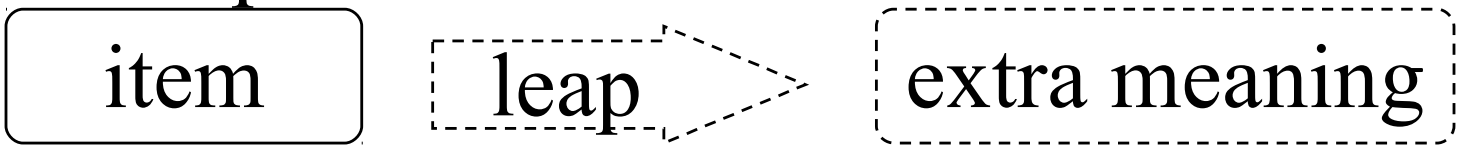


Prophecy

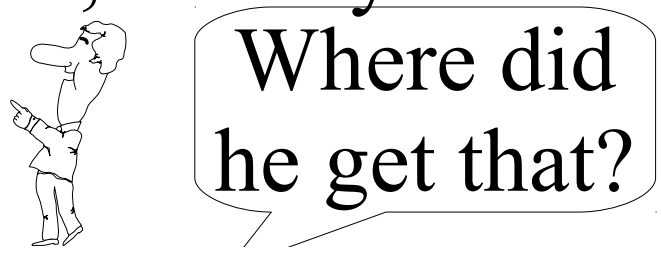
- Robertson: “verbal or enacted prediction”
- … in connection with contemporary preaching
  - OT prophets were divine messengers
  - but in popular thinking, “prophet” connotes prediction

Allegorization

- Robertson: “Accidental, incidental, or artificial relationships”
- “Finding extra symbolic meaning through accidental, incidental, or artificial relationships”



- Illustration: frankincense, gold, and myrrh standing for the Trinity



Allegory

- “A fictional narrative with correspondences between two spheres”
- Illustration: Judges 9:8-15; Luke 15:3-7
- Do not confuse with “allegorization.” Allegorization treats all as allegory.

Allegory

- “A fictional narrative with correspondences between two spheres”
- Illustration: Judges 9:8-15; Luke 15:3-7
- Do not confuse with “allegorization.” One main method of allegorization is treating all the Bible as if it were allegory.

Evaluation

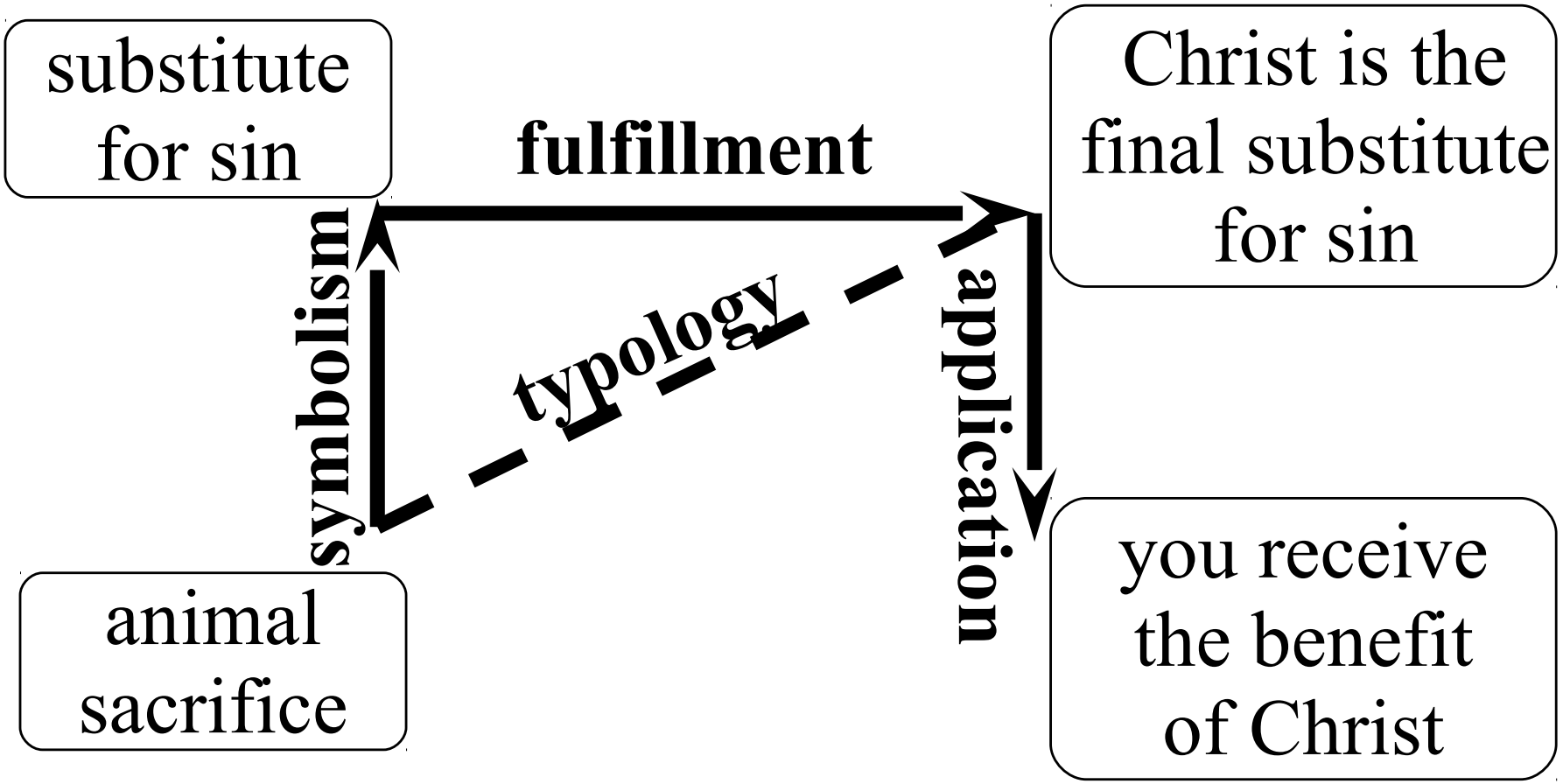
- Distinctions are useful in appreciating diversity.
- But boundaries are fuzzy.
- Categories can be stretched into perspectives.

Evaluation

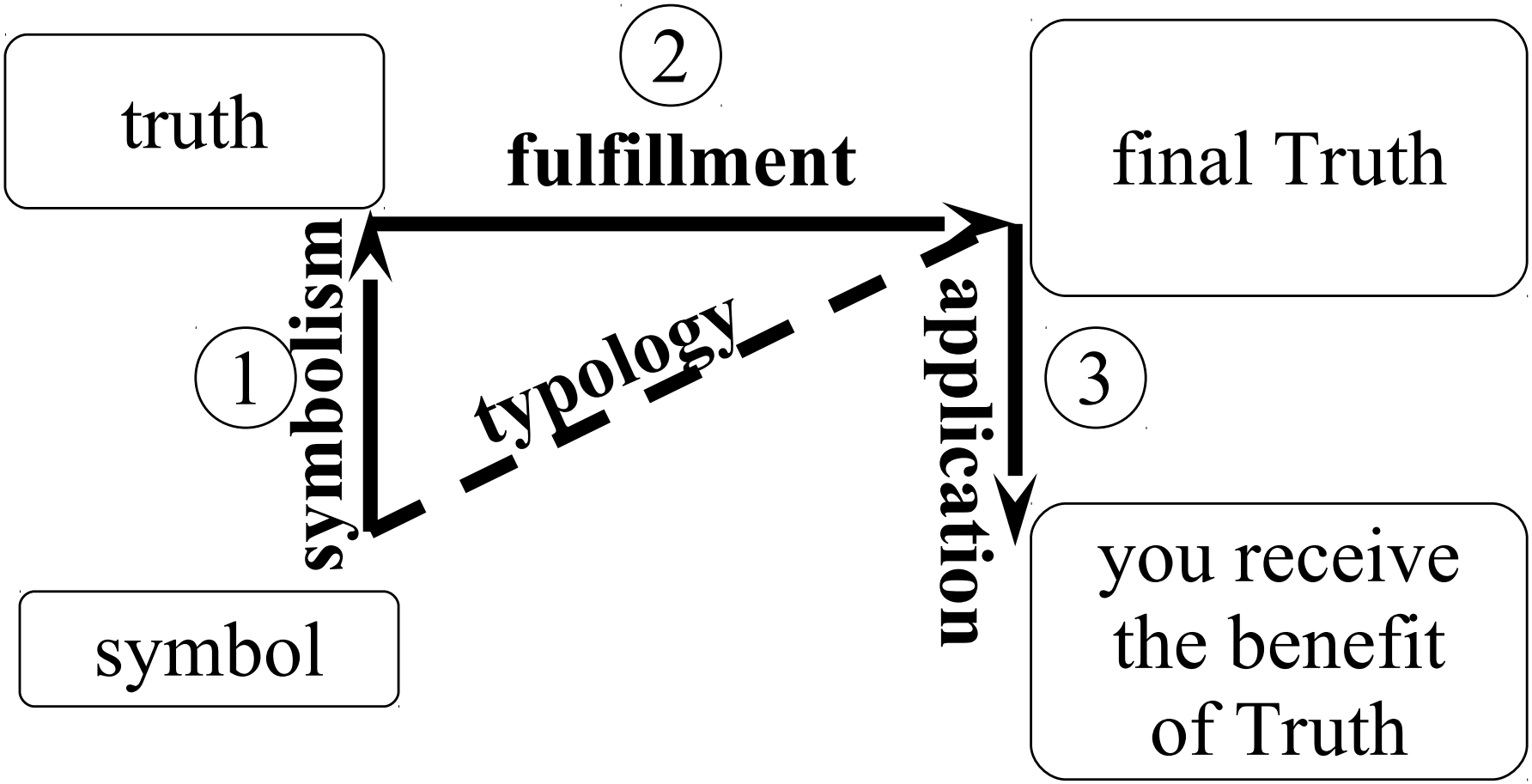
- The foregoing distinctions are useful in appreciating the diversity of biblical genres.
- But boundaries are fuzzy.
- Some categories can be used as perspectives on the whole.

3. Principles for Interpreting Types

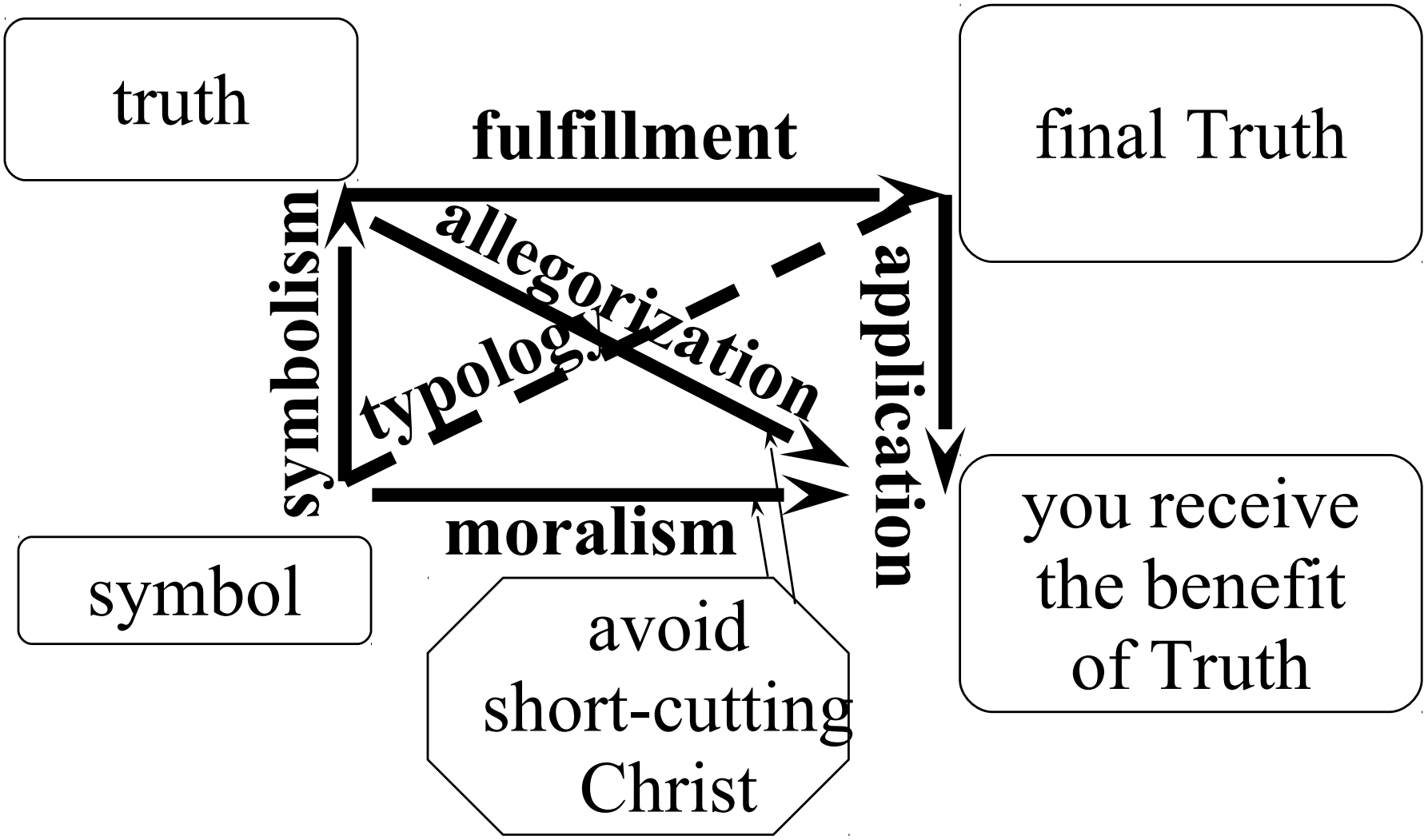
An Example: Sacrifices



Clowney's Triangle of Typology

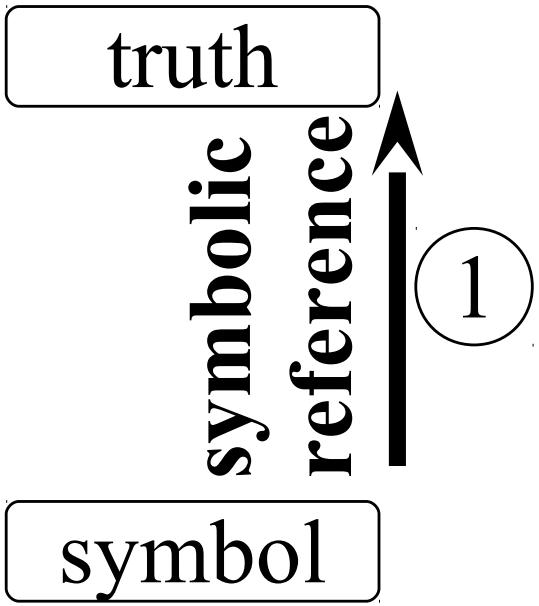


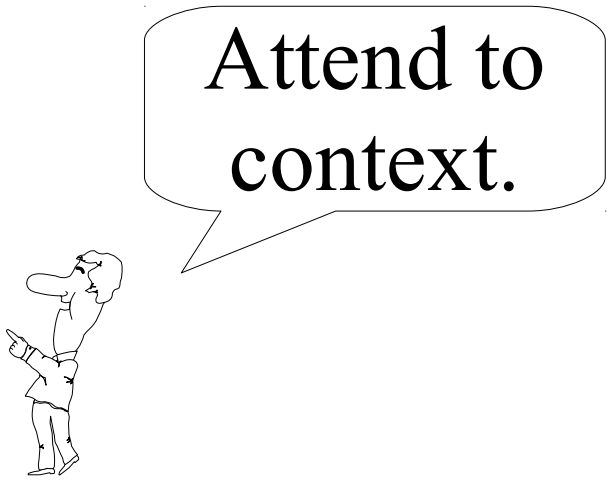
Avoiding the False Routes



Step 1: What Did It Mean Then?

- What did it symbolize then?





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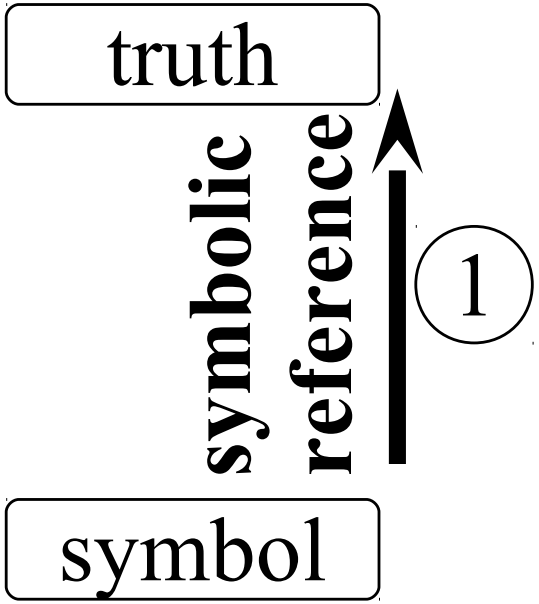


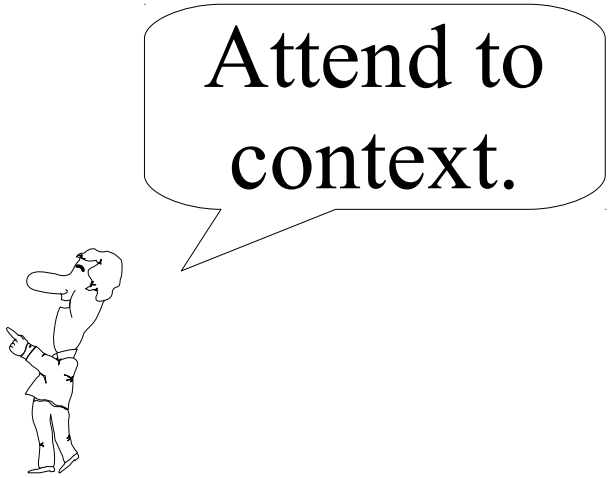
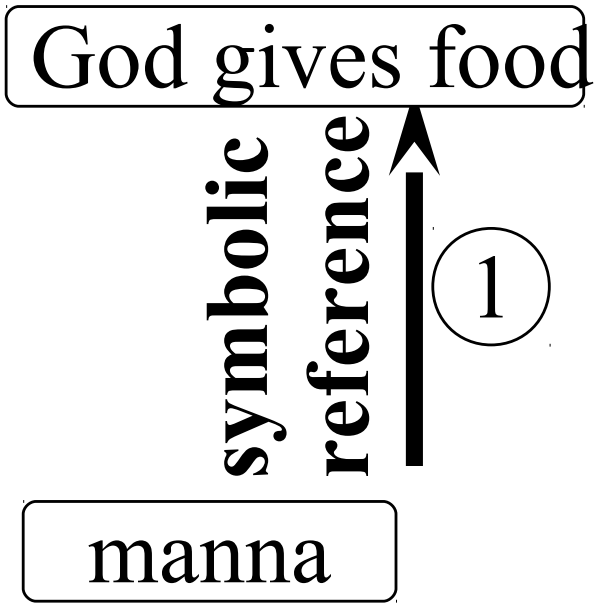
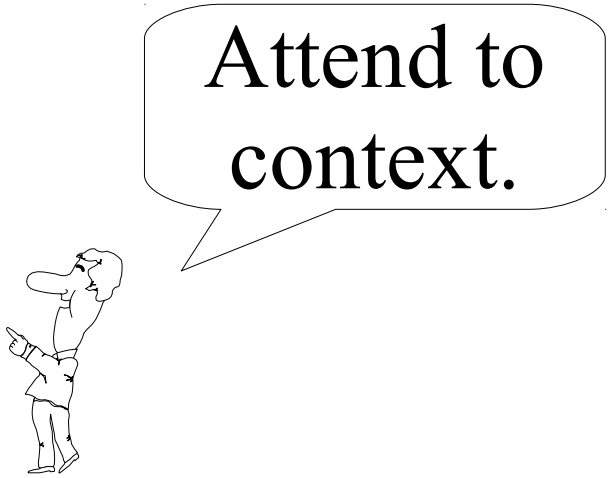


Illustration of Step 1 (Truth)

- What did it symbolize then?





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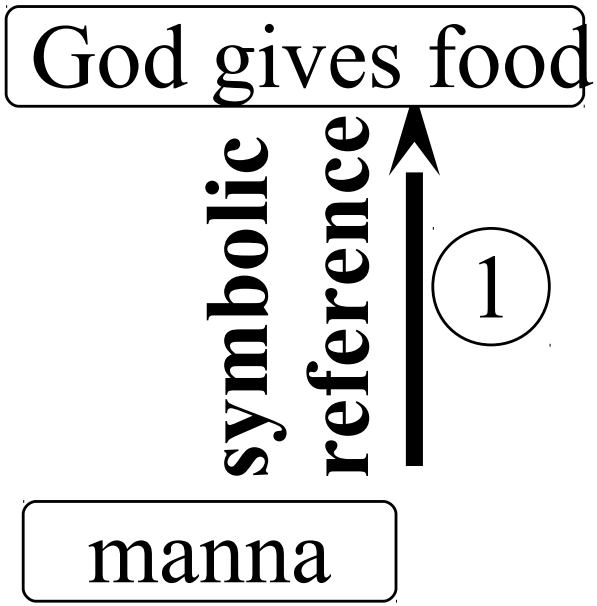
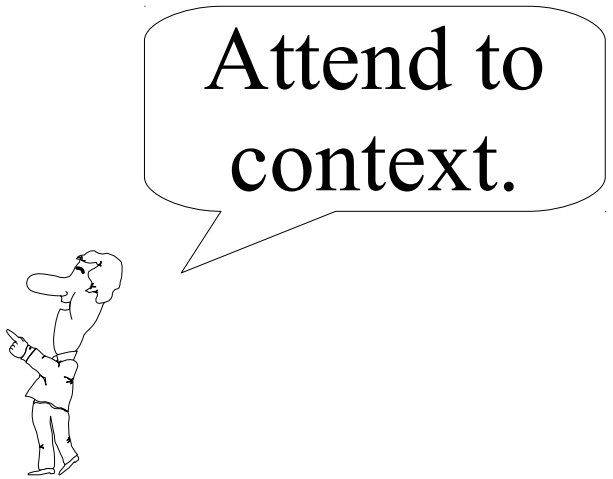
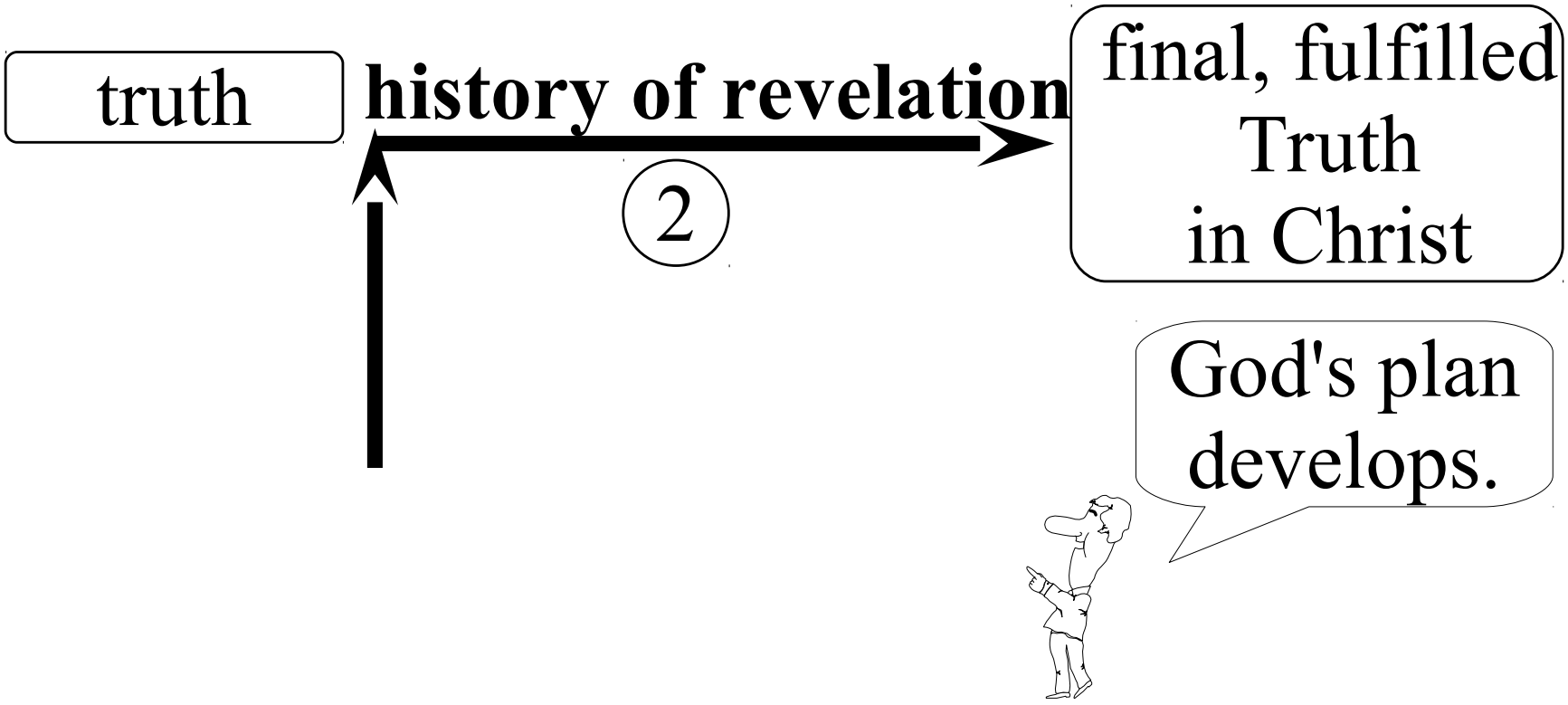




Step 2: Go Forward in History

- What does it anticipate?



Step 2: Go Forward in History

- What greater manifestation of truth did it embody and anticipate? (Look at context.)

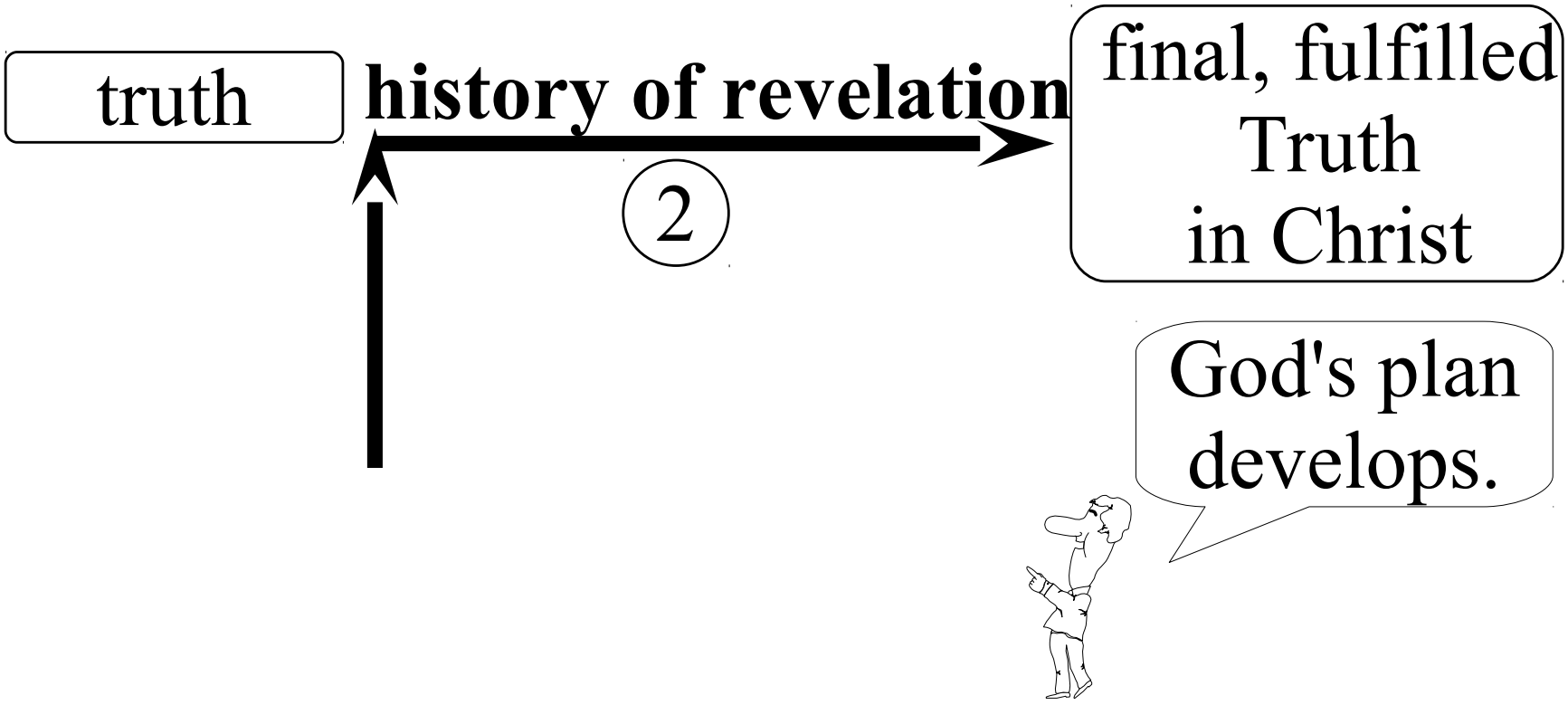
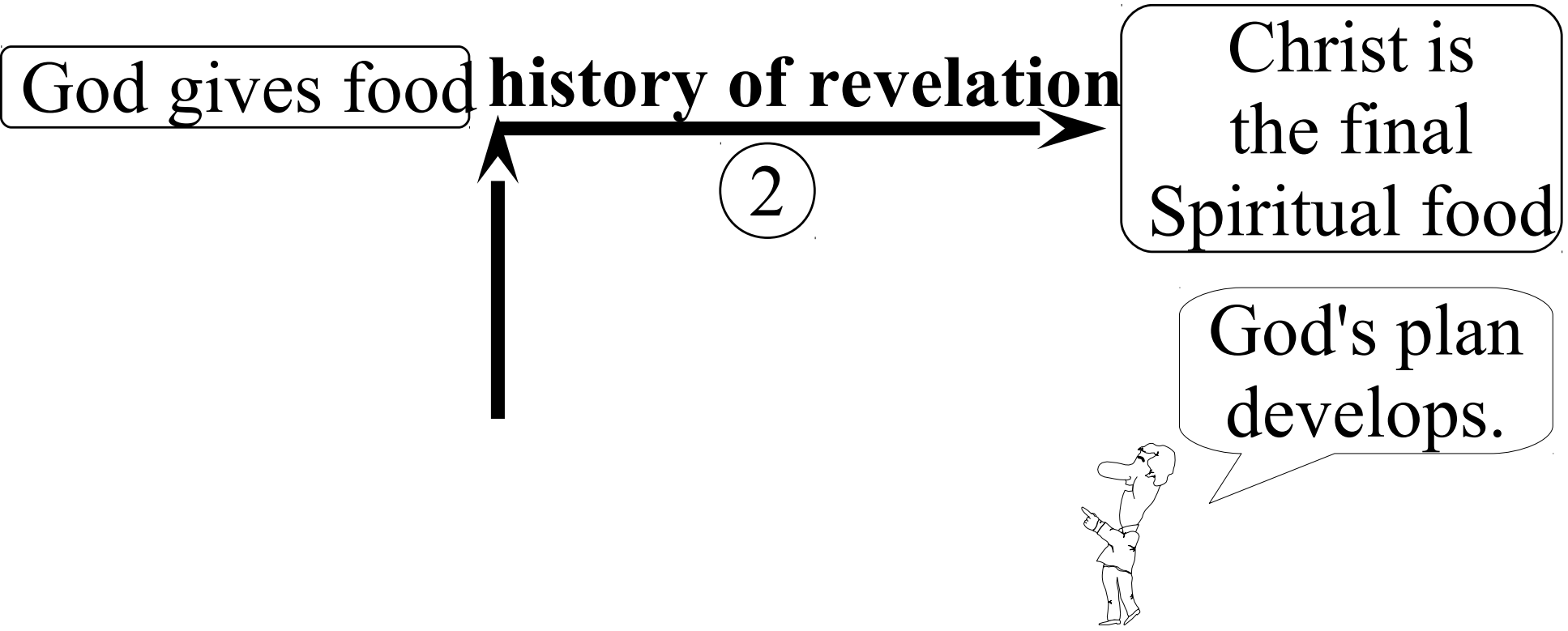


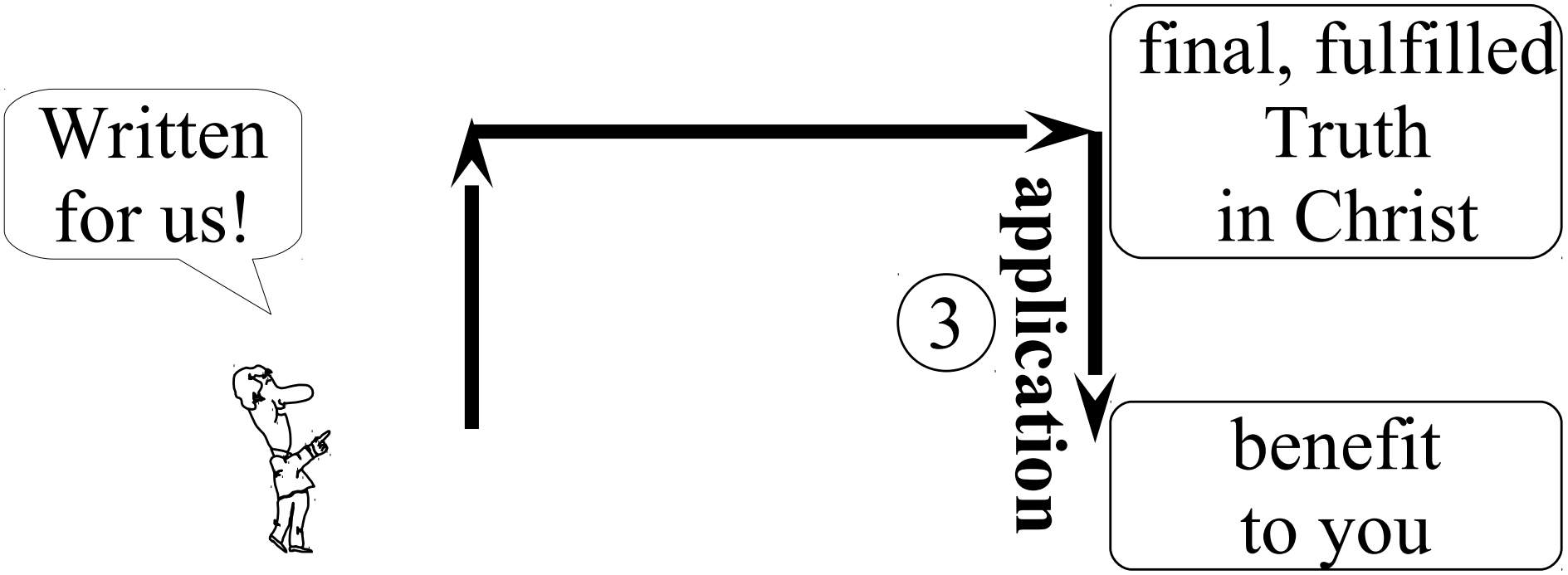
Illustration of Step 2 (Fulfill)

- What does it anticipate?



Step 3: Apply to Us

- How do we benefit?



Step 3: Apply to Us

- How do we benefit from participating in the fulfillment in union with Christ?

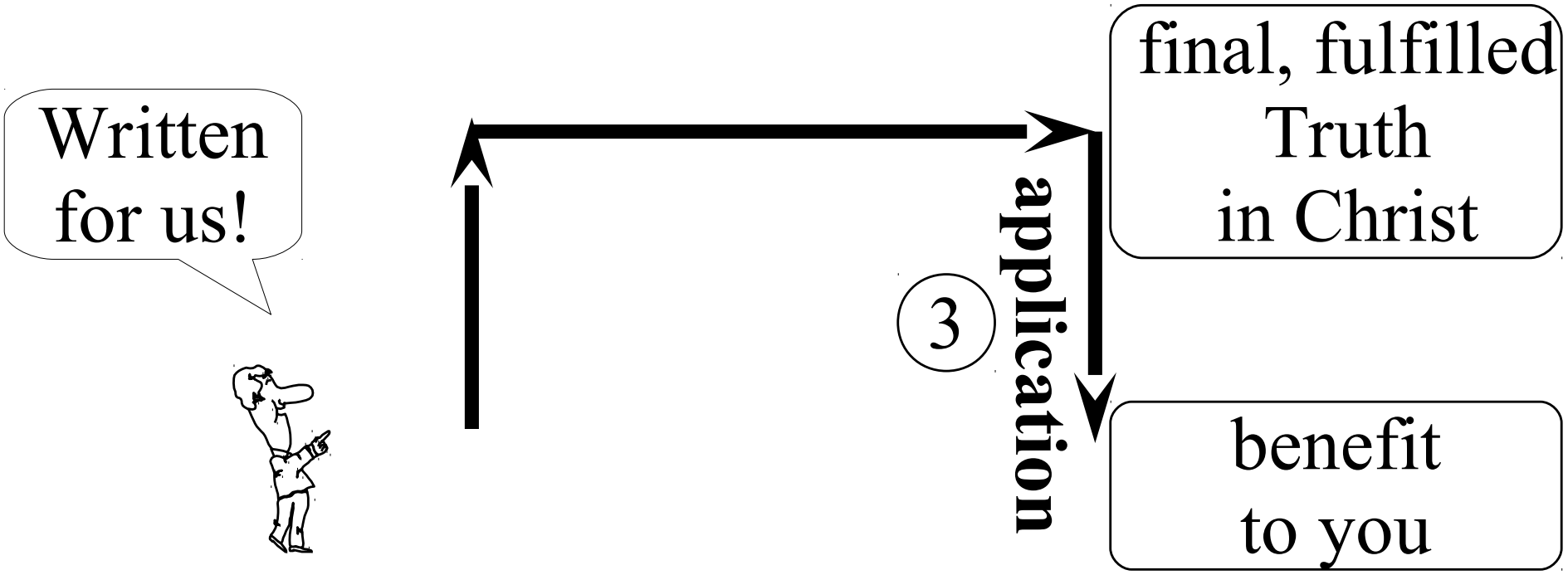


Illustration of Step 3 (Apply)

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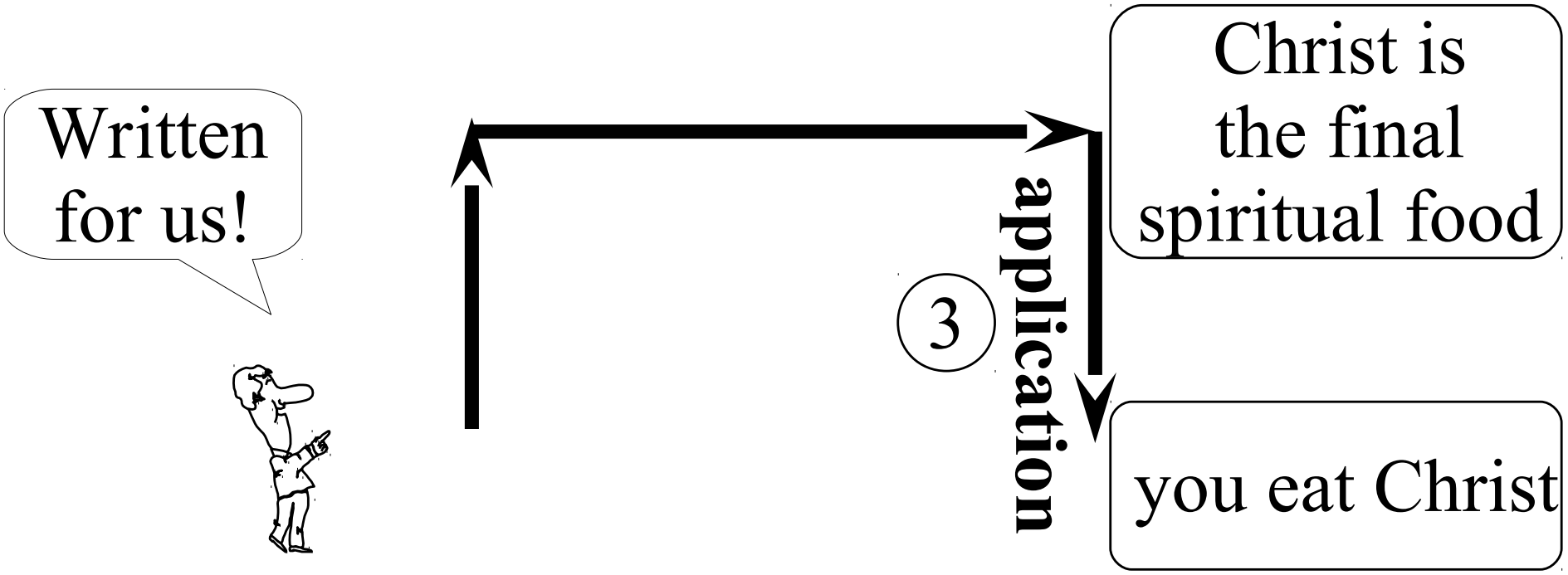

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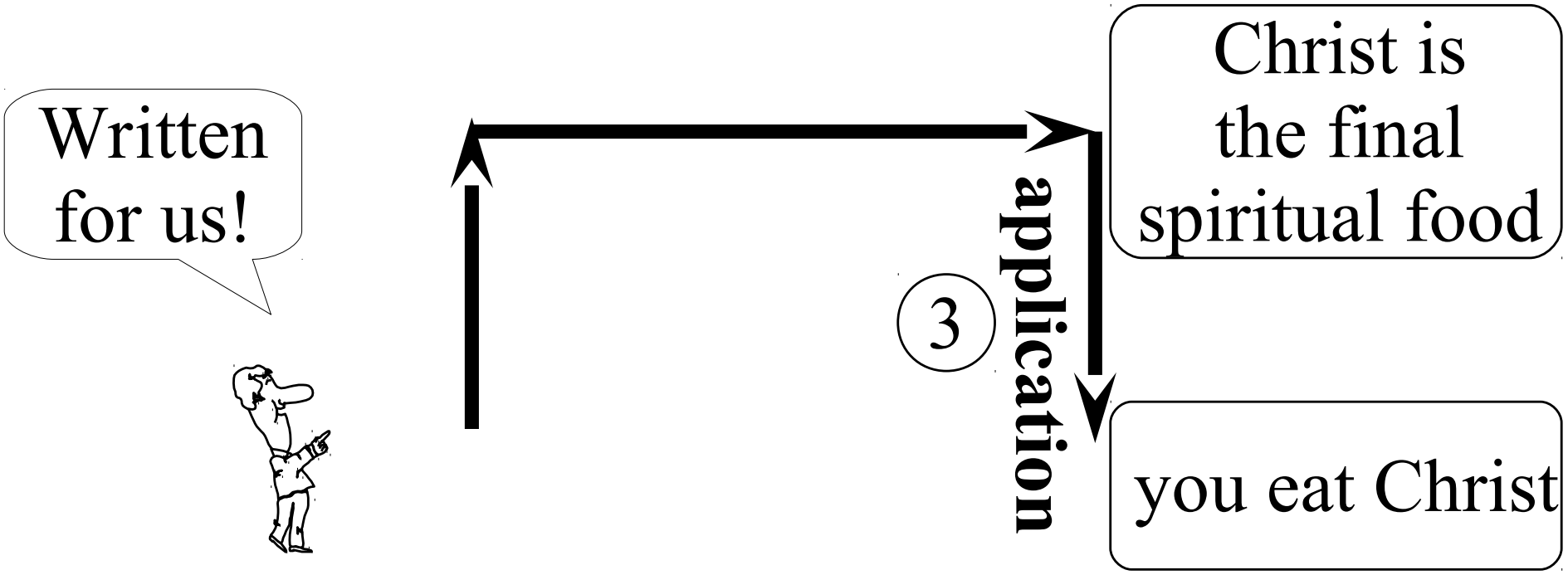
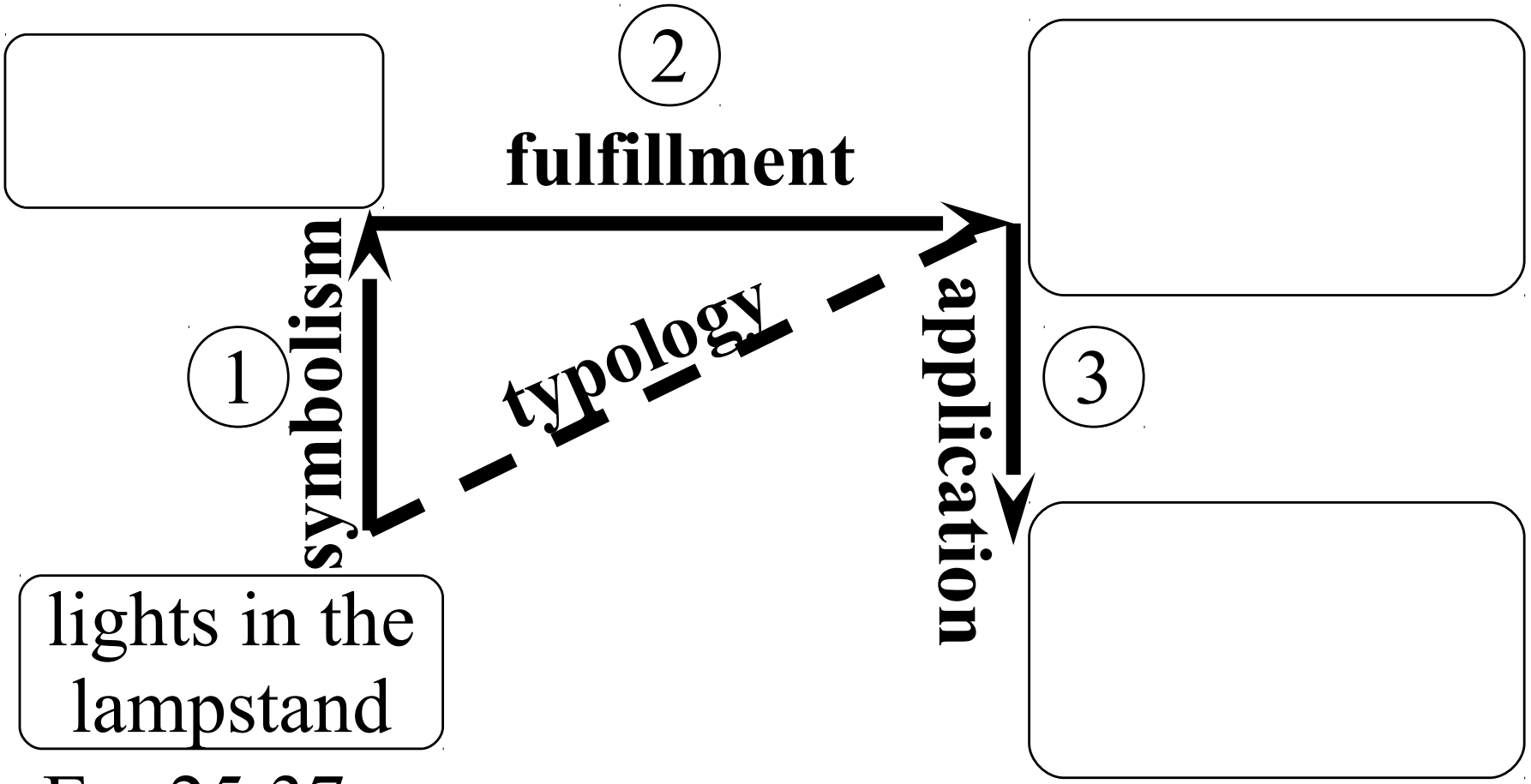
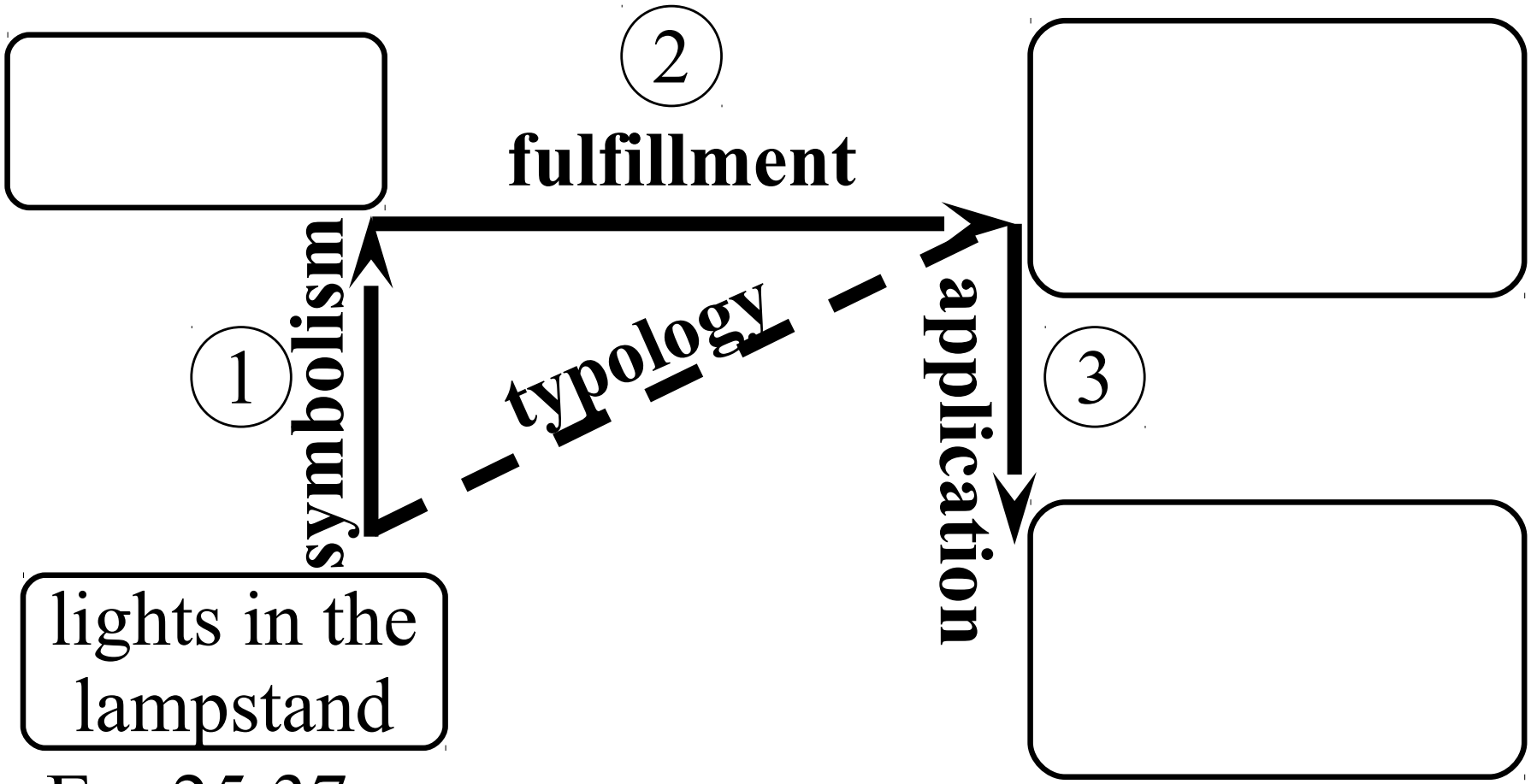


An Exercise:
Lights in the Lampstand



Ex. 25:37

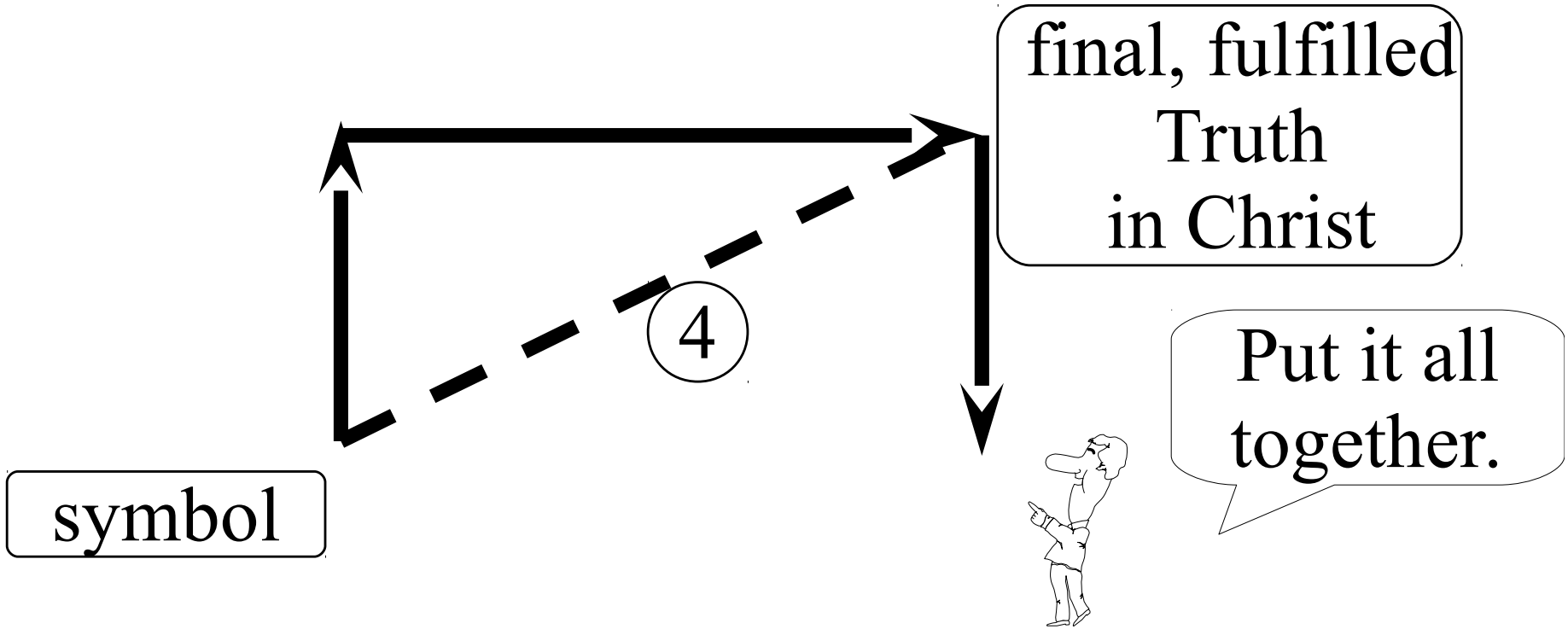
An Exercise:
Lights in the Lampstand



Ex. 25:37

Step 4: How Does Fulfillment Illumine the Earlier Stages?

- Fulfillment illumines the earlier.



Step 4: How Does Fulfillment Illumine the Earlier Stages?

- See how fulfillment gives significance to what is vague at an earlier point.

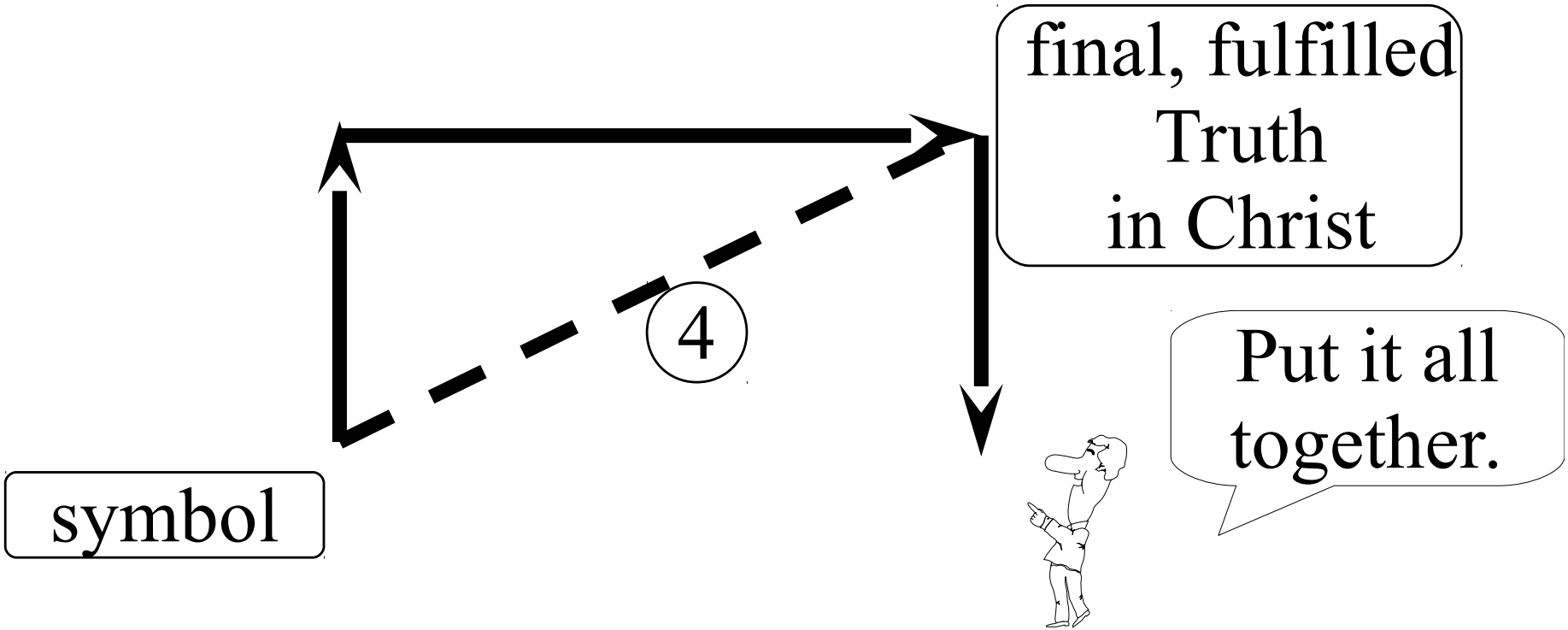
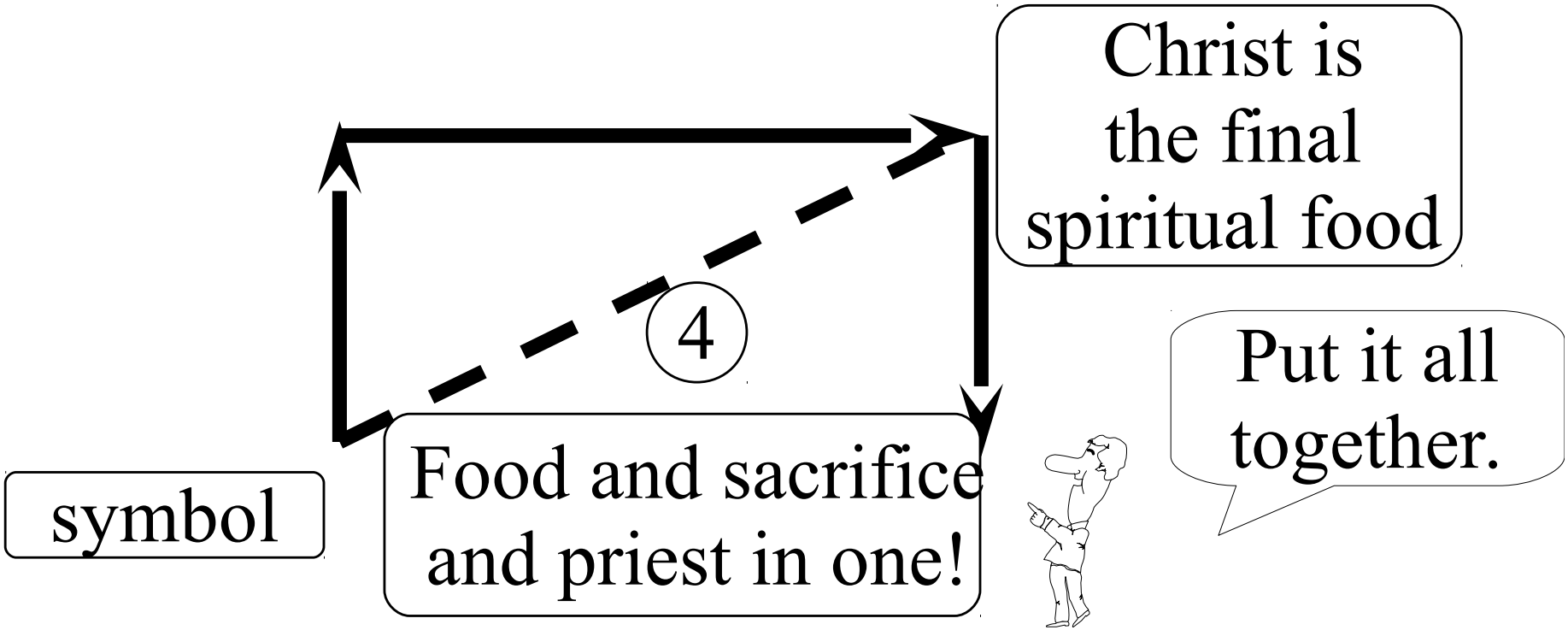


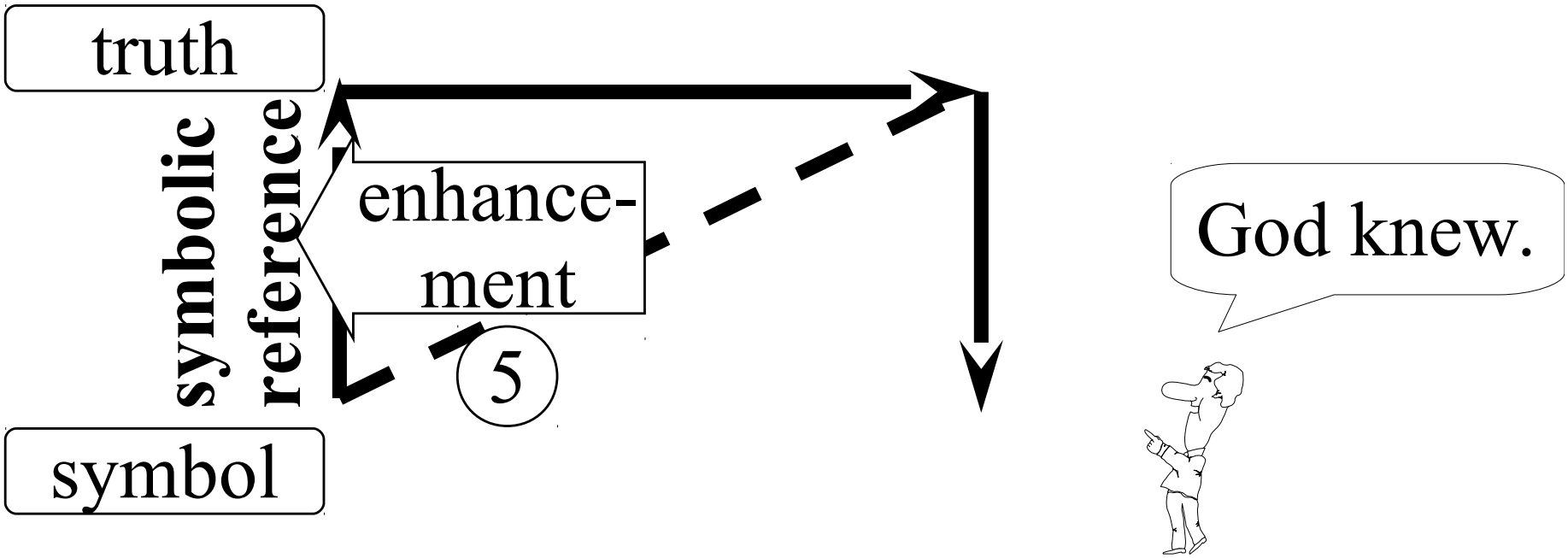
Illustration of Step 4 (More)

- Fulfillment illumines the earlier.



Step 5: Deepen the Earlier Stage

- More significance in the original?



Step 5: Deepen the Earlier Stage

- Does the fulfillment help us to notice more detailed significance in the original setting?

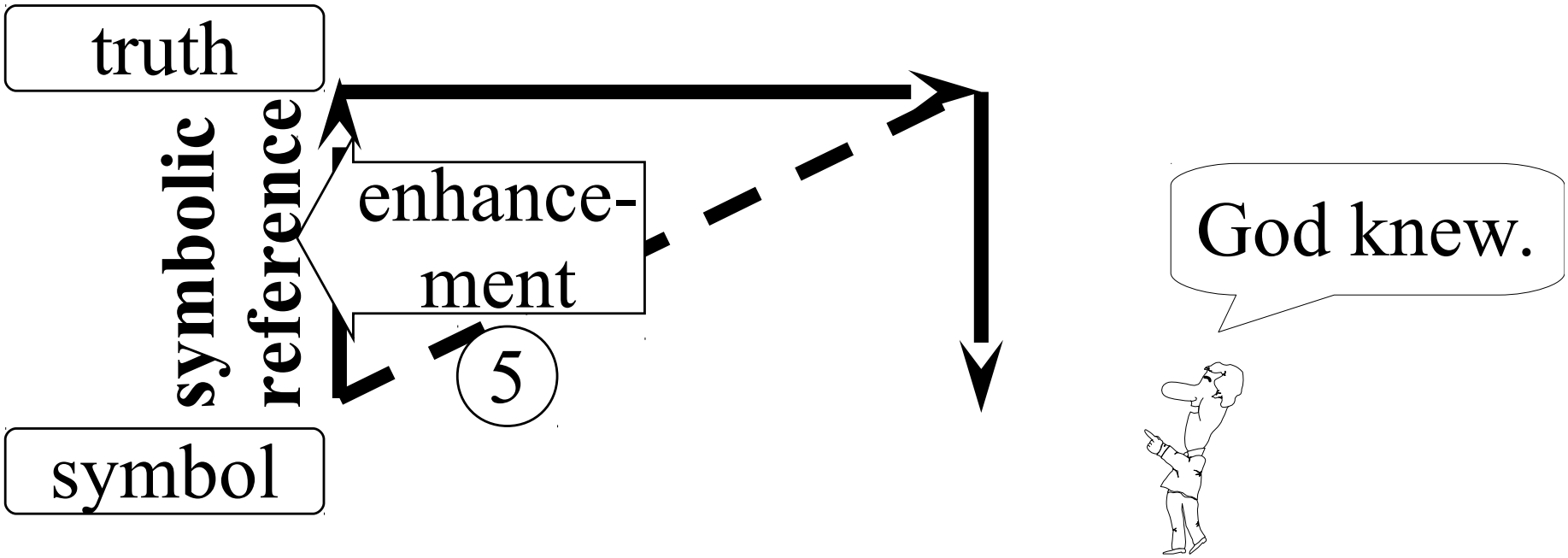


Illustration of Step 5 (Deepen)

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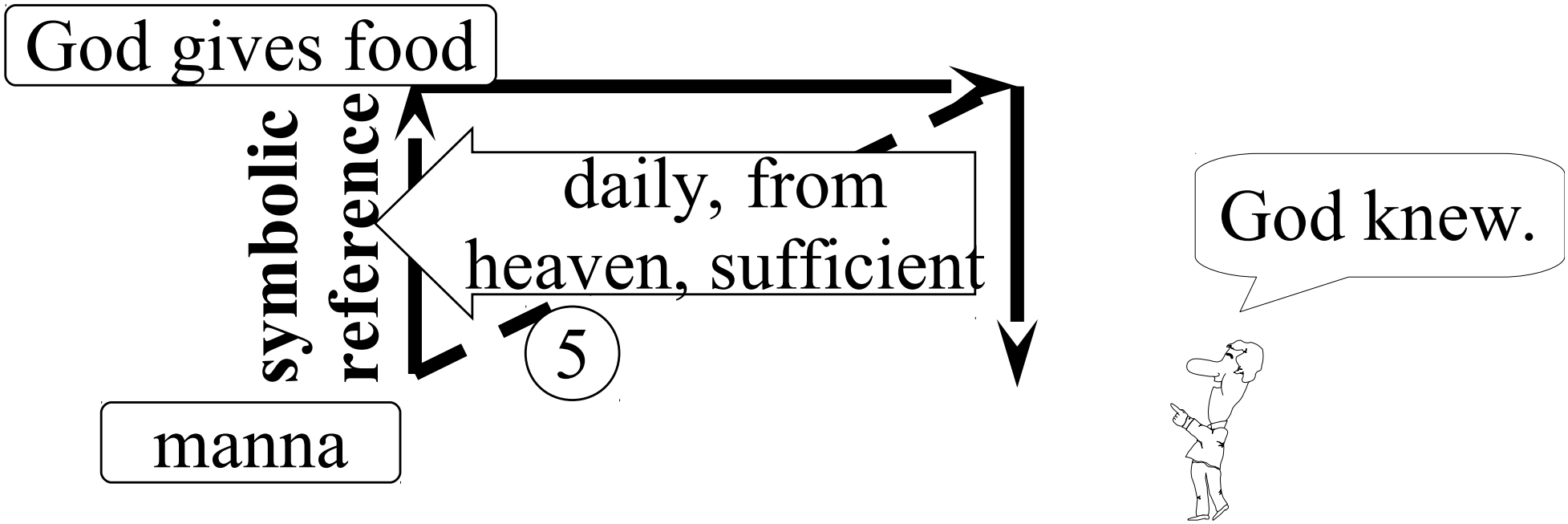

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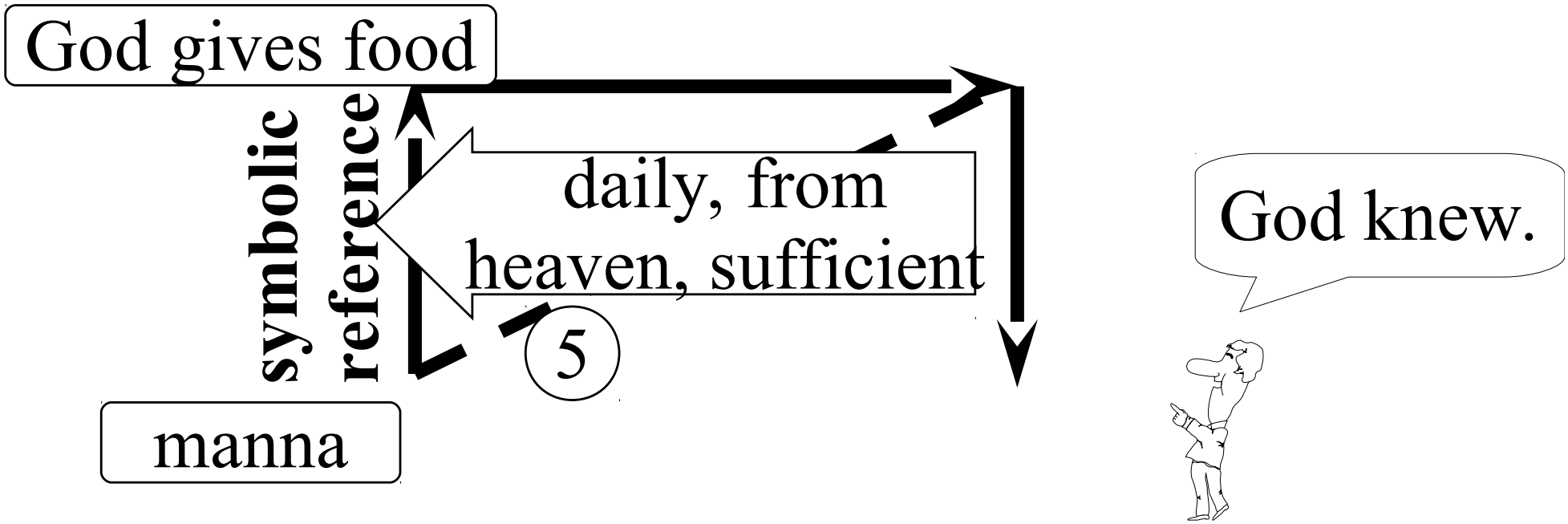
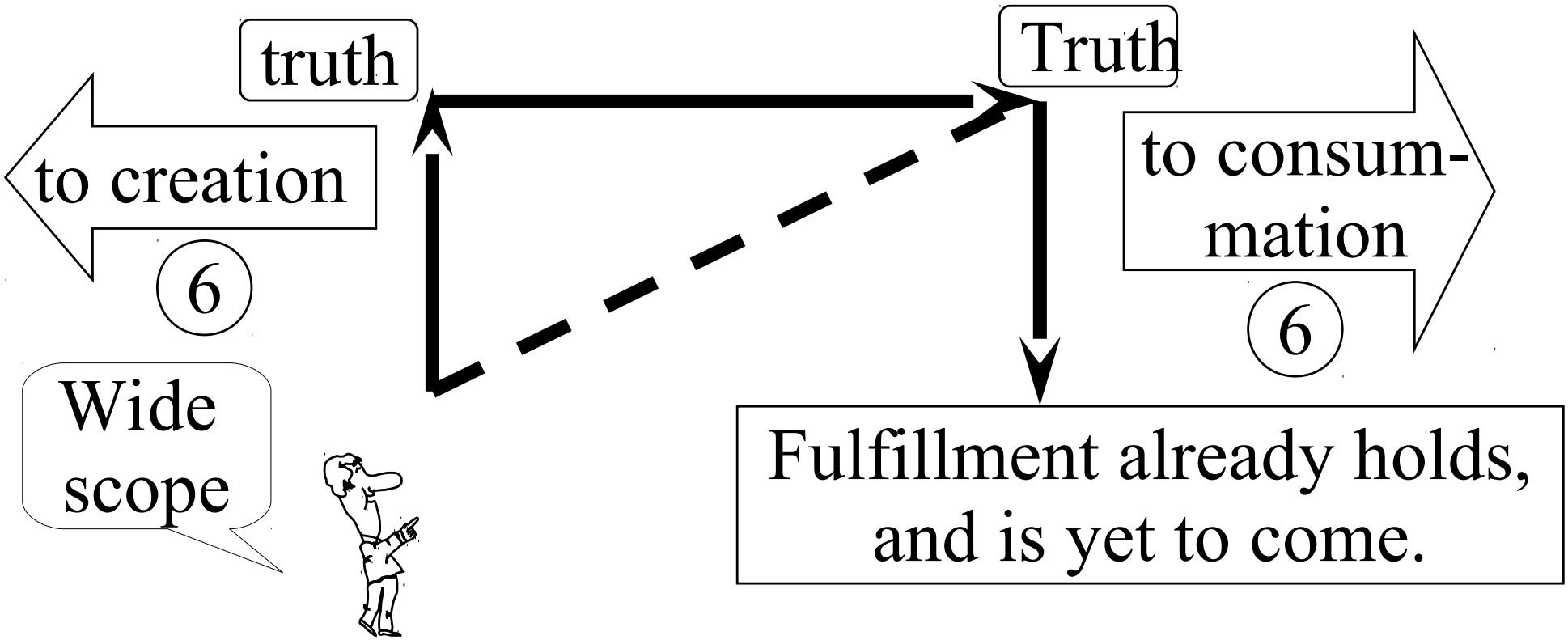


Step 6: Trace Beginning and End

- Trace from creation to consummation.



Step 6: Trace Beginning and End

- Trace the truth back to creation and forward to consummation.

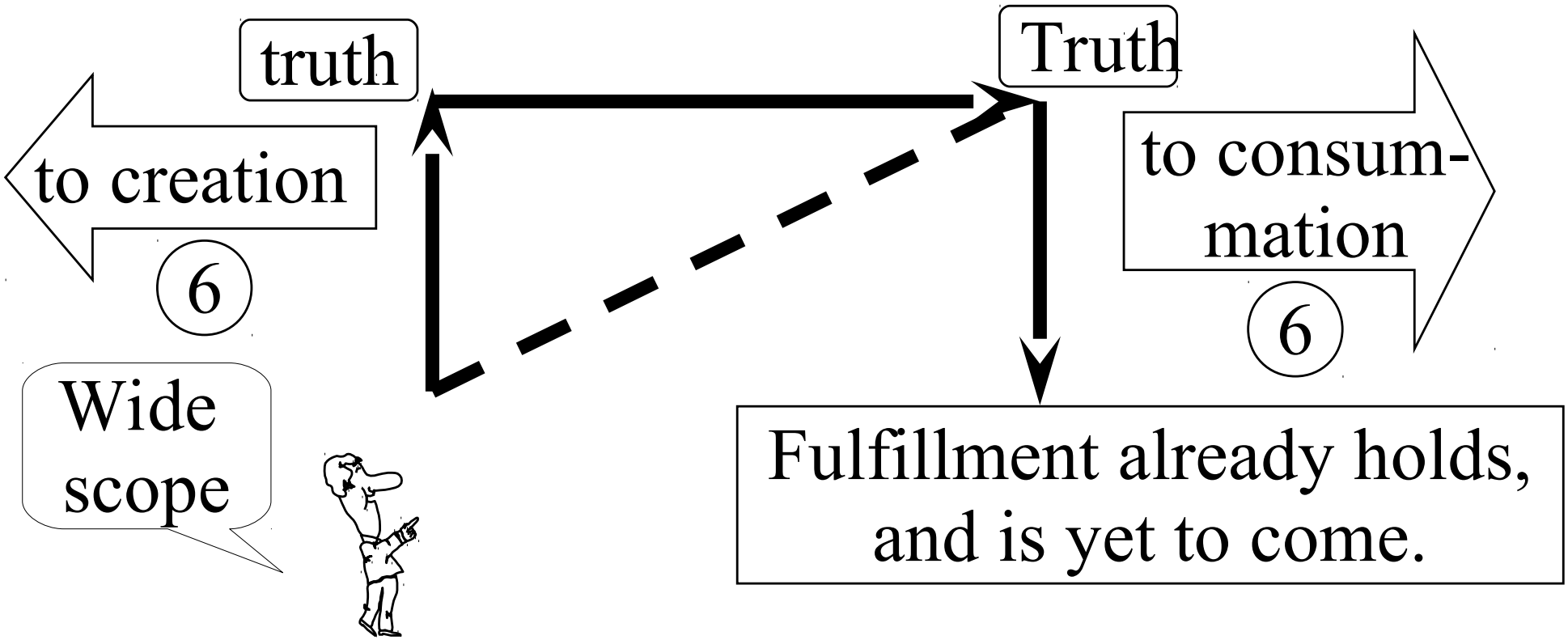


Illustration of Step 6 (Beginning and End)

- Trace from creation to consummation.

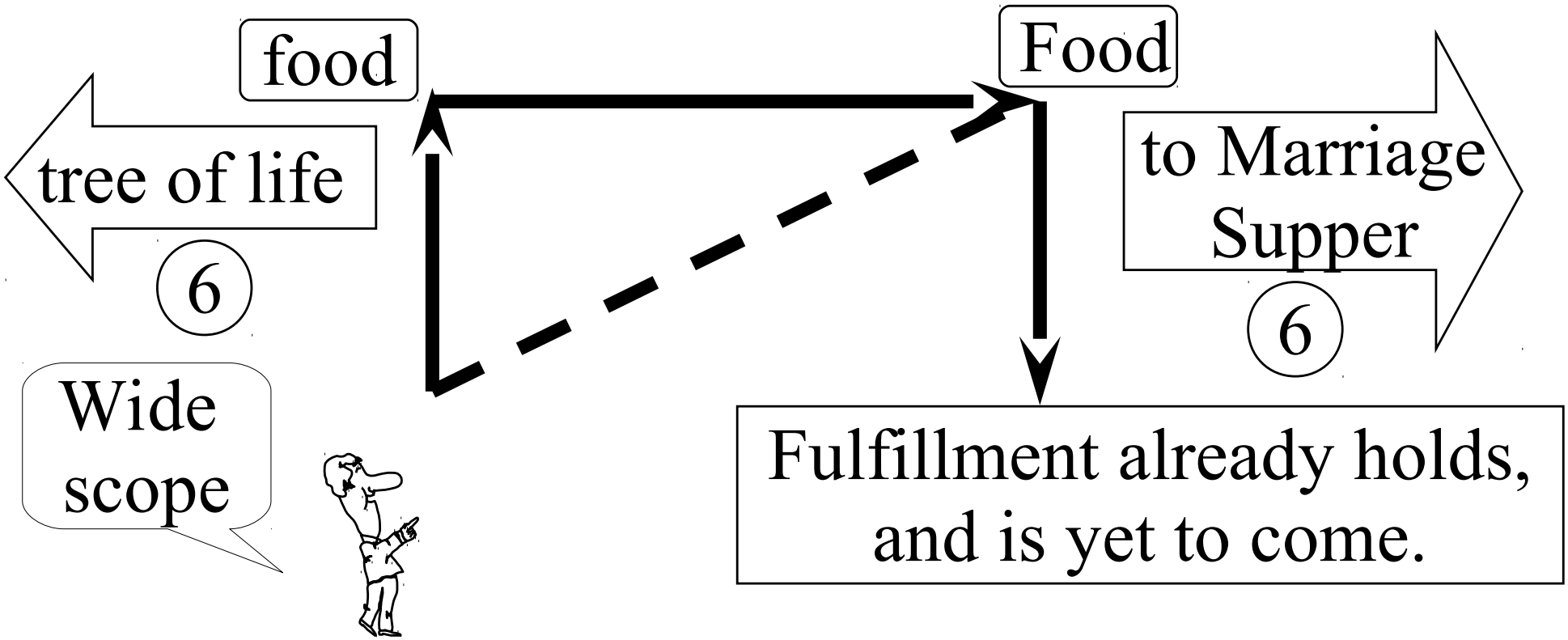
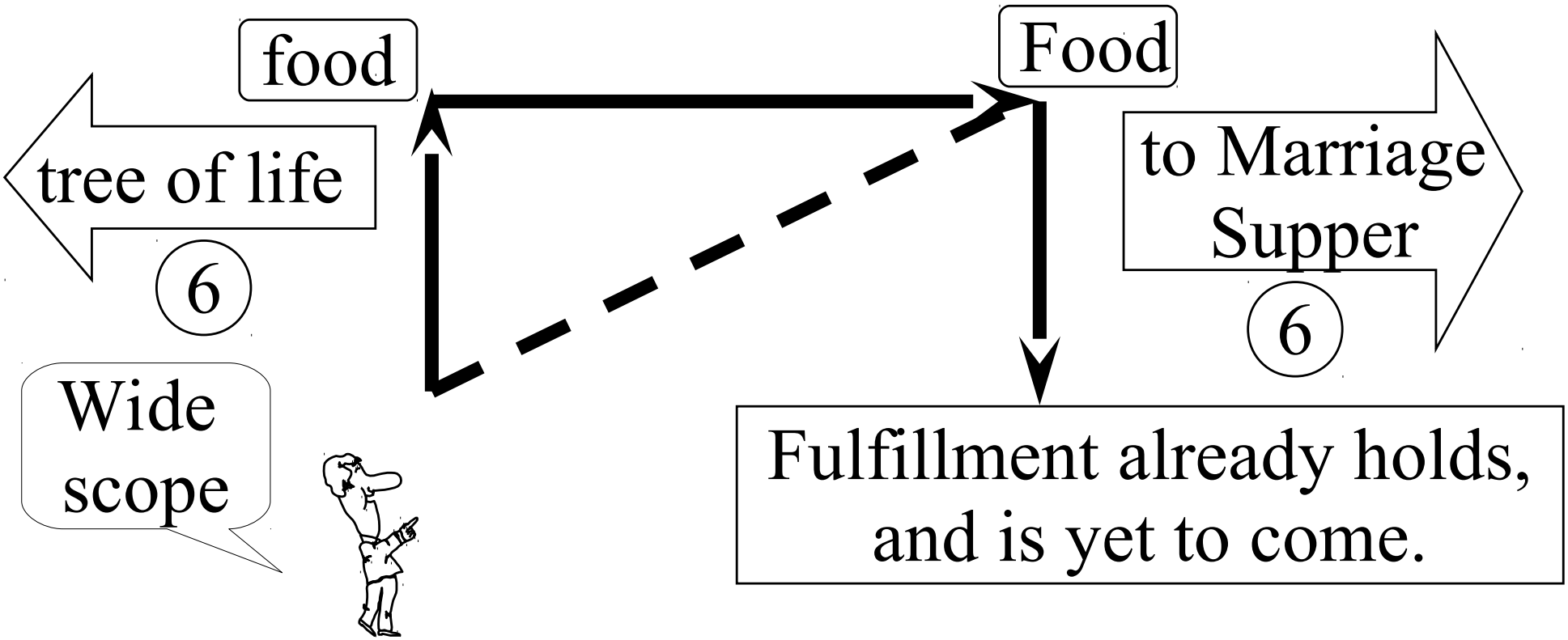


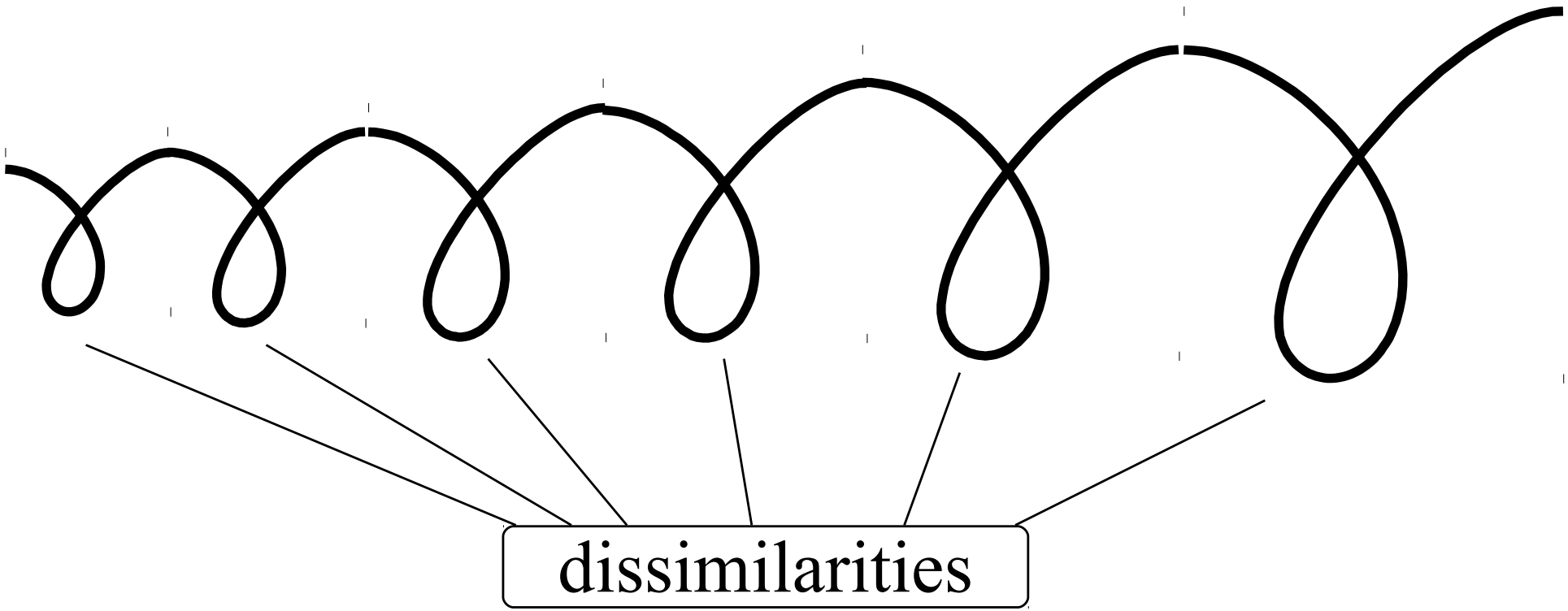
Illustration of Step 6 (Beginning and End)

- Trace the truth back to creation and forward to consummation.



Step 7: Distinctiveness

- Note distinctiveness of each epoch.



Step 7: Distinctiveness

- Reflect on the overall distinctiveness of each epoch in its embodiment of the truth.

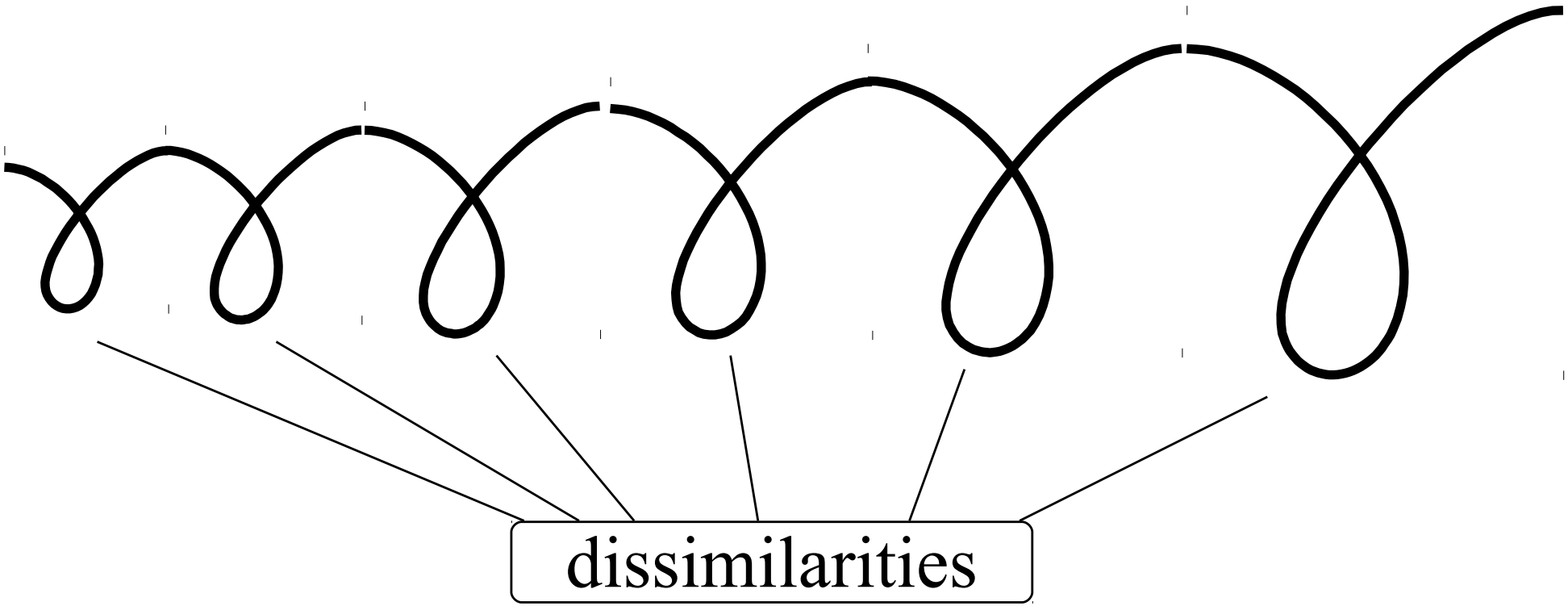


Illustration of Step 7 (Distinct)

- Distinctiveness of each epoch.

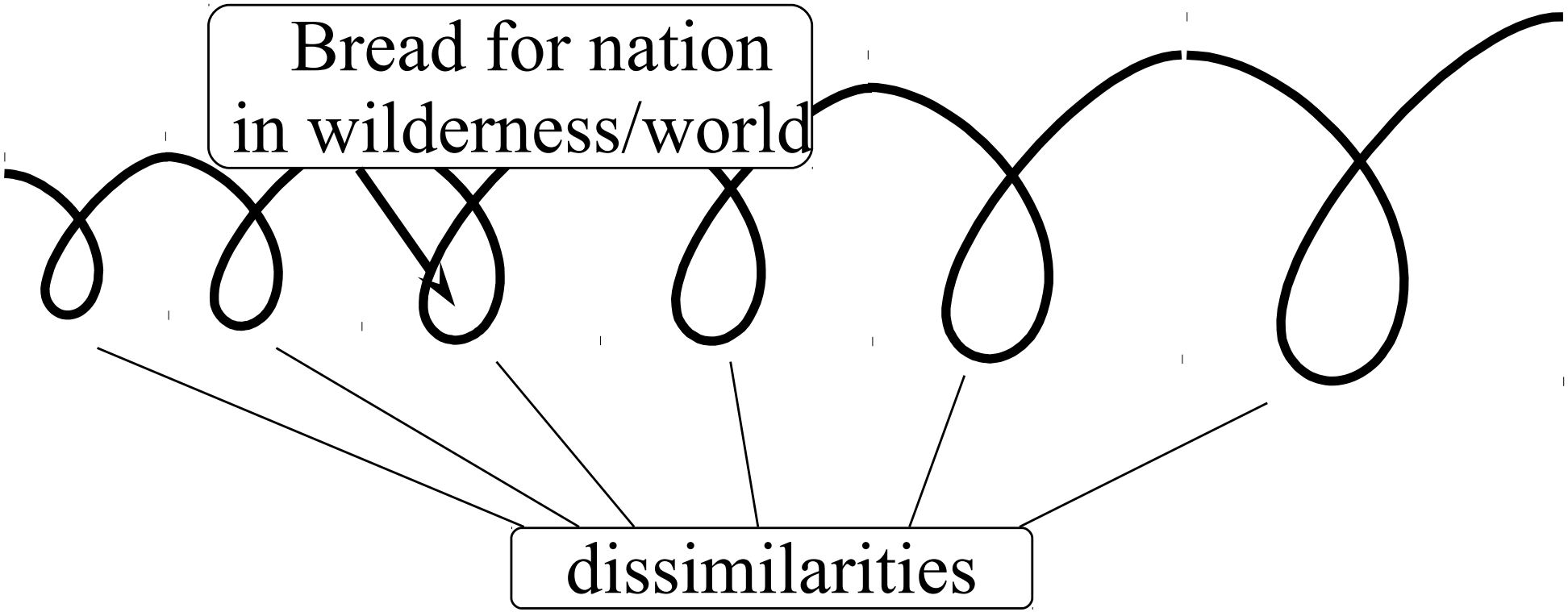
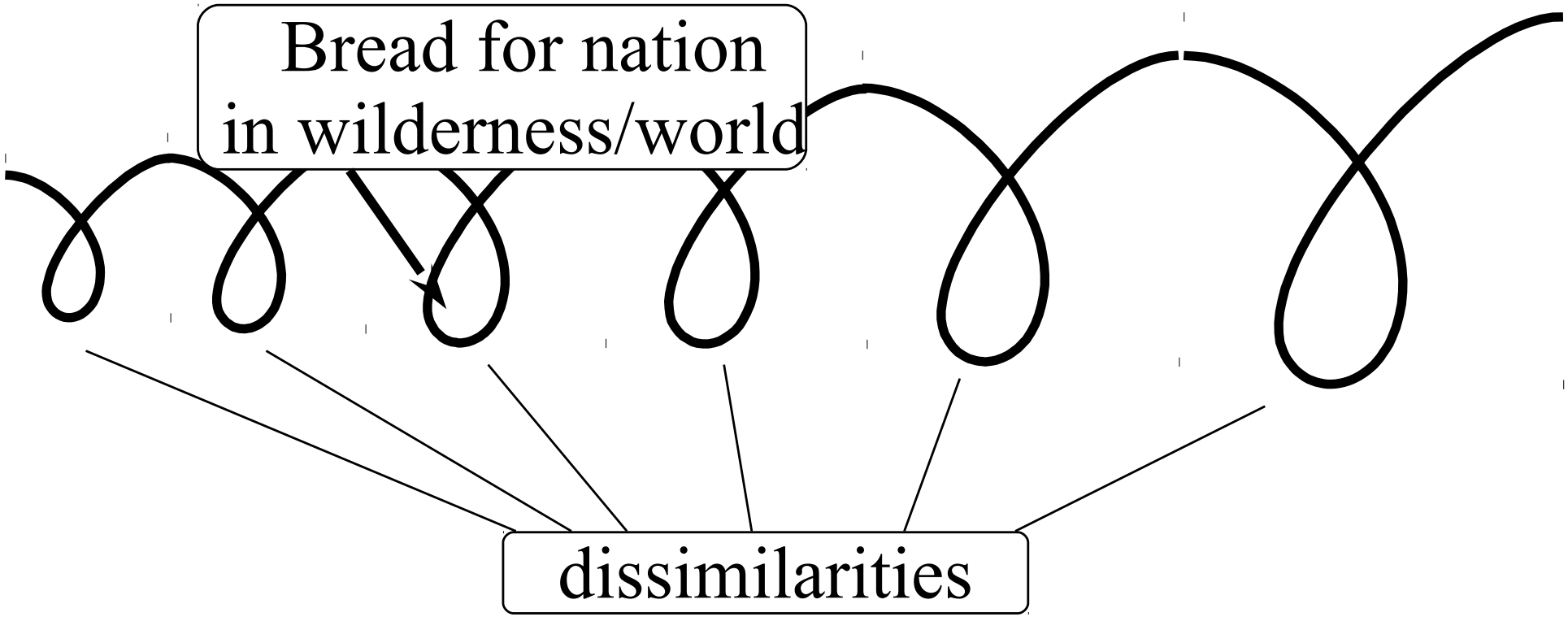


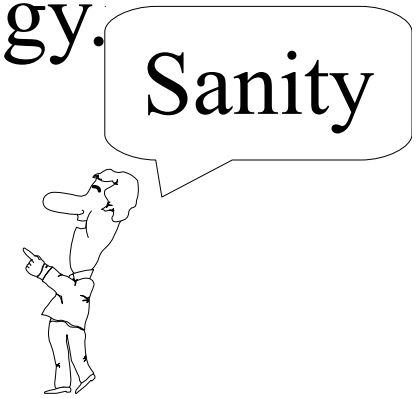
Illustration of Step 7 (Distinct)

- Reflect on the overall distinctiveness of each epoch in its embodiment of the truth.



Limits of Typology

- No new doctrine or predictions.
- Because:
  - Christ is not hidden but revealed!
    (We are not gnostics.)
  - Shadow is less full than fulfillment.
  - One needs context to control analogy.

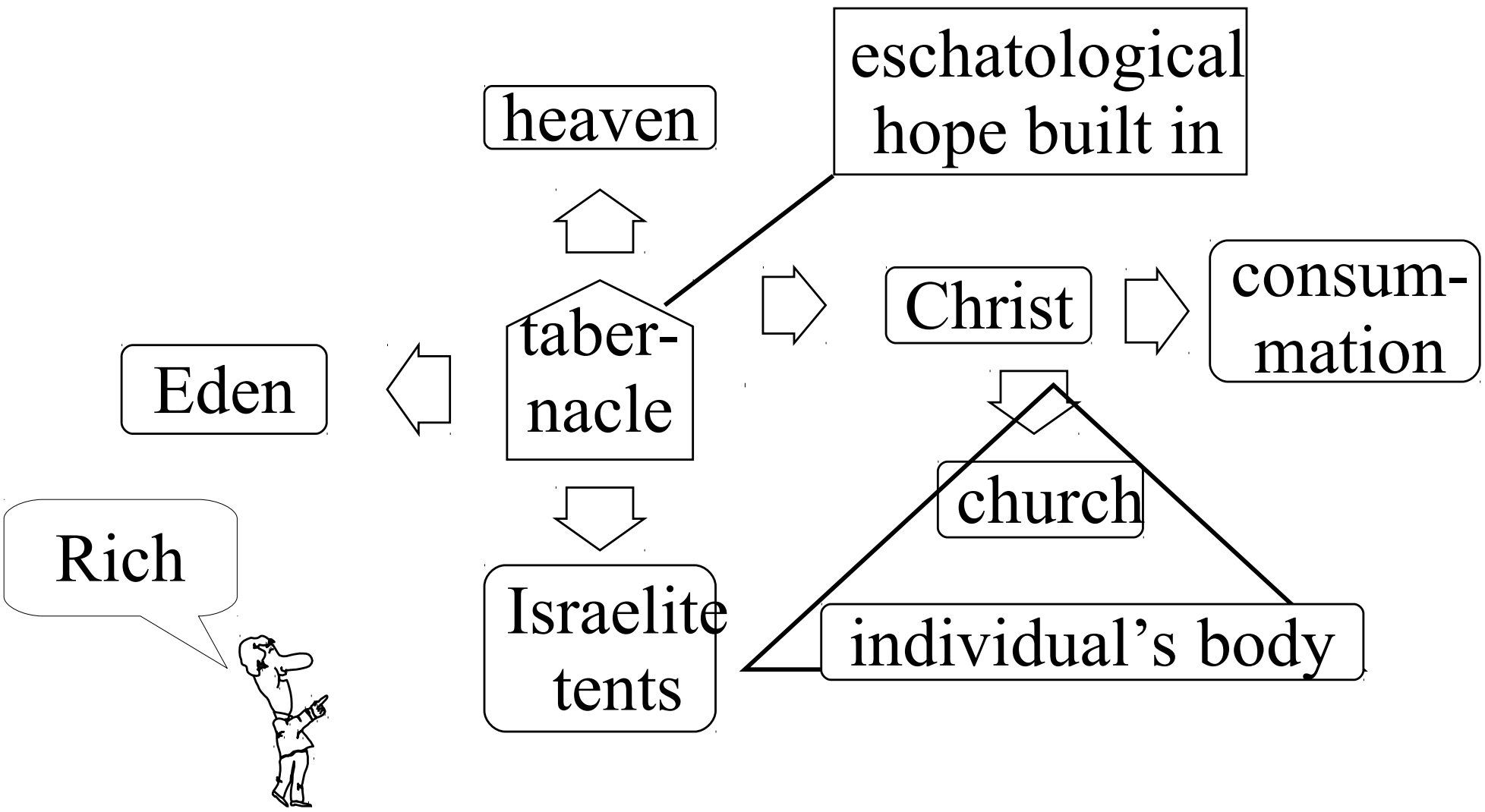


Limits of Typology

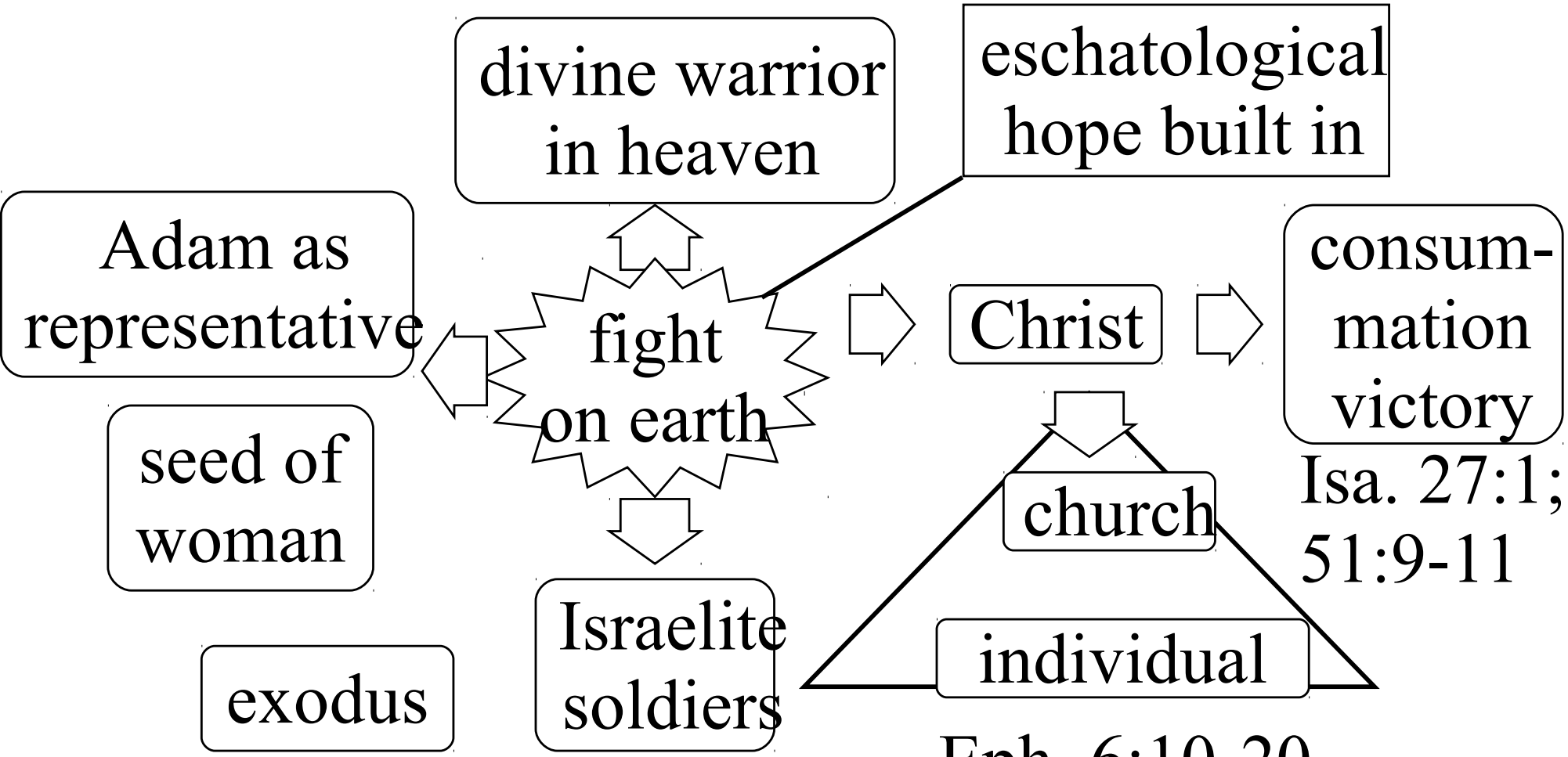
- Do not make new doctrine or predictions.
- Because:
  - In NT, Christ is not hidden but revealed! (We are not gnostics.)
  - The shadow, as shadow, is less full than its fulfillment.
  - One needs context to establish and control the directions of analogy.

4. Multifaceted Imagery

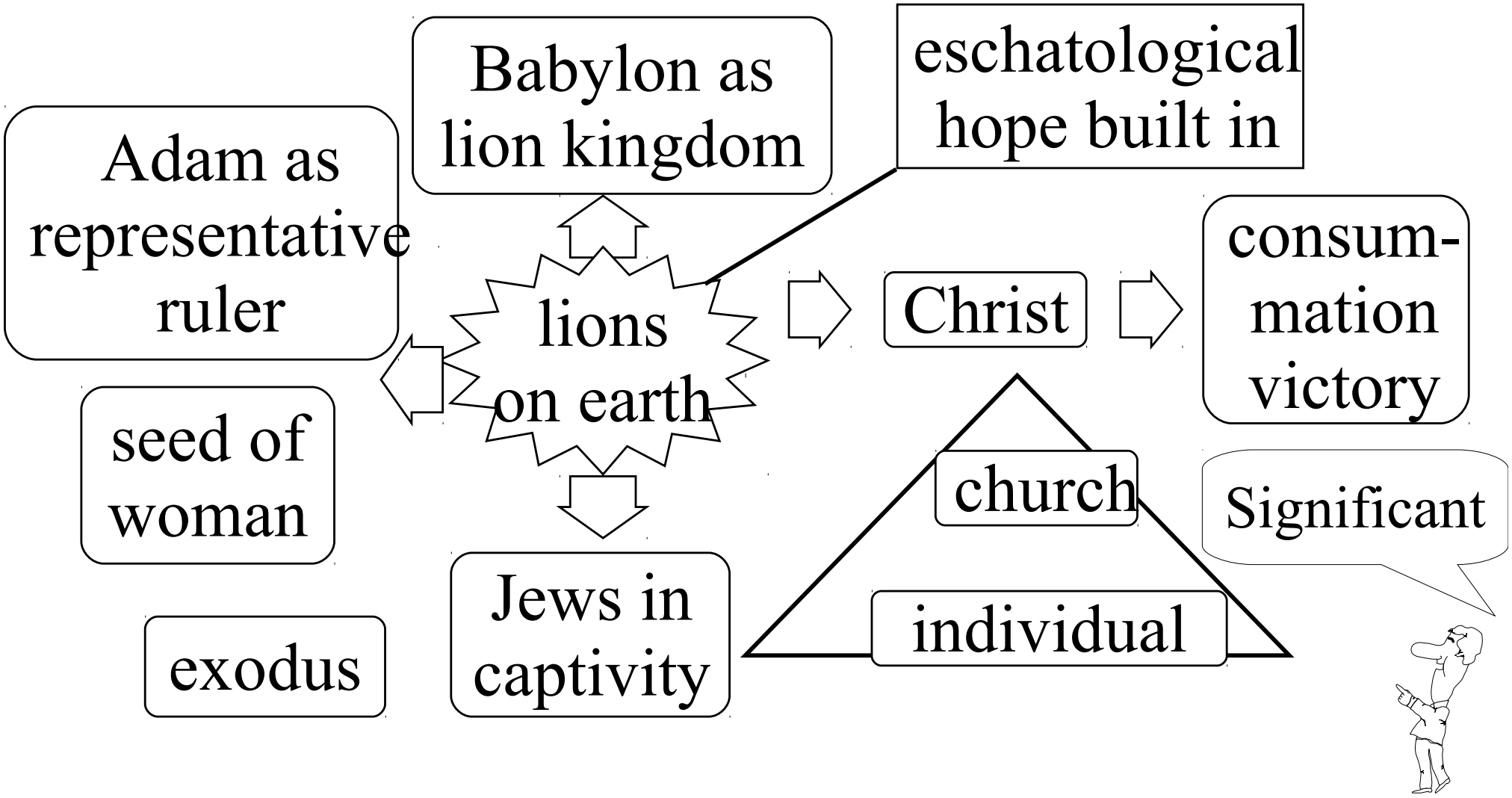
Tabernacle as Multifaceted



David and Goliath as Multifaceted



Daniel and Lions (Daniel 6)



Maxims on Typology

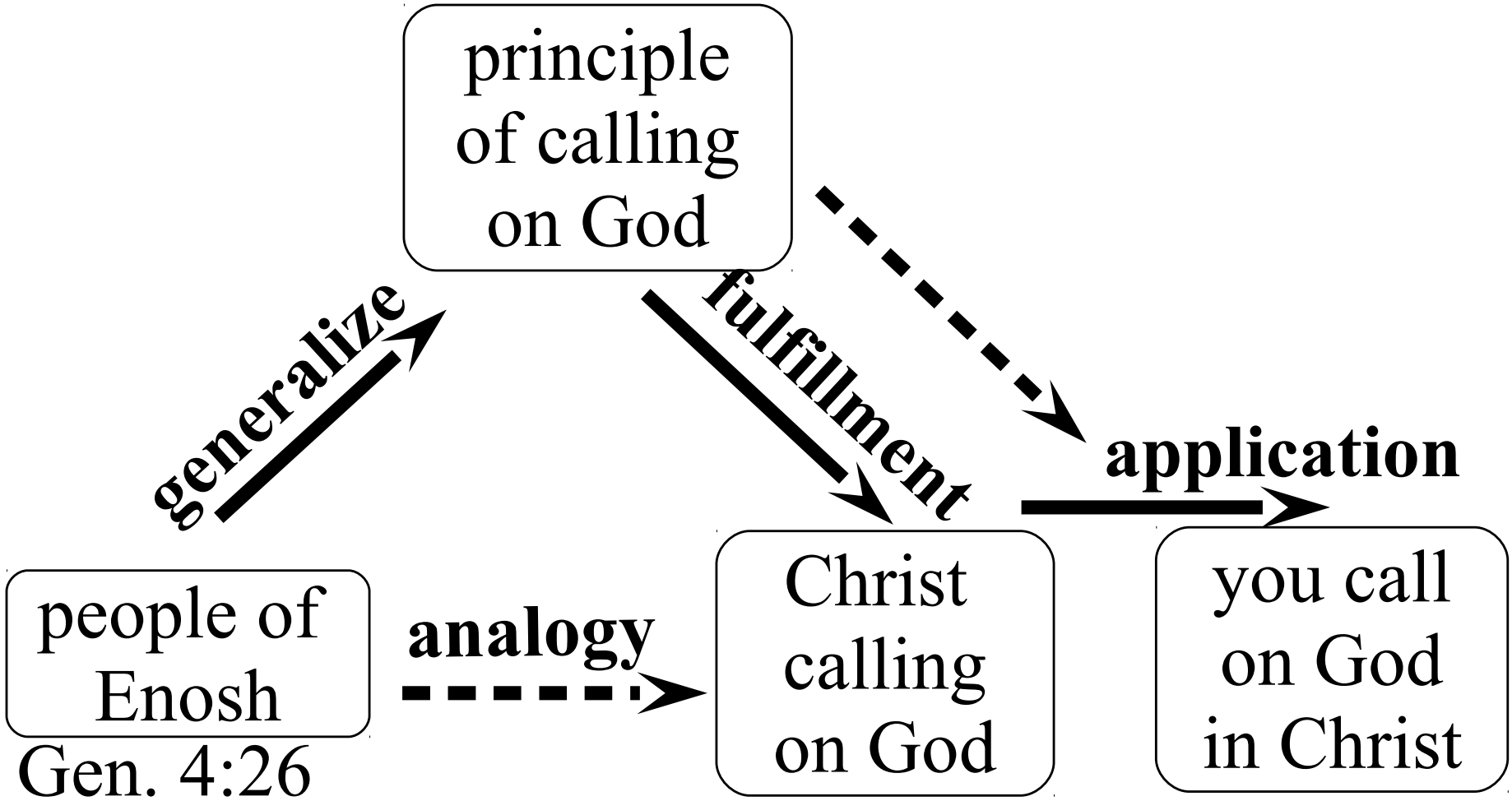
- 1-1 correspondences miss multifaceted relations.
- Note the superiority of the antitype.
- NT in relation to OT,
  not NT instead of OT.
- A sermon is not a lecture.

Maxims on Typology

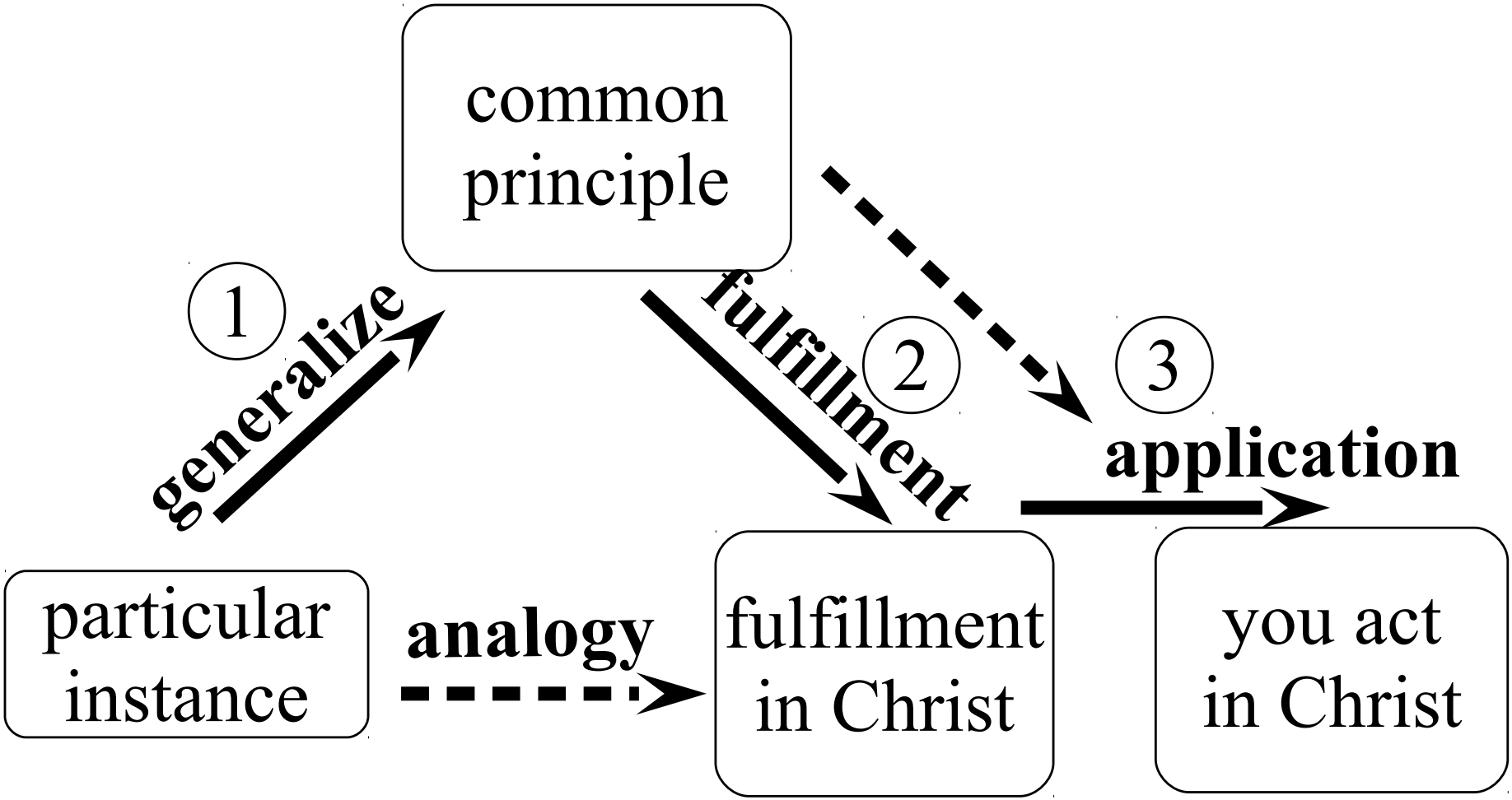
- 1-1 line-ups of type and antitype may miss multifaceted relations.
- Note the superiority of the antitype and the insufficiency of the type.
- Allegorization and forced typology preach the NT instead of the OT, rather than NT in relation to the OT.
- Do not turn a sermon into a biblical-theological lecture.

5. Principles for Interpreting Analogies

An Example: Calling on God



Common Principle



Step 1: What Was the Principle?

- What common principle did it express then?

common principle

1 generalize

particular instance

Attend to context.

Illustration of Step 1 (Principle)

- What common principle did it express then?

seek vengeance or not

1

generalize

Lamech's vengeance

Gen. 4:24

Attend to context.

Step 2: Go Forward to Fulfillment

- What does it anticipate in Christ?

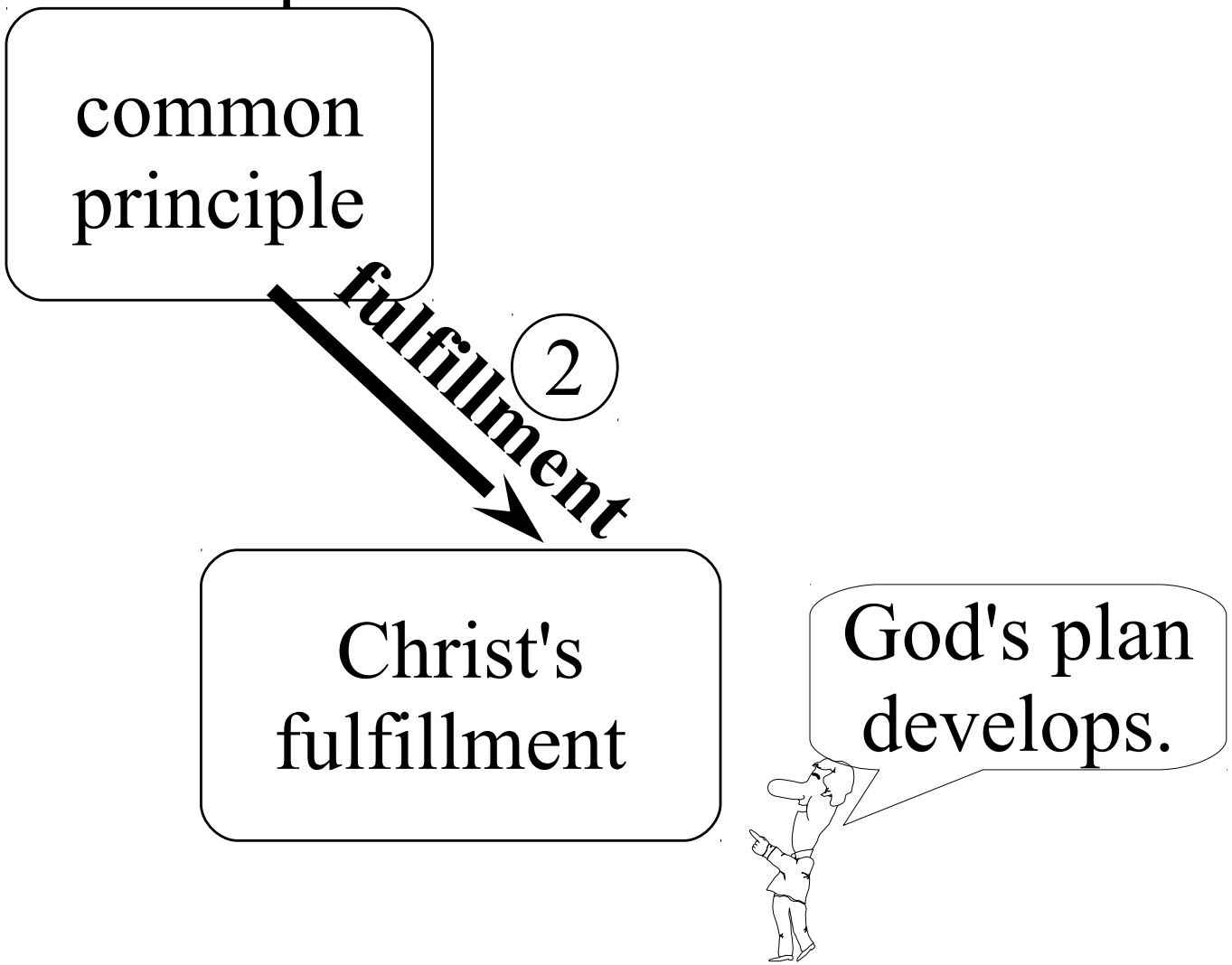
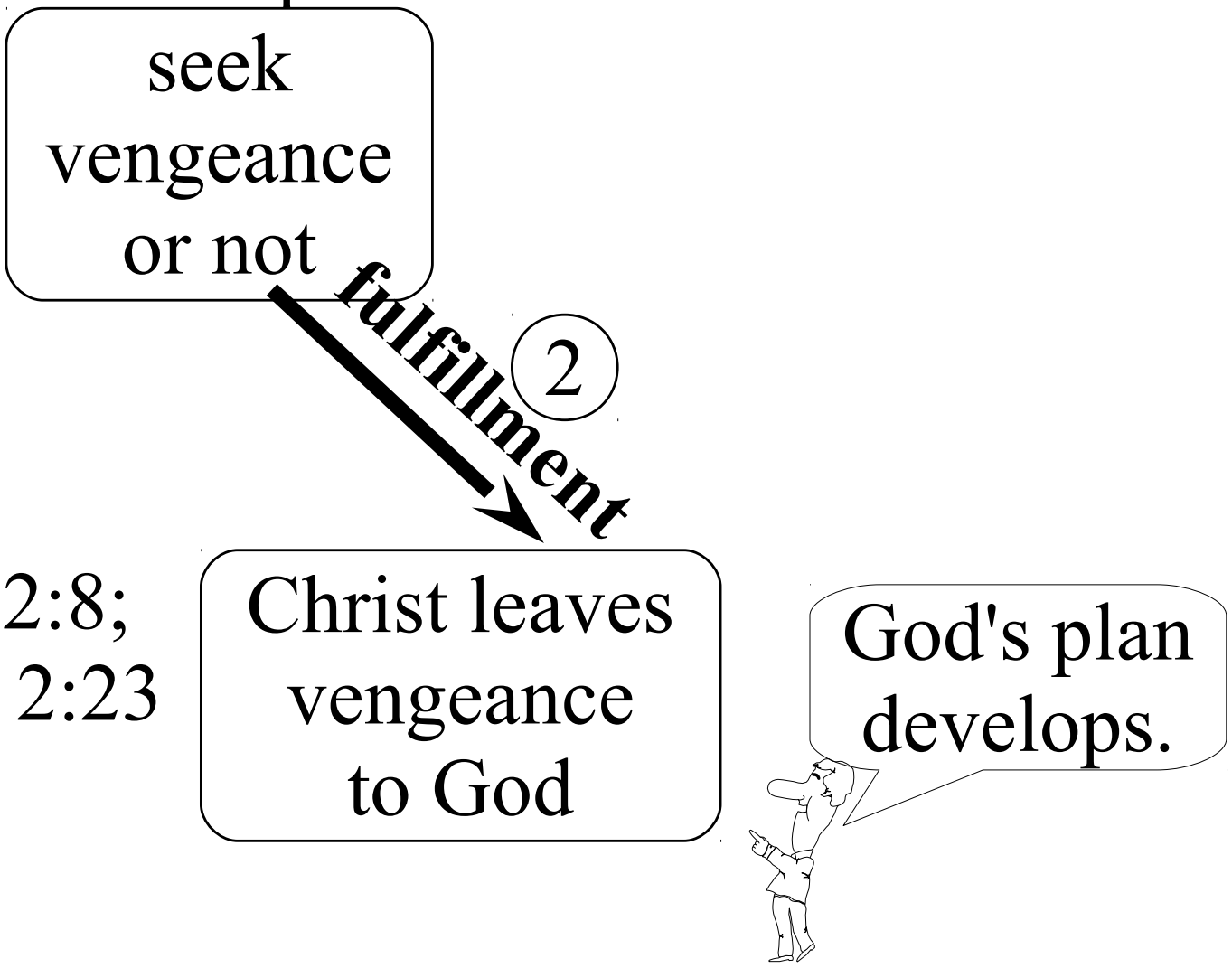


Illustration of Step 2: Fulfillment

- What does it anticipate in Christ?



Step 3: Apply to Us

- How do we benefit?

Written for us!

3

application

fulfillment in Christ

you act in Christ

Illustration of Step 3: Apply

- How do we benefit?

Written for us!

Rom 12:19

3 **application**

Christ leaves vengeance to God

you leave vengeance to God