

G. Dealing with Technical Terms

of Systematic Theology
and Biblical Theology

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What about Technical Terms?

Technical terms are useful

But

biblical
word

≠

technical term
in theology

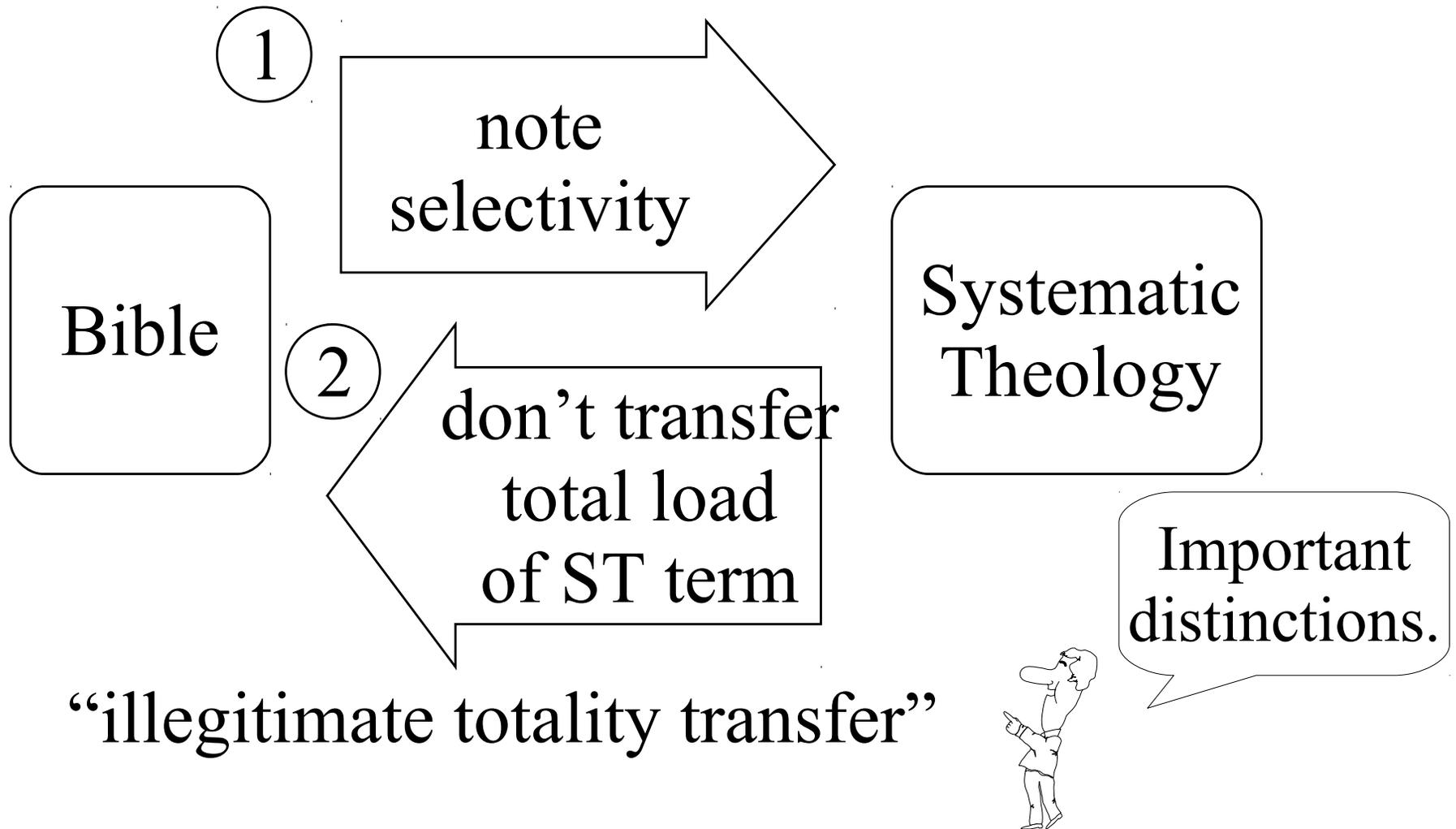
flexible,
range of meaning

summarizing a
large amount of
rich biblical teaching

word

similar to
concept

Challenge of Technical Terms



The Problem Illustrated

concept

=summary
of biblical
teaching

word

1X in KJV,
0 in RSV, NIV

word

concept

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*
2:639.

... the Holy Spirit so operates on the chosen people of God, that they are brought to repentance and faith, and thus made heirs of eternal life, through Jesus Christ their Lord.

This work of the Spirit is in the Scriptures called VOCATION. It is one of the many excellences of the Reformed Theology that it retains, as far as possible, Scriptural terms for Scriptural doctrines.

The Problem Illustrated (cont.)

word

concept

It is proper that this should be done.

Words and thoughts are so intimately related that to change the former, is to modify, more or less seriously, the latter. And as the words of Scripture are the words of the Spirit, it is becoming and important that they should be retained.

no translation?

word

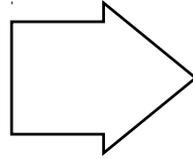
Clarify
your thinking.



in the autograph,
and in Greek
and Hebrew

NT Vocabulary

καλέω, κλητός,
κλήσις
“call, called, calling”

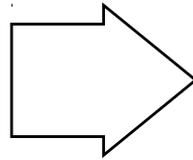


in Paul

only Rev. 17:14

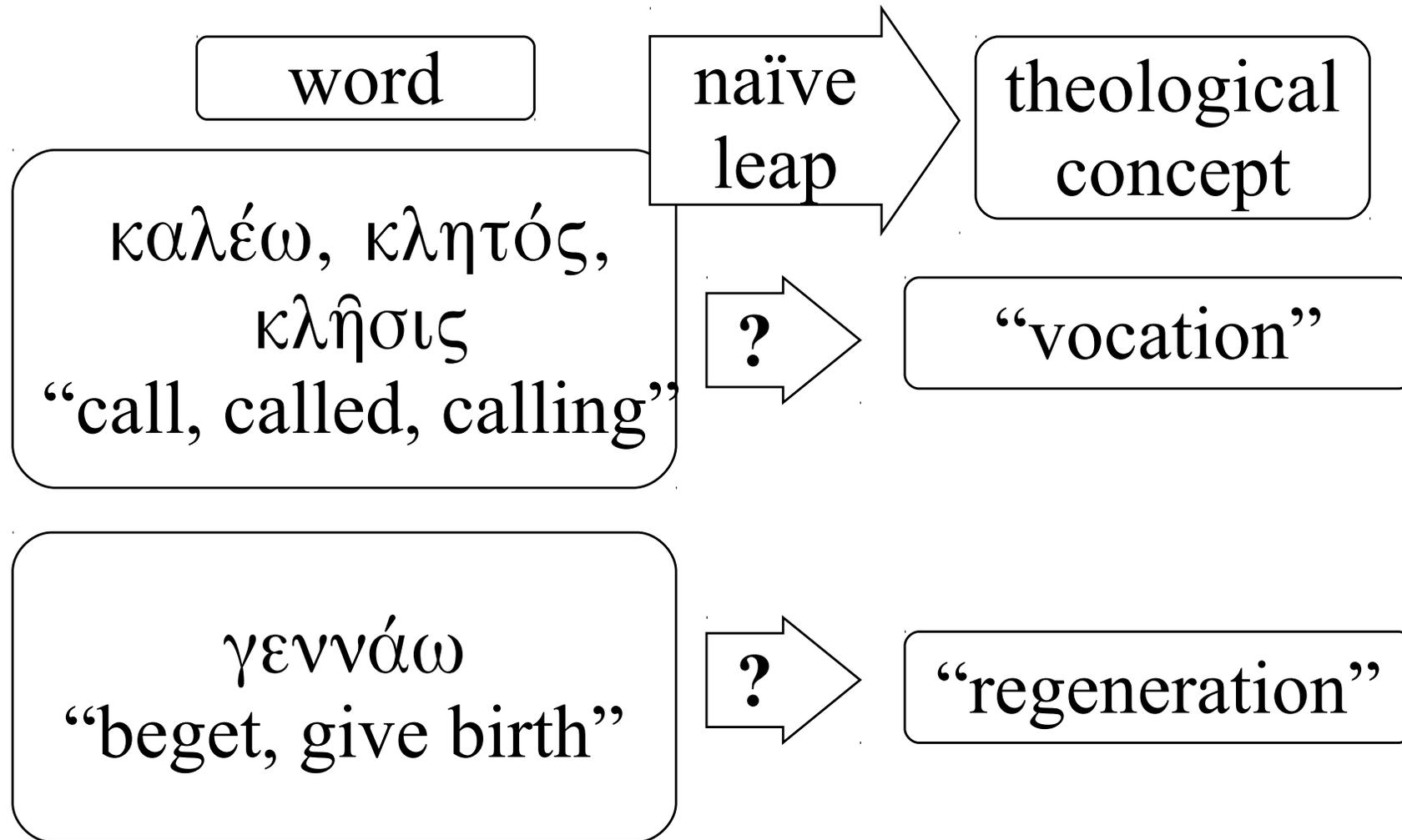
no

γεννάω
“beget, give birth”



in John

Temptation to Leap to Concepts



Likely Meaning in NT

word

theological
concept

καλέω, κλητός,
κλήσις
“call, called, calling”

*analogy
with spoken
command*

γεννάω
“beget, give birth”

*analogy
with birth*

aspects of
beginning
of new life

Berkhof on Sanctification

etymology

confusing
English and
Hebrew

if so,
retranslate
as “aloof”

Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* 527:

Others, with a greater degree of probability, derive the word [קָדַשׁ] from the root *qad*, meaning ‘to cut.’

This would make the idea of separation the original idea. The word would then point to aloofness, separateness, or majesty. Though this meaning of the words ‘sanctification’ and ‘holiness’ may seem unusual to us, it is in all probability the fundamental idea expressed by them.

Louis Berkhof's Procedure

Start with קִדְּשׁ.

Meaning unrelated to “sanctification.”

The rest ignores קִדְּשׁ.

Use verses on sanctification,
no matter what vocabulary occurs.

Succeeds in spite of bad beginning.

Louis Berkhof's Procedure

Start with קִדְּשׁ and say it really has a meaning unrelated to “sanctification.”

Write the rest of the chapter ignoring your results with קִדְּשׁ.

Use verses that talk about moral progress in the Christian life, no matter what vocabulary occurs.

Berkhof succeeds in spite of a bad method at the beginning.

John Murray on Order of Salvation

But Christians continue to hear and believe!

“Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ...” (Eph. 1:13)

concept: an action at beginning of new life

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* 82 (on Eph. 1:13):

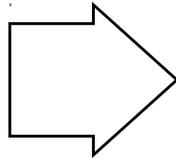
“Hearing and believing are therefore prior in order and cannot be made to follow the sealing of the Spirit.”

assumes one order.

But compare 1 Cor. 2:12.

What Paul Means

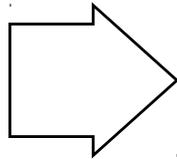
believe



sealed with Spirit

pictured through
its visible side

confess



baptized

actual temporal order

Summary of the Situation

Paul's uses words without technical precision.

Murray reads in technical meaning.

Murray is usually better:

He exegetes whole passages, not words.

Summary of the Situation

Paul is not using words “hear” and “believe” with later technical precision to talk about the absolute beginning of new life.

Murray is interested in this technical question, and so reads in technical meaning.

Murray is usually better, because he exegetes whole passages rather than focusing merely on words.

Evaluating Systematic Theology

“Word” study means trouble.

Be balanced in evaluating the past.

Augustine and Calvin cited passages.

Post-Reformation developed technical terms
and associated problems.

But they too knew their Bible.

Evaluating Systematic Theology

“Word” study means trouble.

Be balanced in evaluating the past.

Augustine and Calvin did not do word study.

They knew the Bible and cited relevant passages.

Post-Reformation developed technical terms and associated problems. But they too knew their Bible.

Refocusing Your Study

Study passages, not words.

Greek speaker just read Paul.

The Bible has technical vocabulary:

βλασφημία, ἀπόστολος, γέεννα.

But even here, easy to see too much.

Baal worshipers spoke Hebrew;

gnostics spoke Greek.

Refocusing Your Study

Study passages, not words.

What did a native speaker of Greek do? Use a concordance, or read Paul?

The Bible has technical religious vocabulary: βλασφημία, ἀπόστολος, γέεννα. But even here, it is easy to read in too much, if you see a commitment to a theory.

Baal worshipers spoke Hebrew;
gnostics spoke Greek.

False Motives for Word Study

Laziness

Desire to appear rigorous

Imitation of others

Feeling of profundity;

cf. James Barr, “Etymology and the OT,” *OTS* 19 (1974)
1-28.

Correlations of Words with Theological Concepts

word

concept

δικαιόω

“vindicate”

Rom. 5:1

justification

ἀγιάζω

“consecrate”

Rom. 6:19

sanctification

~~Rom. 6:7~~
~~Heb. 10:10~~



Watch out!

Danger of Reading in

word

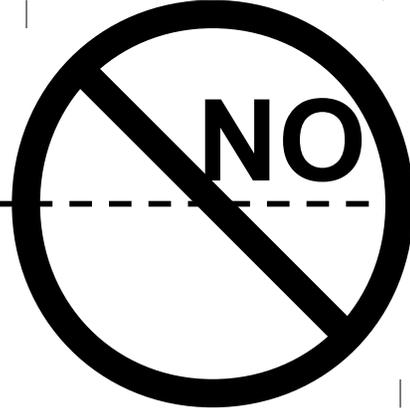
concept

δικαιόω
in James 2:21
“vindicate”



justification

ἀγιάζω
in 1 Cor. 1:2
“consecrate”



sanctification

Theological Jargon

“justification”

put right, declare right,
acquit, vindicate

in English, “giving reasons”

“sanctification”

consecrate, purify, make
upright, morally renew

“covenant”

contract, agreement, Commu-
pact, commitment nica-
tion

“covenant children”



Forming a Concept from John 3

word

concept

γεννάω,
“beget”

focus on
unity

“regeneration,”
work of the Spirit
in all history

Your
choice.

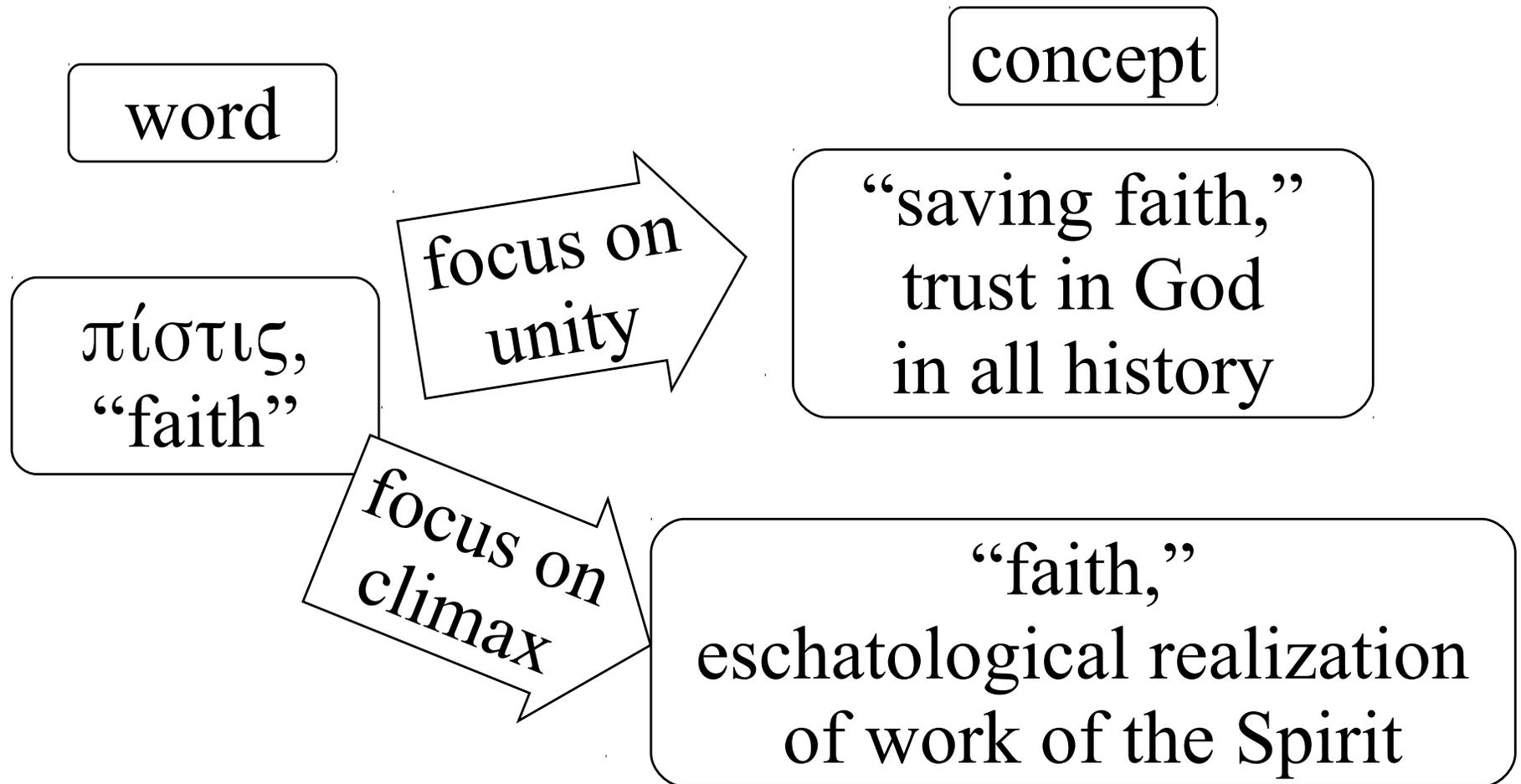
focus on
climax

“regeneration,”
eschatological realization
of work of the Spirit



John 7:37-39

Forming a Concept of Faith



Gal. 3:23

What Is a Covenant?

word

concept

בְּרִית,
“covenant”

?

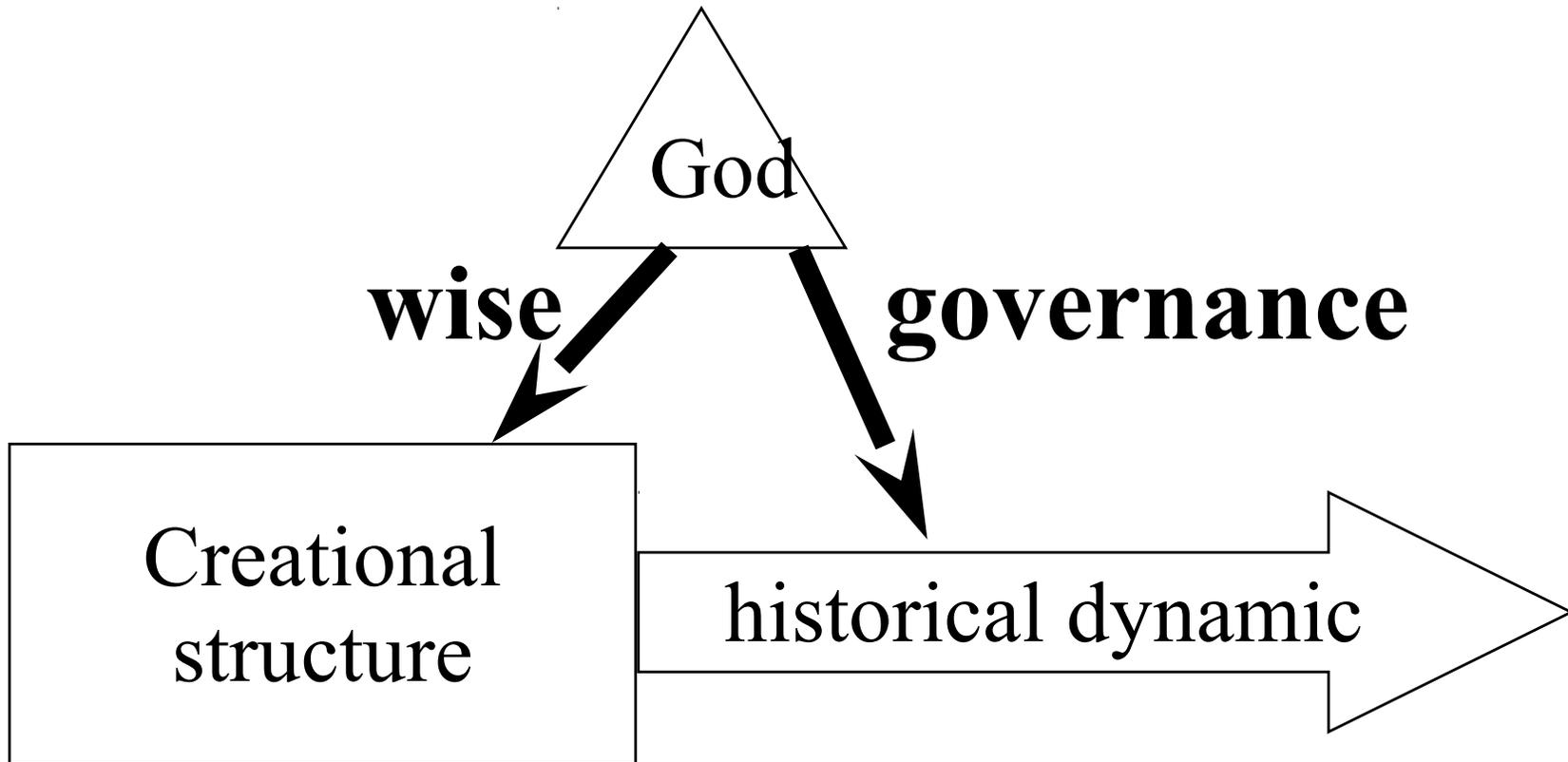
Your choice
again!



= a formally *ratified* (stipulatory) pact
with *sanctions*; a pact ratified by oath

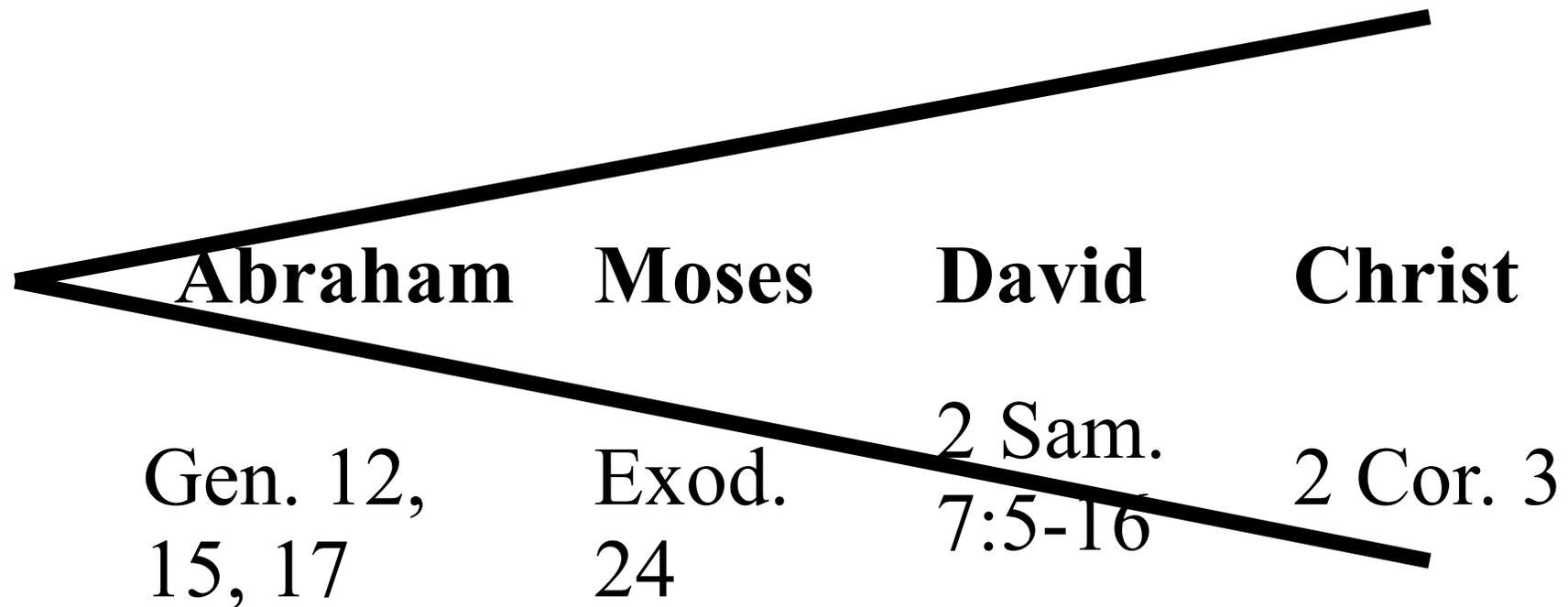
Covenant Concept for Conn

Expand to include all cultures.



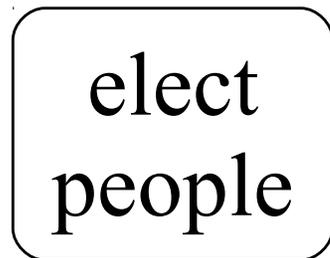
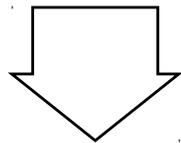
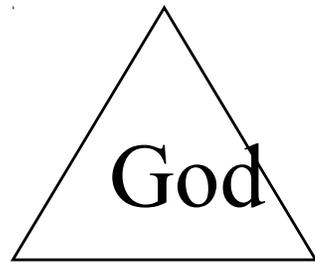
Covenant for Robertson

Common core of God's fellowship with human beings: "a bond in blood, sovereignly administered"

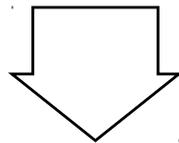


Covenant Concept for Murray

One way of salvation

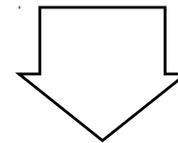


divine
initiative



human
response

grace

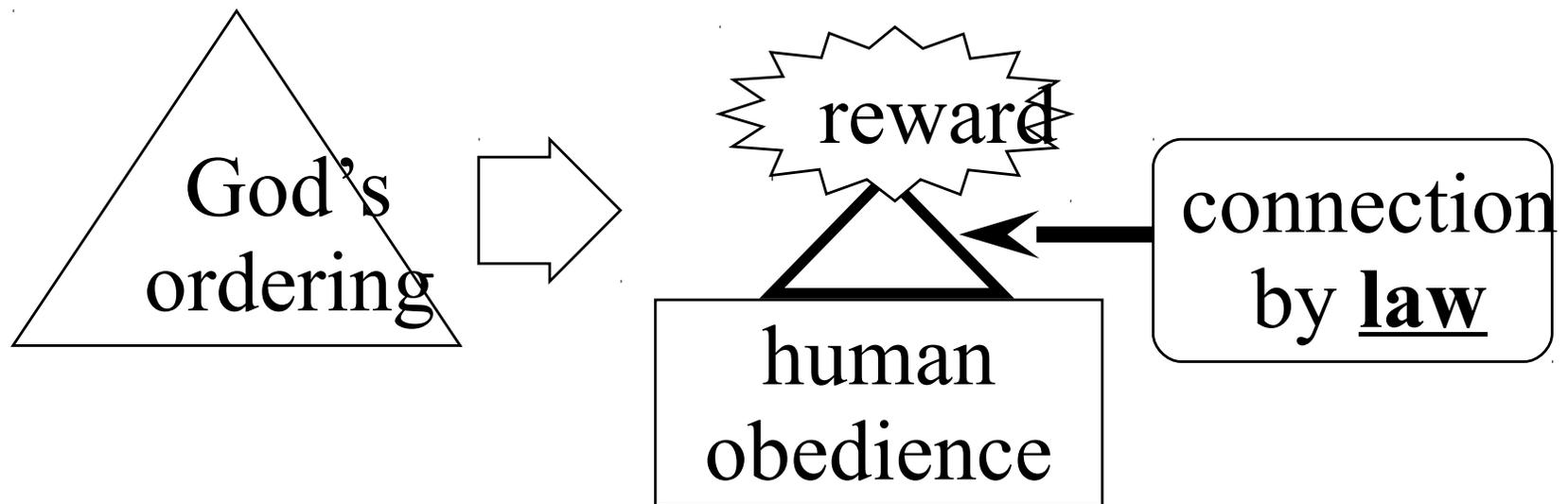


responsibility
(from law)

Covenant Concept for Kline

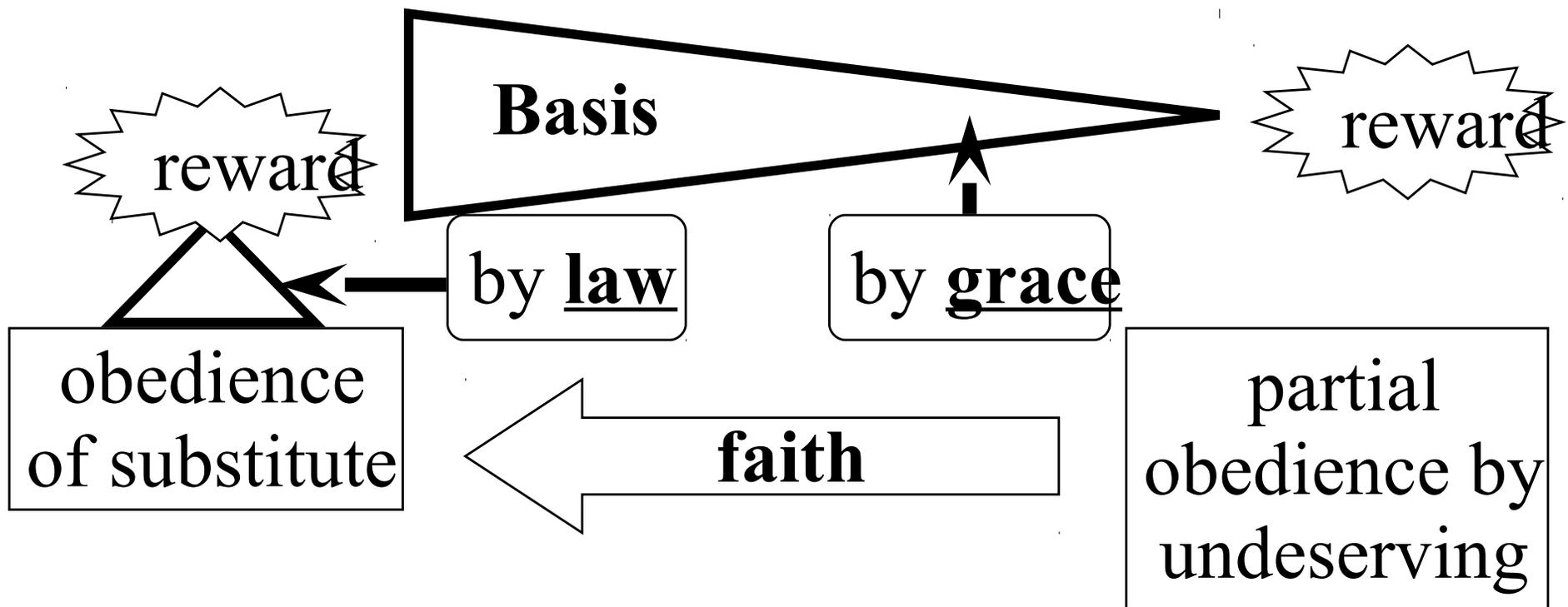
Understand substitutionary grace

Law principle: reward is based on and grounded in obedience by the human party.



Grace in Kline

Grace principle: reward is based on obedience of a substitute.



Conflict of Murray and Kline

“grace”

“law”

Murray:

God’s
beneficence

responsibility
to obey God’s
standard

Kline:

substitution
for demerit

reward on basis
of desert



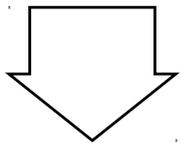
Potential
confusion.

Murray Interpreting Lev. 18:5

“You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them.”

Murray:

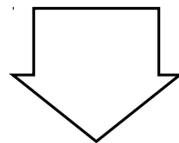
grace



responsibility
(from law)

Lev. 18:5:

redemption
out of Egypt

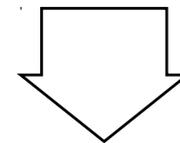


“obey them”

Application

Gal. 6:7-8:

redemption
out of sin



Christians obey
the moral law

“live” out of receiving more grace

Kline Interpreting Lev. 18:5

Kline:

Lev. 18:5:

Application

Gal. 3:12-14:

reward

“live”

reward to us

imputed

resurrected

life

obedience
of substitute
under law

“obey them”

Christ obeys
perfectly

Lessons from Covenant

Each approach is selective.

Absolutizing leads to heresy.

Doing theology is risky, but do it.

Greater cleverness leads to greater danger.

Creative theology produces tensions.

Whole picture comes with the consummation.

Richness as residing in relations.

Lessons from Covenant

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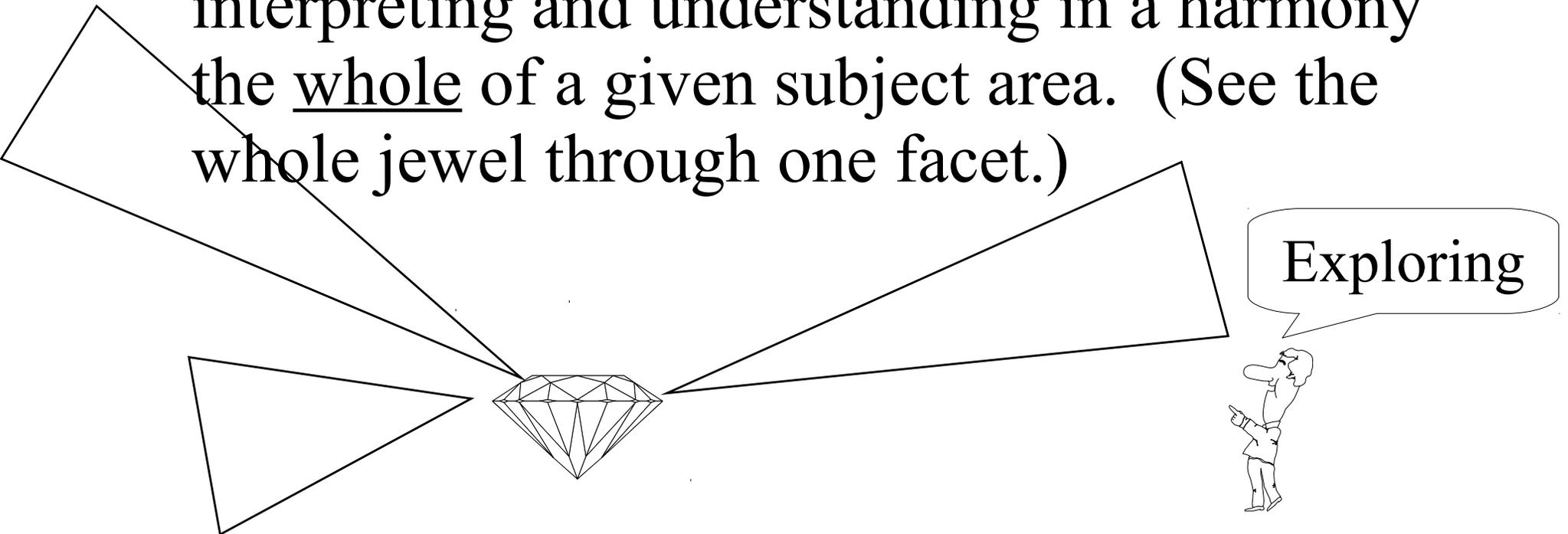
Whole picture comes with the consummation.

Think of the richness as residing in relations
among texts.

H. Using Multiple Perspectives

What Is Symphonic Theology?

A style of life, interpretation, and thinking in which an endeavor is made to take a number of limited complementary starting principles and use them as perspectives for interpreting and understanding in a harmony the whole of a given subject area. (See the whole jewel through one facet.)



1. The Four Gospels as an Example

Perspectives from Four Gospels

One Lord
Jesus Christ

Revealed in

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

King in
the line of
David

Warring
against the
kingdom of
evil spirits

Jubilee
liberator
of the poor

Revealer
of the
Father

Truth in the Gospels

Each Gospel has a different human perspective.

Each has a different divine perspective.

All are true.

God does not contradict himself.

Any one Gospel presents Christ truly.

God affirms four perspectives.



Amazing!

Truth in the Gospels

Each Gospel has a different human perspective.

Each Gospel has a different divine perspective.

All the Gospels are completely true. God does not contradict himself.

Any one Gospel presents the true Christ.

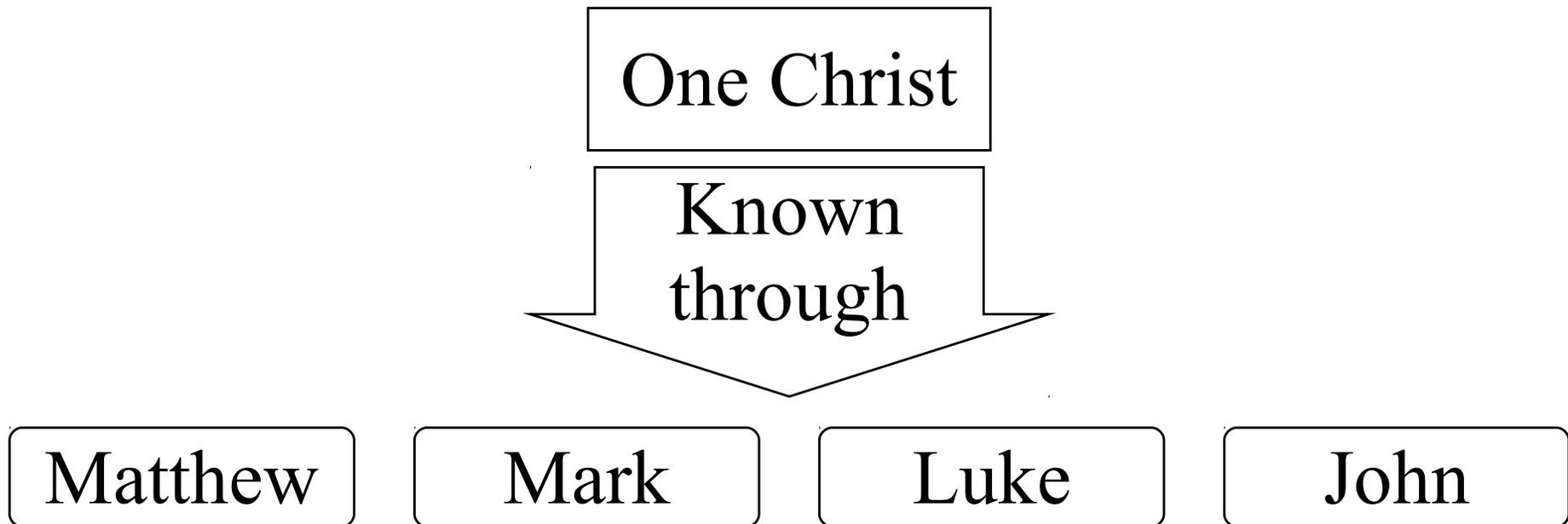
God affirms the validity of four perspectives on Christ.



Amazing!

Knowing

Differences in manner of knowing; Knowing includes unity and diversity.



Knowing

Differences in perspective may include differences in manner of grasping and digesting truth. Knowing includes unity and diversity.

One Christ

Known
through

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Contrasts with Relativism

Relativism

No real truth.

Truth and error
harmonize.

Reality inaccessible.

Everyone confined
to his own view.

Biblical Symphony

The Bible's statements
are absolutely true.

Grow in truth and remove
error.

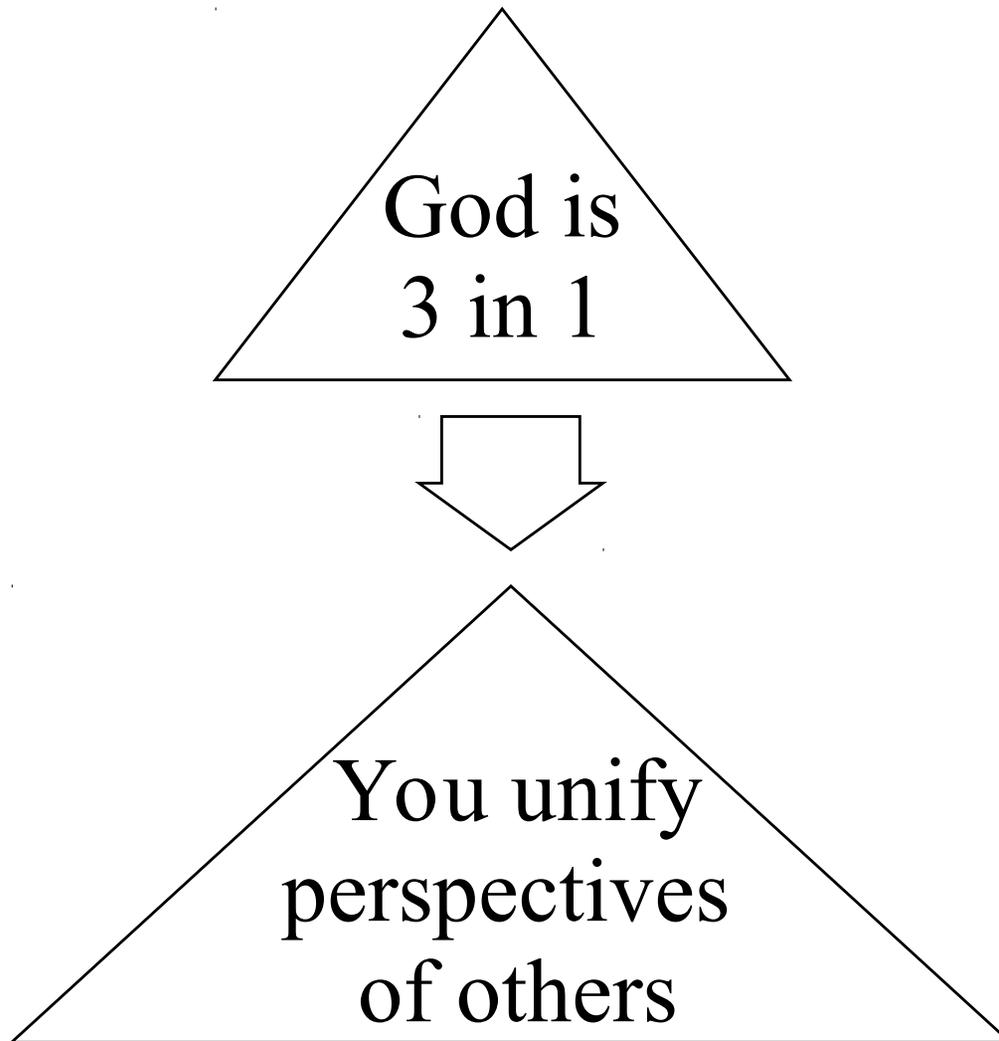
Truth overwhelmingly
surrounds us.

Learn more from all four
Gospels.



Antithesis.

Symphony Imitates Trinity



Sound
starting
point.



2. Diversity in the Body of Christ

Perspectives in the Body

1 Cor. 12

God-made diversity

value and love others

see from their view

second perspective

**20th century
exposure to
diversity
means a need
for joints and
ligaments**



Part of
God's plan.

The Love Commandment

“Love your neighbor as yourself”

Listen and understand

second perspective

Unavoidable



Knowing in the Body of Christ

Knowing in the body of Christ includes unity (shared doctrine) and diversity (manner and grasp of truth).

One Christ

Known
through

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Kinds of Diversity

In personality

In spiritual gifts

In modes
of knowing

Various
biblical
characters

1 Cor. 12

Four Gospels

3. Using Perspectives

Using Perspectives in Contextualizing Theology

Western past	Guilt	Justification
Tribes	Evil spirits	Holy war
Black US	Dignity, release from oppression	Exodus
Asian	Shame	Shame of cross
USA now	Meaninglessness	Adoption



Lots of potential.

Multiperspectiv e Analysis

One passage enjoys many relations.

Look at the passage through a theme.

Themes suggest connections to Christ.

Themes help to preach Christ (Luke 24:44-49).

Multiperspectiv e Analysis

Any one passage enjoys many kinds of relations to the rest of the Bible.

So look at the passage through any of a number of thematic emphases.

These themes suggest connections forward to Christ.

Hence, this reflection helps us to preach Christ (Luke 24:44-49).

Assignment in Perspectives

Read through pp. 8.19-8.21.

Apply the same procedure to Isa. 52:11-12.

Use perspectives 1b, 2c, 3d, 5a, and 5d.

For 1b and 2c, connect to Christ.

Turn in a summary.

Hope you
have fun!



Assignment in Perspectives

Read through the attached explanation and study the example of using multiple perspectives with Isa. 51:21-23.

Apply the same procedure to Isa. 52:11-12.

Use perspectives 1b, 2c, 3d, 5a, and 5d.

For 1b and 2c, connect your findings forward to Christ.

Write a summary on 8 1/2 X 11 paper, preferably one page, to turn in.



Hope you
have fun!