Twitter Thread by Union Seminary



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1. A word about biblical infallibility:

This weekend, we received much damnation from fundamentalists over our denial of scriptural inerrancy. It's understandable, because once you relinquish conviction that the Bible is *literally* God's word, faith becomes a messier affair.

2. It's easier to simply believe that the Bible is a plain record of the divine, that it clearly and concisely states what Christians should believe. In a world that feels so chaotic, biblical infallibility can provide distinct comfort.

But comfort and truth aren't synonymous.

3. The truth is that the biblical books were written by humans. They represent the fruits of people grappling with God, and what it means to be human, for centuries—in all the complexity those questions necessarily entail.

4. Moreover, even the decision about which books would be included in the Bible was a human choice—one that didn't solidify until centuries after Jesus died: They by no means represent all the early Christian texts. (Dr. Hal Taussig's A New New Testament collects many others.)

5. Furthermore, the languages in which most Americans read the Bible reveal yet another layer of human interpretation, decisions made by translators who labor diligently over the original Hebrew and Greek texts.

6. There is so much humanity in the Bible, and humans are—by nature—fallible and often blinded by our own cultural prejudices and blindspots. That was every bit as true for the early Church as it is for the modern Church.

7. But by no means should an admission of fallibility be read as an admission that the Bible is worthless, or a denial that God speaks through Scripture. Instead, it simply opens the door to a far deeper, nuanced and complex faith.

8. It means being a critical reader of the Bible—interpreting more difficult passages in light of clearer ones, reading biblical scholarship to better understand the cultural context in which texts were written (and how that informs them).

9. But, on a deeper level, it means opening up faith to doubt. It means acknowledging that, when it comes to God, there are no "easy answers." There's no cheat sheet that you can simply refer to, to read God's voice—clear as day. Letting go of that can be painful.

10. But, once you embark on this new religious adventure, you'd be shocked at how it can deepen your faith. A lot of people seem worried about relinquishing biblical inerrancy because it would render Christianity meaningless—this could not be further from the truth.

11. The Bible still speaks divine truth; those who study it still benefit from the centuries of spiritual contemplation and reflection it contains. The psalms are no less beautiful, proverbs no less profound. Job remains an unparalleled distillation of grappling with theodicy.

12. Jesus' life and ministry still embody God's expansive, radical love made flesh. His resistance to Empire—and willingness to die for opposing how it oppressed the vulnerable—no less challenge our complicity and complacency.

13. Moreover, relinquishing infallibility is the only means by which you can fully square Scripture with a loving, just God. A god that would condemn LGBTQ people for their love, or consign women to subservience, is not a god worth worshipping.

14. Fortunately, that god was never God—simply an idol worshipped by people who valued print and ink over divine justice. Letting go of that idolatry is the first step towards truly knowing God, to developing faith that honors both humanity and the divine.