

~Other Speakers S-Z: Robert Wurtz II:

BLOCK LOGIC

(An Introduction to Hebrew Thought)

Compiled By Robert Wurtz II

Hebrew thought was perhaps the last topic I would have ever expected to really open my eyes as to why so many problems with understanding scripture have developed over the last 2000 years. Every culture has a certain paradigm. The Greeks used a linear logic that flows in steps from premises to a conclusion. Each step linked closely to the next in a coherent, rational, logical fashion. The conclusion is almost always limited to one view- a human beings limited perspective on reality. It takes into account only things that can be understood within the finite minds of the human cranium and stutters and stumbles at realities beyond its comprehension. Man has ever thirsted to understand things too wonderful for him; and in so doing, often grossly limits the true reality of issues by reducing them to the size of his or her own mind. This is why we are told not to lean to our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge Him and He will direct our paths. The Angel that announced the birth of Sampson asked the parents, "Why is it that you ask me my name seeing it is beyond your comprehension." If an angels name could be beyond our comprehension- why would we continue to reduce the truths of God with the sword of Greek logic? Greek logic is mans attempt to understand something that is spiritually discerned. It is like putting your faith in a strait jacket. John Wesley once remarked concerning unconditional election and God being the author of sin, "Better would it be to say that it made no sense at all than to say that these passages made a sense such as this." (Paraphrased) But man is not content to say, "It makes no sense at all!" Why? Because pride desires to know things too wonderful for us. We prefer to lean upon the arm of understanding rather than the arm of FAITH.

Do a study on the Jews. You will find that they have the highest amount of accomplished scientist of any other group. Take some facts from science: Did you know that Albert Einstein was a Jew? Did you know about all the nobel prizes? Their contributions to society to be such a small group are enormous! Could part of it be that while men were thinking Newtonian Physics - the Jewish mind saw a deeper and perhaps wonderful possibility for the building blocks of all creation? While the high school science books were depicting the atom in a Newtonian solar system looking atom- while it was really acting like a wave? Quantum physics took us into the electronics and nuclear age. There comes a point when logic runs out- and you have to step out in faith. Not to say that God is not logical- His logic is too wonderful for our comparatively weak and beggarly models of thinking.

One of the great tragedies of the last 2000 has been the influence of Greek philosophy upon interpretation of scripture. Greek logic falls wildly short of being able to understand God and His word and for this cause when Greek logic is used to understand scripture the reader is filled with all manor of feelings of contradiction. This is one of the great arguments that Messianics have had against the Gentile dominated Church is that they have a Hellenistic view of scripture. Greek logic leaves much to be desired in terms of understanding scripture and tempts man to venture into places that God never intended Him to go. Have you ever wondered why there arose so many heresies in the first 4 centuries? People were trying to understand scripture through the ill equipped framework of Greek logic and all sorts of madness developed.

Block Logic

by DR. Aaron Wilson:

The biblical authors never argue the existence of God; they only assume it. God is not understood philosophically, but functionally. He acts. The Hebrews primarily thought of him pictorially, in terms of personality and activity, not in terms of pure being or in any static sense. That is, to express the divine attribute of love, the Hebrews would normally think in terms of a "loving God" (i.e., a God who loves), rather than "God is love." Certainly, therefore, the Hebrew mind-set of Bible times would find little or no interest in many of the issues the Church has debated over the centuries. These issues include theoretical arguments for the existence of God, the nature of the Godhead, free will and predestination, the specifics of the life to come, and the precise way in which the divine and human mesh in the inspiration of Scripture.

The Hebrew knew he did not know all the answers. His position was "under the sun" (Eccl. 8:17), so his words were few (5:2). He refused to oversystematize or force harmonization on the enigmas of God's truth or puzzles of the universe. He realized that no one could straighten what God has made crooked (7:13). All things, therefore, did not need to be fully rational. The Hebrew mind was willing to accept the truths taught on both

sizes of the paradox; it recognized that mystery and apparent contradictions are often signs of the divine. Stated succinctly, the Hebrews knew the wisdom of learning to trust in matters that they could not fully understand.

While philosophical and structural divisions of learning obviously have an important role to play in contemporary education, our Western culture—especially on most levels of secular and Christian instruction—has provided little understanding concerning the nature of Hebrew thought. Thus we have the natural tendency to impose more rational and systematic categories of thought on the Bible. The Bible, however, tends to reject most carefully worked-out charts and thoroughgoing attempts at schema-tization. Neither God nor his Word may be easily contained in a box for logical or scientific analysis. Both God and his Word have a sovereign unpredictability that defies rational, human explanation. The Christian dogmatic tradition has much to learn from the Jewish community at this point.

The Semites of Bible times did not simply think truth—they experienced truth. Truth is as much encounter as it is propositions. This experiential perspective on reality explains, in part, why Judaism never really developed vast systems of thought. It also allows us to understand how Judaism could live with the tensions and paradoxes surrounding block logic. To the Jew, the deed was always more important than the creed. He was not stymied by language that appeared contradictory from a human point of view. Neither did he feel compelled to reconcile what seemed irreconcilable. He believed that God ultimately was greater than any human attempt at systematizing truth. “Walking in the truth” (2 John 4) and “living the truth” (1 John 1:6) were a higher priority than rationally analyzing the truth.

Wilson, Marvin “Our Father Abraham” c. 1989 Eerdmans