

Reading and Understanding Your Bible

A few Disclaimers

- This is from a protestant viewpoint.
- This is not a bible college course.
 - But there will be some challenging language.
 - Want this to be accessible to all, but we also want to grow you.

Outline of tonight

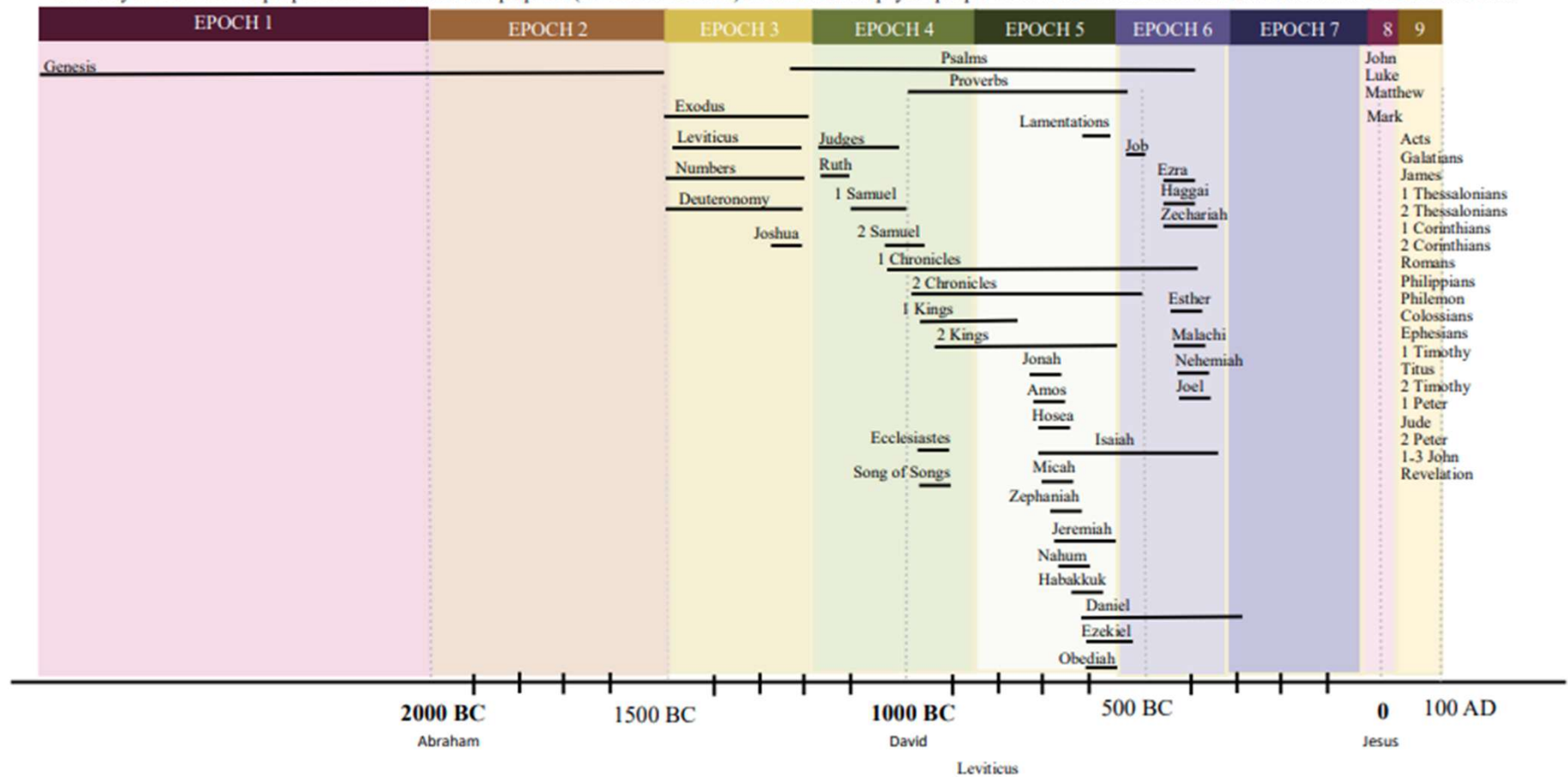
What is the Bible

Methods

Daily Routines

Period of Time Covered by each Book of the Bible

A history of the nation of people whom God chose and prepared (the Nation of Israel) so that he could pay *all* people's debts for *all* time because of His tremendous love for each of us



Lieber, D. (1994). *Bible 101 getting the big picture*. From a class presented at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in 1994.

<https://villagechurch.org/pdf/bible-study/3-Bible-Timelines.pdf>

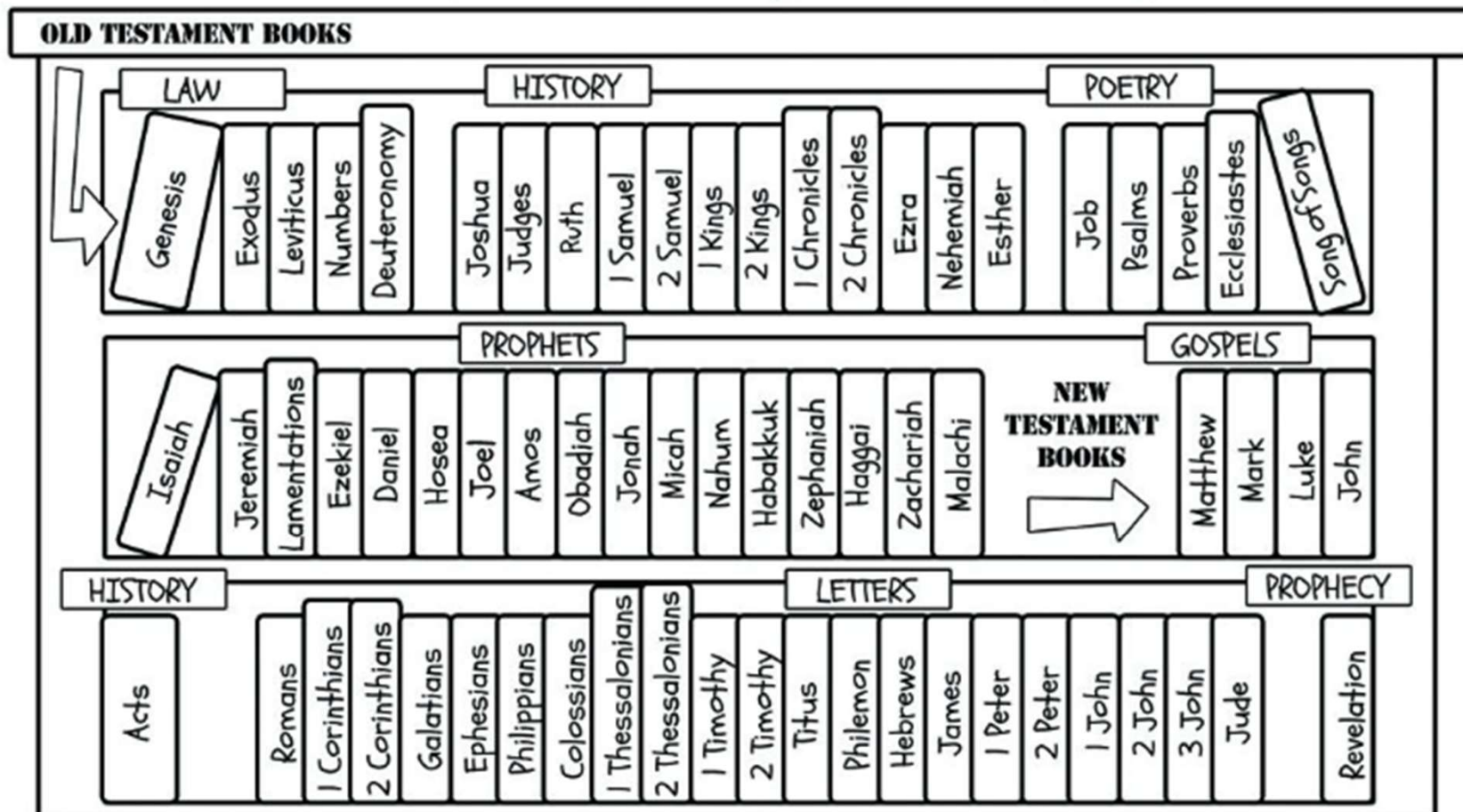
Context

- Authors
 - There are so many people who are credited with writing the bible over those 1500 years. At least 40 and we don't know them all. They were a wide range of people from fishermen or shepherds to royalty. We don't know every detail of who wrote everything or when.
- Scripture was originally written without chapter or verse distinctions, we started adding them in the 1200s but didn't have a copy with complete chapter and verse distinctions until 1560
- Languages
 - Three main: written in mostly Hebrew but some Aramaic in parts of old testament, Greek in new testament

Context Continued

- Countries and Continents
 - Africa, Asia, and Europe
- Book names and audiences
 - The names of all of these books mean something
 - Genesis means origin or beginning, Ephesians was a letter written to the church in Ephesus, 1 and 2 Timothy Paul wrote to Timothy, etc

Books of the Bible



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A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- A natural question arises: if there are 66 books across 1,500 years, 40 or authors and several languages, then how is the bible one work?

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Three responses
 - Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Self-referential material
 - Inspiration of Scripture

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Hypothesis (Puzzle Box Top)
 - Economy
 - Recapitulation

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Hypothesis (Puzzle Box Top)
 - What should the story look like? (overarching main point)
 - Protoevangelium: first gospel in Genesis 3:15
 - Luke 24:27, 44

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Hypothesis (Puzzle Box Top)
 - Economy
 - Recapitulation

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Economy (proper order of things)
 - All main stories and figures will follow the hypothesis
 - Grand narrative that invites you to see Jesus, His person and work in the bible.

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Hypothesis (Puzzle Box Top)
 - Economy
 - Recapitulation

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Recapitulation (“Summing up” or “doing it again”)
 - Figures like Hannah in 1 Samuel 1 have their stories retold and perfected. (Elizabeth and Zechariah)
 - Romans 5:12-14

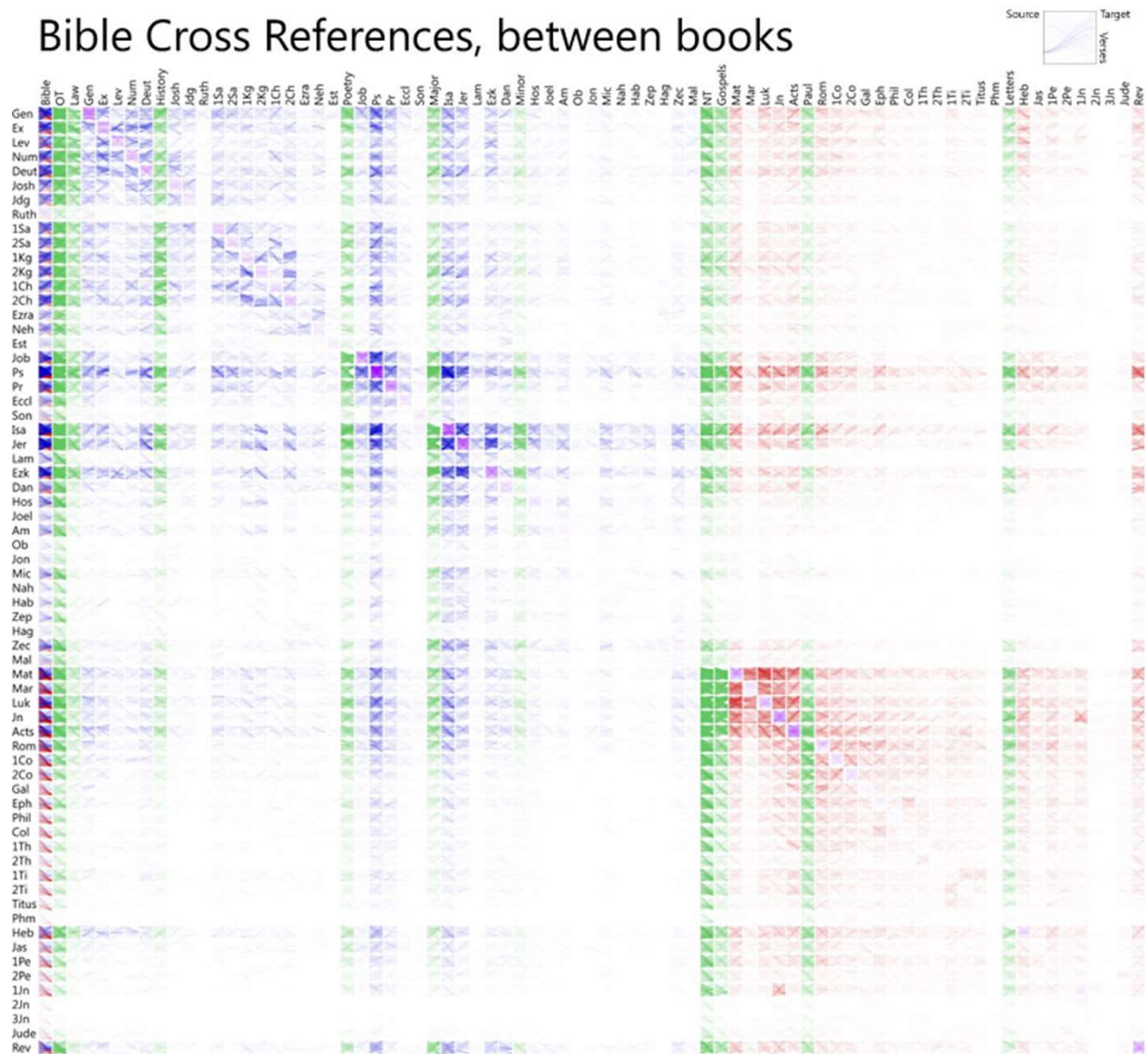
A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
 - Hypothesis (Puzzle Box Top)
 - Economy
 - Recapitulation
 - To summarize: Christ is the interpretive key from beginning to end.
 - Priest, prophet, king, Son of God, Son of Man, etc.

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Irenaeus of Lyons
- Scripture is self-referential

Bible Cross References, between books



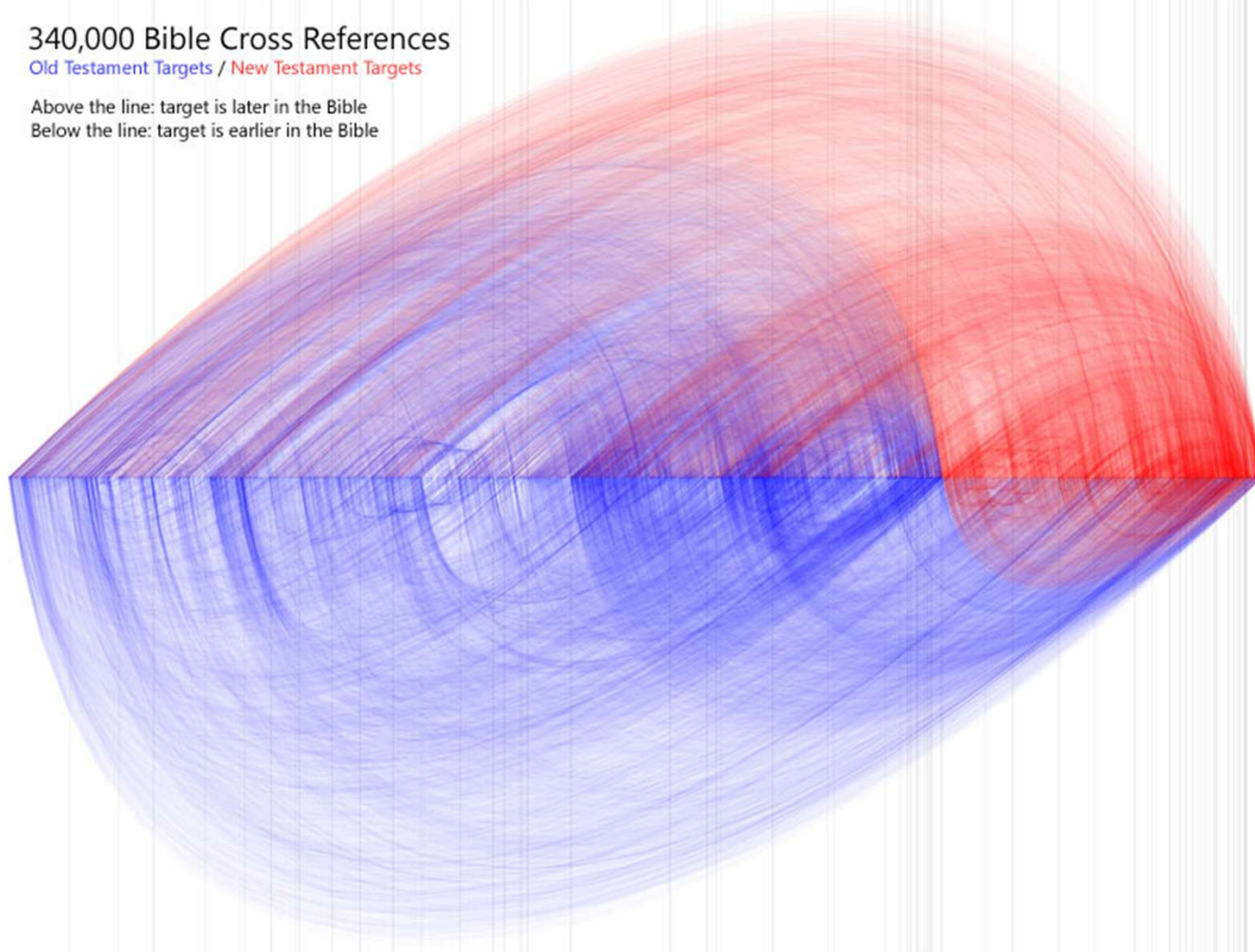
Gen Exod Lev Num Deut Josh 1Sam 1Kgs 1Chr Ezra Ps Prov Isa Jer Ezek Hos Matt Luke JohnActs Rom Gal Hb Re

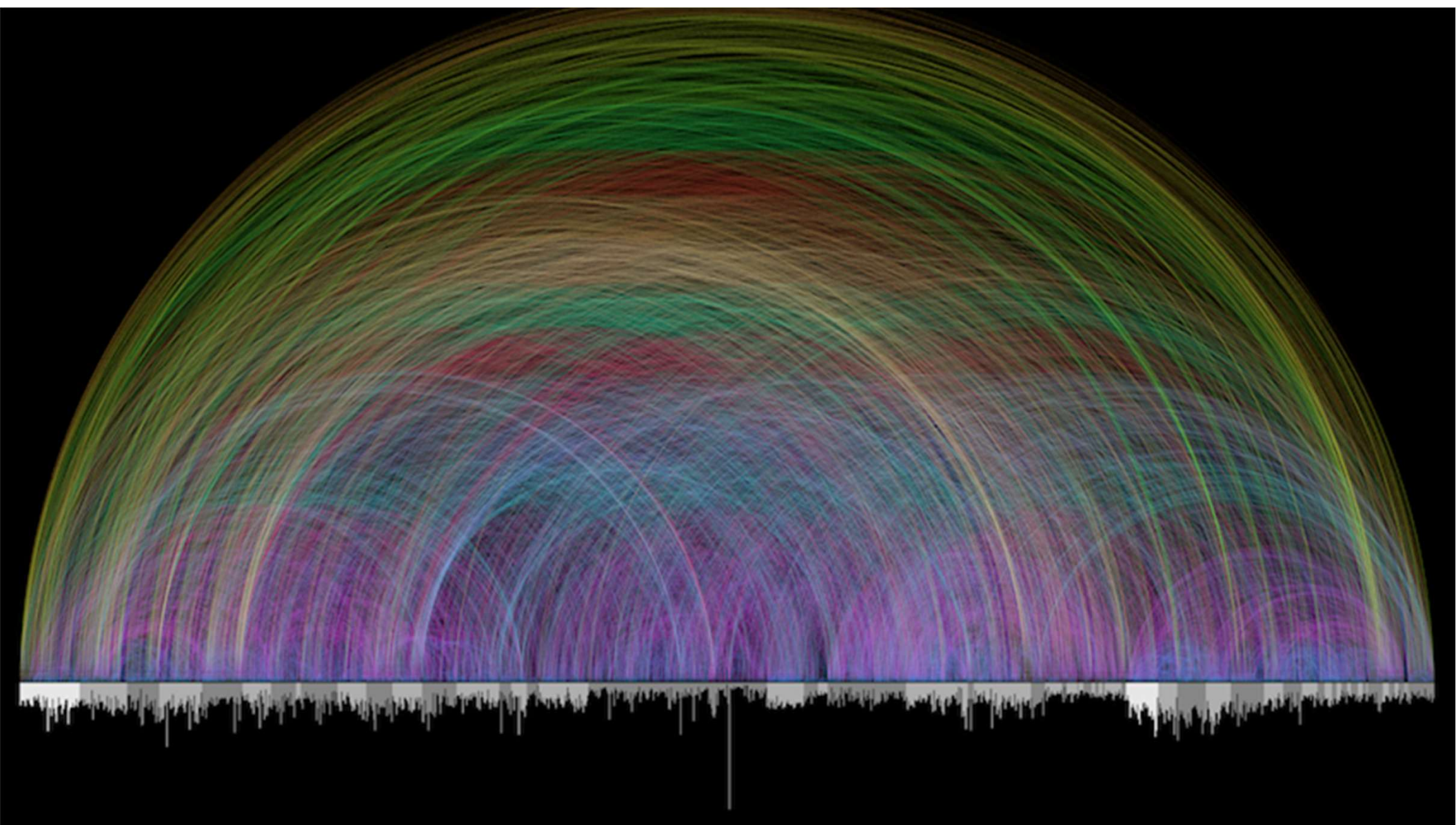
340,000 Bible Cross References

Old Testament Targets / New Testament Targets

Above the line: target is later in the Bible

Below the line: target is earlier in the Bible





A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

- Scripture is self-referential
 - Matthew 1:22 – Isaiah 7:14
 - Zechariah 9:9 - Mark 11:1-10
 - Daniel 9:2 - Jeremiah
 - Jeremiah 26:18 – Micah 3:12

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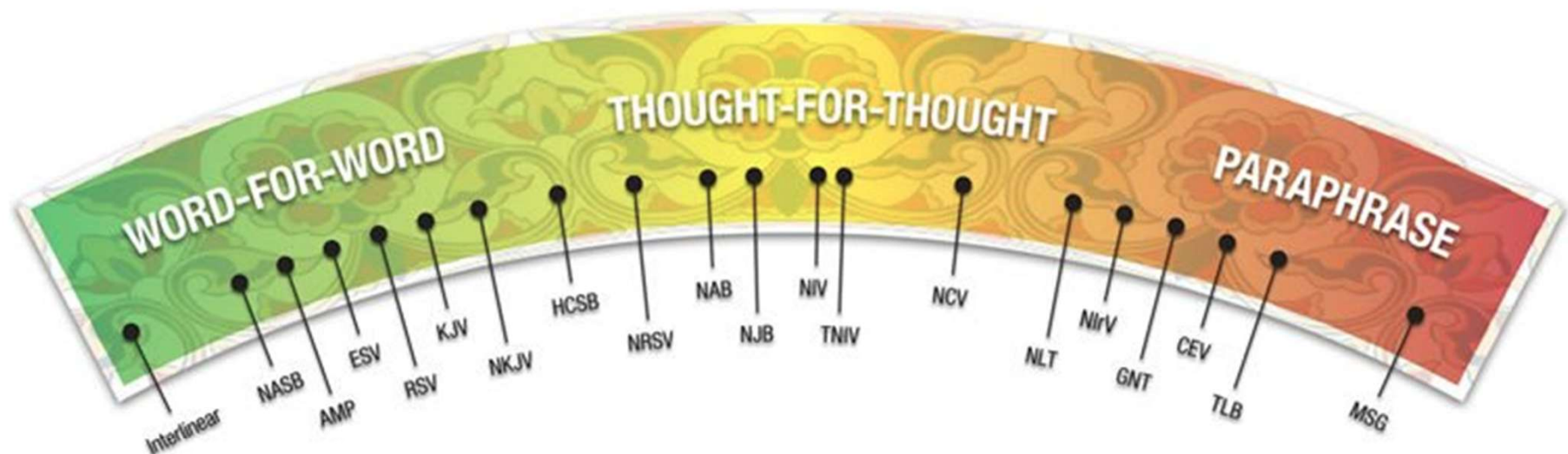
- Scripture is self-referential
 - Hosea 12:3-4 – Genesis 25:26
 - Amos 4:11 – Genesis 19:24-25
 - Psalm 103:8 – Exodus 34:6
 - Psalm 106:17 – Numbers 16:32
 - 2 Peter 3:15-16

A Unified Story Pointing to Jesus

Inspiration of Scripture

- 2 Peter 1:16-21
 - 2 Samuel 23:1-2
- 2 Timothy 3:14-16
- Inspired
 - Inerrancy
 - Infallibility

Types of Bible Translations



NASB - New American Standard Bible
AMP - Amplified Bible
ESV - English Standard Version
RSV - Revised Standard Version
KJV - King James Version
NKJV - New King James Version

HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible
NRSV - New Revised Standard Version
NAB - New American Bible
NJB - New Jerusalem Bible
NIV - New International Version
TNIV - Today's New International Version
NCV - New Century Version
NLT - New Living Translation

Nlrv - New International Reader's Version
GNT - Good News Translation
(also Good News Bible)
CEV - Contemporary English Version
TLB - The Living Bible
MSG - The Message

Broad Principles for Interpretation

- Scripture interpret scripture
 - Let clear verses have more weight in doctrine than unclear verses
 - Don't take things at face value (that would be to assign our own meaning to the text itself)
 - Matthew 10:34-39. What does it mean!?
 - 1 Timothy 2:1-6
 - Matthew 4:17
 - Let Scripture be literature!!! (face value vs. meaning)

Broad Principles for Interpretation

- Don't forget that this is written in limited human language
 - God's words by the Holy Spirit communicated through people (context matters)
 - (think back to our discussion on inspiration)
 - Eisegesis vs. Exegesis
 - Anachronistic study is dangerous

Broad Principles for Interpretation

- Don't ignore education and those who have gone before
 - The Spirit of God works through both the educated and the uneducated.
 - BUT...
 - God tells us to study His word!
 - Meditate on it day and night!
 - Write it on our doorposts!
- 2,000 years of church history!
 - Creeds
 - Councils

Broad Principles for Interpretation

- Don't ignore education and those who have gone before
 - Don't be afraid of reading or listening to other Christians, including dead Christians.
 - But test each one and see if they line up well to scripture itself.

5 Types of Study from Cru

1. Big Picture
2. Book Study
3. Chapter and Verse
4. Thematic
5. Character

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/blog/help-others-grow/mentoring/five-techniques-study.html>

Big Picture

- “The Story”
 - This is a resource that looks at the Bible as “one continuing story of God and his people” - takes scripture passages and puts them in order while filling in the gaps with transitions
- Canonical order
 - Gives a good feel for the current book as a whole
- Chronological order
 - Seeing the difference in each gospel or old testament history may make comprehension easier

Book Study/Overview

- Read and reread
- Identify
 - Literature
 - Authors
 - Recipients
 - Others
 - Events
 - Historical/cultural settings
 - Purpose of book
 - Key words/phrases
 - Themes (chapter and book)

Chapter Study

- Observation: what does the passage **say**?
- Interpretation: what does the passage **mean**?
 - Again, Matthew 10:34-39 What does it say vs. what does it mean?
 - Don't forget your Biblical Interpretation Principles
- We have provided a few pages of guides to help with this in practicing S.O.A.P

Thematic Study

- Reading looking for a certain theme
 - Danger of only looking for themes you want to find or only pulling things to match the theme you're looking for. Make sure you understand the big picture first.
- This is what we're doing in Proverbs this semester

Character Study

- Studying a specific person and their story, and then how that story fits into scripture's overall story
 - Danger of focusing on certain aspects or parts of their story that miss the point of the overall story.
- This is what we're doing in the women's study this semester

The SOAP

Bible Study Method

- S:** *scripture*
As you read, write out the verse(s) that stuck out most to you.
- O:** *observation*
What truth can you learn? Are there any warnings? Principles? Commands? What is the overall message of the verse?
- A:** *application*
How does this verse apply to your life today?
How can you live differently in light of this truth?
- P:** *prayer*
Turn these thoughts into prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how to meditate on and apply this scripture to your life.

CARRIED AWAY MINISTRIES

Resources

- The Bible Project
- Commentaries
- Concordances
- Blue Letter Bible
- The Canon of Scriptures by F.F. Bruce
- The Nicene Faith by John Behr
- Books that teach tools for interpretation like Exegetical Fallacies by D.A. Carson

- Why can't I just read it and get it?
- Why is this so hard?
- What mindset should we have when we read the bible?
- What is the goal of reading it (as a Christian)?
 - It all goes back to the heart.
 - Don't get so lost in the act of reading that you forget the purpose of reading.
 - All sorts of people read the bible in all sorts of ways, as Christians we read to learn about and learn from the Lord.

Read, Study, Memorize

- The point is not to get through scripture, but to get scripture through you.
- Read for familiarity
 - Hard at first
 - Gets easier
 - Like all language and communication
- Study for meaning
- Memorize/Meditate for internalization
- All go hand in hand

Encouragement

- Find a friend or a group
- Set aside time daily
- Start your day and end your day by planning out when and how to listen to God through His word

Where do I start?

- Yes!
- The Gospels (Mark is short but Matthew lays it out plainly) or Genesis are good places
- Simultaneously reading the Proverbs or Psalms helps with daily application
- Read books about the bible too – history, scholarly work, the resource page we handed out