

# Check-in

Follow-up on last week:

- ✱ “Aha moments”
- ✱ Questions *[AMA]*
- ✱ Comments
- ✱ Reflections



# What Did Jesus Really Say & Do —“According to” *Matthew*?

- \* March 12 - April 16, 2019
- \* 10:00am - 11:30am
- \* ~4 chapters/week

# Matthew 6

*(2nd third of the Sermon on the Mount)*

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- **19** "Do **NOT** store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;
- **20** but [**DO**] store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also....
- **25** "Therefore I tell you, do **NOT** worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"



# Matthew 6

*(2nd third of the Sermon on the Mount)*

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- **26 [DO] Look at the birds** of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet God feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
- **27** And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?
- **28** And why do you worry about clothing? **[Do] Consider the lilies of the field**, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,
- **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

# Was Jesus Apocalyptic?

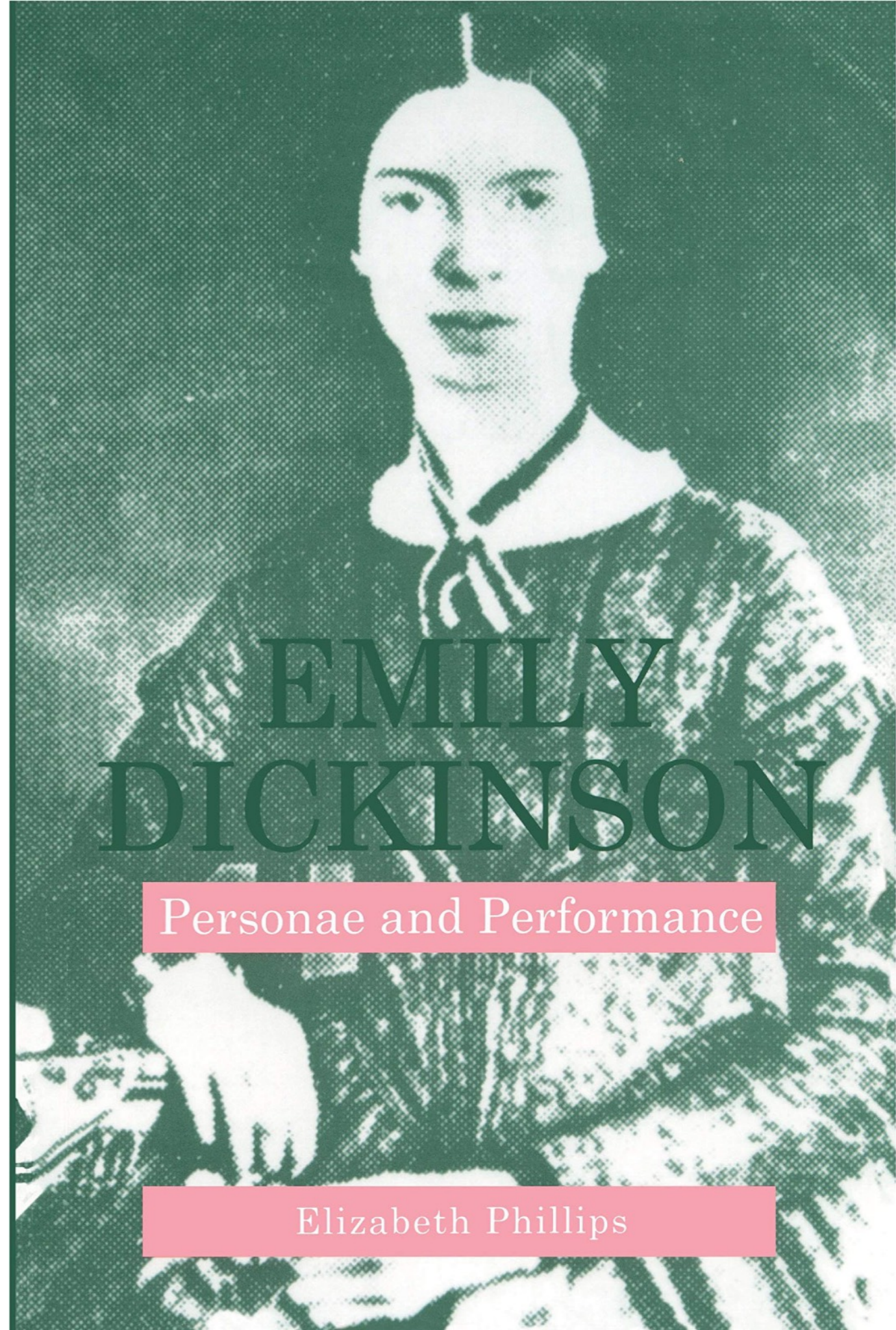
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- Yes: meant “other-worldly”
- No: Jesus embraced life in this world: healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, and eagerly eating and drinking with all manner of people—arguably what the Incarnation is all about.



- Note sent in June of 1884 to Alice Cooper Tuckerman, one of her cousins,

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- to congratulate Alice on the birth of her daughter,
- wrote a word of wisdom for the newborn.
- “Let me commend to Baby’s attention the only Commandment I every obeyed —  
—
- ‘Consider the lilies.’”



# EMILY DICKINSON

Personae and Performance

Elizabeth Phillips



I have been thinking  
about living  
like the lilies  

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that blow in the fields.  
They rise and fall  
in the wedge of the wind,  
and have no shelter  
from the tongues of the cattle,  
and have no closets or cupboards,  
and have no legs.  
Still I would wait all day  
for the green face  
of the hummingbird  
to touch me.  
What I mean is,  
could I forget myself  
even in those feathery fields? ...

# HOUSE OF LIGHT



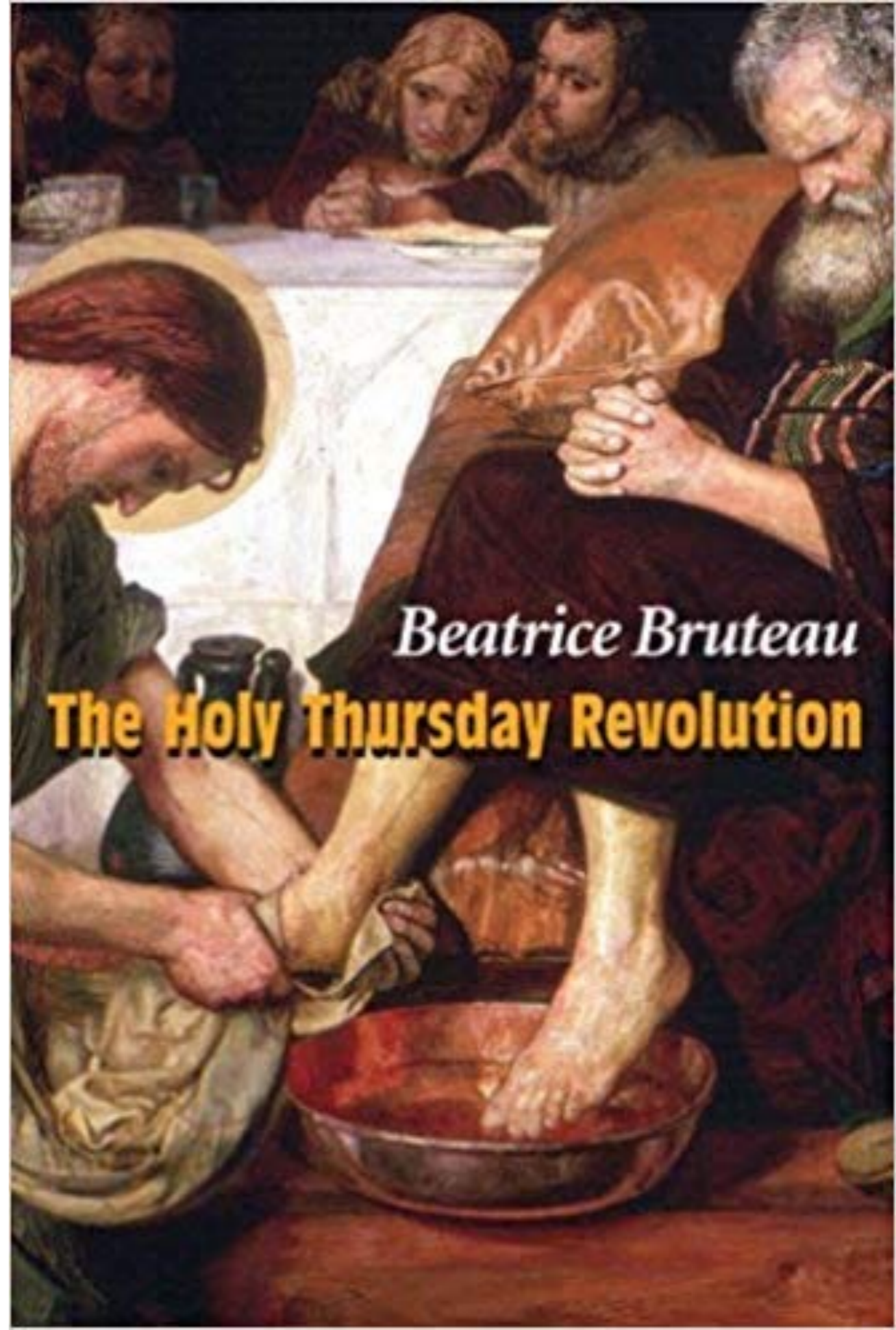
POEMS BY

MARY OLIVER

WINNER OF THE 1984 PULITZER PRIZE FOR POETRY



- Might “Consider the lilies” be as central as teaching as “Love your enemies.”
- Taking to “consider the lilies of the field” and “look at the birds of air” may be precisely what allows you (and Jesus before you) to cultivate the inner peace, equanimity, and interconnection with all things — including your enemies! — that makes loving your enemies conceivable and even possible.
- Story: dog walking *metta*
- [Love neighbor *as self*.]

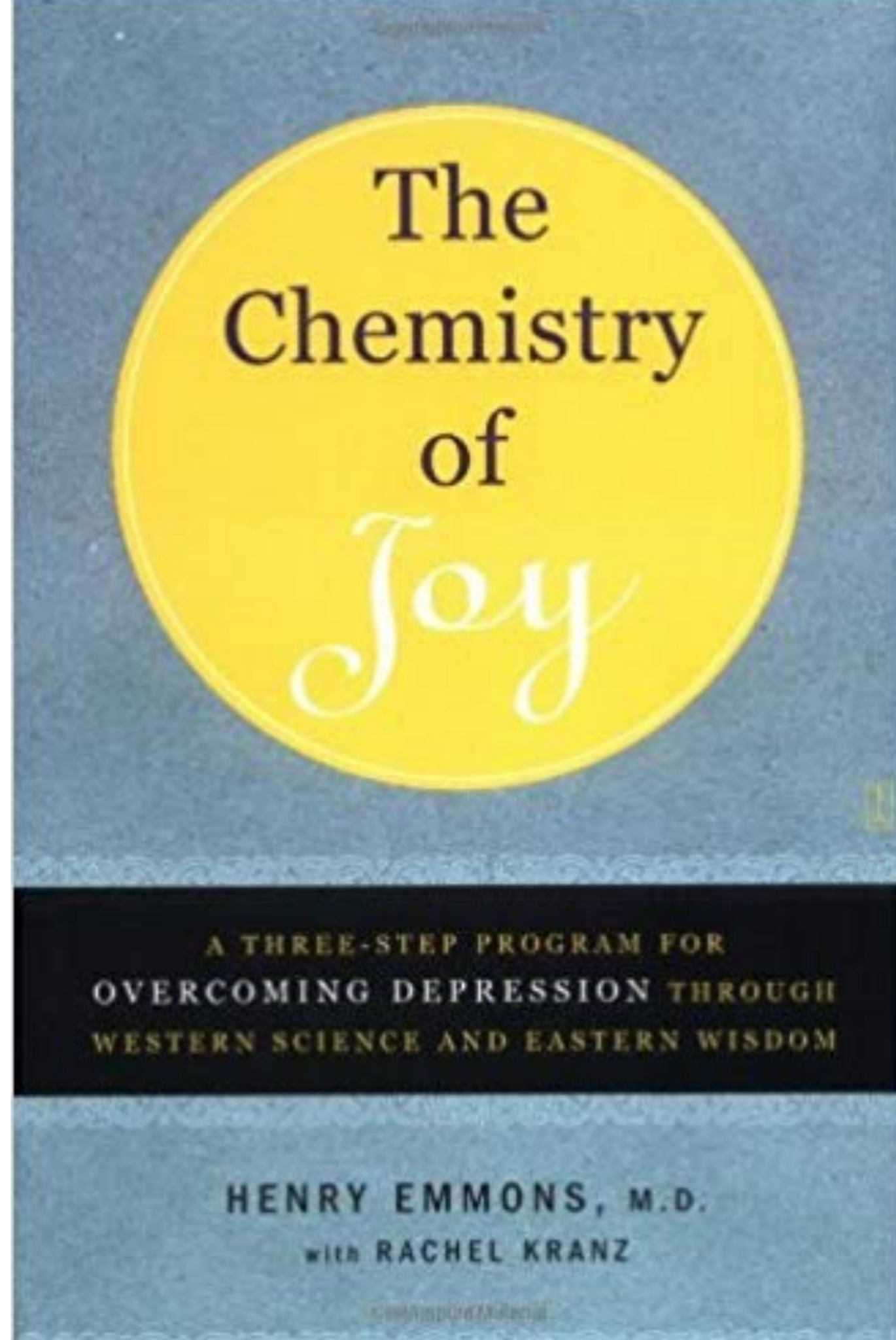




- Mullah Nasrudin has taken up gardening.

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- He loves the flowers and vegetables that he grows, and he becomes an adept gardener.
- But his garden is plagued by dandelions, and Nasrudin begins to grow more and more frustrated at his inability to control them.
- Finally, Nasrudin can bear the dandelion invasion no longer.
- He travels to the city to consult the Prince's gardener, acknowledged throughout the land for his mastery of gardening, and begs for help.





# Islamic Parable

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- The royal gardener gives Nasrudin instructions for the most effective remedy he knows.
- Mullah Nasrudin goes home, full of enthusiasm, and follows the royal gardener's instructions to the letter.
- But still, the dandelions return, just as they always have.
- Really angry now, Nasrudin goes back to the master gardener.



# Islamic Parable

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- “You’re a fraud!” he declares. “Your remedy was no better than the rest! What else can I do about these dandelions?”
- The master gardener looks thoughtful and strokes his chin.
- Finally, he says softly, “Mullah Nasrudin, there is only one thing to do.
- **You must learn to love the dandelions.”**



# Matthew 7

*(Sermon on the Mount, part 3 of 3)*

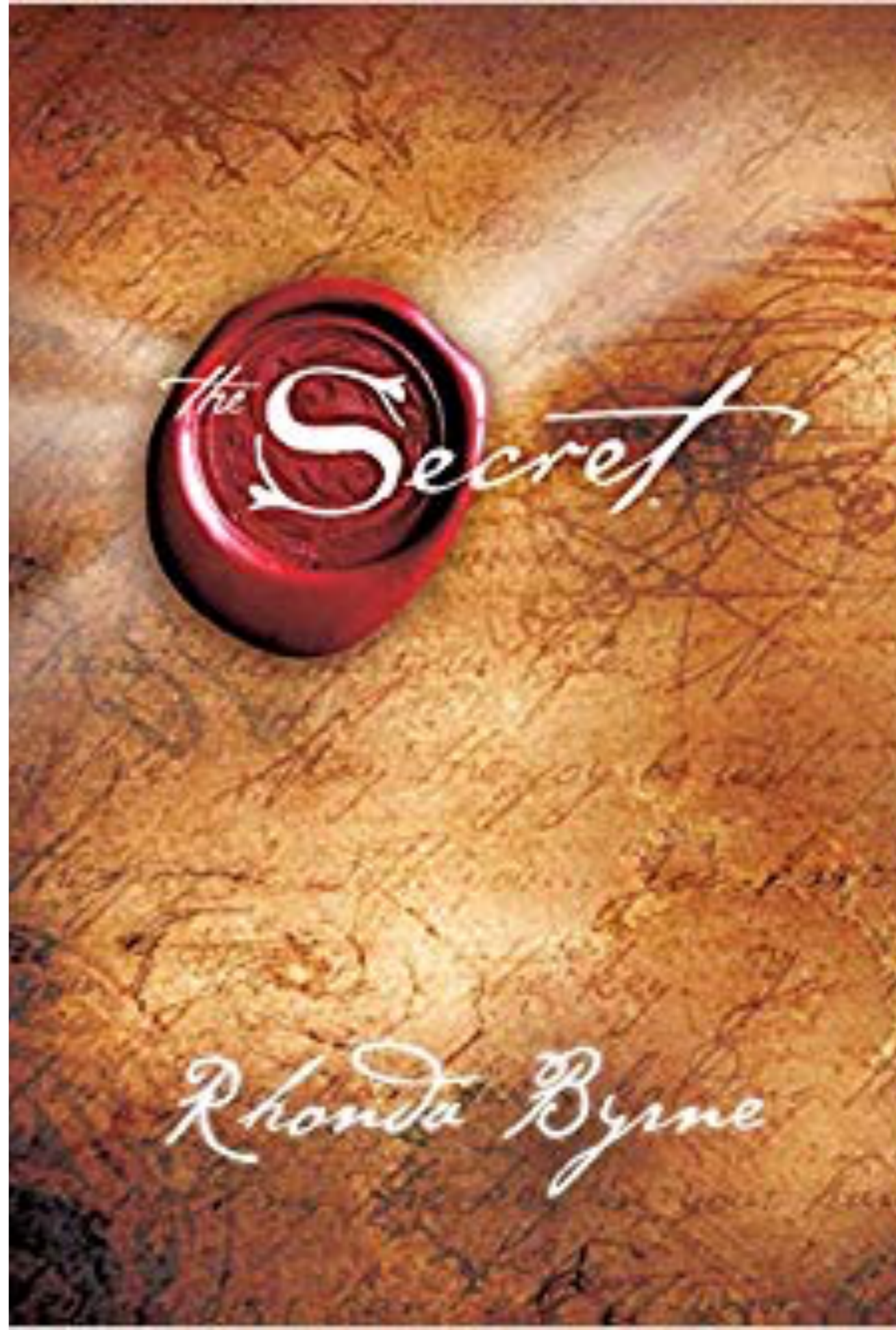
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- Jesus did not deliver this address (Matthew 5-7) as one, long continuous monologue.
- Matthew has arranged this first (of 5) large blocks of Jesus' teachings in Matthew's Gospel as an intentional parallel to the Torah (the so-called "Five Books of Moses").
- "Matthew's Jesus" as the "new Moses"

- Sometimes taking Jesus *seriously*, but not literally?

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- Verses 7-8: “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”
- Really?
- If Jesus is the lamb of God, does that mean that Mary had a little lamb?!





- Jesus only said ~20% of what the Gospel attribute to him.

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- Red: Jesus did say the passage quoted, or something very much like the passage.
- Pink: Jesus probably said something like the passage.
- Grey: Jesus did not say the passage, but it contains Jesus' ideas.
- Black: Jesus did not say the passage—it comes from later admirers or a different tradition.

# THE FIVE GOSPELS

WHAT DID JESUS REALLY

*The Search for the  
Authentic Words of Jesus*

NEW TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

ROBERT W. FUNK,

ROY W. HOOVER,

AND THE JESUS SEMINAR

- Verses 7-8: “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”
- Jesus Seminar: Otoh, “gross exaggeration”: people ask for things all the time and do not get what they want. People search for things all the time and did not find them. And people knock on all sorts of doors — whether physical or metaphorical — and these doors remain locked.
- Otoh, if Jesus didn’t say something similar to this oddball passage, then Matthew would never have included the saying in his Gospel.
- In Q: potentially embarrassing, but Matthew perhaps felt “stuck with it” or obliged to include it because it was so well know.
- *One Interpretation*: “Everyone who asks (God) receives (*but they will not necessarily receive what they thought they were asking for!*), and everyone who searches finds (*but not necessarily what they thought they were searching for!*), and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened (*but not necessarily the door they thought would open!*)”



# Further Adventures in Taking Jesus Seriously, But Not Always Literally

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- **24** Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. **25** The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.
- **26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **27** The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell — and great was its fall!”
- **28** Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, **29** for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

# Further Adventures in Taking Jesus Seriously, But Not Always Literally

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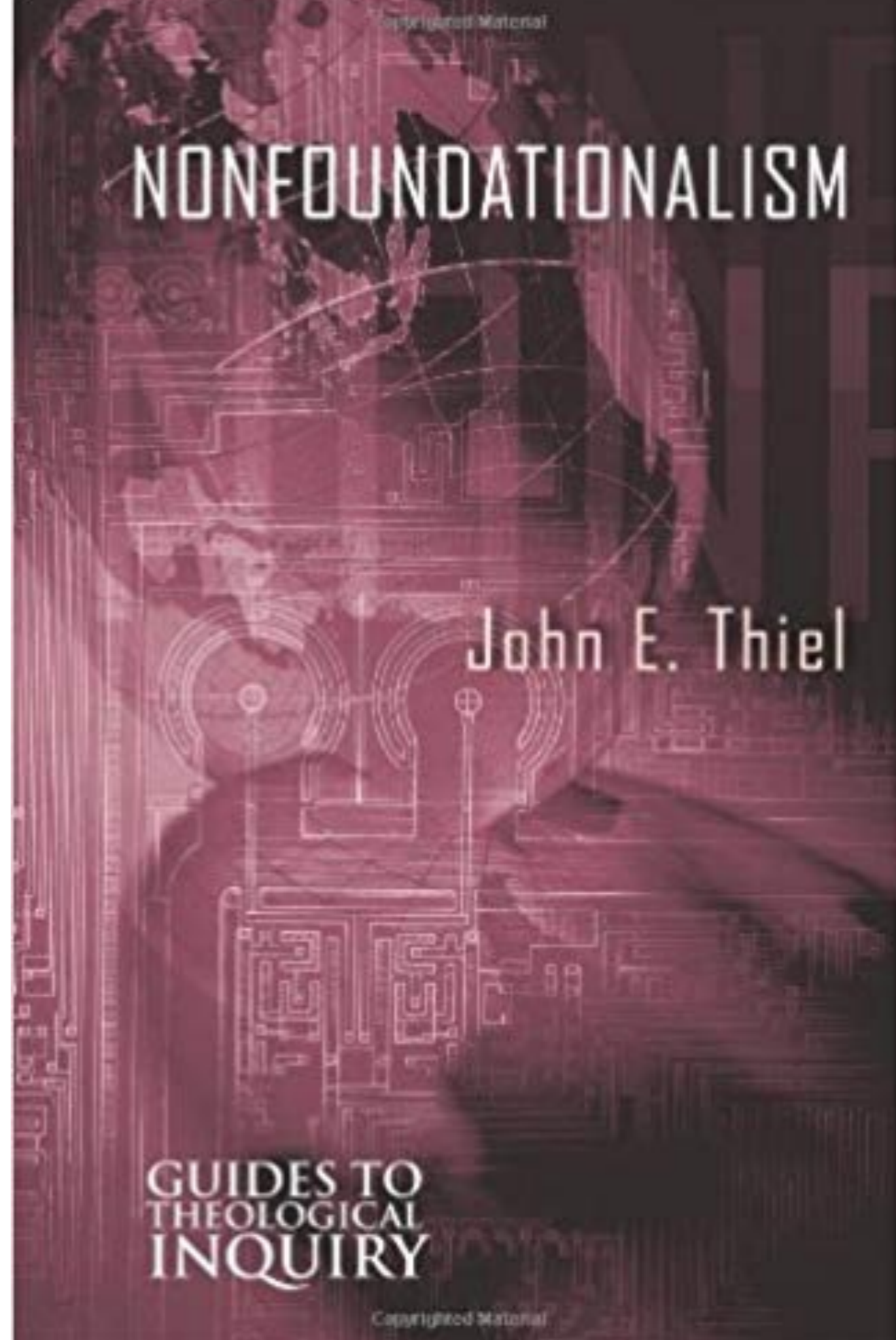
- 7:24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on **rock**.”
- 16:18 “You are Peter, and on this **rock** I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”
- Likely indicates Peter’s ‘bedrock,’ ‘foundational’ role in the Christian communities with which Matthew was familiar and most interested in supporting and promoting.



What if sand is all we have?

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- Knowledge as a 'raft' rather than as a 'pyramid'
- Floating on ever-moving currents of time & culture
- Rather than certain truths timelessly fixed in never-shifting rock.
- Socrates: wisest man in Athens because aware of his ignorance.
- Decenterings: Copernicus, Darwin, Freud, Einstein, Hubble





A serene sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of purple, pink, and orange. In the foreground, a small, weathered wooden boat with a blue hull is positioned on the water. The boat's reflection is visible in the calm water. In the background, there are some structures and more boats on the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

The opposite of faith is  
not doubt, it's certainty.

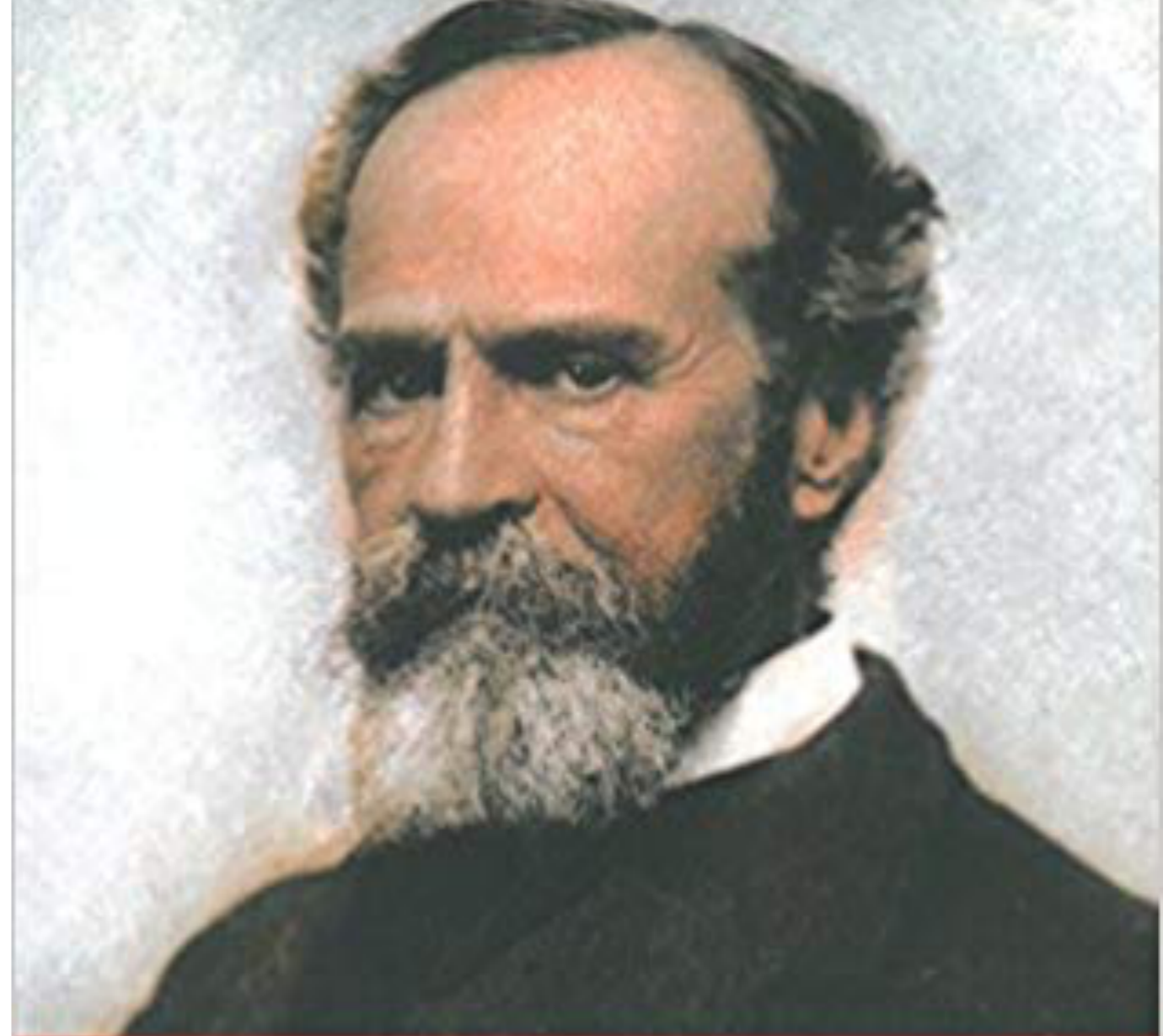
Anne Lamott



## Final Verse of Sermon on the Mount

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- “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”
- “Churches, when once established, live at secondhand upon tradition;
- but the *founders* of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their direct personal communion with the divine”



William James

# The Varieties of Religious Experience

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Jaroslav Pelikan



PAPERBACK CLASSICS

## Transition from Sermon on the Mount

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- Matthew 5-7: “Sermon on the Mount”
- Matthew 8:1, “When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him....” [*Moses also came down from the mountain*]



# How Does Matthew Read the “Bible” (as it was in his day)

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- Matthew 8: 14 When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; *15* he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. *16* That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. *17* **This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah,** "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."
- Matthew the Editor, not the Historical Jesus.

# How Does Isaiah Read the “Bible” (as it was in his day)

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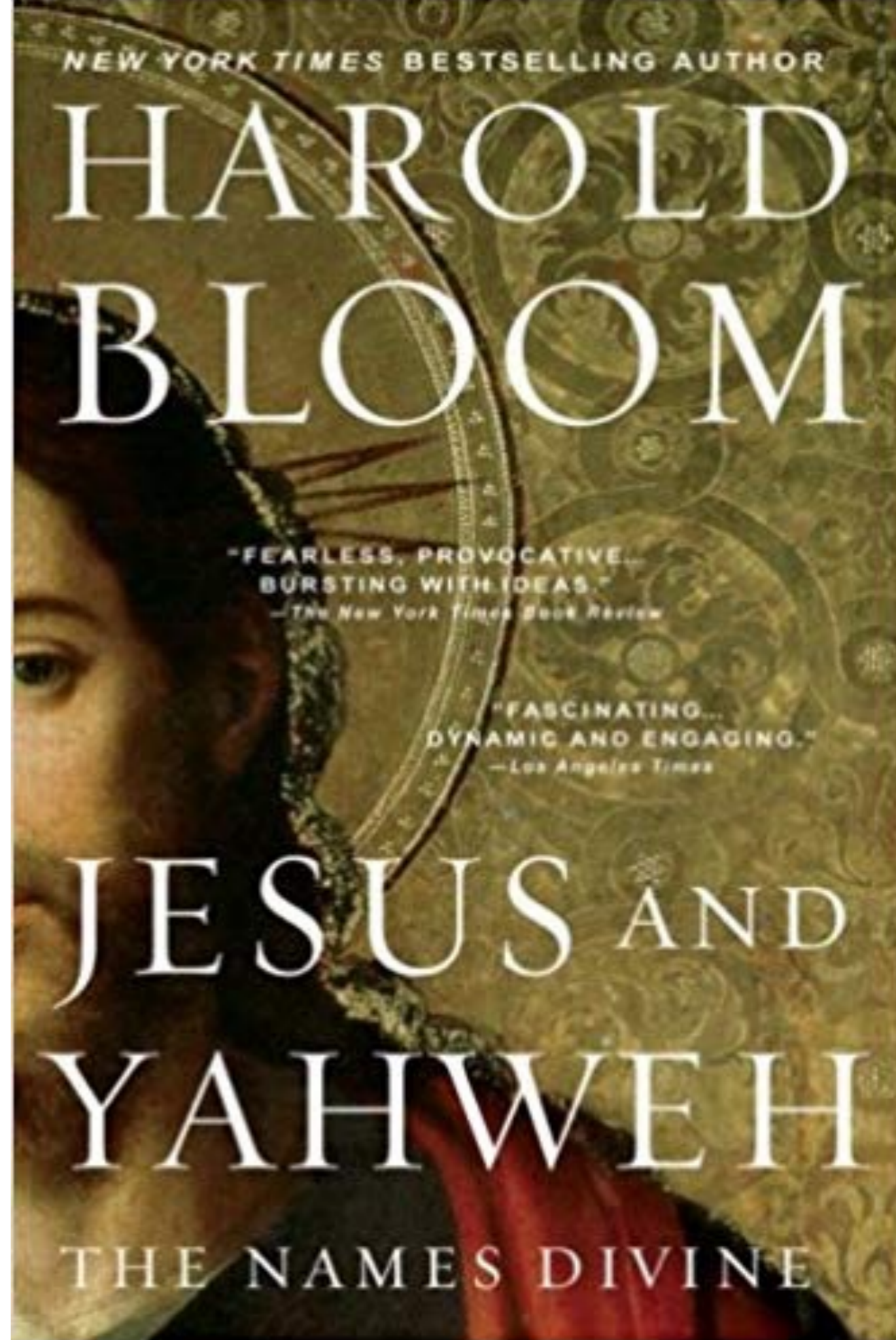
- Isaiah 53:4, which Matthew is quoting, is from a section of Isaiah known as the Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12).
- The first three are significantly shorter (42:1-4; 49:1-6; and 50:4-9).
- Original prophecy more than five centuries before Jesus about the Jewish exiles in Babylon *in Isaiah’s own day*.
- Complex and anguished record of Isaiah wrestling with how to comfort and challenge, critique and inspire the exiles regarding the thorny question of how God could allow them to be exiled in the first place as well as how they could restore themselves to God’s favor. [*Deuteronomistic History*]



## On Christian readings of Jewish Scriptures

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- "Christians stole our watch,
- and for the past 2,000 years have been trying to tell us what time it is."

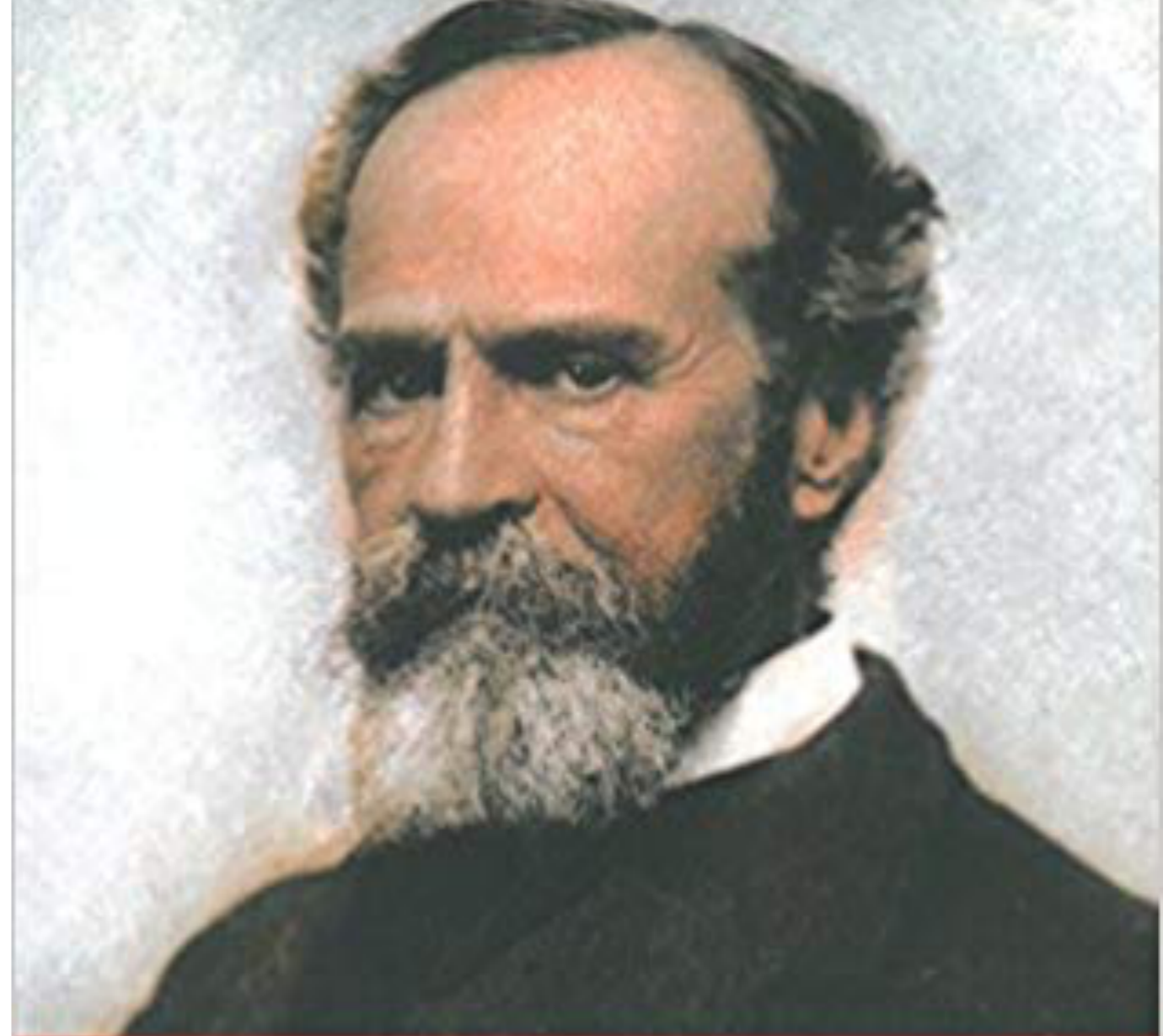




## Firsthand Religion

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- “Churches, when once established, live at secondhand upon tradition;
- but the *founders* of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their direct personal communion with the divine”
- Are we any less free, than Matthew or Isaiah (or Paul), etc. to do our best to interpret in our day—as they did in their day?



William James

# The Varieties of Religious Experience

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Jaroslav Pelikan



# How Does Matthew Read the “Bible”

## Matthew 9:9-13

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- 9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him. 10 And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ 12 But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **13 Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.**’
- **Quoting Hosea 6:6**



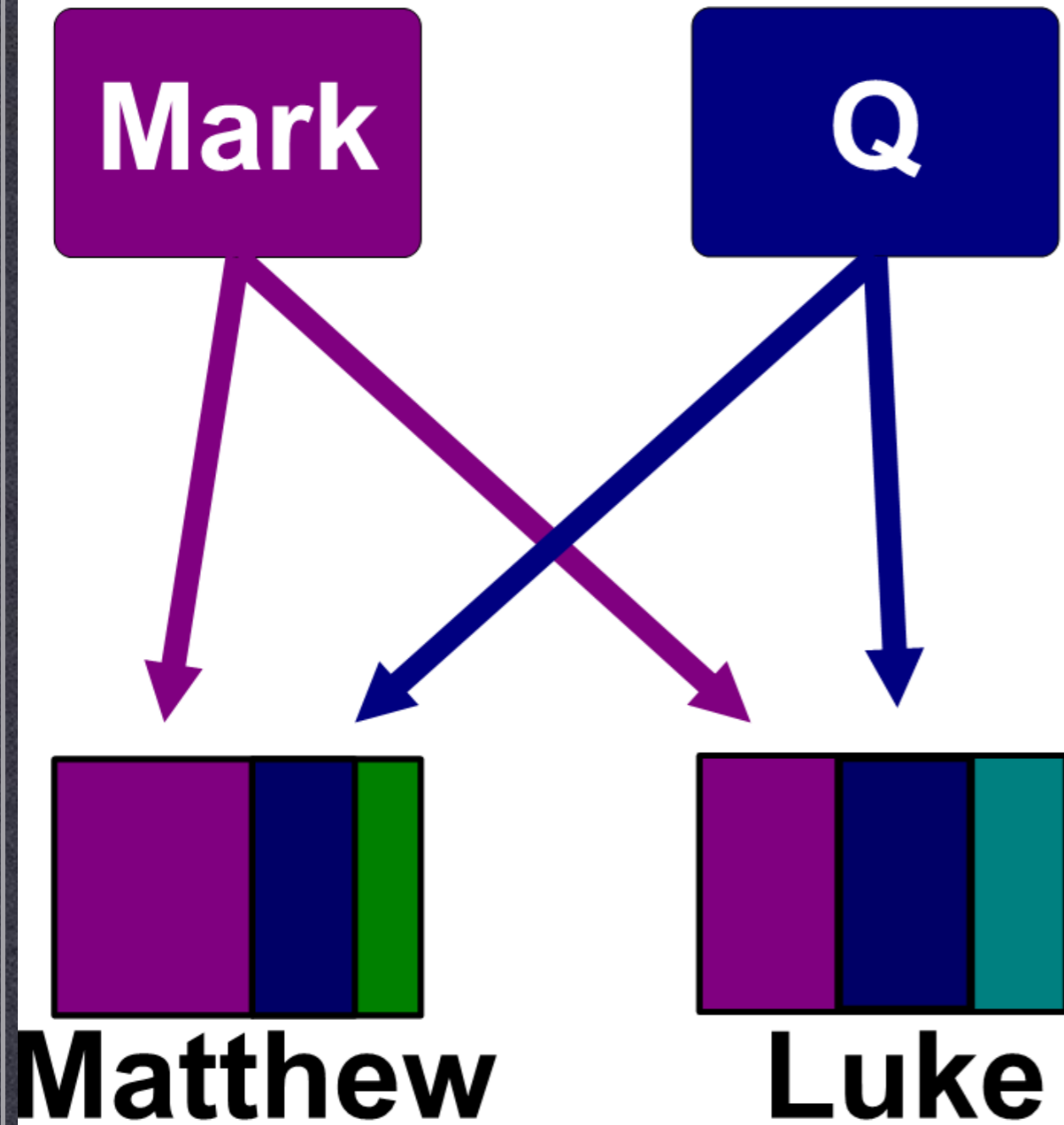
# How Does Matthew Read the “Bible”

## Matthew 9:9-13

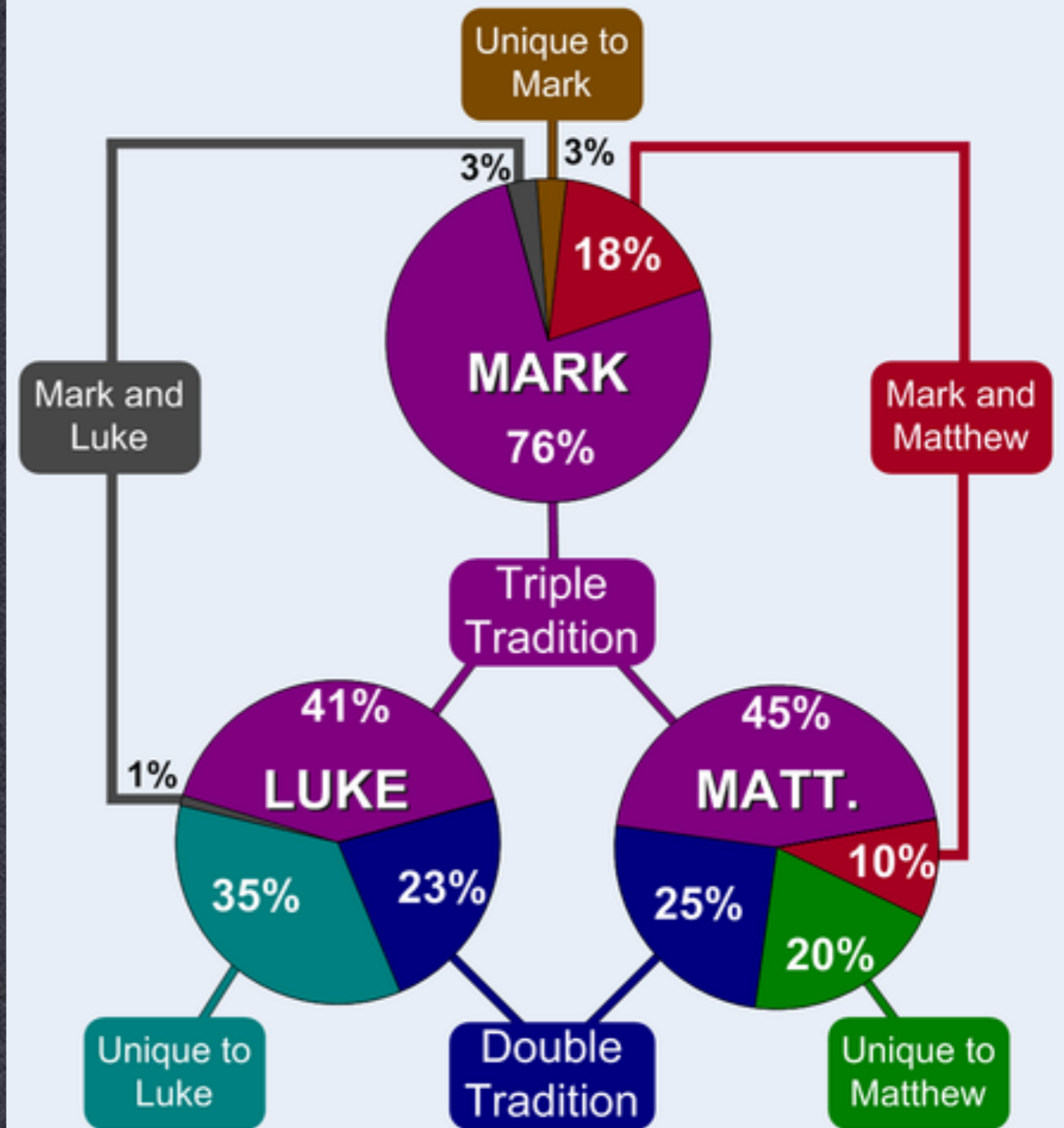
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- Note Matthew’s editorial insertion, *“This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet....”*
- “Matthew’s Jesus” quotes Hosea 6:6, “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’”
- Some scholars: Matthew put this quote from Hosea in Jesus mouth (not in Mark or Luke—but in Matthew a second time in Matthew 12:7)

# Two-source Hypothesis



# Relationships between the Synoptic Gospels



**SYNOPTIC PROBLEM**



# Putting the Two HB Quotes in Conversation

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- *17* This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "**He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.**"
- "Matthew's Jesus" quotes Hosea 6:6, "Go and learn what this means, '**I desire mercy, not sacrifice.**'" (*twice...pay attention to what you repeat*)
- What if Isaiah & Matthew got it *wrong* that, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."
- And what if Hosea & (Matthew's) Jesus got it *right* that, "God desires mercy, not sacrifice"?

# Jesus's Standard Operating Procedure (Matthew 10)

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- **5** These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, **6** but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
- **7** As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’
- **8** Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.
- **9** Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, **10** no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food.
- **11** Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. **12** As you enter the house, greet it. **13** If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.
- **14** If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. **15** Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.
- **16** See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”



“Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”?

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- Inclusive?
- Matthew 15: Jesus & the Canaanite women. (//: Mark 7 Syrophenician woman)
- Reiteration: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” She changes his mind, & he heals her daughter.
- Paul: fully and unabashedly include the Gentiles.
- Gentile-inclusion unclear: Paul vs. Peter over traditional Jewish boundary markers (circumcision, eating kosher, and practicing Sabbath).
- Luke 2: “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature.”

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food.”

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- vs. “Jesus died on the cross for your sins”  
[deeds vs. creeds, belief vs. behavior]
- Mark 1:1,14-15: Good News proclaimed *about Jesus* after his death is different that the Good News that *Jesus himself proclaimed* while he was still very much alive. [finger pointing at moon]
- //: Manna in Wilderness Wanderings (Exodus 16 & Numbers 11)
- Gandhi: “There’s enough for everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed.”



# //: Francis of Assisi (13th century way of Jesus)

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- Francis's *Testament*, circulated after his death, included a strongly worded call to the friars to remain poor and lowly, never to seek protection or privileges from the church hierarchy.
  - Brother Elias was constructing in Assisi a basilica in Francis's honor.
  - Francis's friend Hugolino, now Pope Gregory IX, intervened to clarify the Rule and to set the conscience of the order at ease with regard to the goods they used."
- Francis' brother Elias and Francis' friend Hugolino essentially began the betrayal of the original vision in the same way as did Jesus' brother James and Jesus' friend Peter.
- After the death of the founder, they sought to reassure themselves and any other "Rich Young Rulers" that Jesus did not really mean what he said when he was alive. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bObItmxAGc>]

“Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.”

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- End at “Conclusion”: [youtube.com/watch?v=3bObItmxAGc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bObItmxAGc)

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- Jesus’ earliest followers — like Jesus himself — were **peasants**.
- Many, like Jesus, were also **homeless** — many, in part, due to rapacious tax policies from the Roman Empire.
- Note: If knocking on doors, Jesus’ SOP, assumes that *not* everyone is homeless.
- The extent to which we householders do (or do not) extend hospitality is the extent to which we will be deemed worthy (or unworthy)



“Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”

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- Genesis 18: sin in this infamous scripture is *inhospitality*, not homosexuality.
- Abraham’s debate with God concerns the lack of “righteousness” in Sodom, not the presence of same-sex relationships.
- Ezekiel 16:49, which says, “This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.” [*“Ezekiel’s Bible” ...waves of canon*]
- Prop 8 the Musical: [youtube.com/watch?v=B\\_hyT7\\_Bx9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_hyT7_Bx9o)

# Check-out

What have *resonated* most with you: excited or disturbed?

- \* “Aha moments”
- \* Questions
- \* Comments
- \* Reflections