

The Antitheist meets the Shepherd: A response to Yoram Hazony's *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*

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Yoram Hazony's book begins by asking whether there is something important missing in our understanding of the Hebrew Bible (2012, ix). His answer, as you might have expected, is yes. But the nature of the answer is something you might not have anticipated. According to Hazony, the problem is that we think of the Bible as works of revelation rather than reason. Hazony does not deny that the Hebrew Bible is a work of revelation, but he does worry that this confession has obscured the fact that these works were (and are) first and foremost exercises in philosophical reasoning.

As I read *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* I began to wonder how Hazony's conception of the Bible would stand up against the vociferous critiques of the new atheists. Admittedly, a new atheist might appear to be a rather curious choice for an interlocutor given that, when it comes to religion, they are typically the very antithesis of nuanced and charitable critical analysis. Even so, there is value in choosing a new atheist as an interlocutor given their effectiveness at summarizing common objections to the Bible with all the skill of the populist rhetorician. We can put it this way: it would surely be foolhardy to suggest that the worth of a tent be judged by its ability to withstand a hurricane. Nonetheless, if a tent *can* withstand a hurricane surely that would count in its favor. Similarly, while it would be foolhardy to judge Hazony's view of the Bible simply on its ability to neutralize new atheist incredulity, nonetheless, if it can provide a viable response to new atheist incredulity, that would surely count in its favor.

With that in mind, I have decided to invite to the table perhaps the most vitriolic of the new atheists, the late Christopher Hitchens. Can Hazony's treatment of the Bible respond effectively to the main objections raised by this fierce critic? To answer this question, I will look briefly at Hitchens' bestseller *god is not Great* (2007) where we will see that he rejects the Bible for its alleged triviality, ignorant provincialism and immorality. On each point we will find that Hazony's treatment of the Bible as works of philosophy offers a reply. But Hazony's account is not without problems. I will close by noting one important objection: while Hazony states that the biblical writers view their works as vindicated by concordance with moral reason and received wisdom, those texts contain much content that seems to violate moral reason and received wisdom. While Hazony's view allows the reader to resolve this tension by repudiating specific readings of problem texts, this leaves us in danger of saving the Bible by reducing it to the pliant wax into which we press the seal of our own errant perspectives.

We begin with popular skeptical views of the Bible, and that brings us to chapter 7 of Hitchens' bestseller *god is not Great*, which is titled: "Revelation: The

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Nightmare of the 'Old' Testament." Hitchens starts off by stating the popular view of the Bible as revelation: "On certain very special occasions, it is asserted, the divine will was made known by direct contact with randomly selected human beings, who were supposedly vouchsafed unalterable laws that could then be passed on to those less favored." (2007, 97) On this view, the Bible purportedly consists of a collection of universal, unchanging laws which were supernaturally revealed to particular individuals and should be received passively, without question by the reader. As Psalm 119:160 declares, "All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal." Or in the words of the Christian fundamentalist bumper-sticker, "God said it. I believe it. That settles it."

This leads to Hitchens' first problem with the Bible. If this material really constitutes a novel revelation, then why does much of it appear to be *common* knowledge? After all, as he observes, the ancient Hebrews certainly didn't need the Ten Commandments to figure out that it is wrong to engage in murder, adultery, theft or perjury (2007, 99). So the biblical text fails the first hurdle in that it attempts to pawn off common knowledge as some sort of otherworldly revelation.

Second, Hitchens believes that the Bible's revelatory status is undermined by the undeniable gross ignorance and provincialism of the ancient Hebrews. As he sees it, the Bible consists of a collection of writings from uneducated, ignorant, and superstitious country folk who resided in the obscurity of a "Middle Eastern wasteland" (2007, 98). Consequently, any attempt to grant this "hopelessly knotted skein of fable" (2007, 103) authority in guiding contemporary life is foolhardy. Indeed, on Hitchens' view, basing our contemporary ethics and philosophy on the Bible would be as foolish as basing contemporary medicine on the ancient Greek theory of the humors.

Hitchens' final objection to the biblical text is arguably the most serious as he charges that the Bible flatly contradicts our moral knowledge. To be sure, Hitchens acknowledges that the Bible includes commands that are good (e.g. "Love thy neighbor"). But he quickly adds that it also commands and commends innumerable actions and states of affairs which are evil, from the enslavement of peoples to the practice of ethnic cleansing to a litany of barbarous punitive acts codified as part of a brutish legal code (2007, 102). In summary, for Hitchens the only proper response to the Bible is categorical rejection or what he calls "antitheism", the assertion of the rational mind and moral will over-against the arbitrary power of an immoral and capricious deity.¹

Yoram Hazony is well aware of the common assumption that the Bible purports to be "miraculous knowledge, to be accepted in gratitude and believed in faith." (2012, 1) And he also recognizes that this view tends to place revelation and reason in a zero-sum relationship where the more revelatory the Bible is, the less reasonable it becomes. Consequently, as Hazony observes, "Outside of religious circles, the Bible is often seen as bearing a taint of irrationality, folly and irrelevance,

¹ Elsewhere Hitchens expands on the antitheist position by describing it as a Promethean revolt against a despotic deity who would otherwise seek to monitor and control our every move. See (2001), 55-56.

the direct result of its reputation as a consummate work of unreason.” (2012, 3) And this, of course, is precisely what we see in the incredulity of Christopher Hitchens.

Hazony provides an intriguing response to this popular, skeptical view. And it goes to the source of the problem, the assumption that the Bible is a collection of works of revelation *instead of* reason: “I propose that if we want to understand the ideas the Hebrew Scriptures were written to advance, we should read these texts much as we read the writings of Plato or Hobbes – as works of reason or philosophy, composed to assist individuals and nations looking to discover the true and the good in accordance with man’s natural abilities.” (2012, 31) It’s a bold move. But at first blush it hardly comports with what we find in the Bible. Consider, for example, the prophets who deliver divinely sourced messages with the ringing endorsement, “Thus saith the Lord”. Such phrasing certainly seems to fit with Hitchens’ view of the Bible as a product arising directly from “the divine will”.

Hazony responds by pointing out that the motif of speaking on behalf of a divine being was widespread at the time the Hebrew prophets wrote. For example, Greek philosopher Parmenides prefaces his philosophical disquisition by describing his ascension into the sky to receive revelations from a goddess. As blushing revelatory as this may seem, this ethereal prologue was never considered to provide grounds to exclude Parmenides from the canon of philosophy. Moreover, Hazony points out that similar language is found in other Greeks including Empedocles and even Socrates himself who freely describes “revelations and commands and dreams from the gods that give form and content to his life and work.” (2012, 38) Once we appreciate how “revelatory” ancient Greek philosophy was, it begins to look like a mere historical accident that we baptize the Greek writers as genuine philosophers while consigning their Hebrew counterparts to the hinterland of otherworldly revelation.

So from where did this opposition between Greek reason and Hebrew revelation arise? Hazony identifies several factors including Enlightenment philhellenism, a strain of anti-Semitism, and a skepticism about the final form of the texts borne of source critical analysis. Finally, he points out that the Hebrew Bible has long been read through the spectrum of the New Testament, a set of writings which in Hazony’s view do fit in more naturally with the revelation/reason opposition. For example, Hazony contrasts Jesus’ use of parables as a tool to obscure understanding for the uninitiated with the Hebrew prophet’s use of parables “to make difficult subjects *easier to understand....*” (2012, 85) Moreover, time and again the New Testament highlights the centrality of a specially given deposit of revelation (e.g. 1 Peter 1:12) which confounds human wisdom (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). All these factors conspire to perpetuate the stark revelation/reason opposition that we then errantly read back into the Hebrew Bible.

Before proceeding, I need to take issue with Hazony’s view that the New Testament contrasts with the Old in conforming to the traditional reason/revelation dichotomy. While there certainly are New Testament passages that seem to support this dichotomy, many others do not. As both Dallas Willard (1999) and Douglas Groothuis (2003) have argued, Jesus himself was a top notch logician and philosopher; Paul reasoned with the philosophers at Mars Hill with appeal to their altar to an unknown God and the testimony of their own Stoic philosophers (Acts

17:28); when John called Jesus the Word (John 1:1) he was clearly drawing an affinity with both Hebrew and Greek concepts of *logos*; even the central confession in Jesus as risen messiah was presented not simply as a blind confession of faith, but instead as one rooted in the testimony of his works and the historical evidence for his resurrection (John 10:25; Acts 1:3). Consequently, if we are to view the Old Testament as consisting of works of reason, it is reasonable to extend the same ascription to the New Testament, or at least much of it.

So what happens to Hitchens' charges if we begin to examine the Bible as works of reason? Consider first the charge of triviality sourced in the assumption that revelation should present novel claims otherwise inaccessible to reason. Hazony counters that the law should be viewed not as the negation of human wisdom, but rather as the best example of it: "Far from claiming to have privileged insight into inscrutable secrets, Moses presents his law as being precisely what the other nations of the world should readily be able to recognize as 'wisdom,' 'understanding,' and 'justice.'" (2012, 61) The law is vindicated as it is seen to be "fitted to man's nature and directed toward his well-being." (2012, 23) As a result, the very reasonableness of mandates like the Ten Commandments counts not against the Hebrew Bible but rather for it.

Hitchens' second objection centers on the provincial ignorance of these texts from a "Middle Eastern wasteland". Hazony's response on this point is particularly powerful as he illumines the high level of philosophical sophistication in these works. Far from being a "hopelessly knotted skein of fable," the Deuteronomic history is "a masterpiece of political philosophy" (2012, 141) which explores through narrative a treasure trove of philosophical topics including the tension between anarchy and government, the best forms of political organization, the responsibilities of political leaders, and so on. The same sophistication is found in the prophets. Hazony devotes one chapter to Jeremiah's profound epistemological reflections at a time of social crisis. In Jeremiah's view, the people have misunderstood the value of the temple, viewing it as a mechanistic means to attain absolution rather than true repentance (2012, 168). Hazony points out that we have often misunderstood Jeremiah's references to the heart (*lev*) by anachronistically reading into them an opposition of the emotional heart over-against the rational mind. In fact, the Hebrew recognized no such opposition, and *lev* is really best understood as referring to the seat of cognitive reflection. Jeremiah also embraces a sober assessment of human epistemic limitations which helps explain the degree to which the leaders of his age have been led astray. He also rejects fideism for while the heart may be deceitful, there is no other faculty of belief to which we can turn (2012, 173). Instead, he recommends a careful engagement with reality in the confidence that truth will ultimately impress itself upon us, despite our fallible limitations.

The third and most devastating antitheistic charge is that of immoral content. The problem is magnified by the common assumption that biblical ethics consists of little more than unthinking acquiescence to arbitrary and even immoral divine commands, or as Hazony says, "doing whatever God commands you to do." (2012, 103) Such a simplistic ethic begs the question of what one is to do when God appears to command actions that are not only unreasonable but even evil, such as

the directive to sacrifice Isaac. While Hazony recognizes that the Biblical writers maintain an expectation of obedience toward God's commands, they also allow for conscientious objectors (2012, 135), as found in the many individuals who dissent from God's commands without facing divine retribution. This suggests that biblical ethics is something much more than blind obedience, as it draws upon one's own reasoning and moral intuitions in order to discern what of the divine will to follow.

Hazony believes that this reflective ethical response is exemplified in the type of the shepherd which is set over-against the slavish and submissive piety of the farmer (2012, 24). These two types recur often in the biblical text beginning with the conflict between Cain the farmer and Abel the shepherd. Starting with God's choice of Abel's offering over that of Cain we find a pattern emerging where God shows his preference for the free, independent spirit of the shepherd. This continues with a long line of shepherds including Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and beyond (2012, 69, 105). While the farmer submits without question to the perceived divine will, the shepherd dares to speak back to God. Consider, as an example Abel's response to the curse that God has placed on the land: "The fact that God has decreed it, and that his father has submitted to it, does not make it good. His response is the opposite of submission: He *resists* with ingenuity and daring..."² Such resistance isn't always a sign of rebellion: in the shepherd it can manifest integrity, a depth of moral character, and the honesty of genuine relationship.

This surprising situation begs an important question. If individuals are going to challenge the divine command, then on what basis do they cast their dissenting vote? Hazony believes the protest is rooted in a prior grasp of the universal moral law which is "portrayed as being prior to almost all of the laws or commands God gives to human beings." (2012, 104) For example, Abraham appeals to God to spare Sodom with the call: "Will not the judge of all the earth do right?" Moses does the same by turning God's wrath away from the destruction of Israel. Jacob wrestles through the night with the Angel of the Lord for a blessing. There is a long list of shepherds wrestling with God, and together these passages challenge the notion that biblical ethics consists merely in unflinching obedience to God's revealed commands (2012, 136). In fact, God embraces and approves "those who disobey for the sake of what is right, and is capable of being pleased when a man has used his freedom to wrestle with him and to prevail, so long as the path on behalf of which he struggles ultimately proves to be the right one in God's eyes." (2012, 138)

Nor is it merely particular individuals within the community of Israel who are called to the free life of the shepherd and who seek to live guided by deeply-seated moral intuitions of the right, good and just. God intended all Israel to become a nation of shepherds who will not accept the commands of a human or divine sovereign unless it conforms to the ethics of the shepherd (2012, 138). Consequently, far from being merely a prophetic outlier, the shepherd is intended to represent the national spirit at its heart. And this means that Israel's God is not a deity who snuffs out the Promethean spirit, or even one who merely tolerates it.

² 2012, 108. Further, "God is not particularly impressed with piety, with sacrifices, with doing what you are told to do and what your fathers did before you. He is not even that impressed with doing what you believe has been decreed by God." 2012, 109.

Instead, he is one who fans the flame and rewards those with enough gumption to cast a dissenting vote guided by their own innate sense of justice.

But what then about that paradigmatic example of human subservience to the inscrutable divine will which is placed so prominently in the narrative and tradition, namely the offering of Isaac? Isn't this the very embodiment of that servile submission to the morally unconscionable that motivates antitheism? Hitchens believes so as he brusquely observes, "There is no softening the plain meaning of this frightful story." (2007, 206) For Hitchens, the story is simple and morally horrifying: God commanded Abraham to murder his son (2007, 207).

Hazoni believes this interpretation of the Akedah is mistaken and he attributes the error to Hebrews 11:17-19 which lauds Abraham for his willingness to sacrifice his son in the hope of a resurrection.³ Hazoni counters that this interpretation contradicts the explicit denunciation of child sacrifice in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Moreover, Genesis 22 provides clear indicators that Abraham never believed God would really require him to sacrifice Isaac. Hazoni's view certainly is more palatable, though it does leave the Christian with the need to address the allegedly errant interpretation of Hebrews.

There can be little doubt that Hazoni's treatment of the Bible goes far in redressing many of the new atheist criticisms. It turns out that the Bible affirms philosophical reasoning rather than decrying it, it encourages careful reflection rather than discouraging it, and it boasts penetrating philosophical commentary to rival that of the greatest Greeks. To be sure, this kind of exposition does not in itself establish that the Bible is a genuine revelation, nor does it aim to. But it seems reasonable to suppose that if God were to appropriate human works as media of divine revelation, he would be more likely to appropriate intellectually serious and sophisticated works of human literature rather than works that are intellectually trite and superficial. Thus, by defending the Bible as an intellectually serious collection of sophisticated philosophical works, Hazoni neutralizes much of the incredulity that keeps new atheists from considering these texts as bearers of important truth and, at least possibly, of revelation.

The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture goes far toward defusing the antitheistic protests of new atheists like Christopher Hitchens. The case is arguably strongest on the second point relating to the alleged ignorance and provincialism of the Hebrews. After one reads Hazoni's careful exposition of Jeremiah's epistemology, the Deuteronomic history as political philosophy, and the Hebrew concept of truth over-against the familiar Aristotelian alternative, Hitchens' cursory dismissal of the texts as intellectually primitive looks blushing ignorant.

³ Hazoni comments: "This horrifying line of argument has gained currency in part because the New Testament appears to be committed to this view...." (2012, 311). He then asserts: "I am afraid that in introducing this New Testament trope, advocates of this view risk missing the entire point of the story, which is that the God of Israel, unlike other gods of Canaan, would never will the murder of an innocent person. The sacrifice of children is, as I've said, described in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as that which God hates, that for which the Canaanites are to be expelled from their land and, indeed, put to death. Hebrew Scripture knows of no happy results that can come about after Isaac is dead." (2012, 311-2).

However, the results are somewhat more ambiguous when it comes to the first point on triviality and the third on morality. Here we can begin by returning to Hazony's answer to the triviality objection. As we have seen, he asserts that these writings should be taken as exemplifying the best of human reason. He explains further:

the History does not present the law of Moses as superseding or abrogating the natural law that came before it. The natural order and the natural law are still there, in the History as in the orations of the prophets. And these permit us to look beyond obedience and that which appears to be required in a given moment, to seek what God truly loves, and what the Mosaic law is truly intended to achieve (2012, 139).

This may defuse Hitchens' triviality objection, but it immediately raises other questions. To begin with, while it might seem plausible to view various aspects of the Mosaic law as fitting with the natural law, nonetheless much of it seems to fit poorly with common wisdom. As Jon Levenson wryly observes, "I have yet to meet the philosopher who thinks wearing a garment of mixed wool and linen or eating pork (but not beef) violates the natural law." (2012) So then how much of the Hebrew scriptures should we interpret as manifesting a congruence with the natural law? To take but one example, should we be looking to justify circumcision on natural grounds for its alleged hygienic benefits? Or is it the case that some divine commands will not have any discernible root in the best of human reason and natural law?

It is troubling enough that much of the law, and the Hebrew scriptures generally, appear to fit rather poorly with the natural law. An even more serious problem is that much of it appears to violate outright our contemporary conception of morality and wisdom. It is at this point that Hazony's proposal shows a weakness. While one could reasonably expect that a divine revelation of "inscrutable secrets" would not always fit comfortably with mere human wisdom, one would not expect this of a revelation built on the best of human wisdom. Hazony points out that Moses believes the superiority of Israel's law in terms of wisdom and justice should be readily evident to other nations. Moreover, according to Hazony Jeremiah believes the moral law "gradually forces itself upon the mind of the individual by trial and error." (2012, 174) In other words, the law is vindicated as that which works to order and guide the human experience. As a result, Jeremiah believes that failure to follow the law inevitably results in frustration and suffering: "when men depart from that which is beneficial to them by nature, the result is pain and hardship of a kind that even man's arbitrary mind cannot mistake." (2012, 181)

This is where Hazony's view appears to become vulnerable since there are many cases where it is *observance* of the law, rather than deviation from it, that gives rise to pain and hardship. Insofar as fidelity to biblical teaching appears to be irreconcilable with the dictates of reason and experience, we have evidence that disconfirms the claim that the Bible manifests the best of reason. Examples that fit this description are not hard to find. Consider the case of punitive justice,

particularly as it is reflected in acts of extreme retributive violence like the genocidal mandate to slaughter nearby nations (Deuteronomy 20:16-18), the punitive use of the heavy knife in limb amputation (Deuteronomy 25:11-12), and the stoning of rebellious children (Exodus 21:15; Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Each of these cases will strike most denizens of modern western society as morally intolerable and thus unwise and unreasonable. In short, these divinely sourced geopolitical and legislative directives are very far from anything that one would recognize as good, wise or just.

Some readers might question my assumption that directives of genocidal slaughter, punitive hand amputation and stoning are so obviously inconsistent with societal flourishing. In response, I will offer a few comments in support of these intuitions. Consider first the excellent empirical evidence that participation in punitive acts of killing always has overwhelmingly negative sequelae in otherwise properly functioning individuals. In his book *On Killing* Dave Grossman observes that the psychological evidence is overwhelming that human beings have an enormously strong aversion to killing other human beings. As he puts it, "The resistance to the close-range killing of one's own species is so great that it is often sufficient to overcome the cumulative influences of the instinct for self-protection, the coercive forces of leadership, the expectancy of peers, and the obligation to preserve the lives of comrades." (1996, 86) To put it bluntly, properly functioning human beings will do almost anything to avoid killing others. And when people do end up killing others, when they are *forced* to, Grossman notes, "With very few exceptions, everyone associated with killing in combat reaps a bitter harvest of guilt." (1996, 89) Incidentally, the notable exceptions to this aversion and guilt cycle are those deemed clinically psychopathic.⁴ The same aversion that would dissuade people from participation in genocide would also dissuade them from participation in brutalizing legislative acts like punitive limb amputation and stoning. These empirical observations support the moral intuitions that the condoning of such violent acts would not encourage human flourishing in civil society.

The point can be effectively illumined by a less extreme example, the biblical view of corporal punishment. On this point, several conservative Christian organizations have long advocated for the perceived wisdom in biblical directives for the corporal punishment of children. For example, James Dobson and Focus on the Family defend the biblical wisdom of spanking one's children.⁵ So it is no stretch to see that Focus on the Family seeks to defend the wisdom and authority of the Bible based on generally appreciable evidence, much like Hazony proposes. Unfortunately, this defense of a biblical view of corporal punishment faces critical problems, as William Webb points out in his book *Corporal Punishment in the Bible*. To begin with, the evangelical endorsement of moderate spanking is not in fact, what the Bible teaches. Webb makes the point by collating biblical provisos on corporal punishment together. The resulting picture bears little relationship with

⁴ Since World War 2 new psychological conditioning techniques have greatly increased the firing rate in combat, but the result has been devastating on the soldier who suffers from inescapable guilt, rising rates of PTSD, violence, and suicide.

⁵ Dobson argues that spanking "is in harmony with nature, itself." 1993, 61.

popular evangelical instruction of “two smacks max”. Instead, the Bible advises the administration of lashes on the lower back with a good rod (e.g. a hickory stick) to produce intense pain and leave behind welts and wounds. This should be done for a range of serious and relatively trivial offenses, and with up to forty lashes to be delivered to teenagers (2011, 52-53). Needless to say, this instruction appears brutish, unjust, and very far from the wise ideal of good parenting. And societies would do well to disregard such advice.

Even worse, there is a growing consensus that corporal punishment *simpliciter*, including even the relatively modest non-biblical evangelical Christian form of spanking, is simply *not* a good way to exercise discipline of children. Webb’s own views on spanking were changed when his son Jon developed a degenerative disorder that returned the teenager’s mind to that of a small child. Webb had to ask himself whether he would consider exercising corporal punishment on his infantilized teenage son, but he quickly concluded: “Even the thought is revolting to me. He is an adult, and as such an action, despite his childlike mental capacity, would degrade him as a human being.” (2011, 145)

To sum up, the Bible includes many claims that seem to contradict the best of natural reason, experience and moral reflection. If there is anything which gradually forces itself on the mind, it is not the rigorous submission to biblical directives and legislative mandates, but rather the occasional necessity of deviating from or even outright rejecting them. Consequently, the evidence seems to support the conclusion that much of the law is not vindicated by human reason, a conclusion which seems to contradict Hazony’s view, and that of the biblical authors themselves.

Hazony’s role of the shepherd offers a response to this dilemma. One could concede that the Bible does offer some wisdom which is confirmed by natural reason while noting that the places where it fails to do so, including immoral directives to carry out genocide or stone children, can be rejected by the reader under the prophetic mantle of the shepherd. In short, the reader is obliged to become a conscientious objector to retributive directives that are perceived to be immoral. In that sense, the reader is invited to enter into what Hazony calls a “tradition of enquiry” as we engage with the text aided by our own insights rooted in an innate and socially formed sense of the right and good (2012, 65). For those apprehensive about bringing a voice of moral protest to the text, it might help to recognize that there are already diverse perspectives represented in the Bible itself. For example, while Hitchens expresses indignation at the Torah teaching that God judges children for the sins of their parents (Ex. 34:6-7; Deut. 5:8-10) (2007, 99), Hazony points out that Ezekiel shares this same moral assessment (2012, 42-43). It certainly is striking to realize that the antitheist’s moral protest against aspects of the text may already be anticipated in the voice of the biblical prophet.

The suggestion that the Bible invites the reader to an engaged ethical reflection on its various descriptions and directives provides a tidy means to resolve the moral offense of texts that command or commend brutish and immoral acts. And such a response might seem to be legitimized by the text where there is already an internal biblical voice that shares the dissent (as in Ezekiel’s rejection of inherited culpability). But the stance of the prophet seems riskier when the Bible itself contains no antecedent by which the conscientious reader can model her protest.

And this is where the fear of subjectivity becomes clearest. How do we know we are not reducing the Bible to a mere wax seal into which we press our own subjectivity, thereby producing a canon fitted for our personal, fallible, historically conditioned ethical perspective? How do we know that as we read the reasonable Bible prophetically, we are not, to borrow Schweitzer's famous image, simply looking back at our own image? Are we effectively redeeming the Bible as a work of reason by evacuating it of its ability to reveal? And if so, how is it that we can hope to find, as Hazony puts it, "what God *truly* loves"? (2012, 139, emphasis added)

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