

THE ANTIPODES OF SCRIPTURE: PEAKS AND VALLEYS IN THE BIBLE

1. Paradoxes within Scripture, the two sides of the pancake, minority and majority voices, internal tensions within the sacred text.
2. Examples: Prov. 26: 4-5; II Sam 24:1/I Chron. 21;1; Luke 11:22/ 9:50; Matt. 27:14 and Mk. 15: 32/Luke 39-43; Galatians 6: 2, 5
3. Why? OT written over 1000-year period by dozens of authors; NT written over 50+-year period by numerous authors. Many anonymous writers. No effort in the canonization process to iron out the tensions in the text.
4. Tensions found in Narratives, Practice/Ethics, and Doctrine/Theology
5. Three Texts: John Shelby Spong *The Sins of Scripture*; Gerd Ludemann *The Unholy in Holy Scripture*; Inspired by Rachel Held Evans
6. Holy War in the OT: Doctrine in Deut. 20 (gift of land and eliminate idolatry) and Narrative in Joshua. Holy war imagery continues in the Psalms of Impercation/Cursing and in apocalyptic imagery of Daniel and Dead Sea Scrolls-the War Scroll and in the Jihad concept in the Quran. Also, seen in the archaeology of Assyria and Moab holy war.
7. In contrast, there are examples of clemency in OT (so unlike Holy War): Joshua 9; I Sam. 24: 1-22; 26: 1-11; II Sam. 19: 16-23; II Kings 6: 8-23. Also, the prophets often utter Oracles against the Nations for behaving just as violently as Israel did during the Conquest (Amos 1-2; Ezek. 24-32; Isa 13-23; Obadiah; Hab 1-2; Nahum). Later Holy War Theology turned upon Israel (721) and Judah (587) as Assyrians and Babylonians carry out God's judgment against his own people. Exilic shift toward Israel as a "suffering servant" (Isa. 53). In the NT there is the futility of the Zealot revolt that ultimately destroyed Jerusalem in 70, a destruction Jesus warned against in Mk 13. Jesus rejects Holy War ideology (Mt. 26: 52-53) in the Garden and during Pilate's interrogation (John 18: 36). More in the Sermon on the Mt (below). Paul agrees with Jesus that "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord." (Rom. 12:19)
8. Problem of Anti-Semitism/Anti-Judaism in the NT. Most negative verse is Matt. 27:24—25. Used repeatedly to justify anti-Semitic behavior, especially during the Crusades and the Holocaust. Role of Judas as

- “traitorous Jew”. John 8:39-44 Jesus calls Jews “sons of the devil”. I Thess. 2:14-16 Paul’s early invective against the Jews. Mirrored in the work of Marcion in the Second Century and Luther in the Reformation.
9. In contrast, Jesus says salvation comes from the Jews (Jn. 4:22). Paul says, “All Israel will be saved” (Rom 11: 26-32) Jesus and all his followers were Jewish. “The gifts and call of God are irrevocable” (Rom.11: 29)
 10. Exclusivity seen in Ezra 10 and Nahum. Eunuchs excluded from the assembly Deut. 23:1; dividing wall between Court of the Gentiles and the Jews in the Temple (which led to Paul’s arrest on a false charge in Acts 21); Lk 11:22; Mk 7: 24-30
 11. In contrast, inclusivity seen in the book of Ruth. Jonah, legal protections for sojourners (Ezek. 47: 21-23) and eunuchs (Isa.56:4-8) in the house of prayer for all people (Isa. 56: 7). Conversion of Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) Inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant people-Matt. 28: 19, Acts 2, 10, Luke 9:50; John 4 Samaritan woman.
 12. Capital punishment for violating 8 of the 10 Commandments plus for many other offenses. But two eyewitnesses needed for conviction of capital offense: Duet 17:6, 19:15; Num 35:30. “Eye for an eye” was to limit retaliation (Ex. 21:23-27)
 13. In contrast, guilty parties not always executed: David and Bathsheba (II Sam. 11; Ps. 51: 4, 14) especially if you are the king. John 8 undermines execution plus the examples of execution of Jesus, James, Paul, Peter and the martyrdom of the saints in Revelation (6:9-11).
 14. Paul urges obedience to the government by paying taxes and giving due honor (Rom. 13) plus prayers for the emperor (I Tim. 2:2)
 15. In contrast, Paul rejects the use of Roman courts to settle disputes (I Cor. 6) and says the rulers of this world were ignorant about Jesus (I Cor. 2:18). Revelation 13 sees the government turned demonic and thus Christians should suffer martyrdom rather than obey.
 16. Slavery is accepted and regulated in the OT, Jewish indentured slaves for 6 years only (Ex. 21:2-7) and foreign slaves for lifetime (Lev.

25:44-46) NT provisions for masters and slaves Eph 6: 5-8; Col 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-10.

17. In contrast, the OT celebrates the Exodus of freed slaves. NT opposes slave traders (I Tim. 1:10; Rev. 18:13) and urges masters to treat slaves well (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). Philemon points to freedom for Onesimus. Gal. 3:28 sees equality for slaves in Christ. All are “slaves or servants of Christ”.
18. Rewards and punishments. Deut 27-28 has blessings and curses. Prov. 11:8; 10:2; 22:8 reap what you sow in Gal. 6:7,9; Second Commandment Ex. 20:4 sins of the fathers visited upon children.
19. In contrast, Jer. 31:29, Ezek 18:1-4 focuses upon individual responsibility. Eccles. 8: 10-19 questions Proverbs ideas. Problem of innocent suffering: Job and Jesus and the Christian church (I Peter).
20. Hatred of enemies in Psalms of Impercution or Cursing 35, 58:9 “snail”, 59, 69, 70, 109, 137, 140 plus many others.
21. In contrast, Jesus’ word from the cross, “Father, forgive them..”
22. Hell seen especially in the Gospel of Matthew 5:22; 8:12; 13:41; 25:41,46 and other places like Lk. 16:23. Interestingly, Paul never really mentions Hell directly. Hell as lake of fire in Rev. 20:14
23. In contrast, there are intimations of a universal reconciliation of all things (Universal salvation? Not clear) Eph 1:9-10, 2:14-16; 3:6; 4:10 Col. 1:19-20; Rom. 5:18-19; 11:32; I Cor. 15:22-28; II Cor. 5:14-15; Phil 2:10-11; I Tim. 2:3-6; 4:10; Titus 2:1. “A wideness in God’s mercy..”
24. Woman as subservient. Role of Eve in Gen. 3 story. Polygamy and concubinage in the OT. Victims of war (Judges 11-Jephthah’s daughter). NT passages: I Tim. 2:8-13; I Cor. 14: 33-36
25. In contrast, the industrious wife of Prov. 31. Resurrection narratives focus on Mary Magdalene and other women as first witnesses. Rom. 16:1 deacon Phoebe and 16:7 apostle Junia; I Cor 11: 2-16 women worship leaders with heads covered. Gal. 3:28. Mainly Jesus’ relationship with women, especially Mary and Martha.

26. Eschatological schemas outlining what is to come before the End found in II Thess. 2 and the Bk of Revelation. Also in Mk 13 and parallels.
27. In contrast, the rejection of any schema, focus on Jesus returning like a “thief in the night” without warning: I Thess 5:4; Matt 24:43; II Peter 3:1; Rom. 13: 11-14. No schema.
28. NT married leadership required: I Tim. 3; Titus 1.
29. In contrast, Jesus speaks of those who are “eunuchs for the kingdom’s sake” (Matt. 19:12). Jesus and Paul were both apparently celibate. Paul urges celibacy in I Cor. 7 but allows for marriage.
30. Hospitality is urged upon Christians: 3 John, Heb.13: 2 reflecting Gen. 18. I Peter 4:9
31. In contrast, hospitality is refused to false teachers 2 John.
32. Importance of the Temple. Solomon’s prayer at the Dedication of the First Temple I Kings 8; Isa. 36-39; Haggai-rebuilds Second Temple
33. In contrast, the Temple is expendable and subject to God’s judgment; Jeremiah 7 and Mark 13.
34. Birth Narrative of Matthew 1-2
35. In contrast, the Birth Narrative of Luke 1-2 (Synoptic Problem)
36. Salvation by Faith alone-Abraham. Romans 4: 3-25; Gal 3
37. In contrast, salvation by faith plus works James 2:14-24
38. Sermon on the Mount 6 Antitheses contrasting the old and the new in the coming Kingdom of God: Murder/anger; adultery/lust; divorce/marriage; oaths/no oaths; revenge/no revenge; hatred/love of enemies. Jesus points the way to seeing the tensions within Scripture and is not afraid to point beyond the “letter” to the “spirit of the law”.
39. Implications for the Interpretation of Scripture: a. Ways that Evans, Spong and Ludemann address this issue. b. Distinguish between culturally inspired mandates (“kiss of peace” Rom. 16:16, foot washing John 13, hair length I Cor 11:14) and eternally valid commands Love God and neighbor) c. Interpretative models focusing on the “mind of Christ”. d. Bible as family history of faith with all its highs and lows.