

## HEBREW THEOLOGY IS BASED ON A STORY

### Stewardship vs Ownership

#### Introduction:

1. What I am about to say is not psycho babel but imagine yourself in that church
2. Folks, the genius of the bible – the way it is structured, the way it is told – the majority of the bible are word pictures for you and me.
3. Hebraic theology is based on a story
4. It provides the narrative of how we should live
5. Think about your own history – all of us have an oral transmission – sometimes written
6. Someone once wrote, *“master stories not only inform us, but they also form us.”*
7. These stories we are reading in the Book of Acts are what God wants to use to form us
8. **"A picture is worth a thousand words"** is an English language idiom.
9. Think of the pictures you post on Facebook
10. We are experiencing a transition from Gutenberg to Zuckerberg
11. Story of Viktor Frankel
12. The bible is the story of hope and redemption in the midst of a perverse, fallen world
13. The Bible reveals that humans are unique creatures designed for much more than just survival.
14. We are designed to have deep relationships with others and with our Creator and Facebook and other social media can never fill that void
15. Suicide amongst teens – no meaning – no purpose
16. Story of the Scottish / South African guy
17. BUT JESUS
18. All of us have a BUT Jesus story

#### Word of Knowledge:

1. Story of Spurgeon – Word of Knowledge
2. We have seen this in our church as well
3. What is Luke trying to tell us?
4. Funeral of friend
5. Death of my father – I have never forgotten that
6. The question for us is what is our destination?

#### The Jerusalem Church:

1. It must have been exciting to be in the Jerusalem church in those days
2. Right in the middle of everything 11 verses deal with sin and judgment
3. **Acts 4:32-37** describes the unity and selflessness
4. **Chapter 5:12-16** – another status report of God's goodness
5. In the midst of this judgment
6. ***“But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.”***
7. The word ***“but”*** forms a contrast
8. By nightfall, there are two fresh graves
9. The new church was a place of holiness, just like the Old Testament

#### Dangerous Holiness:

1. The sense of dangerous holiness emanates from some of Israel's ancient traditions – not only as regards the temple but also as a community

2. ***Leviticus 10 tells us of the two sons of Aaron who infringed the holiness of the sanctuary and suffered the consequences***
3. ***Joshua 7 – the story of Achan; 2 Chronicles 26 – King Uzziah***
4. If we want to be that kind of community, then we must not be surprised if the living God takes you seriously
5. Cheap grace is a fallacy – God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7)
6. When we desire to live in the Presence of God, we cannot lapse back into some variety of easy-going paganism, even if it has a Christian veneer to it.
7. To name the name of Jesus, and to invoke the Holy Spirit, is for us to claim to be the Temple of the living God
8. Our culture today is notoriously full of spin and smear, and outright lies
9. Was there anything wrong with Ananias keeping some of the money?
10. The word “kept back” is the Greek word *nosphizomai* – to misappropriate or embezzle
11. In ***2 Titus 2:10, it means “to steal.”***
12. Ananias wanted people to think they were as committed as Barnabas
13. Peter had a “Word of Wisdom” about the situation – we have had it in this church
14. Peter affirmed the right to private property
15. ***But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?" (Verse 3)***
16. The Holy Spirit is a Person only - a person can be lied to
17. You are the living church and the "habitation of the Holy Spirit."

#### **Names as Metaphors:**

1. Let me say this: When you put the Bible into the context, there's stuff in it that you can't even imagine.
2. The phrase “*breathed his last*” is the word *ekpsucho* only occurs when God strikes someone dead e.g. ***Acts 12:23 and Judges 4:21***
3. ***Judges 4:17 -21*** – story of Sisera and Jael.
4. It was not only because Ananias and Sapphira lied
5. When we lie, we misuse the highest faculty we possess – to worship our God
6. We are the Temple of God, and light and darkness can't mix
7. ***Proverbs 6:16-19 “Here are six things God hates, and one more that he loathes with a passion: eyes that are arrogant, a tongue that lies, hands that murder the innocent, a heart that hatches evil plots, feet that race down a wicked track, a mouth that lies under oath, a troublemaker in the family.”***
8. The other thing is hypocrisy – that always starts on the inside

#### **Why Did This Happen - Ownership Vs. Stewardship?**

1. Ownership leads to greed; stewardship leads to generosity.
2. Here's what I've learned: those who understand stewardship help us love and care for more people because they're not wasting leaders, dollars, facilities, and technologies.
3. That's why this issue in ***Acts 5*** is so damnable
4. It's about the mission, not just the money.
5. Here is ownership versus stewardship: Ownership is, “*It's mine. It's mine. I've earned it. I deserve it. I'm entitled to it. I will consume it. I will use it. I will enjoy it. I will spend it. It's mine.*”

6. Stewardship is, *"It's not mine."* You notice these are different? *"It's all his. I'm his. God doesn't give to me; God gives through me. I'm not an owner; I'm a steward."*
7. If somebody dies, they leave a will and give instructions for the inheritance to the executor of the will; he does not own the estate.
8. He is to oversee the disbursement of the estate to the heirs.

**A Different way of looking at Giving:**

1. Conversation with a new Christian re tithing
2. How many of you would love it if the government said, *"Ten percent flat tax. That covers your property taxes, sales taxes, death inheritance taxes, your FICA, and your Social Security"?*
3. **BEFORE YOU HAVE ANYTHING, GOD GIVES YOU EVERYTHING**
4. This is where Christianity is different from other religions.
5. God says: *"Give me your sin. And I'll give you my salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life, love, adoption into my family, new nature, and the Holy Spirit."*
6. That's what I get? It's not a fair deal. No, that's a grace deal.
7. When God's people get God's heart, they become generous, they become joyful, they experience the joy of giving, they get to see others experience grace through them, and they're so glad that Jesus would share with them this message and mission of generosity and salvation.

**Opportunity to Respond:**

1. As we come to Communion, we remember that we give God our sins, and he gives us our Savior.
2. We remember that salvation is a gift.
3. We're also going to give of our tithes and offerings,
4. About 15% percent of the entire church is giving anything this year.
5. To those of you who have been generous and contributed, thank you.
6. If it were not for the few, we would be upside down by a lot
7. And for the rest, we invite you to do the same, become a cheerful giver.
8. Here's where we're at: Our giving and our expenses are basically identical, so we're living within our proverbial means.
9. We don't have any margins, but we are being good stewards by God's grace and the leadership of some very skilled people
10. And so, that being said, I'll pray, and we'll give you an opportunity to respond.