

An illustration of a tree with bare branches on the left, set against a background of falling brown leaves and a blue sky with light clouds. The text is overlaid on this scene.

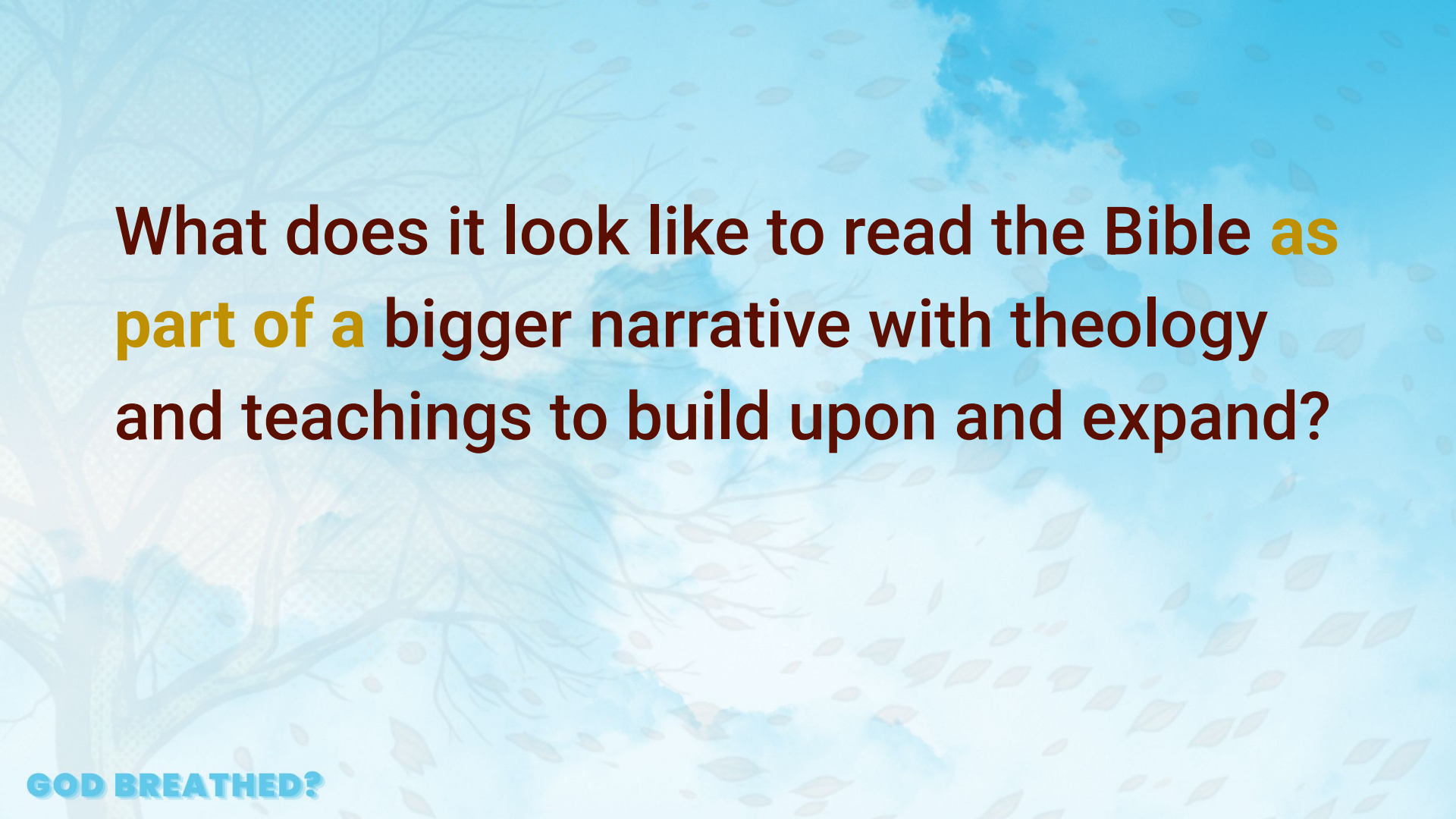
GOD BREATHED?

READING THE BIBLE AFRESH

The background of the entire image is a stylized illustration of an autumn scene. On the left, a large tree with dark, intricate branches is shown. The leaves on the tree and those falling around it are in various shades of orange, red, and brown. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall style is artistic and evocative of the fall season.

GOD BREA**T**HED?

A STORY STILL UNFOLDING

The background of the slide features a light blue and white watercolor-style illustration. On the left side, there is a faint outline of a tree with branches extending upwards and outwards. Numerous small, light-colored leaves are depicted as if they are falling or blowing away from the tree, scattered across the entire background. The overall aesthetic is soft and ethereal.

What does it look like to read the Bible **as part of a** bigger narrative with theology and teachings to build upon and expand?



Photo credit: Getty Images

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2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Psalms 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

N.T. Wright, “How can the Bible be Authoritative”

‘Authority’ is the place where we go to find out the correct answers to key questions ... This notion, however, runs into all kinds of problems when we apply it to the Bible. Is that really what the Bible is for? Is it there to control the church? Is it there simply to look up the correct answers to questions that we, for some reason, already know? As we read the Bible we discover that the answer to these questions seems in fact to be ‘no’.

N.T. Wright, “How can the Bible be Authoritative”

My conclusion, then, is this: that the regular views of scripture and its authority which we find not only outside but also inside evangelicalism fail to do justice to what the Bible actually is—a book, an ancient book, an ancient narrative book.

N.T. Wright, “How can the Bible be Authoritative”

Authority is God's. We find soon enough—this is obvious but is often ignored—that all authority does indeed belong to God. ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth’. God says this, God says that, and it is done. Now if that is not authoritative, I don't know what is.

N.T. Wright, “How can the Bible be Authoritative”

But what is God doing with his authority? We discover, as we look at the Bible itself, there is a more subtle thing going on. God is not simply organizing the world in a certain way such as we would recognize from any of those human models. He is organizing it—if that’s the right word at all—through Jesus and in the power of the Spirit.

N.T. Wright, “How can the Bible be Authoritative”

Authority is not the power to control people, and crush them, and keep them in little boxes. The church often tries to do that—to tidy people up. Rather, **God’s authority** vested **in scripture is designed** , as all God’s authority is designed, **to liberate human beings** , to judge and condemn evil and sin in the world in order to set people free **to be fully human** . That’s what God is in the business of doing. That is what his authority is there for.

John 14: 15-18

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

John 14: 26-27

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid

What Can We Do?

- Be curious ~ What if?
- Deconstruct, with gentleness
- Apply critical thinking, with mindfulness

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