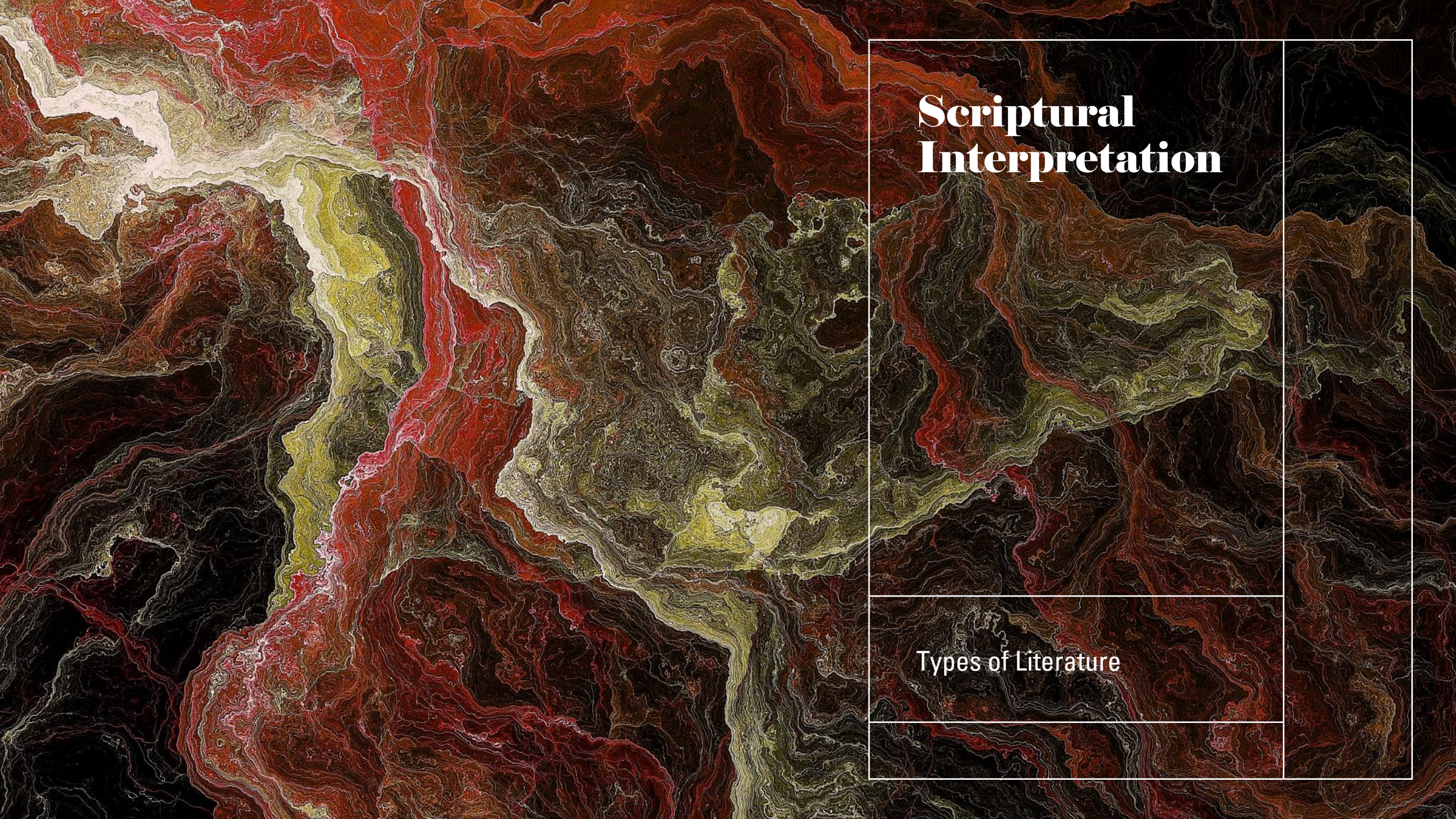

Scriptural
Interpretation
Types of Literature

LAW BOOKS

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Deuteronomy
Numbers

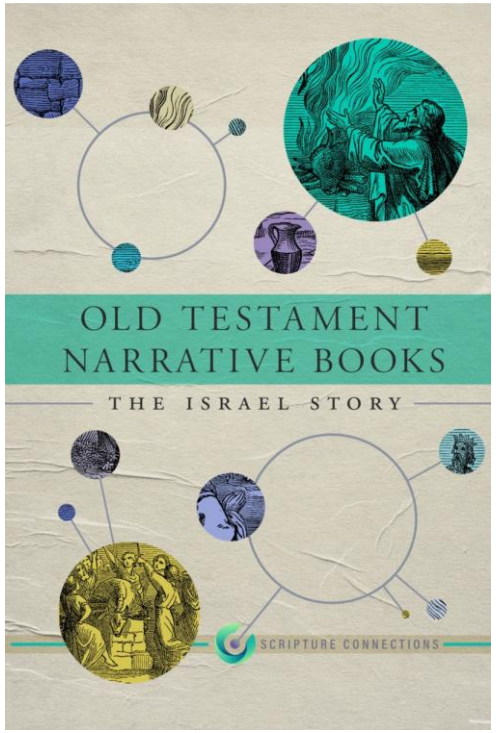
Law

NARRATIVE BOOKS

Genesis
Exodus
Numbers
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Isaiah
Daniel
Jonah
Haggai

The Gospels
Acts



History ~ Narrative

APOCALYPTIC BOOKS

Daniel

Revelation

Apocalyptic

Poetry ~ Psalms ~ Songs

WISDOM BOOKS

Job

Proverbs

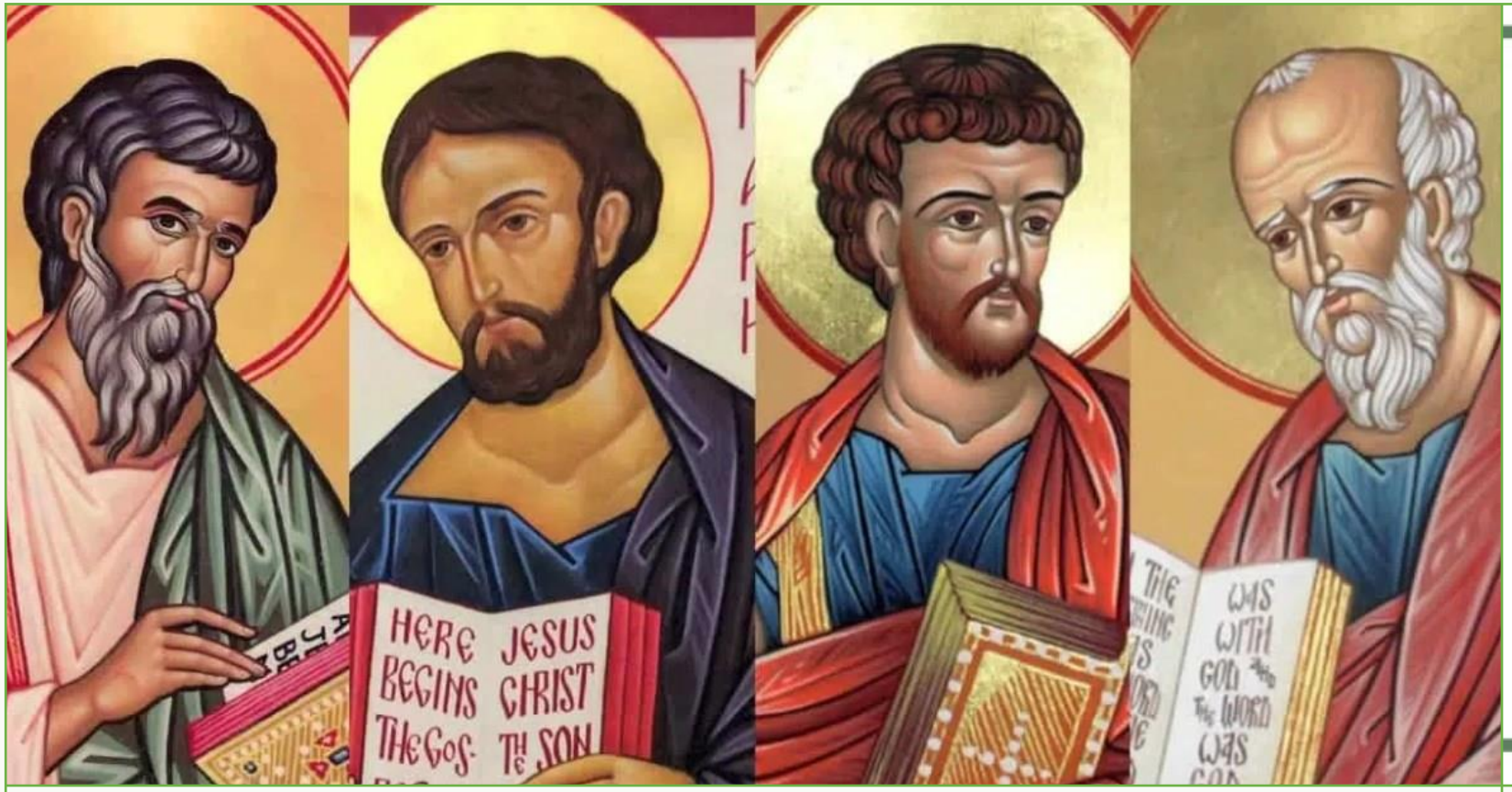
Ecclesiastes

Wisdom ~ Proverbs

PROPHECY BOOKS

Isaiah	Jonah
Jeremiah	Micah
Lamentations	Nahem
Ezekiel	Habakkuk
Daniel	Zephaniah
Hosea	Haggai
Joel	Zechariah
Amos	Malachi
Obadiah	Revelation

Prophetic



GOSPEL BOOKS

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Gospels

Parables

10/30/2024

LETTER BOOKS

Romans	Hebrews
1 Corinthians	James
2 Corinthians	1 Peter
Galatians	2 Peter
Ephesians	1 John
Philippians	2 John
Colossians	3 John
1 Thessalonians	Jude
2 Thessalonians	
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	
Titus	
Philemon	

Letter ~ Epistle

John Wesley on Scriptural Interpretation ~ 4 Guidelines

1. ***Scripture*** is Our primary source for Christian teaching. It is here that we find the witness to God's revelation of God's self in ancient Israel and in Jesus Christ.

This is our inheritance from the prophets and the apostles.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

JW cont.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

2. ***Tradition*** is the record of how our primary source has been interpreted through successive generations. It is both the process and the form of that interpretation in particular times, places, and circumstances.

We are not the first to read or interpret a text of Scripture. Reflecting on the ways a text has been understood by people of faith through the centuries can reveal meaning in a text that may not be apparent to us in the present. In seeking the meaning of a text for the here and now we reflect on the meaning previous generations have found in it.

JW cont.

3. ***Experience*** refers to both the personal and corporate experience of appropriating God's grace. Wesley was concerned that the witness to God's saving and healing grace be confirmed in the life of the individual as well as in the life of the community of faith.

The experience of God's transforming grace changes the way we see ourselves, God, our neighbors, and the world. We dialogue with scripture and tradition through our experience of faith in the world.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

JW cont.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

4. ***Reason*** constitutes the fourth guideline in this quadrilateral of sources. With reason we see clarity in our witness, test the congruity of our witness with the other three guidelines, and discern ways in which God is leading us to new understandings of God's will for our lives.

Reason is the God-given faculty that enables us to reflect with faith as we bring Scripture, tradition, and experience to bear on issues and questions that confront us in the present.

JW cont.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

Keep in mind that theological reflection is both **critical** and **constructive**. Wesley himself is an example of how to engage in these kinds of reflections. In his vigorous attack on slavery he was going against both Scripture and tradition. In 1755 when Wesley issued one of the earliest critiques of slavery in the British Empire, the practice of slavery claimed support from all biblical texts on the subject. His attacks, particularly on slavery in America, was particularly sharp. In 1791, a week before his death, Wesley wrote to William Wilberforce encouraging him and his effort to have parliament ban the slave trade in the empire.

JW cont.

Scripture and tradition again were against Wesley when he gave to women leadership roles in the Methodist societies. In this case women had, on their own, against Wesley's policies, begun teaching and preaching in society meetings. Wesley first objected until his mother advised him to consider the fruits of their work. Reason and experience prevailed.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

JW cont. ~ What informed Wesley's Reasoning and Experience?

1. The Analogy of Faith

2. The Tenor of Scripture

3. The Grand Scheme of Doctrine

JW cont.

T.W. LEWIS ADAPTED

"[A]ccording to the general tenor of [Scripture]; according to that grand scheme of doctrine which is derived therein, touching *original sin*, *justification by faith*, and *present, inward salvation*. There is a wonderful analogy between all of these; and a close connection between the chief heads of faith 'which was once delivered to the Saints'. Every article therefore concerning which there is any question should be determined by this rule; every doubtful scripture interpreted according to the grand truths which run through the whole." (*Notes on the New Testament* see Romans 12: 6).

JW cont.

Wesley finds a tenor (**a course of thought**) that runs through Holy Scripture that connects sin, justification, and sanctification. It is the course that runs through the Hebrew Testament and New Testament from God's gracious pursuit of the alienated (sin), to saving faith (justification), to sanctification. Sanctification, for Wesley, was **the healing process by which the Holy Spirit works in those reconciled with God through faith that leads them toward the perfect love of God and neighbor**. It is this **tenor of Scripture**, this **analogy of faith**, this **grand scheme of doctrine** that should be used in discernment wherever there is an issue or interpretation of Scripture in doubt. It is, for Wesley, this **tenor that gives Scripture its unity**. It informs the individual Christian and the community of faith about what God is doing in the world and bids them follow.

JW cont.

The perfect love of God and neighbor, the goal of the process of sanctification, was for Wesley the engine that moved him to engage the challenges of the social conditions of his day. Not only slavery, but also farm monopolies that ran up the price of food, poor and dangerous working conditions, orphanages, and education for children were for Wesley but some of the issues to which the love of neighbor summoned him. A legacy in his doctrine of sanctification for United Methodists in our time is the injunction to have eyes to see, hearts to love, and the will to embrace the cause of the vulnerable in our midst.

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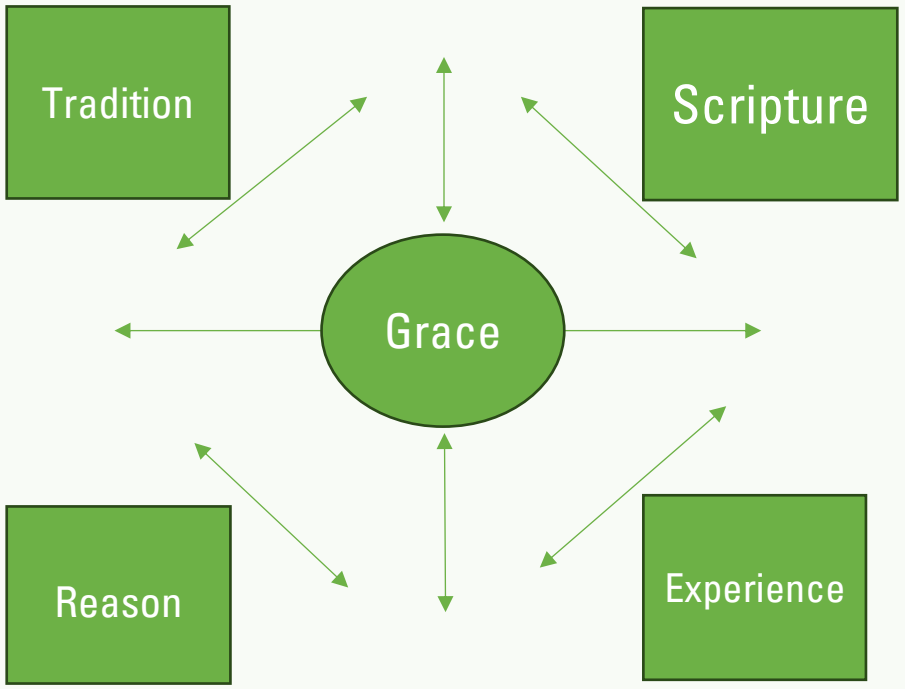
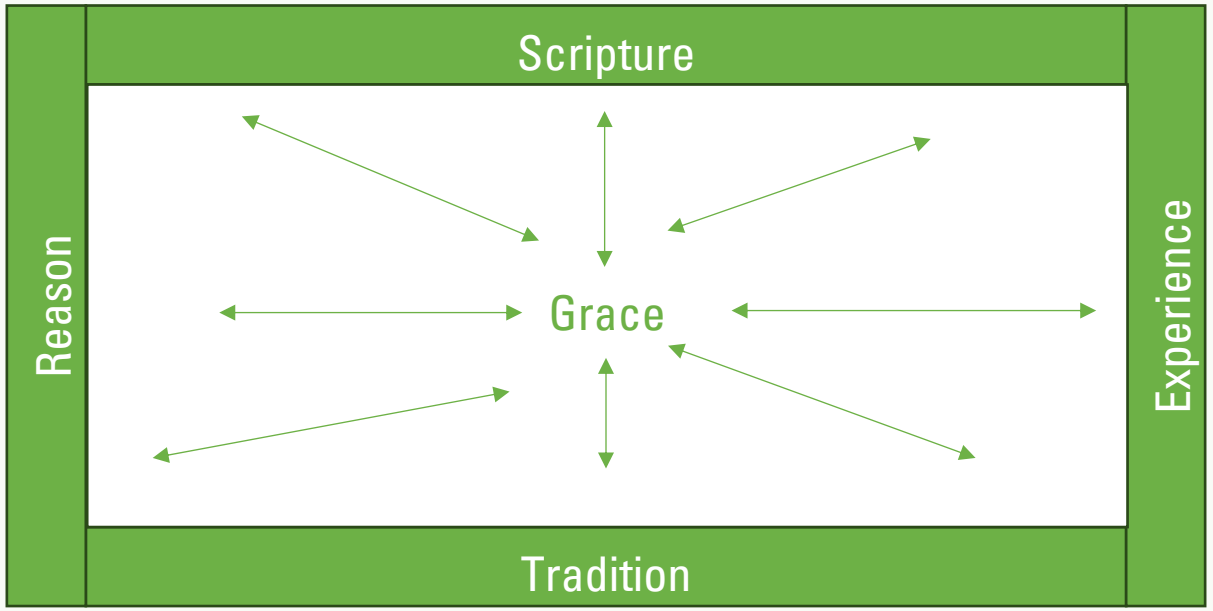
Centered Set



Bounded Set