

CULTURE VULTURE

from mess, to Messiah



A loaf of golden-brown bread is shown on a white paper liner. A slice of the bread is cut and placed in the foreground, with a pat of butter melting on its surface. Two more pats of butter are visible on the paper liner to the left of the loaf. The background is dark and out of focus.

**PREACHING
THE GOSPEL**

⁴⁴ He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ He told them, 'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

LUKE

24:44-49

GOSPEL OF LUKE

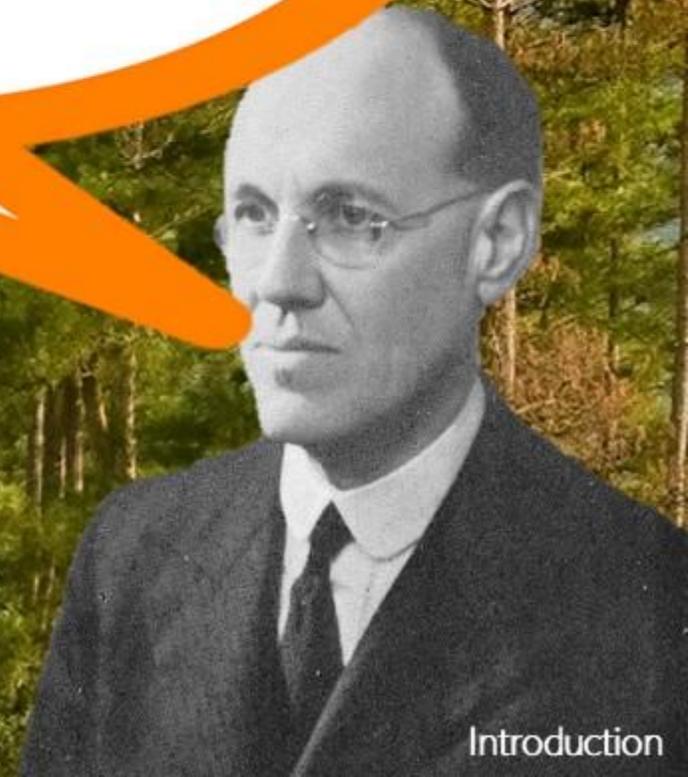
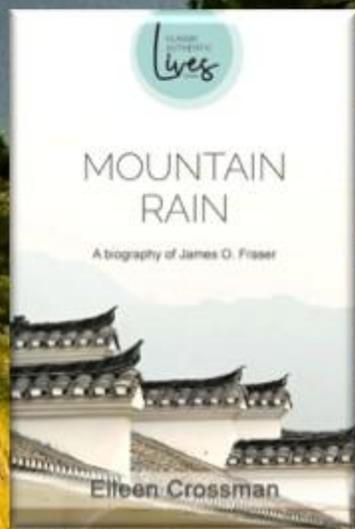
1. Jesus' sufferings
2. Jesus' resurrection
3. Repentance
4. Forgiveness of sins



ACTS

1. Jesus' death
2. Jesus' resurrection
3. Repentance
4. Forgiveness of sins

I first went through the Acts of the Apostles...with a view to finding out the actual gospel we are bidden to preach...The result was very instructive to me. I had never imagined the gospel was so simple.



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LUKE

24:44-49

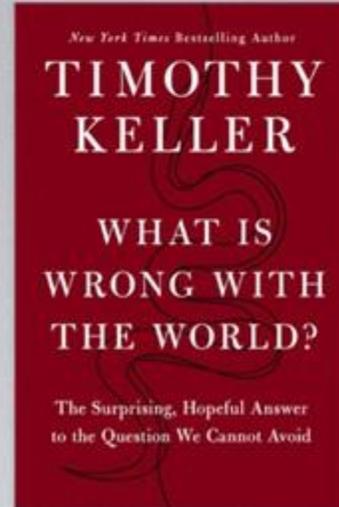


REPENTANCE

REPENTANCE

“...you have to **see your sin**,
you have to **confess your sin**,
you have to **mourn your sin**,
and you have to **hate your sin**.”

p.184



1. MESS (from)

2. MESSIAH (to)

3. MESSAGE (through)



1.

MESS

2.

CULTURE

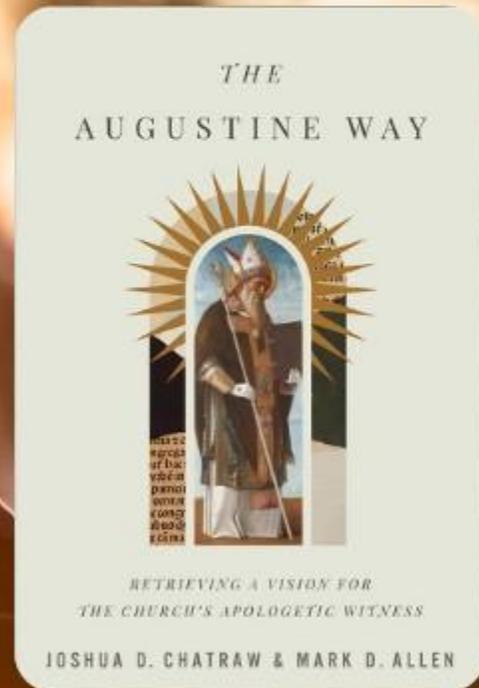
BIBLE



WHY?

SOCIAL SETTING

“Our social imaginary shapes the way we experience the world, interpret events, reason, and make decisions...People reason within the images, stories, and myths they've inherited through their social setting. Indeed, they will use a kind of logic, but it will be one that fits the larger framework that they live and move within.” p.39



A close-up photograph of a hand with two fingers pointing upwards. The index finger is labeled '1. CULTURALLY' and the middle finger is labeled '2. BIBLICALLY'. The word 'MESS' is written in large, bold, black letters across the palm of the hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall tone is contemplative and critical.

MESS

What's
going on
down there?

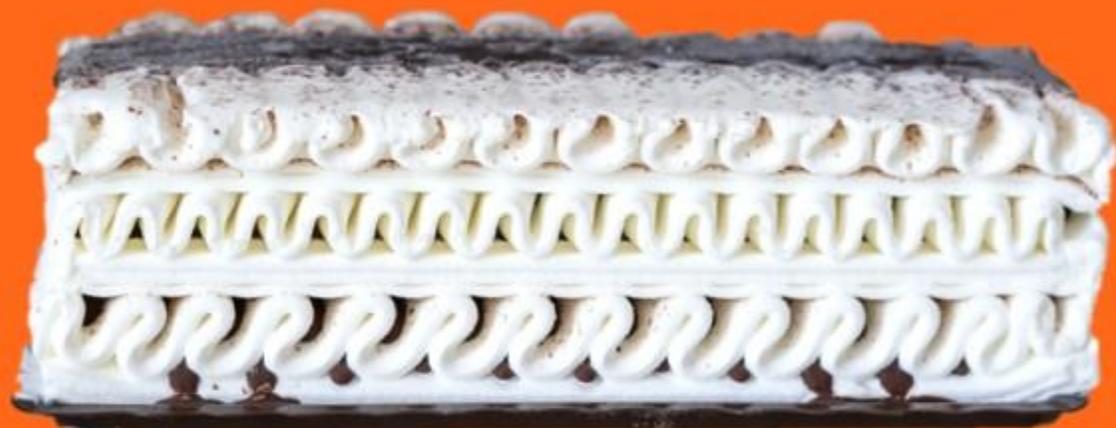


1. MESS

Culturally defined



OUR SOCIAL SETTING



≡ substack

N. S. LYONS



LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

1789-1914

EXPANSION, EMPIRE, ENLIGHTENMENT

LUDOVICO MAGNO LXXII ANNOS REGNANTE
DISSOCIATIS REPRESSIS CONCILIATIS GENTIBUS
QUATUOR DECENNALI BELLO CONJURATIS
PAX TERRA MARIQUE PARTA



LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY

1945-2025



LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY

OPEN SOCIETY
Good-bye all borders

1

TECHNOCRACY
Ruled by the experts

2

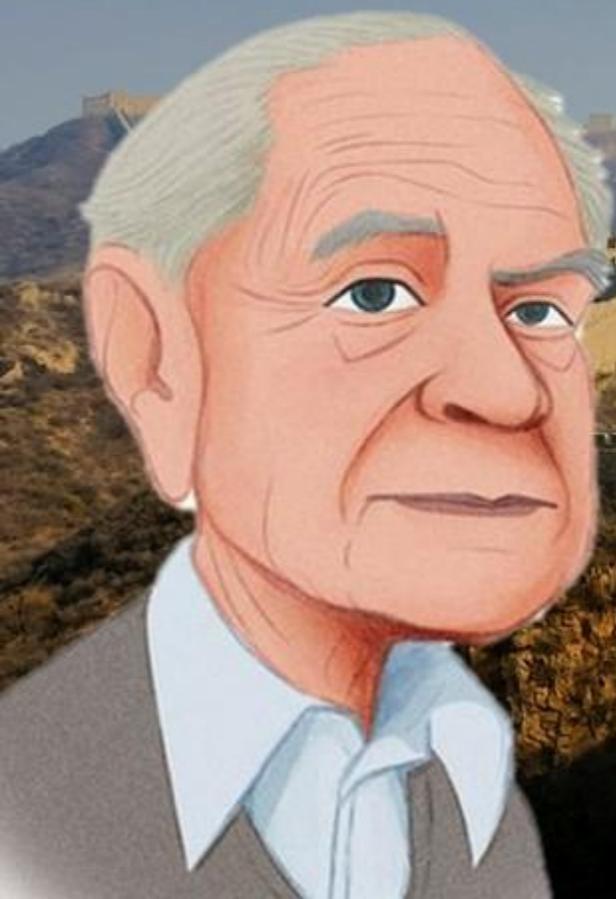
RULES-BASED
INTERNATIONAL
ORDER

3

U T O P I A

CLOSED SOCIETY

LONG 19TH CENTURY (1789-1914)



STRONG GODS

STRONG BELIEFS
STRONG TRUTH CLAIMS
STRONG MORAL CODES
STRONG RELATIONAL BONDS
STRONG COMMUNAL IDENTITIES
STRONG CONNECTIONS TO
PLACE AND PAST

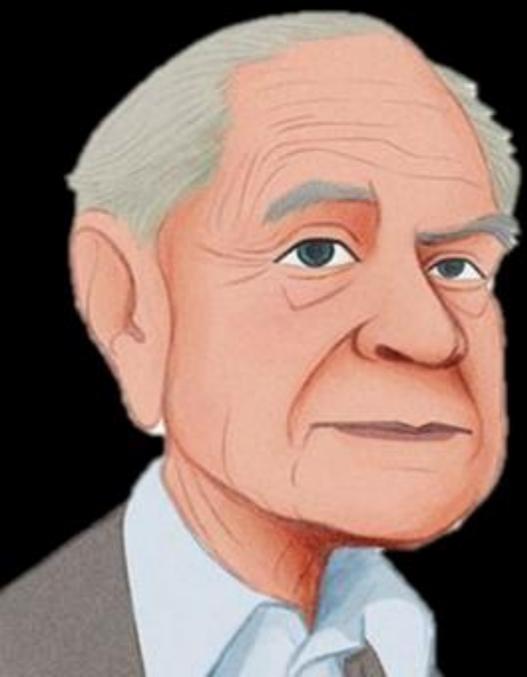
ALL
LED
HERE

HALT!
STOJ!

DANGEROUS

Cherishing your homeland and history
= “anti-humanitarian propaganda”

Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1945



Faith, Family, & Fatherland =
“authoritarian personality”

Theodor Adorno



LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY

1945-2025



A photograph of a stone archway leading to a dirt path in a lush green forest. The arch is made of large, rough-hewn stones and is flanked by stone pillars. The path leads into a dense forest of tall trees with vibrant green foliage. The text '1.1 OPEN SOCIETY' is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the top of the arch.

1.1 OPEN SOCIETY

A woman in a teal long-sleeved shirt and dark pants stands on the left side of a road. The road is heavily damaged, with large sections of asphalt missing and a metal guardrail that has collapsed into a pile of debris. The background is a dense forest with green trees. The text "BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS MUST GO" is overlaid in large white letters in the center of the image.

BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS MUST GO

THE CHOICE

AUSCHWITZ

OPEN
SOCIETY

FORBIDDEN TO FORBID

“To stand in the way of any possible aspect of societal opening and individual liberation – from secularization, to the sexual revolution and LGBTQ rights, to the free movement of migrants – was to do Hitler’s work and risk facilitating fascism’s return (no matter how far removed the subject concerned from actual fascism). It was established as the open society’s only inviolable rule... it is “forbidden to forbid.””

N S Lyons, *The return of the strong gods*, 2025





THE FIGHT

A dog with brown and white fur is shown in profile, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The dog's head is in the foreground on the left, and the rest of the image is a blurred expanse of land and sky.

BORDERLESS WORLD

Our Mission: to defend the
border not of our countries,
but of our human rights.

You're
worse than
Hitler!

It's too late
for flattery



STOP HITLER'S
RESURRECTION

YES, BUT HOW?



A high-contrast, black and white photograph. A hand, wearing a watch, holds a dark rectangular sign tilted at an angle. The sign has white text that reads "Taking the political out of politics". Below the hand is a dark ballot box with a slot. The background is a bright, overexposed sky.

Taking the
political out
of politics

1.2 TECHNOCRACY

TECHNOCRACY

*Put in the
smartest men*

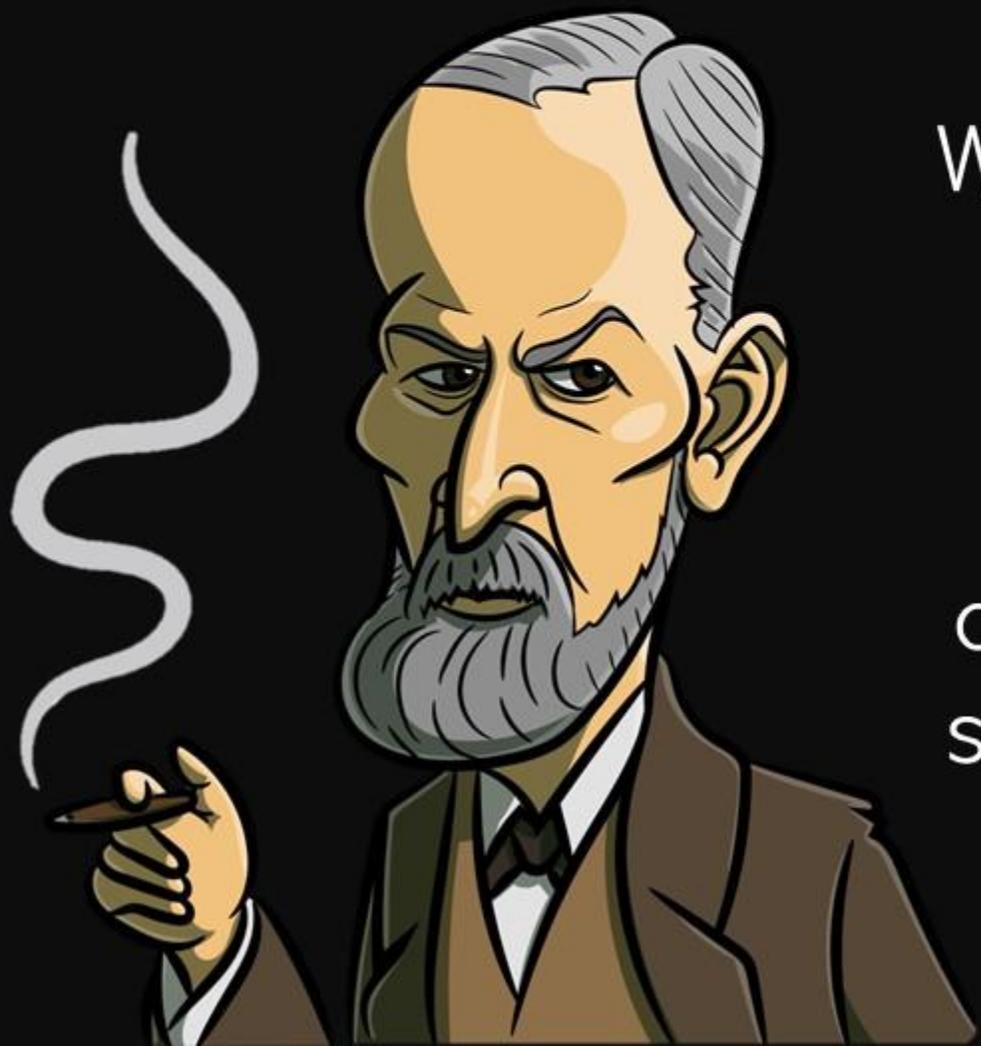
Governance should be by
scientific management, by
“institutional technologists”



MANAGE PUBLIC OPINION



ALONG CAME FREUD

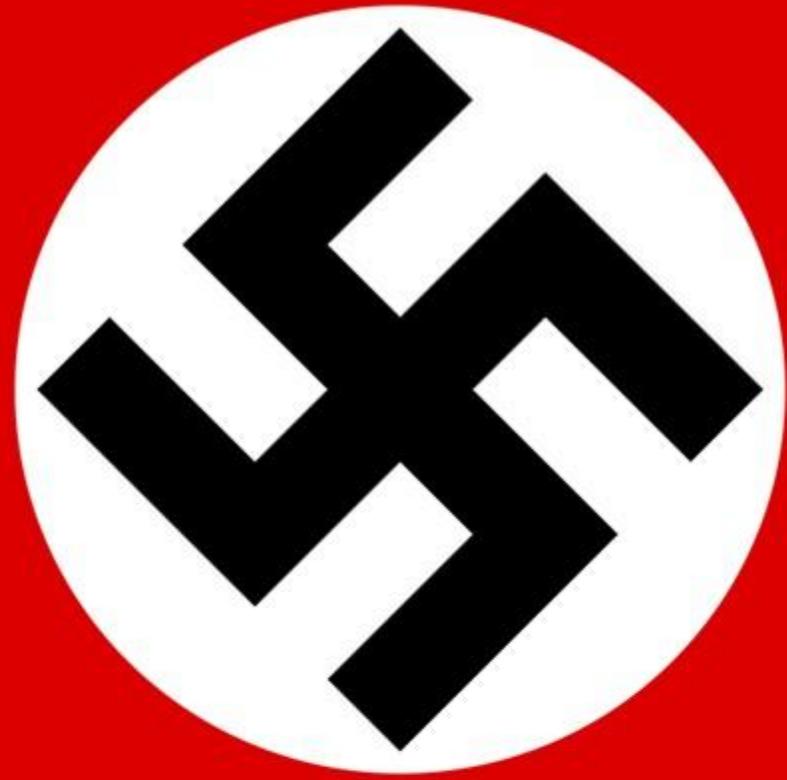


We're not as rational as we think...
There are primitive sexual and aggressive forces hidden deep inside our minds which, if not controlled, will lead individuals and societies to chaos and destruction.

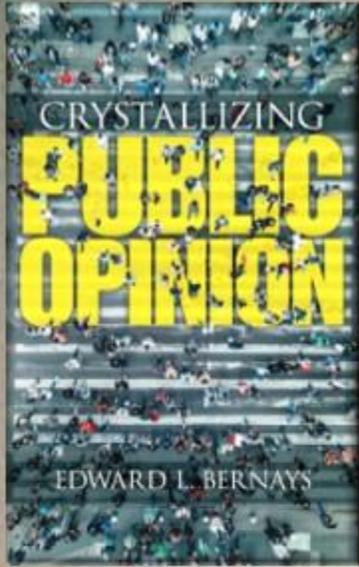
EDWARD BERNAYS

THE FATHER OF
"PUBLIC RELATIONS"

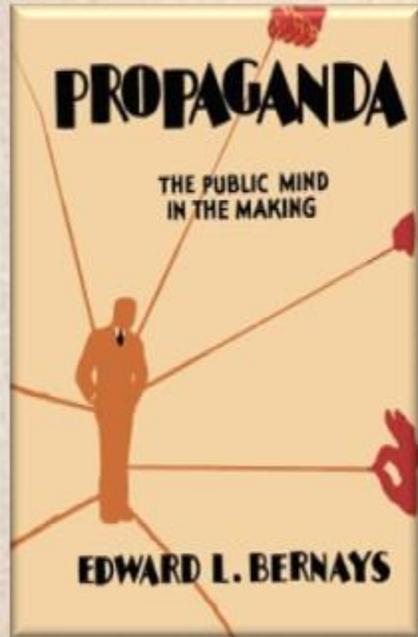




THE NAZIS USED BERNAYS'
IDEAS TO CONTROL THE PEOPLE



1923



1928



We can use
Uncle Freud's
insights
to sell
products
and ideas



ADVERTISING: *REASON*

HERE'S WHY THIS PRODUCT IS GOOD..



ADVERTISING: *DESIRE*



TORCHES OF
FREEDOM

1.2 Technocracy

DESIRE DRIVEN

I WANT, I FEAR



DESPISE THE *DEMOS*

“The PMC...still believe themselves to be the heroes of history, fighting to defend innocent victims against their evil victimizers, but the working class is not a group they find worth saving, because by PMC standards, they do not behave properly: they are either disengaged politically or are too angry to be civil... [the PMC] disparage them for their bad taste in literature, bad diets, unstable families, and deplorable child-rearing habits.” pp.1-2.

Virtue Hoarders

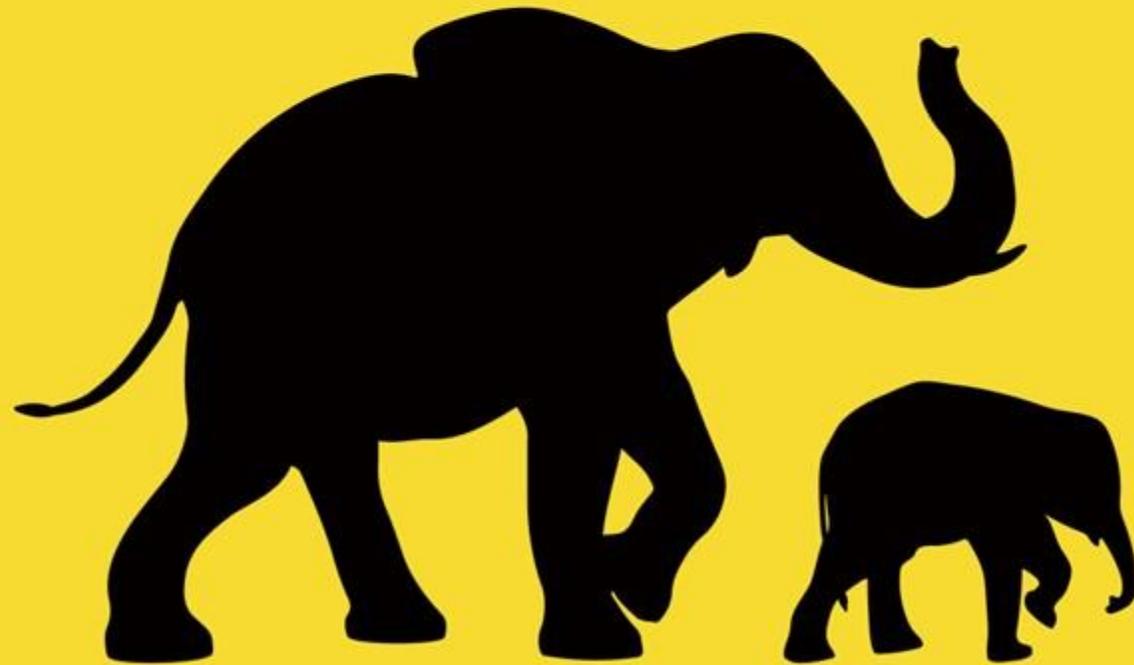
The Case against the Professional Managerial Class

Catherine Liu

DESPISE THE *DEMOS*



NUDGE



3. RULES-BASED LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER



MANAGED by:

United Nations, EU, IMF etc

POLICED by: US military & allies

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY



LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY

1945-2025



MARRIAGE: WONGA & WOKE



Jean-Claude Michéa

RUBBLE

“Looking back, we can see that what happened when the [Berlin] wall fell was not the triumph of freedom over oppression so much as the defeat of one Western ideology by another: liberalism... [Liberalism] claimed to liberate the individual from oppression. In practice it has manifested as the process of breaking all borders, limits and structures: of bringing down walls.



ROOTLESS

“The societies we have built around this way of seeing claim freedom *for* the individual *from* society itself, and proffer a radical notion of human nature. Rather than seeing humans as hefted creatures, rooted in time and place, liberalism offered a new conception: detached, sovereign personhood. Humans were now “rights-bearing individuals who could fashion and pursue for themselves their own version of the good life.””

Paul Kingsnorth, *The Liberal Order Is Already Dead*,
Unherd, February 17, 2022



LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY

OPEN SOCIETY
Good-bye all borders

1

TECHNOCRACY
Ruled by the experts

2

RULES-BASED
INTERNATIONAL
ORDER

3

UTOPIA?



A WORLD
WHERE
YOU CAN'T
BREATHE

A WORLD WHERE
YOUR HEART
CAN'T BEAT



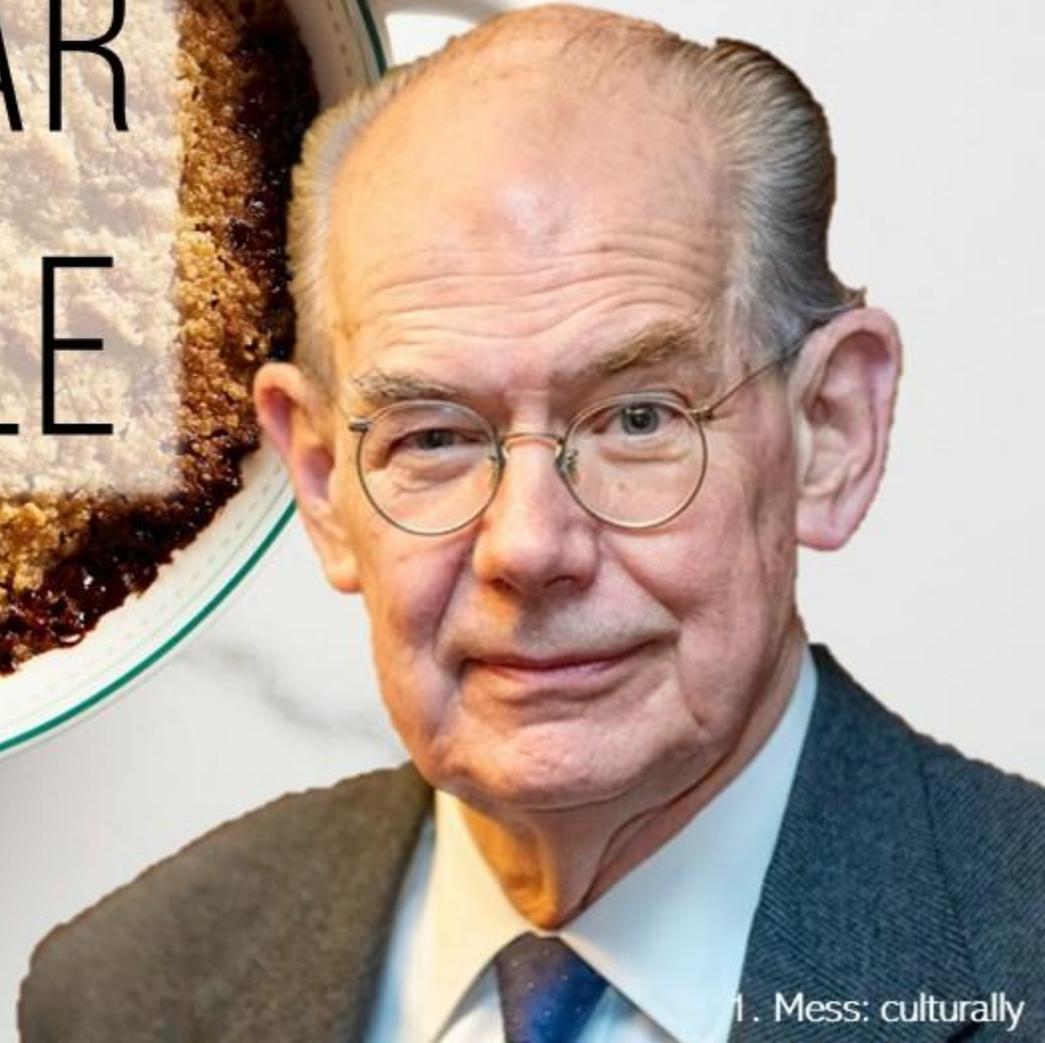
A close-up photograph of a young monkey with light brown fur and large, bright green eyes. The monkey has its mouth wide open in a shocked or surprised expression, showing its pink tongue. It is perched on a thick, green, textured branch. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural, forest-like environment. In the upper right corner, the words "FREAK OUT" are written in a white, sans-serif font.

FREAK
OUT



UNIPOLAR CRUMBLE

Bound to Fail:
The Rise and Fall of the
Liberal International Order
John J. Mearsheimer





STRONG GODS REFUSE TO DIE

SOMETHING SCARY IS HAPPENING





MAKE AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN

BREAK FROM AN OPEN SOCIETY

“AMERICA FIRST”



The era of liberal hegemony is over. For three decades, the guiding principle of American foreign policy was a fusion of messianic universalism and raw power, a belief that the United States existed not merely to secure its own interests but to evangelize the “rules-based international order” to the ends of the earth. From the Balkans to Baghdad, American grand strategy was predicated on the assumption that Washington was the armed curator of a global garden. The 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS), just released by the Trump administration, is the obituary for that era... 6 December, 2025

The Critic



1.4 TWO COMPETING STORIES

OPEN SOCIETY

CLOSED SOCIETY



EXPECT (EX)CHANGE

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and **exchanged** the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

They **exchanged** the truth about God for a lie...

Romans 1:22-23 & 25

THE OPEN SOCIETY STORY



1. Creation



2. Fall



3. Redemption



4. Consummation

#1. CREATION

In the beginning
I was good
(a blank canvas)

#2. THE FALL

When other people
mucked me up
(by trying to define me)

#3. REDEMPTION

Rediscovering me



#4. CONSUMMATION

Being comfortable and safe



I AM THE AUTHOR



I AM THE HERO



THE CLOSED SOCIETY STORY



1. Creation



2. Fall



3. Redemption



4. Consummation

#1. CREATION

In the beginning
my nation was good
(Britannia ruled the waves;
Land of hope & glory)

#2. THE FALL

The erasing of our
connections with past,
people, and place
(removal of all boundaries)

#3. REDEMPTION

Rediscovering our nation
(democracy not technocracy);
by destroying all things woke
(death to DEI!)

#4. CONSUMMATION

Being back in control of our
families, our communities,
and our nation

WHICH IS
BETTER?



WHERE TO FIND THE BALANCE?

“That finding the proper balance between “closed” and “open” values is necessary to maintain a healthy society was a fact carefully ignored for decades.”

N S Lyons, *The return of the strong gods*, 2025



BUILD HIGHER WALLS



MATTHEW KAEMINGK

1.4 Two competing stories

OPEN WIDER DOORS

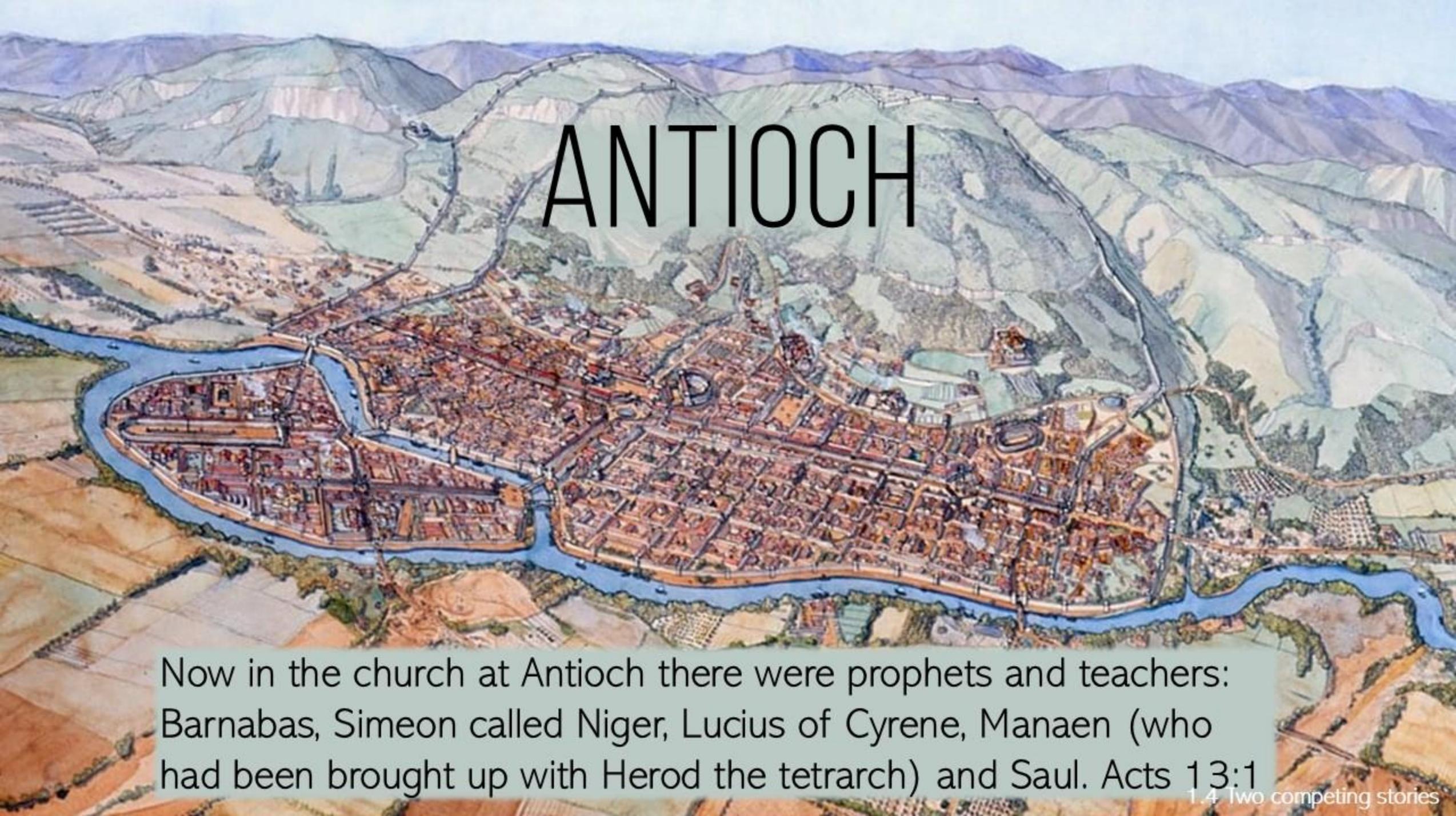


MATTHEW KAEMINGK

TABLE

In fighting over the "American house," one side has demanded the construction of higher walls while the other has demanded the opening of wider doors. This obsession with walls and doors misses a critical third element, the one thing that can turn this American house into a home. Tables flourish in homes that are both secure and generous, just and merciful. Tables represent a hospitality that is both ordered and open. In light of this, I would argue that the ultimate end of Holy Week politics is not high walls or open doors; it is a well - set table.

Public Justice Review, Vol. 2, 2017, A JUST WELCOME, Refugees and the Politics of Holy Week, Matthew Kaemingk

An aerial, artistic rendering of the ancient city of Antioch. The city is a dense cluster of brown-roofed buildings, surrounded by a blue river that winds through it. The city is situated in a valley, with rolling hills and mountains in the background, some of which are colored in shades of purple and green. The overall style is that of a historical reconstruction or a stylized map.

ANTIOCH

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. Acts 13:1



THE
STRONG
GOD *ts*

PHARISEES AND "SINNERS"

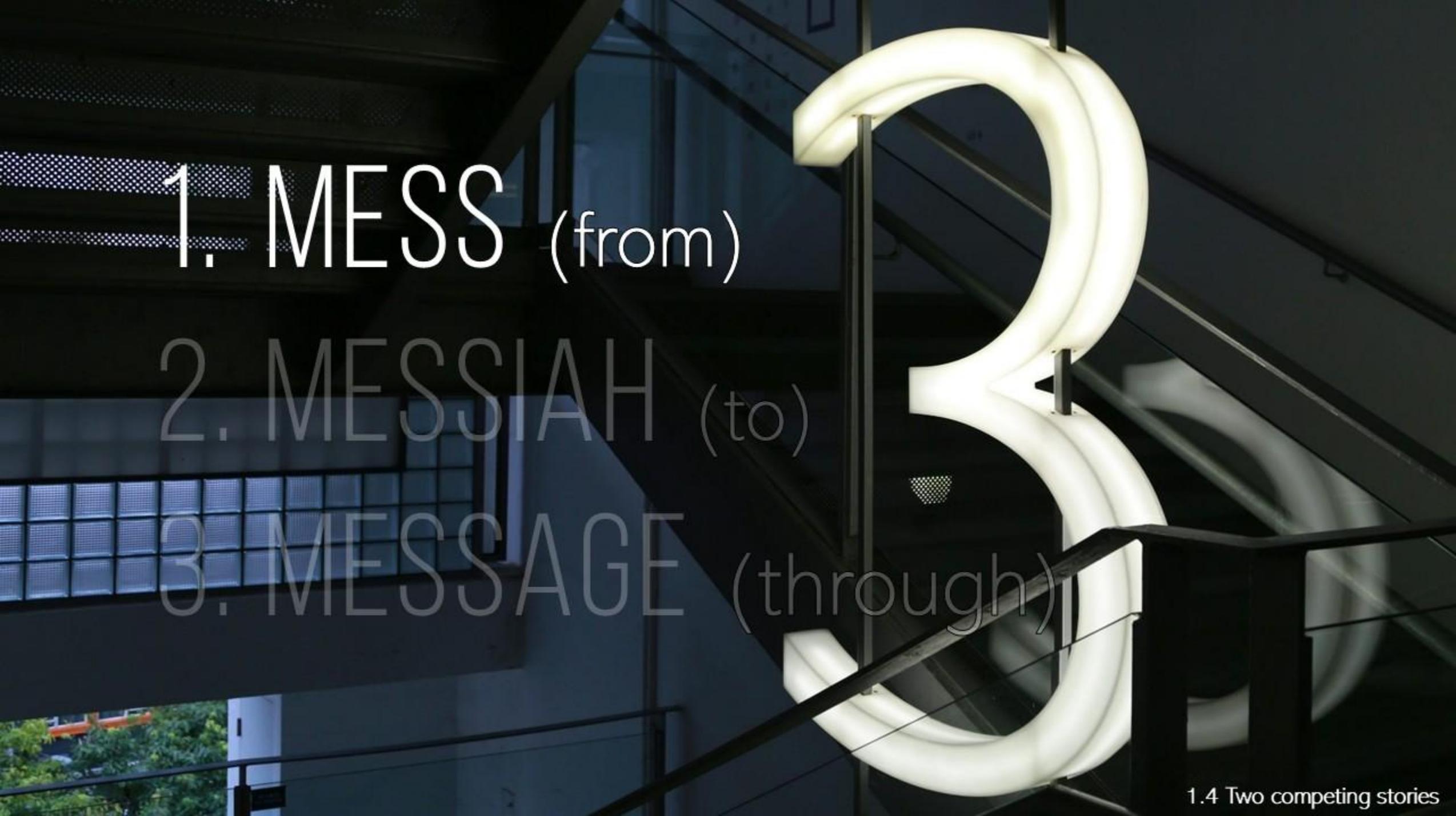


HOW TO RESPOND?



TELL THE GOSPEL STORY

A man with glasses, wearing a brown jacket and light-colored pants, is sitting on the ground leaning against the trunk of a large tree. He is holding an open book and appears to be reading. The scene is set at night, with a warm, golden light source in the background, possibly a sunset or a fire, creating a soft glow. The sky is dark blue, and the tree's branches are silhouetted against the light. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.



1. MESS (from)

2. MESSIAH (to)

3. MESSAGE (through)

2. MESS

Biblically defined



GOSPEL



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LUKE

24:44-49

THANK YOU!

.....



WHAT IS SIN?



BIBLE'S EXPLANATION OF SIN

