

# INSPIRED

SLAYING GIANTS, WALKING ON WATER, AND LOVING THE BIBLE AGAIN

Rachel Held Evans

# What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

- ▶ “Did he believe that God wrote stories with only one kind of meaning? It seemed to me that a story that had only one kind of meaning was not very interesting or worth remembering for too long.” Chaim Potoki, *Davita's Harp*

# “Once upon a time...”

- ▶ Can you relate to these thoughts...
- ▶ Pages xi-xiii
- ▶ Even with questions asked and (maybe) unanswered is the spell unbroken for you?
- ▶ A book translated into over 2000 languages, quoted and inspiring to by countless authors over multiple centuries from William Blake to Beyonce, from Shakespeare to Steinbeck to Blind Willie Johnson...words etched on tombstones, scribbled on protests posters carried in picket lines...incorporated into on-line dating profiles...civil rights activists and Christian segregationists...hope to the oppressed and holy reason for the oppressors...wars and peace fought and settled in its name...

# Life Stages of Biblical Belief

- ▶ Childhood: A Storybook - What was your favorite story?
- ▶ Adolescence: A Handbook - How did the Bible guide you through your teen years?
- ▶ Young Adult: Questioning for Self-knowing - How did the questioning affect your life; spiritually and/or day to day? Read xvii.

# A Journey Back...

- ▶ Read xix.
- ▶ “...the whole purpose of biblical devotion is to be “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17) - Evans’ parents
- ▶ What does this mean to you?
- ▶ “What if the Bible is just fine the way it is?...Not the well-behaved-everything-is-in-order version we create, but the messy, troubling, weird, and ancient Bible that we actually have?” - Peter Enns, an American Biblical scholar and theologian and author of several books, including *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our 'Correct' Beliefs*
- ▶ What does this quote say about God and our relationship with him?

# An Ancient, Magical Palace

- ▶ The ancient rabbis likened Scripture to a palace, alive and bustling, full of grand halls, banquet rooms, secret passages, and locked doors...



Artists rendering of the Minoan Palace at Knossos, Crete

# “All scripture is inspired by God.”

- ▶ 2 Timothy 3:16
- ▶ *Theopneustos* - Greek: *theo*, meaning “god” and *pneo*, meaning “to breathe out”
- ▶ “Inspiration is rooted in the imagery of divine breath, the eternal rhythm of inhale and exhale, gather and release.”
- ▶ “Inspiration comes from the faithful; a collaborative process...a holy give-and-take, a partnership between Creator and creator.”
- ▶ Read xxiii.

# “God is still breathing.”

- ▶ The Bible is inspired and inspiring.
- ▶ “Our job is to be ready to direct the breath, to discuss and debate and like the biblical character Jacob, to wrestle with the mystery until God gives us a blessing.”
- ▶ Curiosity of the text will never leave you without learning something new...
- ▶ Persistence might just leave you inspired...



# “Thy Word”

- ▶ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
- ▶ And a light unto my path.
- ▶ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
- ▶ And a light unto my path.
  
- ▶ When I feel afraid,
- ▶ And think I've lost my way.
- ▶ Still, you're there right beside me.
- ▶ Nothing will I fear
- ▶ As long as you are near;
- ▶ Please be near me to the end.