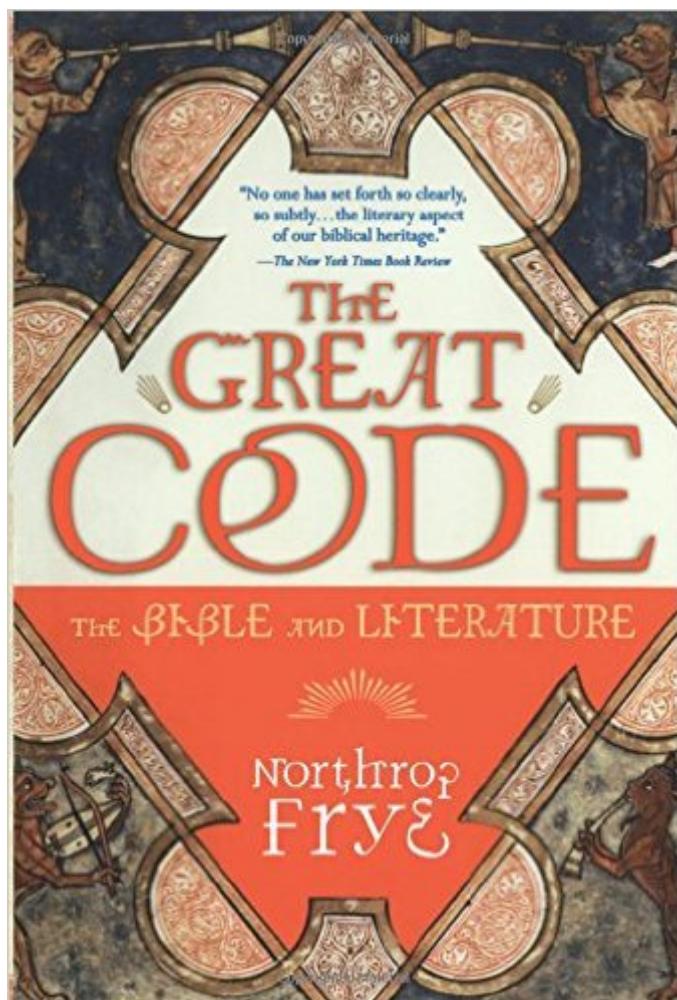


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The Great Code: The Bible And Literature



Synopsis

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"The result, then, of what is now called the historical-critical method was an understanding of the Bible as a collection of historically conditioned documents, reflecting the biases, backgrounds and idiosyncrasies of its authors." Michael Coogan's Archaeological Inquiry: Professor Coogan explains, "The first challenges to this traditional understanding of the Bible as unequivocally the word of God, consistent and free from error, came in the 17th century, when philosophers challenged traditional views about the Bible's authorship and authority, by appealing to common sense, logic and historical method. By the 19th century this approach had gained considerable momentum. During the same period thousands of ancient texts-in languages such as Assyrian, Babylonian, Aramaic and later Sumerian and Ugaritic-were excavated, deciphered and translated. Many of these texts had close or even verbatim correspondences with biblical passages, so that the view of the Bible as a unique document without parallel came under irrevocable challenge. Finally, there was an exponential growth of scientific knowledge: The Bible was simply not true or not simply true, in the sense in which it had for so long been considered. Its cosmology, anthropology and

chronology were often just wrong. For the most part, scholars engaged in this new criticism were not only believers but ordained clergy, generally teachers in seminaries." Between the Scholars and the PewA feel for the contextBible students are warned to be aware of the figurative devices in the Bible and the need to carefully read and study the Bible to become familiar with the ways that language is utilized.

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