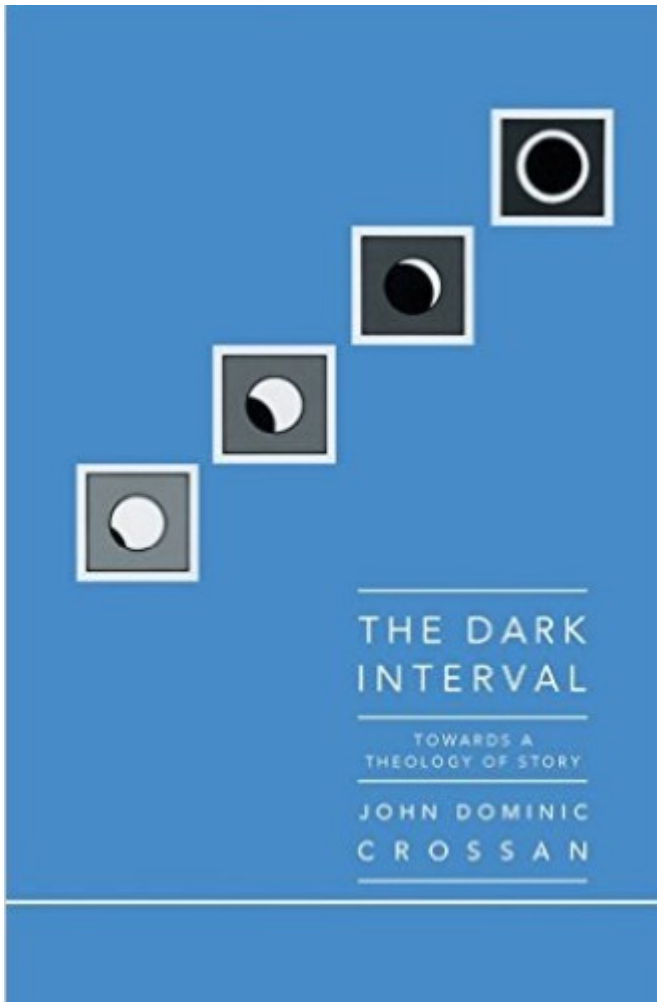


The Dark Interval, by John Dominic Crossan

selected by [Steven Young](#) in the [October 14, 2015](#) issue

In Review



The Dark Interval

by John Dominic Crossan
Polebridge Press

New students' approaches to religious texts exhibit scant sensitivity to the complex recipes by which hearers and readers construct meaning. Yet interpretive skills are useful for making sense not only of sacred texts but of all texts, and of other

communication tools as well. One book I keep selecting to introduce the richness and complexities of hermeneutics is 40 years old: John Dominic Crossan's little gem *The Dark Interval*. In a hundred pages it boldly and engagingly introduces novices to a set of issues that impinge on the meaning and interpretation of religious texts. It challenges students to interpret not only texts but also themselves—their beliefs, their worldviews, and their orientation toward various assumptions that shape their sense of just what meanings are possible.

Although the book originates in a dated 1960s structuralism, the topics Crossan covers without resorting to technical language arise naturally in class discussion and have had a lasting impact: from metanarratives and folktales, from worldviews to readers' expectations, from genres to contexts. At the heart of the book is Crossan's concept of parables as stories that undermine the reality-constructing myths that make all of us feel at home in the world.