

OCIA – The Holy Scriptures

-Recap: we can know *that* God is on our own, but we can't know *who* He is...He needs to reveal Himself to us.

- The primary way God has revealed Himself to us is through the Word-made-flesh, Jesus.
 - This word is also communicated & recorded in human words: Scriptures.

-What is the Bible? Not a single Book, but rather a library!

- 73 different books containing the Word of God.
 - 46 Old Testament Books, 27 New Testament Books.
 - Testament means Covenant (an exchange of persons – like a marriage).
 - 46 Books detailing the story Before Jesus; 27 Books During/After Jesus.
 - Different genres*: Genesis (myth), Exodus (history), Leviticus (law), Psalms (poetry), Proverbs (poetry +theological stories), Gospels (own genre), Daniel/Revelation (apocalyptic literature), Epistles (letters)
 - Different times*: beginning of time, 2000BC, 500 BC, AD 50, end of time.
 - Different human people writing it*: Pentateuch (Moses + editors), Psalms (David), 4 Gospels, Paul, etc...

-Who wrote the Bible? God & Man.

- God: God is the primary author of the Bible. This means that the Holy Spirit inspired every word and every human author.
- Man: Certain people were filled with the inspiration of God & communicated what they “felt.”
- This is what makes the Bible different – it's not a bunch of people writing about God... It's God revealing Himself in human words & human perspectives.
 - These words are *ALIVE* because He is *ALIVE*.
- The Bible is God's Love Letter to us all.

-What's in the Bible?

- Old Testament: From Adam to the Maccabean Revolt (right before the time of Christ).
 - 1) Pentateuch – Adam to Promised Land
 - 2) Historical Books – Promised Land to Maccabean Revolt (200BC)
 - 3) Wisdom Literature – Psalms / Advice / Theology
 - 4) Prophetic Books – God speaking to His people through prophets
- New Testament
 - 1) Gospels: the life of Jesus
 - 2) Acts of the Apostles: life in the years immediately after Jesus's Ascension.
 - 3) Paul's Letters & other Epistles: Letters to particular churches
 - 4) Revelation: A vision describing the meaning of it all / end of time.

-Canon: books that are determined to be inspired by God.

- Who has the authority to do this? The Apostles – Jesus gave them His authority & they passed that authority along.
 - Early Church leaders would discuss which Books were truly inspired by the Holy Spirit & which books were just edifying.

- Criteria used to determine if a book was from the Holy Spirit:
 - 1) Orthodox – it taught what Jesus taught
 - 2) Universal – applies to everyone (not just secret knowledge)
 - 3) Liturgical – the reading was used in the Mass / time of group prayer
 - 4) Apostolic – some connection to the apostles/time of Christ

-Differences between Catholic & Protestant Bibles

-New Testament: same 27 Books.

-Old Testament

-Protestants have 39 Books.

-Books omitted: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, 1st & 2nd Maccabees.

-Catholics have 46 Books.

-Language is key

-Old Testament books were written in Hebrew.

-In 250 BC, a translation of all of the Old Testament – the Septuagint (LXX) – was made in Greek. This became the standard version of the early Church, and it contained all 73 Books of the Bible.

-By the time of Fr. Martin Luther, Jews in Europe didn't use the Septuagint and only used the Hebrew Old Testament, which had 7 less Books.

-Luther rejected that the Church had the authority to declare which books were inspired or not, and he subsequently rejected the 7 non-Hebrew ones.

-Question is who has authority...Not Jews, but the Church. Not Martin Luther, but the Church.

-Bold claim to “remove” Scripture after 1500 years! Did the Holy Spirit make a mistake? screw up?

-Interpreting Scripture

-Who has the authority to interpret Scriptures? The Catholic Church claims the authority to interpret the Scriptures, as a group.

-“Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.” (Acts 8:30-31)

-Two questions to ask when interpreting Scripture:

- 1) What is the Genre?
- 2) What is the Context?

-Not all Scripture is to be interpreted in a literalistic way!

-Different ways to interpret Scripture:

- 1) Literal – what the author intended.
- 2) Spiritual – signs & symbols
 - a) Allegorical – How it relates to Christ.
 - b) Moral – how it relates to how we act.
 - c) Eschatological – how it relates to the end-times.