CALVARY CHAPEL
MARTIN COUNTY

Living in the Last Days Becoming Biblically Literate Part 1
Learning How to Study the Bible
Genesis 3:1, Galatians 1:6-9

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One of the major things we confront in this day and age are those who question the validity of the Bible. That is not new at all.

That has been a scheme of Satan since Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1
“Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “**Has God really said**, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”” (NASB 2020)

It worked for him then and still works today. Living in the last days, we must settle this, the Bible is God's word and that is why we study it.

We must treat the Bible the same way that our Lord treated the word while He was here and ministering. I never cease to be amazed at some of the so-called scholars and experts who have a lower view of God's word than Jesus did. Charles Ryrie points out the way Jesus approached the word, as observed by His interactions with it.

Jesus clearly used historical events in the Bible which reflected His total confidence in the facts. "Adam and Eve were created by God, that they were two living human beings, not merely symbols of mankind and womankind." (Mattthew 19:3-9) (Ryrie 1998, 78)

- Jonah lived, was swallowed by a fish, and spit out after three days Matthew 12:40).
- The events surrounding the Noah and the flood he confirmed. (Luke 17:26-27)
- The following people were real as He acknowledged the historicity of Isaiah (Matthew 12:17), Elijah (Matthew 17:11–12), Daniel (Matthew 24:15), Abel (Matthew 23:35), Zechariah (Matthew 23:35), Abiathar (Mark 2:26), David (Matthew 22:45), Moses and his writings (Matthew 8:4; John 5:46), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; John 8:39). (Ryrie 1998, 78)

That is just some of the historical references. Jesus made statements that show us Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah rather than, as some like to do today, say there were two Isaiah's since they have such difficulty with the prophecy.

John 12:36–43
"While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. But although He had done so many signs before them, **they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1) Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." (Isaiah 6:10)** These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (NKJV)

Jesus took the word to be inerrant. He took it to be true truth.

The pressure we see here in the last days is to discount His word, question His word and ignore His word. As we study the word, we must look at it the same way that Jesus did, God's word. Francis Schaeffer explains this a bit further.

What we claim as Christians is that when all of the facts are taken into consideration, the Bible gives us true knowledge although not exhaustive knowledge. Man as a finite creature is incapable of handling exhaustive knowledge anyway. (Schaeffer 1982, 22-23)

When we get to Heaven, what we learn further will no more contradict the facts the Bible now gives us than the New Testament contradicts the Old. (Schaeffer 1982, 23)

So, some facts about the Bible.

First of all is the supernatural aspect of the scriptures. We cannot ignore that, we cannot wash that away since this is God's revelation of Himself to us.

The result we have now is 66 books with 40 different identified men who were used by the Holy Spirit and inspired to write what they did.

The original text of the bible is actually in three different languages. Hebrew which is the bulk but not all of the Old Testament.

The book of Daniel is in Hebrew (Daniel 1:1-2:4a, 8:1-12:13) as well as in Aramaic (Daniel 2:4b-7:28). Ezra also has a significant portion of the book in Aramaic, Ezra 4:9-6:18 and Ezra 7:12-26.

Then the New Testament is written in Koine Greek. There is another form of Greek as well, called Attic Greek which is more formal, Koine means common, common Greek.

There are tools, if you are inclined to research and study specific words to include the original language and meaning of that word, which are really good to help you and require zero knowledge of the languages. One of those tools is Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Then there is Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary.

We will talk more about the use of tools in another session.

One of the lies, not a new one but it seems new to many, is there are new translations, or new books or revelation. There are also those who lie about obtaining a brand-new spirit led or even angelic revealing of hidden truth in the scriptures. The Good News Bible I think, boils down Paul's words on this idea really well.

Galatians 1:6–9
"I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting another gospel. Actually, there is no "other gospel", but I say this because **there are some people who are upsetting you and trying to change the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!**" (GNB)

What do you really think Paul? I know of two folks who claim angelic revelation of their "word", Mohhamed and Joseph Smith.

Are there others as well today? Holly Pivec has researched a group that is in this mold today which also provides us the impetus to know the word.

"In the twenty-first century, churches in small towns and large cities throughout the world encounter teachers who, like Paul, are bringing new teaching. These teachers—part of the New Apostolic Reformation, or NAR (pronounced NAHR)—also call themselves apostles and prophets. Their teaching is that churches must submit to their leadership so they can advance God's kingdom and prepare the earth for Christ's return." (Pivec 2014, xiii)

These are the same folks who are in a royal funk right now since they are proponents of dominion theology as well as the seven-mountain mandate. The recent election was not kind to them. They teach the church takes over the culture and then Jesus returns. My Bible does not teach that. Geivett and Pivec add to this.

“These men and women claim they have the God-given authority, divine strategies, and miraculous powers needed to advance God’s earthly kingdom so that Christ can return. And they offer people a choice.

If you submit to their leadership, then you too will work mighty miracles. You’ll become part of a great end-time army that will bring about a world revival and cleanse the earth of evil by calling down hailstones, fire, and the other judgments of God described in the New Testament book of Revelation.
If you do not submit to their leadership then, at the very least, you will miss out on God’s end-time plans. And if you actively oppose the apostles and prophets, then brace yourself for the fallout. Others must be warned that you are the pawn of a powerful demon, known as the “spirit of religion.”” (Geivett and Pivec 2014, 3)

From those of us who have the Holy Spirit, not so much the “spirit of religion,” this is why we need to know the Word and the truth of the Word.

What is the Bible, really? Dr. Geisler points out the bible answers that question for us.

The Bible claims for itself that every word or part of a word, with tenses and number, is absolutely true since it is given by the Holy Spirit from the mouth of God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Therefore, it has final divine authority in whatever it teaches, whether it be historical, scientific, or spiritual matters. This applies to both the Old Testament and the New Testament. (Geisler 2004, 22)

The Bible is God’s Word, we must treat it with the same seriousness as Jesus did. Satan has been and still is all about deceiving and asking questions about the veracity of God’s Word. And yes, there are those out there who say they are representing our Lord, who are not and they are working to deceive you and me away from the primacy of God’s Word to their own pronouncements. Yes, there are groups today that believe they can teach things that supersede the Bible, this includes the Mormons, the Catholic Church, various prosperity gospel “preachers” as well as those who adhere to a NAR type of theology. And we have already seen Paul’s prescription for them.

What is the canon of the Bible? What does that mean other than the authoritative list of the books of the Bible? Charles Ryrie defines canon with a “twofold meaning. It refers to the list of books that met certain tests or rules and thus were considered authoritative and canonical. But it also means that the collection of canonical books becomes our rule of life.” (Ryrie, Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth 1999, 118-119)

There is a lot of history behind what is and what is not, a lot of prayer and a lot of work by Godly men centuries ago.

Ryrie again, “since A.D. 397 the Christian church has considered the canon of the Bible to be complete; if it is complete, then it must be closed. Therefore, we cannot expect any more books to be discovered or written that would open the canon again and add to its sixty-six books. Even if a letter of Paul were discovered, it would not be canonical.” And based on my study of the scriptures, I already know of two letters written by Paul we do not have. Both connected with the church in Corinth. The evidence is overwhelming we have the correct text. (Ryrie, Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth 1999, 120)

There is extensive manuscript evidence for the Bible, including at least 300 Hebrew manuscripts and 5,800 Greek manuscripts, as well as more than 20,000 ancient manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments written in various languages, and more than 30,000 scriptural quotations in the early church fathers which help confirm the accuracy of Scriptures. Neither the Qur’an nor The Book of Mormon can make this claim. (Wegner 2013, Kindle Locations 2849-2852)

Old Testament

- 5 books of the Law (Torah) (Books of Moses)
- 12 books of history
- 5 books of wisdom
- 5 major prophets (simply larger books)
- 12 minor prophets

I have provided some additional detail for you in the notes regarding the Old Testament books.

5 Books of the Law

1. Genesis - origins
2. Exodus – the way out
3. Leviticus - Holiness
4. Numbers – wilderness wanderings
5. Deuteronomy – a copy of the law

Author - Moses

12 Books of History

1. Joshua – taking the land – Joshua
2. Judges – failure in the land – Samuel
3. Ruth – picture of Messiah – Samuel (we think)
4. 1 & 2 Samuel – Kingdom beginnings – Samuel, Nathan and Gad
5. 1 & 2 Kings – mans view – Jeremiah
6. 1 & 2 Chronicles – God's view – Ezra
7. Ezra – restoration begins – Ezra
8. Nehemiah – restoration completed – Nehemiah
9. Esther – for such a time as this – That is a really good question

5 Wisdom Books

1. Job – God's relationship with man – Job
2. Psalms – song book of the nation – David, Solomon, Sons of Korah, Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Moses
3. Proverbs – to know wisdom = Solomon, Agur, Lemuel
4. Ecclesiastes (The Preacher) – man's wisdom - Solomon
5. Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) – love of the bridegroom - Solomon

5 Major Prophets

1. Isaiah – the glory of God – Isaiah
2. Jeremiah – warning – Jeremiah
3. Lamentations – mourning – Jeremiah
4. Ezekiel – judgment/glory – Ezekiel
5. Daniel – history in advance – Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar

12 Minor Prophets

1. Hosea-redeeming love – Hosea (The Lord Saves)
2. Joel- Day of the Lord – Joel (YAHWEH is God)
3. Amos- sin is judged – Amos (Bear a load)
4. Obadiah- Edom's Doom – Obadiah (Servant of the Lord)
5. Jonah- God's Mercy – Jonah (Dove)
6. Micah-judgment and future – Who is like the Lord)
7. Nahum-Nineveh's doom – Nahum (Comfort of God)
8. Habakkuk-why are the sinful prospering – Habakkuk (Embrace)

9. Zephaniah-day of the Lord – Zephaniah (Lord hides)
10. Haggai-encouragement-rebuild the temple – Haggai (Festive)
11. Zechariah-Messiah – Zechariah (The Lord remembers)
12. Malachi-formalism rebuked – Malachi (My messenger)

Books Referenced But Missing

1. Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14)
2. Book of Jashar (Just) (Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18)
3. Book of the Acts of Solomon(1 Kings 11:41)
4. Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14:19; 2 Chr 33:18)
5. Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29; 15:7)
6. Chronicles of Samuel the Seer (1 Chron 29:29)
7. Records of Nathan the Prophet (2 Chron 9:29)
8. Records of Shemaiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer (2 Chr 12:15)
9. Annals of Jehu son of Hannani (2 Chron 20:34)
10. Records of Hozai (2 Chron 33:19)
11. Jeremiah's Lament for Josiah (2 Chron 35:25)
12. Chronicles of Nathan the prophet (1 Chronicles 29:29)
13. Chronicles of Gad the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29)

Then there is the New Testament. At a basic level, it contains

- 4 gospels
- 1 book of history
- 21 letters
- 1 book of prophecy

As with the Old Testament, the notes also have additional background for you on the New Testament.
4 Gospels

1. Matthew-King – Matthew (Levi)
2. Mark-Servant – John Mark
3. Luke-Man – Doctor Luke
4. John-God – John

One Book of History

- Acts-the Church begins – Doctor Luke

21 Letters Also referred to as the Epistles of the Apostles
Some further divide this into

- Pauline Epistles
- Epistles to the Church
- Pastoral Epistles
- General or Hebrew Epistles

1. Romans-Gospel – Paul
2. 1 & 2 Corinthians-conduct and authority – Paul
3. Galatians-Saved by Grace – Paul
4. Ephesians-Church – Paul
5. Philippians-Christian life – Paul and Timothy
6. Colossians-Christ is #1 – Paul and Timothy
7. 1 & 2 Thessalonians-return of Christ – Paul, Silvanus and Timothy
8. 1 & 2 Timothy-Church order – Paul

9. Titus-Church order – Paul
10. Philemon-Example of love – Paul
11. Hebrews-Christ-Priest – Paul?
12. James-Practical living – James
13. 1 & 2 Peter-suffering/last days – Peter
14. 1,2,3 John-fellowship/commandment/truth – John
15. Jude-fight for the faith – Jude

One Book of Prophecy

- Revelation-we win – Jesus and John

How were these specific books determined to be the ones that would make up the canon of scripture?

The Rabbis had it locked down for what we call the Old Testament when it was translated into Greek for the Septuagint.

For the Old and New Testament, what were the keys for inclusion?

1. Inspired by God
2. Recognition by the spokesperson for God
3. Collection and preservation by the people of God

Homework assignment!

There is no Midweek bible Study this week, and to get you into the word I am going to ask you to do an assignment that I had to do for my now good friend Colin MacDougal when I took his English class at Biola. The assignment, his words here, is easy. Just read the first three chapters of Proverbs and then define the following four folks.

The wise
The Simple
The Fool
The Scorner/Scoffer

As you read, who are these four people Solomon calls out? Are they all lost? Who, if any, is a believer? Who is placed to become a believer and are there any who are just totally lost?

Let's pray.

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