



THE THEOLOGY NOTEBOOK
Bibliology and Hermeneutics

Version 3
Last Edited 11/8/2005



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BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

“Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.”

—2 Timothy 3:16–17

Question Outline

- What is Tradition?
- What are the five main views of authority?
- Is Scripture all we need?
- What are the arguments for and against Sola Ecclesia?
- What are the arguments for sola Scriptura?
- Do we have the right words?
- What is Textual Criticism?
- How accurate are the Old and New Testaments?
- Do we have the right books?
- What are the facts concerning the canon?
- What are the tests for canonicity?
- Should the Apocrypha be included in the canon?
- What was the development of the New Testament?
- How do we know the Bible is inspired?
- What is the biblical view of inspiration?
- What are the theories of inspiration?
- Where does inspiration lie?
- What is Biblical Docetism?
- How do we know the Bible is inspired?
- What internal and external evidence is there for the Bible’s authenticity?
- Does the Bible err?
- How is inerrancy different from infallibility?
- What is the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy?
- What are examples of alleged biblical contradictions?
- How have people historically interpreted Scripture?
- How did the Jewish readers interpret the Old Testament in Christ’s day?
- How did the New Testament authors interpret Scripture?
- How did the people interpret the Bible in the “Dark Ages”?
- How did the Reformers interpret the Bible?
- What is the modern way of interpreting the Bible?
- What are the principles of Biblical Interpretation?
- What are examples of interpretation fallacies?

Course Outline

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BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

Syllabus

Course Description

This course focuses on the authority, nature, and interpretation (hermeneutics) of the Scriptures. It is designed to help students work through issues that concern the trust they place in the Bible and its interpretation. We will compare the various Christian traditions' views of authority, examining the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura*. The Scripture will be studied as an ancient text focusing on its transmission and canonization. We will also ask tough questions concerning the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. We will then look at how the Church has interpreted the Scriptures throughout history, ending our time by looking at current trends in Evangelical hermeneutics.

Course Objectives

1. The student will understand the vital difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic views of authority.
2. The student will learn why we believe the Bible today essentially is the same as when it was originally written.
3. The student will learn why we believe that the Bible today has the right books.
4. The student will learn the different views of inspiration and inerrancy.
5. The student will understand why we believe the Scriptures *alone* are the inspired word of God.
6. The student will learn about historical-grammatical-literary hermeneutics.

Course Textbooks

Required:

- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Olson, Roger. *Mosaic of Christian Beliefs*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.
- Bible (preferably New American Standard or NET Bible)

Course Requirements and Grading

This course can be taken at two levels: Certificate or self-study.

1. **Certificate Students:** Certificate students take the course for a grade to receive a certificate that can be applied towards the TTP diploma. You must pay the tuition, attend or view all ten sessions, and complete enough of the homework according to the grading system below to receive a passing grade. This applies to both online and campus students.
2. **Self-study:** Self-study students take the course for enrichment only. Homework is not required, although doing homework will obviously enrich your learning from the course.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be offered depending upon the venue. Ask your instructor for more information.

Honors credit can be earned in this course by completing all the coursework *and* completing an additional reading assigned by the teacher. See bibliography for options.

Assignment Description - see course schedule for due dates

Viewing/Attending classes: Students are required to attend or view all ten sessions of the course. (All sessions for every course are posted on the TTP website and are available for viewing or for purchase.) Online certificate

students: It is preferred that you view only one session per week so you won't get too far ahead of the rest of the class. While attending or viewing the sessions is required for all certificate students, it does not apply toward your grade and you cannot receive credit without it.

Ten hours of theological community time (online certificate students only): All online certificate students are required to spend one hour a week in the online TTP forums or in the voice/chat rooms provided. Each course will have a separate classroom in the TTP forums. In this classroom, you can accrue theological community time by asking or answering questions of other students, blogging your thoughts, discussing issues relevant to the course, or posting your answers to the discussion questions at the end of each lesson. Voice and chat rooms will be open each week where you can participate in live theological conversation with other students in your class (see website for details). While theological community time is required for all online certificate students, it does not apply toward your grade and you cannot receive credit without it.

1. **Reading:** Various reading assignments will be given during the ten-week period. Each student will be expected to read the material according to the ten-week-session schedule provided in the syllabus.
2. **Scripture memorization:** Each student will memorize the passages provided on the Scripture memorization sheet in the syllabus. Once completed, the student will recite the memorized Scripture to a partner who will affirm the completion by signing the Scripture memorization sheet.

The preferred translations for all memorization in English are listed below:

- New American Standard
- NET Bible (available at www.bible.org)
- English Standard Version
- New International Version

3. **Case Studies:** The two case studies in the Student Notebook must be completed according to schedule. Online certificate students are to post their case studies online on the TTP forums. Your instructor will grade them online, marking them in red.

4. **Vocabulary Quizzes:** Two closed-book theological vocabulary quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. Online students can find these quizzes on the website. See schedule for due dates. Once the student looks at the quiz, he or she must take the quiz. In other words, you cannot look at the quiz, study the right terms, and then take the test.

Grading System

Complete 1 of 4	Complete 2 of 4	Complete 3 of 4	Complete 4 of 4	Complete all 4 plus honors reading
<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i> <i>with honors</i>

Schedule

Session No.	Session Date	Session Topic	Assignments	Due Dates
1		Introduction and Authority	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> pp. 127-138	Session 2
2		<i>Sola Scriptura</i>		Session 3
3		Transmission of Scripture	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , pp. 54-72	Session 4
4		Canonization of Scripture (OT)	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , pp. 73-89; <i>Mosaic of Christian Belief</i> , pp. 89-109	Session 5
5		Canonization of Scripture (NT)	Case Study #1 Vocabulary Quiz #1	Session 6
6		Inspiration of Scripture		Session 7
7		Proving Inspiration	Reading Assignment: “Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy” (Appendix 1 in the Student notes); <i>Systematic Theology</i> , pp. 90-104	Session 8
8		Inerrancy		Session 9
9		History of Interpretation	Reading Assignment: “Chicago Statement of Biblical Hermeneutics” (Appendix 2 in the Student notes)	Session 10
10		Historical-Grammatical-Hermeneutics	Case Study #2 Vocabulary Quiz #2	One week after session 10

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

Required Reading

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

Roger Olsen, *Mosaic of Christian Beliefs*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.

Essential Reading

*Hendricks, Howard G. and William D. Hendricks. *Living By the Book*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991. (Hermeneutics, beginner)

*Mathison, Keith A. *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001. (Bibliology, intermediate)

*Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000. (Bibliology, intermediate)

Suggested Reading Bibliology

Black, David Alan. *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994.

*Bruce, F. F. *The Canon of Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. (Advanced)

_____. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.

Comfort, Philip Wesley, ed. *The Origin of the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992.

_____. *The Complete Guide to Bible Versions*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996.

*Geisler, Dr. Norman L., and William E. Nix. *From God to Us*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974. (Beginner)

_____. *A General Introduction to the Bible, Revised and Expanded*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1996.

- *_____, ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.
(Advanced)
- _____. *Systematic Theology: Volume One, Introduction, Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002.
- *Kistler, Don, ed. *Sola Scriptura!* Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2000.
(Intermediate)
- *Pink, Arthur W. *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press, 1976.
- Webster, William. *Holy Scripture: The Ground and Pillar of Our Faith, Three Volume Set*. Battle Ground, WA: Christian Resources Inc., 2001.
- _____. *The Old Testament Canon and the Apocrypha*. Battle Ground, WA: Christian Resources Inc., 2002.
- *Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1999. (Intermediate)
- *White, James R. *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations?* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1995. (Intermediate)
- *White, James R. *Scripture Alone*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2004. (Beginner)

Suggested Reading Hermeneutics

- Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972.
- Carson, D.A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.
- *Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992. (Intermediate)
- *Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982. (Beginner)
- Klein, Dr. William W., Dr. Craig L. Blomberg and Dr. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1970.
- Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

*Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation*. Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1991. (Beginner)

Honors Reading

Read one book marked with an asterisk (*).

SUGGESTED BIBLE REFERENCE MATERIALS

Bible Atlas

Beitzel, Barry J. *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985.

Bible Backgrounds

Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Packer, J. I., Merrill C. Tenney and William White, Jr. *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bible Dictionaries/Encyclopedias

Bromiley, Geoffrey, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 4 Vols*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988.

Marshall, Howard and J. I. Packer. *New Bible Dictionary Third Edition*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Bible Difficulties

Archer, Gleason L. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation, 2001.

Bible Handbook

Wilkinson, Bruce and Kenneth Boa. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983.

Concordance

Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.

One Volume Commentary

Wenham, G.J. and D.A. Carson. *New Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Two Volume Commentaries

Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

Multi-Volume Commentaries

Gaebelein, Frank E. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation, 1979-1992.

Student Name _____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION SHEET

Authority

Acts 17:11
Hebrews 13:17

Canon

Jude 1:3
Heb. 1:1-2*

Inspiration and sufficiency

John 20:30-31
2 Pet. 1:20-21
2 Tim. 3:14-17
Isa 46:9-10

Inerrancy

Jn. 17:17*
Num. 23:19*

I _____ have listened to _____
and confirm that he or she has recited the above Scriptures to me without any aid.

Signature _____

* This was already covered in *Introduction to Theology*, but must be done again.



CASE STUDY 1: THE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS

Bibliology and Hermeneutics

This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for an hour or two. This person should be a Bible believing Christian of any tradition. With notes in hand, the topic of your conversation is going to be explaining the difference between the Roman Catholic dual-source view of authority and the Evangelical (or Protestant) *sola Scriptura* view.

- Ask these questions before you begin:
 1. Where do you go for religious authority?
 2. How much authority do you give your denomination or tradition?
 3. Do you think that a person should interpret the Bible on their own or do you think that they should seek the guidance of others in authority?
- After this, explain the different views of authority.
- Then go through the arguments for the Dual-source Theory of authority and the *Sola Scriptura* theory of authority.
- Final question to ask. Do you think that the difference between *sola Scriptura* and dual-source theories was significant enough to be a major cause for the split between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century?

The object of this assignment is to help people understand the issue of authority in the Church and what divides the major traditions today.

After you are done, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Online student are to post their summary in their class forum. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone who completes this will receive credit for the case study.



CASE STUDY 2: THE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS

Bibliology and Hermeneutics

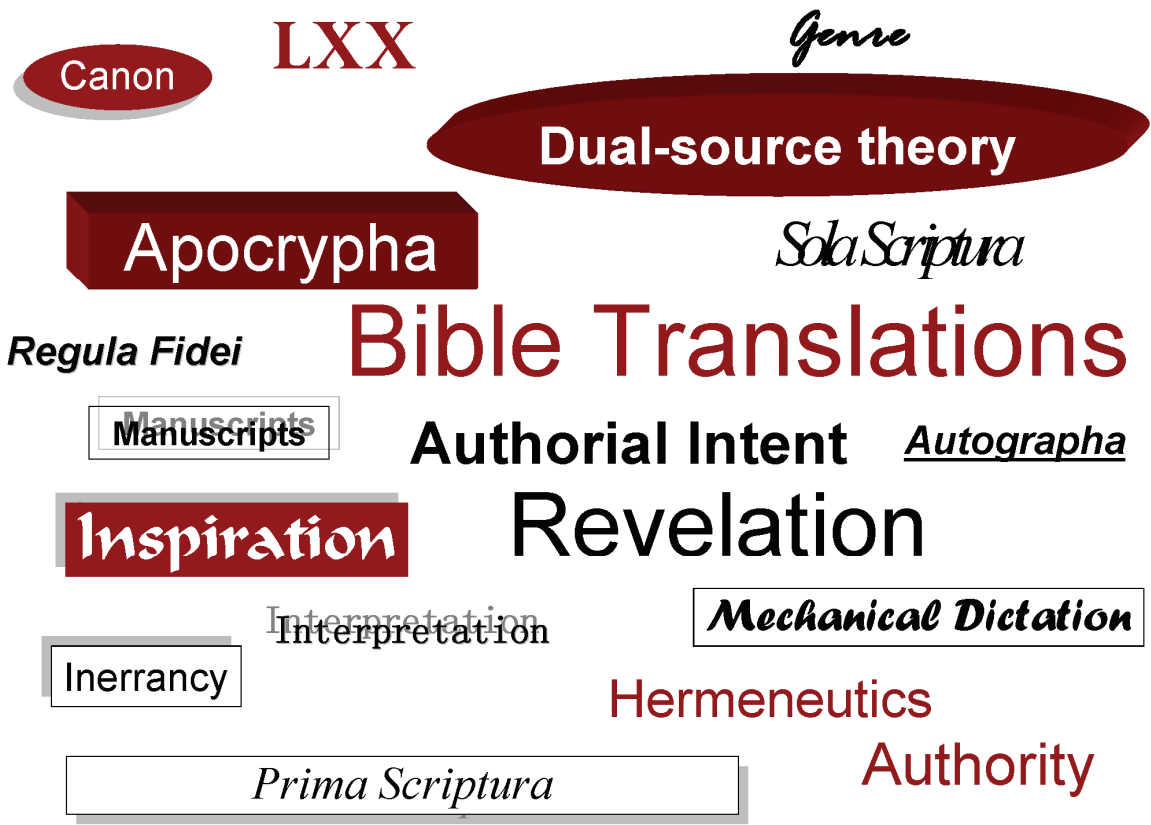
This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for an hour or two. It would be good if this person was a seeker, unbeliever, or a skeptic, but he or she can be a Christian. With notes in hand, the topic of your conversation is going to be explaining why we believe the Scriptures are inspired.

- Ask these questions before you begin:
 1. Do you believe that the Scriptures are the inspired word of God? If so, why? If not, why?
 2. Do you believe that God expects Christians to simply trust that the Scriptures are inspired, or do you think He want Christians to take a critical approach to the Scriptures?
- Proceed to explain the entire “Proving Inspiration” section in your notes.
- Now ask what evidence they found the most convincing concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures.
- Then ask what evidence they found the least convincing concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures.
- If they are still doubtful concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures, ask them what evidence short of God shouting from heaven that they would accept to verify that the Scriptures are inspired.

After you are done, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Online student are to post their summary in their class forum. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone who completes this will receive credit for the case study.



BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS



AUTHORITY

Who do we trust?

Questions:

- What does *sola Scriptura* mean?
- What is the Roman Catholic understanding of Tradition?
- What does Eastern Orthodoxy believe concerning Tradition?
- What is the difference between *sola Scriptura* and *Solo Scriptura*?

Story of the Reformation

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony from scripture or by evident reason—for I confide neither in the Pope nor in a Council alone, since it is certain they have often erred and contradicted themselves—I am held fast by the scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience is held captive by God's Word, and I neither can nor will revoke anything, seeing it is not safe or right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen."

—Martin Luther

Diet of Worms, April 18, 1521

Five Primary Views:

1. Sola Ecclesia
2. Prima Scriptura
3. Regula Fidei
4. Sola Scriptura
5. Solo Scriptura

What Is Tradition?

American Heritage Dictionary:

- The passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication.
- A mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continuously from generation to generation; a custom or usage.
- A body of unwritten religious precepts.
- A time-honored practice or set of such practices.

Two Types of Tradition in Ecclesiastical History:

Tradition 1: A “summary” of Christian orthodoxy that has been held by the universal/catholic Church since its inception. It is infallible only because it accurately represents Scripture. If it does not accurately represent Scripture, it is not true Tradition. Therefore, it is subject to the Scripture. Often referred to as the *regula fidei*.

Tradition 2: An infallible unwritten body of material that contains information beyond that which is contained in Scripture (e.g. Marian dogmas, infallibility of the pope). This Tradition began with the Apostles’ teaching and is passed on through a succession of bishops. It is only revealed when issues arise that make it necessary for a pope or a council to speak authoritatively from this “deposit” of information. Often referred to as “living Tradition”.

Regula Fidei

“Rule of Faith”

This is a Greek phrase used often in the early Church to refer to the summation of the Christian faith. The *regula fidei* was seen as the faith which was held “always, everywhere, and by all.” It was seen as being inherited and passed on, not through an avenue of inspired or infallible information distinct from that of Scripture, but as representative of the essential doctrinal and moral elements of the faith contained in Scripture.

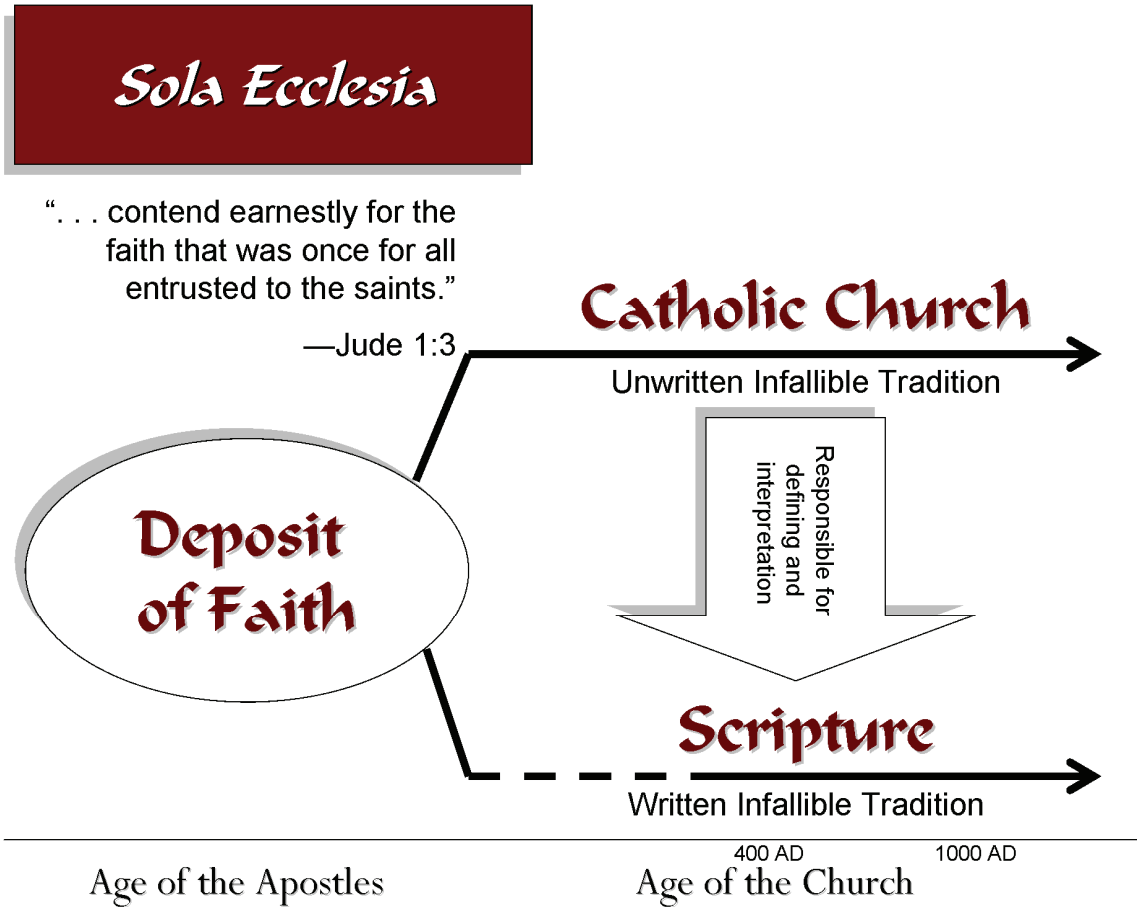
1. Sola Ecclesia

Sola Ecclesia: Belief that Tradition, represented by the magisterial authority of the Roman Catholic Church, is infallible and equal to Scripture as a basis for doctrine; it is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice since it must define and interpret Scripture.

Adherents: Roman Catholics

Tradition: Tradition 2

Alternate name: Dual-source theory

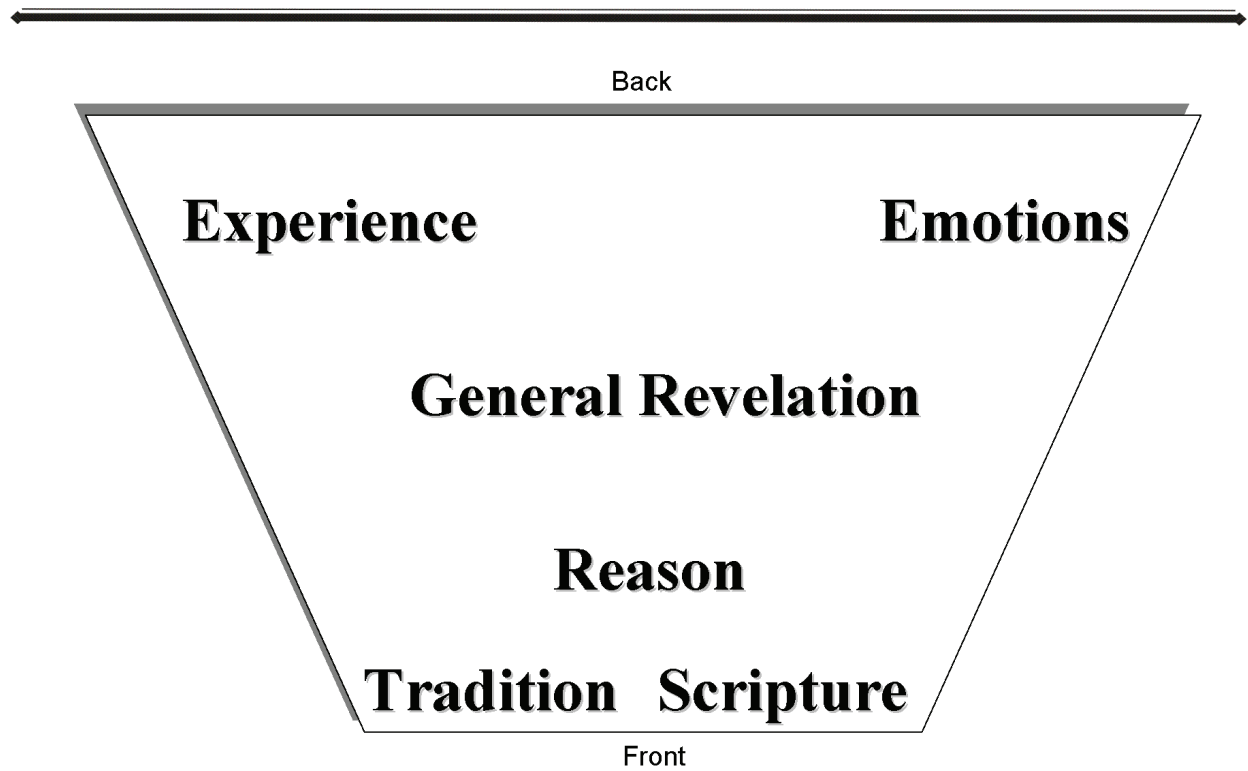


Catechism of the Catholic Church

81 “*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.

And [Holy] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching.

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, “*does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence*” (emphasis added).



Authority

What makes a teaching infallible?

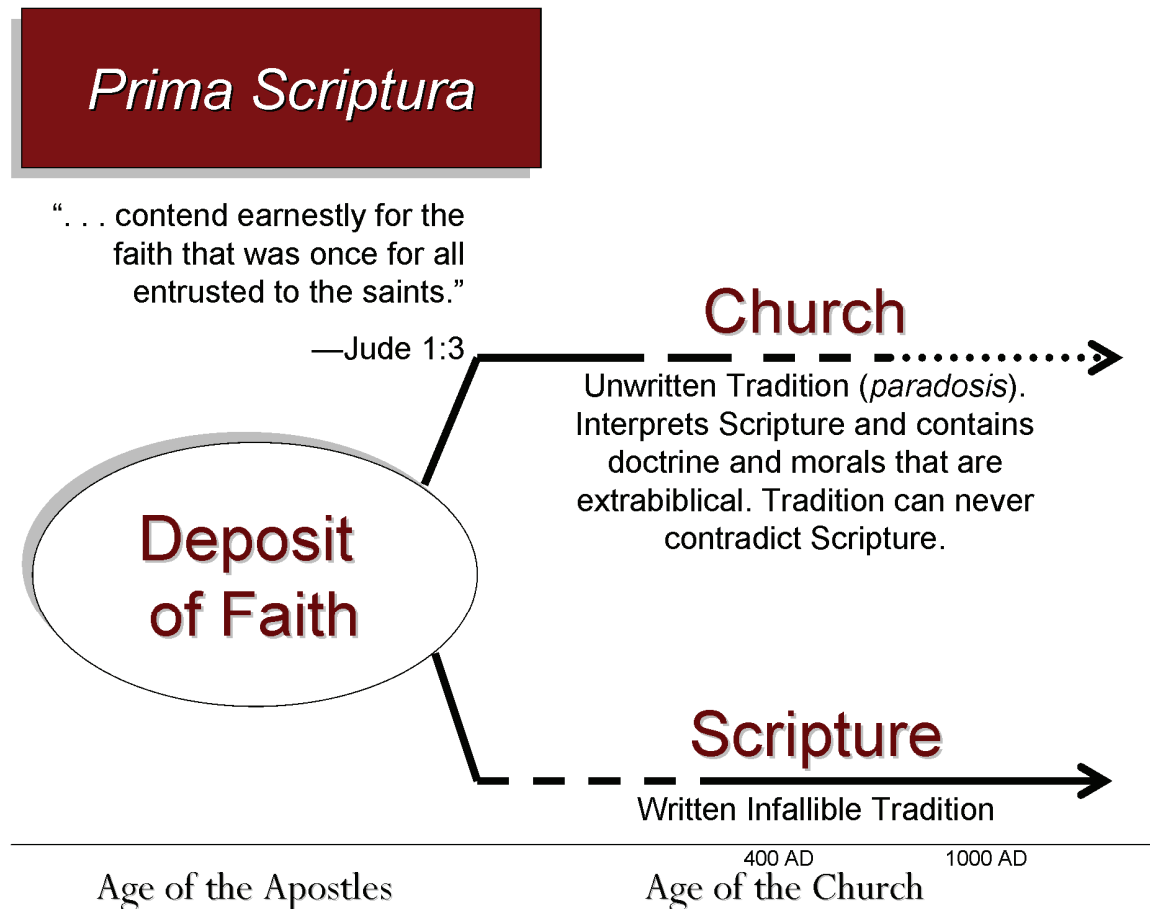
- Pope speaking alone concerning matters of faith or morals (*ex cathedra*):
e.g., papal bulls, encyclicals
- When the pope and bishops speaking together concerning matters of faith or morals: *e.g., ecumenical councils and creeds*

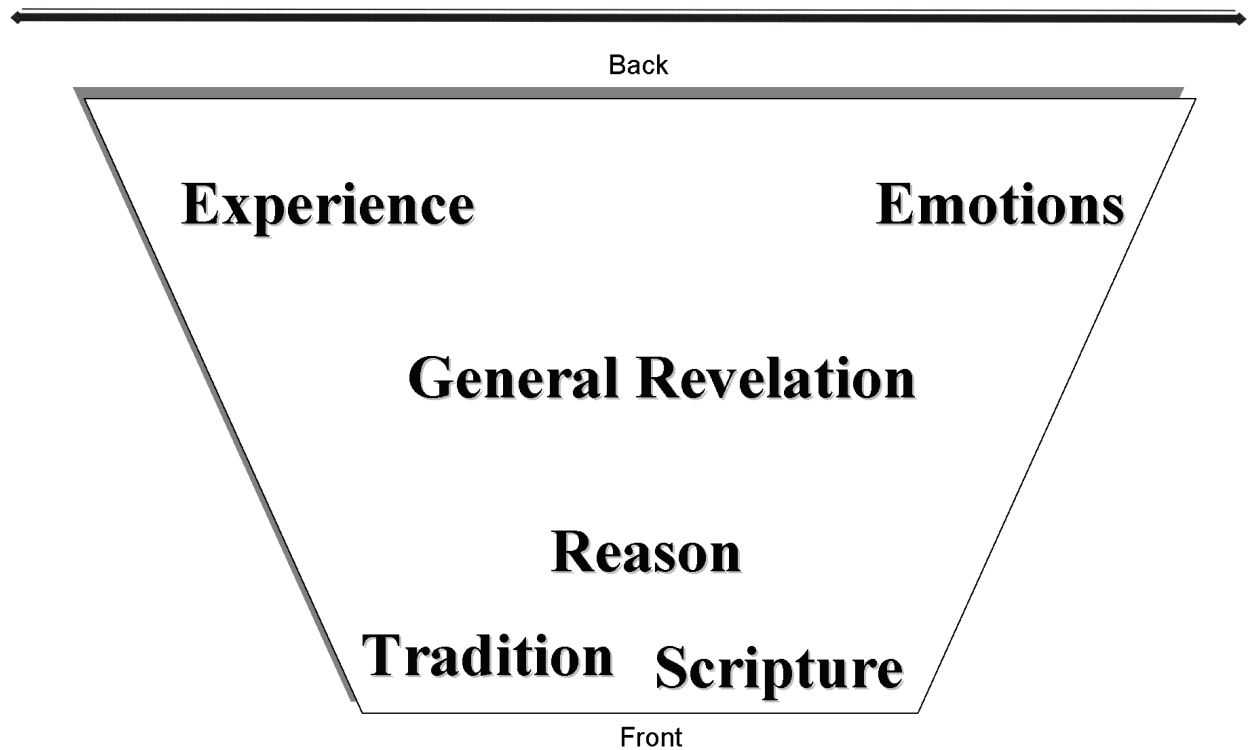
2. *Prima Scriptura*

Prima Scriptura: Belief that the Body of Christ has two separate sources of authority for faith and practice: 1) the Scriptures and 2) Tradition. Scripture is the primary source for authority, but by itself it is insufficient for all matters of faith and practice. Tradition also contains essential elements needed for the productive Christian life.

Adherents: Some Roman Catholics, some Eastern Orthodox, some Protestants.

Tradition: Tradition 2



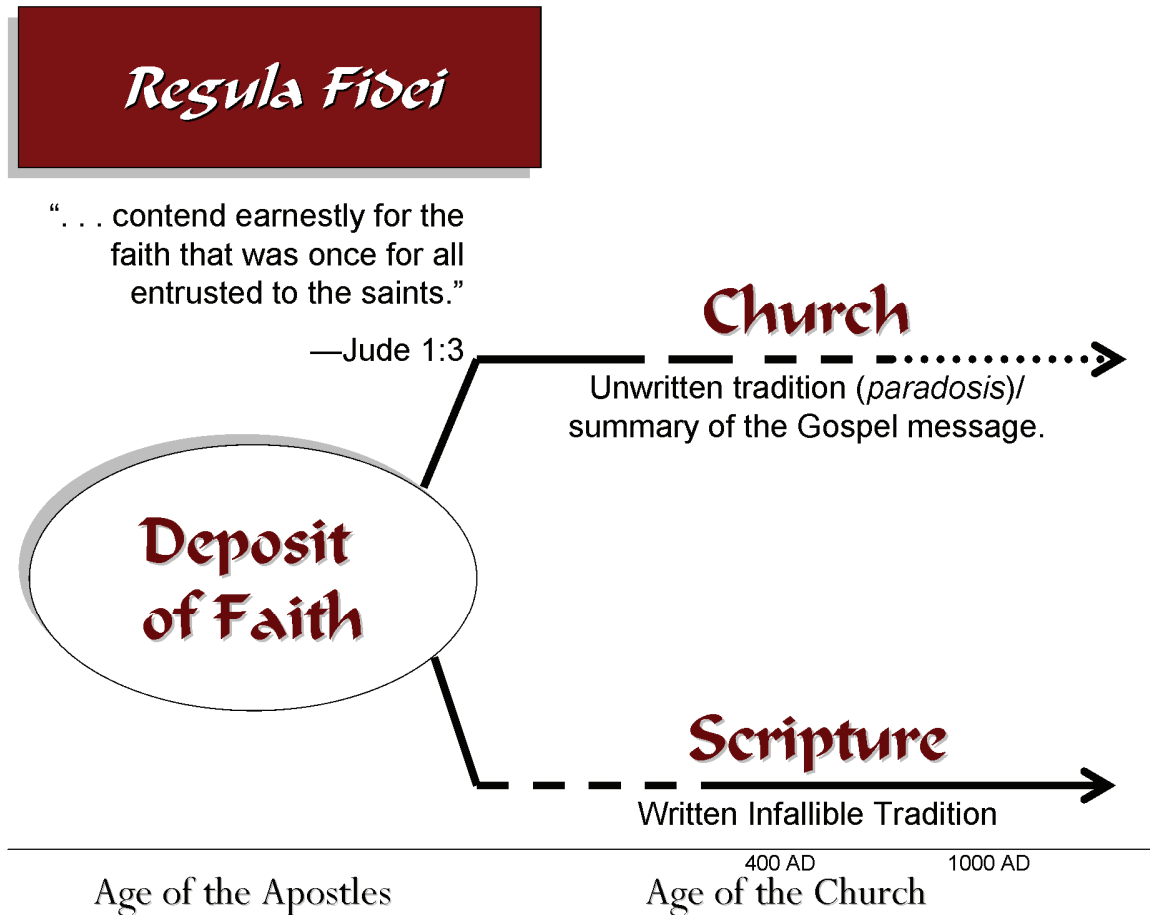


3. Regula fidei

Regula fidei: Belief that tradition is an infallible “summary” of Scripture passed on through apostolic succession. Ultimately, there is only one source of revelation, but two sources of authority. In other words, Tradition is Scripture.

Adherents: Eastern Orthodoxy, early Church, some evangelicals.

Tradition: Tradition 1



“Any disjunction between Scripture and Tradition such as would treat them as two separate ‘sources of revelation’ must be rejected. The two are correlative. We affirm (1) that Scripture is the main criterion whereby the church tests traditions to determine whether they are truly part of the Holy Tradition or not; (2) that Holy Tradition completes Holy Scriptures in the sense that it safeguards the integrity of the biblical message.”

—*Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue:
The Dublin Agreed Statement 1984*

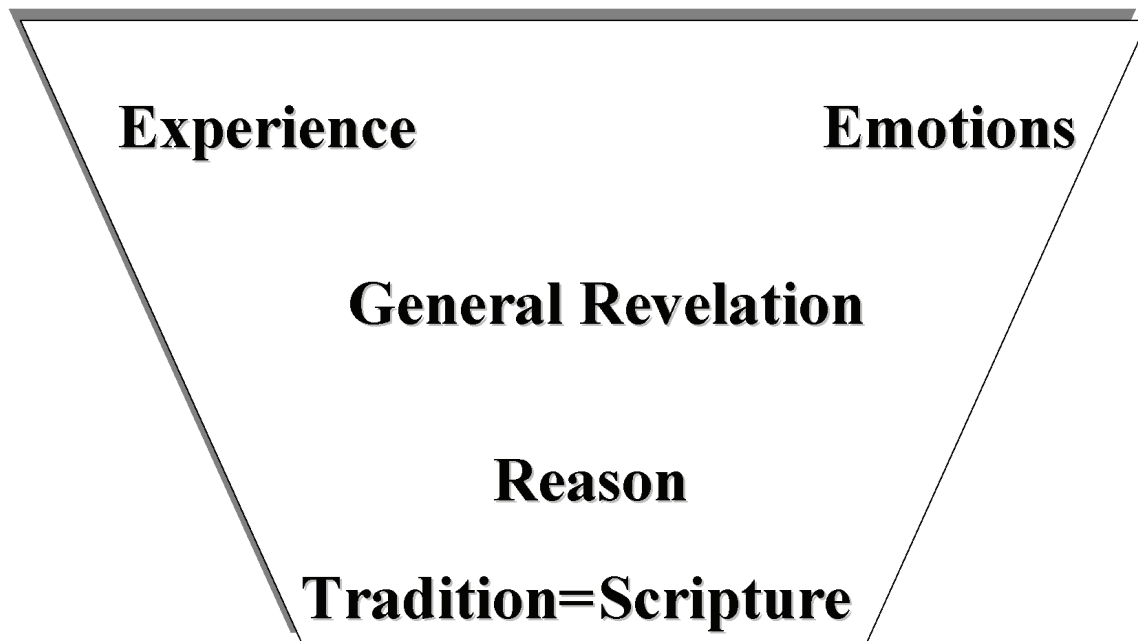
(Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 50–51

“Regarding the relation of Scripture and Tradition, for centuries there seemed to have been a deep difference between Orthodox and Lutheran teaching. Orthodox hear with satisfaction the affirmation of the Lutheran theologians that the formula *sola Scriptura* was always intended to point to God’s revelation, God’s saving act through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to the holy Tradition of the Church . . . against human traditions that darken the authentic teaching in the Church.”

—*Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue:
The Agreed Statements 1985-1989*

(Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1992), 11

Back



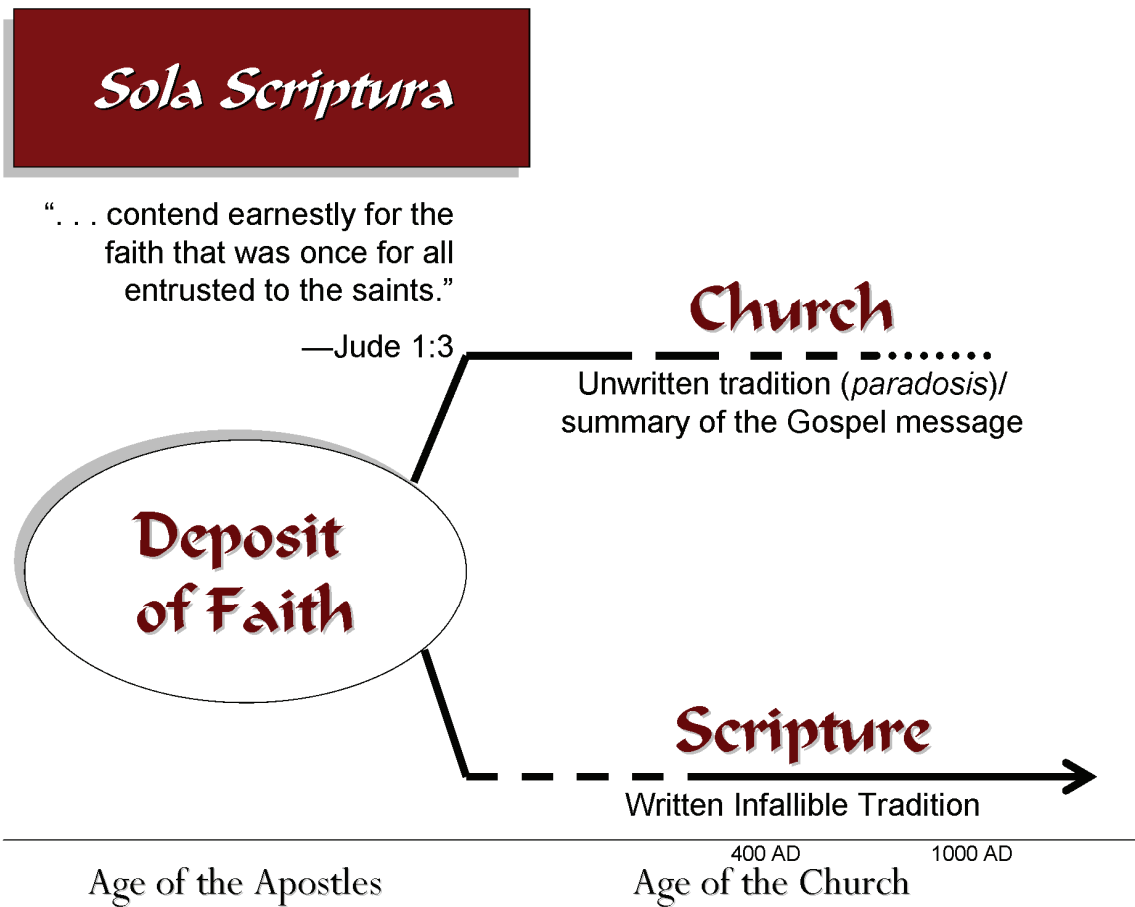
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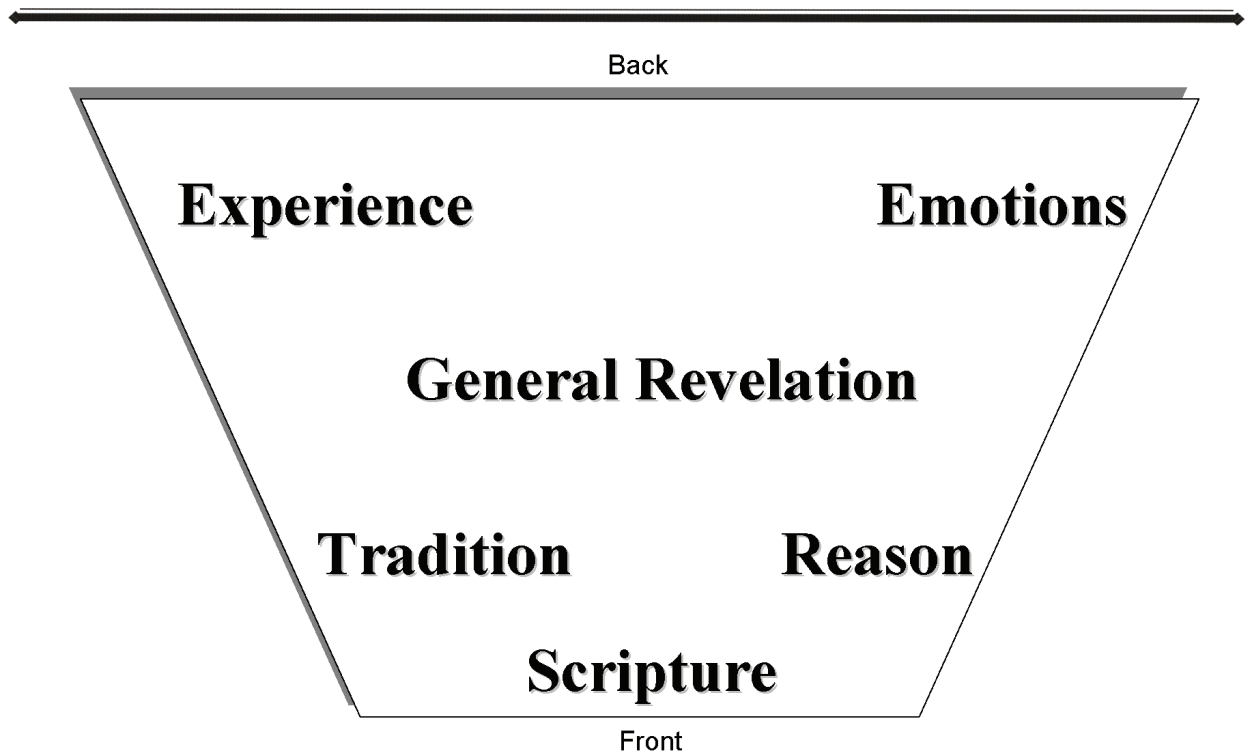
4. *Sola Scriptura*

Sola Scriptura: Belief that Scripture is the final and only infallible authority for the Christian in all matters of faith and practice.

Adherents: Evangelicals, Reformers.

Tradition: Tradition 1





5. Solo Scriptura

Solo Scriptura: Belief that Scripture is the sole basis and authority in the life of the Christian. Tradition is useless and misleading, and creeds and confessions are the result of man-made traditions.

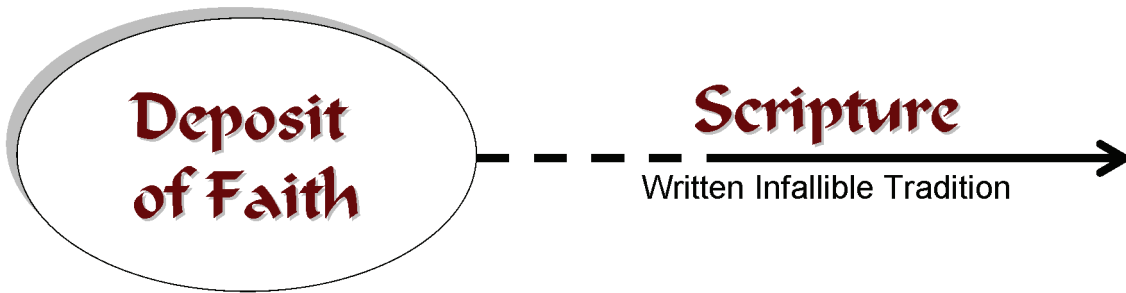
Adherents: Fundamentalism, Restoration Churches

Tradition: None (or Tradition 0)

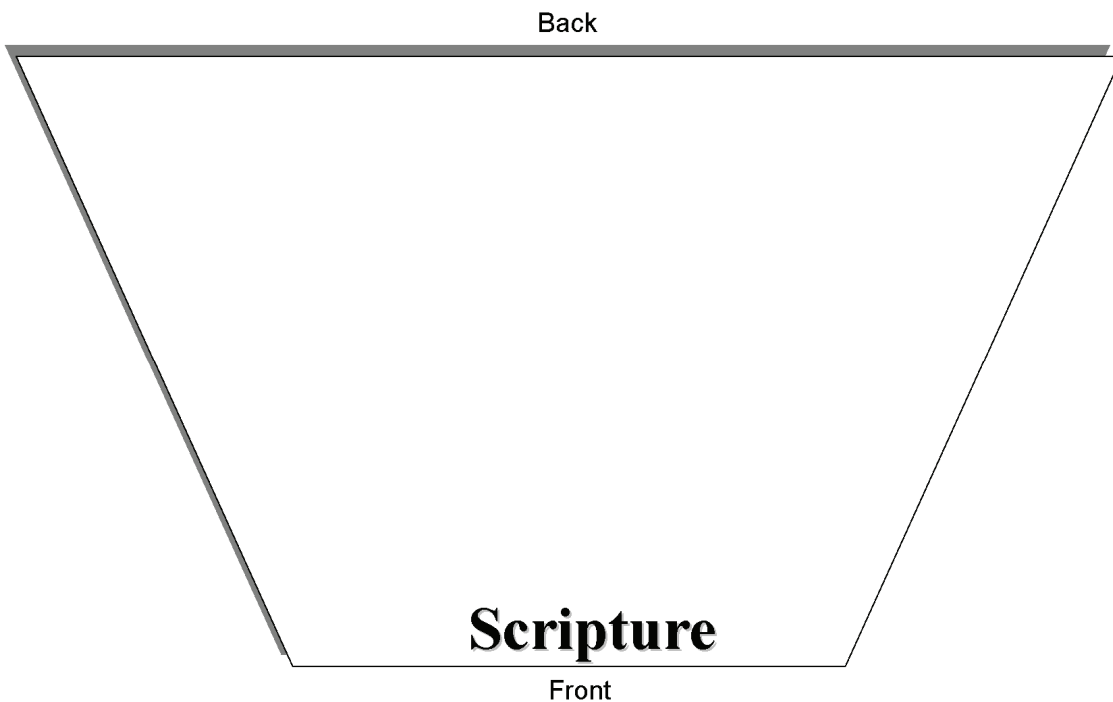
Solo Scriptura

“ . . . contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

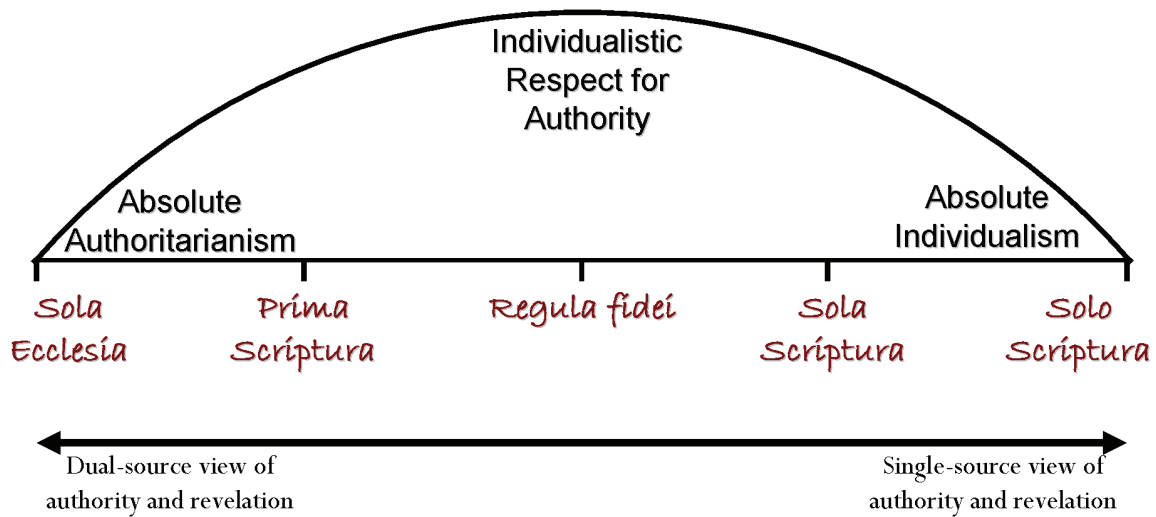
—Jude 1:3

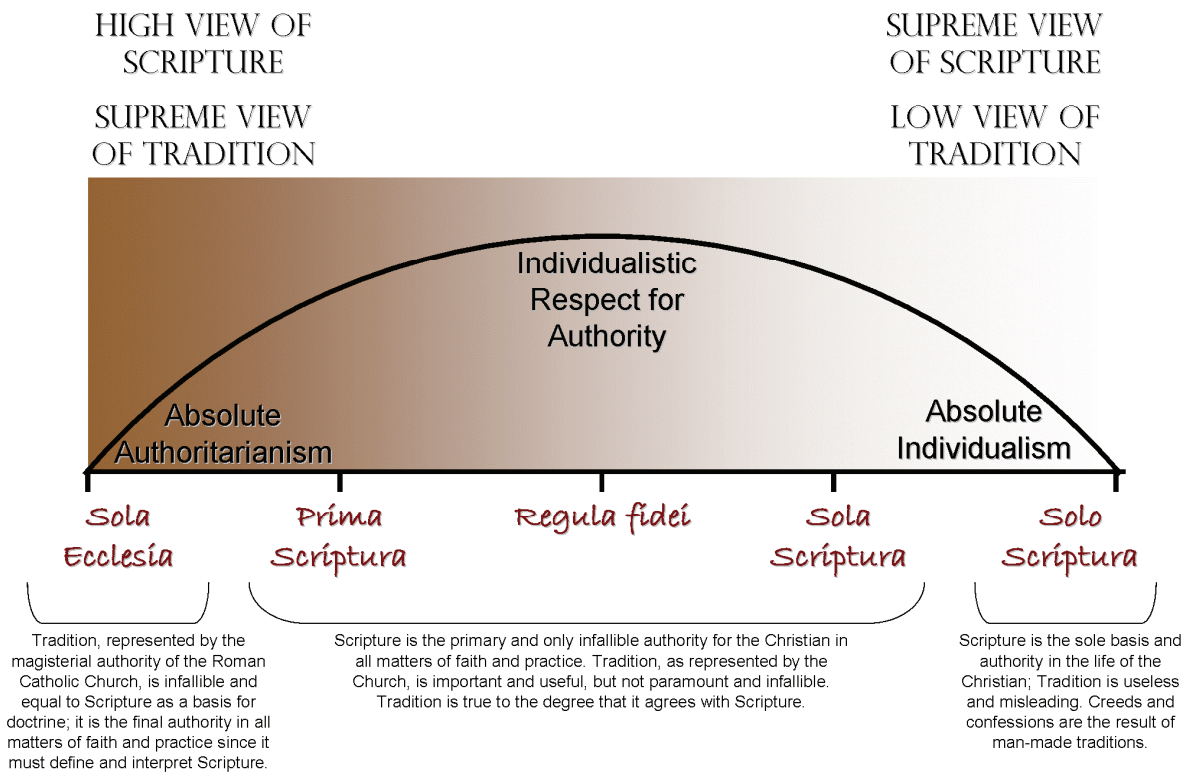
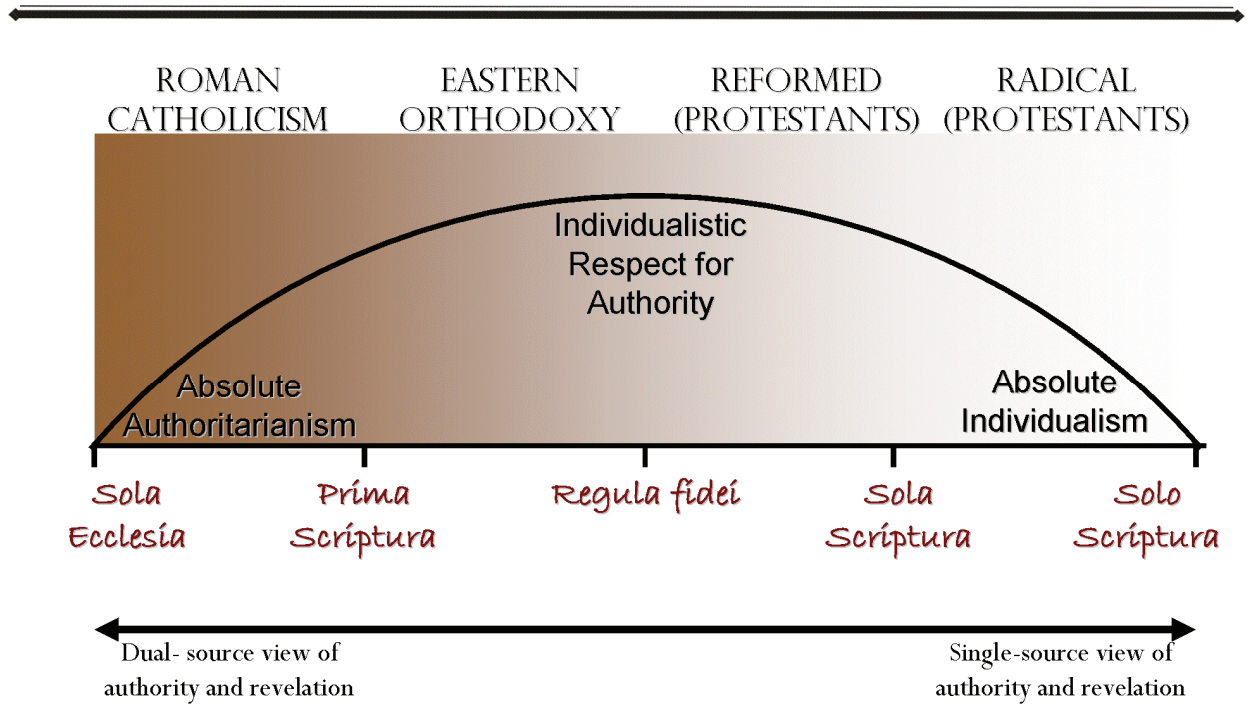


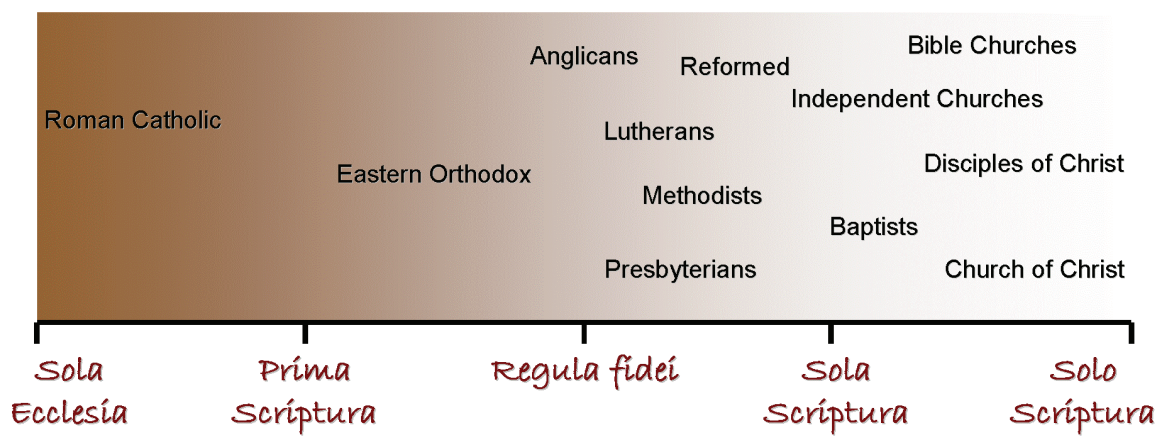
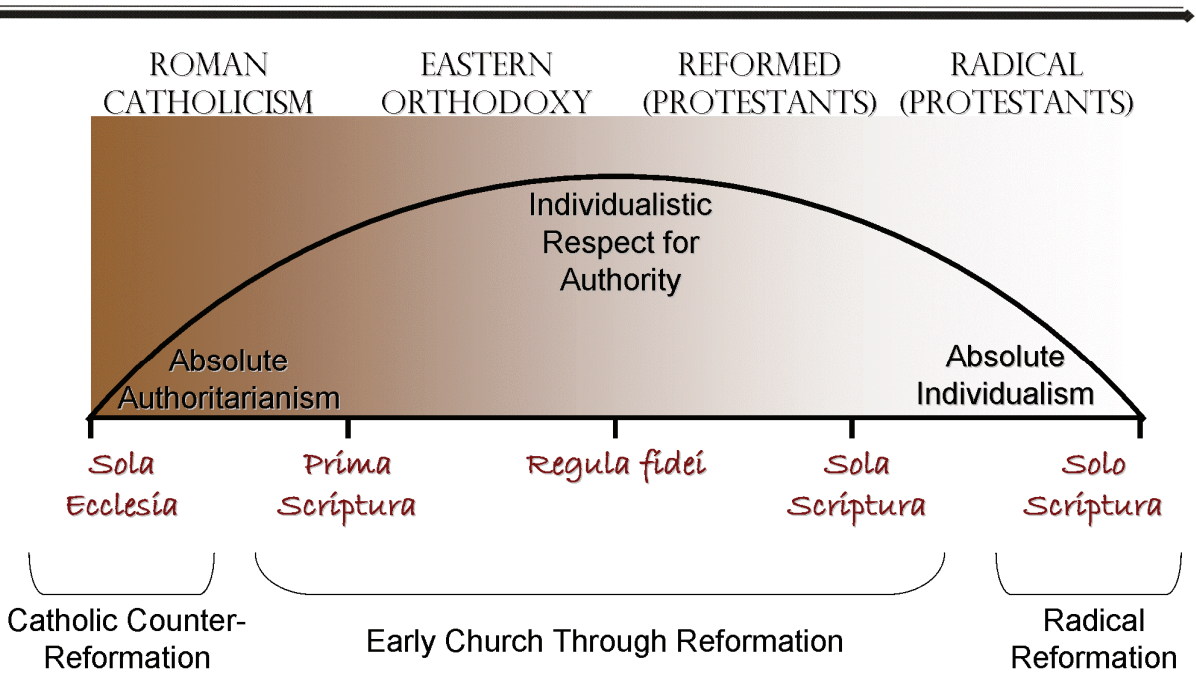
Age of the Apostles 400 AD 1000 AD
Age of the Church

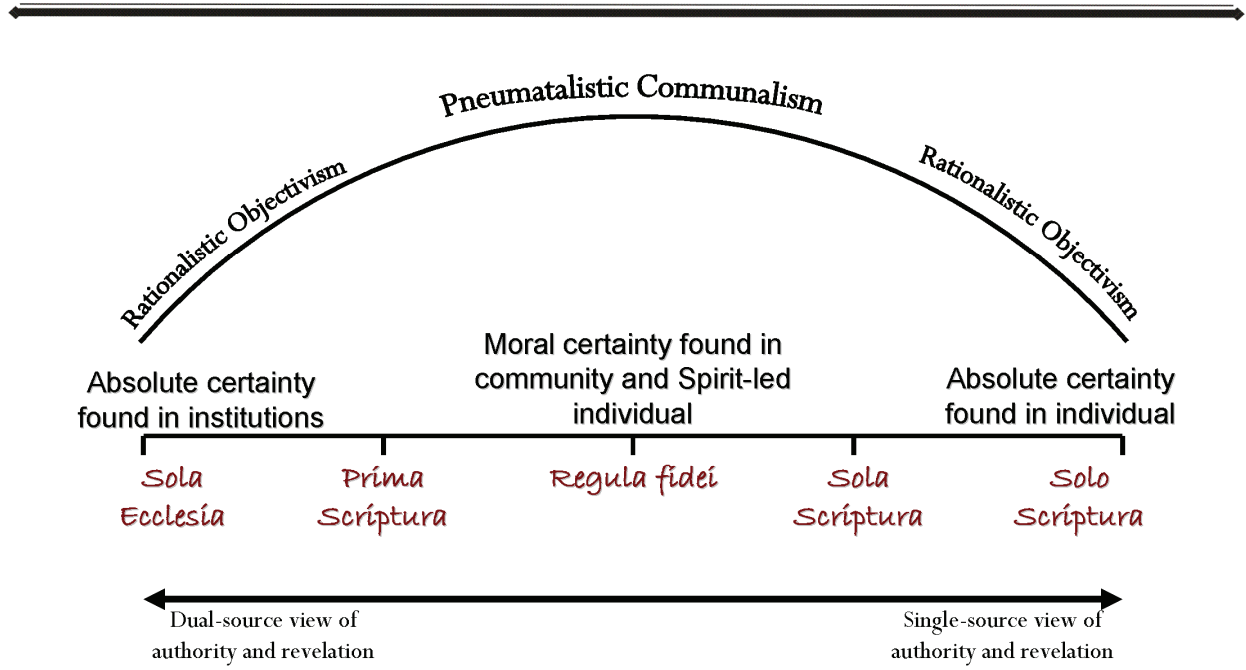


“I have endeavored to read the Scriptures as though no one has read them before me, and I am as much on my guard against reading them today, through the medium of my own views yesterday, or a week ago, as I am against being influenced by any foreign name, authority system whatever.”
 —Alexander Campbell
 Founder of the Disciples of Christ









GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It is important to understand what the word “tradition” means in the context which it is spoken. What were the benefits of “Tradition 1” in the history of the Church?

What are the benefits of “Tradition 1” today?

2. The Roman Catholic idea of tradition as a separate avenue through which the “Deposit of Faith” was mediated is essential to their theology. How might “Tradition 2” develop into an over dependence upon tradition (*Sola Ecclesia*)? Explain.

What are the dangers of *Sola Ecclesia*?

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3. The doctrine of *sola Scriptura* has been called the formal cause of the Reformation. Do you think that such a doctrine is essential enough to divide the Church the way it has? Explain.

 4. Do you think most Evangelical Protestants today follow *sola Scriptura* or *Solo Scriptura*? Explain.

 5. *Solo Scriptura* is a reaction against tradition in general. How can *Solo Scriptura* be thought of as arrogant and actually neglectful of the power of the Holy Spirit? Explain.

 6. Which view do you agree with most? Explain.



7. Which view does your local church seem to practice? Explain.

8. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking? Explain.



SOLA SCRIPTURA

Is the Scripture all we need?

Questions:

- What is Tradition?
- Why does the Roman Catholic Church reject *sola Scriptura*?
- Why did the Reformers reject the absolute authority of Tradition?
- Is *sola Scriptura* to be blamed for all the separation in the Protestant Church?
- Can't I just study the Bible on my own and let the Holy Spirit guide me to all truth?
- Is *sola Scriptura* dangerous?

Five Primary Views (review):

1. Sola Ecclesia
2. Prima Scriptura
3. Regula Fidei
4. Sola Scriptura
5. Solo Scriptura

Sola Ecclesia

Sola Ecclesia: Belief that Tradition, represented by the magisterial authority of the Roman Catholic Church, is infallible and equal to Scripture as a basis for doctrine; it is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice, since it must define and interpret Scripture.

Adherents: Roman Catholics

Alternate name: Dual-source theory

Arguments for the *Sola Ecclesia* (dual-source) theory:

1. The Scriptures clearly say that there were many other things that Christ did that were not written down.

Jn. 21:25

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

2. The New Testament writers clearly speak about the importance of Tradition.

2 Thess. 2:15

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”

1 Cor. 11:2

“I praise you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I passed them on to you.”

Jude 1:3

“Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

3. Christ gave infallible authority over the Church to the apostles and their successors (apostolic succession), with Peter and his successors being given the ultimate authority in the Church (papacy or the Seat of Rome).

Jn. 20:23

[Christ, speaking to the apostles] “If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.”

Matt. 18:18

“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.”

Matt. 16:17–19

“And Jesus answered him, ‘You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven! And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.’”

4. Without the infallible declaration of the Church, there would be no way of knowing what books belong in the canon of Scripture.
5. Without the infallible authority of the Church, the Church would be hopelessly divided on matters of doctrine and morals. This would not be the Church that Christ started.

Jn. 17:22–23

“The glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one—I in them and you in me—that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and you have loved them just as you have loved me.”

Response to the *Sola Ecclesia* (dual-source) theory:

1. It is self-evident that the Bible did not record everything that Jesus said and did. John's purpose in telling his readers this is not because he wants them to seek out "unwritten Tradition" to learn of these other things, but because he wants them to know *that what he has recorded contains sufficient information to bring one to salvation*. There is no reason to think that people need exhaustive knowledge of all that Christ said or did. The Bible is not exhaustive history, it is theological history.

Jn. 20:30–31

"Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (emphasis added).

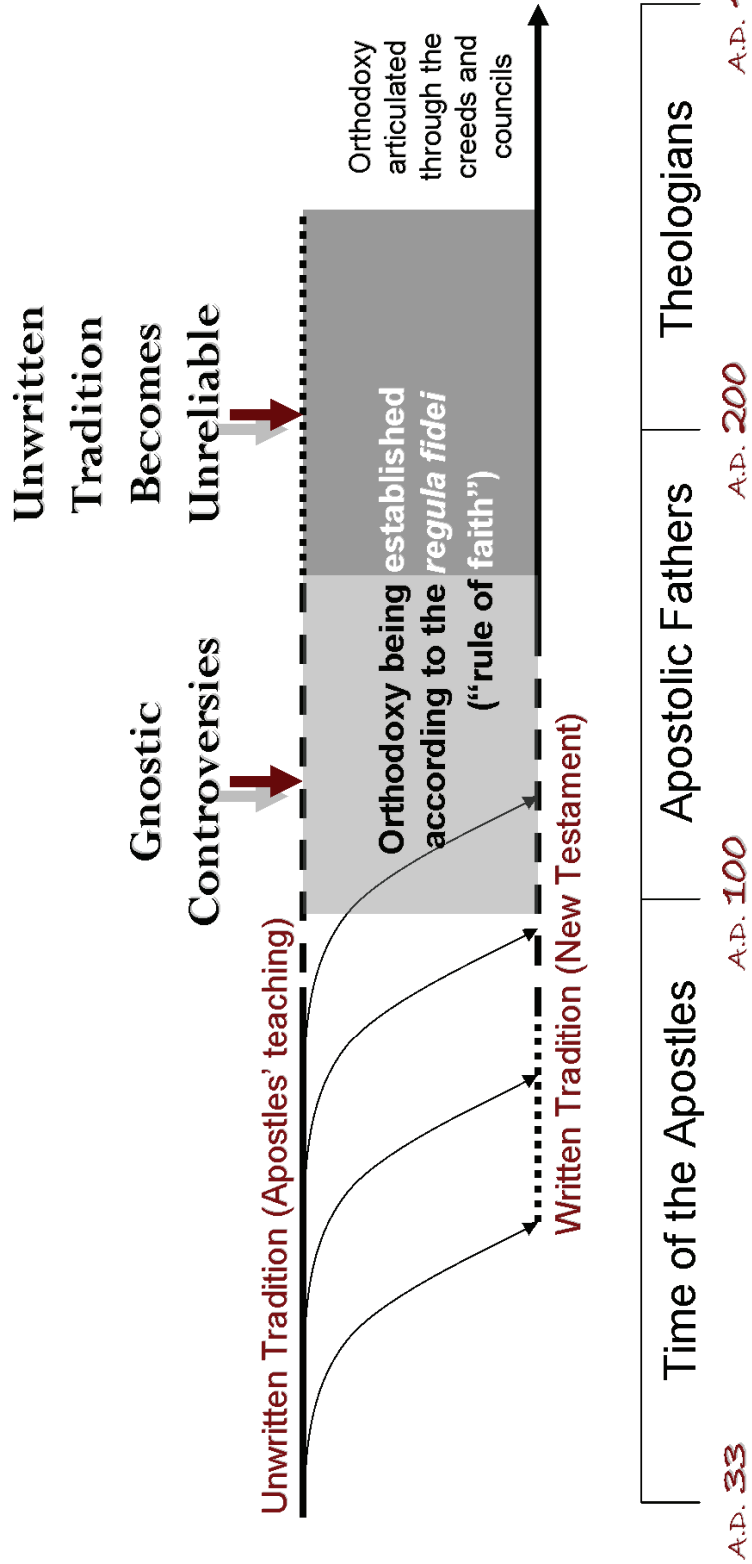
"Sola Scriptura [does not] claim that everything Jesus or the apostles ever taught is preserved in Scripture. It only means that everything necessary, everything binding on our consciences, and everything God requires of us is given to us in Scripture."

—John MacArthur

Sola Scriptura (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995), 166

2. The New Testament does speak of the importance of Tradition. But the Tradition that is referred to in these passages is the Gospel message that was eventually recorded in the New Testament (*regula fidei*). There is no reason to believe that the New Testament writers were speaking of some infallible "unwritten Tradition" that was separate from the message of the New Testament and that was to be passed on through an unbroken succession of bishops throughout the ages.

Development of the *regula fidei*



3. The belief in a lineage of apostolic succession that includes absolute authority and infallibility is untenable for many reasons:
 - It is agreed that Peter and the apostles *were* given authority and the guidance to teach the truth. Their authority and teaching continues today, *not through an unbroken lineage of succession*, but through their teaching contained in the Scripture.
 - The Scriptures presented concerning the authority of the apostles concerns them alone. There is nothing said either explicitly or implicitly concerning the passing on of this authority through apostolic succession.
 - The theory of Papal infallibility cannot be found in the Church until the late Middle Ages. It was not declared dogma by the Catholic Church until Vatican I (1870).

Vatican I 1870

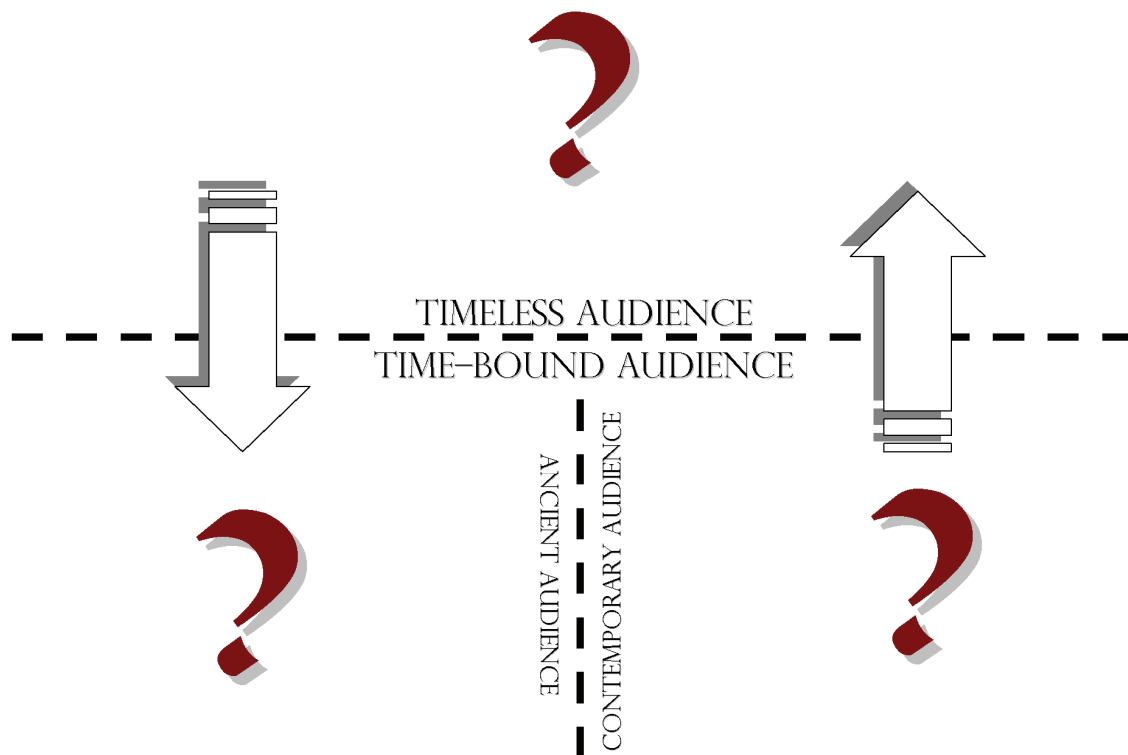
“[T]he Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff [Pope] hold primacy over the whole world, and that the Pontiff of Rome himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, the chief of the apostles, and is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church and faith, and teacher of all Christians; and that to him was handed down in blessed Peter, by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule, and guide the universal Church, just as is also contained in the records of the ecumenical Councils and in the sacred canons.”

“[W]hen he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when carrying out the duty of the pastor and teacher of all Christians in accord with his *supreme apostolic authority* he explains a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, through the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, *operates with that infallibility* with which the divine Redeemer wished that His church be instructed in defining doctrine on faith and morals; and so such definitions of the Roman Pontiff from himself, but not from the consensus of the Church, *are unalterable*” (emphases added).

- If God wanted believers to see the Church as an institutional authority that houses infallibility, either through the unity of the bishops or the *ex*

cathedra statements of the Pope, then it goes without saying that this would be a primary doctrine that the Bible should explicitly address. While the Scriptures contain many opportunities to teach this, either through example in the book of Acts or through explicit instruction in the Pastoral epistles, there is no such teaching. To rely solely upon unwritten Tradition begs the question and makes one wonder why such an important doctrine is unmentioned in Scripture. All attempts to find the doctrine of *infallible* apostolic succession in Scripture must be labeled as eisegetical theology (reading your theology into the text, rather than deriving one's theology from the text).

Eisegetical Theology



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4. It is true that there is no inspired table of contents in the Scripture. But it is equally true that the Scriptures do not teach Papal infallibility or the infallibility of tradition. When it comes to the issue of the canon, we must not look for a *declaration* producing *absolute* certainty (infallible certainty), but a *recognition* producing *moral* certainty (obligation imposed by the weight of the evidence). This evidence is substantial and morally binds the informed responsible thinker to submit to the evidence. The Roman Catholic solution of infallible Tradition does not resolve anything, since according to Roman Catholics Scripture was not *infallibly* declared until the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

 5. The issue of unity needs to be answered in many different ways:
 - The unity that Christ prayed for was not *absolute creedal* unity, but *functional ontological* unity. This was fulfilled at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit baptized all believers into one Body.

 - There is, however, a basic creed of essential beliefs that has evidenced this ontological unity and the mutual indwelling of the Holy Spirit since the beginning of the Church, but this creed is functional, not exhaustive. The Church has never had absolute creedal unity on every doctrine, and we should not expect it to until Christ comes, since we all “see in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12). In fact, it could be argued that God’s intentions have been to purposefully keep creedal tension within the Church so that comprehension would be maximized. Without tension and controversy caused by disagreements, people would become intellectually lazy. We see this in all traditions whose main source for doctrine is folk theology.

 - It must also be stressed that from the outsider’s perspective, Catholicism is just one denomination among the many thousands. The Pope could very well be seen as a divider, rather than one who unites, since the Papacy was the primary cause of the Great Schism in 1054 and a major reason for the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

 - Nevertheless, this does not excuse the Protestant church’s lack of practical unity. We should all strive to exemplify what we truly are (the unified body of Christ).

Some Beliefs and Practices in Which Christians Have Always Been Unified

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belief in God 2. Belief that God created everything 3. Belief in the Trinity 4. Belief in the hypostatic union 5. Belief in the resurrection of Christ 6. Belief in the atonement 7. Belief in the sinfulness of man 8. Belief in the necessity of faith in Christ 9. Belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit 10. Belief in the inspiration of Scripture 11. Belief in the authority of Scripture 12. Belief in God's love | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Belief in God's righteousness 14. Belief in the need for prayer 15. Belief in morality 16. Belief in evil 17. Practice of baptism 18. Practice of the Lord's Supper/Eucharist 19. Belief in the Second Coming of Christ 20. Belief in final judgment 21. Belief in the new heaven and new earth 22. Belief in the same 66 books of the canon (at least) 23. Belief in the need to love others 24. Belief in the need to love God |
|--|---|

Arguments for the *sola Scriptura* theory:

1. The Scripture implicitly and explicitly speaks of its sufficiency.

2 Tim. 3:14–17

“You, however, must continue in the things you have learned and are confident about. You know who taught you and how from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.”

Three things this passage teaches us:

1. Scriptures are sufficient for salvation.
2. Scriptures are sufficient for sanctification.
3. Scriptures are uniquely God-breathed (*theopnoustos*). Tradition is never given this designation or any similar designation.

Ps. 119

This Psalm is an acclamation of the Scriptures, made up of 176 verses (longest chapter in the Bible) mentioning the Word of God 178 times using 10 different synonyms. The Scriptures are presented as being totally sufficient for the follower of God in all matters pertaining to instruction, training, and correction. It is significant that though Scripture is mentioned 178 times, the concept of unwritten Tradition is never mentioned once. In fact, there is no acclamation of or meditation on unwritten Tradition in such a way *anywhere* in Scripture. This would be problematic if one were to believe that the concept of unwritten Tradition is on equal footing as Scripture, yet the Bible never mentions it. It would be the greatest case of neglect that one could find.

Acts 17:10–11

“The brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea at once, during the night. When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they eagerly received the message, examining the scriptures carefully every day to see if these things were so.”

2. Scripture explicitly states that no one is to add to or take away from the Word of God. These warnings would be meaningless if there was not some objective way for one to judge if he or she was adding to God’s Word, since unwritten Tradition is by nature beyond this type of examination. These commands are warnings against traditions that add to the complete and sufficient Word of God. They would only make sense if the Scriptures were sufficient and complete.

Deut. 4:2

“Do not add a thing to what I command you nor subtract from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I am delivering to you.”

Rev. 22:18–19

“I testify to the one who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.”

Concerning the sufficiency of Scripture, the Westminster Catechism says:

“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture; unto which, nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men” (1:6).

3. If the Roman pontiff, the “Vicar of Christ”, or the magisterium is going to speak on behalf of Christ, being successors to the apostles’ office, authority, and infallibility, they must show the signs of one who speaks for God as prescribed in Scripture.

Deut. 18:20–22

“But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. Now if you say to yourselves, ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the LORD?’ —whenever a prophet speaks in my name and the prediction is not fulfilled, then I have not spoken it; the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.”

2 Cor. 12:12

“Indeed, the signs of an apostle were performed among you with great perseverance by signs and wonders and powerful deeds.”

4. The Scriptures speak explicitly against the “traditions of men” as misleading and often in opposition to God’s written Word. Therefore, all traditions must submit to Scripture.

Matt. 15:2–6

“Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat.’ He answered them, ‘And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If someone tells his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you would have received from me is given to God,’ he does not need to honor his father. You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition.”

5. The early-medieval church supported an unarticulated and undeveloped doctrine of sola Scriptura.

Irenaeus (ca. 150)

Against Heresies 3.1.1

“We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.”

Clement of Alexandria (d. 215)

The Stromata, 7:16

“But those who are ready to toil in the most excellent pursuits, will not desist from the search after truth, till they get the demonstration from the Scriptures themselves.”

Gregory of Nyssa (d.ca, 395)
“On the Holy Trinity”, *NPNF*, p. 327

“Let the inspired Scriptures then be our umpire, and the vote of truth will be given to those whose dogmas are found to agree with the Divine words.”

Athanasius (c. 296–373)
Against the Heathen, 1:3

“The holy and inspired Scriptures are fully sufficient for the proclamation of the truth.”

Basil the Great (ca.329–379)
On the Holy Spirit, 7.16

“We are not content simply because this is the tradition of the Fathers. What is important is that the Fathers followed the meaning of the Scripture.”

Ambrose (A.D. 340–397)
On the Duties of the Clergy, 1:23:102

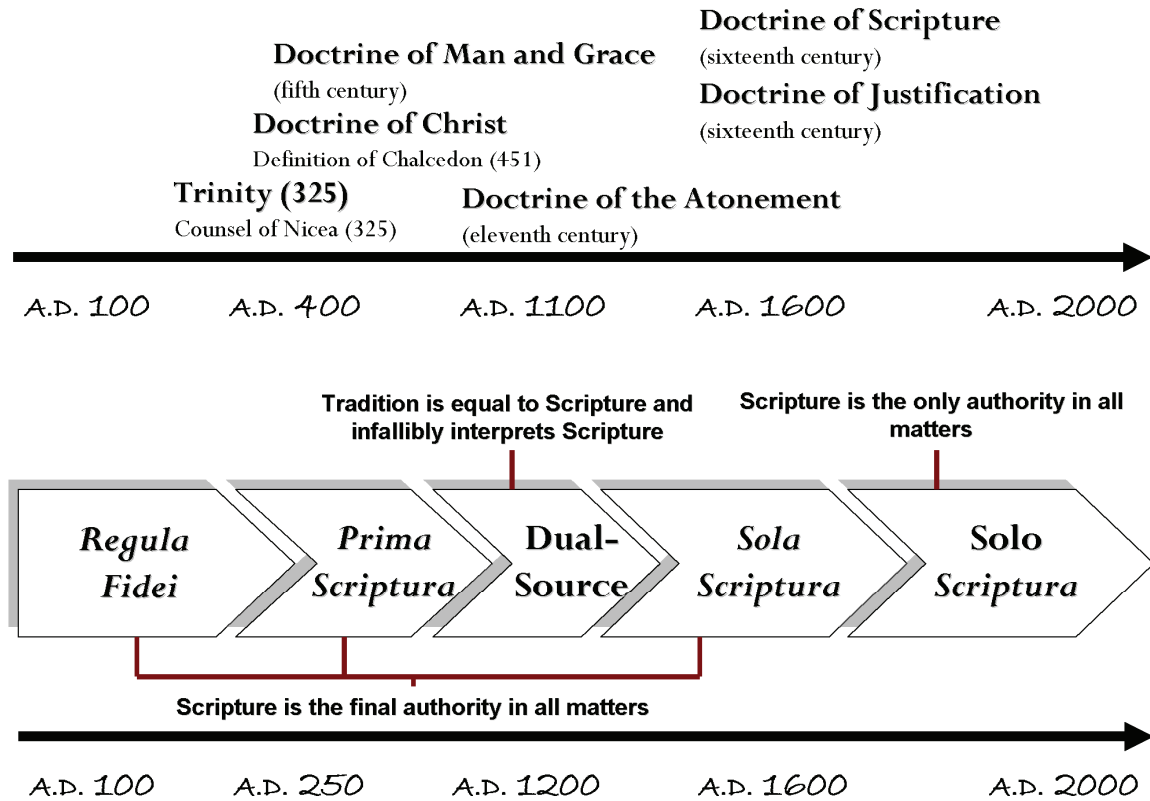
“For how can we adopt those things which we do not find in the holy Scriptures?”

St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430)
De unitate ecclesiae, 10

“Neither dare one agree with catholic bishops if by chance they err in anything, but the result that their opinion is against the canonical Scriptures of God.”

Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225–1274)
Summa Theologiae, Question 1, art. 8

“For our faith rests on the revelation made to the Prophets and Apostles who wrote the canonical books.”



6. By the process of elimination, one must come to the conclusion that Scripture is the final and only infallible authority available to us.

What sola Scriptura does not mean:

- That there are no other sources of authority in the life of a Christian.
- That each Christian is an autonomous interpreter of the Scriptures, being independent of the interpretive community of the body of Christ.
- That Tradition is not valuable for understanding matters of faith and practice.
- That there is no institutional authority at all to which believers must submit.

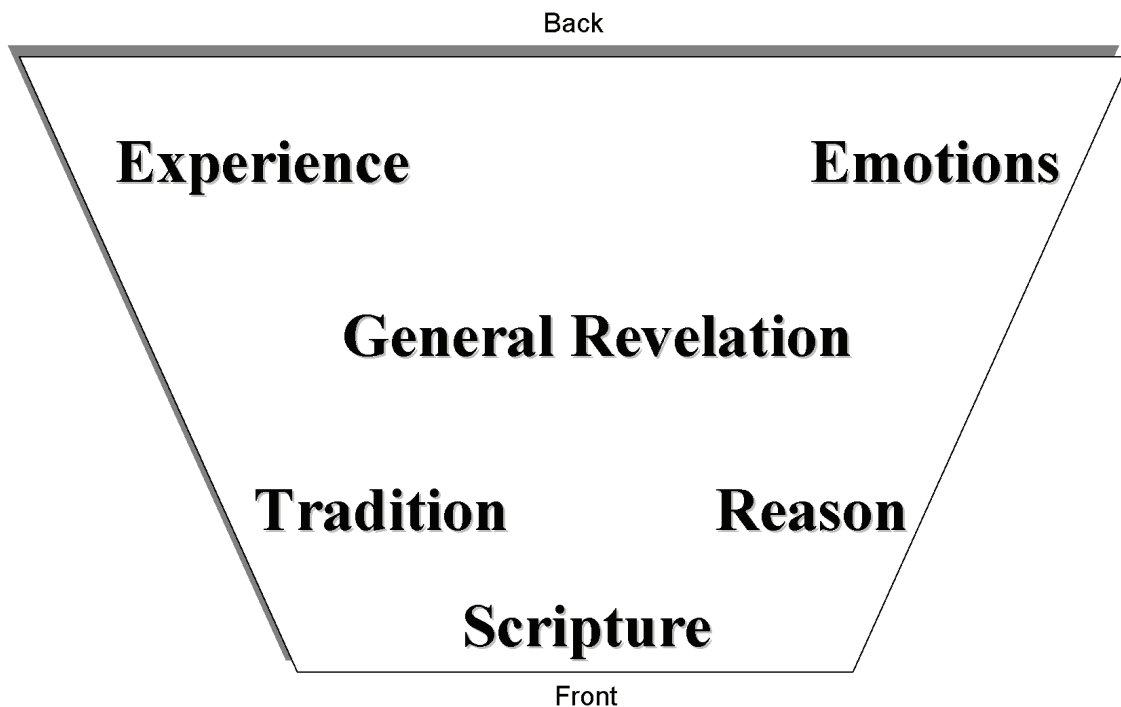
“We may say that our final authority is Scripture alone, but not Scripture that is alone.”

—Keith Mathison

The Shape of Sola Scriptura (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), 259.

Heb. 13:17

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.”



Sola Scriptura is dangerous!

norma normans sed non normata**“A norm of norms which is not normed”**

This is a Latin phrase of the Protestant Reformation that stresses the importance of Scripture above all other sources of theology. The Scripture, according to the Reformers, is the standard (norm) against which all other sources for theology must be judged, but this standard cannot be ultimately judged by them.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Jude 1:3; 1 Cor. 11:2; and 2 Thess. 2:15. Knowing that the traditions spoken of in the New Testament are simply summaries of the Gospel that have been passed on from one person to another, do sermons in evangelistic crusades and Sunday sermons qualify for traditions? Explain.

2. Why do you think Roman Catholics find it so attractive to have a *living* authority other than Scripture that authoritatively pronounces on matters of faith and morals?

What is the danger of this?

-
3. (Advanced question) Roman Catholic apologists often accuse Protestants of holding to the “novel” doctrine of *sola Scriptura* which was not known until the sixteenth-century. Is this true? Explain.

An “anachronistic fallacy” is when one demands that someone find or enforce a contemporary articulation of an idea, term, or concept upon people of earlier times.

How do Roman Catholics commit this fallacy when they 1) interpret the word “tradition” in Scripture and the early Church fathers and 2) when they demand that Protestants find an articulation of *sola Scriptura* in Scripture or the early Church fathers?

4. How have you been frustrated by the practical disunity in the Protestant Church today?
5. Do you think that this disunity needs to be solved? If so, how would you suggest the Protestant Church create unity, and how absolute should this unity be?

6. Do you believe that the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* has been abused in the Protestant church? Give examples.

7. Do you believe that the Bible supports the *sola Scriptura* theory or the dual-source theory more?

8. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

TRANSMISSION OF SCRIPTURE

Do we have the right words?

Questions:

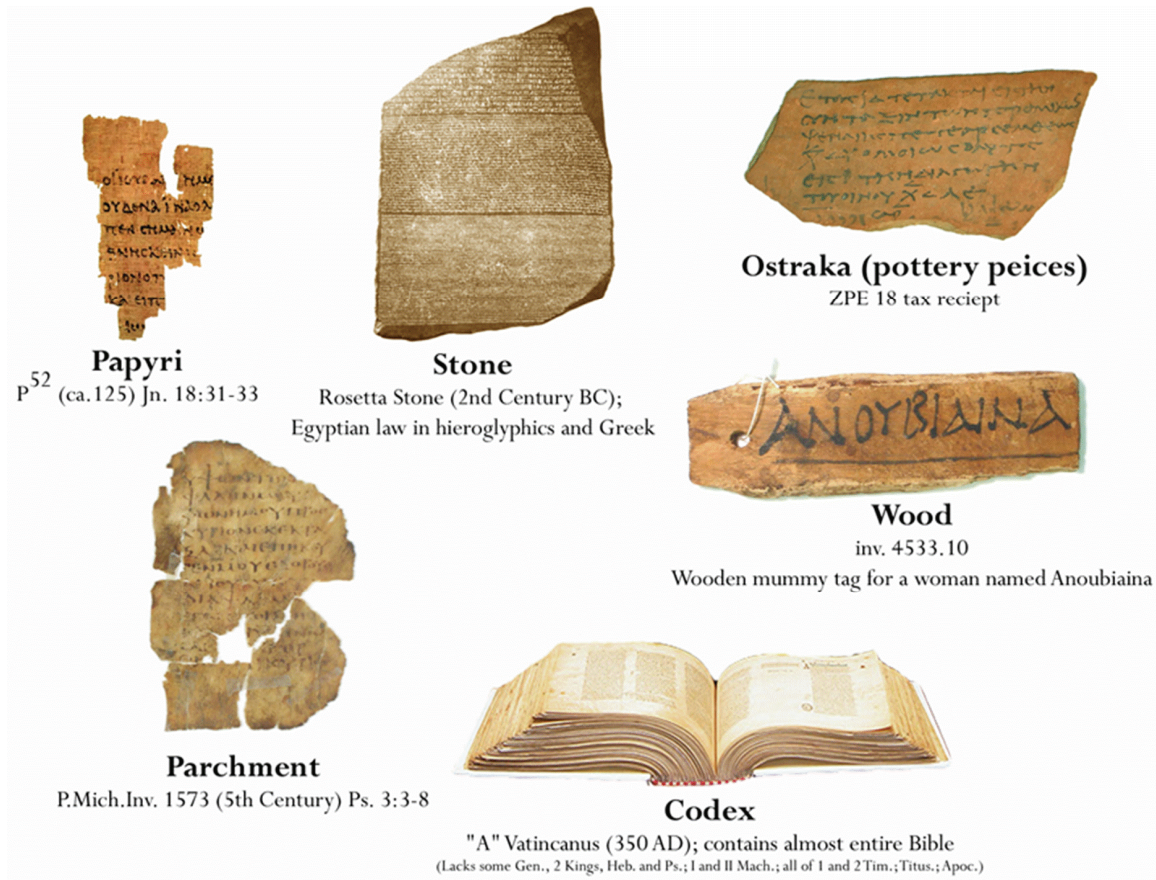
- How do we know that the Bible is the same as when it was written?
- Did the scribes ever make mistakes when copying the Bible?
- My Bible sometimes says that many manuscripts do not contain these verses (e.g., Mark 16:9–20). Why?

Outline:

1. Basic Facts
2. Textual Criticism
3. Transmission of the Old Testament
4. Transmission of the New Testament

1. Basic Facts:

- The Old Testament was originally written in two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic (portions of Ezra and Daniel), from the years 1500 to 400 B.C.
- The New Testament was originally written in *Koine* Greek from the years 40 to 100 B.C.
- We do not have any original writing (autographa).
- All transmissions of the Bible were handwritten until the invention of the printing press in 1450s by Johann Gutenberg.
- The most readily available writing materials were stone, papyri, and parchment/vellum. Later (second century B.C.) the codex was developed.



- Manuscripts were subject to wear and tear, and it is therefore unlikely that any would survive.
- We do not have many manuscripts of the OT that date before 900 A.D.
- Transmission of the text was an extremely difficult task.

2. Textual Criticism

Textual Criticism: Science of reconstructing the original text of the Scriptures based upon the available manuscript evidence.

Copyist Errors?

- Many times there were errors made by the scribes who copied both the Old and the New Testaments. There are more than 300,000 copyist errors in the New Testament alone.
- The different readings among the manuscripts are called *variants*.
- These errors are worked out through a process called *textual criticism*.
- Textual criticism is looked down upon by some fundamentalists who believe that it amounts to tampering with the text.
- Textual criticism is necessary to discover original readings.
- Ninety-nine percent of the variants make no theological difference.
- Of the one percent that do, none affect any major doctrine.

<h2>Unintentional Errors</h2>	
1. Mistaken Letter	Similar-looking letters were sometimes interchanged. 7 7 (Hebrew) Θ O (Greek).
2. Homophony	Substitution of similar-sounding words. Rom. 5:1 εχομεν “We have.” Or εχωμεν “Let us have.”
3. Dittography	A letter or word that was written twice rather than once.
4. Fusion	Incorrect division of words. GODISNOWHERE
5. Homoioteleuton	An omission caused by two words that have similar endings.
5. Metathesis	Reversal of order of two words. Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ.

<h1>Intentional Errors</h1>			
1. Changes in grammar or spelling and modernizations of language	Updating in languages (“Rameses,” Gen. 47:11).		
2. Harmonization	Often the scribe felt at liberty to change apparent discrepancies (Lk. 23:38 and Jn. 19:19).		
3. Theological changes and/or additions	<p><i>Comma Johanne</i> (1 Jn. 5:7-8)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>KJV (TR) 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, agree in one. and the water, and the blood: and these three</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>NAS (UBS) 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>KJV (TR) 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, agree in one. and the water, and the blood: and these three</p>	<p>NAS (UBS) 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement</p>
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4. Liturgical Additions	Matt. 6:13 “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. <For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.>”		

Basic Principles of Text Criticism:

1. The shorter reading is normally preferred.
2. The harder reading is normally preferred.
3. The earlier the occurrence of the variant reading adds weight to its authenticity.
4. The wider the geographical distribution of the variant reading adds weight to its authenticity.
5. The number of representative manuscripts that contain the variant reading adds weight, but only to the degree that its representation is early and/or wide spread.

3. Transmission of the Old Testament

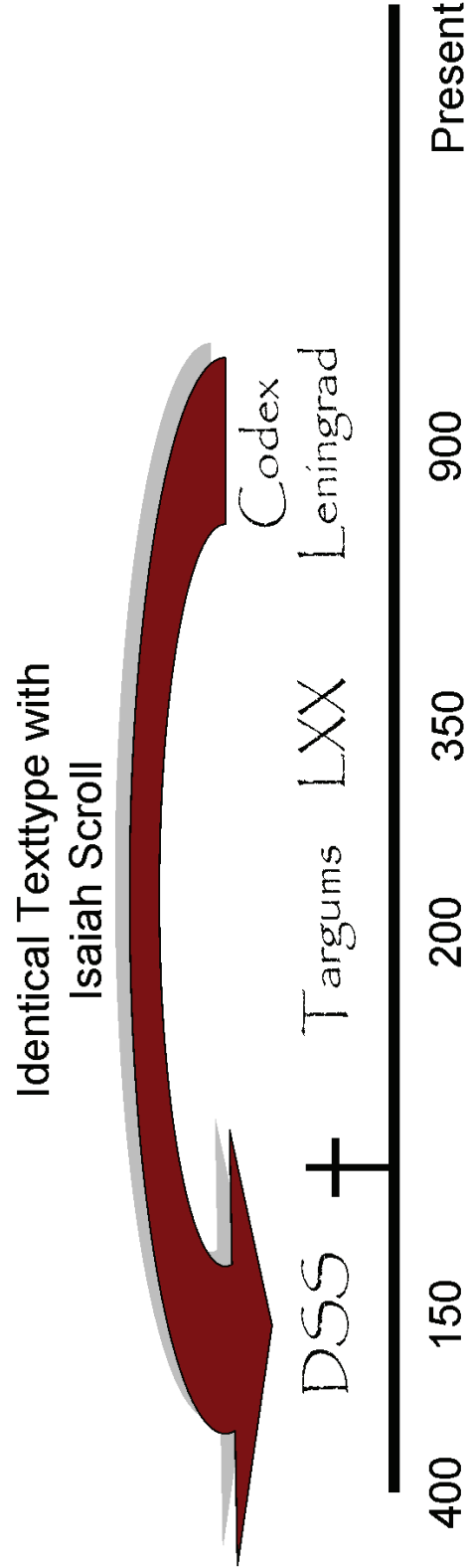
Two primary factors add value to extant manuscripts:

1. How close do our copies come to the original?
2. How many copies do we have?

Old Testament Manuscripts:

1. Ben Asser Family: (9th and 10th centuries) a Masoretic family of scribes.
 - Cairo Codex (Codex C): written in A.D. 950.
 - Leningrad Codex (Codex P): written in A.D. 916. Text behind BHS.
 - Alppo manuscript (Codex A): written before A.D. 940.
2. Septuagint (LXX): Greek translation of the Old Testament translated around 300–150 B.C. Earliest copy A.D. 400 (Ⲛ, A, B).
3. Targums: Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament after A.D. 200.
4. Dead Sea Scrolls: Found in 1948. Contained copies or portions of every book in the Old Testament except Esther. *There is a full copy of Isaiah dating back to 135–200 B.C.*

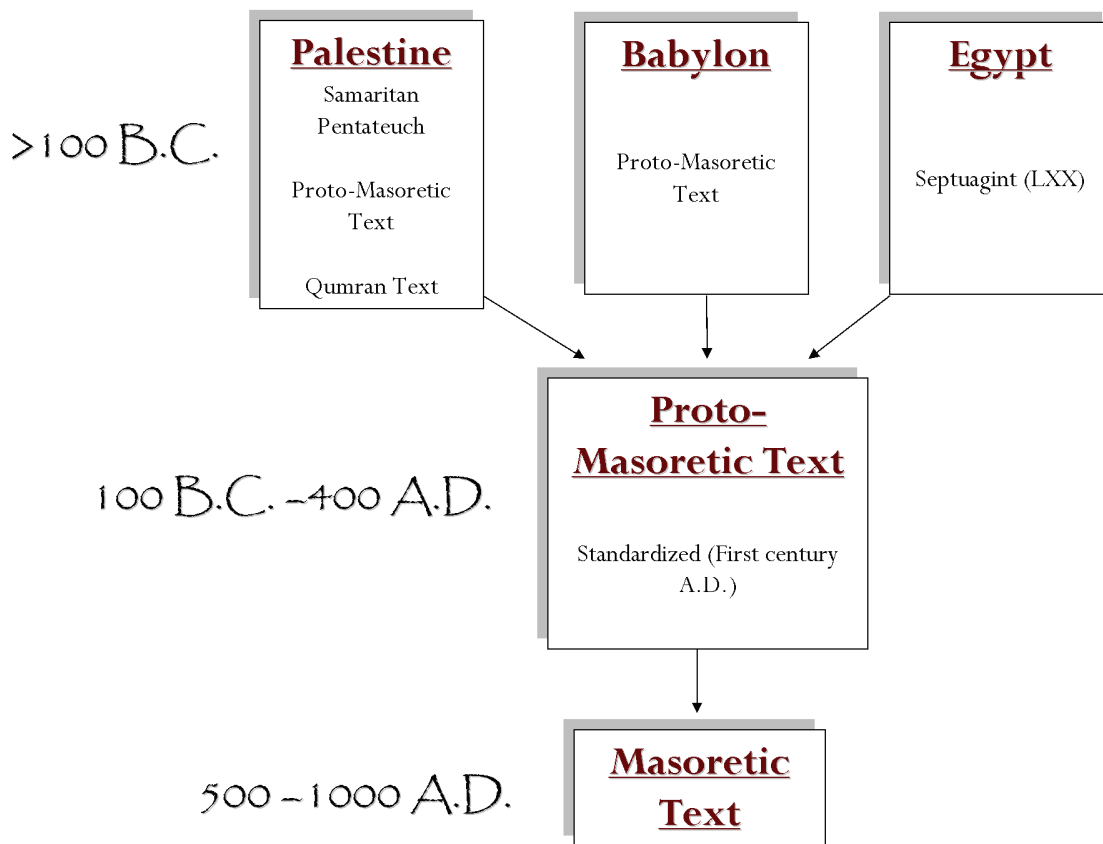
TRANSMISSION OF SCRIPTURE



Transmission: <300 B.C.

- Very little is known about the transmission of the OT at this time.
- We have no manuscripts from this period.
- Prior to 1350 B.C. Paleo-Hebrew was used rather than square script.

Transmission: 300 B.C.–500 A.D.



Transmission: 500 A.D.–1100 A.D.

Masorites: Group of scribes who carried on the meticulous transmission process of the standardized text from 500 A.D. to 1100 A.D.

Various Rules that the Masorites followed:

- Only parchments from clean animals could be used.
- Each column of the scroll was to have no fewer than 48 and no more than 60 lines whose breadth must consist of 30 letters.
- The ink was to be black, prepared according to a specific recipe.
- No word or letter was to be written from memory.
- There was to be a space of a hair between each consonant and the space of a consonant between each word.
- The scribe must wash himself entirely and be in full Jewish dress before beginning to copy the scroll.
- He could not write the name YHWH with a newly dipped brush, nor take notice of anyone, even a king, while writing the sacred name.

4. Transmission of the NT

Three types of evidence:

1. Original Greek Manuscripts
 - John Ryland Papyri (125 A.D.)
 - Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ; 350 A.D.)
 - Codex Vaticanus (B; 350 A.D.)
2. Early Church Fathers
 - Commentaries, diaries, books, and letters
 - Polycarp, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertillian, etc.
 - John Burgeon, a biblical scholar, catalogued over 86,000 quotations before A.D. 325.

- Reconstruction could be accomplished within 50 years of its completion using these manuscripts.

3. Translations

- 15,000 copies
- Syriac, Old and New Latin, Sahidic, Bohairic, Middle Egyptian, Armenian, Gothic, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Nubian versions.

25,000 handwritten copies of the NT

100% of the original!

Papyri	Name	Date	NT Books Covered	General Characteristics
p ⁴⁵	Chester Beatty papyrus	3rd century A.D.	Gospels, Acts 4-17	Mark (Caesarean); Matt, Luke, John (intermediate between Alexandrian and Western texttypes)
p ⁴⁶	Chester Beatty papyrus	ca. 200 A.D.	10 Pauline Epistles (all but Pastorals) and Hebrews	Overall closer to Alexandrian than Western
p ⁵²	John Ryland's papyrus	c. 110-125 A.D.	fragment of John	Earliest known extant witness to the NT

Uncial/ Codex	Name	Date (approx.)	NT Books Covered	General Characteristics
ⱼ (01)	Sinaiticus	4th century	The entire NT	Alexandrian; best in epistles
A (02)	Alexandrinus	5th century	Most of the NT	Important in the Epistles and Revelation
B (03)	Vaticanus	4th century	Most of NT except Hebrews 9:14ff, the Pastorals, Phlm., Rev.	Alexandrian; best in Gospels

Comparison Between the Bible and Other Reliable Ancient Manuscripts

Author of Work	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar (<i>Gallic Wars</i>)	100–44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	10
Livy (<i>History of Rome</i>)	59 B.C.–17 A.D.	N/A	N/A	20
Plato (<i>Tetralogies</i>)	400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	7
Pliny the Younger (<i>History</i>)	61–113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (<i>History</i>)	460–400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Herodotus (<i>History</i>)	480–425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Sophocles (<i>History</i>)	469–406 B.C.	100 A.D.	600 yrs.	193
Aristotle	384–322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	193
Homer (<i>Iliad</i>)	900 B.C.	400 A.D.	1,500 yrs.	643
New Testament	50–90 A.D.	125 A.D.	25 yrs.	>25,000

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Find the copyright date on your Bible, and read it to the group. How does the fact that it was written nearly 2000 years before your copyright date make the study of Bibliology necessary for a Christian?
2. How does knowing that there are over 300,000 textual variants in the NT alone disturb you?
3. Have everyone but one person in your group take ten minutes to handwrite this paragraph, making at least one intentional error without telling the others of your error.

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Once complete, bring all the manuscripts together, and have the person who did not create a manuscript attempt to reconstruct the original. Remember, while this is a passage that you may be familiar with, this is not a translation that you are likely to be familiar with.

How close did you come to reconstructing the original?

-
4. Knowing that this is about the same situation that text critics find themselves in (around one or two variants per verse), how does this exercise give you more confidence in the science of text criticism? Explain.

 5. Review the comparison chart of the New Testament with other ancient manuscripts. How does the evidence show how serious God is about protecting His Word? Would you call it miraculous? Explain.

 6. In light of the fact that God is serious about protecting His Word for us, how serious should we be about searching it to find Him? Are you?

 7. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

CANONIZATION OF SCRIPTURE (OLD TESTAMENT)

Do we have the right books?

Questions:

- How do we know that the books we have in the Bible are the right ones?
- Why do the Roman Catholics include extra books in their Bible?
- Who has the authority to determine what books can be called Scripture?

Canon: Lit. “rule” or “measuring rod”. Refers to the accepted books of the Old and New Testaments.

Facts and Fables Concerning the Canon

Fables Concerning the Canon

1. Age determines canonicity.
2. Language determines canonicity.
3. Agreement with the other Scriptures determines canonicity.
4. Religious value determines canonicity.
5. An inspired religious authority determines canonicity.
6. If a prophet or apostle wrote it, it is canonical.
7. If it is quoted by Scripture, it is canonical (Jude 9—Assumption of Moses, 14–15—Book of Enoch; Acts 17:28—Aratus [ca. 310–245 B.C.], *Phaenomena* 5).
8. Inspiration determines canonicity. “If it is inspired, it belongs in the canon.”

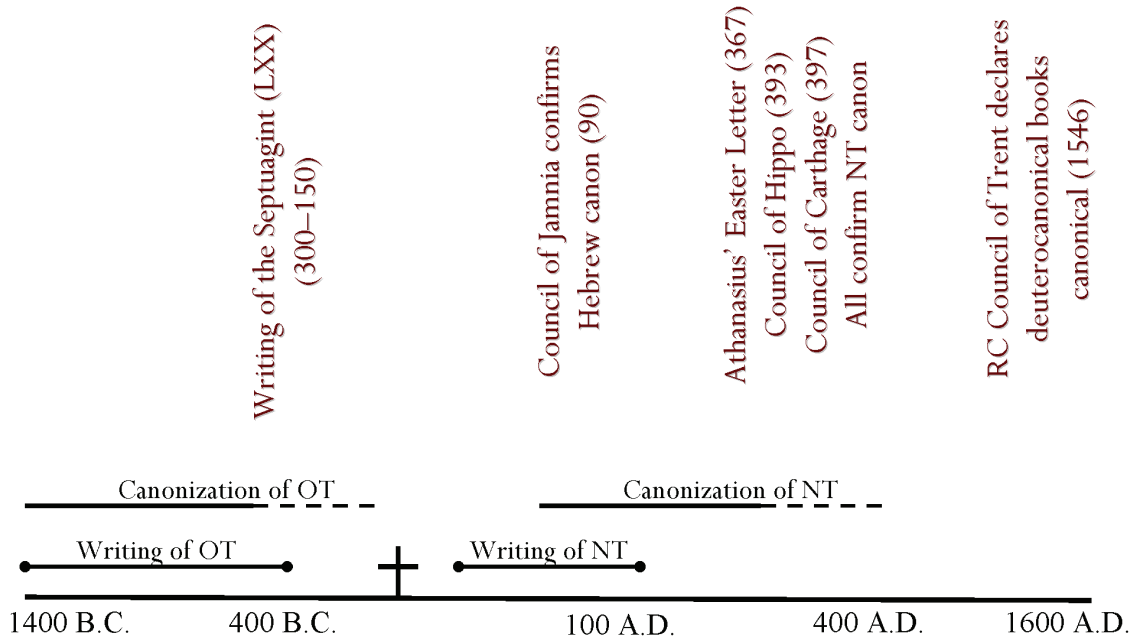
Facts Concerning the Canon

1. Prophetic nature and Apostolicity *comprises* canonicity.
2. The body of Christ *recognizes* the canon.
3. God alone *determines* canonicity.

"One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa—at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397—but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities."

—F.F. Bruce

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 27



Old Testament Canon

Tripartite Division of the Old Testament

The Law:

Lk. 16:17

“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.”

The Law and the Prophets:

Matt. 5:17

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

The Law, Prophets, and the Psalms:

Lk. 24:44

“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’”

Five Tests for Canonicity of OT

1. Does the New Testament attest to its authority?
2. Do extrabiblical Jewish writers affirm it?
3. Is the book consistent with other revelation?
4. Was it written by a prophet or someone of divine authority?
5. Did Christ attest to its authority?

1. Does the New Testament attest to its authority?

Lk. 24:44

“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’”

Matt. 7:12

“Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

2. Do extrabiblical Jewish writers affirm them?

Josephus

“How firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it has become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion should arise, be willing to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws and the records that contain them.”

Babylonian Talmud

“After the latter Prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel.”

Philo also attests to a closed threefold division of the OT.

Council of Jamnia (A.D. 90)

After the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the Sanhedrin was allowed by Rome to reconvene for purely spiritual reasons. At this council, the present OT books were reconfirmed officially.

3. Is the book consistent with other revelation?

- Does it contain any inconsistencies?
- Does it contain any contradictions?

4. Was it written by a prophet or someone of divine authority?

5. Did Christ attest to its authority?

“Since Jesus is the Messiah, God in human flesh, He is the last word on all matters. He had the divine authority to endorse all Scripture or only some of it. He universally affirmed all Scripture, in every part, as the divine Word of God.”

—Don Stewart

The Ten Wonders of the Bible (Orange, CA: Dart Press, 1990), 123

APPENDIX: THE APOCRYPHA

Apocrypha: Lit. “Hidden writings.” This describes the group of writings, mostly written in Greek during the intertestamental period (400–100 B.C.) that are contained in the Christian Septuagint and Latin Vulgate and accepted by Roman Catholics and some Eastern Orthodox as Scripture, but rejected by Jews and evangelical Protestants.

Alternate Name: Deuterocanonical books (Lit. “second canon”)

Key Terms

Protocanonical: Lit. “first canon.” In contrast to the deuterocanonical books, refers to the books of the Old Testament that have always been accepted by all as Scripture.

Pseudepigrapha: Refers to rejected books that are falsely attributed to an author (e.g., *The Apocalypse of Peter*).

Greek Orthodox Deuterocanonical	Roman Catholic Deuterocanonical	Protestant Apocrypha
1 (3) Esdras		1 (3) Esdras 2 (4) Esdras
Tobit	Tobit	Tobit
Judith	Judith	Judith
Additions to Esther	Additions to Esther	Additions to Esther
Wisdom of Solomon	Wisdom of Solomon	Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)
Baruch	Baruch	Baruch
Epistle of Jeremiah	Epistle of Jeremiah	Epistle of Jeremiah
Prayer of Azariah	Prayer of Azariah	Prayer of Azariah
Story of Susanna	Story of Susanna	Story of Susanna
Bel and the Dragon	Bel and the Dragon	Bel and the Dragon
Prayer of Manasseh		Prayer of Manasseh
1 Maccabees	1 Maccabees	1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	2 Maccabees
3 Maccabees		
4 Maccabees		
Psalm 151		

Categories in the Deuterocanonical Books

Historical	Religious	Wisdom
1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	Tobit Judith Susanna Additions to Esther Bel and the Dragon	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Wisdom of Solomon Baruch Prayer of Manasseh Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah

Arguments for its inclusion:

1. These works were included in the LXX (B.C. 300–150) from which the NT writers often quoted. Paul quoted from the LXX many times. It was the primary text for the author of Hebrews.
2. Several deuterocanonical works were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This evidences an early acceptance of the deuterocanonical books.

3. Early Christians reflect some knowledge of the deuterocanonical books.
4. Certain early Church fathers used the works authoritatively, sometimes even quoting them as Scripture:
 - Clement of Alexandria (Tobit, Sirach, Wisdom)
 - Origen (Epistle of Jeremiah)
 - Irenaeus (Wisdom)
5. Many official Church councils included it as part of the accepted canon of Scripture (Rome 382; Carthage 393; Hippo 397).
6. Martin Luther presumptuously deleted it from the canon in the sixteenth century because it contained elements of theology that he did not agree with.

Response to the arguments for its inclusion:

1. It is disputed whether or not these books were included in the LXX for many reasons:
 - The earliest copies of the LXX that we have are Christian in origin and were not copied until the fourth century. It is hard to tell if the original Alexandrian Jews had this wider canon.
 - The three extant copies of the LXX do not agree concerning the canon.

Deuterocanonical/Apocrypha Comparison Chart					
Codex Vaticanus (B)	Codex Sinaiticus (X)	Codex Alexandrinus (A)	Greek Orthodox Deuterocanonical	Roman Catholic Deuterocanonical	Protestant Apocrypha
1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras 2 (4) Esdras
Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees
Psalms 151	Psalms 151	Psalms 151	Psalms 151		

-
- Philo, a first century Jewish scholar in Alexandria who used the LXX extensively, did not mention the Apocrypha even though he commented on virtually all the protocanonical books. The same can be said for Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who used the LXX extensively, who explicitly states that the apocryphal books were never accepted as canonical by the Jews.
2. Many works were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls which are not canonical.
 3. Knowledge of a work does not make it authoritative. Many people know of the deuterocanonical books, and may even respect and quote from them with authority, but this does not necessarily mean that they believe them to be inspired.
 4. While early Christians did quote from the deuterocanonals from time to time, the *earliest* Christians showed no evidence of *accepting them as Scripture*. It was only when the Christian community began to break ties with the Jews that their inclusion became an issue. The earliest Christian list of books in the Old Testament is that of Melito, bishop of Sardis (A.D. 170), and it contains only the protocanonical works (Protestant canon).
 5. Hippo, Rome, and Carthage were all North African or Roman *local* church councils that did not have the authority to declare the canon. Augustine, the North African bishop of Hippo, accepted the Apocrypha (although slightly different than the Roman Catholic version) and had heavy influence upon these councils. This explains their acceptance.
 6. Martin Luther rejected the Apocrypha just as many others throughout church history had done. There was no official “infallible” declaration on the canon by Rome until after Martin Luther rejected them. It was an over-reactive response to Luther’s rejection that caused the Roman Catholic Church to declare them to be Scripture at Trent. Until that time, they were doubted by most and labeled either Apocrypha or deuterocanonical books.

*A list of some Church leaders throughout history who rejected part or all of the deuterocanonical / Apocrypha books**

Origen, a second-century theologian, rejected the Apocrypha, listing the canon to be 22 books (equivalent to the Jewish and Protestant canon).

Athanasius, the fourth-century bishop of Alexandria, rejected most of the Apocrypha holding to a 22-book Old Testament canon.

Jerome, who was commissioned by the Church in the fifth century to translate the Scriptures into Latin, produced the Latin Vulgate which was the Church approved translation for over a thousand years. He did not accept the Apocrypha but, instead, adhered to a Jewish canon of 22 books

Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, who, according to the Roman Catholic Church must have had the unwritten tradition that included the canon, rejected the book of 1 Maccabees.

The Venerable Bede, historian and doctor of the Church, in his commentary on Revelation, listed the Old Testament books to be 24 in number (the same as the Jewish and Protestant canon).

Ambrose of Autpert, a ninth-century theologian

Hugh of St. Victor, a leading theologian of the twelfth century

John of Salisbury, one of the leading scholars of the twelfth century who became the Bishop of Chartres

Rupert of Deutz, an early twelfth century theologian

Hugh of St. Cher (Hugo Cardinalis), a Dominican cardinal of the thirteenth century

Nicholas of Lyra, one of the most highly regarded and influential theologians of the Middle Ages, surpassing even Thomas Aquinas in authority as a biblical commentator

* For a more detailed study of the status of the deuterocanonical books throughout Church history, see William Webster "The Old Testament Canon and the Apocrypha, Part 3: From Jerome to the Reformation" (www.christiantruth.com/Apocrypha3.html).

William of Ockham, in his *Dialogues*, wrote that the Church did not receive the books of the Apocrypha as canonical.

Cardinal Cajetan, the opponent of Luther, wrote a commentary on all the books of the Bible and even dedicated it to the Pope, saying that the Apocrypha was not canonical in the “strict sense”. Therefore, the deuterocanonical books were not included in his commentary.

Glossa ordinaria, the standard commentary of the late Middle Ages studied and respected by all in the Church, says that the Church did not believe the deuterocanonical books were inspired. Here is the preface:

“The canonical books have been brought about through the dictation of the Holy Spirit. It is not known, however, at which time or by which authors the non-canonical or apocryphal books were produced. Since, nevertheless, they are very good and useful, and nothing is found in them which contradicts the canonical books, the church reads them and permits them to be read by the faithful for devotion and edification. Their authority, however, is not considered adequate for proving those things which come into doubt or contention, or for confirming the authority of ecclesiastical dogma, as blessed Jerome states in his prologue to Judith and to the books of Solomon. But the canonical books are of such authority that whatever is contained therein is held to be true firmly and indisputably, and likewise that which is clearly demonstrated from them.”

Arguments for their exclusion:

1. The New Testament never directly quotes from any apocryphal book as *Scripture* with the common designation “it is written”. Often, when people claim that it does, the references are a stretch to get them to match the deuterocanonical books, or they are, at best, mere allusions that evidence knowledge of the deuterocanonical books. *If* there are genuine allusions to certain deuterocanonical books, this does not mean that the writer believed them to be inspired any more than Paul's quotation of Aratus (ca. 310–245 B.C.) in Acts 17:28 means that he believed *Phaenomena* was part of the canon. (See also where Jude quotes from the apocryphal book Enoch in Jude 1:9).
2. The Palestinian Jews (those who lived in Israel) never accepted the deuterocanonical books. This was the key argument for the Reformers. The basic idea is that if Christ did not recognize them, they are not canonical. Josephus (born c. 37 A.D.), a primary Jewish historian, plainly writes about the accepted canon of his day which is the same as the current Protestant canon. He makes no mention of the Apocrypha and does not hint at a canon controversy in his day (*Against Apion* 1.41). The *Talmud* makes a similar point: “After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel.” Philo, who lived in Alexandria in the first century, did not accept the Apocrypha either.
3. From a Protestant perspective, there are significant theological and historical inaccuracies in the deuterocanonical books (e.g., works-based salvation, Tobit 12:9; cruelty, Sirach 22:3; 42:14, 2; doctrine of purgatory, 2 Maccabees 12:41–45). What is more, these books have historical errors. It is claimed that Tobit was alive when the Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 B.C. and also when Jeroboam revolted against Judah in 931 B.C., which would make him at least 209 years old; yet according to the account, he died when he was only 158 years. The Book of Judith speaks of Nebuchadnezzar reigning in Nineveh instead of Babylon.
4. The Apocrypha itself attests to the absence of prophets in its own time.

1 Macc. 9:27

“Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.”

5. The deuterocanonical books were in dispute for so long and held to secondary status that it would be problematic to say that they contain the voice of God since most people did not recognize them to be His voice.

Jn. 10:27

“My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Further discuss what the Church should do if we were to find Paul's real first letter to the Corinthians. Would you include it in your Bible? Why or why not.
2. The canon was defined as in class as being "closed" only to the degree that God is no longer adding to it through verified writings. Do you think that it is possible for God to add to the canon? If so, in what sense is it really "closed"? Discuss.
3. It must also be understood that Scripture is not an exhaustive history book. It is a collection of books that record *soteriological* history (the history of the fall and redemption) and an "instruction book" on how to live as God intended. Read 2 Tim. 3:15-17 and discuss how this is true.

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4. Now read Heb. 1:1-1 and discuss how this passage might lead us to the seemingly assured yet somewhat tentative conclusion that there is probably not going to be any more Scripture added to the canon as we know it.

 5. If someone were to say that they wrote a book that is inspired by God and that should be added to the Bible, how should you respond?

 6. How did the lesson challenge your view of the canonical status of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books? Do you think that they should be part of the Bible? Are you willing to die for your answer? Discuss.

 7. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

CANONIZATION OF SCRIPTURE (NEW TESTAMENT)

Do we have the right books?

Questions:

- How do we know that the books we have in the Bible are the right ones?
- Who has the authority to determine what books can be called Scripture?

Review of canonization

- Canon is a term that describes a *theological concept* used to describe the collection of books called Scripture.
- The canon is closed only to the degree that God is no longer giving Scripture through the writing of His validated messengers.
- It would *seem* that since soteriological history has been completed and recorded, there is no longer a need for any Scriptures to be added to the canon.
- Therefore, all major traditions of Christianity today believe that the canon is “closed” and not to be “reopened”.

Review of OT canonization

- Whatever Scriptures Christ used in the first century are the Scriptures we should use today.
- The Scripture of the Palestinian Jews in the first century contained the same books as the current 39-book Protestant canon, as evidenced by the NT itself, Philo, Josephus, and the Talmud.
- The Scripture of the Alexandrian Jews (LXX) in the first century probably contained the same books as the current 39-book Protestant canon, as

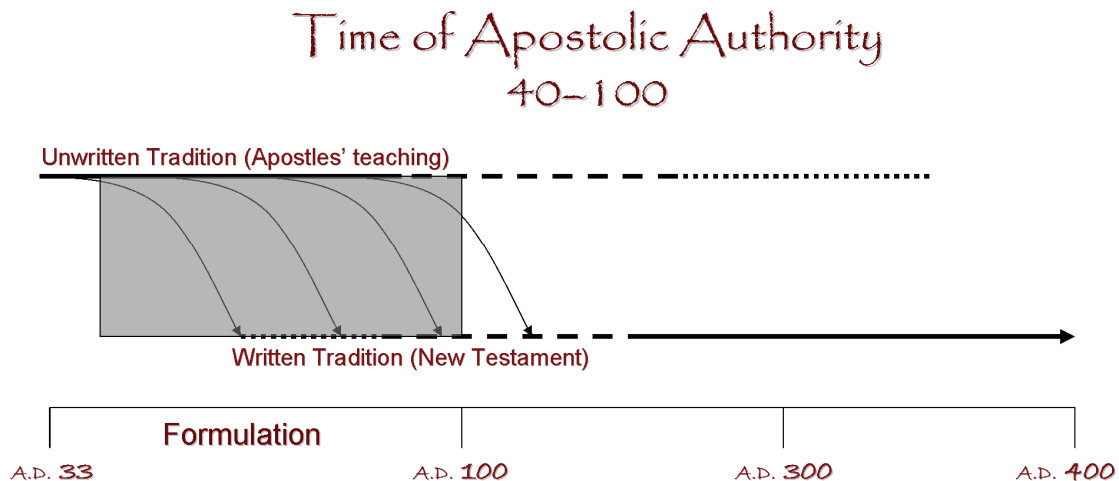
evidenced by the writings of Philo and Josephus and the canonical disagreements among the extant copies of the LXX.

- The deuterocanonical/Apocryphal books are rejected by Protestants because they were not accepted by the first century Jews, Palestinian or Alexandrian, and because the body of Christ did not ever recognize them as the voice of God, as evidenced by the massive amount of historical disagreement concerning their inclusion.

Canonization of the NT

Canonization of the NT 40–100 A.D.

Development of the NT Canon



1. The NT attests to the acceptance of the authority of the words of the Apostles as being on par with that of God.

2 Thess. 2:15

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.”

1 Cor. 14:37

“If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.”

Gal. 1:8

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”

1 Thess. 2:13

“For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

2. The NT attests to the acceptance of other NT books as Scripture.

2 Pet. 3:15–16

“And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

1 Tim. 5:18

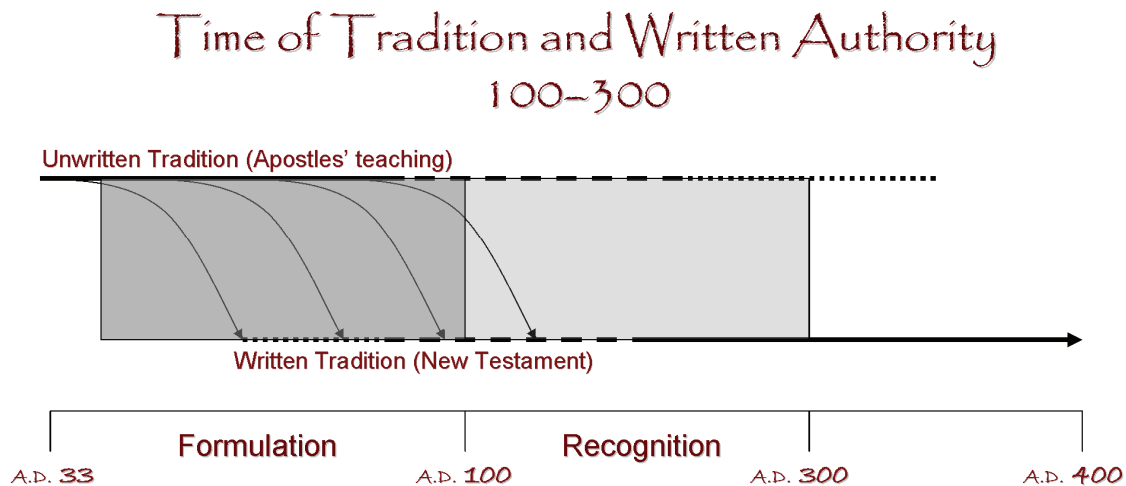
“For the Scripture says, ‘you shall not muzzle an ox while he is threshing’ [Deut 25:4], and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’” [Lk 10:7].

Rev. 1:3

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

Canonization of the NT 100–300 A.D.

Development of the NT Canon



1. The writings of the early Church fathers attest to the acceptance of many NT books:
 - They quote them as Scripture.
 - They draw a clear distinction between their writings and that of Scripture.
 - Marcion (c. 140), a Gnostic heretic, devised his own canon which excluded the entire OT and included only Luke (except Chap. 1 and 2) and the Pauline epistles (excluding the pastoral epistles).

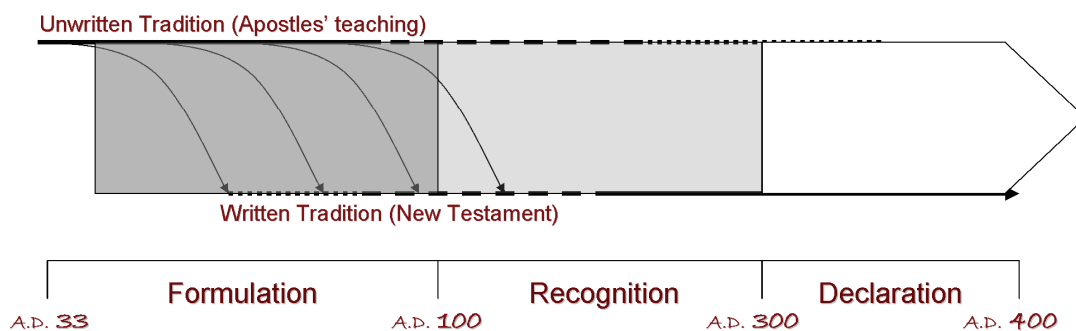
“From the early part of the second century of the Christian era, there is evidence that the letters of Paul were treasured not merely as isolated communications, but as a definite collection of writings, now commonly described as the Pauline corpus.”

—Donald Guthrie

New Testament Introduction (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 986

2. Origen (185–254 A.D.) writes commentaries on most of the books of the NT emphasizing their inspiration.
3. Muratorian Canon (170 A.D.) attests to all the books of the NT except Hebrews, James, and 1 & 2 Peter.

Time of Written Authority 300–present



Canonization of the NT 300–400 A.D.

1. Diocletian persecutions (c. 302–305) caused the Christians to be more attentive to establishing the definite canon.

2. Eusebius, a fourth-century Church historian, speaks plainly about the condition of the canon in his day:

Homologomena: Universally-agreed-upon books were the four Gospels, Acts, Letters of Paul (which included Hebrews), 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation.

Antilogomena: Books that were accepted by the majority (including Eusebius), but disputed by some: James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.

Pseudepigrapha: *Acts of Paul*, the *Didache*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

3. Athanasius, a fourth-century bishop of Alexandria, sent out a cyclical letter affirming the 27 books of the NT (367 A.D.). This is the first formal attestation to our current canon.
4. Council of Hippo (393 A.D.) and Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) both affirmed our current NT canon. They forbade claiming any other writing as Scripture.

Suggested Criteria Used by the Early Church in the Canonization Process

1. Was it written by an apostle or at least by someone of recognized authority (“under the apostolic umbrella”)?
2. Did it agree with the canon of truth? Did it contradict known Scripture?
3. Did it have a self-authenticating nature?
4. Did the church accept it?

"In the matter of canonical Scriptures, he should follow the authority of the greater number of catholic [universal] churches, among which are those that deserve to have apostolic seats and receive epistles. He will observe this rule concerning canonical Scriptures, that he would prefer those accepted by all catholic [universal] churches to those which some do not accept; among those which are not accepted by all, he should prefer those accepted by the largest number of most important churches to those held by a few minor churches of less authority. If he discovers that some are maintained by the larger number of churches, others by churches of the weightiest authority, although this condition is not likely, he should hold them to be of equal value."

—Augustine
On Christian Doctrine 2.8

	Muratorian Fragment	Origen	Eusebius of Caesarea	Cyrl of Jerusalem	Council of Laodicea	Athanasius	Gregory of Nazianzus	Jerome	Council of Hippo	Augustine	Council of Carthage	Codex Claromontanus	John of Damascus
	170	225	324	348	363	367	380	390	393	397	397	400	730
Old Testament, Gospels, Acts, Pauline Corpus	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Hebrews		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
James		B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2, 3 John	A/C	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2 Peter		B		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jude	A	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Revelation	A	A		F	F	A	F	A	A	A	A	A	A
Shepherd of Hermas	F		F			F						A	
Apocalypse of Peter	C											A	
Barnabas			F									A	
1 Clement													

A = Homologoumena (same spoken; agreement): Accepted

B = Legomena (spoken of): Difficult to say, but probably accepted

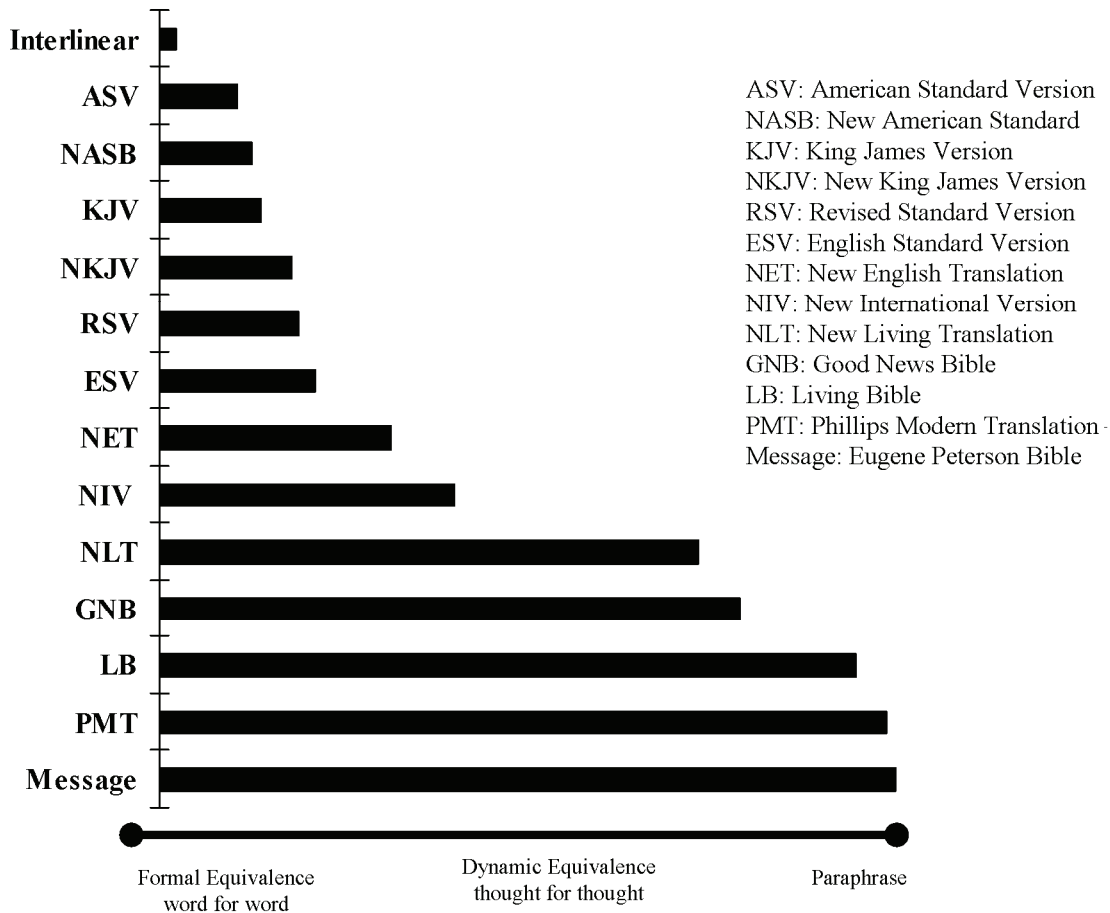
C = Antilegomena (Against spoken): Disputed

Blank = Alogomena (not spoken of at all): Not mentioned—implies rejection

F = Pseudepigrapha (False writings): Rejected

Translation Theories:

- Formal Equivalence (word for word)
- Dynamic Equivalence (thought for thought)
- Paraphrase



Excursus: Bible Translations

- What is the best Bible translation?
- What translation should I use for study?
- Is *The Message* an acceptable translation?

Introduction to Principal Manuscript Evidence for the Greek New Testament^{*}

No ancient literature has survived in its original form; everything we have is derived from copies of the originals. The NT is no exception. However, in comparison with any other ancient literature, the NT is without a peer—both in terms of the chronological proximity and the surviving number. Several ancient authorities are preserved in only a handful of manuscripts. Not so with the NT. There are approximately 5,500 Greek witnesses, ranging in date from the second century AD into the middle ages. Besides the Greek evidence, there are nearly 30,000 versional copies (e.g., Latin, Coptic, and Syriac), and over 1,000,000 quotations from the NT in the church Fathers. NT textual criticism has always had an embarrassment of riches unparalleled in any other field.

The Greek Witnesses

The Greek witnesses are by far the most important, since in large measure they represent some of our earliest witnesses and since they involve direct reproduction from Greek to Greek. There are four kinds of Greek witnesses: papyri, uncials (or majuscules), minuscules (or cursives), and lectionaries. The first three are important enough to warrant some discussion here.

Papyri

These documents are written on the cheap writing materials of the ancient world that were roughly equivalent to modern paper. Literally thousands of papyrus fragments have been found of which approximately 100 contain portions of the New Testament. Actually, taken together, these 100 fragments constitute over half of the New Testament and all but four are in the form of codices (i.e., four are scrolls rather than the book-form [codex]). All NT papyri were written with uncial or capital letters. They range in date from the early second century through the eighth century. About 50 of them are to be dated before the fourth century. Though many of them are somewhat fragmentary, and at times the copying was looser than one would like (i.e., they were done before the canon was officially recognized), they are nevertheless extremely important for establishing the text of the New Testament—if for no other reason than the fact that they represent some of the most ancient

^{*} Taken from the Preface to the NET Bible® (Biblical Studies Press: www.netbible.com). Used by permission.

witnesses we possess. Six important papyri are illustrated in the chart below. The symbol for each papyrus is p followed by a number (e.g., p45). The most important papyri cited in the NET NT footnotes are as follows:

Papyri	Name	Date	NT Books Covered	General Characteristics
p45	Chester Beatty papyrus	3rd century AD	Gospels, Acts 4-17	Mark (Caesarean); Matt, Luke, John (intermediate between Alexandrian and Western text-types)
p46	Chester Beatty papyrus	ca. AD 200	10 Pauline Epistles (all but Pastorals) and Hebrews	Overall closer to Alexandrian than Western
p47	Chester Beatty papyrus	3rd century AD	Revelation 9:10-17:2	Alexandrian; often agrees with Sinaiticus (Ī)
p66	Bodmer Papyrus	ca. AD 200	John	Mixed text between Western and Alexandrian
p75	Bodmer papyrus	early 3rd century	Luke and John	Alexandrian, often agrees with B

Uncials

There are approximately 300 uncials known to exist today that contain portions of the New Testament and one uncial that contains the entire NT. Like the papyri, these manuscripts were written with uncial or capital letters, but unlike the papyri they were written on animal skins or vellum. For the most part they are beautiful manuscripts, elegantly written and routinely done in scriptoria and often for special purposes. Generally speaking, they range in date from the fourth through the ninth centuries. Our oldest complete copy of the NT is an uncial manuscript, Ī (see chart below). The symbol for each uncial is either a capital letter (in Latin or Greek letters [though one ms has a Hebrew letter, Ī]) or a number beginning with 0 (e.g., 01, 0220, etc.). The most important uncials cited in the NET NT footnotes are as follows:

Uncial	Name	Date (approx.)	NT Books Covered	General Characteristics
Ⲁ (01)	Aleph or Sinaiticus	4th century	The entire NT	Alexandrian; best in epistles
A (02)	Alexandrinus	5th century	Most of the NT	Important in the Epistles and Revelation
B (03)	Vaticanus	4th century	Most of NT except Hebrews 9:14ff, the Pastorals,	Alexandrian; best in Gospels

			Phlm, Rev	
C (04)	Ephraemi Rescriptus	5th century	Portions of every book except 2 Thess and 2 John	mixed
D (05)	Bezae/ Cantabrigiensis	5th century	Gospels and Acts	Western
D (06)	Claromontanus	6th century	Pauline Epistles and Hebrews	Western
F (010)	Augiensis	9th century	Pauline Epistles	Western
G (012)	Boernerianus	9th century	Pauline Epistles	Western
L (019)	Regius	8th century	Gospels	Often agrees with Vaticanus
W (032)	Washingtonianus	early 5th century	Gospels	mixed; earliest representation of Byzantine text-type. Alexandrian in John 5:12-21:25.
Q (038)	Koridethi	9th century	Gospels	The text of Mark is similar to that used by Origen and Eusebius in the third and fourth centuries at Caesarea
Y (044)	Athous Laurae	8th/ 9th century	Gospels/ Acts/ Paul/General Epistles	Contains Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine influences

Minuscules

There are approximately 2,813 NT Greek minuscule manuscripts known to us today. These copies range in date from the ninth to sixteenth centuries, were produced on vellum or paper, and were written in cursive or a lower-case, flowing hand. They are the best representatives of the medieval ecclesiastical text, that is, the Byzantine text. There are approximately 150-200 that deviate from the Byzantine standard, almost always representing an earlier transmissional stream and hence quite important for NT textual criticism. The symbols for the minuscules are of three kinds: (a) Arabic numbers (e.g., 1, 565, 1739), each of which represents one manuscript; (b) “family 1,” [Ē1] “family 13” [Ē13] (involving a group of closely associated manuscripts); (c) Byz (involving the majority of Byzantine minuscules). The following are among the more important witnesses cited in the NET NT notes:

Minuscule	Date (approx.)	NT Books Covered	General Characteristics
33	9th century	Gospels, Acts, Paul, Catholic Epistles	Alexandrian
81	AD 1044	Acts, Paul, Catholic Epistles	Very important for establishing the text of Acts. Agrees substantially with the Alexandrian text-type.

1739	10th century, but probably goes back to a late 4th century ms	Acts, Paul, Catholic Epistles	Alexandrian
Family 1 (Ē1)	12th-14th centuries	Gospels	Caesarean (of the 3rd or 4th centuries)
Family 13 (Ē13)	11th-15th centuries	Gospels	Important in the discussion of the authenticity of the pericope adulterae (i.e., John 7:53-8:11)

Versional Evidence

Versions were initially prepared for missionary purposes. The history and transmission of versions are often quite complex, and scholars often do not agree on or do not know the particular dates or characteristics of the versions. The chart below contains the major versions cited in the notes; the most important abbreviations are listed, but not all abbreviations are indicated. For more information on the versional evidence for the NT, consult B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (3d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 67-86; B. M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); and B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes, eds., *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (Studies and Documents 46; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 75-187.

Version	Abbreviations	Date (approx.)	General Characteristics
Vulgate and part of the Itala witnesses	lat	2nd to 3rd century	Western, Alexandrian, and others
Itala	it	3rd century	Western
Vulgate	vg	4th century and later	extensive cross-contamination of text-types
Syriac	syr	2nd to 6th centuries	Old Syriac (syr ^c and syr ^s) is generally Western. The Peshitta (syr ^p) has a mixed text in Gospels and Epistles, Western in Acts. The Harclean version (syr ^h) of Acts is Western. The Palestinian Syriac (syr ^{pal}) is generally Caesarean.
Coptic	cop	3rd and 4th centuries (Sahidic dialect is 4th to 5th centuries; Bohairic dialect is 9th century)	generally Alexandrian in the entire tradition; Sahidic (sa) and Bohairic (bo) are Alexandrian with numerous Western readings

Armenian	arm	5th century	generally Caesarean but sections are Byzantine, and the mss of Paul show strong Alexandrian affinities
Georgian	geo	5th century	mixed text-types; generally Caesarean, but becoming strongly Byzantine in later mss
Ethiopic	eth	exact date unknown, but most likely within the 4th to 5th centuries	mixed text, but generally early Byzantine
Slavonic	slav	9th century	Byzantine

Patristic Evidence

Tremendous sources for evidence of the Greek NT are citations found in early Church Fathers. They help to locate and date various readings and text-types found in the manuscripts and versions. This field is quite complex for two broad reasons: (1) It is often difficult to determine if what the Father actually wrote has been preserved in the extant manuscripts or if corruption has occurred. (2) It is often difficult to determine if a Father is citing a text verbatim, paraphrasing it, or alluding to it. All of the Fathers cited in the notes are listed below. For more information on the patristic evidence for the NT, consult B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (3d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 86-92; and B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes, eds., *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (Studies and Documents 46; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 189-236.

Ambrose of Milan, d. 397
 Ambrosiaster of Rome, active 366-384
 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, d. 373
 Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430
 Chromatius, d. 407
 Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, d. 407
 Clement of Alexandria, d. before 215
 Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, d. 258
 Cyril of Alexandria, d. 444
 Cyril-Jerusalem, d. 386
 Didymus of Alexandria, d. 398
 Ephraem the Syrian, d. 373
 Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, d. 403

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, d. 339 or 340
Hesychius of Jerusalem, d. after 451
Hilary of Poitiers, d. 367
Hippolytus of Rome, d. 235
Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, d. ca. 202
Jerome, d. 420
Justin Martyr, d. ca. 165
Marcion of Rome, 2nd century
Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea, d. 254
Pseudo-Athanasius, dates unknown
Serapion, d. after 362
Severian, d. after 408
Tertullian of Carthage, d. after 220
Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, d. 428
Victorinus-Pettau, d. 304

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss again the importance that we have the right canon?
2. Are all books of the canon equally important? Do you think that you would ever have noticed if 3 John did not make “the cut”?
3. Further discuss the importance of the early acceptance of the Gospels and the Pauline corpus.
4. Can you think of any *essential* doctrine that is not dealt with in the Gospels and the Pauline corpus? How is this significant?

-
5. Are you more or less confident about the canon of Scripture after this lesson? Explain.

 6. How does your view of the providence and sovereignty of God affect this study?

 7. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

What is inspiration and how did it occur?

Questions:

- What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?
- How did inspiration occur?
- How does one's view of inspiration affect their interpretation?

What is inspiration?

American Heritage Dictionary:

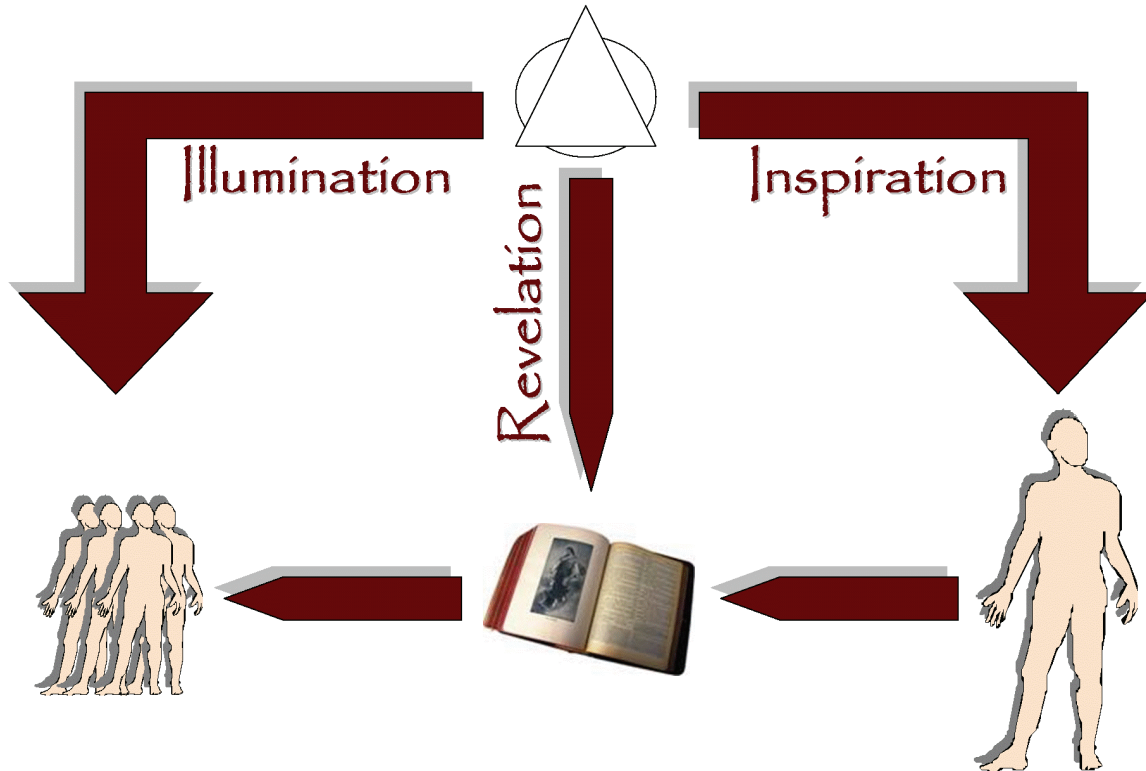
- Stimulation of the mind or emotions to a high level of feeling or activity.
- An agency, such as a person or work of art, which moves the intellect or emotions or prompts action or invention.
- Something, such as a sudden creative act or idea, which is inspired.
- The quality of inspiring or exalting: *a painting full of inspiration.*
- Divine guidance or influence exerted directly on the mind and soul of humankind.
- The act of drawing in, especially the inhalation of air into the lungs.

Key Terms

Revelation: The act whereby God reveals truth to mankind through both special revelation (Scripture, prophets, etc.) and natural revelation (nature, conscience, etc)

Inspiration: The act whereby God guided the writers of Scripture, giving them His words while fully utilizing the human element within man to produce the Scriptures.

Illumination: The act whereby God enlightens people to understand His revelation and its relevance to their lives.



**“Sine qua non
of evangelical theology”**

**“The watershed issue of contemporary
evangelicalism”**

2 Tim. 3:16–17

“All Scripture is *inspired* by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

θεόπνευστος =

θεός (*theos*) πνευστος (*pneustos*)

Lit. “God breathed”

2 Pet. 1:20–21

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

Wrong Interpretation	Correct Interpretation
Refers to the interpretation of the revelation to the <i>readers</i> so that they might <i>read</i> the Scriptures correctly.	Refers to the interpretation of the revelation to the <i>author</i> so that he might <i>write</i> the Scriptures correctly.

φερόμενοι (*pheromenoi*)

- Lit: “to carry,” “to bear,” “to guide,” or “to drive along.”
- Used of a ship being carried by the wind (Acts 27:17).

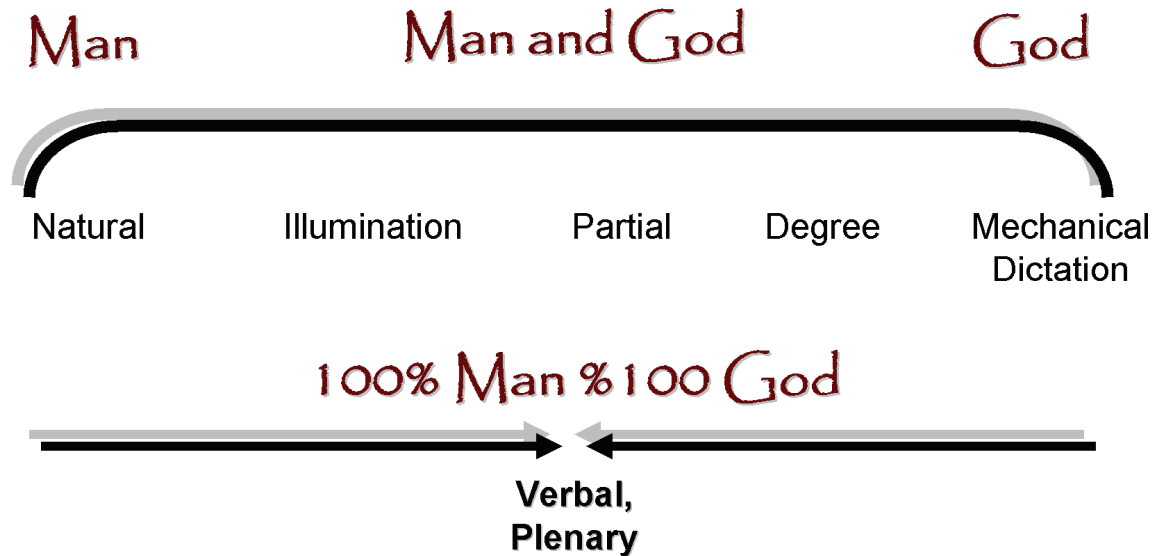
Theories of inspiration:

- Natural:** Belief that certain people were extremely gifted through their natural God-given abilities to write Scripture. (100% man)
- Illumination:** Belief that the Holy Spirit moved within certain individuals to write above their natural capacity. (90% man, 10% God)
- Partial:** Belief that some Scripture is inspired, namely, that which is profitable for doctrine, matters of “faith and practice,” but not all is inspired. Matters of history and science are not included because they are irrelevant to God’s purpose. (50% man, 50% God)

Degree: Belief that all Scripture is inspired, but some passages are more inspired than others. The “days of creation” narrative, for example, was written in accommodating language, a sort of “baby-talk,” but was nonetheless inspired. (90 % God, 10% man)

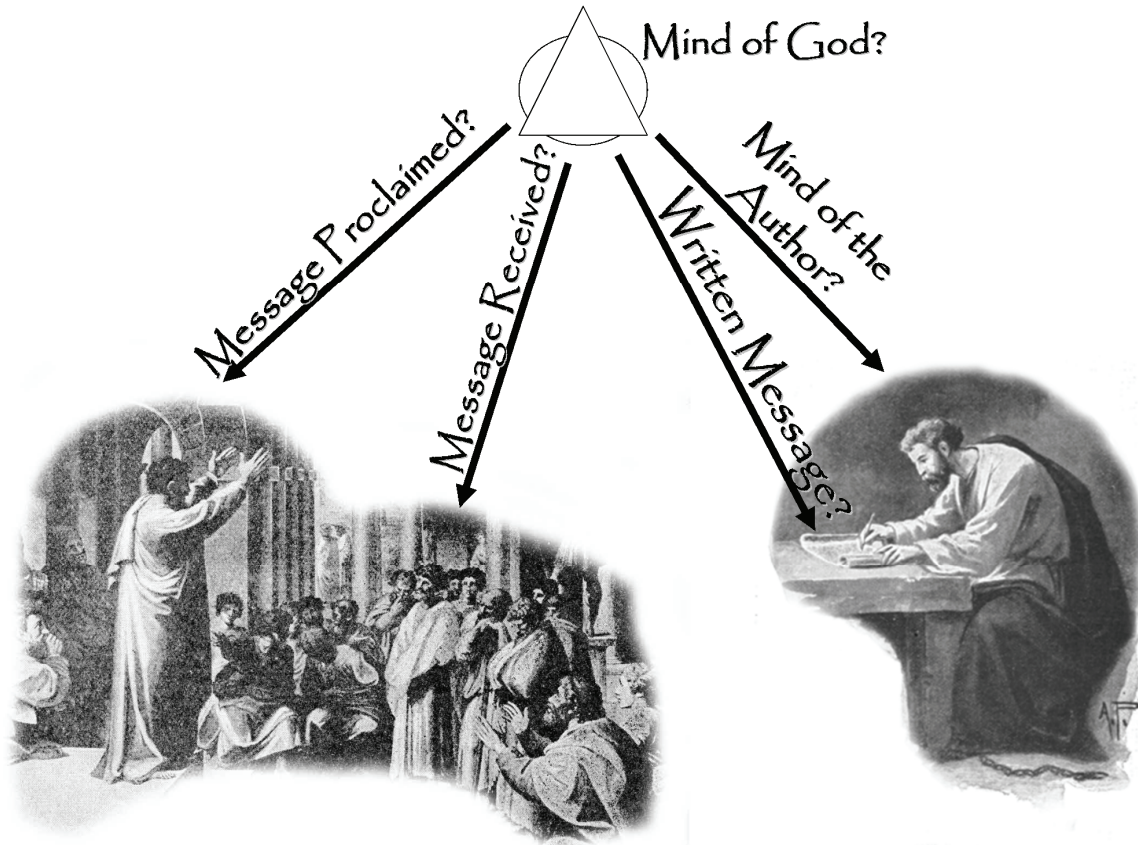
Mechanical Dictation: God simply used the hand of man to *passively* write His words. (100% God)

Verbal Plenary: All Scripture is inspired by God who utilized the human element within man to accomplish this without error. (100% man, 100% God)



Where does inspiration lie?

- Mind of God?
- Mind of the Author?
- Written Words?
- Message Proclaimed?
- Message Received?



Biblical Docetism

“the evangelical heresy”

Biblical Docetism: A method of approaching the Scripture that completely neglects the human element in Scripture, emphasizing only the divine element. This approach is often influenced by a mechanical dictation theory of inspiration, but it is not necessarily limited to it.

Hermeneutical Effects of Biblical Docetism:

- Randomly opening the Bible and seeing what God has to say.
- Thinking every Scripture applies to you (2 Chr. 7:14).
- Believing that the chapter and verse numbers are inspired.

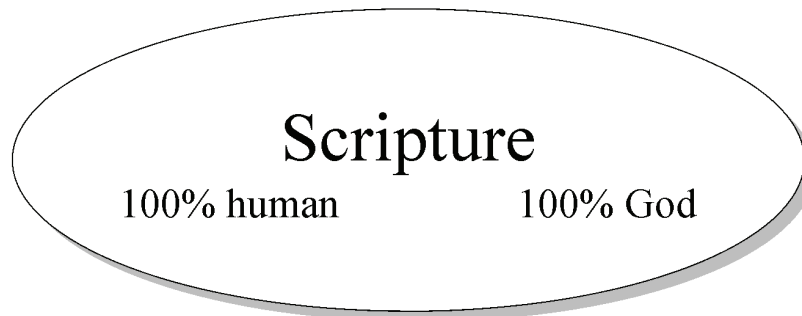
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- Believing that the canon order is inspired.
 - Neglecting the personality of the writer.
 - Neglecting the rules of interpretation demanded by the type of literature represented.
 - Believing that if it is in the Bible, it must be true.
 - Over literalization of Scripture.
 - Not taking into account the progress of revelation.

Examples of the Human Element within Scripture:

1. Emotion: Psalms, Romans 9
2. Grammatical Differences:
Hebrews and John
3. Grammatical "Errors": Romans 5
4. Phenomenological Language:
Joshua 10:13
5. Use of round numbers

Inspiration

Inspiration: **The act whereby God guided the writers of Scripture, giving them His words while fully utilizing the human element within man to produce the Scriptures.**



Inspiration is . . .

- **Verbal:** Extends to the very *words* of Scripture, not just teachings.
- **Plenary:** Extends to *everything* in the Bible, not just parts that speak on matters of faith and practice.

GROUPS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that there are so many different views of inspiration?
2. How important do you believe it is to get the right view? Explain.
3. How does the fact that C.S. Lewis held to a view of inspiration that most would call unevangelical at best and unorthodox at worst affect your view of its importance?

7. Discuss ways in which you have practiced or witnessed Biblical Docetism in action.

8. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

PROVING INSPIRATION

How do we know the Bible is inspired?

Questions:

- How does the Bible authenticate itself?
- What evidence is there that the Bible is inspired?
- Is there any evidence for the historicity of the Bible outside of Scripture?

What makes *you* believe that the Scriptures are inspired?

Evidences for the Bible's inspiration

1. Self-attestation
2. Uniqueness
3. Historicity
4. Prophetic element
5. Testimony of Christ
6. Life-changing ability
7. Testimony of the Holy Spirit

1. Self-attestation

The Scriptures claim inspiration in many places, in many different ways.

2. Uniqueness

The Bible is a collection of 66 books made up of different genres, written by more than 40 different authors from all walks of life (fishermen, kings, physicians, shepherds, tax collectors, etc.), on three different continents in three languages over 1,500 years, all writing to different circumstances and dealing with different issues. It has been translated into more languages than any other document, book, or writing. Because of its claim for divine inspiration, its message, and its unparalleled popularity, the Bible has also been attacked more than any other piece of literature. Despite these attacks, the Bible remains the authoritative book for more than two billion professing Christians and the best-selling book of all time.

3. Historicity

- Internal evidence: evidence coming from within the Scriptures
- External evidence: evidence coming from outside the Scriptures

Internal Evidence:

- a. Honesty
- b. Harmony
- c. Extraordinary claims
- d. Lack of motivation for fabrication

- a. Honesty

The Bible records both successes *and* failures of the heroes. It never paints the glorious picture that you would expect from legendary material, but shows them in all their worst moments. The Israelites whined, David murdered, Peter denied, the apostles abandoned Christ in fear, Moses became angry, Jacob deceived, Noah got drunk,

Adam and Eve disobeyed, Paul persecuted, Solomon worshiped idols, Abraham was a bigamist, Lot committed incest, John the Baptist doubted, Abraham doubted, Sarah doubted, Nicodemus doubted, Thomas doubted, Jonah ran, Samson self-served, and John worshiped an angel. In addition, the most faithful are seen as suffering the most (Job and Lazarus) while the wicked are seen as prospering (the rich man).

“A forged history would have clothed friends with every virtue, and would not have ventured to mar the effect designed to be produced by uncovering the vices of its most distinguished personages. Here there is displayed the uniqueness of Scripture history. Its characters are painted in the colors of truth and nature. But such characters were never sketched by a human pencil. Moses and the other writers must have written by Divine inspiration.”

—A. W. Pink

Divine Inspiration of Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press, 1976), 23

The Bible also contains irrelevant details that you would not expect from an embellishment of history.

Jn. 20:1–8*

“Early on the first day of the week (when? Does it matter?), while it was still dark (who cares?), Mary Magdalene (an incriminating detail . . .) went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one who Jesus loved (John’s modest way of referring to himself—another mark of genuineness) and said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don’t know

* Taken from Gregory Boyd *Letters from a Skeptic* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communication Ministries, 2003), 82-83.

where they have taken him!’ (note her lack of faith here). So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. They were running, but the other disciple out ran Peter and reached the tomb first (John’s modesty again, but who cares about this irrelevant detail). He bent over (the tomb entrance was low—a detail which is historically accurate of wealthy people of the time—the kind we know Jesus was buried in) and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in (why not? irrelevant detail). Then Simon Peter, who was behind him (modest repetition again), arrived and went into the tomb (Peter’s boldness stands out in all the Gospel accounts). He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head (irrelevant and unexpected detail—what was Jesus wearing?). The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen (could anything be more irrelevant, and more unusual than this . . .? Jesus folded one part of his wrapping before he left!). Finally the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went inside (who cares about what exact order they went in?)”

- Man is hopelessly sinful.
- The primary hero is murdered by man.
- Nobody ever understands what is going on in God’s plan, which leaves no motive for any proposed embellishment. Only through progressive revelation does the *reader* understand the full message.
- Women are the first to witness Christ’s resurrection.
- Man would not create the tensions of predestination and human responsibility, the Trinity, the hypostatic union, etc.
- Many texts contain inherent ambiguity like the meaning of “baptism for the dead” (1 Cor. 15:29), “keys to the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19), and the “seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15).

"The Gospels present a consistent portrait of who Jesus is and what He did, as well as of the events which surrounded His life. If the four accounts were individually fabricated, where did this consistency come from? But there are also significant differences in each account, showing the relative differences of their perspectives. If they were all fabricated together, the consistency would be greater than we find."

—Gregory Boyd

Letters from a Skeptic, (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communication Ministries, 2003), 84

b. Harmony

Despite the fact that the Scriptures are a collection of multiple compositions, written by different authors with differing personalities, purposes, cultural representations, writing in different genres on three different continents in three languages over a time span of 1,500 years, the Bible has remarkable consistency that evidences one guiding Author who superintended the writings. Parallel accounts all contain the same basic story with different details and differing perspectives. This harmony adds to the historical legitimacy of the Gospel accounts.

c. Testable extraordinary claims

There are thousands of historical claims of extraordinary events (miracles), giving extensive details of the events themselves—time, location of occurrence, and the witnessing audience—with the result that they are testable through the normal historical means of objectifying the past.

d. Lack of motive for fabrication

If the Scriptures are fabricated there is no valid motivation for the writers of Scripture to record what they did. The Gospel writers, for instance, did not gain anything but persecution for their beliefs. The

writing of these beliefs would have brought further rejection with nothing to gain but the fear of death at the hands of their enemies.

“To read the Scriptures as fabrications is to let an anti-supernaturalistic bias be your guide, rather than the normal means of historical verification.”

External Evidence:

- a. Preservation
- b. Archeology
- c. Extrabiblical attestation
- d. Survival in a hostile environment

a. Preservation

The Bible is the most well attested book in all of ancient history, with more extant manuscripts in existence than any other work. The uniqueness of its preservation is inherently tied to its self-authentication as the word of God. There is no book that has been the object of such scrutiny and passionate attack as the Scripture. Yet, it survives today as the best selling book of all time. This alone, gives attestation to its authenticity as God’s word, being protected by His providential hand.

b. Archeology

The witness of archeology has continually confirmed the scriptural data. When there has been doubt in the past (e.g., existence of the Hittites, the date of the census in Luke and the reign of Quirinius, Governor of Syria, date of the Gospel of John, etc.), later archeological and historical finds have proved the Scriptures to be historically accurate.

"It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries."

—Nelson Glueck

Rivers in the Desert; History of Negev (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1969), 31

c. Extrabiblical attestation

Over 39 extrabiblical sources attest to more than 100 facts regarding the life and teachings of Jesus. Besides all of the Apostolic fathers (whose witness cannot be dismissed simply because they believed that Christ was the messiah) are the Jewish and Roman historians.

Josephus (Jewish Historian; 37–100 A.D.)

"Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. [He was the Christ]; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him [for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him] and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." (*Antiquities XVIII*, 63f)

Pliny the Younger (Emperor of Bythynia; 112 A.D.)

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and

bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed, but to abstain from all fraud, theft and adultery, never to break their word, or deny a trust when called upon to honor it; after which it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but ordinary and innocent kind.” (Letter to Emperor Trajan)

Suetonius (Roman Historian; c. 69–122 A.D.)

“Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome.” (*Life of Claudius* XXv.4)

Tactitus (Roman Historian; 115 A.D.)

“Consequently...Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberias at the hands of the Procurator Pontius Pilatus, and a deadly superstition, thus checked for a moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but also in the City.” (*Annals* XV.44.2–8)

Thallus (Roman Historian)

“On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.” (Julius Africanus, *Chronography*, 18:1)

Lucian (Greek satirist; 120–180 A.D.)

“The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account... You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and

then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.” (*The Death of Peregrine*, 11–13)

Celsus: (opponent of Origen; 2nd century)

Criticizes the Gospels alluding to 80 different quotes from the Bible. Interestingly, he admits that the miraculous works of Jesus were generally believed in the 2nd century.

d. Survival in a hostile environment

Since the entire Gospel was spoken and written in close proximity to the events themselves, there would have been many people who could have brought forth evidence that their stories were lies. However, even in the midst of a hostile environment, where the opponents had everything to lose if the Gospel story is true, you do not have anyone producing anything that would lead the historian to believe that the story was a fabrication.

CASE STUDY: RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

1. Internal Evidence

Honesty:

The disciples who recorded it claimed to have abandoned Christ and did not believe in His resurrection when told. They still present themselves as ignorant of God's plan. Also, women are the first to witness the resurrection.

Harmony:

The four Gospel writers claim to have witnessed the resurrected Christ. The same is the case for the other writers of the NT. The four gospel writers all write of the same event from differing perspectives. Although they differ in details, they are completely harmonious to the main events surrounding the resurrection, and all claim that it is an historical event.

Extraordinary claims:

The Bible records that the resurrection of Christ happened and gives the time, place, people involved, and it names many of the witnesses. In other words, the extraordinary claims were not done in secret as would be the case if it were fabricated.

Lack of motive for fabrication:

There is no reasonable explanation as to why the apostles would have made up such a story. They had no popularity, power, or riches to gain from it if it was a lie. They were in constant persecution because of their confession, and finally, most met a terrible death, sealing their testimony in blood. It could not have been an illusion, for illusions do not happen in mass over time. It could not have been a case of mistaken identity (i.e., they merely *thought* they saw Christ), since it is

impossible to explain how this many witnesses could be mistaken about seeing someone dead and buried, and then seeing the same person alive three days later. It could not be that Christ did not really die, since the Romans were expert executioners, and many people helped in the burial process, wrapping Christ in burial cloths as was their custom.

2. External Evidence

Preservation:

The manuscript evidence conclusively demonstrates that the Gospel accounts were all written within a generation of the events which they record, authenticating their claims of eye-witness testimony. There is no time for legendary material to arise.

Archeology:

Christ's remains were never found. Neither could those who denied the resurrection in the first century produce a body, nor those who deny it today.

Extrabiblical attestation:

There are numerous first-century and second-century extrabiblical writings that witness to the fact that Christians believed that Christ rose from the grave: Josephus, Clement, Papias, Didache, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Hermas, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria.

Survival in a hostile environment:

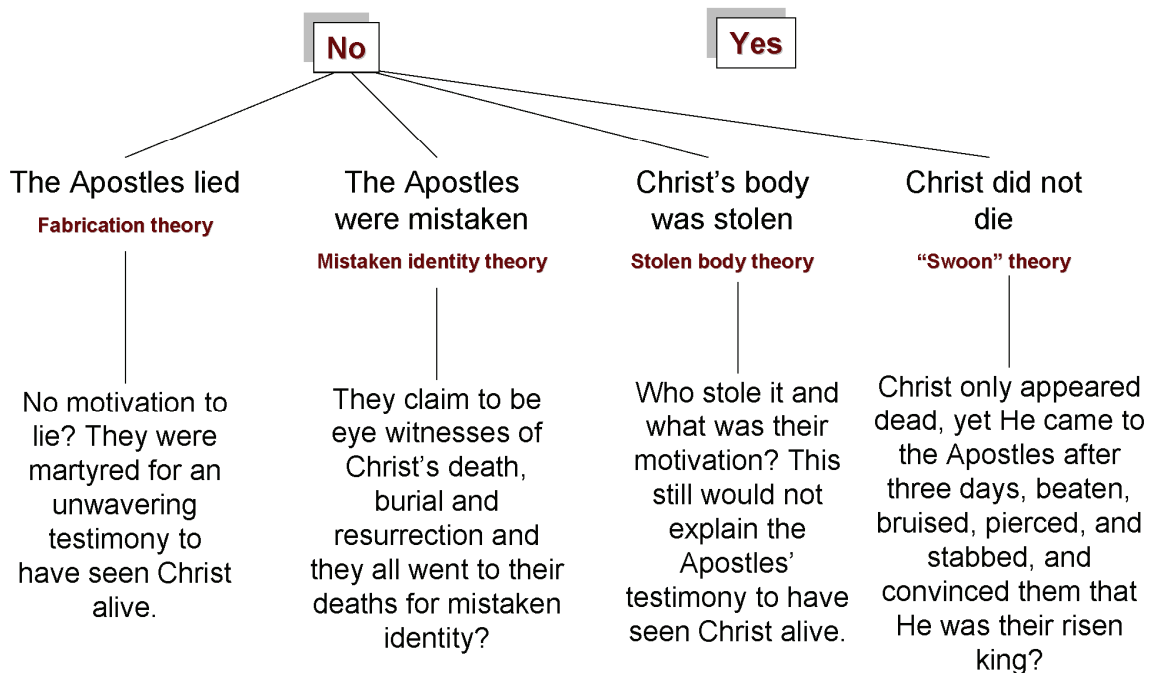
The opponents of Christianity had every opportunity to expose the fabrication if it were true. The fact that those who were hostile to Christianity did not put forth a case against it adds to its historicity.

“Christianity was born in a very hostile environment. There were contemporaries who would have refuted the Gospel portrait of Jesus—if they could have. The leaders of Judaism in the first century saw Christianity as a pernicious cult and would have loved to see it stamped out. And this would have been easy to do—if the “cult” had been based on fabrications. Why, just bringing forth the body of the slain Jesus would have been sufficient to extinguish Christianity once and for all. In spite of this, however, Christianity exploded. . . . Even those who remained opposed to Christianity did not deny that Jesus did miracles, and did not deny that His tomb was empty.”

—Gregory Boyd

Gregory Boyd, *Letters from a Skeptic* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communication Ministries, 2003), 85-86

Did Christ Rise From the Grave?



3. Prophetic Element:

The Bible is the only religious or historical book that foretells the future in detail and then asks its readers to test the validity of this prophecy to verify its message.

God's apologetic challenge to you

Isaiah 46:9–10

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”

Isaiah 41:21–24

“‘Present your argument,’ says the LORD. ‘Produce your evidence,’ says Jacob's king. ‘Let them produce evidence! Let them tell us what will happen! Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles, so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled. Or decree for us some future events! Predict how future events will turn out, so we might know you are gods. Yes, do something good or bad, so we might be frightened and in awe. Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting.’”

List of some relevant prophecies:

- **The “seed of a woman”:** Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4
- **Descendent of Abraham:** Gen. 12:3, 18:18; Acts 3:25; Matt. 1:1
- **Heir of the throne of David:** Isa. 9:7; Lk. 1:32–33
- **Born in Bethlehem:** Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:1; Lk. 2:4–7
- **To be born of a virgin:** Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:26–35
- **Flight to Egypt:** Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:14–15
- **Triumphal entry in Jerusalem on a donkey:** Zech. 9:9; Jn. 12:13–14
- **Betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver:** Zech. 11:12–13; Ps. 41:9; Mk. 14:10; Matt. 26:14–15

- **Hated without reason:** Ps. 69:4, 35:19, 109:3–5; Jn. 15:24–25
- **Crucified, “pierced through hands and feet”:** Zech. 12:10; Ps. 22:16; Matt. 27:35; Jn. 20:27
- **Time of His death:** Dan. 9:25; Lk. 2:1; Matt. 2:1
- **Preceded by a forerunner:** Mal. 3:1; Lk. 7:24–27
- **Declared the Son of God:** Ps. 2:7; Matt. 3:17
- **Galilean ministry:** Isa. 9:1–2; Matt. 4:13–16
- **Speaks in parables:** Ps. 78:2–4; Matt. 13:34–35
- **A prophet:** Deut. 18:15; Jn. 6:14; Acts 3:20–22
- **Priest after the order of Melchizedek:** Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:5–6
- **To bind up the brokenhearted:** Isa. 61:1–2; Lk. 4:18–19
- **Rejected by His own people, the Jews:** Isa. 53:3; Jn. 1:11
- **Not believed:** Isa. 53:1; Jn. 12:37

Isaiah 53:1–12

“Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD was pleased To

crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.”

4. Testimony of Christ

Since the historical evidence conclusively demonstrates that Christ rose from the grave, the resurrection itself verifies His claims to be the Son of God. Since Christ is God’s Son, His testimony concerning the inspiration of the Scripture is final and authoritative. He witnessed to the Old Testament’s inspiration many times and paved the way for the inspiration of the New Testament, through the appointing and sending of His apostles, validating them through signs and wonders.

5. Life-changing ability

The Scriptures demonstrate the characteristics of wisdom, discernment, and conviction that one would expect to find from the testimony of an omniscient Creator. This conviction has evidenced itself in dynamic life-change of millions of people throughout time and demonstrates its divine nature.

Heb. 4:12

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart.”

7. Testimony of the Holy Spirit

The Scriptures testify to themselves through the subjective testimony of God Himself in the mind, heart, and soul of an individual, demonstrating that the message proclaimed is truly the voice of God.

Jn. 10:26–27

“But you refuse to believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

	Bible	Book of Mormon	Koran
Authors, time, place	40+ authors, >1,500 years, three continents	1 author, <50 years, 1 place	1 author, <50 years, 1 place
Honesty	X		
Irrelevant detail	X		
Testable extraordinary claims	X		
Testable prophecy	X		
Lack of motive for fabrication	X		
Life-change ability	X	X	X
Testimony of the Holy Spirit	X	X	X
Claim for divine inspiration	X	X	X

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before this session, for what reasons, if any, were you confident that the Bible is the word of God?
2. Of the evidences presented in this session for the inspiration of Scripture, what *one* evidence do you find most convincing?
3. It was said in class that Christianity is based upon history first, not the inspiration of Scripture. Discuss how a skeptic might need to see the biblical documents as separate pieces of literature that must historically stand on their own merits before they see them as part of the inspired whole.

-
7. Read Jn. 10:26–27. The Scriptures claim to be the voice of God. Christians are told that we, by virtue of our new nature, recognize this voice. How do you hear God’s voice speaking to you when you read the Scriptures?
8. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

INERRANCY

Does the Bible err?

Questions:

1. Can the Scriptures err and Christianity still be true?
2. Can the Scriptures err and still be inspired?
3. Do the Scriptures contain inconsistencies?
4. How do we explain the apparent contradictions?

Can the Scriptures err and Christianity still be true?

Can the Scriptures err and still be inspired?

Key Terms

Inerrancy: The doctrinal teaching that the Scriptures *in the autographa* (original manuscripts) are true in all that they teach, and thus without error.

Infallibility: The doctrinal teaching sometimes used synonymously with inerrancy, that the Scriptures cannot fail in matters of faith and practice.

Arguments for Inerrancy:

1. If the Scriptures are “God-breathed,” representing the voice of God, and God is without error, and then the Scriptures are without error.

Premise 1: God is truthful and therefore beyond error (2 Sam. 7:28; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

Premise 2: God is the ultimate author of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).

Conclusion: Scripture is truthful and therefore beyond error.

2. If Scripture contains historical and/or scientific error, then its entire theological message is placed in jeopardy, since the theological message of Scripture is based upon the historical. Who has the ability to judge what is accurate and what is not?

3. Inerrancy is inherently tied to absolute authority. Any denial of inerrancy produces a slippery slope in which the one who denies this doctrine is open to deny the authority of Scripture on any matter.

4. The Bible does not contain any errors.

Premise: The Bible does not contain any errors.

Conclusion: The Bible is inerrant.

Premise: Everything the Bible says is true according to the intention to which it was written.

Conclusion: The Bible is true (i.e., inerrant).

CHICAGO STATEMENT OF BIBLICAL INERRANCY

Select Articles

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or falseness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of metrical, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

Objections to Inerrancy

1. Since the Scriptures were written by man, we should expect them to accurately reflect the characteristic in all men which is error. To deny error in Scripture is to deny the humanity of Scripture.

“To err is human”

Premise 1: Human beings err.

Premise 2: The Bible is a human book.

Conclusion: The Bible errs.

2. Inerrancy only applies to the original manuscripts (autographa). Since we do not have the original manuscripts, it is irrelevant to talk about inerrancy.
3. The Bible contains errors; therefore, the Bible is not inerrant.

Response to objections to inerrancy:

1. While it is true that the Bible is a human work, and humans often err, it is also true that it is a divine work, and God does not err. It is not *necessary* to err to be human.

If that argument was true, then this argument would be true as well:

Premise 1: Human beings err.

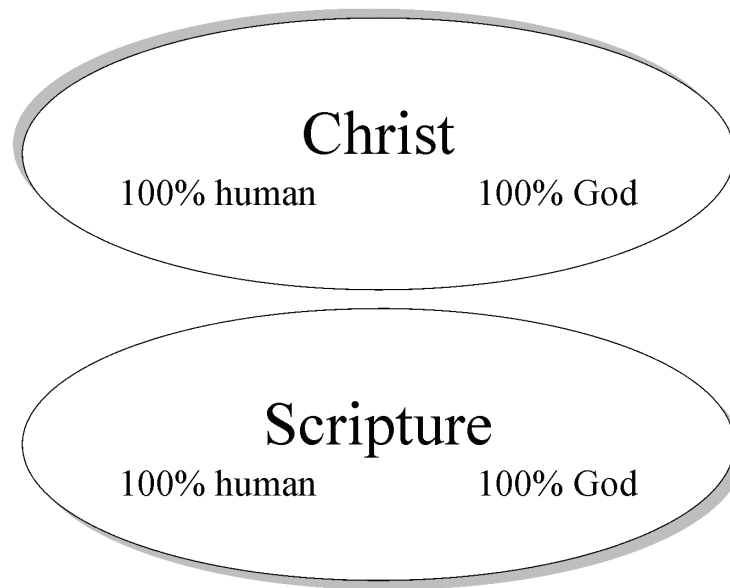
Premise 2: Christ is a human being.

Conclusion: Christ errs.

The fallacy of this argument lies in the premise that to err is human.

- Human beings *must* err.
- Human beings *can* err.

Error is not a foregone necessity of humanity.



2. While it is true that we do not have the original manuscripts of Scripture, this does not invalidate the doctrine of inerrancy; it simply makes textual criticism all the more important. Through the science of textual criticism we learn that the Scriptures are preserved with 95 percent accuracy and that we have *access* to the originals through diligent study and research. In other words, textual criticism does not invalidate inerrancy, but inerrancy validates textual criticism.
3. When the original context and intention is understood, taking into account the science of textual criticism, all alleged errors are shown to be based upon either faulty hermeneutics or scribal errors.

Alleged Error #1

2 Sam. 10:18 vs. 1 Chron. 19:18

2 Samuel 10:18	1 Chronicles 19:18
But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.	The Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed of the Arameans 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, and put to death Shophach the commander of the army.

Alleged Error #1 Solution
Error in transcription

Alleged Error #2

Matt. 27:5 vs. Acts 1:18

Matthew 27:5	Acts 1:18
“So Judas threw the silver coins into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself.”	“Now this man Judas acquired a field with the reward of his unjust deed, and falling headfirst he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.”

Alleged Error #2 Solution
Faulty Assumption

Two writers can include different details of the same event for their own purposes.

Judas could have hanged himself and then fallen. Peter was emphasizing the fulfillment of prophecy through the death of Judas, while this was not a concern of Matthew.

Alleged Error #3

Matt 26:34, 74–75 vs. Mark 14:30, 72

Matthew 26:34	Mark 14:30
“Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’”	“And Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.’”

Alleged Error #3 Solution

Faulty Assumption

One writer can be more detailed than another.

Alleged Error #4

The Bible claims that the moon is a light. But we know that the moon simply reflects light, but is not a light itself.

Isaiah 13:10

“For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light.”

Alleged Error #4 Solution

Over-emphasis on scientific preciseness does not take into account phenomenological language (i.e., language that speaks from the perspective of the subject).

Alleged Error #5

Proverbs 12:21 vs. Lk. 16:19–22

Proverbs 12:21	Lk. 16:19–22
“The righteous do not encounter any harm, but the wicked are filled with calamity.”	The unrighteous rich man is without harm, while the righteous poor man is experiencing calamity.

Alleged Error #5 Solution

Faulty understanding concerning the nature of a proverb. A proverb is a general truth that does not necessarily apply in every situation. Here is a misunderstanding of the ultimate end of both men. The poor man, Lazarus, was the one who ultimately experienced peace, while the rich man experienced calamity after death.

Facts about inerrancy:

- The Bible does speak in accommodating language (e.g., “The sun went down.”).
- The Bible does use round numbers (7,000 killed, instead of 6,899).
- The Bible does summarize (Sermon on the Mount is longer in Matthew than in Luke).
- Consideration must be made of the genre of the individual books.
- The Bible does use free quotations (Old Testament in the New Testament).

Ipsissima Verba: Lit. “the very words.” This expresses the often-misunderstood assumption that the authors of Scripture always recorded the exact words of those who spoke, without paraphrasing.

Ipsissima Vox: Lit. “the very voice.” This expresses the understanding that the writers of Scripture would often give summaries or paraphrase the words of those who spoke, not necessarily the exact words.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The twentieth century witnessed great development in the doctrine of inerrancy. Some have said that the doctrine did not exist in any form *until* twentieth century, thus implying that neither the early church nor the Reformers believed in the doctrine. How does the rise of liberalism and the higher criticism of the Scriptures (e.g. the Bible is full of historical mistakes and is made up of fairy tale stories and embellishments) make it understandable that inerrancy would not be *articulated* until now, but that it was always believed?
2. How important do you believe the doctrine of inerrancy is? Explain.
3. Further discuss the differences between inerrancy and infallibility. Can the Scriptures be infallible without being inerrant?
4. Identify and explain this alleged discrepancy: Proverbs 26:4-5.

-
5. Identify and explain this alleged discrepancy: Matt. 5:22; Matt. 23:17.

 6. Identify and explain this alleged discrepancy: 1 Sam. 31:4–6; 2 Sam. 1:6–10.

 7. Identify and explain the discrepancy in the creation order in Gen. 1 and 2.

 8. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?



HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

Hermeneutics through the centuries

Questions:

- How did the first-century Jews interpret the Scriptures?
- How did Christ and the Apostles interpret the Scriptures?
- How did the early Church interpret the Scriptures?
- Should Christians today follow the same hermeneutic as the early Church?

Outline:

- A. Introduction to Hermeneutics
- B. A Brief History of Interpretation

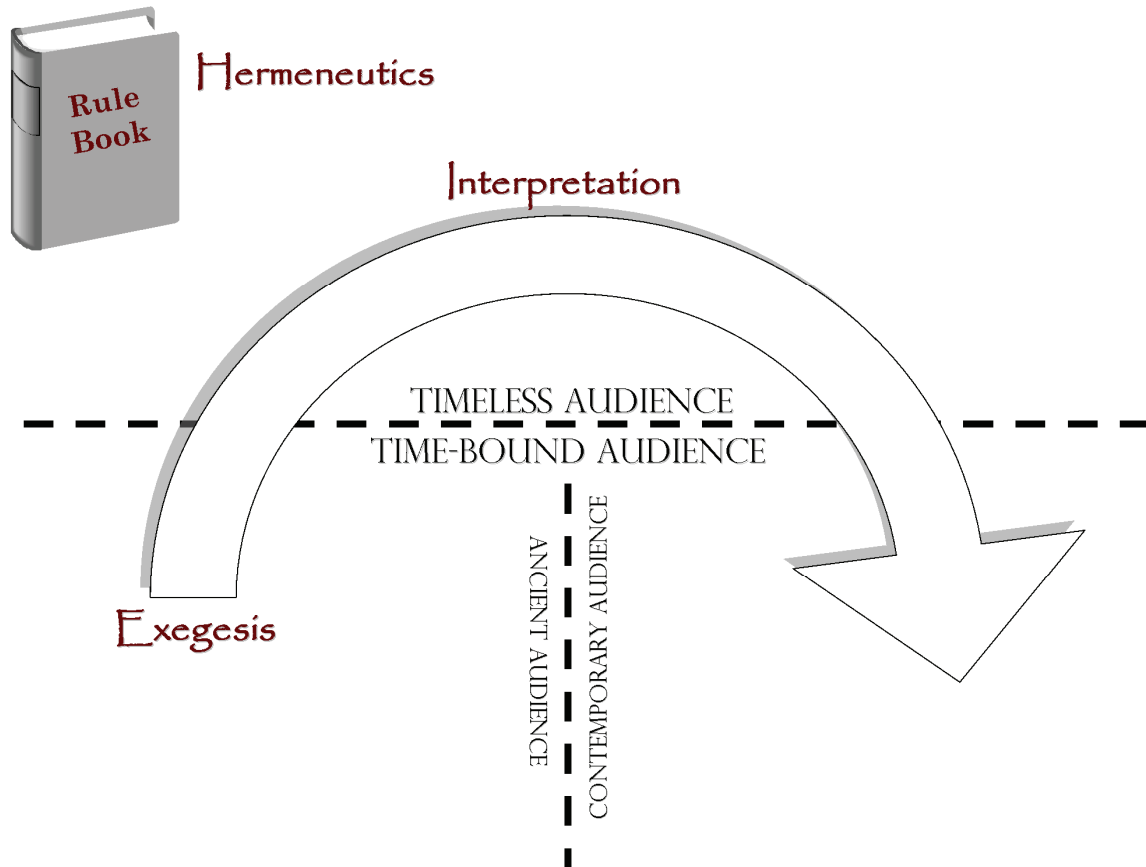
A. Introduction to Hermeneutics

Key Terms

Interpretation: The process by which the Scriptures are understood by the reader.

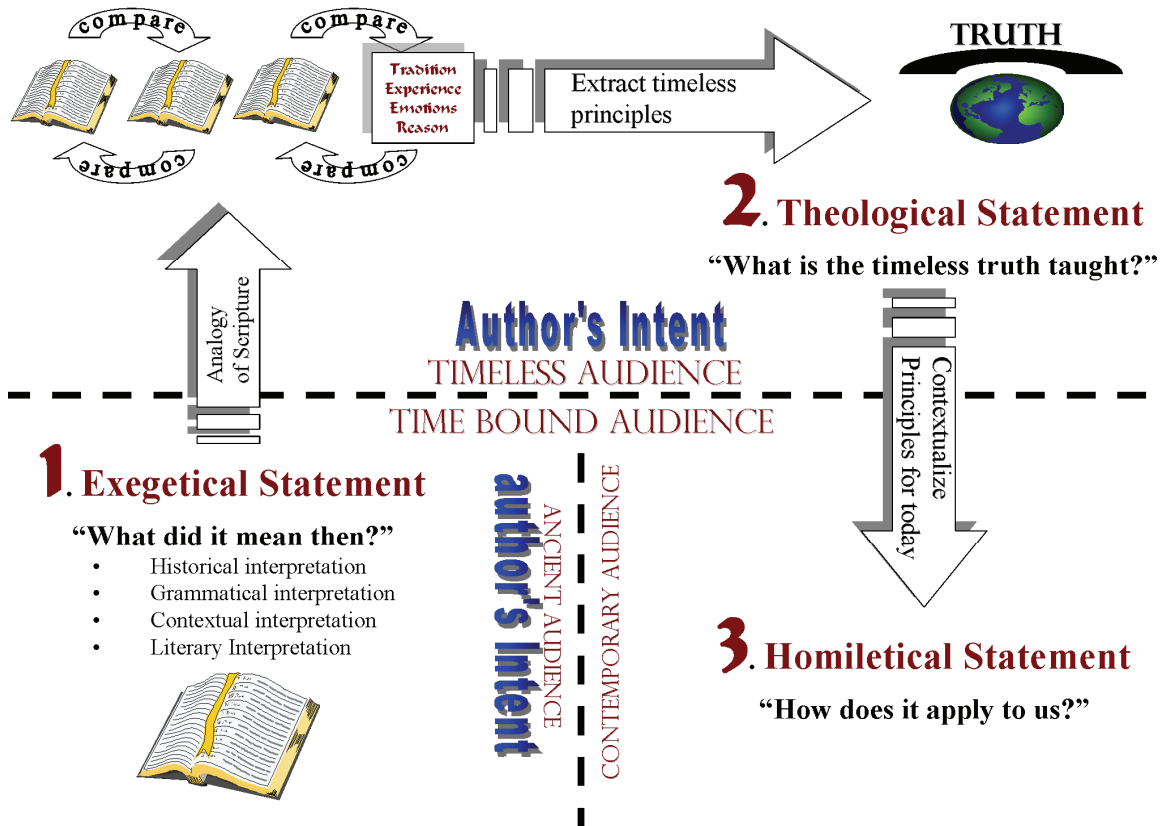
Hermeneutics: The theory, method, or rules of biblical interpretation.

Exegesis: The process of discovering the original meaning of the biblical text, “bringing it out” (“exegeting”) by studying the text according to the authorial intent in its historical and grammatical contexts.



Historical-Grammatical Hermeneutics:

Also referred to as “literalism,” literal, historical-critical, or historical-literary hermeneutics. The theory of hermeneutics which seeks to interpret the Scriptures by studying the text in its original historical-grammatical context in order to discover what the author’s original intent was so that timeless principles can be discovered and applied to a contemporary setting.

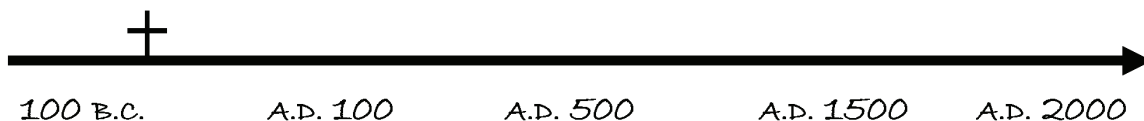


B. A Brief History of Interpretation:

1. Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics
2. New Testament Hermeneutics
3. Patristic/Early Church Hermeneutics
4. Medieval Hermeneutics
5. Reformation Hermeneutics

1. Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics

Ancient Jewish



Summary: Ancient Jewish hermeneutics is best described as an attempt by those who were passionately committed to the inspiration of Scripture to make God's word relevant to the current context. In their zeal, they often took an overly literal and legalistic approach in which every detail of the Scriptures had out-of-context meaning and significance for their current situation.

"The Scribes . . . took great care in copying the Scriptures, believing every letter of the text to be the inspired word of God. This profound reverence for the scriptural text had both its advantages and disadvantages. A chief advantage was that the texts were carefully preserved in their transmission across the centuries. A major disadvantage was that the rabbis soon began interpreting Scripture by methods other than the way in which communication is normally interpreted. The rabbis presupposed that since God is the author of Scripture, (1) the interpreter could expect numerous meanings in a given text, and (2) every incidental detail of the text possessed significance. Rabbi Akiba, in the first century A.D., eventually extended this to maintain that every repetition, figure of speech, parallelism, synonym, word, letter, and even shapes of letters had hidden meaning."

—Henry Virkler

Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 49

b. Sanhedrin 34a

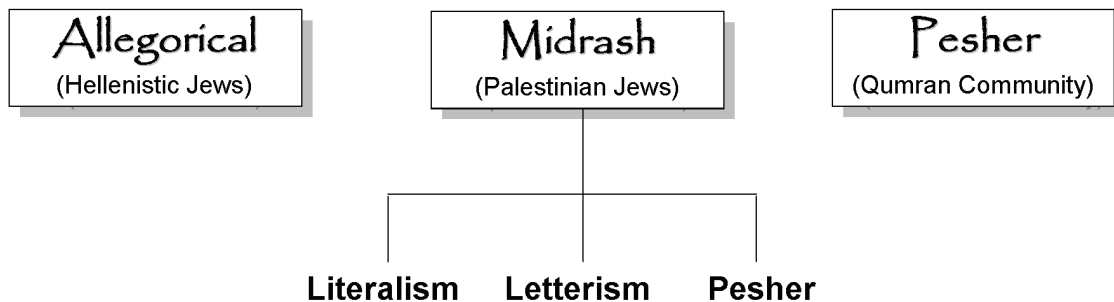
"Just as a rock is split into many splinters, so also may one biblical verse contain many teachings."

Midrash:

A form of interpretation that characterized the normal hermeneutical method of the rabbis and Pharisees in general. *It sought to contemporize the text of Scripture so as to make it relevant for everyday application.* Typically, this application came by extensive out-of-context applications of incidental teachings.

Abusive Characteristics of Midrash:

- Often gave meaning to texts, phrases, and words without regard to the context in which they were meant to apply.
- Combined texts that contained similar words or phrases whether or not such texts were referring to the same idea.
- Took incidental and obscure aspects of grammar and gave them interpretive significance.



Literalism: Interpretation of the Scripture according to the straight-forward reading of the text. Among the rabbis this literalization of the text was often extreme, bypassing the general theological principles that were being taught, and opting for particular legalistic applications.

Letterism: Interpretation that ignores context, historical and cultural setting, and even grammatical structure, taking each word, letter, and number as an isolated truth.

Deut. 21:18–19

“If a person has a stubborn, rebellious son who pays no attention to his father or mother, and they discipline him to no avail, his father and mother must seize him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his city.”

Mishnah Sanhedrin 8.4

“If either of them [the parents] was maimed in the hand, or lame or blind or dumb or deaf, he cannot be condemned as a stubborn and rebellious son, for it is written, ‘so the father and mother shall lay hold of him’—so they were not maimed in the hand; ‘and bring him out’—

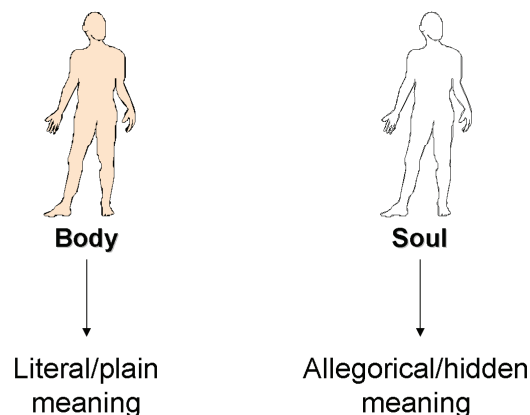
so they were not lame; ‘and they shall say’—so they were not dumb; ‘this is our son’—so they were not blind; ‘he will not obey our voice’—so they were not deaf.”

Matt. 23:23

“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others.”

- Pesher:** A form of interpretation, popular among the Dead Sea community, in which the text had immediate eschatological significance that could only be understood through divine revelation.
- Allegorical:** Interpretation of Scripture, practiced primarily among the Hellenistic Jews, in which the primary goal of interpretation is to find the underlying hidden meaning of the text found in characters, places, events, numbers and other details that would not otherwise be found.

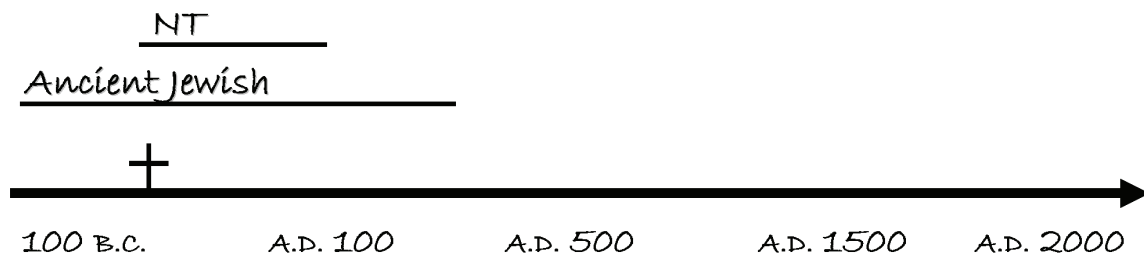
Philo of Alexandria's View of Interpretation



Basics:

- Limited regard for the original context.
- Overly literal interpretation seeing significance in every detail, including letters and numbers.
- The biblical text was only a vehicle for the true hidden meaning that must be discovered.
- Immediate eschatological fulfillment (Qumran).
- Emphasis on allegory (Hellenistic Judaism).

2. New Testament Hermeneutics



Summary: Christ and the New Testament writers saw Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament writing. They often employed a literal hermeneutic in which the Scriptures were interpreted in a straight-forward historical manner with Christ being the literal fulfillment of OT prophecies. They also employed pesher and typology, believing that Christ's advent brought ultimate fulfillment of God's word.

Approximately ten percent of the New Testament is quotations, paraphrases, or allusions to the Old Testament.

All but nine Old Testament books are referred to in the New Testament.

Typological: Looking at events in history as a foreshadowing or a “type” of things present or to come.

Allegory	Typology
Finding hidden meaning in characters, places, events, numbers, and other details that would not otherwise be found.	Finding a foreshadowing of present and future events in historical events and people of the past.

Christ used literal, typological, midrashic, and pesher hermeneutics, considering Himself the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets.

- Literal: Matt. 15:4; Mark 10:7; Mark 12:26
- Typological: Matt. 12:39–40; Jn. 3:14; Matt. 24:37–39
- Midrash: Matt. 7:11; Lk. 12:28; Mk. 2:25–28
- Pesher: Lk. 4:16–21; Jn. 5:39–47; Mk. 12:10

Allegorical interpretation was not employed by any of the NT writers.

Although the NT writers may have used the OT in ways that go beyond the literal reading through pesher and typology, caution should be used by contemporary readers when using these same hermeneutics for ancient or contemporary fulfillment.

Jer. 31:15

“The LORD says, ‘A sound is heard in Ramah, a sound of crying in bitter grief. It is the sound of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are gone.’”

Matt. 2:17–18

“Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud wailing, Rachel weeping for her children, and she did not want to be comforted, because they were gone.”

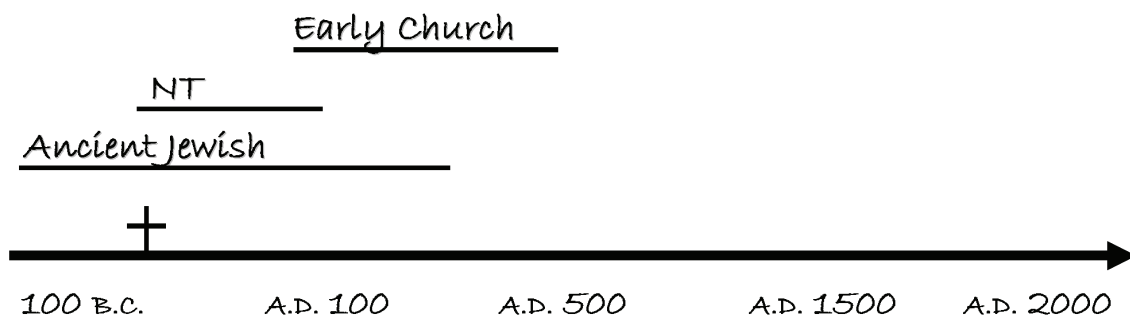
Hosea 11:1

“When Israel was a young man, I loved him like a son, and I summoned my son out of Egypt.”

Matt. 2:15

“He stayed there until Herod died. In this way what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet was fulfilled: ‘I called my Son out of Egypt.’”

3. Patristic/Early Church (100–500)



Summary: The early Church continued the Christocentric interpretation employed by Christ and the NT writers. The earliest Christian writers used a functional hermeneutic, encouraging local churches in their faith. While there was usage of the typological, the early church eventually moved to a primary use of an allegorical hermeneutic that was popular in the Hellenistic culture.

With the rise of Gnostics who claimed to have the “secret” teachings of Christ handed down to them from the Apostles, the Church increasingly employed a “traditional” or “authoritative” hermeneutic that sought to appeal to Church tradition as the interpretive norm for Christianity. Thus early Church tradition (*regula fide*),

practically speaking, came to rival Scripture as the authority for doctrine in the Church and was used as a basis for all other hermeneutics.

The Antiochene school of interpretation rejected both allegorical and authoritative hermeneutics in favor of a historical-grammatical interpretation. This hermeneutic did not gain wide acceptance until the Reformation.

First and second century pastoral guidance

Apostolic Fathers → Functional → Christians

Second century apologetics

Justin Martyr → Typological → Jews

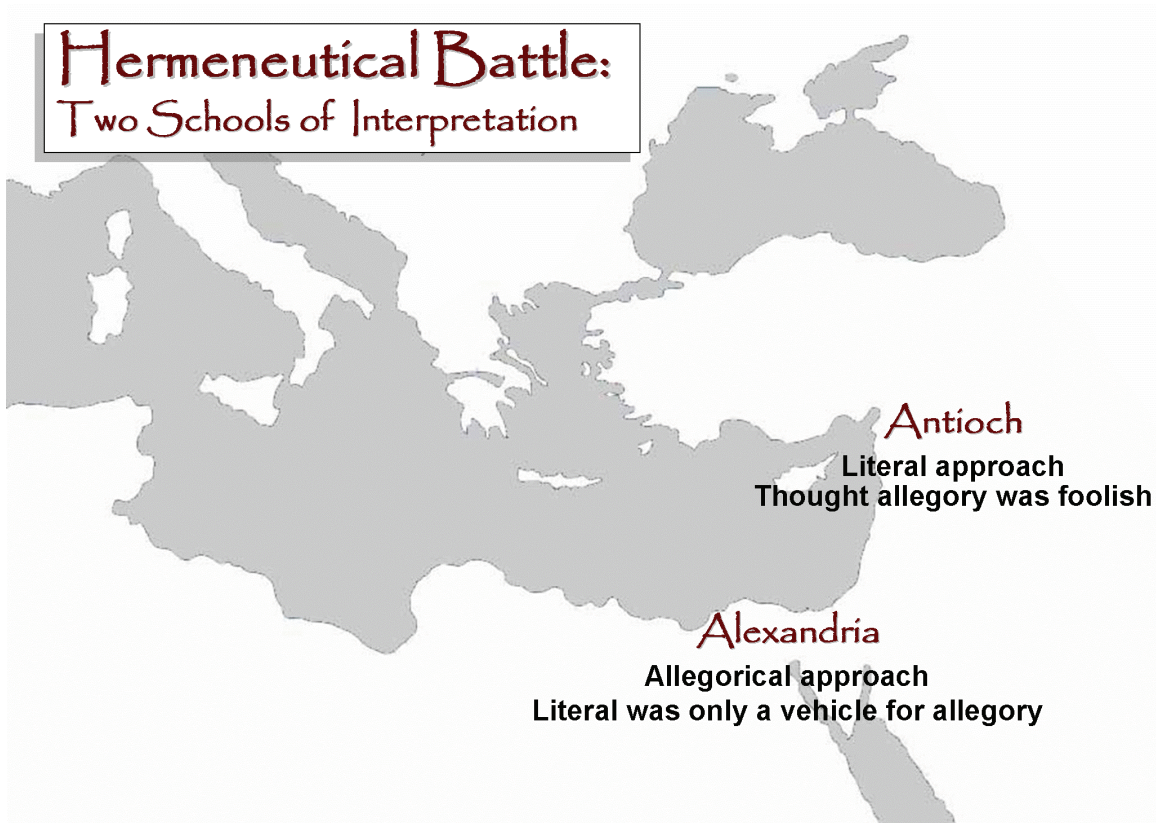
Second and third century heresies

Tertullian and Irenaeus → Authoritative → Gnostics

"[The rise of heresy] produced a hermeneutical method in which church tradition determined the meaning of Scripture. By this, a hermeneutical circle was enacted: church tradition was created by the interpretation of Scripture and the interpretation of Scripture was then governed by the church's traditions in the rule of faith."

—David Dockery

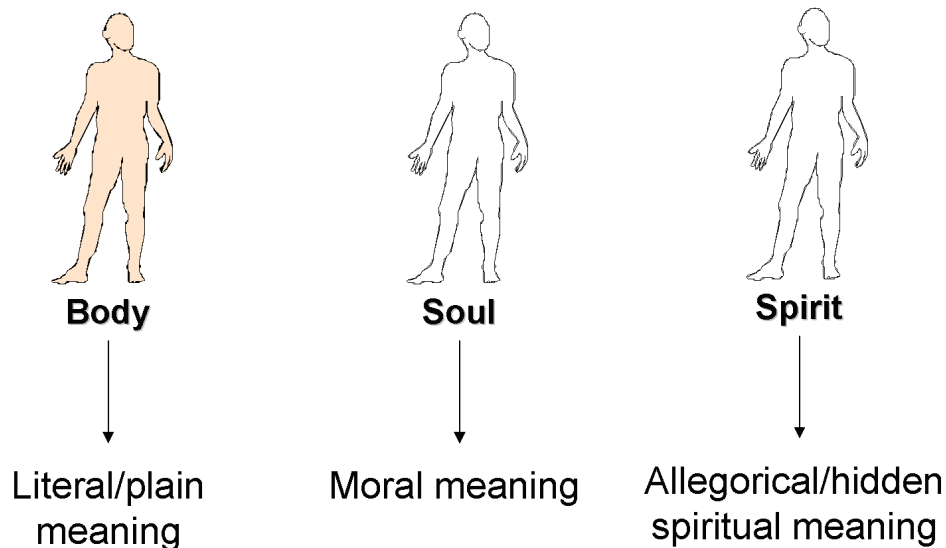
Biblical Interpretation Now and Then (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 69



Alexandrian School of Interpretation:

Heavily influenced by the Hellenistic culture, the Alexandrian school of interpretation as represented by Clement of Alexandria and Origen placed an emphasis on the allegorical meaning of Scripture, looking to find the deeper meanings that lay behind the literal sense.

Origen's View of Interpretation



Origen's allegorical interpretation of Gen. 19:30–38—Lot's sexual relations with his daughters:

- Literal:** Actually happened.
- Moral:** Lot represents the rational human mind. Lot's wife represents the flesh. Lot's daughters are vainglory and pride.
- Spiritual:** Lot represents the OT Law. Lot's wife represents the Israelites' rebellion in the wilderness. Lot's daughters represent Jerusalem and Samaria.

Antiochene School of Interpretation:

To the Antiochene interpreters, the historical-grammatical (literal) interpretation was the only meaning of the text. The spiritual applications found direct correspondence in the literal. Only through understanding the history and the grammar could one discover the author's original intent and thereby understand what God was communicating through the text. Unfortunately, Nestorius, one of Theodore's students, was condemned as a heretic, an event that had contributed to the decline of this hermeneutic until the Reformation.

Theodore, Antioch's greatest exegete, did not believe that the Song of Solomon was a love song between Christ and the Church, as the allegorical school suggested, but believed that it was a love poem written by Solomon to celebrate his marriage to his Egyptian wife. As well, he drew a distinction between OT texts that contained genuine Messianic prophecies and those that, in their historical setting, were not truly predictive prophecies, but merely analogous experiences shared by Christ and the OT situations.

Antiochene View of Interpretation



Body/Soul



Literal (historical-grammatical)/spiritual

Augustine's Hermeneutical Principles:

1. Genuine Christian faith must be possessed.
2. The literal and historical must be held in high regard.
3. Scripture has more than one meaning and the allegorical should be used to find the "second" meaning.
4. Biblical numbers have significance.
5. The OT should be understood as a Christian document since it is about Christ.
6. The interpreter's task is to derive his interpretation from the text, not force his preconceived interpretation into the text.
7. We must consult the analogy of faith (*regula fide*) when we interpret.
8. No Scripture is to be studied out of immediate context or the context of the rest of Scripture.
9. We must not build doctrines on obscure passages.
10. The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for diligent study.

Early Church Hermeneutics			
Functional- Typological	Authoritative	Allegorical	Historical- Grammatical
Clement (<i>fl.</i> ca. 96) Ignatius (ca. 50–ca. 100) Polycarp (69–155) Didache (ca. 100) Justin Martyr (ca. 100–ca. 155)	Irenaeus (ca. 135–ca. 202) Tertullian (ca. 155–ca. 225)	Barnabus (ca. 130) Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215) Origen (185–232) Augustine (354–386)	Chrysostom (347–407) Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428) Theodoret (393–457) Nestorius (d. ca. 451)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before this session, how would you have described your hermeneutic?
2. How important do you think that knowledge of the history of hermeneutics is? Explain.
3. The statement was made in class that while the Scriptures were inspired, this does not necessarily mean that the writers of Scripture used an inspired method of interpretation. Discuss the problems and merits of this way of thinking.
4. Do you think that it is possible that the apostles like Matthew used a valid typological hermeneutic in which they were able to see a “hidden” underlying Christological fulfillment of some text because they were inspired, while you and I cannot use the same hermeneutic today? Explain.

-
5. Why do you think it was and is so common in the early Church for people to say that inspired Scripture has a “second” meaning that goes beyond the literal?

 6. Further discuss the dangers of using the allegorical method of interpretation.

 7. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL HERMENEUTICS

Toward an Evangelical Hermeneutic

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Questions:

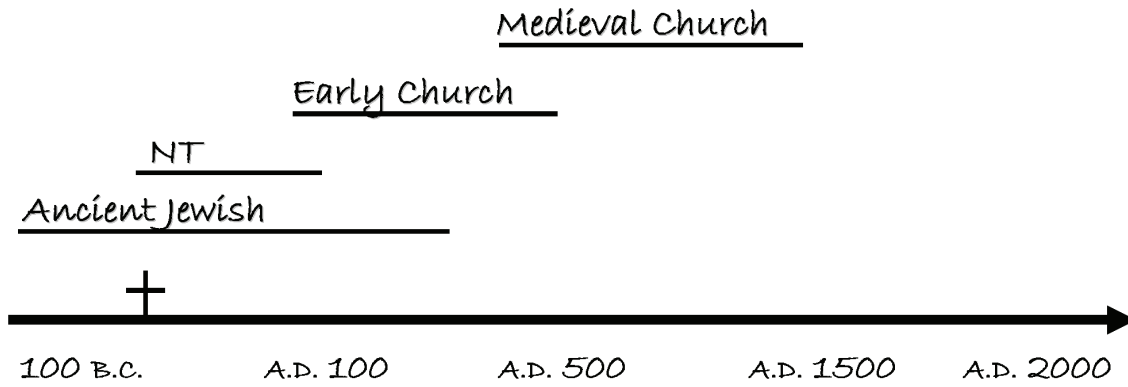
- How did people interpret the Bible during the “Dark Ages”?
- What changed at the Reformation?
- What are the basic principles of historical-grammatical hermeneutics?
- What are common interpretive mistakes that we should avoid?

Outline:

- A. History of Interpretation (cont.)
- B. Principles of Historical-Grammatical Hermeneutics
- C. Hermeneutical Fallacies

A. History of Interpretation (continued)

1. Medieval Church (600–1500)



Summary: This period does not see positive development regarding hermeneutical method. With the rise of the institutional authority of the Church, the medieval period saw a gradual shift from the priority of Scripture to the priority of Tradition.

Jerome's translation of the Scriptures into Latin (Vulgate) was the official Bible used by the Church. The original languages were rarely consulted, if at all.

Glosses, the commentaries of the medieval period, did not struggle with the text itself, but were merely marginal notes in the Scriptures taken from the Church Fathers. In essence, interpretation of the Bible was bound to what the early Church Fathers taught not personal struggles with the text.

During this period, the average lay person was not encouraged to read the Bible at all for fear that heresy would be promoted. Eventually, tradition and the Scripture could only be interpreted by the teaching authority of the institution called the Magisterium.

Council of Toulouse (1229 A.D.)

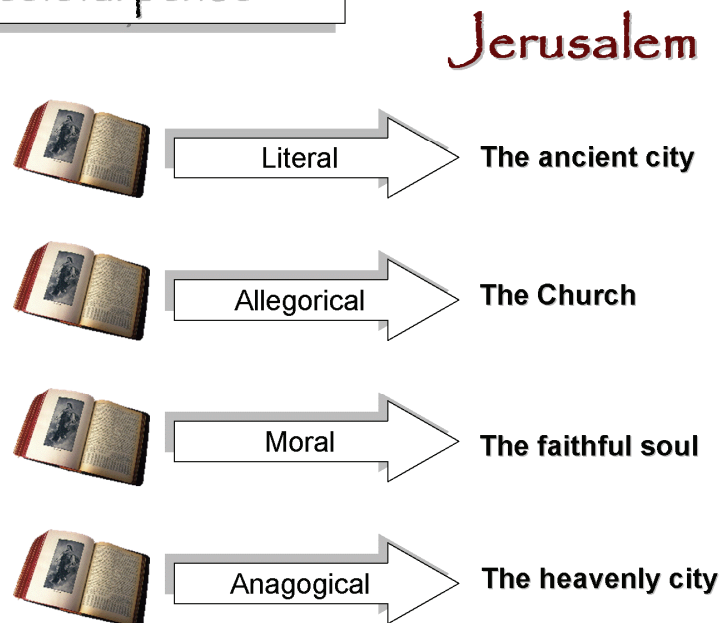
Canon 14. We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; unless anyone from motive of devotion should wish to have the Psalter or the Breviary for divine offices or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books.

"It is evident from experience, that the holy Scriptures, when circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, produced more harm than benefit... eminently dangerous to souls... undermining the very foundations of religion."

—Pope Pius VII (1800–1823)

In the late Middle Ages, Tradition as handed down through apostolic succession began to be promoted not simply as an interpretation/ summary of Scripture (*regula fide*), but as a second avenue of revelation altogether, containing essential information not found in Scripture.

Four-sense hermeneutic of the medieval period



The letter shows us what God and our fathers did.

The allegory shows us where our faith is hid.

The moral meaning gives us rule of daily life.

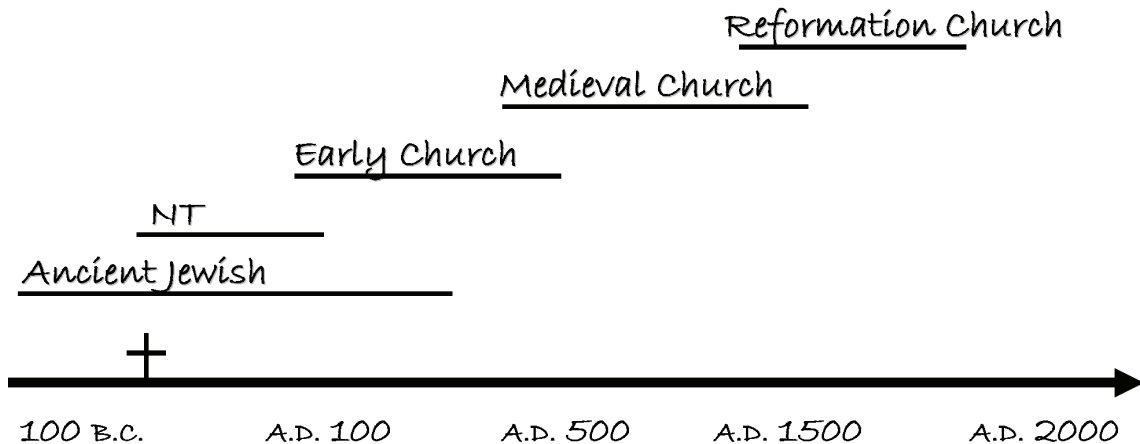
The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, dense ignorance prevailed concerning the content of Scripture: there were some doctors of divinity who had never read the Bible through its entirety.

— Henry A. Virkler

Hermeneutics Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 65

2. Reformation (1500–1800)



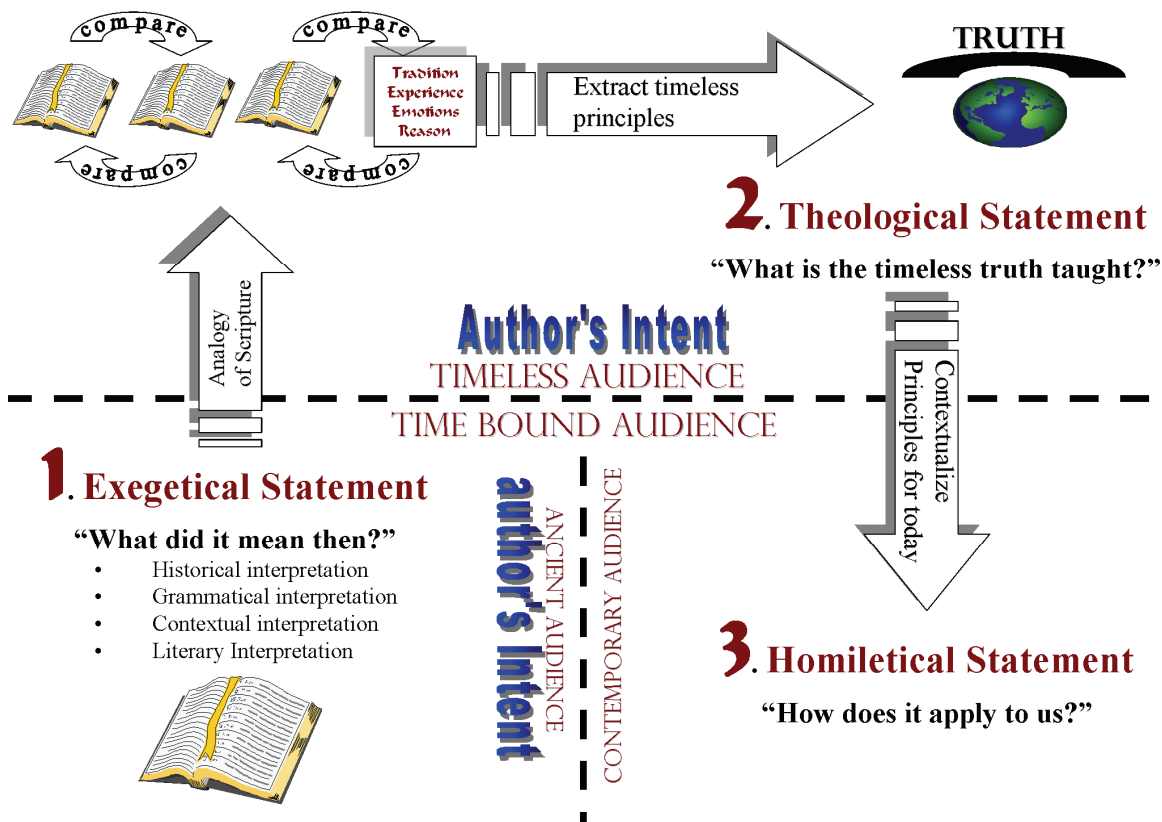
Summary: With the invention of the printing press (1450), history saw a great revival of the intellectual life and literacy among the common man. The church began to return to a study of the original biblical languages. People became less reliant upon the interpretations of the institutionalized Church for their understanding of Scripture.

The subjectivity of the allegorical method and the eventual abuse of the authoritative method caused many people to return to the sources themselves (*ad fontes*—“to the sources”). With this return to the sources came a resurgence of the literal or historical-grammatical method of interpretation. There also came a great realization of the abuses of the institutionalized Church and hence came the Great Reformation.

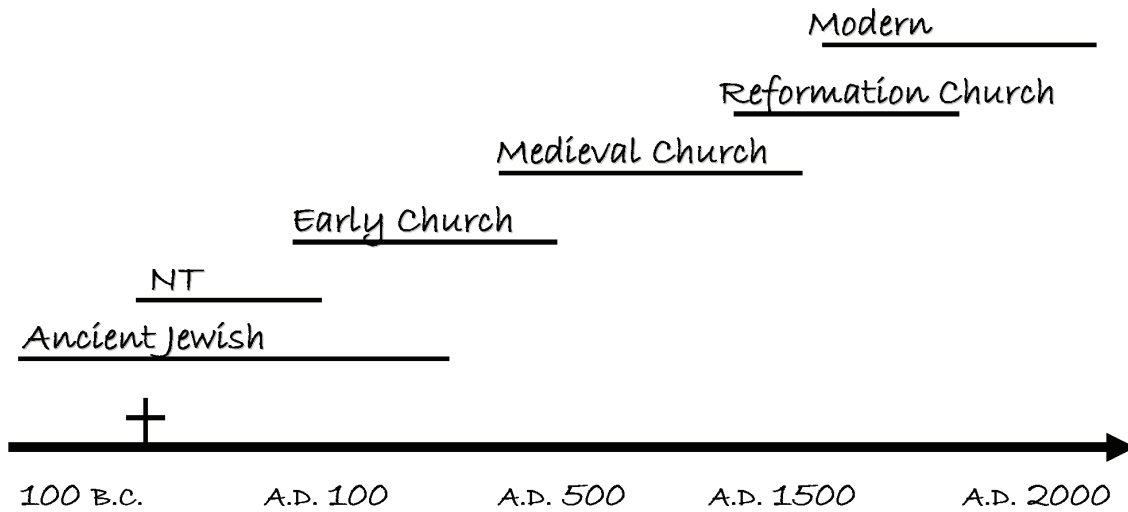
The Reformers believed that the Scriptures must be understood in their original historical, grammatical, and literary context. Martin Luther rejected the allegorical interpretation, calling it “dirt,” “scum,” and “obsolete loose rags.” John Calvin believed that allegory was an invention of Satan meant to obscure the plain and true meaning of Scripture.

The Reformers believed in the perspicuity of Scripture—that the most important doctrines of Scripture were clear enough for any layman to understand. This was in contradistinction to the Roman Catholic belief that the Scriptures have a hidden meaning that can only be found by the institutional Church’s magisterial authority.

“It is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”
 —John Calvin



3. Modern Hermeneutics (1800–present)



Summary: The rise of rationalism caused people to begin placing reason above Scripture. No longer did Scripture interpret reason, but reason interpreted Scripture. Liberalism and the higher critical method challenged the historicity of Scripture—the very foundation of historical-grammatical hermeneutics.

Some retreated to fundamentalism, which downplayed the role of man in Scripture; many joined the liberals, while others sought to find Christ not in the Scriptures themselves, but through a subjective encounter with Him as they read the Scriptures (neo-orthodox). This paved the way for today’s full-blown subjective postmodern hermeneutic where the Scriptures mean whatever you want them to mean (reader-response).

To be sure, many evangelicals have carried on the tradition of the reformers in seeking the literal meaning of the Scriptures, but, sadly, to be evangelical these days does not say as much about one’s hermeneutical method as it should.

Hermeneutical Gleanings from Church History:

- When inspiration is strongly believed, biblical docetism (ignoring or downplaying the human in favor of the divine) often becomes a factor.
- When inspiration is downplayed, exegesis without principles and application becomes standard.

- The only consistently reliable hermeneutic is that which takes the text at face value, looking to the authorial intent in the historical and grammatical context.
- Allegorical interpretation must be rejected, since it is purely subjective, having no hermeneutical guidelines by which to test the interpretation.
- Respect must be given to the rule of faith (*regula fide*).
- The Scriptures are to be interpreted in light of Christ (Christocentric).

Approach	God	Man	God-Man
Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by a search for a second deeper meaning • Interaction with God brings correct interpretation • Purely subjective • Spiritual • Allegorization • Letterism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds no other meaning than the historical • Interaction with the texts brings correct interpretation • Purely objective • Historical • Higher criticism 	Spiritual meaning is found through a study of the original intent of the author, looking to history, grammar, and literature, keeping the writings in their context and letting them speak for themselves.

A. Principles of Biblical Interpretation

- Christians are the only ones who can *truly* understand and submit to text through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 2:14–16

“The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

- Recognize your preunderstandings
 - Theology
 - Religious tradition
 - Culture
 - Family background
 - Class
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Keep the text in its literary context
 - Sinfulness
 - World Events
 - Political beliefs
 - Education
 - Generation
 - Emotional makeup

Book	Genre	Purpose
Genesis	Narrative	Theological history of Israel
Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Narrative and Law/legal	Theological history of Israel
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	Narrative	Theological history of Israel
Psalms	Poetry	Emotional praises to God
Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	Wisdom	Wise living
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	Prophecy	Call Israel to repentance
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts	Narrative	Theological history of Christ
Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude	Epistle	Didactic and pastoral letters written to explain theological teaching for the Church
Revelation	Apocalyptic	Message of hope for the church

- Keep the text in its intentional context (authorial intent)

Jn. 20:30–31

“Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Prov. 1:2–6

To learn wisdom and moral instruction, and to discern wise counsel. To receive moral instruction in skillful living, in righteousness, justice, and equity. To impart shrewdness to the morally naive, and a discerning plan to the young person. (Let the wise also hear and gain instruction, and let the discerning acquire guidance!) To discern the meaning of a proverb and a parable, the sayings of the wise and their riddles.

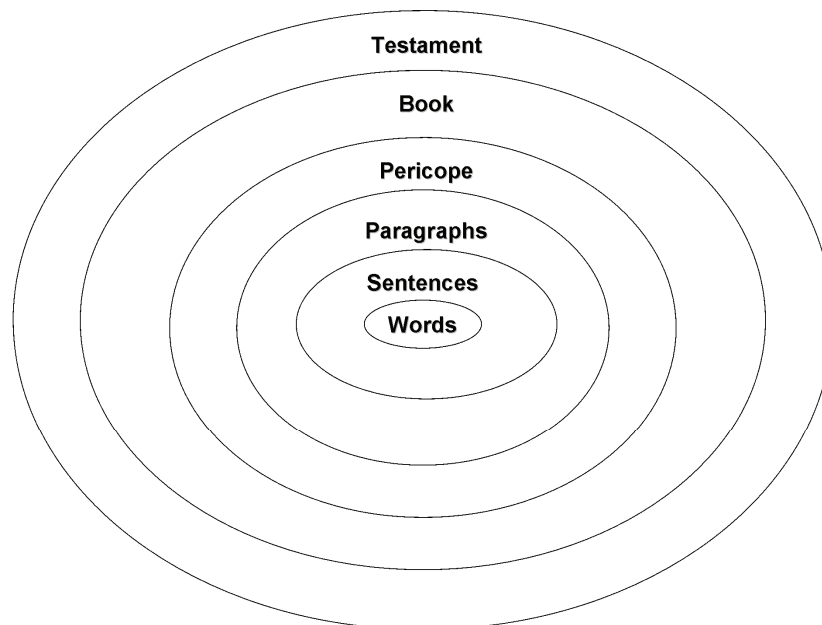
Rom. 1:15–16

“Thus I am eager also to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel . . .”

1 Jn. 5:13

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

- Keep the text in its grammatical context



- Keep the text in its historical context

Historical issues to consider:

1. Author: Who wrote the book?
 2. Date: When was it written?
 3. Audience: Who was it written to?
 4. Circumstances/Purpose(s): What was going on at the time? Why was it written?
- Keep the text in its cultural context

Cultural Issues to Consider

• Political	• Dietary
• Geographical	• Architectural
• Economic	• Clothing
• Legal	• Social
• Agricultural	• Philosophical culture
• Military	• Religious
• Family	• Judaism
	• Christianity

- Keep the text in its stylistic context

John: simple writing style, extreme use of esoteric concepts (light, dark, word, love, hate)

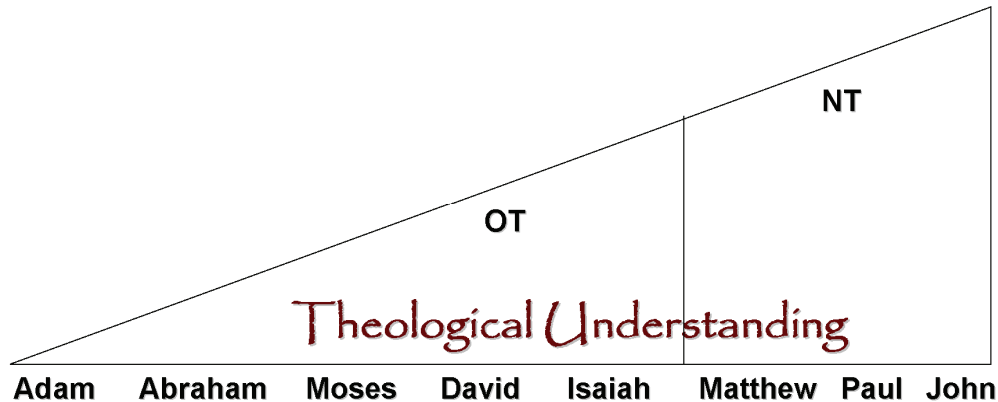
Paul: logical, passionate, and excited writing style

James: pastoral and often sarcastic

David: passionate and emotional

Luke: detailed and historical

- Keep the text in its context of revelation (progressive revelation)



B. List of Common Hermeneutical Fallacies

1. Preunderstanding fallacy: Believing you can interpret with complete objectivity
2. Incidental fallacy: Reading incidental historical texts as prescriptive rather than descriptive

Prescriptive: Information that provides the reader with principles that they are to apply to their lives.

Descriptive: Incidental material that describes the way something was done but is not necessarily meant to encourage the reader in the same action.

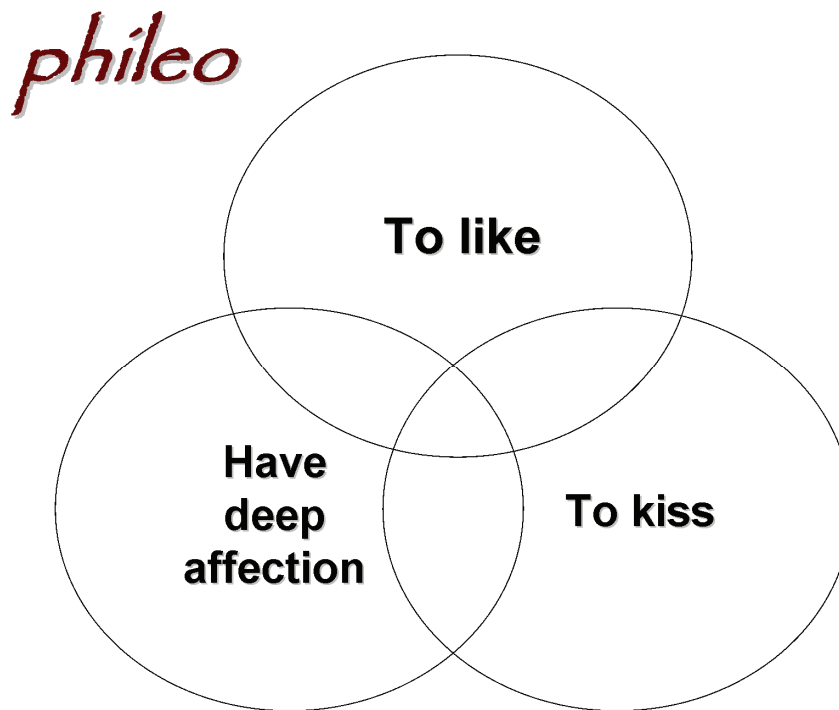
3. Obscurity fallacy: building theology from obscure material
4. Word study fallacies: etymological root fallacy, illegitimate totality transfer, selective use of meaning
5. Etymological root fallacy:

Looking to the root etymology of a word to discover its meaning. The problem with this is that etymology can often be deceiving, such as in the English word “butterfly” taken from “butter” and “fly.” An

etymological study of this word only confuses the current usage. The same can be said of the word “good-bye,” which is taken from the Anglo-Saxon, “God be with you.” When someone says “good-bye,” it does not necessarily (if ever) mean that they are calling a blessing of God’s presence to be with you.

6. Illegitimate totality transfer (ITT):

Bringing the full meaning of a word with all its nuances to the present usage. Take the Greek verb *phileo*. The UBS dictionary of the Greek New Testament lists these possible meanings: have deep feeling for; love; like (to do or be something); kiss. Some interpreters would commit an ITT by using all of the nuances that the word *phileo*, has when, in fact, it usually only carries one meaning that is determined by the context.



7. Selective use of meaning:

This is like the ITT in reverse. Instead of the word carrying all the possible nuances, the interpreter will select which nuance he or she likes best, when, again, the context determines the nuance, not the interpreter.

8. Eisegetical fallacy: reading theology into the text
9. Maverick fallacy: believing that you don't need anyone but the Holy Spirit to interpret the text

Pastor Joe from the pulpit:

“Dear friends, I have a message for you from God’s word. I assure you that I have not consulted any commentaries, lexicons, so-called theologians, or any other outside resource that might be fraught with unfounded traditions. I have relied upon the Holy Spirit alone as I interpreted the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, rest assured, the message that I have for you today is from God alone.”

“The Church throughout the ages, constituted by the Holy Spirit, provides accountability; it offers the arena in which we can formulate our interpretation. Such accountability guards against maverick and individualistic interpretations.”

—Craig Blomberg

Introduction to Biblical Interpretation (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), 86

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Further discuss the merits and dangers of an authoritative approach to Scripture. Give further illustrations of how this method has been abused in Church history.
2. Further discuss how important it was that the reformers returned to the historical-grammatical method of interpretation.
3. The liberal approach to Scripture is to see only the human element within Scripture. How can we avoid becoming too liberal in our interpretation?
4. Discuss some of the preunderstandings that *you* bring to the text that can affect your interpretation.

5. Discuss which hermeneutical fallacy you believe is committed most by the average Christian today.

6. How has this lesson *most* challenged your thinking?

APPENDIX 1: THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

This statement was produced in Chicago in the fall of 1978 by members of the International Congress on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), an interdenominational joint effort by hundreds of evangelical scholars, pastors, and leaders. These sought to defend the integrity of Scripture against the attacks of liberal higher-criticism, the misguided understanding of neo-orthodoxy, and any internal corruption that could undermine the authority of Scripture. Among the nearly 300 evangelicals who signed this statement were James Montgomery Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, Roger Nicole, J.I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and John Wenham.

Before its completion in 1988, ICBI produced three major statements: this one on biblical inerrancy in 1978, one on biblical hermeneutics in 1982, and one on biblical application in 1986.

PREFACE

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's own Word that marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we propose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this Statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help that enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

I. SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of

world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

II. ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.
We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.
We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.
We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.
We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, through not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.
We deny that the finitude or falseness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of metrical, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.
We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved violate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads or relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims of authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We

further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

III. EXPOSITION

Our understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy must be set in the context of the broader teachings of Scripture concerning itself. This exposition gives an account of the outline of doctrine from which our Summary Statement and Articles are drawn.

A. Creation, Revelation and Inspiration

The God, who formed all things by his creative utterances and governs all things by His Word of decree, made mankind in His own image for a life of communion with Himself, on the model of the eternal fellowship of loving communication within the Godhead. As God's image-bearer, man was to hear God's Word addressed to him and to respond in the joy of adoring obedience. Over and above God's self-disclosure in the created order and the sequence of events within it, human beings from Adam on have received verbal messages from Him, either directly, as stated in Scripture, or indirectly in the form of part or all of Scripture itself.

When Adam fell, the Creator did not abandon mankind to final judgment, but promised salvation and began to reveal Himself as Redeemer in a sequence of historical events centering on Abraham's family and culminating in the life, death, resurrection, present heavenly ministry and promised return of Jesus Christ. Within this frame God has from time to time spoken specific words of judgment and mercy, promise and command, to sinful human beings, so drawing them into a covenant relation of mutual commitment between Him and them in which He blesses them with gifts of grace and they bless Him in responsive adoration. Moses, whom God used as mediator to carry his words to His people at the time of the exodus, stands at the head of a long line of prophets in whose mouths and writings God put His words for delivery to Israel. God's purpose in this succession of messages was to maintain His covenant by causing His people to know His name--that is, His nature--and His will both of precept and purpose in the present and for the future. This line of prophetic spokesmen from God came to completion in Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word, who was Himself a prophet--more than a prophet, but not less--and in the apostles and prophets of the first Christian generation. When God's final and climactic message, His word to the world concerning Jesus Christ, had been spoken and elucidated by those in the apostolic circle, the sequence of revealed messages

ceased. Henceforth the Church was to live and know God by what He had already said, and said for all time.

At Sinai God wrote the terms of His covenant on tablets of stone as His enduring witness and for lasting accessibility, and throughout the period of prophetic and apostolic revelation He prompted men to write the messages given to and through them, along with celebratory records of His dealings with His people, plus moral reflections on covenant life and forms of praise and prayer for covenant mercy. The theological reality of inspiration in the producing of Biblical documents corresponds to that of spoken prophecies: Although the human writers' personalities were expressed in what they wrote, the words were divinely constituted. Thus what Scripture says, God says; its authority is His authority, for He is its ultimate Author, having given it through the minds and words of chosen and prepared men who in freedom and faithfulness "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (I Pet 1:21). Holy Scripture must be acknowledged as the Word of God by virtue of its divine origin.

B. Authority: Christ and the Bible

Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the Word made flesh, our Prophet, Priest and King, is the ultimate Mediator of God's communication to man, as He is of all God's gifts of grace. The revelation He gave was more than verbal; He revealed the Father by His presence and His deeds as well. Yet His words were crucially important; for He was God, He spoke from the Father, and His words will judge all men at the last day.

As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ is the central theme of Scripture. The Old Testament looked ahead to Him; the New Testament looks back to His first coming and on to His second. Canonical Scripture is the divinely inspired and therefore normative witness to Christ. No hermeneutic, therefore, of which the historical Christ is not the focal point is acceptable. Holy Scripture must be treated as what it essentially is--the witness of the Father to the incarnate Son.

It appears that the Old Testament canon had been fixed by the time of Jesus. The New Testament canon is likewise now closed, inasmuch as no new apostolic witness to the historical Christ can now be borne. No new revelation (as distinct from Spirit-given understanding of existing revelation) will be given until Christ comes again. The canon was created in principle by divine inspiration. The Church's part was to discern the canon that God had created, not to devise one of its own.

The word 'canon', signifying a rule of standard, is a pointer to authority, which means the right to rule and control. Authority in Christianity belongs to God in His

revelation, which means, on the one hand, Jesus Christ, the living Word, and, on the other hand, Holy Scripture, the written Word. But the authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one. As our Prophet, Christ testified that Scripture cannot be broken. As our Priest and King, He devoted His earthly life to fulfilling the law and the prophets, even dying in obedience to the words of messianic prophecy. Thus as He saw Scripture attesting Him and His authority, so by His own submission to Scripture He attested its authority. As He bowed to His Father's instruction given in His Bible (our Old Testament), so He requires His disciples to do--not, however, in isolation but in conjunction with the apostolic witness to Himself that He undertook to inspire by his gift of the Holy Spirit. So Christians show themselves faithful servants of their Lord by bowing to the divine instruction given in the prophetic and apostolic writings that together make up our Bible.

By authenticating each other's authority, Christ and Scripture coalesce into a single fount of authority. The Biblically-interpreted Christ and the Christ-centered, Christ-proclaiming Bible are from this standpoint one. As from the fact of inspiration we infer that what Scripture says, God says, so from the revealed relation between Jesus Christ and Scripture we may equally declare that what Scripture says, Christ says.

C. Infallibility, Inerrancy, Interpretation

Holy Scripture, as the inspired Word of God witnessing authoritatively to Jesus Christ, may properly be called 'infallible' and 'inerrant'. These negative terms have a special value, for they explicitly safeguard crucial positive truths.

'Infallible' signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe and reliable rule and guide in all matters.

Similarly, 'inerrant' signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

We affirm that canonical Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage, we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of his penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise.

So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth. Differences between literary conventions in Bible times and in ours must also

be observed: Since, for instance, nonchronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days; we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed.

The truthfulness of Scripture is not negated by the appearance in it of irregularities of grammar or spelling, phenomenal descriptions of nature, reports of false statements (for example, the lies of Satan), or seeming discrepancies between one passage and another. It is not right to set the so-called "phenomena" of Scripture against the teaching of Scripture about itself. Apparent inconsistencies should not be ignored. Solution of them, where this can be convincingly achieved, will encourage our faith, and where for the present no convincing solution is at hand we shall significantly honor God by trusting His assurance that His Word is true, despite these appearances, and by maintaining our confidence that one day they will be seen to have been illusions.

Inasmuch as all Scripture is the product of a single divine mind, interpretation must stay within the bounds of the analogy of Scripture and eschew hypotheses that would correct one Biblical passage by another, whether in the name of progressive revelation or of the imperfect enlightenment of the inspired writer's mind. Although Holy Scripture is nowhere culture-bound in the sense that its teaching lacks universal validity, it is sometimes culturally conditioned by the customs and conventional views of a particular period, so that the application of its principles today calls for a different sort of action.

D. Skepticism and Criticism

Since the Renaissance, and more particularly since the Enlightenment, world views have been developed that involve skepticism about basic Christian tenets. Such are the agnosticism that denies that God is knowable, the rationalism that denies that He is incomprehensible, the idealism that denies that He is transcendent, and the existentialism that denies rationality in His relationships with us. When these un- and anti-Biblical principles seep into men's theologies at presuppositional level, as today they frequently do, faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture becomes impossible.

E. Transmission and Translation

Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appears to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free.

Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the autograph. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

F. Inerrancy and Authority

In our affirmation of the authority of Scripture as involving its total truth, we are consciously standing with Christ and His apostles, indeed with the whole Bible and with the main stream of Church history from the first days until very recently. We are concerned at that casual, inadvertent and seemingly thoughtless way in which a belief of such far-reaching importance has been given up by so many in our day. We are conscious too that great and grave confusion results from ceasing to maintain the total truth of the Bible whose authority one professes to acknowledge. The result of taking this step is that the Bible that God gave loses its authority, and what has authority instead is a Bible reduced in content according to the demands of one's critical reasoning and in principle reducible still further once one has started. This means that at bottom independent reason now has authority, as opposed to Scriptural teaching. If this is not seen and if for the time being basic evangelical doctrines are still held, persons denying the full truth of Scripture may claim an evangelical identity while methodologically they have moved away from the evangelical principle of knowledge to an unstable subjectivism, and will find it hard not to move further. We affirm that what Scripture says, God says. May He be glorified. Amen and Amen.

APPENDIX 2: THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

WE AFFIRM that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

WE DENY the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

Article II

WE AFFIRM that as Christ is God and Man in one Person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language.

WE DENY that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.

Article III

WE AFFIRM that the person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible.

WE DENY that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

Article IV

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message.

WE DENY that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to any one anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Article V

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

WE DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

Article VI

WE AFFIRM that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.

WE DENY that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

Article VII

WE AFFIRM that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite, and fixed.

WE DENY that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

Article VIII

WE AFFIRM that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations.

WE DENY that the distinction between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. We further deny that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.

Article IX

WE AFFIRM that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives.

WE DENY that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

Article X

WE AFFIRM that Scripture communicates God's truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms.

WE DENY that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God's message.

Article XI

WE AFFIRM that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries.

WE DENY that the meaning of biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

Article XII

WE AFFIRM that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents that are faithful to the content of biblical teaching should be employed.

WE DENY the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or distort biblical meaning in the process.

Article XIII

WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

Article XIV

WE AFFIRM that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact.

WE DENY that any such event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

Article XV

WE AFFIRM the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

WE DENY the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

Article XVI

WE AFFIRM that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning.

WE DENY the legitimacy of allowing any method of biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer's expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

Article XVII

WE AFFIRM the unity, harmony, and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter.

WE DENY that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

Article XVIII

WE AFFIRM that the Bible's own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words.

WE DENY that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.

Article XIX

WE AFFIRM that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

WE DENY that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

Article XX

WE AFFIRM that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history, or anything else. We further affirm that in some cases extrabiblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations.

WE DENY that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.

Article XXI

WE AFFIRM the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of biblical teaching with the facts of nature.

WE DENY that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.

Article XXII

WE AFFIRM that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.

WE DENY that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

Article XXIII

WE AFFIRM the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin.

WE DENY that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.

Article XXIV

WE AFFIRM that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of biblical scholars.

WE DENY that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by biblical scholars.

Article XXV

WE AFFIRM that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.

WE DENY that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.

KEY TERMS FOR BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS (1)

1. **Regula Fidei:** This is a Greek phrase used often in the early Church to refer to the summation of the Christian faith. The regula fidei was seen as the faith which was held “always, everywhere, and by all.” It was seen as being inherited and passed on, not in through an avenue of inspired or infallible information distinct from that of Scripture, but as representative of the essential doctrinal and moral elements of the faith contained in Scripture.
2. **Sola Ecclesia view of Authority:** Belief that Tradition, as represented by the Magisterial authority of the Roman Catholic Church, is infallible and equal to Scripture as a basis for doctrine; it is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice since it must define and interpret Scripture.
3. **Prima Scriptura view of Authority:** Belief that the Body of Christ has two separate sources of authority for faith and practice: 1) the Scriptures and 2) Tradition. Scripture is the primary source for authority, but by itself it is insufficient for all matters of faith and practice. Tradition also contains essential elements needed for the productive Christian life.
4. **Sola Scriptura view of Authority:** Belief that Scripture is the final and only infallible authority for the Christian in all matters of faith and practice.
5. **Solo Scriptura view of Authority:** Belief that Scripture is the sole basis and authority in the life of the Christian. Tradition is useless and misleading, and creeds and confessions are the result of man-made traditions.
6. **Textual Criticism:** Science of reconstructing the original text of the Scriptures based upon the available manuscript evidence.
7. **Septuagint (LXX):** Greek translation of the Old Testament translated around 300–150 B.C.
8. **Dead Sea Scrolls:** Ancient scrolls found in 1948 that contained copies or portions of every book in the Old Testament except Esther. There is a full copy of Isaiah dating back to 135–200 B.C.
9. **Masorites:** Group of scribes who carried on the meticulous transmission process of the standardized text from 500 A.D. to 1100 A.D.
10. **John Ryland Papyri (p⁵²):** The oldest discovered extant fragment of the New Testament dated c.125.
11. **Codex Sinaiticus:** A fourth-century Alexandrian codex that contains the entire New Testament and most of the Old Testament.
12. **Canon:** Lit. “rule” or “measuring rod.” Refers to the accepted books of the Old and New Testaments.
13. **Apocrypha/deuterocanonical books:** This describes the group of writings, mostly written in Greek during the intertestamental period (400–100 B.C.), that are accepted by Roman Catholics and some Eastern Orthodox as Scripture, but rejected by Jews and Evangelical Protestants.
14. **Protocanonical:** Lit. “first canon.” In contrast to the deuterocanonical books, refers to the books of the Old Testament that have always been accepted by all as Scripture.
15. **Pseudepigrapha:** Refers to rejected books that are falsely attributed to another author (e.g. The Apocalypse of Peter).

KEY TERMS FOR BIBLIOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS (2)

1. **Revelation:** The act whereby God reveals truth to mankind through both special revelation (Scripture, prophets, etc.) and natural revelation (nature, conscience, etc.)
2. **Inspiration:** The act whereby God guided the writers of Scripture, giving them His words while fully utilizing the human element within man to produce the Scriptures.
3. **Natural View of Inspiration:** Belief that certain people were extremely gifted through their natural God-given abilities to write Scripture (100% Man).
4. **Partial View of Inspiration:** Belief that some of Scripture is inspired, namely, that which is profitable for doctrine, matters of “faith and practice,” but not all is inspired. Matters of history and science are not included because they are irrelevant to God’s purpose (50% Man, 50% God).
5. **Mechanical Dictation View of Inspiration:** Belief that God simply used the hand of man to *passively* write His words. (100% God)
6. **Verbal Plenary View of Inspiration:** View that all Scripture is inspired by God who utilized the human element within man to accomplish this without error. (100% Man, 100% God)
7. **Biblical Docetism:** A method of approaching the Scripture that completely neglects the human element in Scripture, emphasizing only the divine element.
8. **Inerrancy:** The doctrinal teaching that the Scriptures *in the autographa* (original manuscripts) are true in all that they teach, and thus without error.
9. **Infallibility:** The doctrinal teaching sometimes used synonymously with inerrancy, that the Scriptures cannot fail in matters of faith and practice.
10. ***Ipsissima Verba*:** Lit. “the very words.” This expresses the assumption that the authors of Scripture always recorded the exact words of those who spoke, without paraphrasing.
11. ***Ipsissima Vox*:** Lit. “the very voice.” This expresses the understanding that the writers of Scripture would often give summaries or paraphrase the words of those who spoke, not necessarily the exact words.
12. **Interpretation:** The process by which the Scriptures are understood by the reader.
13. **Hermeneutics:** The theory, method, or rules of biblical interpretation.
14. **Exegesis:** The process of discovering the original meaning of the biblical text, “bringing it out” (exegeting) by studying the text according to the authorial intent in its historical and grammatical contexts.
15. **Letterism:** Interpretation that ignores context, historical and cultural setting, and even grammatical structure, taking each word, letter, and number as an isolated truth.
16. **Peshet:** A form of interpretation, popular among the Dead Sea community, in which the text had immediate eschatological significance that could only be understood through divine revelation.
17. **Allegorical:** Interpretation of Scripture, practiced primarily among the Hellenistic Jews, in which the primary goal of interpretation is to find the underlying hidden meaning of the text found in characters, places, events, numbers and other details that would not otherwise be found.

18. **Typological:** Interpretation that sees events in history as a foreshadowing or a “type” of things present or to come.
19. **Alexandrian School of Interpretation:** Heavily influenced by the Hellenistic culture, this school of interpretation placed an emphasis on the allegorical meaning of Scripture.
20. **Antiochene School of Interpretation:** School of interpretation that placed emphasis on the historical-grammatical (literal) interpretation, believing that it was the only meaning of the text. The spiritual applications found direct correspondence in the literal.
21. **Historical-Grammatical Hermeneutics:** Also referred to as “literalism,” literal, historical-critical, or historical-literary hermeneutics. The theory of hermeneutics which seeks to interpret the Scriptures by studying the text in its original historical-grammatical context in order to discover what the author’s original intent was so that timeless principles can be discovered and applied to a contemporary setting.