

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**AN INTRODUCTION TO HOLY SCRIPTURE**

**Methodology:** The objective for this introduction is to familiarize the student with the sources, content, and use of Scripture; to familiarize the student with how the Bible evolved, how its canon was determined, what issues are presented by textual variants and variations in translations, and how a daily study of Scripture can enrich all in spiritual growth. This is not a course about the Bible, but in the Bible. The objective in this course will only be fulfilled if the student can grow in a real familiarity with the content of Scripture, and grow in faith through this witness. Discussion will focus more on the framework of the Bible than on the discussion of individual texts.

1. Bring a Bible and notebook to each class.
2. The standard Bible used in this course will be the New Revised Standard Version. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV)* and *The Catholic Study Bible (NAB)* each contain particularly useful text introductions, annotations, and critical discussion.

In the study of Scripture we do well to remember that God's word must be both understood and lived. Scripture must be interpreted in faith, with the message of Scripture being put into action. What the word "means" is *what the word does*.

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**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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**The Shape of the Canon**

- 1) The word "canon" comes from the Greek word for reed. A papyrus reed was used as a standard measure of length in Alexandria, Egypt (a Greek city).
  - a) The word is used in the Church to signify a measure or standard.
    - i) A writing is canonical in that it has been deemed to meet the measure of inspiration.
  - b) The criteria by which the Church selected works as canonical include:
    - i) *Apostolicity*: Can the work be identified with a specific apostle (New Testament) or prophet or oral tradition (Old Testament)?
    - ii) *Use in public liturgy*: Has the work been used in public prayer or instruction?
    - iii) *Catholicity*: Has the work been used in the Church in all or almost all lands? For example, the First Letter of Clement (A.D. 96) meets all other criteria, but was not known or used outside of Rome and Greece. It was therefore not included in the canon (of the New Testament).
    - iv) *Age*: Is there an unbroken tradition of the knowledge of and use of the work?
    - v) *Inspired character*: Is the content of the work consistent with the history of salvation set out in the rest of the canon?

- 2) *Problems in formation of the canon:*
  - a) The ancient Christian canon relied on the *Septuagint* (LXX), a Greek version of the Old Testament.
    - i) The LXX contains some text variations (psalms, for example, are numbered differently).
    - ii) The LXX contains all the books which are considered part of the Apocrypha in Post-Reformation Bibles.
    - iii) The Roman and Orthodox Churches follow the LXX text tradition.
  - b) The canon in the West now generally follows the Masoretic Text (MT).
    - i) The MT has all the Old Testament in Hebrew.
      - (1) The MT includes vowel pointings in Hebrew.
        - (a) These vowel pointings did not exist in ancient Hebrew (“Proto-Hebrew”).
        - (b) The MT was not completed until the ninth century after Christ.
        - (c) The Masoretes (an hereditary clan) thus developed a different text (with some different vowel interpolations) from that of the LXX.
          - (i) In modern practice the differences are not material, but be aware of the text tradition in use!
    - c) The Hebrew manuscripts do not include chapter and verse organization. Organizing the Bible by chapters and verses did not arise until the Renaissance.
    - d) Reformation changes: The Protestant Reformers relegated most of what is now the Apocrypha to a secondary status (useful for teaching, but not establishing doctrine).
- 3) The Old Testament is divided traditionally (including by Jesus) into:
  - a) The *Law* (sometimes referred to as the *Pentateuch* or “The Five Books of Moses”).
  - b) The *Prophets* (usually further divided into the “Former Prophets” and the “Latter Prophets”).
  - c) The *Writings*, e.g., the Psalms and “Wisdom Literature;” certain histories.
- 4) The Law consists of: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy:
  - a) Genesis: The name derives from the Greek word for “origin”.
  - b) Exodus: Also from the Greek, here referencing the history of the Hebrews leaving Egypt.
  - c) Leviticus: the “priestly book”. The name is derived from the name of the priestly caste, the “Levites”. The book sets forth many rules of priestly practice.
  - d) Numbers: The name derives from the story of the census of the tribes of Israel (Num. 1 and 26).
  - e) Deuteronomy: From the Greek word for “second law”. The book recapitulates much of the law set forth in Exodus and Leviticus.
- 5) The Pentateuch is thought to have been written and re-written over centuries, tracing back to a tradition starting (probably orally) with Moses.
  - a) Under the “Documentary Hypothesis” (also called “JEDP Theory”) four authorship/redaction strands are identified by scholars.
    - i) These are scholarly *theories*, not proven fact.
  - b) The four traditions identified are:
    - i) The *Jahwist* (“J” is the German “Y”), from the proper Name of the LORD. Ninth century, B.C., writing in the southern kingdom (Judah).

- (1) God is referred to by His proper Name.
- (2) J uses anthropomorphic terminology with reference to God (*e.g.*, God walks and talks in the Garden of Eden).
- (3) J emphasizes storytelling.
- (4) The J source is the earliest and most comprehensive source in the Law.
- ii) The *Elohists*, from the Hebrew word for God (*elohim*) used in this tradition. The word has a plural form but takes a usage in the singular by context and verb form.
  - (1) Written in the northern kingdom, Israel, after the fall of Solomon's kingdom (eighth century, B.C.) to respond to the need for an official account of Jewish origins.
    - (a) Less vivid storyteller; fewer anthropomorphisms.
- iii) The *Deuteronomistic Historian*, from evidence of a thorough editing and reordering of the first five books undertaken in the seventh century B.C.
  - (1) Reflects northern and southern traditions, but written, probably, in the south (Judah) after flight from the north.
  - (2) Limited vocabulary, very repetitious.
- iv) The *Priestly* source, from evidence of a concern with cult practices.
  - (1) Probably reflecting the sixth century B.C. need of a community in exile (in Babylon), and thus stressing obedience to the Law.
  - (2) Not a good storyteller.
  - (3) God is in heaven, not involved intimately in human affairs.
- c) The Pentateuch can be divided into two strands of *Law* and *Narrative* (discussed *infra*.)

### **The Ten Central Themes of the Five Books of Moses<sup>1</sup>**

The Pentateuch represents not only a collection of narratives and law, but reflects a worldview which differs greatly from our own. It is useful, therefore, to identify the themes which are returned to again and again in this earliest collection of Scripture. The following are salient:

- 1) *Creation Establishes a Good World*: When Genesis 1 affirms that God created all things by speaking a word, it means that all is ordered by the divine plan and works together in harmony. After Creation was completed, God looked upon it and “found it very good” (Gen. 1.31). Thus, no matter the evil and failure that follow in world history, we are to recall that goodness will prevail.
- 2) *God has Blessed Human Life*: An important corollary of a good world is divine blessing upon it. Twice we are told in Genesis that God blessed the human race (Gen. 1.28; 9.1). Later, the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12.2) is highlighted, as are those of Sarah and Isaac (Gen. 17.16), Jacob (Gen. 27.27-29), of the whole people by Aaron (Num. 6.24-26), of the nation by Balaam (Num. 23.20), and, as the finale of the Pentateuch, of each tribe by Moses (Deut. 33.1-29).
- 3) *Humanity has a Tendency to Sin*: Much of the biblical narrative centers on the disobedience and sinfulness of God's creatures who refuse to heed or obey the divine will. In turn, many

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from L. Boadt, “The Pentateuch,” in *The Catholic Study Bible*, D. Senior, *et al.*, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), RG 36–55.

of the laws center on atonement (particularly in Leviticus), and on the need for repentance and turning back to God (in Deuteronomy in particular).

- 4) *God Delivers from all Evil:* If humanity tends toward rebellion, God is focused on forgiveness and mercy. God spares Adam and Eve, Cain and Noah, and others in order to give the human race a new start each time after it sins. God is revealed above all else as a liberating God in the Exodus. This becomes the heart of Israel's praise for God in the Passover celebration.
- 5) *God Fulfills His Promises:* The Pentateuch stresses again and again the fulfillment of the promise made to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses that God will make them into a great people. The LORD has no characteristics of an ancient "god" patterned on the recurrent cycles of nature, but always the God of the future who calls forth in Israel a trusting hope that must expect new and greater divine acts still to come.
- 6) *The Covenant Binds God to Israel:* All peoples believe their gods relate to the world somehow, but only between Israel and the LORD do we find a union based on love and loyalty pledged to each other in permanent union that actually respects the role of the human partner. The covenant is the heart of biblical faith because it expresses a unique bond between God and people, built on past deeds but committed to future collaboration.
- 7) *The Law Expresses Israel's Bond to God:* The covenant establishes a relationship, but the laws of the Pentateuch show how that relationship is to be lived out by the people. The Law is not a set of restrictive rules, but a dynamic way of life that expresses faithfulness to God in actions as well as words, always with a flavor of joy (in worship and praise).
- 8) *Worship = Praise = Thanks:* To pray is to praise, and to praise is to thank God. The Pentateuch constantly points out what God has done for Israel, and the laws point to a spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving on Israel's part in giving back to God a part of the gift to them: namely, praising the divine goodness in all things. (This theme is later reflected very prominently in the psalms.)
- 9) *Religious Life is Life in Community:* Israel is a people, not a collection of individuals. Discovery of the divine will and proper praise can only be given by human voices joined together. God's many revelations can be appreciated only when memories are shared and mutual goodness is shown in action to one another.
- 10) *God Directs all History:* The natural conclusion to be drawn from the attributes of God described above is that all things fall under divine providence. The central faith of Israel that there is one, and only one, God leads to the recognition of the divine lordship over all peoples and all events. God both blesses and punishes, sets obstacles as well as shows the way to pass through them. All things are in the hands of God, and so no course of action may be contemplated except to walk in the ways of the LORD.

## Meet the Prophets

Both Jewish and Christian traditions divide the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. We have looked already at the Law, and now shift to the Prophets, bearing in mind that this tripartite division includes with the prophetic literature the history narratives (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings). For purposes of our discussion, we will treat the historical narratives as reflecting the central themes of the Law discussed *supra*.

The Prophets proper then may be divided into the “Major Prophets” and the “Minor Prophets” (*see the listing at the end of this section*). This ignores that prophetic figures appear elsewhere (*e.g.*, Samuel and Daniel), but as a corpus the Major and Minor Prophets include all of the themes of prophetic literature.

- 1) *Terminology*: “Prophet” can represent the Hebrew titles of *hōzeh* (“seer”), *rō’eh* (“diviner”), *ēsh ha’elohim* (“man of God”) or *nabí* (“prophet”).
  - a) The titles are not really interchangeable. Where Amos or Daniel might be described as a seer (one who sees and reports visions), and Samuel as a diviner (one who interprets signs), the “prophet” and “man of God” is more the individual who speaks for God, a holy man who may personify the deity as the one who bears the burdens of the people (*e.g.*, Isaiah).
- 2) *Timing*: With the signal exception of Moses, prophets do not appear early in Israel. Prophetic roles and character are at times assumed (*e.g.*, by Abraham at Gen. 20.7; by Miriam at Exod. 15.20; and by Deborah at Judg. 4.4), but these are not the dominant roles of these figures.
  - a) Prophets *per se* do not really appear prior to the formation of the full Israelite state, about 1000 B.C., under David.
    - i) Moreover, within about 75 years of the destruction of Judah as an independent state, the prophets disappear.
  - b) The timing of classical prophecy relates very much to the existence of the monarchic state of Israel, a time when the king spoke and acted for Israel, for good or for ill.
- 3) *Literary Form*: Prophetic testimony contains common literary elements, including:
  - a) Symbolic action reports: A description of prophetic behavior that is designed to convey a message (*e.g.*, Isa. 20.1-6: Isaiah walks naked for three years “as a sign and portent against Egypt and Ethiopia”).
    - i) Action rather than work or speech provides the key element.
  - b) Commissioning reports: Sometimes referred to as “call narratives.” Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1.4-10 are the most famous examples.
  - c) Vision reports: The prophet experiences that which is happening or is about to happen. For example, four such reports appear in Ezekiel (in chs. 1, 8, 37 & 40).
  - d) Legend: The actions of Elijah and Elisha in 1 & 2 Kings are narrative stories, but stories with a didactic point, that in the re-telling have become legends of the people.
  - e) Historiography: The re-telling of actual historical events, such as when Isaiah (in chs. 36-39) tells of the attack on Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Such stories attest to the role of the prophet in national affairs.
  - f) Biography: The life of the prophet may be related in detail, as in Jeremiah.

- g) Divinatory chronicle: The prophet may function as a diviner (as in Ezekiel), or may respond to specific questions for God (Zech. 7-8).
- h) Poetic speech: Structured speech is the predominant form of prophetic speech. Often the prophets speak in the form of indictment and judgment, *e.g.* in the language of a divine court.
- 4) *Religious and Ethical Issues*: Three themes are prominent in prophetic literature:
- a) Covenant and Imperium: The prophets often remind the people of what they have already agreed to in the covenant with the LORD. For example, much of the language in Hosea 4 echoes the Ten Commandments.
- i) When the prophets speak in terms of indictment and judgment, they speak for God, and thus recite a lawsuit under the terms of the covenant (*see* Mic. 6.1-8), and may in fact utter curses (*e.g.*, Isa. 34.11-17, which echoes Deut. 28).
- (1) The prophets often also speak to other nations (Isa. 13.1-23.18; Jer. 46.1-51.58; Ezek. 25.1-32.32), although Jeremiah is the only one referred to as “a prophet to the nations”. When the prophets speak to the nations, they set forth God’s plan for Israel, and by extension for the world.
- b) Ethical norms: Much of the critique spoken by the prophets relates to ethical norms. Amos (1-2) indicts the nations for behavior that all humans would ordinarily find heinous. Isaiah (14) speaks of behavior against Israel’s God which is prideful.
- i) When the prophets speak of Israel *per se* they speak of ethical behavior in the sense of obeying the Law. The principle of righteousness involves beneficence.
- c) Hope: Despite the propensity of prophetic literature to identify the many ways in which humans have fallen short of both universal and Israelite ethical and religious norms—along with the ensuing results—the prophets most often strike a hopeful note. In other words, the prophets focus much on the destruction and restoration of Israel (and Judah), but with an emphasis on the latter, on restoration into a state as intended by the LORD.
- 5) *Who are the prophets?*
- a) The Former Prophets: Samuel, Elijah, Elisha.
- b) The Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
- c) The Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

### **The Theology of “the Writings”: Narrative, Wisdom Literature, and Apocalyptic**

The third type of literature found in the Old Testament consists of the “Writings.” This broad classification includes those books of narrative history often referred to as the “Former Prophets” (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings), and the broad genre of “Wisdom Literature.” Wisdom literature includes both books such as Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, together with many writings that are parts of the Apocrypha in Protestant bibles, together with Daniel, which—while part of the Writings—is *sui generis* as an example of a type of writing known as “Apocalyptic”.

The traditional tripartite division of the Old Testament ignores the very different characters and purposes of writings in the Wisdom Literature tradition and those which are narratives (*e.g.*, 1 & 2 Chronicles). For purposes of this introduction, therefore, we will consider narrative

literature together with the Former Prophets, for there are perhaps greater parallels within this grouping than within the broader classification of the Writings.

- 1) *The Former Prophets and Narrative Literature*: Books included as Former Prophets include: Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings. In Catholic bibles following the Septuagint text tradition, 1 & 2 Samuel are known as “1 & 2 Kings,” and 1 & 2 Kings are known as “3 & 4 Kings”. Books included as narrative literature include: 1 & Chronicles, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah.
  - a) The Former Prophets: The concept of one people in covenant with and under the rule of the LORD predominates.
    - i) Thus, in Joshua the people enter the promised land under one strong leader. Joshua (the book) ends with the death of this leader (Joshua), and Judges then begins “after the death of Joshua.”
      - (1) The time frame for this transition is not specified, but Judges refers to the people not as “Israel,” but as “the children of Israel.”
      - (2) Judges is told in a disjointed fashion, reflecting the fact that the people are fractured into competing tribes.
      - (3) There is no one leader, and this absence of a unifying leader is portrayed as an evil, leading to great iniquities among the people.
    - ii) In 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings we witness the rise of the unified Jewish monarchy. Despite struggles and personal failings in monarchs, the Jewish golden age arises under David and Solomon, with the building of the Temple.
      - (1) The LORD is truly in His people’s midst, and the people are united in the worship of the LORD, all under one king.
        - (a) The wickedness and failings of individual monarchs are portrayed as failure to serve the LORD.
        - (2) A common theme is the need to rely wholly on the LORD for protection.
          - (a) In addition to Samuel, Elijah and Elisha are prominent as prophets who say little but do much.
            - (i) Their actions portray the message of the greatness of the LORD, and His paramount position above all other gods.
    - b) Narrative Literature: Common to both the historical books of the Former Prophets and to the later narrative literature, the object of biblical witness is not to record history *per se*, but to bear testimony to the working out of the prophetic word in the life of the nation. This same is true of those books (*e.g.*, Esther and Ruth) which are not so much history as moral stories. The word of God is lived rather than spoken.
    - c) Daniel: Daniel must be considered within the context in which it was written and received among Jews of the post-Maccabean period (2<sup>nd</sup> century, B.C., *i.e.*, more than three centuries after the events related in the book).
      - i) Daniel is written in two different languages: Hebrew and Aramaic.
      - ii) Daniel can be seen to be comprised of “court stories” (chs. 1-6) and apocalyptic visions (chs. 7-12).
      - iii) Daniel does not address his hearers as would a prophet, but interprets dreams and visions.

- iv) The genre of apocalyptic literature (visions of the end of the world) dominate in times of persecution (*e.g.*, after the revolt of the Maccabees): that God will vindicate the righteous.
- 2) *Wisdom Literature*: This is a broad genre reflecting a style of writing common in the ancient Near East.
- a) Books included as Wisdom Literature include many books placed in the Apocrypha in Protestant bibles, and includes both books written in Hebrew and in Greek (*e.g.*, Sirach, or the Wisdom of Solomon [sometimes called “Baruch”], and Wisdom).
    - i) The best-known books in this tradition include Psalms and Proverbs, together with Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon (the “Song of Songs”).
    - ii) The remainder of the Wisdom books are all in the Apocrypha in Protestant bibles, and range from Tobit (a sort of sapiential short story concerned with the morality of everyday living) to tales of heroism told to make a moral point (*e.g.*, Susanna).
  - b) Thematic content: These books say almost nothing about the history of Israel, but are concerned with right living: How the just and wise man is to live. Righteousness is not linked to observance of the Law, but to enlightenment.
    - i) The books are strongly didactic in nature, making a point of saying that they teach.
    - ii) They are concerned both with practical living and with going beyond practical living, to teach the nature of wisdom itself, and the relationship of wisdom to the LORD.
    - iii) “Wisdom” is often personified (in Greek as *Hagia Sophia*, “Holy Wisdom”) using the feminine pronoun.
  - c) It is very possible that the Wisdom books and Deuteronomy were written by the same class of scribes (*ca.* the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, B.C.) Much vocabulary is similar, and wisdom is reckoned in Deuteronomy to be obedience to the LORD (4.5-8; 32.6, 21, 28-31).
    - i) “Wisdom” thinking was probably in the mainstream of biblical thought, and it is thus not surprising that wisdom elements are not uncommon in many books of the Bible. Common themes include:
      - (1) *Cosmic order*: There is a divinely ordained order in the natural world. Human beings are part of nature, and not separate from it.
      - (2) *Creation*: The LORD is the author of all creation, determining boundaries and setting forever that His works do not disobey the divine word. Human beings, however, have free choice. We are called to obedience, and the path of wisdom lies in obedience.
      - (3) *Wisdom*: The rules or laws which are part of the structure of the world can be discovered through wisdom. These norms can be expressed and taught to others. Wisdom is practical, involving knowledge of how the world works. Human wisdom has limits (Prov. 26.4-5, “Do not answer fools according to their folly ...”). Wisdom is both a human task and a divine gift, and is an object of constant reflection.
      - (4) *Human choice has consequences*: All actions have consequences, leading to the doctrine of “Two Ways”.
      - (5) *Two Ways*: Life presents two paths, each with an intrinsic dynamism. The contrast may be explicit (as between Wisdom and Folly, in Prov. 4.10-19). Psalm



1 is also an example. One way of living is blessed and the other cursed, but these ways of living are not static.

- (6) *The Problem of Evil*: A skeptical thread runs through wisdom literature. Nonetheless, no separate power of evil is recognized. God is the source of all creation. Wisdom literature recognizes that one may be righteous and yet suffer (e.g., Job).
- (7) *Personification of Wisdom*: Wisdom is personified as a woman. Nonetheless, she is never confused with being a goddess. Her qualities may be enumerated (Wis. 7.22-23), but as those of a *creature* of the LORD. As a person, she bears the hallmarks of metaphor.

### **Salvation History and Christian Typology**

To look at the Old Testament in the broadest context it is necessary to consider two overarching perspectives: (1) Salvation History; and (2) Christian Typology.

The history of the salvation of the human race, beginning with God's promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3.15) and continuing to the end of the apostolic age, or the death of the apostle St. John. The fullness of salvation is revealed, of course, in the New Testament (e.g., the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; the spread of the Gospel). A review of the Old Testament therefore must include a review of Christian "typology": *How is Jesus foreshadowed in the salvation history set forth in the Old Testament?* This survey is found in the Appendix to this introduction, at pp. 26-32.

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## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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### **Canonicity and the Process of Canonization:**

- 1) *The concept of canon*: See **The Shape of the Canon**, pp. 1-2, *supra*. The Greek manuscripts do not include chapter and verse organization. Organizing the Bible by chapters and verses did not arise until the Renaissance.
  - a) The canon of the New Testament is shaped as follows:
    - i) The Gospels and Acts: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts of the Apostles.
      - (1) Matthew, Mark and Luke are "Synoptic" Gospels (from the Greek *synoptikon*, "through the same lens").
      - (2) Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of Luke.
      - (3) John is a separate account.
    - ii) The Epistles: Epistles are broadly classified as "Pastoral" or "Catholic".
      - (1) The Pastoral Epistles are addressed to a specific church or person.
        - (a) The Pastoral Epistles include: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.
      - (2) The Catholic Epistles include: Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.

- (3) Epistles are also classified as “Pauline” or “Johannine,” on the basis of traditional understanding of authorship.
- iii) Revelation (Apocalypse): This book of apocalyptic visions is classified separately, and treated in the nature of prophecy.
- 2) *Criteria for preservation and acceptance:*
- a) See **The Shape of the Canon** pp. 1-2, *supra*.
- i) The criterion of *Apostolicity* was uppermost in the minds of those in the Church who reviewed Scripture.
- ii) This criterion was tested with relation to that of *Catholicity* to determine if the writing in question was, in fact, apostolic.
- (1) For example, the so-called *Gospel of Peter* was rejected because (in addition to some the content being at odds with the four-fold Gospel, for being “Docetic”) its use was restricted to a single site in Egypt.
- b) *When early Christians referred to “Scripture,” they were referring to what we know as the Old Testament (cf. Luke 24.27).*
- i) The first reference to the “New Testament” did not arise until *ca. A.D. 180*, in *Adversus Haereses* of St. Irenaeus.<sup>2</sup>
- ii) The first references to a fixed canon of the New Testament arise about the middle of the second century.
- (1) The “Muratorian Fragment” was a list of works recognized as canonical in the Church in Rome as of the late second century.
- (a) The Muratorian Fragment does not include *Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, James and 3 John*, yet does include *The Shepherd* of Hermas and *The Apocalypse of Peter*.
- (b) For generations a dispute existed whether *The Didache* should be included and *Revelation* excluded.
- (2) The first complete list which contains all works now recognized as canonical, and no others, is found in St. Athanasius’ Easter sermon of *A.D. 367*.
- 3) *Christian authorship and sources:*
- a) The Gospels have from the beginning been identified with their eponymous authors.
- i) Mark is considered to be the Gospel first written (perhaps as early as *A.D. 60*; 68–73 likely).
- (1) In Church Tradition Mark is thought to have relied upon the personal recollections of Peter.
- ii) Matthew relies upon Mark and upon another source or sources.
- (1) Matthew is later (*ca. 85*) and thus reflects knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem in *A.D. 70*.
- (2) “Matthew” is identified by most modern scholars with a “Matthean community” which was particularly active after Christians were expelled from the synagogue (*ca. 85*) after the Council of Jamnia.

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<sup>2</sup> This work refers to the *Gospel of Judas*, a second century Gnostic work that was “discovered” in 2006, and given wide publicity as an “unknown” work. *Judas* has been known all along, and *rejected* as uncanonical. The Church did not attempt to hide this or any other such work.

- (3) Matthew's additional source(s) may include an oral tradition in the Matthean community and/or a separate tradition (almost certainly oral) which scholars refer to as "Q" (from *quelle*, the German word for "source").
- iii) Luke is roughly contemporaneous with Matthew (*ca.* 85).
- (1) Luke refers to his reliance on sources (Luke 1.1-3). He certainly relies on Mark and Q, but may have a separate oral source.
- (2) Luke is also the author of Acts. Luke and Acts are volumes 1 and 2 of one work (Acts 1.1).
- iv) John is unrelated to the other Gospels, dating anywhere from *A.D.* 80 to 110 (likely *ca.* 95).
- (1) Many scholars point to authorship in a "Johannine community," with redaction taking place in the first decade of the second century.
- (2) "John" is also considered to be the author of the Johannine epistles,
- (a) Church Tradition teaches that John also wrote Revelation. However, most scholars believe a separate author was involved.
- 4) *Theories of inspiration:* The Church has inherited the conception of the divine inspiration of Scripture from Judaism.
- a) The New Testament itself refers to Scripture (the Old Testament) as "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*) (2 Tim. 3.16; 2 Pet. 1.21).
- i) This attitude was applied to the New Testament as its text became accepted.
- ii) The Fathers (*e.g.*, Origen) taught that Scripture is written by the Holy Spirit, using the human authors as instruments (*cf.* Ps. 45.1).<sup>3</sup>
- b) Just as God inspired the prophets to speak, so has he inspired the authors of the several books of the Bible. This does *not* mean that the Bible was *dictated* word-for-word, and is thus to be followed literally.
- i) "Infallibility" requires literal interpretation. Under this theory no part of the Bible can be seen to be inaccurate or contain error.<sup>4</sup> Texts which appear to be in conflict are not, and must be understood at a different level.
- ii) "Inerrancy" is not the same as infallibility. This theory teaches that Scripture as a whole cannot lead one into error (even where texts are in conflict), provided Scripture is received in faith.
- c) Modern theories of inspiration focus on Scripture as a social phenomenon, and thus one which is "culturally conditioned".
- i) A necessary corollary to this understanding is that Scripture must be received as "relevant" by any given culture.

### **Aspects of New Testament Thought**

- 1) *Narrative:* Much of the Gospels (and most of Acts) consists of narrative, stories about Jesus and the disciples. In Acts the narrative follows a chronological pattern to recount the early

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<sup>3</sup> The *Catechism* (BCP pp. 845–862) teaches that Scripture was "written ... under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit," that "God inspired [the] human authors," and that the Holy Spirit "guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures."

<sup>4</sup> This is one of the "fundamental" beliefs of modern so-called "Fundamentalism".

history of the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem. In the Gospels a pattern of short narrative stories appears, consistent with literary practice in the Mediterranean culture of the day. Narrative types include:

- a) **Pronouncement stories:** The main point in such a narrative is Jesus' response to a person or situation. An example is Matthew 18.21-22, in which Peter asks the Lord how many times he must forgive a fellow believer who sins against him.
    - i) The pronouncements are notable more for being provocative and memorable than for presenting reasoned arguments for a position.
    - ii) Pronouncement stories can be further classified as:
      - (1) Corrections: The view of one party is corrected (generally by the Lord). *See, e.g.,* Matt. 8.21-22; Mark 9.33-37.
      - (2) Commendations (rare): These are similar to corrections except that Jesus commends what He has seen or heard. *See, e.g.,* Matt. 16.13-20 (Jesus lauds Peter's confession that he is the Christ).
      - (3) Objections: Jesus answers an objection, such as a demand for justification. *See, e.g.,* Mark 7.1-15 (eating with defiled hands).
  - b) **Quest stories:** These are generally longer and more complex than pronouncements. Jesus' response is now part of a larger quest by an individual, such as the Syrophenician woman at Mark 7.24-30, or the sinful woman in the Pharisee's house (Luke 7.36-50).
    - i) Social status is often a factor in these stories. A person of high social status fails in his quest (Mark 10.17-22), while outcasts and aliens succeed (Luke 17.12-19; 19.1-10; 23.39-43).
  - c) **Inquiry stories:** In these stories the movement is from a request for instruction to the answer. A famous example is the Lord's Prayer at Luke 11.1-4.
- 2) **Parables:** Parables are imaginative narratives composed to teach about a subject or issue that lies beyond the literal subject matter of the story.
- a) Parables may be metaphorical (a similitude or parable proper), in which a connection is suggested between the content of the story and a sphere of meaning (*e.g.,* the mustard seed at Mark 4.30-32).
  - b) Parables may take the form of an "example story" (*e.g.,* the rich fool at Luke 12.16-21). Here the meaning is not a part of another sphere, but contained within the story itself.
  - c) The Gospel of John does not use parables like those found in the Synoptic Gospels.
    - i) John uses a similar form, but rarely. For example a short simile may be used (as in the grain of wheat that dies but is fruitful (John 12.24).
    - ii) John also uses "figures of speech," as in the sheep, shepherd and sheepfold found at John 10.7-18.
- 3) **Wonder stories:** These are also known as miracle stories.
- a) The Synoptic Gospels often refer to these wonders as *dynameis* (powers), *i.e.,* manifestations of divine power.
  - b) John refers to miracles as *semeia* (signs) which point to Jesus' divinity,
  - c) Wonder stories can be classified as narratives of: exorcism; healing; provision (*e.g.,* of food).

- i) Miracles may also take the form of rescue (Acts 12.1-11), epiphany (*e.g.*, the Transfiguration), and a healing in the context of controversy over authority (*e.g.*, Mark 3.1-6).
  - d) Wonder stories include those of promise, and commission epiphanies (*e.g.*, of an angel instructing Joseph or Mary, or of the risen Lord's commission of the disciples).
  
- 4) *Eschatology*: The term eschatology (from the Greek *eschatos*, "last") is the theology of last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.
  - a) A related term is "apocalypticism," from *apokalypsis* (Greek for "revelation," and also the title for Revelation in Catholic and Orthodox bibles).
    - i) In apocalyptic literature, the "curtain is drawn back" to reveal last things.
  - b) John the Baptist and Jesus both speak of the nearness of the kingdom of God, *i.e.*, that last things are imminent.
  - c) Peter, James and Paul speak more in terms of the "world" to come as opposed to the "age" to come. The kingdom of heaven breaks into this world in how we respond to God.
    - i) Judgment thus also involves a call to action in this world.
      - (1) We are to proclaim the lordship of Jesus Christ and to act to bring about the kingdom here.
  - d) Scripture does not describe an immediate passage after death into heaven or hell.
    - i) Judgment comes at the last day, the Second Coming of Christ, when the dead then rise to eternal joy or damnation.
  - e) Later writers (*e.g.*, John) sometimes refer to judgment as both a future event and a present event.
    - i) In Revelation an expectation of imminent judgment is expressed. Later writers have attempted to deal with the delay in judgment or the Second Coming (the *parousia*) with theories of history.
      - (1) Perhaps the simplest way to think of eschatology is to believe that Jesus' incarnation, sacrifice and resurrection *changed everything!*
  
- 5) *Resurrection*: All four Gospels describe the appearances of the risen Christ, but the resurrection itself is not described. (The angel has not rolled the stone back from the tomb in order that the witness may see the resurrection, but that she may see that the resurrection has taken place.)
  - a) Jesus is depicted in ways to make clear that He has a body as the risen Lord.
    - i) He eats with the disciples.
    - ii) His hands and side bear wounds.
      - (1) Yet His body is changed. For example, He can pass through a locked door (John 20.19).
  - b) The Gospel accounts vary in details, but in all cases Jesus first appears to the women. (Mary Magdalene is known in the East as the "apostle to the apostles".)
    - i) In all accounts the disciples are commissioned to further action; to tell of the resurrection, to baptize, and to preach the message of salvation.
    - ii) The disciples may not perceive who Jesus is (Luke 24.13-35) due to a lack of faith. As their faith develops (*e.g.*, through His instruction), they come to recognize Him by faith, "in the breaking of the bread".

- c) The agency of the resurrection lies with the Father.
  - i) Jesus is “raised”. He does not “rise” (1 Thes. 1.10; 1 Cor. 6.14; Gal. 1.1).
- 6) *The Lordship of Jesus*: Scripture makes it clear that Jesus (the name means “the LORD saves”) is much more than a wise teacher, much more than a prophet. The center of Jesus’ message and ministry was the coming of the kingdom of God, the triumph of the Father in mercy and judgment, and the regathering of God’s people in the end-time.
  - a) Faith in Jesus is in obedience to the command of both the Father (1 John 3.23) and the Son (John 14.1).
    - i) The Father tells us that Jesus is His Son (Matt. 3.17; Mark 1.11; Luke 3.22).
  - b) Jesus is the Christ. This Greek word means “Anointed” (Hebrew = Messiah).
    - i) As the Anointed, Jesus is the One sent by God to effect His plan of salvation. He fulfills God’s promises to the patriarchs and prophets.
      - (1) Jesus affirms that He is the Messiah (Luke 4.18-21; John 4.26).
      - (2) Jesus is acclaimed as Messiah by Peter, and tells Peter that he has been led to this statement by the will of the Father (Matt. 16.16-17).
      - (3) Jesus is Lord (as proclaimed by angels)(Luke 2.11).
  - c) We acclaim Jesus using the title reserved for God (Gen. 15.7; Exod. 6.2). Jesus accepted this usage (John 13.13).

### **The Gospels and Acts**

- 1) *The term “Gospel”*: (Greek = *evangelion*) refers literally to a “proclamation” in the sense of a “good announcement”. “Good news” is often used as a modern equivalent. Mark begins his Gospel by referring to the “gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mark 1.1), but this is in the sense of the proclamation made by Jesus, that the kingdom of God is at hand. The good news becomes the proclamation that “Jesus is Lord”.
  - a) The technical term for the proclamation of Jesus’ lordship is *kerygma*.
    - i) Absent the *kerygma* any account of Jesus’ life and ministry is not a gospel.
      - (1) For example, the “Gospel of Thomas” is *not* a gospel, for it contains only sayings of Jesus, but does not proclaim His lordship.
- 2) *The Synoptic Problem*: The “threefold tradition” and “double tradition” both refer to the fact that parts of Matthew, Mark and Luke overlap. (See section 3, pp. 10-11 *supra*, “Christian authorship and sources,” in *Canonicity and the Process of Canonization*.)
  - a) Marcan priority is assumed under this analysis, which is often referred to as the “Two Source Theory” (e.g., Mark and Q).
  - b) John is not dependent on the Synoptic Gospels and they are not dependent on John. John is a separate testimony.
- 3) *The Gospel of Mark*: Mark is conventionally divided into two parts:<sup>5</sup> (a) Jesus’ ministry of healing and preaching in Galilee (1.1-8.26); (b) Jesus’ suffering predicted; His death in Jerusalem; His resurrection (8.27-16.8 + 16.9-20). Mark focuses very much on continuous action, moving “scene” using the Greek connector *euthus* (“[then] immediately”).

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<sup>5</sup> The organization scheme given here, and that noted for Matthew, Luke, John and Acts, is taken from Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

- a) Authorship: Attributed by the second century to Mark, the follower and “interpreter” of Peter, usually identified as the John Mark of Acts.
- i) A Greek-speaker who was not an eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry; unfamiliar with Palestinian geography.
  - ii) He addressed himself to a community which had suffered persecution.
  - iii) Mark is thought to have written in Rome, probably between A.D. 68-73 (*i.e.* after the Neronian persecution, but probably before the destruction of Jerusalem).
- 4) *The Gospel of Matthew*: Matthew focuses on Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law and prophecy. Matthew writes to Jewish Christians who have been expelled from the synagogues.
- a) Matthew has a more complex organization:
- i) Introduction: origin and infancy of Jesus the Messiah (1.1-2.23).
  - ii) Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom (3.1-7.29).
  - iii) Jesus’ ministry and mission in Galilee (8.1-10.42).
  - iv) Questioning of and opposition to Jesus (11.1-13.52).
  - v) Christology and ecclesiology (13.53-18.35).
  - vi) Jesus’ journey to and ministry in Jerusalem (19.1-25.46).
  - vii) Climax: passion, death and resurrection (26.1-28.20).
- b) Authorship: Attributed to Matthew, a tax-collector among the Twelve, who either wrote the Gospel or a collection of the Lord’s sayings in Aramaic, with this Gospel or collection being assembled in Greek by a “Matthean community” of Jewish Christians.
- i) The Greek Gospel reflects knowledge of Aramaic and Hebrew, and draws on Mark and Q (or a separate oral tradition).
  - ii) Matthew was written, probably, in the region of Antioch, between A.D. 80 and 90.
    - (1) A post-85 date is most likely (after the Christians were expelled from synagogues by the Council of Jamnia).
- 5) *The Gospel of Luke*: Luke-Acts (*ca.* A.D. 85) is a narrative written by a believer to encourage belief. Luke describes the trajectory of salvation as: *Israel* (= a story recounted in the Law and Prophets); *Jesus* (= a story told in the Gospel); and *Church* (= a story told in Acts). In this trajectory the true faith spreads to the ends of the earth, with Jesus as the centerpiece. Luke writes to the churches affected directly or indirectly by Paul’s mission.
- a) Organization: Following a prologue in which he describes his purpose in writing (1.1-4) Luke narrates as follows:
- i) Introduction: infancy and boyhood of Jesus (1.5-2.52).
  - ii) Jesus’ preparation for public ministry (3.1-4.13).
  - iii) Ministry in Galilee (4.14-9.50).
  - iv) Journey to Jerusalem (9.51-19.27).
  - v) Ministry in Jerusalem (19.28-21.38).
  - vi) Last Supper, passion, death and burial (22.1-23.56).
  - vii) Resurrection appearances (24.1-53).
- b) Authorship: Luke is identified as a physician, a Greek-speaker who was a traveling companion of Paul. He may have been a Syrian Christian from near Antioch.
- i) Luke’s Greek is much more sophisticated than that of the other evangelists, reflecting much more education.

- ii) His use of the Old Testament is from the Greek *Septuagint*.
  - iii) Luke was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry. He was probably not raised a Jew, but may have converted to Judaism before becoming a Christian.
- 6) *The Acts of the Apostles*: Volume 2 of Luke, in which he describes the birth and growth of the Church. The programmatic verse in Acts is 1.8: The disciples will be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, "and to the end of the earth". Luke focuses on the fact that *nothing* can stop the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the Church. Acts is thus organized as follows:
- a) Introduction: preparing Jesus' followers for the Spirit (1.1-2).
  - b) Mission in Jerusalem (2.1-8.1a).
  - c) Missions in Samaria and Judea (8.1b-12.25).
  - d) Missions of Barnabas and Paul converting Gentiles; approval at Jerusalem (13.1-15.35).
  - e) Mission of Paul to the end of the earth (15.36-28.31).
- 7) *The Gospel of John*: John was written probably near Ephesus, probably around the mid-90's, with later editing (perhaps by another hand) in the first decade of the second century. Style and theology are intertwined.
- a) Organization: Following a prologue (1.1-18), the "Hymn to the Logos," which summarizes the career of the incarnate Word, John shifts to:
    - i) The Book of Signs (1.19-12.50), in which the Word reveals Himself to the world and to His own, but they do not accept Him:
      - (1) Prominent are the "signs" (seven miracles), which begin with the water changed into wine at Cana and culminate in the raising of Lazarus (after which Jesus is condemned).
      - (2) Old Testament feasts feature in the narrative, with themes of light and life prominent:
        - (a) Jesus, the new Moses, replaces the Sabbath ordinance to rest (5.1-47).
        - (b) The Bread of Life replaces manna (Passover)(6.1-71).
        - (c) The Source of living water and Light of the world replaces water and light ceremonies (Tabernacles)(7.1-10.21).
        - (d) Jesus is consecrated in place of the Temple altar (Dedication)(10.22-42).
    - ii) The Book of Glory (13.1-20.31): To those who accept Him, the Word shows His glory by returning to the Father in death, resurrection and ascension. Fully glorified, He communicates the Spirit.
      - (1) The Last Supper and Jesus' discourse (chs. 13-17).
      - (2) Jesus' passion and death (chs. 18-19).
      - (3) The resurrection (20.1-29).
    - iii) Epilogue (21.1-25): Galilean resurrection appearances.
  - b) Authorship: This Gospel is attributed to John, son of Zebedee. The content of the Gospel reveals the author as one who regards himself in the tradition of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Authorship is therefore often assigned to the "Johannine community," with redaction taking place about the same time as the composition of 3 John (*ca. A.D.* 100-110).



## New Testament Epistles

- 1) *Epistolary Form*: The twenty-one letters in the New Testament are grouped broadly as Pauline (Romans through Philemon) and non-Pauline (Hebrews through Jude), with Acts and Revelation as “bookends” to these collections. No letter began its life as a piece of Scripture, but as a message addressed to a particular church or person, or to people in general. The form of letters is varied, but is always designed to communicate a message and instruction. An epistle (*epistolé*) was a recognized literary form in the ancient world (*e.g.*, as a rhetorical form like an oration), in which a document in the form of a “letter” is used to outline an argument.
  - a) Pseudonymity: It was common in the ancient world for a disciple to write in the name of and in the style of his teacher. Thus, some of the Pauline letters were very likely not written by Paul himself.
    - i) Letters which are considered to be written by Paul include: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and probably 1 Timothy. (1 Colossians was probably written by Paul; 2 Timothy is less likely to be “genuine”).
    - ii) Pauline letters which are considered to be pseudonymous include: Ephesians and Titus, and perhaps 2 Timothy.
    - iii) 1 Peter is considered to be Petrine, with 2 Peter being considered pseudonymous.
    - iv) 1 & 2 John are considered to come from a hand other than that of the author of the Gospel of John and 3 John.
    - v) James is thought to be “genuine”.
    - vi) The authorship of Hebrews is unknown, although in Tradition authorship has been assigned to Paul.
      - (1) Hebrews is almost certainly not Pauline.
- 2) *Pastoral Letters*: These are intended to provide specific advice and argument to a designated community or individual.
  - a) Pauline form: Letters which are Pauline follow a general form which includes:
    - i) Opening formula: a salutation which offers grace and peace.
    - ii) Thanksgiving (particularly for the witness of the recipients).
    - iii) Message: This can include argument and/or answers to specific questions which have been posed by the recipients.
    - iv) Conclusion and final greeting: This section often contains personal advice, and ends with a blessing.
- 3) *Catholic Letters*: These take the form of a sermon or argument, and are not addressed to a particular person or group. Hebrews, for example, can be read as an extended sermon addressed to those with questions about salvation through Jesus.

## Revelation

- 1) *Apocalyptic literature*: “Apocalypse” (*apokalypsis*) means “revelation” in Greek, in the sense of a curtain being pulled aside. Revelation is unique in the New Testament, but

apocalyptic visions are found in Ezekiel, and in Daniel and some postexilic prophets.<sup>6</sup> The “message” in apocalyptic is the revelation of secrets.

- a) Revelation refers to itself as prophecy (1.2; 22.7), in the sense of revealing what is “to come,” but it is paramount to remember that a vision of an eternal truth is a vision of something *independent of time*.
  - i) Apocalyptic may, therefore, be “prophecy” of what is “to come,” but not necessarily in the sense of something that will happen at a particular time in this world.
- 2) *Authorship*: The case to assign authorship to John, son of Zebedee, is not very strong, although this position has been maintained from the first century (Justin Martyr), and affirmed by Hippolytus, Irenaeus and Origen.
  - a) Stylistic differences from the fourth Gospel are significant.
  - b) The book probably dates from A.D. 92-96, at the end of Domitian’s reign.
- 3) *Structure*: The book is structured as follows:
  - a) Prologue (1.1-3).
  - b) Letters to seven churches in Asia (1.4-3.22).
  - c) Part I of the revelation (4.1-11-19). The first cycle of visions.
  - d) Part II of the revelation (12.1-22.5). The second cycle of visions.
  - e) Epilogue with concluding blessing (22.6-21). Isolated sayings regarding the book and end times.
- 4) *Symbolism*: Apocalyptic literature uses symbolism widely. For example, in Revelation visions occur in cycles of seven. The interpretation of individual symbols and visions is a task fraught with dangers, but it is safe to comment that the intent of the author is more clear that symbols are to be interpreted rather than accepted as a literal truth
  - a) Apocalyptic literature arose at times of persecution. The overarching theme of all apocalyptic is that a truth exists beyond and above the current persecution, and that God will save and vindicate those who trust in Him.

### **Pauline Theology**

- 1) *Paul’s background*: Paul describes himself as a learned Pharisee descended of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3.5-6). The theological motifs he employs are all of an Old Testament character. Luke describes him as born in Tarsus (Acts 23.16), a Hellenistic town, and as a Roman citizen from birth (Acts 22.25-29). Paul’s Greek is very sophisticated, indicating an advanced Hellenistic education.
  - a) Saul became Paul following his “conversion”. His encounter with the risen Christ is described three times in Acts (9.3-19; 22.6-16; 26.12-18), and by himself at Gal. 1.12-16.
    - i) Paul never considered himself to have “converted” from being a Jew. He saw faith in Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the relationship with God established with the Jews and now extended to all in Christ.

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<sup>6</sup> *I Enoch*, a non-canonical prophetic work from the second century B.C., is the most fully-developed example of apocalyptic literature from the Old Testament era. New Testament era works include *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (1 C. Egyptian).

- (1) Jesus is not described as requiring Saul to adopt a new belief, but to *follow* Him and to be His witness to the Gentiles.
- 2) *God's plan of salvation*: God is described by Paul as acting *for us*.
- a) Three qualities of God's action are notable:
    - i) His wrath: This is God's reaction to evil and sin, expressed using Old Testament idiom. This is not wrath in the sense of "anger" but in the sense of justice.
    - ii) His righteousness: This is expressed in forensic terms. God upholds what is right and true, and this acquits His people of sin and evil.
    - iii) His love: This is a function of God's righteousness, poured into our hearts both in forgiveness and bestowing power.
  - b) God's plan of salvation is something which happens in history. It is cosmic (redeeming Creation), corporate (redeeming His people), and eschatological (inaugurating a new age).
  - c) God's plan of salvation is effected by and through the pre-existent Son.
    - i) Paul refers to the risen Christ as *hó Kyrios* ("the Lord") in the same sense he refers to "the LORD" (the Holy Name). This title reflects the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over all Creation (*cf.* Phil 2.10).
    - ii) By the action of the Son the people of God are "justified". This means that (using the same forensic imagery), we *can* stand before God. We are reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5.18-19).
      - (1) By Jesus' sacrifice (His blood) our sins are expiated (Rom. 3.25). The burden and price of sin is removed.
- 3) *Christocentric soteriology*: Regardless of whether or not one considers the "key" to Paul being "justification by faith" or as an antithesis between the "Spirit" (divine) and "flesh" (human), it is perhaps best to focus on what Paul focuses on: salvation by and through and in Jesus Christ.
- a) Paul preaches "Christ crucified". His focus is on the proclamation that the crucified Lord is the Lord who saves; the Lord who through the "Christ event" changed all creation and our place in it.
    - i) God's salvation of His people is made known in Christ, and this is a new reality now revealed.
    - ii) God's salvation enters the world as a "salvific force" (*dynamis*)(Rom 1.16).
      - (1) The Gospel proclamation is that "Jesus is Lord," to which humans are to assent.
      - (2) Salvation is *happening* (not future)(1 Thes. 1.10), by the power of the Spirit (1 Thes. 1.5) and "the word of God, which is at work among you who believe" (1 Thes. 2.13, *cf.* 1 Cor. 15.2).
- 4) *Anthropology and ethics*: Paul testifies that humanity has been changed by the "Christ event". As we have been justified and reconciled; as our sins have been expiated; as we have been redeemed; as we have gained freedom in the new creation; as we are sanctified (set apart as God's own); as we are transformed, we enter a new creation of union with God in which we share in the glory of God.
- a) All this means that our makeup as human beings is changed and that our behavior must reflect this change.

- i) As humans we cannot comply with the Law. In this Paul distinguishes between our human condition (“flesh”) and the divine essence (“Spirit”). In Jesus we partake of this Spirit.
  - (1) Our lives are to reflect faith, hope, and love.
  - (2) We are incorporated into Christ by faith through baptism.
    - (a) In this incorporation we are part of Christ’s Body, the Church.
      - (i) The Church (“assembly” or *ekklesia*) is the body of those who assemble in Jesus’ name to partake of His Body in the eucharist (1 Cor. 11.25).
- b) Paul clearly holds that our changed status in creation must lead to a change in behavior, measured against objective, absolute standards as revealed by God in Christ.
  - i) He therefore frequently lists specific vices and virtues to be avoided or practiced.
  - ii) Prayer and self-renunciation are keys to proper behavior.

### **Johannine Theology**

- 1) *Structure*: John is written in the least complicated Greek in the New Testament, and yet the portrait of Jesus and His message is far from simple. John is structured simply (as outlined in relation to his Gospel, *supra*), and the structure reflects the theology of the revelation of the Word and glorification and empowerment in the Spirit.
- 2) *Community*: Whether we refer to John or the “Johannine community,”<sup>7</sup> the tradition in Johannine theology dates from the beginning of Christianity, being traced to the “beloved disciple”.
  - a) Upon separation, John’s theology became more developed in terms of christology, and of a primacy of love over authority.
    - i) This led to the open expression of some hostility to Judaism.
  - b) John was in close contact with Hellenistic thought. He therefore used much Hellenistic imagery in his writing (*e.g.*, of light and darkness), perhaps in part as a response to Gnostic attacks on the faith.
    - i) John “co-opted” some Gnostic imagery to use against Gnostic influences.
- 3) *God’s plan of salvation*: John tells the story of Jesus of Nazareth in order to communicate belief in Him, and in His saving life, death and resurrection.
  - a) In John, telling Jesus’ story is telling God’s story.
    - i) In this story the nature/character of God is revealed: God is love (1 John 4.8).
    - ii) The glory of God is revealed in Jesus.
    - iii) The glory of God is revealed in the Cross (in God’s giving of Himself).
    - iv) Jesus affirms this identity and glory in his eight “I AM” sayings<sup>8</sup> in the Gospel, in which He identifies Himself as the LORD.
      - (1) Jesus always exercises power. He is handed over to suffering and death only because He permits this.

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<sup>7</sup> For convenience, we will refer to “John” as a person.

<sup>8</sup> [*E]go eimi*, the functional Greek equivalent of the Holy Name, YHWH.

- 4) *Believer's response*: John always refers to faith as a verb, *pisteuein*, and never as a noun, *pistis*. Faith is *doing*.
  - a) Believers may be led to faith by signs, but cannot have faith because of signs.
  - b) Signs are present in order that the reader “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name” (John 20.31).
    - i) Faith as a verb brings new life in the new creation effected by God.
      - (1) Faith as a verb requires action in this world.

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## THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

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- 1) The Bible in the West was known from the late fourth century as the *Vulgate* (*Biblia Sacra Vulgatae*).
  - a) St. Jerome, at the specific commission of Pope Damasus, translated the Bible from Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) into Latin (A.D. 384–397).
    - i) Until this time the Bible was known only to scholars, in the Greek version known as the *Sepuagint* (LXX).
  - b) Scripture in Latin served the needs of the only literate people of the age, in the Church.
    - i) An edition of the Vulgate was the first book printed in moveable type, as the so-called “Gutenberg” (“Mazarin”) Bible of 1456.
- 2) In the Anglo-Saxon period a number of translations of parts of the Bible into English were made. No complete translation of the Bible into English was undertaken.
  - a) All translations were made from the Latin Vulgate text, not from Hebrew or Greek manuscripts.
    - i) Examples include the translation of the Gospel of John made by the Venerable Bede (d. 735), and of the Heptateuch (Genesis through Judges) made by Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham (955–1020). These were private manuscripts used only in the translators’ monasteries.
- 3) No complete translation of the Bible was attempted before that of John Wycliff, scholar of Oxford. This translation (1380–97) was made from the Latin *Vulgate*.
  - a) Wycliff did not actually prepare most of the translation, which was the work of Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey.
    - i) Wycliff inspired the translations, as the key figure among the Lollards,<sup>9</sup> a religious sect which espoused a sort of early form of Protestantism, including the direct access to Scripture by the people.
      - (1) The English crown suppressed the Lollards, violently.
        - (a) Wycliff’s Bible gained no currency in England due to the small number of copies (<100) and its association with an heretical sect.

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<sup>9</sup> “Lollard” derives from the Middle Dutch *lollen* or *lullen* (“to sing”), and refers to the Lollard practice of chanting prayers.

- 4) The first English version of the Bible to be made directly from the Hebrew and Greek was the work of William Tyndale (1494?–1536).
  - a) Tyndale published his New Testament in 1526 (revised 1534), and the Pentateuch and Jonah (1536).
    - i) Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536 as an heretic.
      - (1) His dying words: “Lord, open the eyes of the king of England.”
    - b) Much of Tyndale’s Bible (together with additional material) was published in 1537 as *Matthew’s Bible*, by “Thomas Matthew” (John Rogers, a friend of Tyndale).
      - i) A revision of *Matthew’s Bible* was published in sequential pamphlet form by Richard Taverner (a powerful lawyer) beginning in 1539.
  
- 5) In 1535, Miles Coverdale (1487?–1569) prepared the first *published* translation of the complete Bible into English.
  - a) Coverdale’s translation is based on the Latin Vulgate.
    - i) Coverdale also relied heavily on Tyndale (a friend) and on Martin Luther’s translation of the *Vulgate* into German.
      - (1) Coverdale published in Zurich, as an exile from England.
      - (2) Coverdale’s Bible is the basis for the *Great Bible*, set up in every English church by decree after the accession of Puritan control in England.<sup>10</sup>
  
- 6) Under Mary Tudor the use of the Bible in English was outlawed. On the accession of Elizabeth I it was decreed that a Bible in English was to be set up in every church.
  - a) Elizabeth decreed the use of the *Great Bible*.
    - i) The most popular translation of the time was the so-called *Geneva Bible*, prepared by Puritan exiles in Geneva during the reign of Mary.
      - (1) This was the Bible known by Shakespeare and Bunyan.
      - (2) The *Geneva Bible* remained based primarily on the *Vulgate*, but with certain corrections made from the Hebrew and Greek.
  - b) Not enough *Great Bibles* were available. Archbishop Parker therefore commissioned a new translation, the *Bishops’ Bible* (1568).
    - i) The *Bishops’ Bible* (so called because it was prepared by a committee of bishops) relies much more heavily, but not completely, on the Hebrew and Greek.
    - ii) The Church of England decreed (to which the crown agreed) that churches must use the *Bishops’ Bible* in 1572.
  
- 7) During the Reformation much disagreement arose over which books should be included in the Bible.
  - i) Excluded books became the “Apocrypha,” but remain in Roman Catholic and Orthodox bibles as canonical.
  - ii) An English translation of the Bible (from the *Vulgate*) was prepared by English Catholic exiles in France, and published as the *Douai-Rheims Bible* (1582–1609).
    - (1) The *Douai-Rheims Bible* follows the Latin very closely.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The version of the Psalter found in the *Book of Common Prayer* (first version published 1549) remains based primarily on Coverdale’s translation, *not* on subsequent translations.

- 8) In 1604, following a conference “for hearing and for the determining [of] things pretended to be amiss in the church,” King James I ordained: “That a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes,<sup>12</sup> and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service.”
- a) This Bible, completed in 1611, is known in America as the *King James Bible*, and in England and the Commonwealth as the “Authorized Version”.
  - b) The *King James Bible* relied primarily on the *Codex Alexandrinus* (5<sup>th</sup> C.) and the *Codex Bezae* (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> C.), collections of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.<sup>13</sup>
- 9) Virtually all English versions of the Bible from 1611 have been based on the *King James Bible*.
- a) Most of these versions have sought to update or “correct” Elizabethan English into an idiom more understandable to modern readers and hearers.
  - b) Beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century new versions (beginning with the *Revised Version* of 1881) have sought to correct the *very* few text variations of the *King James Bible*.
    - i) These variations have been identified through the discovery of more ancient manuscripts (*e.g.*, the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1946, and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, discovered in 1844).
  - c) New versions have also sought to be more literal to the Hebrew and Greek, allowing for less expression in English poesy.
    - i) More “literal” versions include the *American Standard Version*, the *American Standard Bible*, and the *New International Version*.
  - d) Newer versions in the King James tradition (*e.g.*, the *New Revised Standard Version*) change Hebrew and Greek pronoun forms to make them gender-inclusive, and verbs to make them collective.
  - e) Bibles such as the *Good News Bible* seek to use simple modern idiom. In so doing, they often paraphrase the original.
    - i) *The Message* (Eugene H. Peterson, 2003) is now a popular version in modern English.
      - (1) *The Message* must be seen to contain much *paraphrasing* of Scripture, with original text at times *changed* or *omitted*.
- 10) What English Bible is the best?
- a) There is no best! *All* translations have defects.
  - b) Use a Bible you are comfortable with and like. If you wish to study a key passage further, compare translations.

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<sup>11</sup> The Bible in English now used in Roman Catholic churches is the *Jerusalem Bible* based on a French translation from the Hebrew and Greek. The *New American Bible* is also often used.

<sup>12</sup> A principal objection to the *Geneva Bible* was its use of many notes offering Puritan commentary.

<sup>13</sup> *Alexandrinus* is held in the British Museum; *Bezae* by Cambridge University. Modern scholars have compared these MSS. carefully with the *Codex Emphraemi* (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris), the *Codex Vaticanus* (Vatican Library), and the *Codex Leningradensis* (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg). Text variations are not material.

- c) All translations (*not* paraphrased bibles) are based on reliable manuscripts that have been compared exhaustively.
- i) More than 5000 ancient manuscripts of individual books of the Bible exist.
  - ii) No ancient text (*e.g.*, of Homer or Plato) has been studied and compared more exhaustively. The text is reliable!
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## Select Bibliography

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### Web-based Resources

1. <http://home.newadvent.org/> : A Roman Catholic site with many links, including a fully searchable version of *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. This is a pre-Vatican II compendium of Roman Catholic history, theology, etc.
2. <http://studylight.org/isb/> : Study Light. An interlinear Bible, with word-by-word comparison between the Hebrew or Greek and English.
3. <http://www.biblegateway.com/> : Bible Gateway. Includes the complete Bible searchable by text and topic, in multiple English translations, plus many other languages. Includes concordance.
4. <http://www.bibles.com/> : The American Bible Society. The “Bible Resources” section has useful links.
5. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/> : The Blue Letter Bible. A very complete website, including links to commentaries, sermons, maps, study outlines, maps, etc.
6. <http://www.ccel.org/> : Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Contains most classic and Patristic Christian texts, plus scholarly commentary links.
7. <http://www.e-sword.net/> : E-Sword. A Bible study tool which is topically linked; designed for drill in Bible memorization. Includes commentaries.
8. <http://www.io.com/~kellywp/index.html> : The Lectionary of the Episcopal Church, by calendar, with full texts and collects.
9. <http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Calendar.htm> : The complete Episcopal Lectionary.
10. <http://www.textweek.com/> : Text Week. Linked to the Lectionary texts; allows research in commentaries, sermons, devotionals, etc.

### Bible Translations

1. *Authorized Version (King James Version)*: Elizabethan English, based on the Masoretic text and the Reformation canon.
2. *The Contemporary English Version*: A late twentieth century translation, focused on the use of idiomatic English and containing, therefore, many paraphrased passages.
3. *The Douai-Rheims Version*: Elizabethan English, based on the Latin *Vulgate* version of the *Septuagint* canon.
4. *The Jerusalem Bible*: A mid-twentieth century translation of a translation into French from original language manuscripts following the *Septuagint* text tradition.
5. *The New American Bible*: Modern English, following the *Septuagint* text tradition, with a focus on translation by phrase rather than word-by-word accuracy.



6. *The New International Version*: A mid-twentieth century translation founded in Reformed exegesis and popular in Evangelical circles; focused more on a word-by-word translation.
7. *The New Revised Standard Version*: An inclusive language version of the *Revised Standard Version*, which drops any distinction between the formal and informal voices in English as archaic.
8. *The Revised English Bible*: A late twentieth century translation focused on word for word accuracy, but often arguing a minority position on usage.
9. *The Revised Standard Version*: A mid-twentieth century revision of the Authorized Version, conforming to modern English grammar but retaining the distinction between formal and informal voices, and using “exclusive” pronouns.
10. *Tyndale’s Old Testament*: Contains only the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, Ruth and Jonah. The first translation into English from the Hebrew. Elizabethan English.
11. *Tyndale’s New Testament*: The first complete New Testament in English, as translated from the original Greek. Elizabethan English.
12. *The Wycliffe Bible*: The first complete Bible in English, translated from the Latin *Vulgate* into late Middle English.
13. *The Interlinear Bible*: The complete Old Testament in *Hebrew* and *Latin*, and the New Testament in *Greek*, together with (separate) exhaustive analytical Hebrew and Greek lexicons.

#### Bible Study resources:

1. *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Raymond E. Brown. The best one volume survey of N. T. history and theology.
2. *In the Beginning: Bibles Before 1000*. The history of the written text.
3. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Brevard S. Childs. A useful one volume survey, written from a Canon Criticism perspective.
4. The “Reader’s Guide” in *The New Catholic Study Bible* (NAB). A book-by-book and thematic survey.
5. *The Death of the Messiah* (2 vols.), Raymond E. Brown. An exhaustive examination of the events and evidence concerning the trial, death and resurrection of Jesus.
6. *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (13 vols.): Late-twentieth century scholarship using NIV and NRSV texts. Exhaustive commentary.
7. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 4 vols.): Exhaustive word studies and linguistic studies by topic.
8. *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Zondervan, 5 vols.): Exhaustive word studies and linguistic studies by topic.
9. *The New Interpreter’s Bible New Testament Survey*: A one volume book-by-book and thematic review of the New Testament.
10. *The New Interpreter’s Bible Old Testament Survey*: A one volume book-by-book and thematic review of the Old Testament.
11. *The New Jerome Bible Commentary*: A one volume commentary on the books of Scripture, and including thematic treatment. Also include maps, background material, etc.

## APPENDIX

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### Salvation History and Christian Typology

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*Salvation History* is the history of the salvation of the human race, beginning with God's promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3.15) and continuing to the end of the apostolic age, or the death of the apostle St. John. Salvation history in the Old Testament may be traced in parallel with the history of the Jewish people.

#### Period in History

**Patriarchal Period:** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the pioneers of the Israelite nation. The story begins in Ur (in Mesopotamia); Abraham journeys northwest and then west to Canaan. Later, Jacob and his family settle in the Nile Delta in Egypt, to escape famine. The Hebrews live comfortably in Egypt so long as Joseph and his family enjoy the favor of Pharaoh. Later, they are enslaved.

**Moses and Exodus:** The LORD calls Moses to free His people from Egypt. Moses leads them out of captivity, into the wandering in the wilderness. During the wanderings, Moses receives the Decalogue from the LORD on Mt. Sinai, and the LORD ratified His covenant with the Jews. At the point of entering the Promised Land, Moses dies, and is succeeded by Joshua.

**Settlement in Canaan:** Joshua lead the people in the conquest of Canaan. However, Judges makes clear that large areas of Canaan remained unconquered. During the period of fracture described in Judges, the LORD calls forth the prophet Samuel.

#### Salvation History

- 1) The LORD promises Noah (Gen. 8.21) that never again will the earth be cursed because of humans. Noah and his posterity are granted blessing and dominion (Gen. 9).
  - 2) The LORD calls Abraham, promises him posterity and inheritance, and that by his posterity all people shall be blessed (Gen. 15). An heir is born (Gen. 21).
  - 3) Jacob reaffirms the covenant with the LORD (Gen. 28.20).
  - 4) Joseph is chosen by the LORD to protect the Hebrews in Egypt (Gen. 39-46).
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- 1) God calls forth Moses and reveals the Divine Name (Exod. 3).
  - 2) God reaffirms to Moses the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod. 6.4). Redemption is promised (Exod. 6.6).
  - 3) The Passover is instituted (Exod. 12).
  - 4) The Hebrews are delivered from the Egyptians (Exod. 14).
  - 5) Bread from heaven (Exod. 16); Water from the rock (Exod. 17).
  - 6) The people consecrated (Exod. 19); Moses received the Law (Exod. 20).
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- 1) Joshua renews the covenant (Josh. 8.32).
  - 2) The tribes are gathered, and renew the covenant (Josh. 24).

**Rise of the Monarchy:** Samuel was both prophet and last of the judges. He was responsible for the establishment of a unified monarchy. Following the unsuitable Saul, David becomes king, and unites the northern and southern tribes of Israel by capturing Jerusalem and making it his capital. (Jerusalem was on neutral ground between the north and south.) David makes Jerusalem the religious capital by bringing with him the Ark of the Covenant.

Solomon succeeds his father, having his father's faults and lacking his virtues. Despite his wisdom, Solomon alienates his people through heavy taxes and forced labor. The northern tribes secede and form their own kingdom after his death in 922 B.C.

**Divided Kingdom:** Following generations of northern-southern rivalry, good terms are established between Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah of Judah. During this period, wealth becomes more stratified between rich and poor. In the eighth century B.C., the rise of the Assyrian empire leads to the fall of Israel. Judah remains independent until its fall to the Babylonians in the sixth century. The Jews are sent into exile, and the Temple destroyed.

**Return from Exile:** In 539 B.C. Babylonia falls to Cyrus, king of Persia. Cyrus issues an edict which allows the Jews to return to their homeland. The Temple is rebuilt. In the fifth century, returning Jews under Ezra reinforce the observance of the Law.

- 1) Samuel is called (1 Sam. 3).
- 2) David is anointed king (1 Sam. 16).
- 3) David is anointed king of Judah (2 Sam. 2), and of all Israel (2 Sam. 5).
- 4) The LORD promises that the throne over Israel shall be everlasting (2 Sam. 7.12-16).

- 5) The northern tribes secede (1 Kg. 12).
- 6) Elijah and Elisha show the greatness of the LORD (1 Kgs. 17-2 Kgs. 13). The LORD visits His redemption through His prophets on non-Jews: the widow at Zarephath (1 Kgs. 17) and Naaman the Syrian (2 Kgs. 5).

- 1) The Passover is re-instituted (2 Kgs. 23.21).
- 2) The whole long period of the divided kingdom is the period in which the prophets are prominent, prophesying both downfall and salvation.

- 1) Cyrus proclaims liberty for the exiles (2 Chron. 36.22). He is proclaimed "messiah" by Isaiah (45.1).
- 2) Worship is restored at Jerusalem (Ez. 3).
- 3) The Temple is rebuilt, pursuant to the decree of King Darius of Persia (Ez. 6.13-18); the Passover is celebrated (Ez. 6.19-22).

**Alexander the Great and Hellenism:**

Alexander conquers Palestine in 322 B.C., leading to a diffusion of Greek culture and language. Under Alexander's heirs (the Ptolemies and the Seleucids) Hellenism (including pagan worship) is imposed on their subjects. The Hasmonean priestly family (under Judas "the Maccabee" or "hammer") leads a successful rebellion. The Temple is rededicated in 164 B.C., and Judah is independent until conquered by the Romans in 63 B.C.

**Roman Rule:** The Romans maintain a military government in their province of Judea, but allow local rule through the king Herod the Great, and through his sons, the Herodian tetrarchs. One of the tetrarchs (Archelaus) is so corrupt that the Romans banish him to Gaul in A.D. 6, and institute direct rule under a prefect, among whom we find Pontius Pilate (ruled A.D. 26-36).

1) The Temple is rededicated. The story of this period of revolt is found in 1 & 2 Maccabees, in the Apocrypha.

1) *John the Baptizer proclaims repentance and the coming of the Lord. Our Lord is born of the Virgin Mary. He teaches; institutes the sacraments of baptism and eucharist; is killed; is raised; promises salvation; commissions His apostles; and ascends to heaven. The Holy Ghost comes upon the Church.*

[Discussion of Christian Typology begins on p. 29.]

**Christian Typology:** Jesus Himself stated that He had come to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5.17), and taught that the scriptures of the Old Testament bear witness to Him (John 5.39). Indeed, the risen Lord taught His disciples that “beginning with Moses and all the prophets” Scripture taught of His identity and mission (Luke 24.27).

Starting even before Abraham, the promises made by God form a series of covenants: (1) The Adamic Covenant; (2) The Noachian Covenant; (3) The Abrahamic Covenant; (4) The Mosaic Covenant; (5) the Davidic Covenant; and (6) The New Covenant (in Christ). In some church traditions, these covenants are referred to as “dispensations,” in which case it is common to refer to only two dispensations (corresponding to the election of Israel in the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, and the new covenant instituted by Jesus).

When we look at the history of salvation under the “old” covenants<sup>14</sup> it is possible to see the “type” of Jesus Christ in this history. The term “type” (from the Greek *typoi*, “examples” or “figures”) refers to a foreshadowing of the Christian dispensation in the persons and events of the Old Testament. Just as Jesus Himself could refer to Jonah as the symbol of His resurrection (Mt. 12.39-40; 16.4; Lk. 11.32), so St. Paul found in the Israelites crossing the Red Sea the “type” of baptism (1 Cor. 10.1-6), and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews found a type of Christ in Melchizedek (Heb. 7). However, a type is not allegory, for the historical significance of the person or event is not lost sight of.

Typology was extremely popular in the early Church (especially among the Alexandrian Fathers, such as St. Clement), to whom almost everything was capable of interpretation as a type. However, their method was more allegorical than grounded in historical reference, and this tendency to allegory was corrected by St. Augustine of Hippo. A more modern, and perhaps the best known, example is the libretto prepared by Charles Jennens and G. F. Händel for the latter’s oratorio *Messiah*.

The *Psalms* have always been considered a special case. Although tradition ascribes the authorship of many of the psalms to David, the psalms are thought of as David (or other writers) speaking for the Lord. The use of the Psalter in the Daily Office is, therefore, a form of praying daily using the utterances of the Lord Himself, as an example of Jesus sharing in all human conditions and emotions. Many commentaries on the psalms have stressed Christian typology in their interpretation. Salient examples include those of St. Hilary of Poitiers, St. Augustine of Hippo, and Bl. John Mason Neale. The psalm which contains the type of Christ *par excellence* is Ps. 22. Indeed, when Jesus utters His last words (Mark 15.34; Matthew 27.46), “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”), He is reciting the first line of Psalm 22. A reading of Ps. 22 reveals that these words—while despairing—are the beginning of a prayer which concludes in the assurance that the LORD delivers.

The Old Testament passages which are commonly thought to refer to the coming of the Christ include:

### **The Messiah is Promised**

1. Gen. 22.18: By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves. (*See also* Gen. 28.14).
2. Gen 49.10: The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs.
3. Ps. 132.11: One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.

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<sup>14</sup> In Romans 11, St. Paul makes it clear that the “old” covenant between the LORD and the Jews remains in force.

## **The Incarnation is Foretold by the Prophets**

1. Isa. 7.14: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
2. Jer. 23.5: Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
3. Jer. 31.22: How long will you waver, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing on the earth: a woman protects a man.
4. Hag. 2.8: I will shake all nations, so that the *treasures*<sup>15</sup> of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts.

## **Christ a Mighty King**

1. Ps. 2.6: I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.
2. Isa. 41.2: Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step? He gives up nations before him, so that he tramples kings under foot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.

## **Christ, the Savior of the World**

1. Isa. 53.4-9: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not 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, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.
2. Isa. 62.11: Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
3. Jer. 23.6: In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'
4. Mal. 3.2: But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? "For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.
5. Zech. 9.9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass.

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<sup>15</sup> The Vulgate tradition invariably translates this word as "desired".

### **Christ as High Priest and Mediator**

1. Ps. 110.4: The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchiz'edek."

### **Jesus' Victory upon the Cross**

1. Hab. 3.4-6: His brightness was like the light, rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed close behind. He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered, the everlasting hills sank low. His ways were as of old.
2. Isa. 9.6-7: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.
3. Isa. 53.10-12: Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

### **Jesus' Redemption of Sinners by His Blood**

1. Isa. 43.25: I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
2. Isa. 52.3: For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money."

### **Jesus, Judge of the Living and the Dead**

1. Dan. 7.10: ... the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.
2. Dan 7.13-14: I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
3. Isa. 14.27: For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?

*That's just the Old Testament!* What about the history of salvation with the coming of the Christ? First, look back at the outline on page 28, above (Roman Rule). In that outline, the life of Christ is described, but we also need to look at the life of the Church.

***Life of Christ:*** The Gospels make it clear that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law, and the fulfillment of all that the prophets foretold. Jesus makes His relationship to the Law and the prophets clear at Matthew 5.17, “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Jesus also identifies Himself with the God of the Old Testament. At Exodus 3.14, the LORD identifies His Name to Moses as “I AM”. This is really a Hebrew verb which denotes continuing action: “I was; I am; I will be.” In John, Jesus is quoted eight times as identifying Himself to the disciples with the Greek phrase *ego eimi*. In recording these words the evangelists are rendering in Greek what Jesus said in Hebrew (or Aramaic): I AM. This is why the Pharisees and Temple authorities seek to kill Jesus. For example, at John 8.58 He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” The Pharisees seek to stone Him for what they deem to be blasphemy.

Remember, Jesus is not just “a way” to God; He *is* God, and He makes this clear, saying, for example, “I and the Father are one” (John 10.29) and “He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me” (John 12.44). *In Jesus we participate in God.* Jesus uses the definite article (very rare in Hebrew, and also in the Greek of the Gospels), saying, “I am *the* Way, and *the* Truth, and *the* Life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14.6). This would be like saying in English “*the one and only*”.

***The Coming of the Holy Spirit:*** Jesus refers to His Father and to the Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is not named in the Gospels, but the three persons of the one God are named, and Jesus Himself commands that His disciples baptize “... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28.19). He promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14.16), and in fact breathes the Spirit on the disciples (John 20.22). The Spirit comes upon the Church at Pentecost (Acts 2), and even comes upon the unbaptized Cornelius (Acts 10.44ff). Where the Gospels focus on the life and teaching of Jesus the *Acts of the Apostles* focus on the birth of the Church. In Acts 1, Jesus tells the disciples that once the Spirit comes upon them, they will be witnesses to God in “Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” That’s what then happens in the rest of Acts. Stephen is killed in Jerusalem (Judea) as the first martyr, for witnessing to Jesus (Acts 7.54ff). Stephen’s speech in fact traces all of the salvation history we looked at above from the Old Testament, pointing out how all of that history points to the Christ.

Following Stephen’s death, Philip witnesses in Samaria (Acts 8), and then comes Paul, who takes the Gospel “to the end of the earth” (throughout the Roman Empire). Acts is about the truth that the spread of the Gospel is ordained.

In closing, recall that all of the conditions that allowed the Gospel to spread to all the world are here today. Quite apart from the providence of God, in the first three centuries after Christ, when the faith went from being a persecuted sect in Judea to the faith of the known world, what conditions obtained?

1. There was world peace (in the sense of no major warfare between nations).
  - That is true today.
2. There was a common language (Greek) of international commerce and communication.
  - That’s true today; it is now English.
3. There was the free movement of goods, and freedom of travel.
  - That’s true today.
4. Finally, there was great spiritual hunger.
  - That’s very much true today!