

Introduction to the Old Testament

- Revelation: How can God share His Life with us?
 - Lit. meaning: *removing the veil*
 - What's behind the Veil? = God's Plan
 - “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. In the fullness of time, God the Father sent his Son as the Redeemer and Savior of mankind, fallen into sin, thus calling all into his Church and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, making them adopted children and heirs of his eternal happiness.” CCC 1-25
 - Why Revelation?
 - Reason can only tell you *about* someone
 - Faith in Self-Revelation is needed to know *them*
 - Divine Pedagogy: the way God reveals Himself
 - Slowly, through stages.
 - Personally through Covenants/Testaments

- Inspiration: How do we know this is truly God's Revelation?
 - Lit. meaning: *breathed/spirited into*
 - 1 Cor. 2:11-13 “No one knows the mind of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.”
 - Who possesses the Spirit in fullness?
 - = Jesus Christ (the Spirit of the Lord is upon me...)
 - Jesus is primarily the Word of God, the Word made flesh and dwelt among us
 - This Word was received by Apostles (his witnesses) and ***handed on*** through the Word of Scripture
 - The Scriptures are secondarily the Word of God, God's Language into our language and written among us
 - Therefore, “The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord.” Dei Verbum
 - Who Authored the Bible
 - Just as Jesus is fully God and fully Man, so the Bible is truly the Word of God put down in human language
 - Human authors are real authors!
 - They are like living instruments
 - not simply “possessed” or given a seal of approval

- Canon: How do we know which books are Inspired?
 - Lit. meaning: *cane, rod* or *measure*
 - “But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know **from whom** you learned it, and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All scripture is inspired by God** and is useful for **teaching**, for **refutation**, for **correction**, and for **training** in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, **equipped** for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:14-17
 - Each book needed “canonized” – “Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the **traditions** that you were taught, either by an **oral statement** or by a **letter** of ours.” 2 Thess. 2:15
 - Scripture came out of Living Tradition of the Church
 - 3 Criteria used to determine Canon (especially for NT)
 - Orthodox: one, holy faith
 - Catholic: accepted everywhere (in early Church)
 - Apostolic: from the apostles or those who worked with them
 - Result: Catholic Canon – 46 OT books (including 7 Deuterocanonical) and 27 NT books
 - Reaction: Jewish Canon – 39 OT books, condemned 7 Deuterocanonical books and NT
 - Written in Greek, not Hebrew
 - Written after the “time of prophecy”
 - Used by Christians to show Jesus was the Messiah
 - Reaction: Protestant Canon – 39 OT books and 27 NT books
 - Removed 7 Deuterocanonical books because of doctrinal issues
 - Almost removed NT books, such as James
 - Ironically, these helped show Jesus was the Christ!
 - Reaction: Apocryphal Literature
 - Later Christian writings that contended to be Scriptural
 - Some are Good: Clement, Shepherd of Hermas, Didache, but not properly Scripture
 - Some are Twisted: Gnostic Gospels written to defend a doctrine contrary to Christian faith
 - Are the Canonical Scriptures reliable?
 - We do not possess a single *autograph* from any divine author, only copies of copies
 - Still, oldest fragments line up with later manuscripts
 - Dead Sea Scrolls discovered around 1945 showed faithful transmission of OT since before the time of Jesus!

- Interpretation: How do we read Inspired Books to receive God’s Revelation?
 - Literal Sense
 - Historical Context: How would the original audience understand this passage?
 - Literary Context: What type of literary genre is the human author making use of? (e.g. history, poetry, ancient biography, law, myth, letter...)
 - Narrative Context: How does the final canonical position of the text affect its interpretation?
 - Spiritual Sense
 - Allegorical Sense
 - Christ is the archetype of every other event in Scriptures
 - Teaches us Faith
 - Confirms our Identity
 - Moral Sense
 - Christ is the archetype of every action in our lives
 - Teaches us Love
 - Confirms our Mission
 - Anagogical Sense
 - Christ is the archetype for the Heavenly City of God
 - Teaches us Hope
 - Confirms our Destiny
 - Criteria for “Catholic/Whole” Reading of the Bible
 - Whole Scripture: be attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture
 - Whole Church: read the Scriptures within the living Tradition of the Church
 - Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church's heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God's Word
 - Whole Plan of Salvation: be attentive to the analogy of faith, which is the coherence of the truths of the faith among themselves in the whole plan of Revelation.

- Resources!
 - *Dei Verbum* “On the Word of God”, available online at vatican.va
 - “Catholic Introduction to the Old Testament” by Brant Pitre and John Bergsma
 - *Bible in a Year Podcast* by Fr. Mike Schmitz
 - Formed.org *Lectio* Series with Dr. Tim Gray

Wisdom Literature				
<u>Sirach</u> Also called “Ecclesiasticus” or “The Little Book of the Church”, it served as an early Biblical Catechism! Summary of the entire OT, spoken by Sira, and written by his grandson, ‘Jesus’.		<u>Wisdom</u> Perhaps the last book of the OT to be written, shortly before the coming of Christ. A “Bible Study” on Exodus looking toward a new Exodus and New Spirit		
<u>Proverbs</u> School of Solomon’s Wisdom Teaches the Purgative Way	<u>Ecclesiastes</u> “Vanity of vanities...” 1:2 “Remember your Creator...” 12:1 Teaches the Illuminative Way		<u>Song of Songs</u> “Set me as a seal upon your heart... deep waters cannot quench love...” 8:6 Teaches the Unitive Way Read during Passover	
<u>Job and Psalms</u> The School of Prayer Try 1, 16, 22, 23, 42, 51, 88, 89, 105, 110, 118, 139, 144, 150 Or Try praying part of the Liturgy of the Hours (Start with Night Prayer, iBreviary)				
Histories and Prophets				
<i>Davidic History</i>	<i>Post-Exilic History</i>		<i>Major Prophets</i>	<i>Minor Prophets (the Twelve)</i>
<u>Joshua</u> “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” 24:15 Entry into the Promise Land	<u>1&2 Chronicles</u> “I will be his father, and he shall be my son... I will confirm him in my house and his throne shall remain for ever.” 1C 17:13 Commentary on 1&2 Sam. and 1&2 Kings with hope for a new son of David after the Exile.		<u>Isaiah</u> Name means “God saves” just like Jesus “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son...” 7:14 “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...” 11:2 “A voice cries out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord...” 40:3 Suffering Servant: “by his wounds we are healed...” 53:5 “new heaven and new earth...” 66:22 Nicknamed the 5 th Gospel	<i>Pre-Exilic Prophets</i> <u>Amos</u> <u>Hosea</u> “I will say to Not-my-people, “you are my people.” And he will say, ‘you are my God” 2:23 <u>Jonah</u> <u>Micah</u> “Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God...” 6:8
<u>Judges</u> “Israel forsake the Lord... then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them...” 2:16 Pattern of God’s Salvation	<u>Tobit</u> “Weeping, Tobit exclaimed, “I can see you, son, the light of my eyes!” Then he prayed, “Blessed be God...” Tale about God bring Light to those in Exile		<u>Jeremiah</u> (with Lamentations and Baruch) “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” 1:5 Prophecy during Fall of Jerusalem “Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow...” L 1:12	<i>Exilic Prophets</i> <u>Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah</u>
<u>Ruth</u> “Where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” 1:16 Ruth, David’s Grandmother, joins the Covenant	<u>Judith</u> “When they came to her, all with one accord blessed [Judith], saying: “You are the glory of Jerusalem! You are the great pride of Israel! You are the great boast of our nation!” Judith celebrated for crushing the “head of the serpent”.		<u>Ezekiel</u> Prophet during the Exile “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you...” 36:26	<i>Post-Exilic Prophets</i> <u>Joel</u> “I will pour my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...” 2:28 <u>Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah</u> “on that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem... and the Lord will become king over all the earth.” 14:8 <u>Malachi</u> “Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me...” 3:1
<u>1&2 Samuel</u> “The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart; and the Lord has appointed him to be prince over his people.” 1S 13:14 David is Chosen as King	<u>Esther</u> “Now on the third day, Esther... won [the king’s] favor and he extended toward her the golden scepter he held.” 5:2 The intercession of Queen Esther saves those in Exile.		<u>Daniel</u> Prophet of the Exile, foretells Son of Man and coming of the Kingdom “In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...” 2:44	
<u>1&2 Kings</u> “Since you have not kept my covenant, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant.” 1K 11:11 The Fall of the Line of David	<u>1&2 Maccabees</u> “Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it.” 1M 4:36 War for the Kingdom of God and to take back the Temple.			
Torah or Pentateuch				
<u>Genesis</u> “In the beginning...” The generation of the People of God	<u>Exodus</u> “The Names...” God gives His Name and calls His People by Name out of Egypt.	<u>Leviticus</u> “And [the Lord] called...” His People are called to “be holy as I am holy.”	<u>Numbers</u> “In the desert...” Trials in the Wilderness toward the Promise Land	<u>Deuteronomy</u> “the Words...” A “Second” Account of the Law given on the edge of the Promise Land.

