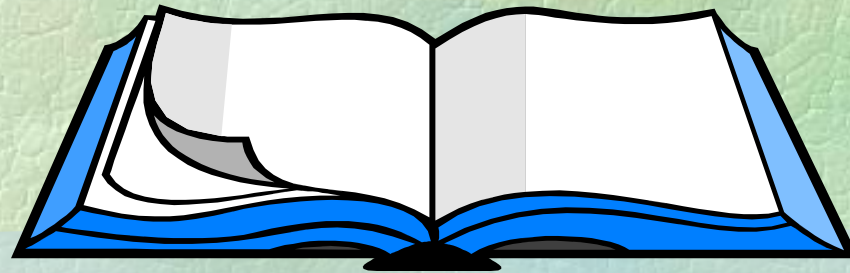


How To Read The Bible



For All Its Worth!

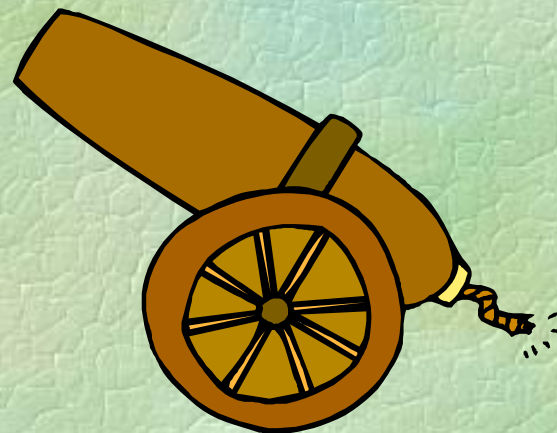
Goals For This Class

- To give a basic approach to understanding the biblical text
- To examine historical methods of interpretation
- To consider other methods of interpretation
- To promote unity of shared understanding
- To relate elders' views on interpretation

Not Goals For This Class

- To ensure everybody believes what I do
- To ensure everybody believes the same thing
- To debate controversial passages of scripture
- To negate or endorse any particular interpretative approach
- To confuse, frustrate, or agitate truthseekers

The Canon



Definition of “canon”

- “a straight rod”
- “a carpenter’s rule”
- The Canon of Truth - 367 AD

Canonical Books

- Authentic
- Genuine
- Of divine authority
- Inspired by God

Uncanonical Books

- The Apocrypha
- The Shepherd of Hermas
- The Epistle of Barnabas

Why Was A Canon Necessary?

- Death of apostles and prophets
- Other writings purported to be inspired
- Edict of Diocletian in 302 AD

Origin Of The Bible

Bible Origins

- Bible comes from the Greek word biblia
- biblia means books
- Old Testament books were written over a time period of about 1100 years
- Originally teaching was passed down verbally by oral tradition
- Ultimately written on clay, parchment, papyrus or vellum by scribes

Old Testament

- Written between 1400 - 400 BC
- Moses commanded books of law be put in the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:9,26)
- Later placed in temple with books from Joshua through David and Solomon added
- 50 years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra collected “sacred writings” and added the major and minor prophets
- Compiled by Ezra and Nehemiah in 400 BC

Septuagint

- Greek Translation
 - completed by 130 AD
 - included all 39 books
 - probably used by Jesus and disciples
- Old Testament canon fixed in 100 AD at Jamnia

New Testament Beginnings

- Early Christians used the Jewish scriptures
- Christian Oral Tradition from 30-100 AD
- Paul and others wrote letters to early churches to deal with problems and issues
- Later two apostles and two close acquaintances of Jesus wrote personal testimonies
- John wrote his Revelation from Patmos
- written between 50-100 AD
- written in Greek

New Inspired Books

- Paul claimed his teaching inspired of God (I Cor 2:7-13)
- John did also for his Revelation (Rev 1:2)
- Paul intended his epistles to be read aloud (Col 4:16)
- Paul wrote “these things” might remain “after his departure” (II Pet 1:15; 3:1-2)
- Paul quoted as Scripture Matt 10:10, Luke 10:7 (I Tim 5:18)
- Peter calls Paul’s epistles “other scripture” (II Peter 3:15-16)

Appearance Of First N.T. Books

- Palestine
 - Matthew, James, Hebrews
- Asia Minor
 - John, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, Philemon, Peter, Johns, Jude, Revelation
- Greece
 - Corinthians, Philippians, Thessalonians, Luke?
- Crete
 - Titus
- Rome
 - Mark, Acts, Romans

Early Writers Quote N.T. Books

- Ignatius AD 110
- Papias AD 70-155
- The Didache AD 80-120
- Barnabas AD 90-120
- Hermas AD 100-140
- Tatian AD 160
- Justin Martyr AD 140

Constantine

“I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order 50 copies of the Sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be the most needful for the instruction of the church, to be written on prepared parchment, in a legible manner, and in a commodious and portable form, by transcribers thoroughly practised in their art.”

Homologoumena & Antilegomena

- 20 books acknowledged as genuine
 - Gospels, Acts, Paul's epistles, I John, I Peter
- 7 books scrutinized for stylistic differences and added in the 4th century
 - Hebrews, II-III John, II Peter, Jude, James, Revelation

The Apocryphal Books

- I-II Esdras
- Tobit
- Judith
- Esther
- Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus
- Baruch
- Song of the 3 Children
- Story of Susannah
- Bel and the Dragon
- Prayer of Manasses
- I-II Macabees

New Testament Canon

- 27 New Testament books generally agreed upon by 100 AD
- Council of Carthage held in 387 AD
- Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria pens letter naming the 27 books

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

Hermeneutics Part II