



**And God Said What?**

# An Introduction to Bible Study for Catholics

# The Direction of Intention


**My God, give me the grace  
to perform this action with you  
and through love for you.**

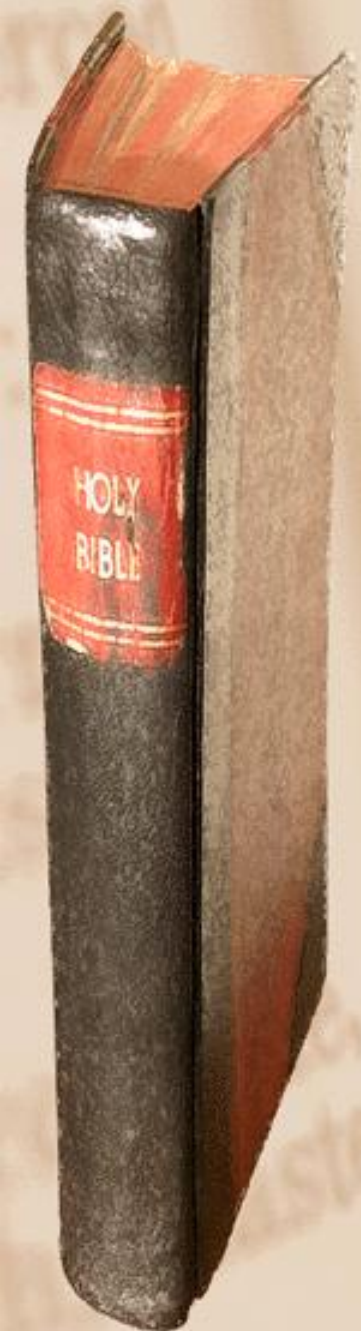
**In advance, I offer to you  
all the good that I will do  
and accept all the difficulty I may meet  
therein.**

**Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.  
St. Francis de Sales, Pray for us**



# An Overview

- 
- 📖 What is the Bible?
  - 📖 Literary Forms – Myth, Legend, Debate
  - 📖 Literary Forms – Fiction, Songs, Narratives
  - 📖 What is a Gospel?
  - 📖 The Infancy Narratives
  - 📖 The Miracle Stories
  - 📖 Parables and Allegories
  - 📖 The New Testament Letters
  - 📖 The Book of Revelation



What does it mean  
when we say that  
Sacred Scripture  
was revealed by  
God?



# What is the Bible?

- 
- 📖 The Bible is not ONE Book
    - Many Books
    - Many Authors
    - Many Literary Forms
    - Written Over Many Centuries
  - 📖 Written about historical events
    - BUT NOT a HISTORY
  - 📖 The Oral Tradition Phase
  - 📖 The Written Tradition Phase
  - 📖 The Editing Phase
  - 📖 The Canon



# Historical Events Behind the Bible



## **2000 BC Birth of Abraham**



2000-1500 BC Book of Job, possibly the oldest book, is written



1500-1400 BC Slavery in Egypt and Exodus Mount Sinai



1000 BC David is king of Israel



## **621 BC Torah in use in the Jerusalem temple**



587-539 BC Babylonian Captivity



250 BC Old Testament translated into Greek



167 BC Judas Maccabeus Revolt



140 BC Essenes found community at Qumran



## **AD 6-4 Birth of Jesus**



AD 33 Crucifixion and Resurrection



## **AD 50 First letter to Thessalonians written**



AD 69 Mark writes his Gospel



AD 70 Romans destroy Jerusalem temple –



## **AD80 Christians Expelled from Synagogues**




AD100 Old Testament finalized

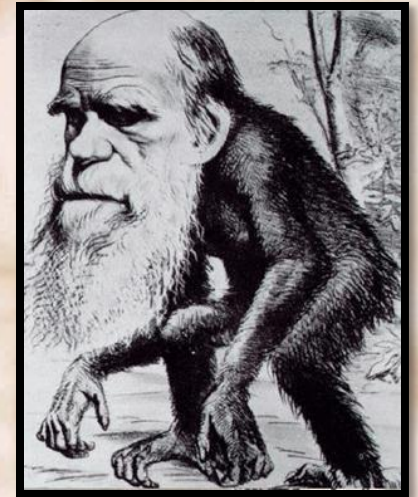


## **100-400 Lists of New Testament books in church fathers; variety in book order continues**



# Oral Tradition

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- 📖 Which came first:  
**SCRIPTURE OR TRADITION?**
  - 📖 Problems with Fundamentalism
    - Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925
  - 📖 Accuracy of Oral Tradition
  - 📖 Not Exact Quotations
  - 📖 Not Historical Social Setting
  - 📖 Not Exact Historic Chronology
  - 📖 Presumed Knowledge Not Repeated



**How do  
we do  
HISTORY?**



# Ancient

While recording the tradition,  
interprets their meaning for  
the tribe.

Uses oral sources with few  
written documents or lists.

Can include several parallel  
versions of the same story.

# Modern

Attempts to reconstruct past  
events objectively and  
accurately.

Relies on documents and  
written records.

Sorts out the conflicting  
accounts to find the "right"  
one.

# Ancient

Relies on fixed types of literary descriptions or motifs.

Gives rough approximations of dates and places.

Uses a "common sense" approach that is not dependent on every fact.

# Modern

Tries to get "behind" the literary genres and narrative modes to find out what really happened.

Carefully searches out the chronology and locations.

Uses all the critical tools and means of information to check sources and their claims.

# Written Tradition

## Difference between Old and New Testaments – Old Testament

- Parts written over many centuries
- Incorporation of many oral traditions
- Rings of a tree
- Example I  
Creation Stories
- Example II  
Great Flood

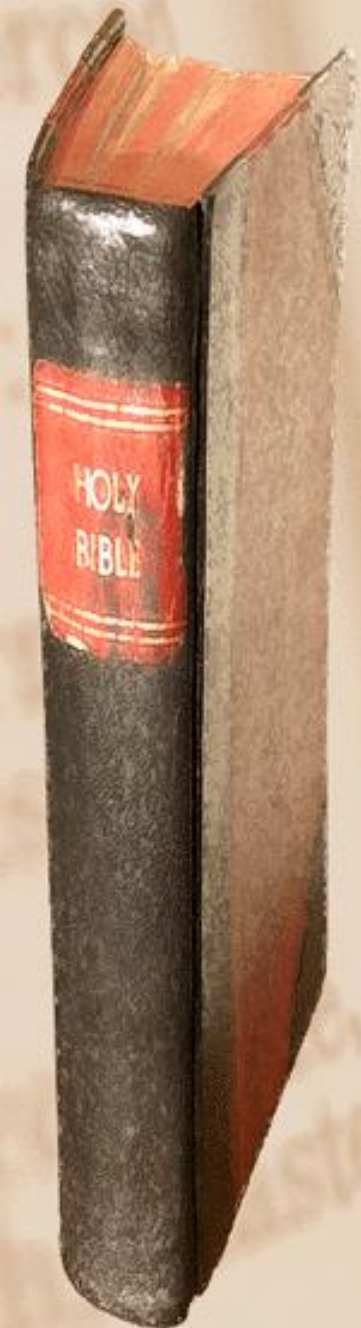




# Written Tradition

## Difference between Old and New Testaments – **The New Testament**

- All Parts completed within a century
- Incorporation of a few oral traditions
- Much written by eye witnesses



# Editing Tradition



## Editing the Old Testament

- Process done over many centuries and done many times
- Implications and Ramifications
  - Books not in Historical Order - thematic
    - Pentateuch – Torah
    - The Prophets
    - The Writings
  - Divergent Points of View
    - Ex. I and II Kings and I and II Sam
  - No Primary written accounts done by eye witnesses
    - Latter Traditions added to earlier stories
      - » Noah and Unclean animals



# Editing Tradition



## Editing the New Testament

- Process completed by the middle of the second century
- Implications and Ramifications
  - Books are in a more historical order
    - Gospels / Acts
    - The Letters
    - Revelation
  - Differing Points of View
    - Infancy Narratives – Passion Accounts
  - Primary written accounts done by eye witnesses



## Addition of Written Material After 1<sup>st</sup> Century

- Other Letters
- Apocryphal Gospels (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries)



# The Canon




## The Final Step



## The Communities Acceptance

- Reflected accurately religious belief and practice
- The Jewish Community
  - 150 BC Last Book of Old Testament Accepted as canonical
- The Christian Community
  - Justin Martyr – AD 150 speaks of 4 canonical Gospels
  - 325 – Council of Nicaea
  - 1546 – Council of Trent – formalizes Roman Canon

# Inspiration and Revelation

 What does it mean when we say that Sacred Scripture was revealed by God?