

***Criteria of Selection Summary*** (Luke T. Johnson in *The Writings of the New Testament*)

1. Composition – contains contexts of preaching, worship (liturgy) & teaching
2. Use – refers to the use in liturgical celebrations (we don't read Gandhi at Mass)
3. Collection – there were many collections used by various Bishops in different Sees/Dioceses
4. Selection – they knew these were approved by the apostles (compare to gnostic and other writings)
5. Ratification – came from lists drawn up by Bishops as to what should be read in liturgy (Councils)

***Old Testament (46) – Augustine: “The New is hidden in the Old and the Old is revealed in the New.”***

OT has three parts written between 1440–50 BC

Law – First 5 books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy

Writings (wisdom literature) – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Sirach & Wisdom

Prophets (includes historical books) – the rest of the OT

***Some OT Highlights***

- Elijah & Elisha – 9<sup>th</sup> century BC (800s) Northern Kingdom (Israel)
- Amos & Hosea – 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (700s) Southern Kingdom (Judah); first ones to be written down
- Isaiah (742-687 BC in Jerusalem) & Micah (similar) – disciples take notes, start recording prophecy
- 167-50 BC – Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Daniel, Esther, Tobit & Judith written

***Disputed OT books (Deuterocanon)***

Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch (sometimes part of Jeremiah), Judith, Tobit, 1 & 2 Maccabees (plus 6 chapters in Ester & 3 chapters in Daniel)

***New Testament (27 books) – Fulfills the Old Testament***

4 parts: Gospels, Pauline Letters, Catholic Letters & Johannine Writings written between about 49–100 AD

***Gospels (5 including Acts)***

Mark – 65; near time Peter & Paul were martyred in Rome

Luke & Acts – 75; companion volumes by the Greek Physician for the Greek-speaking communities of the Roman Empire

Matthew – 80; for Jewish Christians in Palestine & Syria

John – btw 90–100; most likely in Ephesus (John & Mary lived there) to counter Gnostic writings

***Pauline Letters (13 – 14 books & first unified writings)***

49–51 – 1 & 2 Thessalonians

54–59 – Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans

60–67 – 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus (Pastoral letters – Pauline authorship disputed)

61–63 – Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians (Captivity letters from Caesarea, Ephesus & Rome)

Before 97 – Hebrews (Tradition attributes to Paul, authorship disputed since earliest times & if dated after 67 true since Paul was beheaded in Rome; quoted in Pope Clement of Rome's letter to Corinthians ~96 AD)

***Catholic (Universal) Letters (4 books addressed everyone instead of a specific community)***

James (before 62), Peter 1 & 2 (64-67, 2 Peter modern guess ~100-125), Jude (70-80)

***Johannine Writings (4 books)***

1-3 John – btw 90–100; most likely in Ephesus (John & Mary lived there) to counter Gnostic writings

Revelation – 64-96 Patmos; may have been partially written and finished later. Uses writing form popular from 200BC – 200AD, apocalyptic (crisis) literature is similar in style to Ezekiel (~600BC) & Daniel. These books were written during times of persecution to strengthen faith and give hope using symbolic language.

**Inspiration** (2 Tim 3:16-17) – *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.* God is the primary (*principal*) author of the bible who inspired each writer (*instrumental authors*) to write precisely what God intended

**Inerrancy** – God cannot lie or make mistakes, so Inspiration requires Inerrancy; this does not mean it contains all truth about every subject, but that it contains no error about our salvation

**Scriptural Senses** [CC 115-119](#) *Letter-deeds; Moral-how to act; Allegory-faith; Anagogy-our destiny*

1. Literal Sense – “meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis following rules of sound interpretation”; read Scripture based on the rules of the literary forms of writing such as narratives, poems, letters, parables, apocalyptic visions
2. 3 Spiritual Senses – all three based on literal sense (Aquinas “can be signs”)
  - a. Moral – how we live
  - b. Allegorical – significance in Christ; spiritual/prophetic meaning
  - c. Anagogical – leading (future), eternal significance (Church on earth sign of heavenly Jerusalem)

### **Criteria for Biblical Interpretation**

1. Be attentive *to the content and unity of the whole Scripture* (112) – context of passage & all Scripture
2. Read Scripture within *the living Tradition of the whole Church* (113) – living Tradition is sermons & homilies, prayer and meditation, Christian art, liturgical celebrations (lex orandi, lex credendi), etc.
3. *Be attentive to the analogy of faith* (114–*the coherence of the truths of the faith among themselves & within the whole plan of salvation*) – Scripture is divinely inspired & internally coherent & consistent with all doctrines & dogmas; So Church dogmas (Immaculate Conception, Real Presence, Infallibility of the Pope, etc.) are not *added to* Scripture, but are the Church’s infallible interpretation *of* Scripture

### **Reading Scripture**

§1 A plenary indulgence (removes all punishment due to forgiven sin) is granted to the faithful who read the Sacred Scriptures as spiritual reading, from a text approved by competent authority and with the reverence due to the divine word, for at least a half an hour; if the time is less, the indulgence will be partial.

§2 If for some good reason a person is unable to read the Sacred Scriptures, a plenary or partial indulgence is granted, as above, if the text of Sacred Scripture is listened to while another person is reading or if it is heard by means of a video or audio recording. (USCCB Manual of Indulgences, 1999)

### **Recommendations to Get Started**

NT: Gospels, Acts; OT: Genesis, Exodus 1-20, Writings (see above), Judith, Tobit, Ruth

### **Practical Application –Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)**

A meditative reading of Scripture consisting of four elements

1. Lectio – reading (careful repetitious recitation of short text – turning it over in your mind leading to #2)
2. Meditatio – mediation, to think about (understand meaning and apply it to one’s own life leading to #3)
3. Oratio – prayer (response to text requesting grace or closer union with God leading to #4)
4. Contemplatio – contemplation (gazing at/on something for a while)

Three ways to look at the four parts:

1. Reading seeks; meditation finds (meaning); prayer demands; contemplation tastes (God)
2. Reading provides solid food; meditation chews; prayer achieves savor; contemplation refreshing sweetness
3. Reading – surface; meditation – substance; prayer demands by desire; contemplation experiences by delight