

Overview

New Testament (27 books) – doe not abolish the Old Teastament, but fulfills it

Gospels, Pauline Letters, Catholic Letters & Revelation written about 50-100 AD, possibly as late as 125

Gospels (8 including Acts & 1-3 John)

Mark – written 65 AD around the time Peter & Paul were martyred in Rome

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

Matthew – written 80 AD for Jewish Christians in Palestine & Syria

John & 1-3 John – written from 90-100 AD, most likely in Ephesus (where John was exiled with Mary, Jesus' mother); Written specifically to counter the claims of the Gnostics and seems to have been edited and reworded by his disciples (redaction very common)

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

50-51 AD – 1 & 2 Thessalonians

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

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

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

Before 97 AD – Hebrews (Tradition attributes to Paul, authorship disputed and validated if dated after 67 since Paul was beheaded in Rome; quoted in the Clement of Rome's letter to Corinthians 96 AD)

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

James (before 62 AD), Peter 1 (64-67 AD) & 2 (probably 100-125 AD), Jude (70-80 AD)

Revelation or Apocalypse (1 book)

64-96 AD – The book may have been partially written earlier and finished later. Uses writing form popular from 200BC – 200AD called apocalyptic (crisis) literature. Similar in style to Ezekiel & Daniel, these books were written during times of persecution. Purpose: strengthen faith and give hope using symbolic language.

Inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) – God is the primary author of the bible who inspired each writer to write precisely what God intended; The Holy Spirit is the *principal* author of Scripture and the human authors are the *instrumental* authors

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

How to Read Scripture

Senses of Scripture

1. Literal Sense – Discover the meaning of the words and expressions used by the biblical writers; this does not mean to interpret everything literally, for there are other types of writings such as figurative, symbolic; we read Scripture based on the rules of the literary forms of writing such as narratives, poems, letters, parables, apocalyptic visions
2. 3 Spiritual Senses – deeds & events in the Bible are charged with meaning beyond what appears
 - a. Allegorical – Unveils the spiritual & prophetic meaning; how people, events & institutions point beyond themselves toward greater mysteries yet to come in the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14) or display the fruits of mysteries already revealed in the New Testament (John 6:1–14)
 - b. Moral (Tropological) – Reveals how actions of God's people in the OT & Jesus in the NT cause us to form virtuous habits in our own lives (Luke 16:18)
 - c. Anagogical – Points to heavenly glory; events prefigure final union with God in eternity – typology (1 Peter 3:20-21)

Criteria for Biblical Interpretation

1. Be attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture (CCC 112) – context of a passage and the entirety of Scripture
2. Read Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church (CCC 113) – living Tradition is sermons of bishops and clergy, prayer and meditation, Christian art, liturgical celebrations (lex orandi, lex credendi) & through oral tradition
3. Be attentive to the analogy of faith (CCC 114; cf. Rom 12:6) – places scriptural texts within the framework of faith (if Scripture is divinely inspired, then it is internally coherent & consistent with all doctrines Christians believe) – the 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

Practical Application – A Catholic way to read scripture: Lectio (Reading) Divinia (Divine)

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 – meditation, 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

Bibliography

- ✓ Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: New Testament, RSV 2nd Catholic Edition (2001) with Introduction, Commentary & Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch (pgs x – xii)
- ✓ New American Bible (1970) article **How the Bible Came About** by Jerome Kodell, OSB
- ✓ New Jerome Biblical Commentary (1990, 1968) by Raymond E. Brown, SS, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, SJ and Roland E. Murphy, OCarM
- ✓ Originally at <http://blog.myspace.com/jaeg> (removed) for a summation of Lectio Divinia
- ✓ Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, 1994)

Posted on my website <http://melekali.50megs.com/Writings/Index.html>