

Holy Bible

READ
ME!

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come into your presence. Jesus, we know you are here and love us. Thank you, Lord, that we belong to you. Thank you, Jesus, that you want to speak to our hearts through Scripture. Open our hearts as we reflect upon your word. Come, Holy Spirit, and enlighten our minds to Your truth. - Amen

Reading the Bible

- **Most of us read the Bible primarily for our own spiritual well being (prayerful reading)**
- **Some however, may read the Bible for:**
 - **Serious theological study (faith based)**
 - **Serious scholastic study (secular)**
 - **Public reading (lectors)**
 - **Critical analysis (historical, scientific, literary)**
 - **Curiosity**
- **Prayerful readers sometimes step across the line into theological study (whether intentionally or unintentionally,,, it happens)**

Beware Academic Seduction

“We can study the entire history of salvation, we can study all of theology, but without the Spirit, we cannot understand.”

- Pope Francis, homily during Mass, April 28, 2015

“Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.”

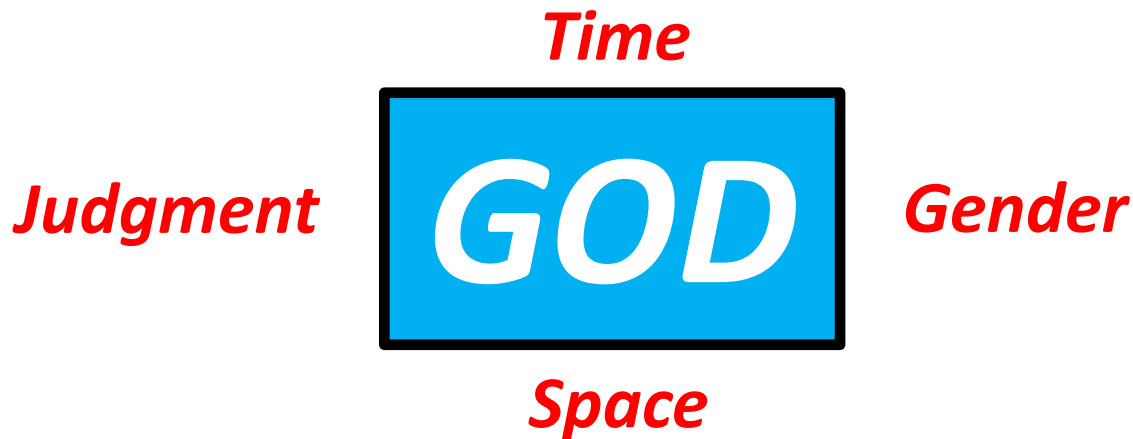
- The words of Jesus Christ, from Matthew 11:25

Vatican II, Dei Verbum 11

“Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures.”

Do Not Put God in a Box!

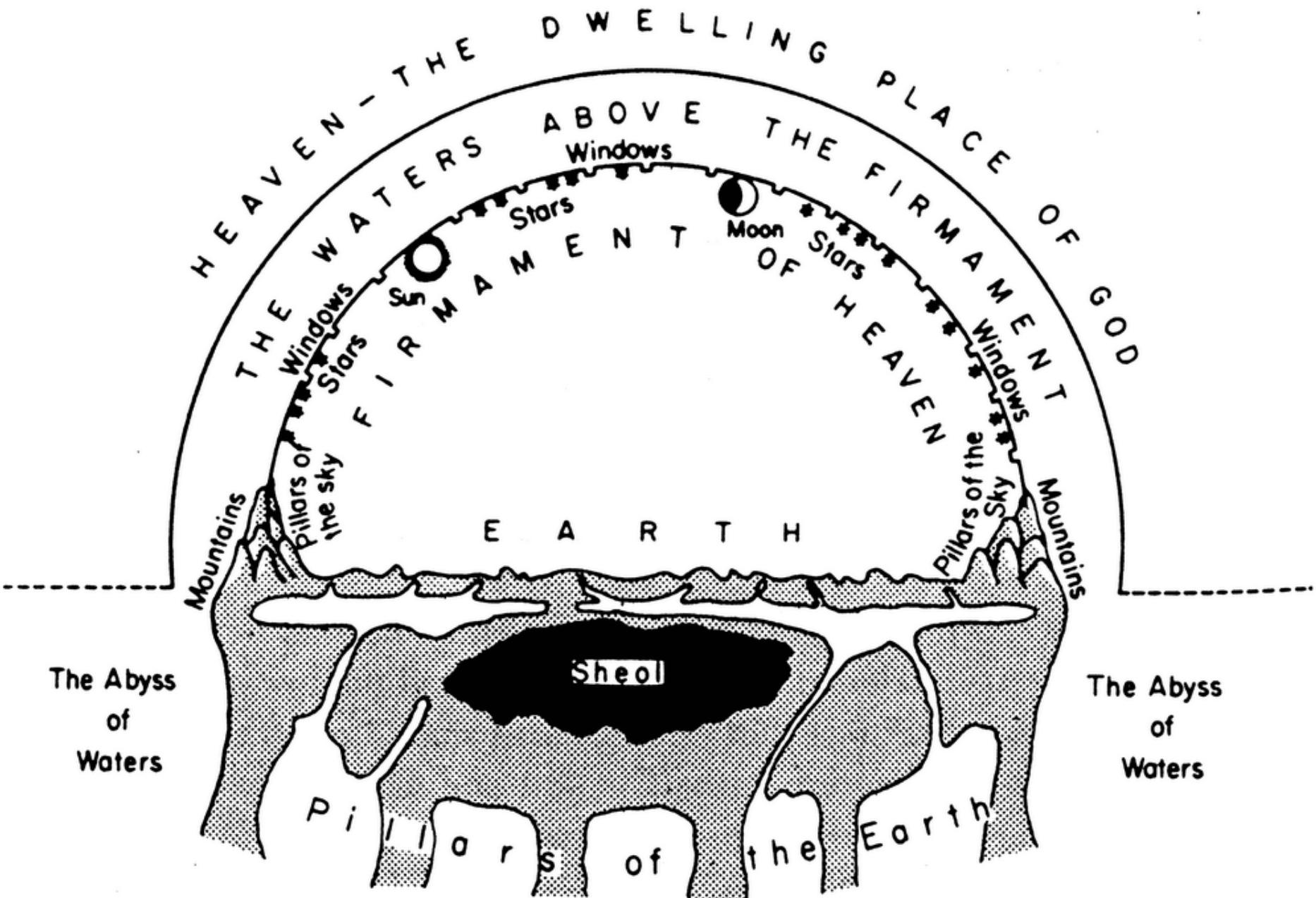
- Remember as you read: God is eternal and completely without limits
- God is the creator of everything humanity has discovered and everything yet to be discovered about our physical universe
- Beware putting human limits on God – the unlimited creator of the universe



Bible in Context

- **The Bible is a library of books with many different literary genres (CCC 110)**
 - It contains; poetry, songs, letters, history, myth, prayers, parables, stories, etc.... (i.e. GN 1-11)
- **“In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way” (CCC 109)**
- **Remember the social, cultural, and traditional setting where/when the inspired author lived**
- **Man’s mind is remains finite, even when supernaturally elevated by divine revelation**

How Biblical Writers Viewed the World

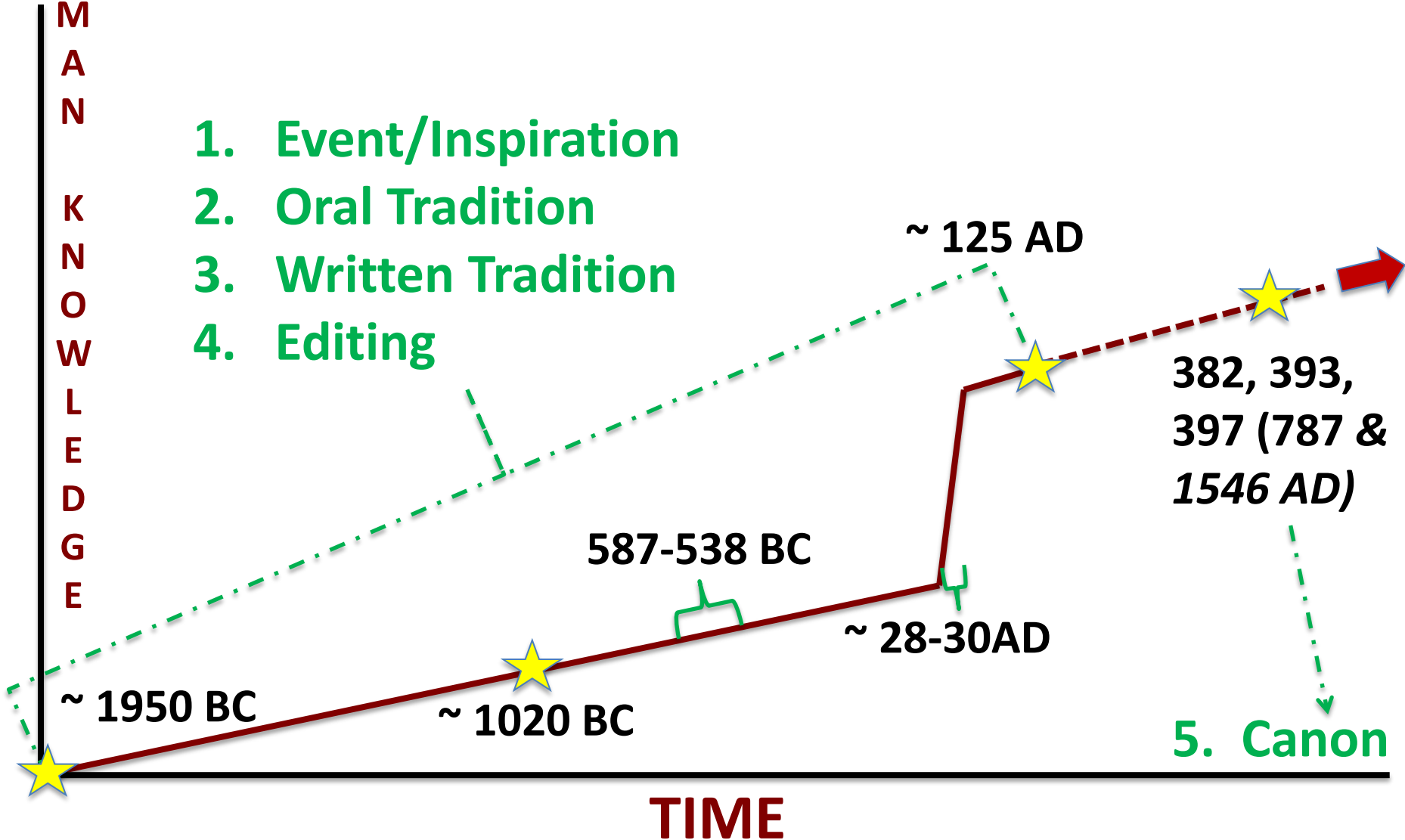


5 Contextual Considerations

- 1. The literary form**
- 2. The social, cultural, traditional setting + the divinely inspired author's audience (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn)**
- 3. Where does the reading, chapter, verse fit on the revelation timeline**
- 4. The whole scene, conversation, audience**
- 5. How can man describe the indescribable – God? (images, metaphors, etc,,,)**

Biblical Revelation Process

1. Event/Inspiration
2. Oral Tradition
3. Written Tradition
4. Editing



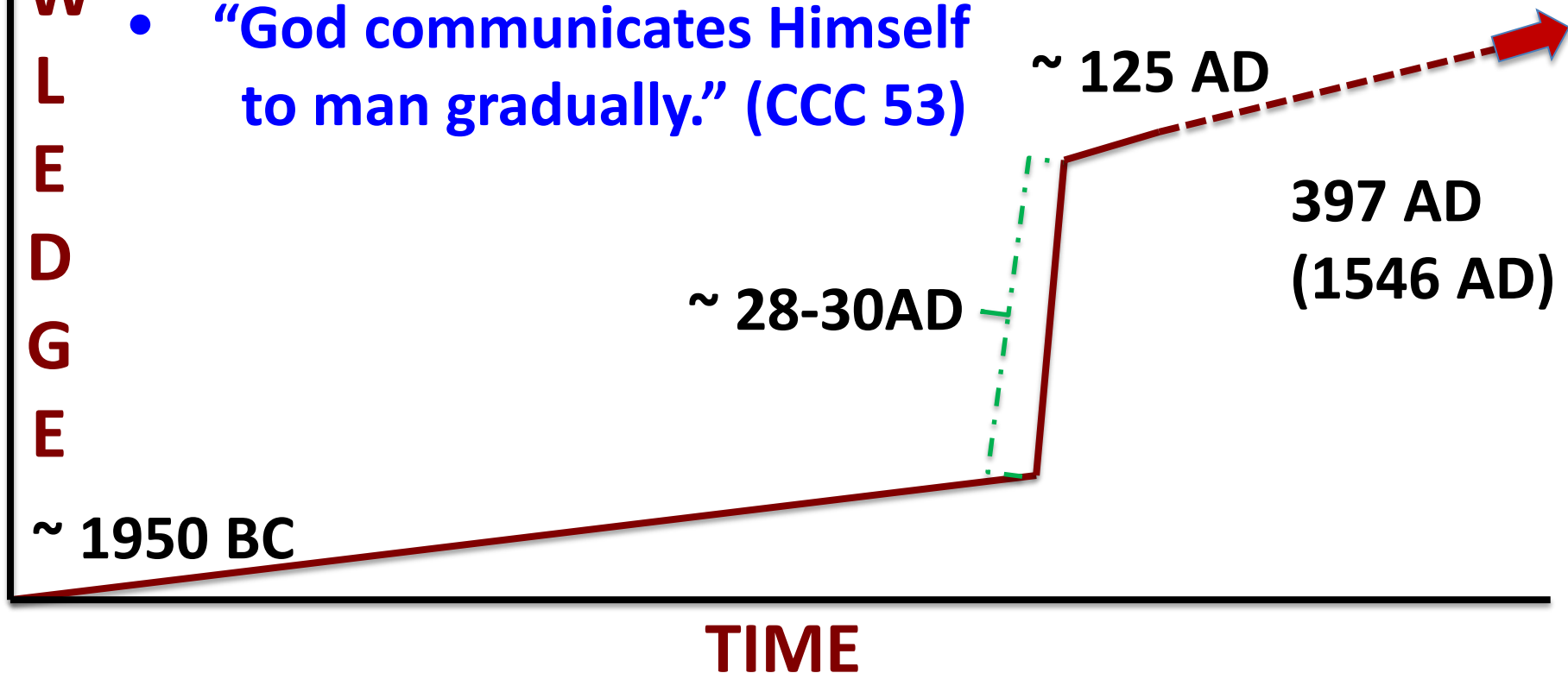
The Bible is a Journey

- View the Bible as our human journey through a growing awareness of God and our universe
- The written revelation of God's limitless love spanned over 2000 years of salvation history and was not fully revealed until the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Everything in the Bible is truth for our salvation,,,
- But you must use the whole Bible to discover Biblical truth (beware cherry-picking by verse)
- “Be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture” (CCC 112)

Humankind's Relationship with God

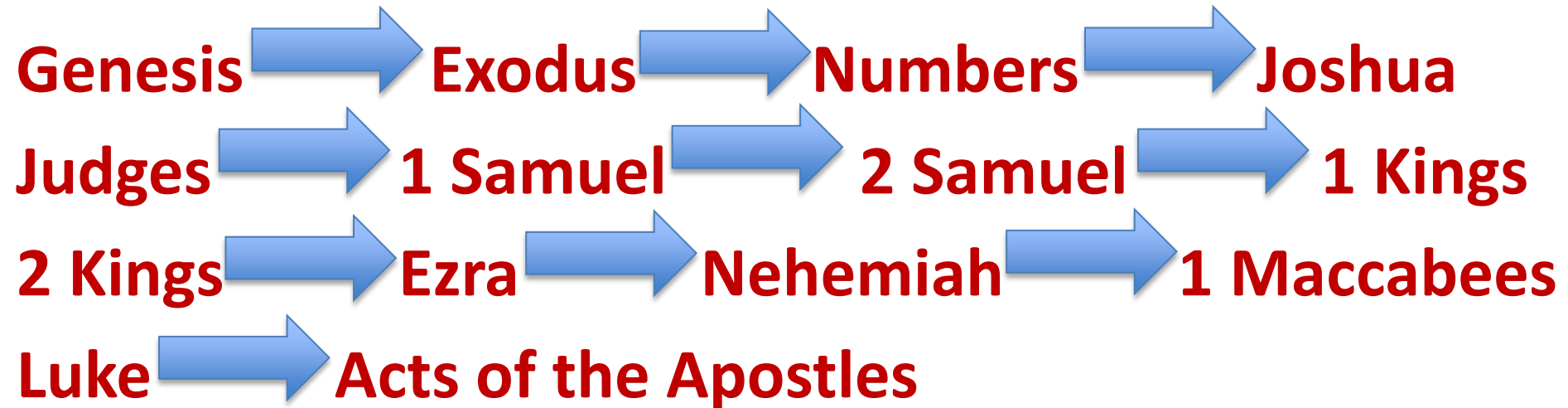
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- Our relationship with God and understanding of our own universe has matured over time
- Our relationship with God continues to mature beyond the written word through Sacred Tradition
- “God communicates Himself to man gradually.” (CCC 53)



The Overarching Story

- These 14 books present a narrative flow for the Bible's Salvation Story; "The Big Picture"



- If you want to read the whole Bible, consider reading these 14 – before you try cover to cover

The Bible is a Love Story

- Never forget; the Bible is the Inspired Word of God, free from error, teaching what God desires us to know “**for the sake of our salvation!**”
- It teaches what we need to:
 - Be in right relationship with God (covenant love)
 - Know with absolute certainty God does love us
 - Know what God would have us do to build up His kingdom of love on earth
- Always seek “salvation truth” and don’t stumble over historical or scientific inconsistencies
- Always remember; **The Bible is a Book of Faith!**

The Bible Story and ***“Predestination”***

- **God exists in eternity**
- **“To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore He establishes His eternal plan of ‘predestination,’ He includes in it each persons freely given response.” CCC 600**
- **God immediately knows every “yes” and every “no” ever spoken throughout eternity but God never forces anyone’s response.**

Prepare Before you Read

- Sit quietly in silence and ask the Holy Spirit in prayer to guide your Scriptural reading
- Achieve a calm and tranquil state of mind
- Ask Jesus to be present (maybe light a candle)

Read the Bible First

- “My personal advice:” Do Not start with a scholar’s commentary before you read the Bible
- You may inadvertently prevent God from speaking directly to your heart because you’ve allowed a scholar to tell you “what it means” first

Speak Lord

- As you finish your reading always sit quietly, open your heart, and allow God to speak
- “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening”
- 1 Samuel 3:9
- Pray as you finish
 - Contemplate what you’ve read
 - Surrender to the Lord (this is hard to do)
 - Be willing to change (even harder to do)

“To the servant of God every place is the right place, and every time is the right time.”

- St. Catherine of Siena

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

likened to

“Feasting On the Word”

- First take a bite – **READ** slowly (Lectio)
- Next you chew on it – **MEDITATE**
- Savor the essence of it – **PRAY**
- Digest the word and make it part of your body and the soul – **CONTEMPLATE**

“In books we seek God, In prayer we find him.
Prayer is the key which opens God’s heart.”

- Saint Padre Pio

Seek God's Path of Love

“The entire point of religion is to make us humble before God and to open us to the path of love. Everything else is more or less a footnote. Liturgy, prayer, the precepts of the Church, the commandments, sacraments, sacramentals—all of it—are finally meant to conform us to the way of love. When they instead turn us away from that path, they have been undermined.”

- Bishop Robert Barron, Gospel Meditation on Jn16:23-28, 6/1/19



Surrender Prayer

Loving Father,

I surrender to you with all of my heart and soul. Please come into my heart in a deeper way. I say, “Yes” to you today. I open all of the secret places of my heart to you and say, “Come on in.” Jesus, you are Lord of my whole life. I believe in you and receive you as my Lord and Savior. I hold nothing back! Holy Spirit, bring me to a deeper conversion to the person of Jesus Christ. I surrender all to you; my health, my family, my resources, occupation, skills, relationships, time management, successes, and failures. I release it all and let it all go. I surrender my understanding of how things ‘ought’ to be, my choices and my will. I surrender to you the promises I have kept and the promises I have failed to keep. I surrender my weaknesses and strengths to you. I surrender my emotions, my fears, my insecurities, my sexuality. I especially surrender my personal journey to you Lord.

Lord God, I surrender my entire life to you, the past, the present, and the future. In sickness and in health, in life and in death, I belong to you.

- Amen