

Lesson 7

The Scriptures



Basic Information about the Bible:

God speaks to us in many ways. One way that God speaks to us is through the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God. It is not just one book; it is a collection of many books. Different authors using different styles wrote these books. Even though human authors wrote the words down on paper, those authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Simply put, although human beings wrote the Bible, the Holy Spirit guided them. Hence, God is the Author of the Bible. Because the Scriptures come from God, they have the power to transform our lives.

The Bible had two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible has a total of 73 books: 46 books comprise the Old Testament and the New Testament consists of 27 books. It is important to note that Protestant Bibles have less books than Catholic Bibles since they do not contain the following Books: Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach, and parts of Ester and Daniel.

All Catholic Bibles come with a statement that the text is free from error and is an official publication of the Church. These credentials are displayed inside the book on a page that

follows the title page and displays the publisher's information as well as the date and place of publication. In other words, you will find these credentials on one of the first few pages of the work. The words to look for are, "***Nihil Obstat***," and "***Imprimatur***." These Latin terms mean that there is nothing objectionable to the faith in the book and the work is printed with the permission of a bishop. These terms are a certain guarantee the publication is Catholic and suitable for instruction since they are in line with the teachings of the Church.

Instead of being placed chronologically, the books of the Bible are organized into four broad categories. We see these four broad categories in both the Old and New Testament: The Law, History, Wisdom, and Prophecy. The following chart gives a visual breakdown of the categories and the books they contain.

Old Testament

1. The Law
(*Genesis to Deuteronomy*)
2. History
(*Joshua to 2 Maccabees*)
3. Wisdom
(*Job to Sirach*)
4. Prophecy
(*Isaiah to Malachi*)

New Testament

1. The (New) Law
(*The Gospels*)
2. History
(*The Acts of the Apostles*)
3. Wisdom
(*The Epistles*)
4. Prophecy
(*Revelation*)

The Law: (Old Testament)

The first five Books of the Bible are called "the Law" or "the Pentateuch." They are traditionally attributed to Moses and they contain the story of creation and Israel. They also provide Israel's fundamental laws.

The Law: (New Testament)

The Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Each of the Evangelists (writers of the Gospels) pick different details of Christ's life to emphasize, but all tell the story of Christ.

The Historical Books: (Old Testament)

These Books tell the history of Israel from the conquest of the Promised Land to the revolt of the Maccabees.

History (of the Early Church): (New Testament)

The focus of this portion of the New Testament is on the establishing of the Early Church by Jesus' Apostles.

The Wisdom Books: (Old Testament)

These books contain the wisdom that appeals to all people in order to lead everyone closer to God.

Wisdom: (New Testament)

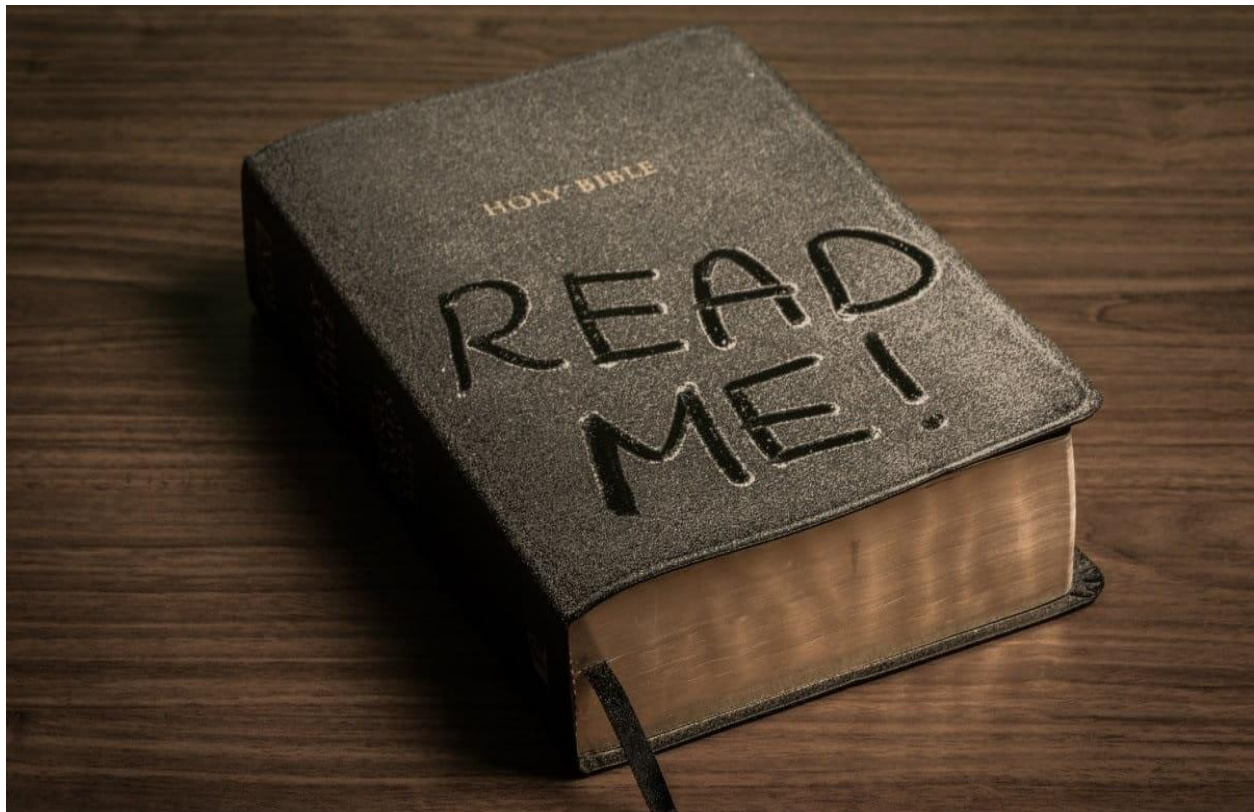
These are letters (Epistles) from the Apostles to congregations that needed advice, discipline, or encouragement. The largest number of these letters were written by St. Paul.

The Prophets: (Old Testament)

The prophetic books of the Bible reveal the message of God for His people as given through His prophets. There are 4 Major Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah. They are called “Major Prophets” because their books are longer than the other prophets (not because they are more important than the other prophets). The remaining prophets are referred to as “Minor Prophets.”

Prophecy: (New Testament)

The Book of Revelation contains the prophecy of the New Testament. The Book of Revelation is a symbolic vision in which all of salvation history comes to a climax. It also outlines the structure of the Mass.



The Bible contains the story of the redemption of human beings; this story is called “Salvation History.” The Old Testament begins with the story of creation and ends before the birth of Jesus Christ. This section of the Bible focuses on the People of God (*specifically the Hebrew people*) and their faith in God.

The first five books of the Old Testament are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books are called the “Torah” which means “instruction” or “law.”

These first five books are also known as the Pentateuch. The central story in these five books is the Exodus, which is the event where God leads His people by Moses out of their slavery in Egypt to their freedom in the Promised Land. During their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses and the people. The Pentateuch is important because it contains all the themes of Salvation History, which will be expanded upon throughout the rest of the Bible.

The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus Christ and ends with the beginnings of the early Church. The New Testament consists of four Gospels (*a gospel is an account of the life of Jesus Christ*), Letters from St. Paul and some of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation. There are four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Someone who writes a Gospel is called an Evangelist.

God has given the Catholic Church the authority to interpret the Scriptures. However, the Church also encourages us to read the Bible to learn about God, to grow in our relationship with Him and others, to understand His message of love and forgiveness, and to teach a new generation what the Church believes.

"Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the Holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God." 2 Peter 1:20-21

How to Identify and Locate a Scripture Passage:

Each book in the Bible has a name. The name of each book also has an abbreviation that is used when making reference to specific verses in the Bible. Each book is divided into chapters and each chapter is divided into verses. Both the chapters and verses are numbered. This numbering system makes finding a Scripture verse relatively simple.

Step for Finding a Passage in the Bible:

1. Passages are listed by Book name, Chapter, and Verse.
2. First find the Book in the Bible:
 - a. Most Bibles have an index that tells you where to find each Book.
 - b. Book names are shown at the top of each page.
3. Chapters are listed in bold in the Bible and at the top of each page.
4. Verses are shown within the text as small numbers.



The following charts give the abbreviations (*labeled "ABBREV"*) for each book found in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Books of the Old Testament

<u>BOOK</u>	<u>ABBREV</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>ABBREV</u>
Genesis	Gen	Proverbs	Prov
Exodus	Ex	Ecclesiastes	Eccl
Leviticus	Lev	Song of Solomon	Song
Numbers	Num	Wisdom	Wis
Deuteronomy	Deut	Sirach	Sir
Joshua	Josh	Isaiah	Is
Judges	Judg	Jeremiah	Jer
Ruth	Ruth	Lamentations	Lam
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Baruch	Bar
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Ezekiel	Ezek
1 Kings	1 Kgs	Daniel	Dan
2 Kings	2 Kgs	Hosea	Hos
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	Joel	Joel
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	Amos	Am
Ezra	Ezra	Obadiah	Ob
Nehemiah	Neh	Jonah	Jon
Tobit	Tob	Micah	Mic
Judith	Jdt	Nahum	Nah
Esther	Esth	Habakkuk	Hab
1 Maccabees	1 Macc	Zephaniah	Zeph
2 Maccabees	2 Macc	Haggai	Hag
Job	Job	Zechariah	Zech
Psalms	Ps	Malachi	Mal

Books of the New Testament

<u>BOOK</u>	<u>ABBREV</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>ABBREV</u>
Matthew	Mt	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Mark	Mk	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Luke	Lk	Titus	Titus
John	Jn	Philemon	Philem
Acts of the Apostles	Acts	Hebrews	Heb
Romans	Rom	James	Jas
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1 Peter	1 Pet
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	2 Peter	2 Pet
Galatians	Gal	1 John	1 Jn
Ephesians	Eph	2 John	2 Jn
Philippians	Phil	3 John	3 Jn
Colossians	Col	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess	Revelation	Rev
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess		

The Three Spiritual Senses

The Church teaches us to interpret Sacred Scripture using three Spiritual Senses. The Holy Spirit often puts more meaning into a passage than the authors knew they were writing. The tradition of the Church tells us that there are three Spiritual Senses to look for when reading the Scriptures: the Allegorical (*or typical*) Sense, the Moral (*or tropological*) Sense, and the Anagogical Sense.

1. The ***Allegorical (or Typical) Sense*** shows us how people and events in salvation history point forward to other times. For example, when we read the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, we see that Isaac is a “type” of Christ since the sacrifice of Isaac shows God at work in a way that would reach its ultimate fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.
2. The ***Moral (or Tropological) Sense*** shows us how we can use the things the heroes of Scripture did as a pattern for our own lives. By seeing the moral content of their actions, we learn to turn toward good and away from evil.

3. The **Anagogical Sense** shows us how the events we see in Scripture point upward to what we will know in heaven. Through the things that are seen, we come to understand the things we cannot see yet. With those glimpses of the reality of the Kingdom of God, we build up our own hope.

When we look for the spiritual senses of a passage in Scripture, we must be careful not to forget the literal sense, since “all other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal,” as Saint Thomas Aquinas pointed out. However, the literal sense is not the only sense. We must remember that God, the ultimate Author of the whole Bible, knew the plan of salvation from the beginning. The Holy Spirit intended even the oldest parts of the Old Testament to be read in the light of the Incarnation, the coming of Jesus Christ as man.



Important People to Know from the Old Testament

Adam & Eve: The first man and woman created by God. Adam and Eve introduce human evil into the world when they eat the fruit of a tree God had forbidden them to touch.

Noah: The survivor of God's great flood. Noah obediently builds the large ark, or boat, that saves the human race and the animal kingdom from destruction.

Abraham: The patriarch of the Hebrew people. Abraham is traditionally referred to as “Our Father in Faith” because the Israelite people and their religion descend from him. God establishes His covenant (*or promise*) with Abraham. God develops an ongoing relationship with the Israelites through Abraham's descendants.

Isaac: Abraham's son and the second patriarch. Isaac's importance consists less in his actions than in the way he is acted upon by others. God tests Abraham by commanding him to kill his son Isaac and Isaac's blindness allows his own son Jacob to steal Isaac's blessing and the inheritance of God's covenant.

Jacob: The grandson of Abraham and the third patriarch of the Israelite people. Jacob becomes the father of twelve sons who form the Tribes of Israel. Jacob experiences a life filled with deception and change. He steals his brother Esau's inheritance and wrestles with God. Appropriately, the nation that springs from Jacob's children derives its name from Jacob's God-given name, "Israel" (*which means "struggles with God"*).

Joseph: Jacob's son and the head official for the Pharaoh of Egypt. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph rises to power in Egypt and saves his family from famine. Joseph's calm and gracious response to his brothers' betrayal introduces the pattern of forgiveness and redemption that characterizes the survival of the Israelite people throughout the Old Testament.

Moses: The reluctant savior of Israel in its exodus from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. Moses mediates between God and the people, transforming the Israelites from an oppressed ethnic group into a nation founded on religious laws. He is known as the "Law-Giver" since he is given the Ten Commandments.

Aaron: Moses's brother, who assists Moses in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. God designates Aaron to be the first high priest in Israel.

Joshua: The successor of Moses as Israel's leader. Joshua directs the people in their military campaign to conquer and settle the Promised Land. Joshua's persistent exhortations to Israel to remain obedient to God imply that he doubts Israel will do so. His exhortations foreshadow Israel's future religious struggles.

Samson: One of Israel's judges and an epic hero with his superhuman strength. Samson's long hair is both the source of his strength and the symbol of his religious devotion to God.

Samuel: The last of Israel's judges and the first of the prophets. He anoints both Saul and David as king.

Saul: Israel's first king. After God chooses Saul to be king, Saul loses his divine right to rule Israel. Saul plots to murder David only to experience David's mercy.

David: The king of Israel and the founder of Jerusalem. Although David's claim to the throne is threatened by Saul and by David's own son, Absalom, David maintains his power by blending shrewd political maneuvering with a forgiving treatment of his enemies. David's decision to bring the Ark of the Covenant (*Israel's symbol of God*) to the capital of Jerusalem signals the long-awaited unification of the religious and political life of Israel in the Promised Land.

Solomon: David's son and the third king of Israel. Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem and ushers in Israel's greatest period of wealth and power. God grants Solomon immense wisdom.

Elijah & Elisha: The prophets who oppose the worship of the god Baal in Israel. After the division of Israel into two kingdoms, Elijah and his successor, Elisha, represent the last great spiritual heroes before Israel's exile.

Ever wonder what would happen if
we treated our Bible like we treat
our cell phone?



vs.



What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?
What if we flipped through it several times a day?
What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
What if we gave it to Kids as gifts?
What if we used it when we traveled?
What if we used it in case of emergency?
This is something to make you go....hmm...where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing:
Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being |
disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill.

Makes you stop and think, "Where are my priorities?"