

Prolegomena

Prolegomena – “before saying” anything about theology there’re ground rules!

Hermeneutics: study of interpretation.

- Jesus is the “key” to unlocking meaning of the Bible (Jn 5:39)
- The Scriptures are inerrant for they “cannot be broken” (Jn 10:35)
- God’s “Word is truth” (Jn 17:17)
- Scripture is inspired or “God-breathed” (2 Tm 3:16). “Scripture interprets Scripture”; Law/Gospel.

1st premise for interpretation: Who is the teacher (*magister*) and who will be the servant (*minister*)? Reason, experience, feelings, or the Word? There can be only one teacher; the rest must be servants/students.

How did we get the Bible we have today?

(1) Need for the Canon arose b/c of heresy (ex. Montanism)

(2) Muratorian Canon late 2nd Cent (omits Heb., 1&2 Pet., James, & 3 John) rejects Gnostic books (ex. Gospel of Thomas/Judas) and Marcion’s Canon.

(3) Athanasius’ Easter Letter in AD 367 was first official doc. w/ all 27 NT books.

Biblical Canon

Old Testament (39 books written in Hebrew; some Aramaic)

Genesis – Greek meaning “beginning”; both the beginning of time & Bible

Exodus – The “Exit” of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Leviticus – The priestly code including ceremonial and civil laws.

Numbers – Begins with a census of God’s people; details the Israelites wandering in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy – From *deutero*, meaning “second”, and “*nomy*” meaning law; second giving of the Law (Ex 20 & Deut 5)

First FIVE books known as the Pentateuch (*pente* = 5)

Joshua – Israelites entering the Promised Land under Moses’ successor.

Judges – Before Israel had Kings, the rulers of Israel were Judges.

Ruth – A story of God’s grace given unto Gentiles and women.

1 & 2 Samuel – Transition period from judgeship to kingship.

1 & 2 Kings – The stories of the rise and fall of Israel as a kingdom.

1 & 2 Chronicles – Same stories in Kings from a different perspective.

Ezra – 1st priest called a scribe in Bible; rebuilding of Temple after exile.

Nehemiah – A faithful layman; worship life resumes in Israel.

Esther – God working through a Queen to save His chosen people.

Job – 1st book of Wisdom Lit.; God’s grace amid horrible circumstances.

Psalms – Means “song”; a collection of 150 songs sung in temple worship.

Proverbs – Wisdom sayings to bestow Solomon’s wisdom on His sons.

Ecclesiastes – Hebrew title *Qoheleth*, “One who speaks publicly in a congregation”; Ecclesiastes from Greek *ecclesia*, meaning “assembly”.

Song of Solomon – Love poems between a husband and wife that reflect God’s love for His Church (Cf. Ephesians 5).

Isaiah – The first of the major prophets. Often called the “Fifth Gospel”. Most quoted in the NT; brings comfort to God’s people with the good news of Zion’s redemption.

Jeremiah – The “weeping prophet” for lamenting over Judah amid exile.

Lamentations – Written by Jeremiah; a lament of Judah’s unfaithfulness amid exile; yet God’s mercies never cease.

Ezekiel – Written amid Babylonian captivity; emphasis on the Watchman.

Daniel – Written by the prophet Daniel with apocalyptic tendencies. God’s power is greater than earthly powers (3 men in fiery furnace).

Hosea – “No mercy” to the unfaithful; Hosea marries a prostitute to demonstrate God’s relationship with Israel.

Joel – Imagery of destructive locusts as judgement; promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit fulfilled at Pentecost.

Amos – Amos was a shepherd later called to be prophet. God’s Laws seen as a plumb line; the Remnant will live.

Obadiah – Shortest OT book. The sin of pride in security; Day of Lord near.

Jonah – Only prophet whom Jesus likened Himself. Sent to Nineveh to preach repentance. God’s mercy to Gentiles.

Micah – Warning against false prophets; nakedness and shame. Foretelling of Christ coming from Bethlehem; Remnant.

Nahum – The LORD described as an angry warrior; destruction of Nineveh. God’s Word is for His people.

Habakkuk – God permits evil to afflict His people; the need for patience. The Lord supplies patience; the just shall live by faith!

Zephaniah – God’s wrath against all nations including His people. Day of the Lord; the Remnant preserved.

Haggai – Rebuilding of Temple; the Lord blesses the people’s focus on receiving the Word.

Zechariah – Bizarre visions of judgment. The Branch prophecy of forgiveness, Temple restored, the Lord will save His people, “They will look will look upon Whom they have pierced” foretells Christ’s death.

Malachi – Condemnation of unfaithful priests, divorce, unfaithfulness; the Lord’s faithfulness and love for Israel. Foretelling of John the Baptist as the one who will prepare the way before the Messiah.

Hosea – Malachi are known as the 12 Minor Prophets

Apocrypha

Judith – A “beautiful religious fiction” (Luther); describes how the Lord delivered Israel through the self-sacrifice of a widow, Judith.

Wisdom of Solomon – Teaches rulers the contrast between wisdom and folly much like Proverbs; Hellenistic ideals (Stoicism/Platonism).

Tobit – Describes the affliction and mercy of God while encouraging Israelites to practice righteousness and almsgiving.

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) – Instruct people in wisdom much like Proverbs

Baruch – Named after a servant of Jeremiah; calls people to repentance and urges them to pray for their rulers.

Letter of Jeremiah – Warns of exile and pending temptations of idolatry.

1 & 2 Maccabees – While not “canonical”, these are works of history from the time between the Testaments and are useful to read.

Susanna – Dangers and virtues of public justice among God’s people.

Bel and the Dragon – Shows the God of Daniel is great, and there is no God besides Him; instructs on use of wisdom and reason. In some manuscripts, this is an extension of the book of Daniel in the OT.

New Testament (27 books written in Greek)

Matthew – The “Jewish” Gospel. Old Testament structure. Quotes OT more than any other Gospel. Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT.

Mark – The Gospel of “immediacy” (tells the story quickly); shortest Gospel. Mark is a “Gospel brochure”.

Luke – The “parable” Gospel; a “full and orderly account” by a detailed writer Luke was a doctor.

John – The “theological” Gospel. Written nearly a generation after the first three Gospels, which are known as the Synoptics. John’s Gospel is much more reflective on the meaning of Jesus’ teachings.

Acts – This book concerns the life of the early Christian church with stories of the acts and doings of the Apostles.

Romans – Written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Rome. “Doctrine Epistle” detailing sin, justification, election, and sanctification.

1 Corinthians – By Paul to the church in Corinth. Teaches about Church division, sexual immorality, marriage, doctrine of the Lord’s Supper (and closed communion), and the resurrection.

2 Corinthians – By Paul to the church in Corinth. Emphasis on the comfort of the Gospel, the ministry of reconciliation, encouragement to give generously and cheerfully, and the dangers of false apostles.

Galatians – By Paul to the churches in the province of Galatia (modern Turkey). Teaches that there is only one Gospel and no other. Emphasis on justification by faith and not by works of the Law; distinction between the Law and the Promise and makes use of the OT; defines freedom in the Christian context, fruit of the Spirit.

Ephesians – By Paul to the church in Ephesus. Paul teaches the importance of Unity in the Church as a gift from God, not created by Man; importance of grace by faith and not by works, but also includes the importance of doing works. Christian marriage defined.

Philippians – By Paul to the church in Philippi. “To live is Christ and to die is gain”, the humility of Christ in his incarnation, righteousness through faith, straining ahead toward the goal of salvation, and encouragement with joy. Known as the Epistle of Joy.

Colossians – By Paul to the church in Colossae. Teaches the superiority of Christ in opposition to the wisdom and teachings of this world. We are alive in Christ by the circumcision of Christ (Baptism).

1 Thessalonians – By Paul to the church in Thessalonica. He writes concerning the 2nd coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord, and encourages the people to rejoice always and pray without ceasing.

2 Thessalonians – By Paul to the church in Thessalonica. He writes concerning the judgment at Christ’s 2nd coming, warns against the “Man of Lawlessness” (Antichrist) and against being lazy/idleness, and gives an exhortation to stand firm in the faith.

1 & 2 Timothy – By Paul to the young pastor, Timothy. Paul encourages him not only to be a faithful pastor, but also addresses some doctrinal concerns of the Church such as prayer for all people, women in the church, and qualifications of pastors and deacons.

Titus – Written by Paul to the young pastor, Titus. Paul lists qualifications of a pastor and exhorts Titus to teach sound doctrine. This epistle with the two Timothys are known as the *Pastoral Epistles*.

Philemon – Written by Paul to a slave owner named Philemon regarding a runaway slave named Onesimus.

Hebrews – Author disputed, but it demonstrates how Jesus fulfilled much of the Old Testament’s prophecies and how Jesus is the center/key to understanding both Testaments.

James – A book written by the half brother of Jesus, who emphasizes the importance of works in the Christian life (sanctification). It is also wisdom literature like Proverbs in the OT.

1 Peter – Written by Peter to believers in exile. Emphasis on Christ being the Living Stone, exhortation to submit to authority, suffering that a Christian will face, and shepherding God’s flock.

2 Peter – Written by Peter to all believers. Warns of false teachers, emphasizes the Day of the Lord (End Times).

1, 2, & 3 John – Written by Apostle John. Uses family relationships to describe Church relationships. Speaks of “Walking” in the light/truth. Warns of Antichrists. Encourages us to acknowledge sin and love each other.

Jude – Written by Jude, tradition naming him a half-brother of Jesus (like James). Warns of false teachers being a constant threat to the health of the Church. Encouragement to persevere! (Similar to 2 Peter).

Revelation – Written by the Ap. John after he was exiled. An apocalyptic work, meaning it uses heavy imagery and metaphors to convey realities of current life in a codified fashion (See Daniel).