



Introducing the Bible
The Drama of Scripture

Week 1



Overview of this week

- ❖ Introducing the class
- ❖ Authority of the Bible
- ❖ Inspiration of the Bible
- ❖ How we got the Bible
- ❖ All those translations!



Introducing the Class

- ❖ The syllabus
 - The class schedule
- ❖ The index cards
- ❖ The CCL website
- ❖ The readings, handouts and weekly worksheets
- ❖ *The Drama of Scripture*, Bartholomew & Green
- ❖ How we'll learn
 - Don't expect immediate application
 - Teaching the head and forming the heart



A First Visit to the Bible

- ❖ Genesis/Revelation/Matthew/Psalms
- ❖ The Bible is not one book – it is a library of 66 books!
 - Until Jesus' day, all the books of scripture were on scrolls
 - The invention of the codex; what we think of as a book
- ❖ Chapters and verses
 - Where is the verse? – “God helps those who helps themselves”
 - Genesis 1:6, or 1:20-23, or 2:4a
 - Verses – the good and the bad!
- ❖ Nearly all forms of literature represented
 - Dominated by narrative/story
- ❖ Closing the historical/geographical/cultural distance
 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan => Luke 10:29-37



Authority of the Bible

- ❖ What do we mean by authoritative?
- ❖ How can a book – an ancient book – be authoritative?
- ❖ The Bible's authority is derived from God's authority
 - The Bible is God's word through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - God's book for his people and his people's spiritual journal
- ❖ Too often, the Bible's authority has been misused



Misusing Authority

- ❖ Too often, the Bible has been used to try to control people
 - Is it a book of right behavior?
 - The bible as a magic answer book, separating timeless truths from cultural conditioning.
 - Is it a book of right beliefs?
 - The bible as a book of beliefs which we have to rearrange into a systematic theology.
- ❖ God gave us the sort of book he intends us to have!
 - Neither a rule book nor a systematic theology
 - Instead, the Bible is a book of stories – big & small
- ❖ The Bible as an unfinished play (N.T. Wright)



The Bible as a six-act unfinished play!

Act One *Act Two* *Act Three*

Creation → Fall → Israel →

Act Four *Act Five* *Act Six*

Jesus → The church → Renewal of creation

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Inspiration of the Bible

- ❖ What do we mean by inspired?
- ❖ 2 Timothy 3:16
 - "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (TNIV)
- ❖ The Bible is neither all-God nor all-human
 - Our understanding of inspiration is far different from Islam's understanding of the Koran.
 - We must embrace the mystery!
 - Our inability to fully grasp some aspect of reality doesn't make it untrue!

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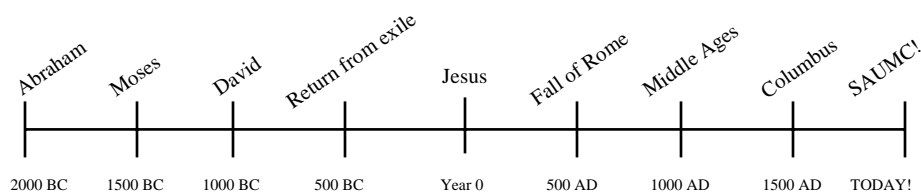


How we got the Bible

- ❖ Timeline
- ❖ Oral traditions to written documents
- ❖ Multiple authors, editors, scribes, and copyists
- ❖ What is a canon? – means “measuring rod” in Greek
 - A tradition of sacred writings
 - A process in a community
- ❖ The Old Testament canon
 - The Jewish community had closed the canon by Jesus’ time.
- ❖ The New Testament canon
 - The Christian community had closed the NT canon by 400AD or so, though all the books and letters had been written in a 50 year period from 50AD to 100AD.



Timeline



This is a simplified timeline – all the dates are approximate!



All those translations!

- ❖ The original languages
 - Hebrew (OT), Greek (NT), Aramaic (just a little of the NT)
- ❖ The inevitable choices when translating
 - literal dynamic paraphrase
NASB /ESV NRSV NIV NLT The Message
- ❖ The value of a committee!
- ❖ Don't confuse study notes with the translation
- ❖ Best approach
 - use a translation appropriate to your purposes
 - use more than one translation
 - I suggest the NRSV (for study) and the New Living Translation (for easier reading)