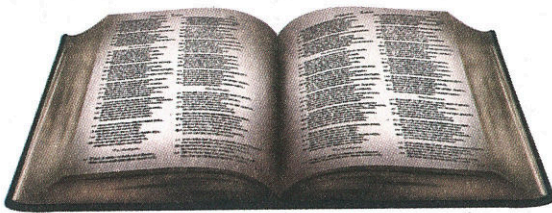


Chapter 8

Holy Bible: Word of God



As Christians, what do we know about our holy book, the Bible?
Am I a person with a very limited knowledge about the Holy Bible?



The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible is the Word of God

- It explains the history of salvation that comes to fulfilment in Jesus.
- It is the sacred book of the world's largest religion.
- It is the most translated book in the world.
- The book that has inspired most of the art & literary works.
- The Bible is a book that can be read according to the interest of every person. It includes parables, moral stories, proverbs, riddles, historical accounts, travelogues, philosophical musings, miracles, and symbols.

Knowing, loving, studying and living by the Holy Bible is essential, given its profound impact on human history.

The Holy Bible: The Divinely Inspired Book

The Holy Bible is the spoken Word of God in written form. God chose a few men to put this conversation into writing. The way God helped them in their writings is called Divine Inspiration; That is why Gregory the Great called God, the Author of the Sacred Scripture, and the man, the writer of the Sacred Scripture.

"The Bible
is God's love
letter to us"

Soren Kierkegaard.



Global Population based on religions (2022)

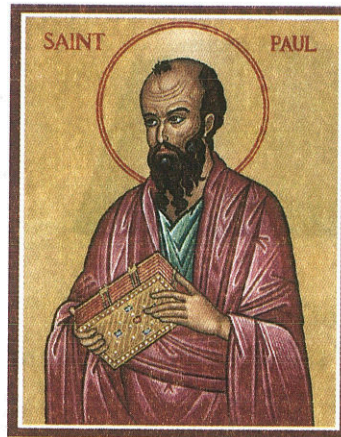
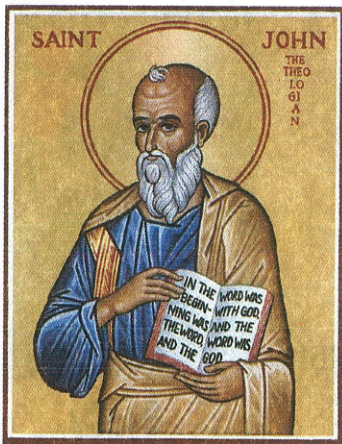
Christians 31.0%
Muslims 24.9%
Hindus 15.2%
Buddhist 6.6%



Why was the Bible translated into so many languages? Discuss.

Books Translated to Most Languages, in Descending Order

1. The Holy Bible
2. The Little Prince
3. The Adventures of Pinocchio
4. Tao Te Ching
5. The Communist Manifesto
6. Alice in Wonderland



"The Holy Spirit, by His supernatural power, inspired and converted the writers of the Holy Scriptures, and enabled them to understand and record the commissions of the Spirit of God without mixture or deficiency. Therefore, it can be clearly said that God is the author of the Holy Book of eternal truths"
God of all Providence
 (Encyclical)
Pope Leo XIII

In the Catholic perspective, the concept of divine intervention consists of four facts.

1. The authors of the Sacred Scriptures received inspiration from the Holy Spirit
2. Since the Holy Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it contains only what God willed.
3. The Holy Bible is infallible in its teachings on divine matters.
4. The writers' unique language style and theological visions are reflected in their writings.

The Holy Scriptures, composed in human language and style, are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Divine inspiration is a sacred process through which these writings transform into the criterion of all divine revelations.

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness"
 (2Tim3:16).



What do you understand by 'Bible is God inspired'?

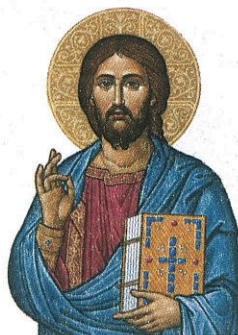
History of Divine Revelation

The self-revealed God is the beginning and the foundation of the Christian faith. We received the word of God through the revelations God made in human history.

In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will (Divine Revelation 2).

God has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ (Eph 1:9).

Divine revelation or manifestation of God refers to the process by which God revealed himself to the world. This revelation was completed through Jesus, the word incarnate. Divine revelation was accomplished through various stages of the plan of salvation.



1. Revelation Through Created Universe

Then God said, "Let there be Light" (Gen 1:3).

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters" (Gen 1:6).

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night" (Gen 1:14).

God first revealed his love and mercy through creation. Genesis testifies that God made creation by his Word. All creation was the initial form of divine revelation. The statement that God created man in his own image and likeness (Gen 1:26) reinforces the idea that creation is God's self-revelation. Created universe is the universal expression of divine revelation. Hence, divine revelation is for all. It is eternal, and all-encompassing.



"(God) desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Tim 2:4).



"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).



Read Genesis chapter 1 and write about the creation God has done each day.

Day 1

God said;

Day 2

God said;

Day 3

God said;

Day 4

God said;

Day 5

God said;

Day 6

God said;

2. Revelation Through Messengers



It is through his messengers that God has brought his messages to the people from time to time and continued his salvific plan. The patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings and Prophets were all messengers of God. In the Old Testament such messages and summaries set forth the faithfulness and unfaithfulness of God's people. These messages begin with the preface, "Thus says the Lord". These introductory words were used to strengthen the conviction that the messages in question were of God and not of the persons narrating them.

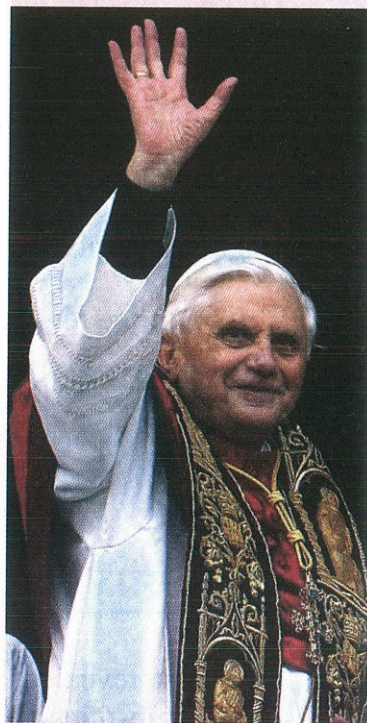
3. Jesus the Fullness of Divine Revelation

The Word of God is revealed to us in its fullness in Jesus, who became man. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as Father's only son, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:1-14). The Gospel passage testifies that the Word of God and Jesus are one and the same.

The writer of Hebrews makes clear the truth that God's Word was fully manifested in the human incarnation.



"Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made" (Rom 1:20).

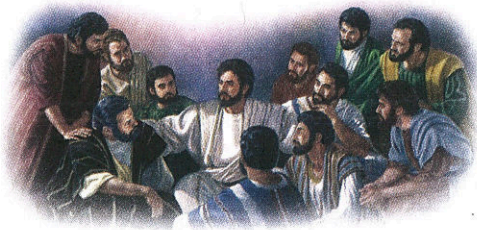


"Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ" (Pope Benedict XVI).

"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb 1:1-2).

4. Divine Revelation and the Church

Jesus chose and assigned 12 Apostles to be witnesses of the divine revelation he had completed and to proclaim it to the ends of the world, which they had heard, seen with their own eyes, watched carefully, and touched with their hands (1 Jn 1:1). Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the corner stone (Eph 2:20), is the Body of the Messiah and his continuation on earth. The Church is the custodian and interpreter of the divine revelation (God's Word) handed down through the apostles. It is the Holy Church that has selected and put together 73 books that are accepted as divinely inspired and given to us as the Holy Bible.



"Throughout the ages, there have been so-called "private" revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history" (CCC 67).

Holy Bible and Holy Tradition

Transmission of Divine Revelation

God's Word

Holy Scripture in written form

Among the divine revelations entrusted to the Church by God, only those in written form are contained in the Holy Bible.

Sacred Tradition in verbal form

The revelations handed down through the Apostles and not recorded in the Bible in written form are called the Sacred Traditions of the Church.



The plan of salvation that began in Paradise was completed in Jesus. The divine revelation received through Jesus is complete. No new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 66).

Private revelations are also claimed to have occurred to many individuals at different times. Discuss in groups how to approach these in the context of the lesson.

12 Apostles

1. Peter
2. Andrew
3. Jacob
4. John
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew
9. James, Son of Alphaeus
10. Judas Thaddeus
11. Simon the Cananaen
12. Mathias chosen in lieu of Judas Iscariot.

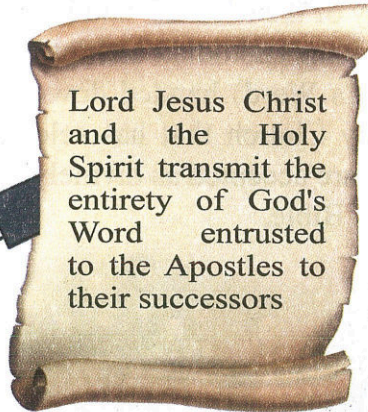
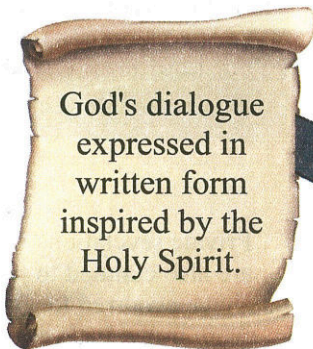
"As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

If you want to understand the Holy Scriptures, you must also understand the Sacred Tradition of the Holy Church. Because the meaning and scope of the scriptures comes from tradition.

There is a strong connection between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. They both originate from the same divine source. Both of them are moving together towards the same goal.

The Holy Bible

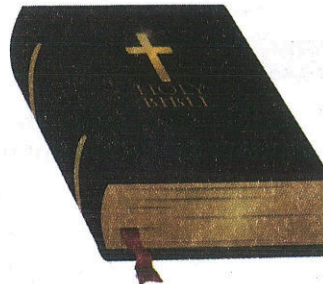
The Sacred Tradition



It transmits it to the successors of the Apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and make it more widely known by their preaching (Divine Revelation 9, CCC 80,81).

Therefore, both the Sacred Scriptures and Sacred Traditions must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.

It is through the Sacred Tradition of the Church that we understand how the Apostles, Church Fathers etc. interpreted the Word of God. Example: Creed, Dogmas of the faith, Teachings of the Church, etc.



Jn 20:30
2 Thess 2:15

Revelation means that God opens himself, shows himself, and speaks to the world voluntarily (YOUCAT 8).

The Essence of Tradition

The Second Council of Constantinople (AD 533) and the Lateran Council (AD 649) defined the essence of tradition as understanding how universal synods interpreted divine revelation through the Messiah.

The Holy Bible: The Written Form of God's Word

The name Bible is derived from the Greek word *Biblia*. The word means written record, book etc.

Bible
73 Books

1334 Chapters

35527 Verses



Old Testament

- * It is the first part of The Complete Bible
- * 46 Books (From Genesis to Malachi)
- * Wisdom, along with 1 and 2 Maccabees were written in Greek, while the other 43 books were written in Hebrew.

New Testament

- * It is the second part of The Complete Bible
- * 27 Books (From The Gospel According to Matthew to Revelation)
- * All the books were written in Greek.

According to Jewish tradition, the Old Testament books are divided into three parts: Laws, Prophecies and Writings. The first five books (the Pentateuch) are known as the Laws. Joshua, Judges, books of Samuel and Kings, and the books of Prophets are the book of Prophecies. The remaining eleven books are known as Writings.

The Old Testament Books According to Christian Tradition

Historical Books - 21

Books of Exhortation - 7

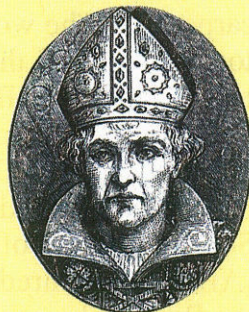
Prophetic Books - 18

The New Testament Books According to Christian Tradition

Gospels - 4



Division of Chapters in the Books of the Holy Bible



In AD 1225 Cardinal Stephen Langton, the Arch Bishop of England divided the books of the Bible into chapters.

The Old Testament books of the Bible were divided into verses by Rabbi Nathan in AD 1448.



The New Testament books of the Bible were divided into verses by Robert Estienne in AD 1551.

The Acts of Apostles – 1
Pauline and Other Letters - 14
Catholic Letters - 7
Revelation - 1

Canonical Nature of the Holy Bible

The Greek word 'Canon' refers to the standard used by carpenters. **The word is used today to refer to the inspired texts of the Holy Bible.**

The term Canon was first used by Athanasius (AD 367), Bishop of Alexandria. The Second Council of Nicaea (AD 787) declared 73 books of the Bible to be canonical. But Martin Luther (1483-1546) declared four New Testament books (Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation) and 7 Old Testament books (Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Judith, Esther and Tobit) as non-canonical. In fact, Luther recognized only 62 books as canonical.



The Church Fathers Declared That There Are 46 Old Testament Books



St. Jerome (Vulgate)
(349 - 420)



St. Augustine (City of God)
(354 - 430)

In addition to the 73 books of the Holy Bible, there are also Apocryphal Books that are not included in the Holy Bible. Example: Book of Enoch, Book of Jubilees, Covenant of the Patriarchs, Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of James, Gospel of Bartholomew, Acts of Peter, Acts of Thomas etc. The birth, life, death and the resurrection of Messiah, the traditions of the Early Church, methods of worship etc. are described in the Apocryphal Books.

- 1. Genesis
- 2.
- 3.
- 4. Numbers
- 5.
- 6. Joshua
- 7. Judges
- 8.
- 9. 1Samuel
- 10. 2Samuel
- 11. 1Kings
- 12. 2Kings
- 13. 1Chronicles
- 14. 2Chronicles
- 15.
- 16. Nehemiah
- 17.
- 18.
- 19. Esther
- 20. 1 Maccabees
- 21. 2 Maccabees
- 22. Job
- 23.
- 24.
- 25. Ecclesiastes
- 26. The Song of Solomon
- 27.
- 28. Sirach

Translations of the Holy Bible

Greek translation
of the Hebrew Old
Testament
Septuagint

Latin
translation
of the Bible
Vulgate

Syriac
translation
of the Bible
Peshitta

Kerala Christians have a tradition of more than a century and a half in the field of Bible translation. In 1841-42, the first complete translation of the Bible in Malayalam was published by Kottayam CMS Press. Later, in 1889, Herman Gundert's translation based on the dialect of Malabar was published.

The most popular among Catholics is the New Testament, translated from Syriac by Reverend Mani Kathanar who was a member of the Third Order of Carmelite Divine (TOCD) (*Nishpaduka Munnam Sabha*- Ka. Ni. Mu. Sa.), that was published in 1935. A commission for translation, under the leadership of Fr. Mathew Vadakel, completed the translation of the entire Old Testament. In the years 1930, 1934, 1939 the S.H. League published it in three volumes. In 1968 Fr. Thomas Moothedan published a complete translation of the Bible based on the Latin Vulgate and the Syriac Pishetta. Under the leadership of the Carmelite Congregation from Mannanam in 1978 and the Bible Society of India in 1980, the Bible was translated and published. The Malayalam translation of the Complete Bible published by the KCBC Bible Commission in 1981 is in use by the Catholic Church in Kerala. A revised New Testament was published in 2012. In 2017, POC published Study Bible: Gospels, Volume 1. In 2020, POC published Study Bible with Acts, Epistles, Revelation as Volume 2.

Meanings of the Holy Scripture

The Holy Scripture is primarily a spiritual book. God speaks to us through its words. To understand it, we must know the meaning of God's words. According to the tradition of the Church, the Holy Scripture has two types of meaning: literal and spiritual. Spiritual meaning itself again has allegorical, moral, and anagogical levels of meaning (CCC 115-118). The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church. Only then can the meaning of the Holy Scripture can be

29. Isaiah
30. Jeremiah
31.
32. Baruch
33. Ezekiel
34.
35. Hosea
36. Joel
37.
38.
39. Jonah
40. Micah
41.
42. Habakkuk
43. Zephaniah
44.
45. Zechariah
46. Malachi



Classify the 73 books of the Holy Bible according to the divisions given here and prepare a flow chart.

~~Complete Peshitta Bible Translation~~

~~Accomplished by
the joint efforts of
Paurastya Vidyapitham
and St. Thomas
Apostolic Seminary,
Kerala as instructed
by the Church Synod~~

fully understood.

1. Literal Sense

Literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the Words of the Holy Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation. All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal sense.

2. Spiritual Sense

God's Words, events and realities mentioned in the Sacred Book have a spiritual sense beyond its literal meaning. Spiritual sense is understood as the messages that give strength to the spiritual growth of man. Spiritual sense can be divided into three.

a. Symbolic Sense

When we understand the events of the Bible in relation to Christ, we can understand them more deeply. For example, the Israelites crossing the sea is a sign of Christ's victory and hence a symbol of Christian Baptism.

b. Moral Sense

The Words and Events of the Sacred Scripture should lead us to moral deeds. Therefore, the Word of God is the inspiration for our life. The Word becomes active in us when we act on the message conveyed to us by every Word and Event.

c. Anagogical Sense

The facts and events described in the scriptures help us to see and understand heaven, our true home. Therefore, we should understand and interpret God's Word with a heaven-oriented vision, through which the message of God's Word becomes clear to us. By understanding it and living it, we attain salvation.

The significance of these four levels of meaning is summarized in a fragment of a medieval verse.

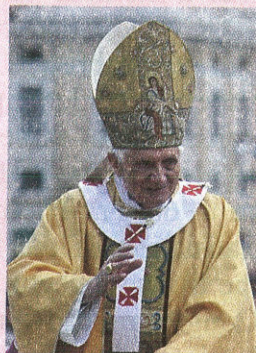
- Talking about the events in literal sense
- Leading to faith in symbolic sense
- Tells how to act in Moral sense
- Tells what the end is in anagogical sense

Biblical Interpretation: Seven Principles

The Sacred Scripture is a precious treasure entrusted to the Church by God. The way of interpreting Scripture is subject finally to the judgment of the Church. The Second Vatican

Find out the literal and spiritual meaning of the following Gospel verses.

1. The Greatest in Heaven (Mk 9:33-37)
2. Sight to the Blind
3. (Mk 8:22-26)
4. Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-42)
5. The rich fool (Lk 12:13-22)
6. The Vine and the Branches (Jn 15:1-7)



"Scripture does not belong to the past. He speaks in the present. He speaks to us and enlightens us. He communicates with us. Thus, equipping us and opening us to peace"

(Pope Benedict XVI).

Council proposes seven criteria to be followed when interpreting the Bible (Word of God 12).

1. Since the Bible is the Word of God written in human language, the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary in reading and interpreting the Bible.
2. The Bible is the most authoritative book on Christianity. Personal revelation should be interpreted based on the normative revelation given by God through the Bible.
3. The Bible is an authoritatively defined collection of canonical scriptures. Therefore, every Word in the Bible must be interpreted in the context of the whole Bible. To isolate and interpret only one Word or a part is to deny the totality of divine revelation.
4. Through the Bible, God has revealed truths necessary for man's sanctification and salvation. Don't adopt an interpretation that misses this basic point.
5. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the author in writing the Holy Scripture inspires the community of believers (Church) who does the interpretation of the Word to understand the true meaning of the Word.
6. God communicates his Word to all generations through the Bible. Therefore, reading and interpreting the Word is not merely a recollection of past events, but a direct hearing of the Voice of God.
7. A true interpretation of God's Word is impossible without standing by the active traditions of the Church. The Holy traditions of the Church is the totality of divine revelations. It is known by tradition that only a small part of the revelations received by God's people over a period of time have found their place in the Bible in written and canonical form. The rest of the collection of divine revelations are the active and Sacred Traditions of the Church.

John's words in his Gospel can also be used in general about the Bible, "that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20: 31). The Bible, the



"The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, is not the God of philosophers and scholars! The God of Jesus Christ. Only through the ways taught in the Gospel can anyone find and possess Him"
(Blaise Pascal 1588-1651).

Christ – The Unique Word of Sacred Scripture

"God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely"

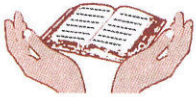
(CCC 102).

written Word of God, took shape in the Church. The Bible is a precious treasure entrusted to the Church by God. The knowledge of the Holy Bible helps us to look at the written Word of God, the Bible with respect, read it with prayer, and thus realize God's will and live happily.

My Convictions



- The Holy Bible is the Word of God.
- Sacred Scripture is the written Word of God. Sacred tradition is the Word of God in verbal form.
- The most authoritative book concerning the Christian faith is the Holy Bible.



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to Luke Chapter 1-5

Let Us Illumine Our Hearts



"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1-2).



My Resolution

I will read God's Word daily to receive guidance in life.