

Bible 101

MODULE 1: Introduction to the Bible

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Overview of the Bible

“Bible” is from the Greek word *biblia*, meaning “books” or “library.”

The Bible is a collection of books (not “a” book *per se*).

The Testaments of the Bible

1. OLD TESTAMENT [THE HEBREW BIBLE (*TANAKH*)]

- A. The Torah (Pentateuch)
- B. History (The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah)
- C. Wisdom Literature
- D. Major Prophets
- E. Minor Prophets

2. NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The Gospels
- B. The Acts of the Apostles (Early Church History)
- C. The Epistles
 - i. "Pauline" Epistles
 - ii. "Catholic" Epistles
- D. The Revelation

The Old Testament

Torah	History	Wisdom Literature	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	I Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	II Samuel	Song of Songs	Daniel	Jonah
	I Kings			Micah
	II Kings			Nahum
	I Chronicles			Habakkuk
	II Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

The New Testament

Gospels	Church History	“Pauline” Epistles	“Catholic” Epistles	Revelation
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts	Romans I Corinthians II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I Thessalonians II Thessalonians I Timothy II Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James I Peter II Peter I John II John III John Jude	Revelation

Reading the Bible

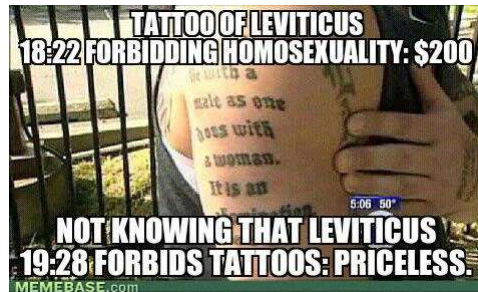
Exegesis vs. Eisegesis

• EXEGESIS

- *Ex-* means “out from”
- “Exegesis” means “to lead out of”
- INTERPRETATION: looking at scriptures to see what they say
- INTERPRETATION: “Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

• EISEGESIS

- *Eis-* means “into”
- “Eisegesis” means “to lead into”
- PROOFTEXTING: looking for scriptures to back up one’s views
- DANGER: contradictory passages, mistranslations, hypocrisies



Forms of Criticism

• HISTORICAL CRITICISM

- Who wrote the text?
- When was the text written?
- Who was the audience of the text?
- Geographical and Archaeological Coordinates

• FORM / GENRE CRITICISM

- Which genre(s) were employed in the text?
- What are the general features of the genre(s) used?

• TEXTUAL / LITERARY CRITICISM

- **STYLOMETRY**: word choice, repetition of phrases, sentence structure
- Plot analysis, character development, resolution
- Critique of other religious positions



“Literal” vs. “Figurative”

- Q: Should we read the Bible literally?
 - A: Yes, as long as one means “read all of it and with great detail.”
 - Exegesis
 - Literary
- Q: Should we read the Bible figuratively?
 - A: Yes, as long as one means “an attempt to explain divine things in human terms.”
 - Metaphors: “I am the vine; you are the branches.”
 - Similes: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a woman who finds a lost coin.”
 - Personifications: “You shielded us with your right hand.”
- Q: How should we read the Bible?
 - A: We should read the Bible with intellectual seriousness and spiritual openness.

Biblicalism

- Biblicalism is a controversial topic.
- Q: Does the Bible tell us how we should live our lives?
 - A: The Bible can indeed help us discern how we should live our lives. When read exegetically, one sees examples of virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, compassion and hatred.
- Q: Does the Bible predict the future?
 - A: The Bible only makes predictions qua prophetic genre; when one approaches prophecy as a literary genre, one knows how not to eisegetically plot the Bible onto current world news.
- Q: Does the Bible contradict itself?
 - A: The Bible, insofar as it is composed of different books, does not contradict itself. Different authors make different claims, hence the need for historical, form, and literary criticism.

Course Layout

The Modules of this Course

1. Introduction to the Bible (This Lesson!)
2. Old Testament I: Torah
3. Old Testament II: History
4. Old Testament III: Wisdom Literature
5. Old Testament IV: Major Prophets
6. Old Testament V: Minor Prophets
7. New Testament I: Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)
8. New Testament II: The Gospel of John
9. New Testament III: The Acts
10. New Testament IV: The "Pauline" Epistles
11. New Testament V: The "Catholic" Epistles
12. New Testament VI: The Revelation

Contents of Each Module

- Online Lesson (Microsoft Mix Video)
- The Lesson Handout (PDF, print-friendly summary of the online lesson)
- Bible Study Passages (3-5 per module; ideal for home study)
- Spiritual Meditation Exercises (1-3 per module)
- Prayer Guide
- Faith Share Posts
- Resource Links (YouTube videos, helpful websites, etc.)
- **Prayerfully consider how much time you wish to devote to this course. You do not need to do everything in each module.**

Prayers for This Class

O God, we thank you for this opportunity to learn more about you through the study of the Holy Bible. May it illuminate our thinking, increase our knowledge and love of you, and help us better understanding and live out our shared life and ministry. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

“Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom: Enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.”

(Collect for Education, BCP p. 261)