



**SCRIPTURE
FROM
SCRATCH:**

**A JOURNEY
THROUGH THE
BIBLE**

Brian Purfield

INTRODUCTION

“Do you really understand what you are reading?”

(cf. Acts 8:26-29)



TWO GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The Bible is not a book – it's a library.
- The Bible is both the Word of God & the words of human beings

What is the Bible?

- OT: 39 books (Jewish & Protestant eds)
46 books (Catholic editions)
- NT: 27 books
- World's largest selling book – c.30 million a year

What is the Bible?



- *"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."*

(Deus Caritas Est 1, 2005).

“TESTAMENT”

- Hebrew: *Berith* = covenant
- Greek: *Diatheke* = covenant, last will, testament
- Latin: *Testamentum* = last will, testament

BOOKS OF THE OT

- Jewish Tradition:
 - The Law (**Torah**)
 - The Prophets (**Nebi'im**)
 - The Writings (**Ketubim**)
- TaNaK



BOOKS OF THE OT

The Old Testament

The Pentateuch

The Historical Books

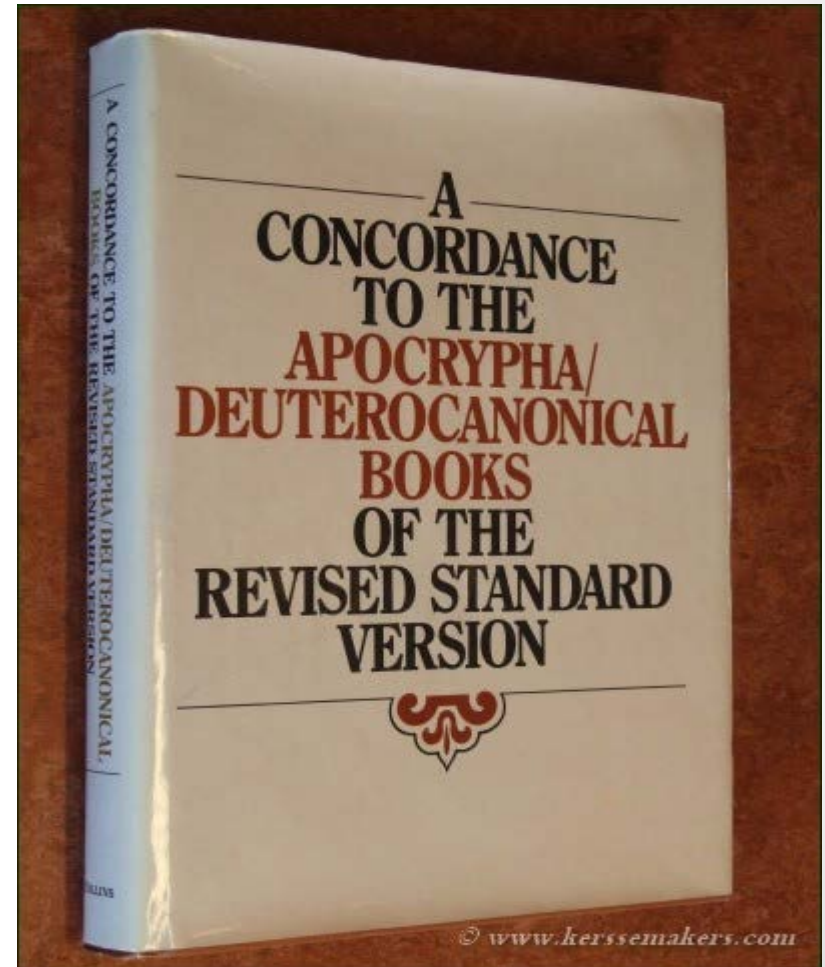
The Wisdom Books

The Prophetic Books

- Catholic Tradition:
- Ancient Greek Translation:
Septuagint (LXX)

THE CANON

- “Canon” = a measuring stick (*qaneh*)
- Jewish & Protestant canon: 39 books
- DEUTERO-CANONICAL BOOKS = 7 books (LXX)
- Alexandrian canon (46)
- Palestinian canon (39)



Hebrew Scriptures

-- in 3 Christian Canons --

Pentateuch

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

"Historical" Books

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1, 2 Kings
1, 2 Chron
1 Esdras
Ezra
Nehemiah
Tobit
Judith
Esther
1 Maccab
2 Maccab
3, 4 Macc

Wisdom Books

Job
Psalms
Prayer of Manasseh
Proverbs
Eccles.
Song of Songs
Wisdom
Sirach

Major Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lament.
Baruch
Letter of Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

KEY

Unmarked = in Jewish, Protestant, Catholic & Orthodox canons

▲ = only in Catholic & Orthodox canon

▲ = only in Orthodox canon

OT TIMELINE

- Growth of Semitic Civilisation (3000-2000)
- Patriarchal Era (1900-1300)
- Exodus & March to Canaan (1300-1250)
- Period of the Judges (1250-1020)
- United monarchy of David & Solomon (1020-930)

OT TIMELINE

- Divided Kingdom (930-722)
- Judah alone (722-586)
- Babylonian Exile (585-539)
- Post-Exilic Period (539-332)
- Greek Rule (332-175)
- Maccabean Revolt (175-1 BC)

THE NT



- 4 narratives about Jesus – Gospels
- 1 narrative about early Church – Acts
- 21 Letters
 - 13 Pauline
 - 8 Catholic
- 1 Apocalypse

USEFUL RESOURCES?

- A Bible!
- Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* [The Word of the Lord], 2010
- Dept. of Evangelisation & Catechesis (BCEW), *The Word of the Lord: Discovering Verbum Domini*, CTS 2013 – A Study Guide for parishes to promote Scripture. [£4.95]
- BCEW, *The Gift of Scripture*, CTS, 2005; 2010 – Understanding *Dei Verbum* & other Church documents on Scripture. Re-issued to coincide with *Verbum Domini*. [£3.95]
- Eileen Clare Grant, *Understanding the Story of the Bible: An Introduction to Salvation History*, CTS, 2013 [£2.50]
- Daniel J Harrington SJ, *How Do Catholics Read the Bible?* Sheed & Ward Books, 2005.

USEFUL RESOURCES?

- Online Bible: www.catholic.org/bible/
- Bible Search Engine: www.bible.catholic.net/
- Introduction to the Bible: A PowerPoint presentation on the background & basics of the Bible: www.saintpaulsvergennes.org/
- A very useful website is the Electronic New Testament Educational Resources by Felix Just SJ: www.catholic-resources.org/

USEFUL RESOURCES?

- Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993). An important document looking at current understanding of Scripture in the Church. Issued on 50th anniversary of Pius XII's *Divino Afflante Spiritu* & building on insights of Vatican II's *Dei Verbum*.
- Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People & their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001)

NEXT TIME

- *Introduction to the Gospels*
- *Speaker: Brian Purfield*
- *Date: Tuesday 25th March, 2014*
- *Time: 7pm – 8.30pm – Vaughan House*