

Essay Question

Stylianopoulos' definition of Scripture (in connection with Tradition) can best be summed up with this sentence: "The faith of the believing reader or interpreter ultimately rests in the Apostolic faith of the New Testament and the broader reality of the Church that put the New Testament together." (Stylianopoulos 92).

The Orthodox perspective is that all Scripture is "God-breathed" or "Given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16 NIV, NKJV) through revelation to holy men, prophets of God, disciples of Christ, etc. More specifically, "Holy Scripture is the record of revelation rather than direct revelation itself." (Stylianopoulos 37) It is important to note this human aspect of Scripture so as not to fall into the Protestant idea of sola scriptura.

Scripture, itself, affirms that the apostles received much more than what was documented in the Gospels: "And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples." (Mark 4:33-34)

It is through the Tradition that Scripture is interpreted, and by Tradition, that Scripture was authenticated. This may seem, at first glance, to leave no room for any sort of biblical criticism. In my opinion, that is not the case.

First, regarding Lower (Textual) Criticism, there are many writings of the Fathers that use different versions of the same verse. For example, in Genesis 1 - some may write "Then God said, 'let light be created'" whereas others may say "Then God said, 'let there be light'". Determining, through textual criticism, which of these is "more accurate" or which is "older" would make no difference on the fundamental message of the passage - that God created light.

Regarding some of the forms of Higher Criticism, I want to use the example given in class. The author of Genesis is known to be Moses through Tradition (both Jewish tradition and Christian tradition). Modern scholarship has developed other theories of authorship of the Pentateuch (especially Genesis) based on methods of Literary Criticism, Historical Criticism, Source Criticism. St John Chrysostom, in his homilies on Genesis, consistently speaks of "Moses spoke" rather than "Moses wrote." The tradition of Moses being author is not overwritten by the Biblical Criticism, but rather it is expanded on. An Orthodox Christian can participate in and use the methods of criticism without having compromised his Orthodox faith.

Revision #1

Created 2025-03-08 19:54:20 UTC by Morcouc Wahba

Updated 2025-03-08 19:54:31 UTC by Morcouc Wahba