

Lecture 1

Lecture Video

Part 1: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/h0herycws0lijl2d3fwty/Lecture-1-Part-1.mp4?rlkey=9z5h5bmsju9vmwnkp6m10s40w&dl=0>

Part 2: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dl2loi5ag7le1aro7wwao/Lecture-1-Part-2.mp4?rlkey=0e3q6bvfi8p18z0k163vja7bv&dl=0>

Part 3: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/jxjy8gfzfvji7iti6uyxo/Lecture-1-Part-3.mp4?rlkey=n5vil34f9n7kxcemer37tpcm3&dl=0>

Lecture Notes

- The Bible
 - Chrysostom calls the Scripture “the books”... “Read the books!”
 - The word Bible was derived from this term: The books à Biblia (Latin) à Bible
 - Each book was separate (it wasn’t a single book like we have now)
- Interpretation
 - All heresies use the Bible; all cults use the Bible (Mormon vs Christian Science interpretation of “made in Our Image”
 - What’s missing with them (that Orthodoxy has) is the Tradition of the Church. The early Church knew what the Scriptures meant.
 - Disciples of Emmaus Christ explained to them the Scriptures (He definitely did that on other occasions)
 - When Christ said “the Lord said to my Lord...” and “I desire mercy not sacrifice” and “the stone that has been rejected has become the chief cornerstone” – He was giving all the interpretations
- Two most important factors when studying the Bible:
 - Context
 - **Historical Context** – what was happening when the book was being written. The idea of considering historical context is patristic (i.e. St John Chrysostom homilies always started with ‘who is John and why did he do this’)
 - **Literary Context** – What was said before it? After it? Theme of the book, etc. Cannot take verses out of context. Fathers did this too.
 - Purpose
 - Skopos – goal/aim/purpose
 - Each book has a purpose, each passage has a purpose
 - If your interpretation violates the purpose of the book, then your interpretation is wrong!

- Bible is a book of faith – it is fundamentally spiritual, and there is a limitation to what we can gain from it if we don't approach it prayerfully. Interpretation of the Bible comes from both a spiritual life, and academic study. Both and not academic study alone. The Bible shouldn't be treated as an encyclopedia, or try to apply it to scientific standards.
 - To Fundamentalists, believing the literary is the highest level of belief. To the Fathers, it is the lowest.
- Fathers used "Scriptures" to refer to the Old Testament because they didn't have a New Testament. Universities use "Hebrew Bible"
- BC and AD... in Universities, BCE and CE
- Testament:
 - in Greek is like a "treasure" or a box that holds treasures
 - English it's like "testify" – a witness to something
 - Old Witness and a New Witness – witnessing to God. God's creation of the world, intervention through His Son, etc.
- Covenant:
 - Like a contract or agreement or promise
 - Two parties (to make an agreement)
 - Prominent in the OT (e.g. Noah, Abraham, etc)
 - Christ said: "I make a new covenant with you" at the Last Supper... "This is My Blood of the new covenant"
- Oral Tradition
 - Most of the Bible has an oral tradition behind it first
 - Event happens
 - Oral tradition
 - Eventually written down
 - Eventually recognized as Scripture
 - People didn't write things down because they didn't know how and then because they thought it didn't need to be written down!
 - Oral Tradition is not like the game of telephone because you didn't hear it once – you heard it hundreds of times. That's what people did at night! Sit in the dark under the stars and tell stories.
 - Abraham was in 1800 BC but by the time his story was written down was hundreds of years later... and yet, it's reliable. We know it's reliable because the details are accurate for the lifestyle of the time period (based on what we know in archaeology, etc)
 - Christ did not change His message in every village – do you think He told the Good Samaritan story only once? The disciples heard these parables over and over again. Christ's miracles happened in public around big crowds. These things were kept and preserved because there were many witnesses. Of course, not everything was written down.
- Written Tradition
 - The books of the NT (and also the OT) were written one at a time and most people didn't have all of them
 - Human author
- **Holy Scripture: Writing that is recognized by a worshipping community as inspired by God and authoritative**

- Writing
- Recognized by a community of faith. It is in the Bible because the Church acknowledges it as Scripture (this is something Protestants have an issue with)
- Inspired by God – God breathed into it “inspire” implies a breath
 - How is something inspired?
 - Dictation: God told him what to write (simplistic view – for children). The problem with dictation is that it leads to “well why does the Bible have different or conflicting or duplicate accounts?” (Genesis 1 and 2)
 - Illumination: God illumined the mind of the Biblical author to write what he wrote. It’s the thought of the author, but illumined by the Holy Spirit.
 - This accounts for the different styles and personalities in the NT.
 - This also accounts for the Orthodox concept of synergy – cooperation with God for our salvation. God takes the initiative, and we respond. It’s a relationship.
 - Inerrancy of the Bible is not specific words, but the message
 - Authoritative – Has authority
 - Hymns can be inspired by God but not have authority
 - Someone can be inspired by God to do good but doesn’t make him authoritative
 - Something can be authoritative but not inspired by God
- Three levels of meaning the Fathers believe are in the Scripture
 - Idea first proposed by Origen
 - Literal/Historical
 - Moral
 - Allegorical/Spiritual
- Biblical Criticism
 - To analyze the Bible according to all of our available tools
 - Lower Criticism: Textual Criticism – what did the original author write?
 - Autograph: The original that was written by the hand of the author. We have no autographs of the Bible.
 - Manuscript (MS): Handwritten copy
 - Scrolls: Used by Jews (rolled up, hard to go from one section to another)
 - Codex: Book format invented by Christians
 - Uncials: All capital letters
 - Codex Sinaiticus – Codex that was discovered at Sinai (Monastery of St Catherine)
 - We have hundreds of fragments of the Scriptures on things like Papyrus
 - 300 Manuscript copies of the Book of Revelation in Greek
 - Textual Critics try to find which aberration is the original. There are manuscripts that say in Revelation “I have the key of Hades” or “I have the key of David” – well which one is it? Sometimes the textual critic will try to find the family tree of the manuscripts (i.e. this one was copied from this other one) and try to find the oldest parent
 - Critical Text – a text that has all the variations written in it (i.e. as footnotes)
 - Manuscript variations were nothing to the Fathers (since the variations rarely affect the meaning)
 - Origen did this (Hexapla)

- Everything in our Bible was the decision of an editor or translator (chapter numbers, punctuation, quotation marks, etc)
- Higher Criticism (many forms, but some important ones are below) – see handout
 - Historical Criticism
 - Literary Criticism
 - Source Criticism
 - Trying to determine where the author got his original information. Was there an oral tradition? A hymn? Was there a different document?
 - Form Criticism
 - Redaction Criticism
- Translations and Versions
 - Translation refers to the language (English translation)
 - Literal
 - Dynamic
 - Version refers to NKJV, RSV, NIV, etc.
 - Septuagint (LXX) – Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible in approx. 250 BCE
 - Greece in Greek is “helas” (they say h silent) – “Hellenization” comes from this
 - Jews were Hellenized (Jews of Diaspora are living outside of Palestine)
 - Tells us what the Jews believed about their Hebrew Scriptures BEFORE Christ (we can’t trust what they’d say now, after the fact)
 - Majority of Jews in the time of Christ were reading their Scripture in Greek
 - Jews in Diaspora had more books that they regarded as Scripture than the Jews in Palestine. There was no agreement in the 1st Century (e.g. Pharisees vs Sadducees)
 - Many people called the Septuagint unreliable because it had books that were longer – considered them aberrations. Like the book of Jeremiah has some extra parts. Dead Sea Scrolls brought us a Hebrew version of the Jeremiah that’s in the Septuagint.
 - Hebrews don’t keep their copies – so when a manuscript becomes brittle, the Hebrews bury it and do a funeral ritual.
 - Hebrews did not finalize their canon until AFTER Christ
 - 49 OT Books
 - Pseudepigrapha – books that were never accepted by the Jews into their canon
 - The Vulgate
 - Around the year 200, Latin becomes dominant language in the West
 - By year 400, there were many poor Latin translations
 - Damascus, Bishop of Rome, asked Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin.
 - That was the Bible used by the Catholic Church until the _____. They didn’t expect the regular people to read the Bible (kind of discouraged it)
 - 46 OT Books
 - The Masoretic Text
 - Masoretes – Jewish scholars in Europe living around 900/1000 AD
 - Didn’t like the ambiguity of the Hebrew text since there aren’t any vowels. Invented indicators (diacritics/tashkeel) that tell you how to pronounce a word
 - King James Version/Authorized Version
 - 1611 AD

- Queen Elizabeth I of England and Ireland had no children (Virgin Queen – Virginia named after her). Her nearest relative when she died was her cousin Mary Queen of Scots' son King James I (King of Scotland). So since he's the nearest relative he became King of England as well. So Scotland and England are United as "The United Kingdom". The Union Jack (flag) has a cross + of St George (patron saint of England) And a white cross like x of St Andrew (patron saint of Scotland) and red cross like x of St Patrick (patron saint of Ireland). Put them on top of each other and you have the Union Jack!
 - James is Protestant and commissions a team of Bible Scholars (Protestants and Catholics) to arrive at a good, unbiased, English version of the Bible
 - Called the Authorized Version because it was authorized by the King
 - Nowadays, it seems fancy or formal (Thee, thou, cometh, seeketh, etc) and makes it very difficult to understand
 - The Greek and Hebrew were not like that, but they were accessible to all (same with the Vulgate)
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Revision #3

Created 8 March 2025 14:25:04 by Morcous Wahba

Updated 8 March 2025 14:45:23 by Morcous Wahba