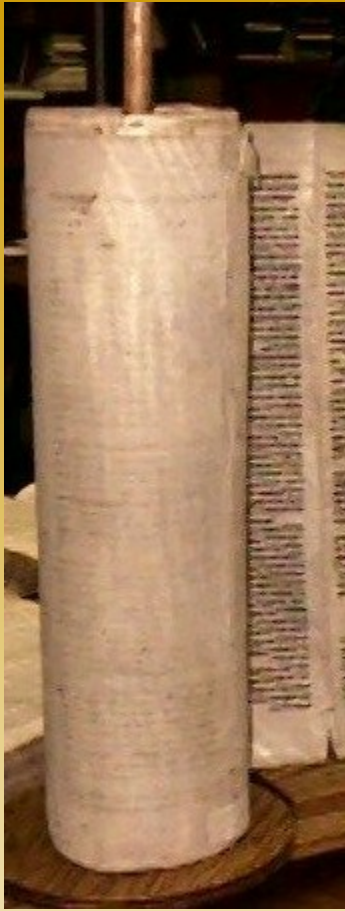


Introduction to Scripture





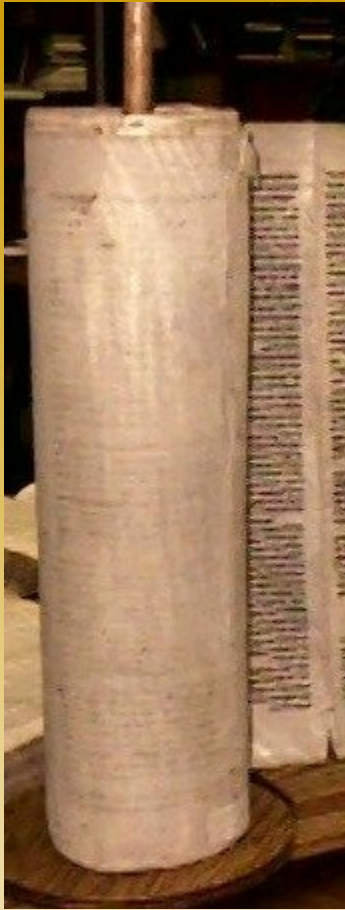
“Ignorance of Scripture is Ignorance of Christ” - St. Jerome

St. Jerome, Father and Doctor of the Church and perhaps our greatest biblical scholar, insisted that ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ because he knew that, as Christians, we can never come to know and love Jesus - *the Living Word of God Incarnate* - unless we also know and love Holy Scripture - *the Living Word of God Inspired*.

Bible study, therefore, is not a luxury – one of those optional, “nice to do,” Christian things – rather, it is a necessity.

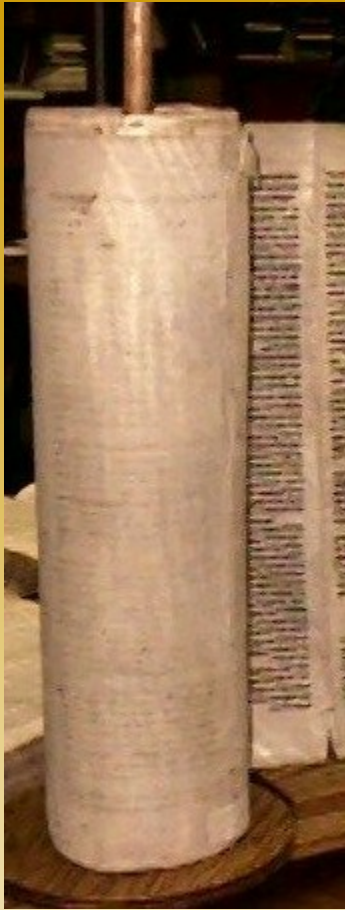
"Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" – Luke 24:32





This, then, is our challenge as Christians: to let Jesus, the living Word of God, speak to us so we have a burning desire to know Him through our study of Scripture; and to go on and be like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, so that we can lead others to God.

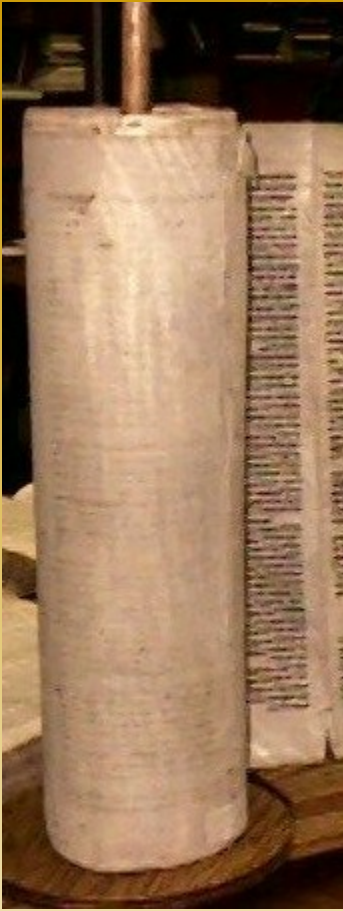




God's Revelation

God's revelation of Himself comes to us in three ways:

- † **Scripture.** The Bible
- † **Tradition.** The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church -- the oral preaching of the Apostles conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church. We see Tradition especially in the liturgy of the Church, in the Mass and the sacraments.
- † **The Magisterium.** The living, teaching office of the Church, whose task it is to give authentic interpretation of the Word of God. Includes the Church's teachings; its dogmas and creeds.



God's Revelation

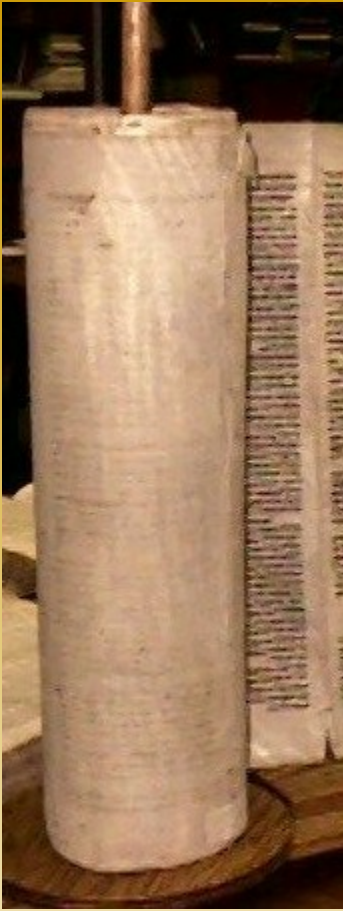
Scripture
Inspirator

Tradition
Animator

Holy
Spirit

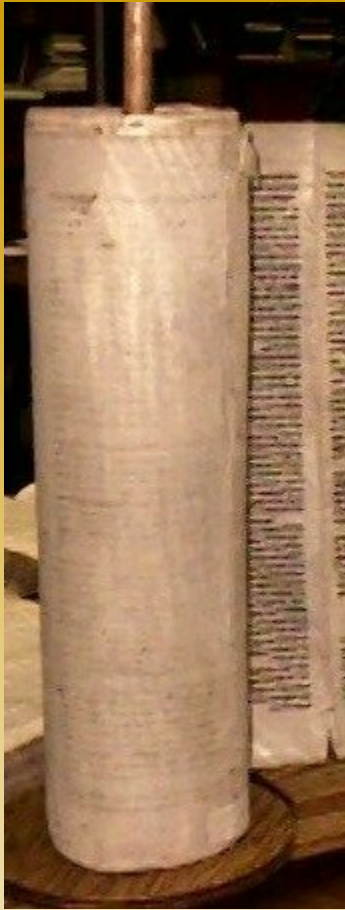
Magisterium
Guarantor

The Holy Spirit is at work through all three channels. He inspires Scripture, animates the Church's living Tradition, and guarantees the teaching of the Church's Magisterium (Catechism, 81-82).



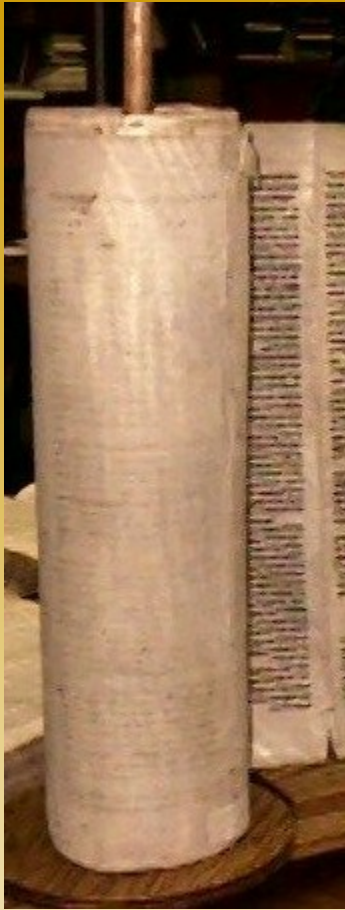
What is the Bible?

- † “Bible” from the Greek *ta biblia* means books or scrolls
- † Actually many books, not just one
- † Books date from the 13th century BC to approx. 100 AD
- † Consists of two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament



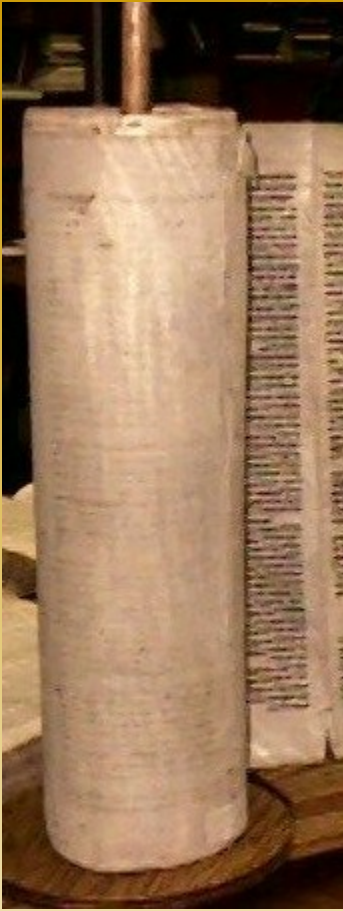
Why Old & New Testaments?

- † "Testament" is just another word for "covenant"
- † Salvation history began with Creation in the Old Testament and progressed through a series of Old Testament covenants
- † The division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments is much more than a literary or historical marker
- † The Old Testament is all about preparing the way for and announcing what will happen in the New Testament



Why Old & New Testaments?

- † All the OT covenants that God made find their fulfillment - their full meaning and purpose - in Jesus, in His "New Covenant"
- † Christ and His cross, are the "hinge" between the Old and the New Testaments
- † With the NT, Christ fulfills all of history in Himself. The world is transformed when He arrives - time and history are taken up into the eternal.
- † The New Covenant, sealed in eternity, will never get "old," since Christ has shattered the boundaries of time.



Getting the Message

“Every happening, great or small, is a miracle by which God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message.” -
Malcolm Muggeridge

Session 2

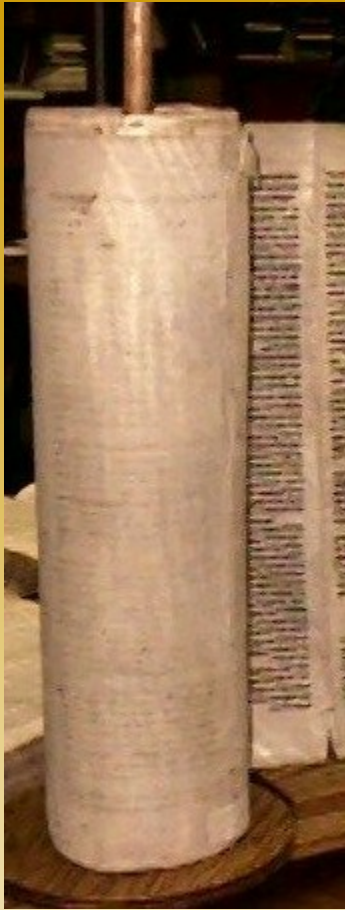
The Bible Is the Word of God



Small Group Discussion

The background of the slide is a rich, multi-layered religious painting. At the top center, a figure, likely Jesus, stands on a hillside, surrounded by sheep and other figures. Below this, a large crowd of people in traditional, colorful robes is gathered in a village setting. In the foreground, a woman in a white headscarf and blue dress is seen from the side, looking towards the center. The scene is filled with various figures engaged in different activities, creating a sense of a busy, lived-in community. The overall style is characteristic of classical religious art, with a focus on narrative and human figures.

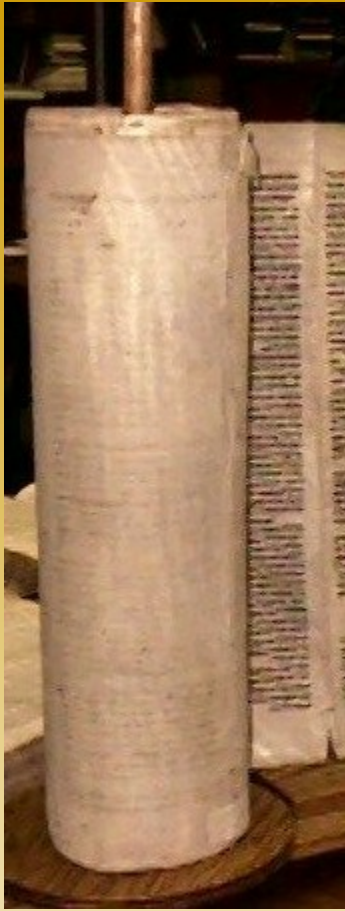
- † What stories are retold in your family that you would like to record for future generations?
- † What role have the Sacred Scriptures played in your religious formation: childhood experiences, adult experiences, favorite stories and/or passages?



Introduction to the Scriptures

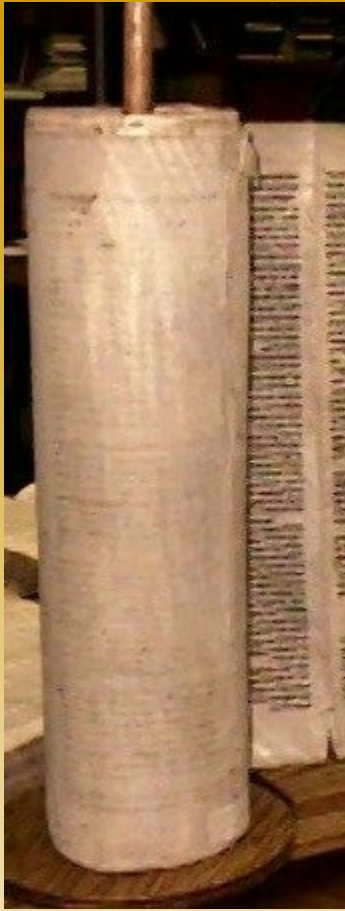
"God wants nothing less than we come to know God fully: to know God's constant love, to understand God's unfathomable faithfulness, to experience God right down to the marrow."
-- Bill Huebsch, *Vatican II in Plain English*

Whenever and wherever we encounter the words of Scripture, we come in contact with God's self-disclosure. The first step to understanding this revelation is to understand exactly what the Bible is, how it was formed, and what types of literature it contains. These understandings are an important foundation for discerning the message of the Bible.



The Bible Is the Word of God

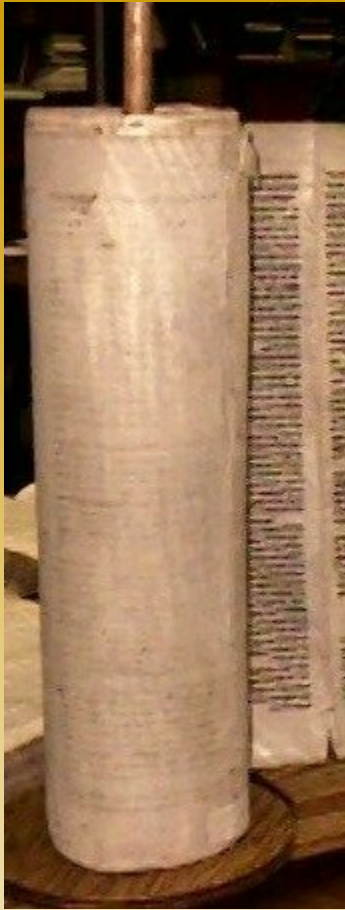
"The force and power in the Word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for the faithful, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life" - (Dogmatic Constitution - Dei Verbum, 21)



The Word in the Word

"The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God." - Dei Verbum 24

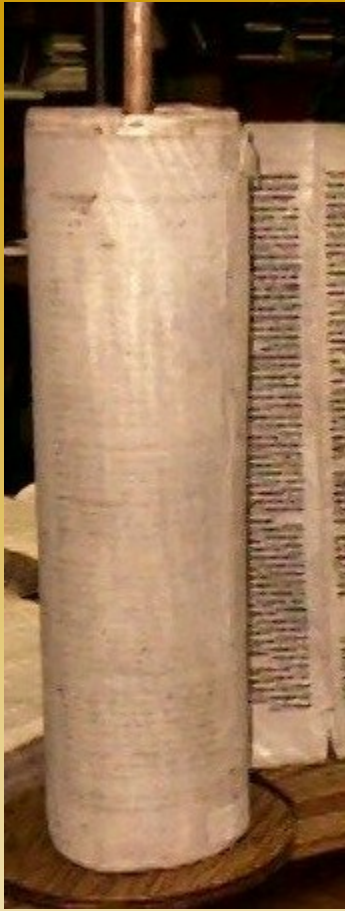
- † Christianity is a religion of the Word, not of a book!
- † The Word is a Person: Jesus Christ. He is God's "final word" on everything



The Word in the Word

"The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God." - Dei Verbum 24

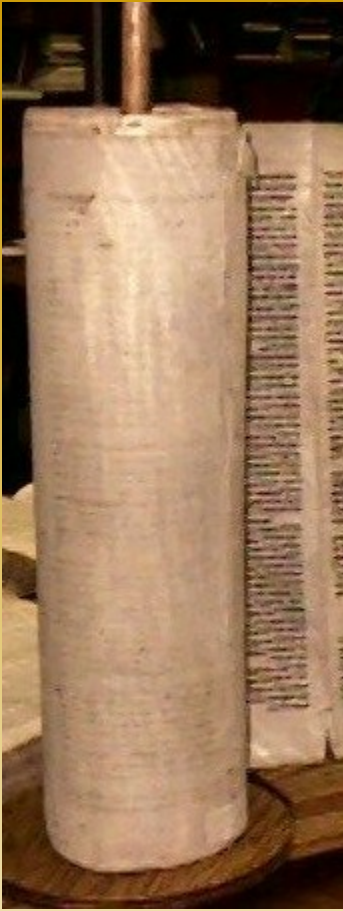
- † Through Jesus, God has revealed everything He wanted to reveal to us about who He is and what He intends for our lives
- † *The Word Incarnate* takes on the weakness of human nature, becoming like us in all things except sin
- † *The Word of God Inspired* expressed in every way like human language (cf. DV 12)



Formation of the Scriptures

There are periods of time (specific steps) involved in the process of scriptural formation:

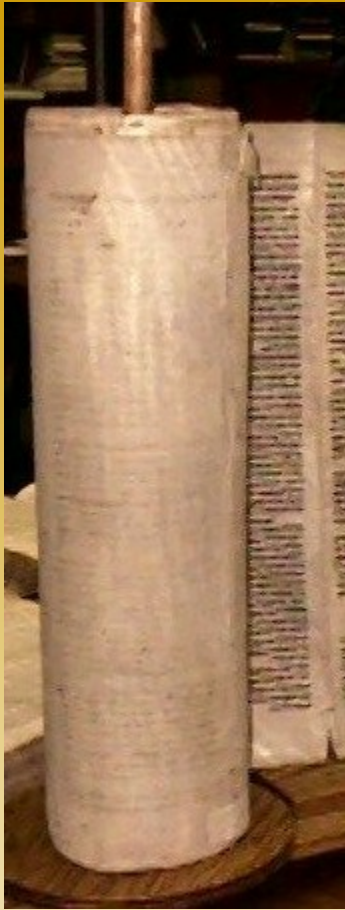
- † The human *event*
- † Collection of *oral* storytelling and traditions
- † Collection of different *writings*
- † *Editing* and *redacting* the final writings
- † Acceptance and incorporation into the *official canon*



How the Bible is Organized

The Old Testament

- † Pentateuch - 1st five books - Torah - stories of creation and the nation of Israel; also includes the Law
- † Historical Books - tell the story of the Israelites from their entry into the Promised Land until the Exile
- † Wisdom Books - Israelites' reflections on faith and God's relationship with humanity
- † Prophets - writings of those inspired to counsel and confront the people and their leaders



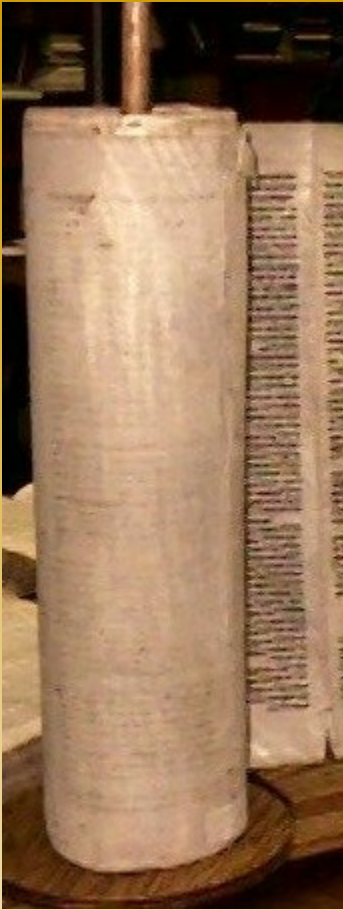
How the Bible is Organized

The New Testament

- † Gospel Accounts - four portraits and collections of stories and words of Jesus
- † Acts of the Apostles - the story of the early Christian Church after the Ascension of Jesus
- † Letters
 - † 13 Pauline Epistles
 - † 7 Catholic Epistles
- † Revelation - addressed to people experiencing persecution and questioning the truth of their faith - offers hope that God's deliverance will come as promised

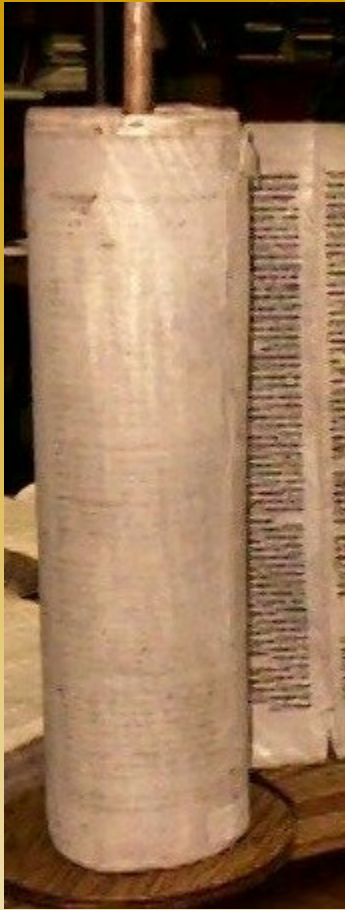
The Bible Is Holy and Inspired





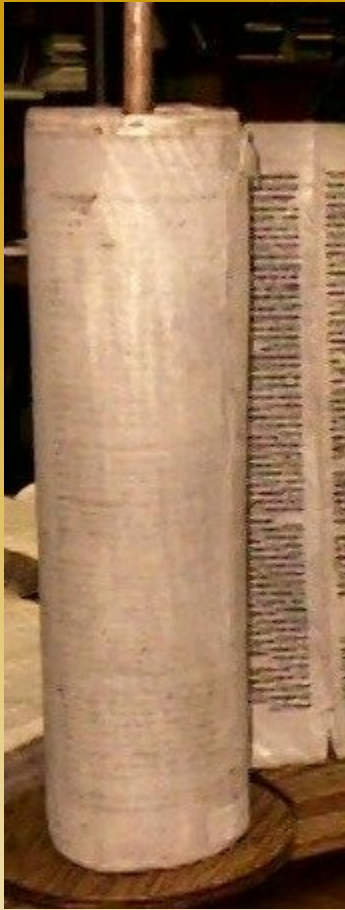
Canon of Sacred Scripture

- † Catholic OT Canon contains 46 books - 39 canonical books plus seven deuterocanonical books
- † Protestant & Jewish OT contains only the 39 canonical books
- † Catholic & Protestant NT both contain the same 27 books



Canon of Sacred Scripture

- † Refers to those texts considered by the Church to be sacred or inspired
- † Official Catholic canon set definitively by Council of Trent in 1546
- † But prior to Trent the Church had long held only the current canon as inspired
- † Until the Reformation there was little need to define the canon since it was generally accepted throughout Western Christendom

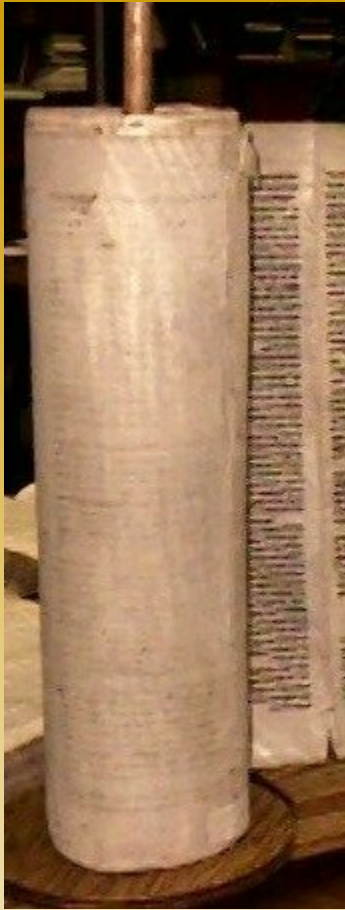


Differences

Between Protestant & Catholic Bibles

- † Protestant Bibles have only 39 OT books, while Catholic Bibles have 46 books.
- † The seven additional books are called *deuterocanonical* books and include:

Tobit	Wisdom
Judith	Sirach
1 & 2 Maccabees	Baruch
- † Catholic Bibles also include additions to the Books of Esther and Daniel
- † The Church considers all of these books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit



Old Testament Canon (46 Books)

Historical books

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 & 2 Samuel
1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
*Tobit
*Judith
†Esther
*1 & 2
Maccabees

Wisdom Books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs
*Wisdom (of
Solomon)
*Sirach
(Ecclesiasticus)

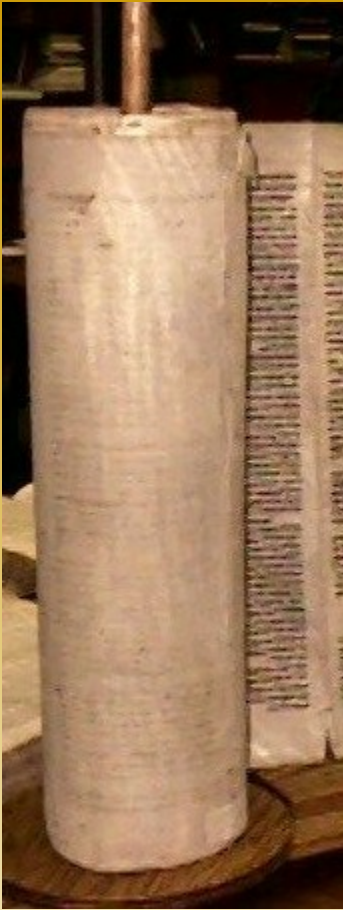
Prophetic Books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
*Baruch
Ezekiel
†Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

* Deuterocanonical book

† Some parts of book only in
Catholic canon

New Testament Canon (27 Books)



Gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts of the
Apostles

Letters of Paul

Romans

1 & 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 & 2 Thessalonians

1 & 2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

Catholic Letters

James

1 & 2 Peter

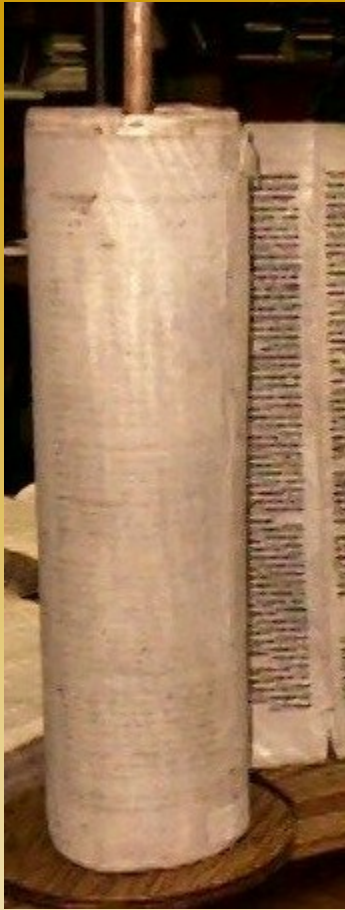
1, 2 & 3 John

Jude

Revelation

**A total of 27 books in both
the Catholic and Protestant
Bibles.**

Handout #5

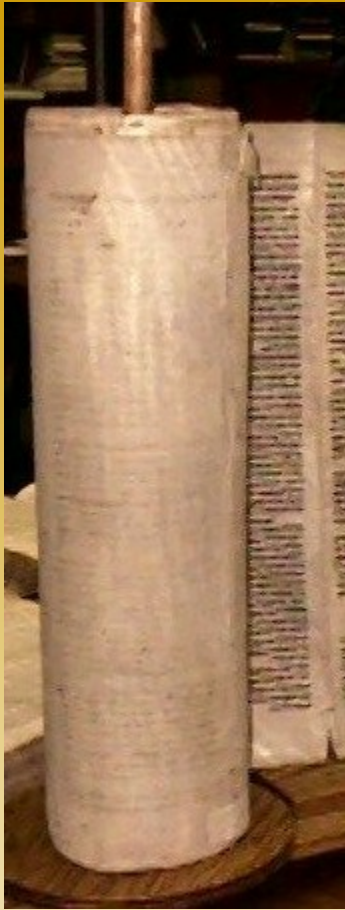


God's Word in human words

Divine & Human

- † Simultaneous divine and human authorship
- † Human writers were "true authors" of Scripture, and so was God (authors inspired by the Holy Spirit)

Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. - (Dogmatic Constitution - Dei Verbum, 11)



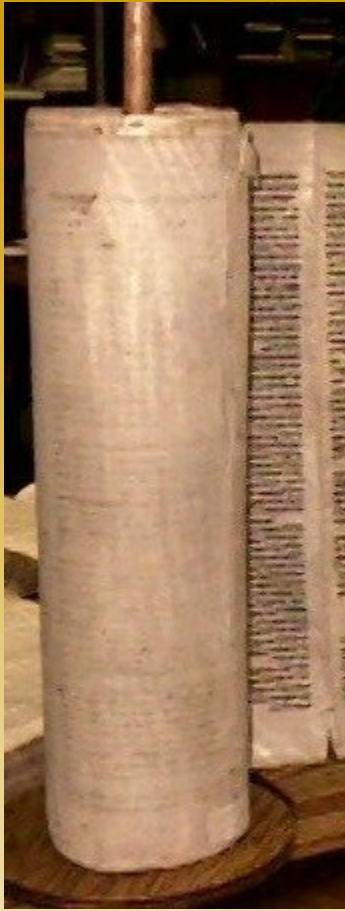
God's Word in human words

Catholic understanding

- † God communicated a message to individuals and faith communities
- † Guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they used their capacities to convey it in a manner comprehensible in both a time-conditioned (historical) and timeless sense.

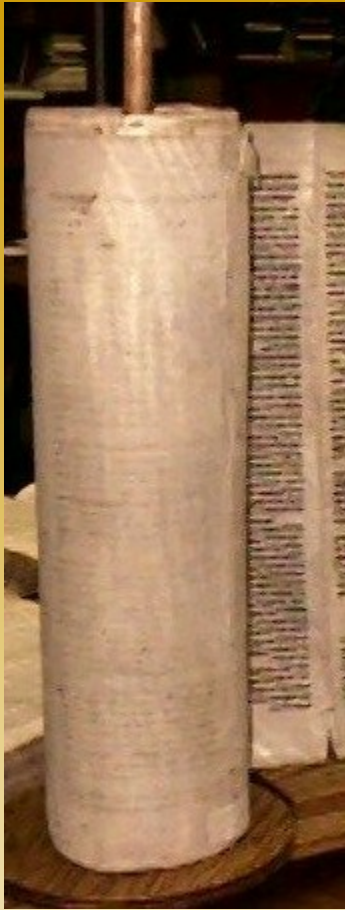
Others

- † Understanding ranges from *fundamentalism* (literal words of God mechanically transcribed by human authors) to *rationalism* (denial of the divine dimension)



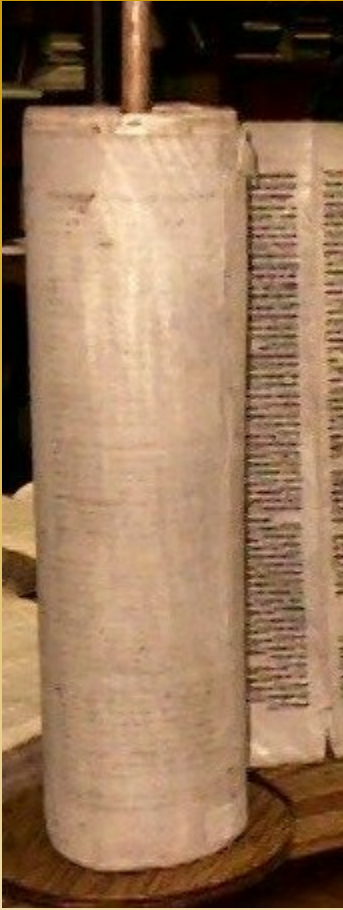
Biblical Authorship

- † In biblical times there was a different notion of authorship and copyrights.
- † In some instances we do not know who the biblical authors were.
- † Some books were composed anonymously and subsequently attributed to important figures among the Hebrews and early Christians.



The Context of Sacred Scripture

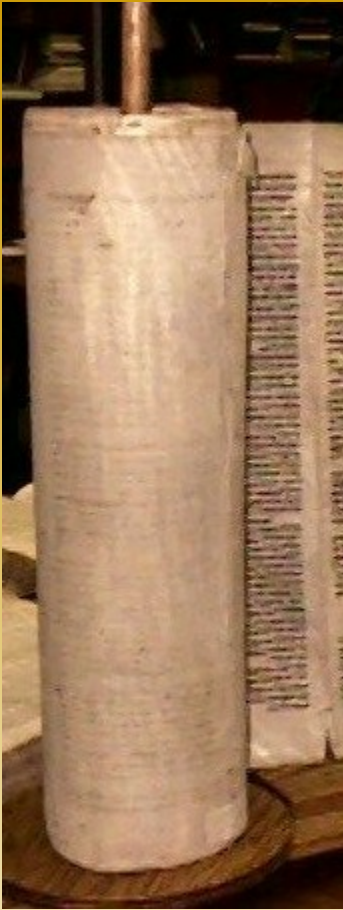
- † Scriptural texts need to be placed in the social and historical context that gave rise to them.
- † It is important not to impose a modern interpretation on ancient texts that were written to people of another culture, place and time.
- † Scripture was written from the experience of faith of ancient communities.
- † The authority of Scripture is rooted in the Magisterial teaching of the Church itself.
- † Biblical interpretation considers the original social and historical context, and relates the passage or issue to the whole body of the revelation of God.



Inspiration

“The sacred writers, or better the Holy Spirit who speaks through them, do not seek to teach men these things [purely scientific matters], for these things are of no avail as far as their salvation is concerned.” – St. Augustine

- † God chose to do the work of revelation through the medium of human experience: our languages, histories, and cultural expressions.
- † By the inspiration of Scripture we mean that the books of the Bible reliably contain the information that God wanted to disclose for the sake of human salvation.

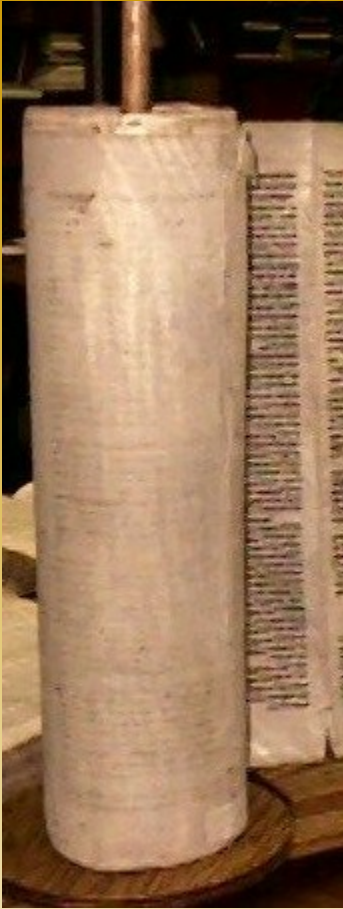


Inspiration

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” – 2 Tim 3:16-17

“Inspired” - from the Greek - literally means “God-breathed,” a good way to think about Scriptural inspiration

Just as God fashioned Adam out of the earth's clay and blew the breath of life into him (Gen 2:7), God breathes His Spirit into the words of the human authors of Scripture and makes them the Living Word of God.

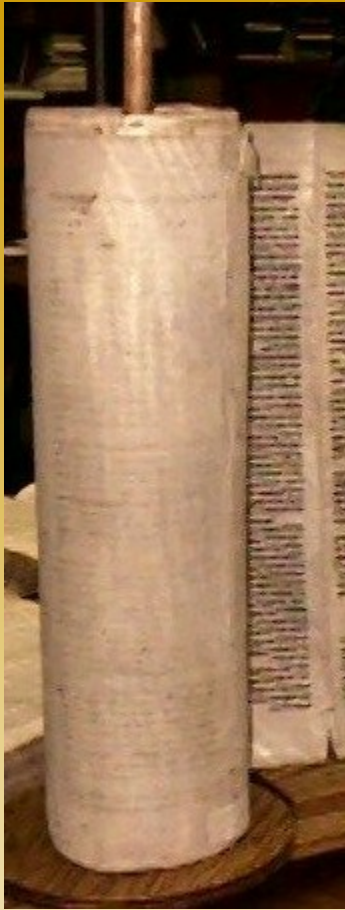


Inspiration

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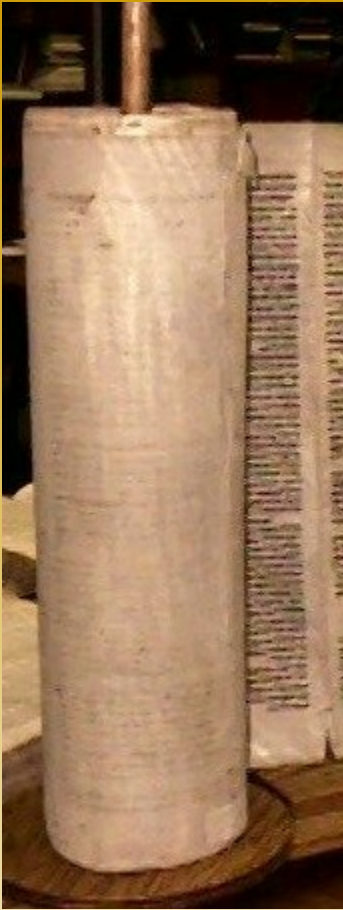
The human authors used their literary skills, ideas and other talents in writing the pages of the Bible.

While they wrote, God acted in them so that what they wrote was exactly what He wanted them to write



Inerrancy of Scripture

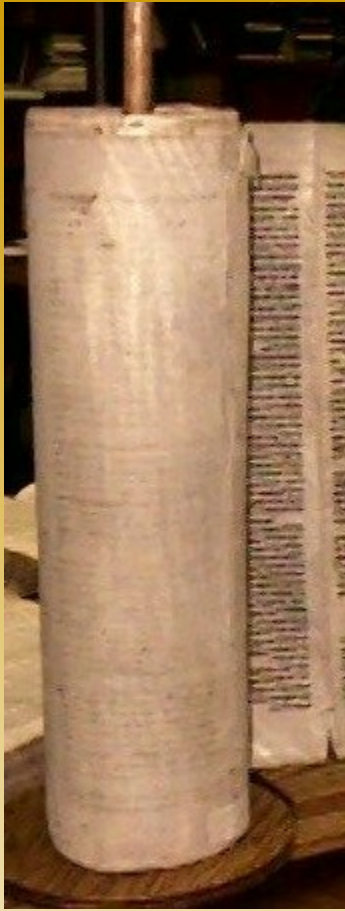
- † Because God is the Bible's co-author and He cannot err, whatever we read in the Bible is true, free from "error" and has been put there for our salvation.
- † This concept of Inerrancy can be a difficult and complex, particularly if it is misunderstood. The following should help us understand the Church's teaching...



Inerrancy of Scripture

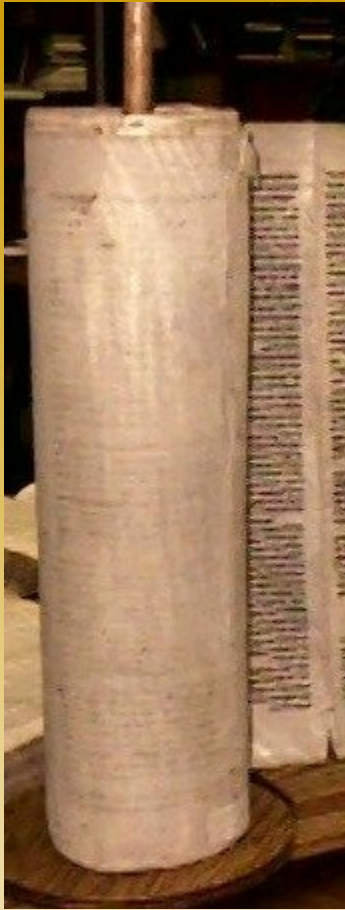
Just as the Holy Father speaks infallibly only when he teaches on faith and morals *ex cathedra* [from the *chair of St. Peter*], the Bible's inerrancy is limited to its central objectives.

The fathers of Vatican Council II, in their document on divine revelation, defined scriptural inerrancy as follows:



Inerrancy of Scripture

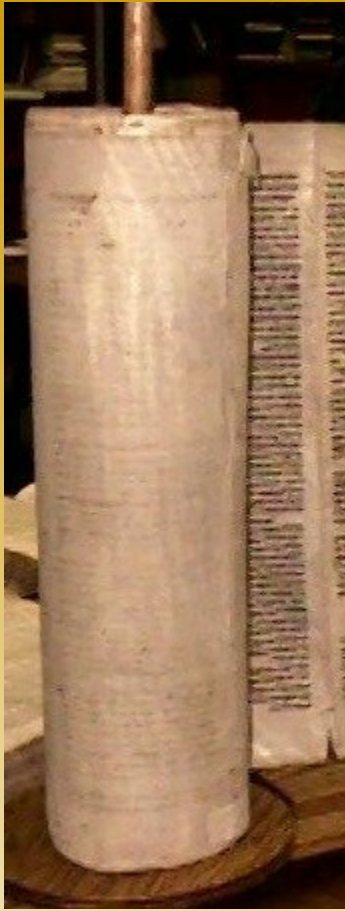
"Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation. - Dei Verbum, 11



Inerrancy of Scripture

Historical, literary or scientific discrepancies are peripheral to the Bible's purpose, and don't detract from its efficacy. As the Council Fathers stated, Catholic Christians believe that the Bible is completely true with respect to its teaching on matters related to salvation, including:

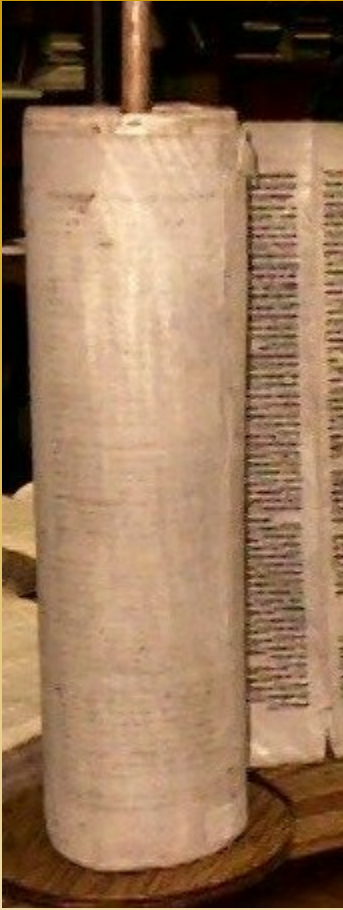
- † **Morality** (right and wrong)
- † **Theology** (about God)
- † **Spirituality** (how moral and theological principles translate into practice; e.g., worship, prayer, devotions, study...)



Inerrancy of Scripture

Always read the Bible on its own terms. The Bible doesn't set out to teach modern history, science, geography, or biography, so don't try to compare what it says about the creation of the world, for instance, to what modern science teaches us.

This doesn't mean the Bible is ever wrong. The Bible, entire and whole, is true and without error - not only in what it teaches about faith and morals, but also what it says about historical events and personages.



Inerrancy of Scripture

The Bible will never lead us astray, if we interpret it responsibly.

We must understand that it gives us history and natural events from a "religious" and divine perspective, often using symbolic language.

Reading & Interpreting Scripture

"The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New." - St. Augustine

Content & Unity of Scripture

- † There is a unity in God's plan for the world, as that plan is revealed in Scripture.
- † Read each book in light of the others; remember, the Old Testament points only to Jesus Christ.
- † The Bible is *Christocentric* - it's all about Jesus.

"Since Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, no less attention must be devoted to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, taking into account the tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith, if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred texts." - Dei Verbum 5 (Vatican II)

Reading & Interpreting Scripture

"The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New." - St. Augustine

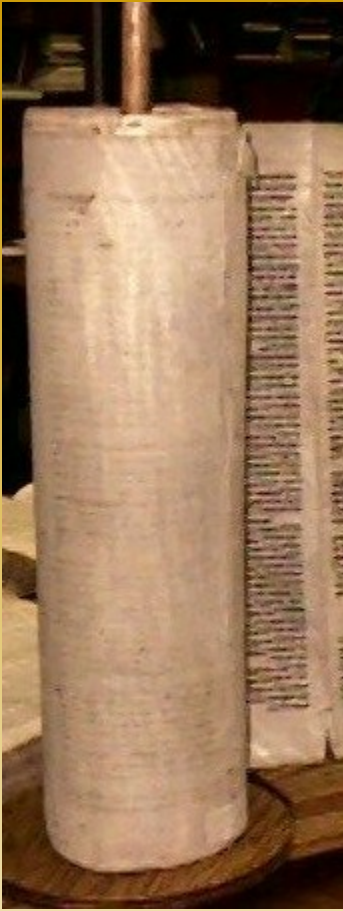
The Church's Living Tradition

- † Read Scripture within the context of the Church's Tradition.

Analogy of Faith

- † The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures also safeguards the Church's teaching authority.
- † No interpretation should contradict the Church's creed and doctrine.

"Since Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, no less attention must be devoted to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, taking into account the tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith, if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred texts." - Dei Verbum 5 (Vatican II)



Biblical Faith in the Psalms

- † The Psalms held the faith of an entire people.
- † The Psalms were prayed and sung by the people from a deep faith in God's saving presence.
- † The Psalms epitomize why we call the Bible holy.

**The Bible Tells the
Story of God's
Love and Saving
Actions**

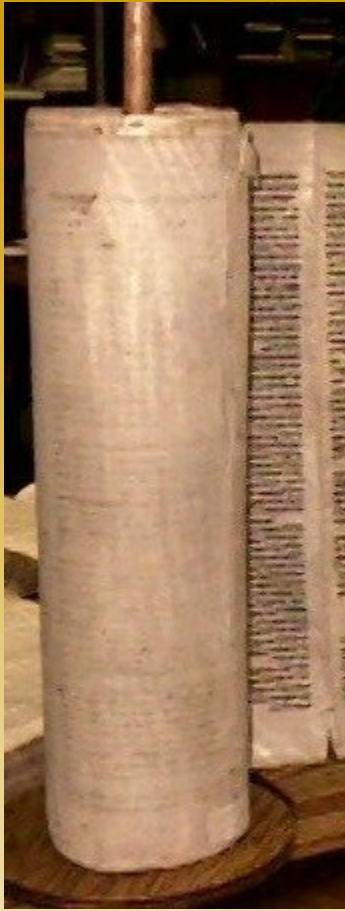


Small Group Exercise

A painting of a man in a white robe sitting on a rocky ledge, looking out over a landscape with a city in the distance. The man is wearing a white head covering and a white robe with a brown sash. He is sitting on a rocky ledge, looking out over a landscape with a city in the distance. The background is a hazy, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The city in the distance is built on a hillside and has a prominent tower or spire. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

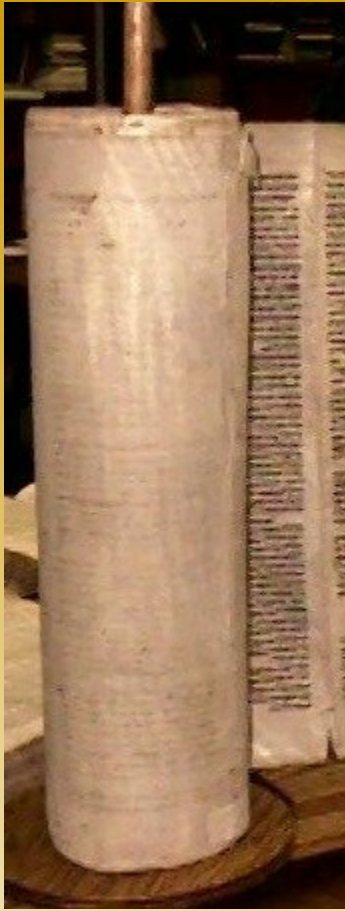
In your groups, discuss and answer the following question:

What is the central message of Sacred Scripture and how would you describe it to someone outside our faith tradition?



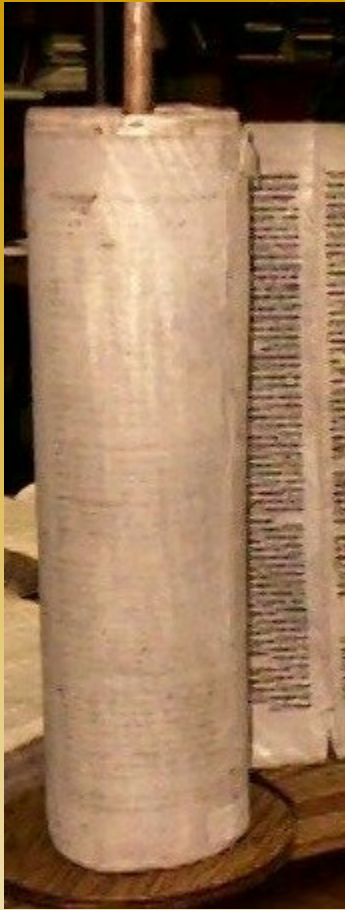
Covenant

- † Hebrew *berith*, Greek *diatheke*, Latin *testamentum*
- † Used 285 times in the Hebrew Bible (first in Gen 6:18) and 33 times in the New Testament
- † A covenant is not a contract. It is a sacred family bond, sealed in God's name by oaths. Because they are sealed in God's name, oaths invoke blessings and curses.
- † Covenants are ratified formally, usually sealed with blood, and thus often involve animal sacrifices; concrete symbols or "signs" often exchanged to remind the two parties of their agreement.



Covenant

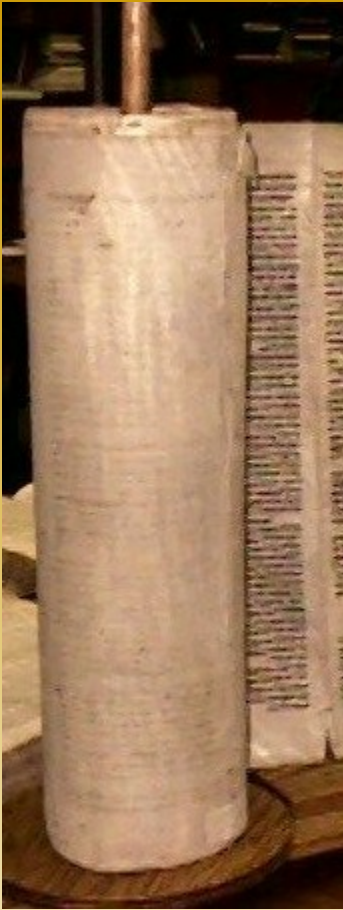
- † Parties involved might be individuals, families, states, kings...even God
- † Parties might be on the same level (two families, two kings) with mutual obligations agreed upon freely
- † Parties might be on different levels (God and humans; a large empire and a smaller nation) with the stronger party imposing the conditions on the weaker party (obedience, taxes, tribute) in exchange for certain benefits (protection)



Salvation History & Covenants

"Understanding...consists in showing why there are a number of covenants with mankind and in teaching what is the character of those covenants" - Irenaeus, Adversus Heresies, Bk. 10; Ch. 3

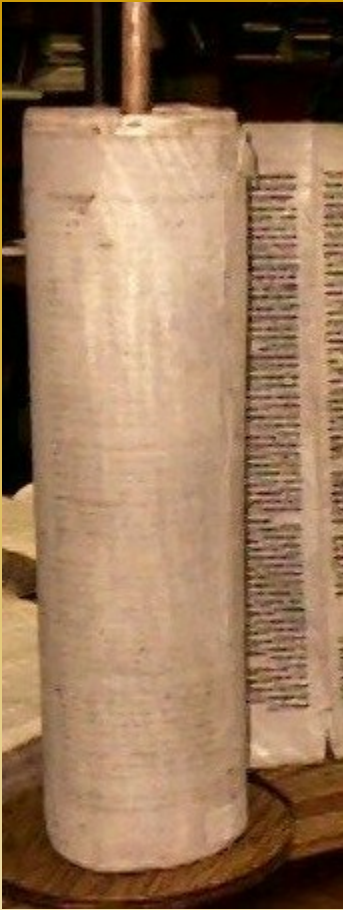
- † St. Irenaeus, early Church father, recognized the need to study salvation history in terms of the covenants.
- † The Bible gives us history from God's perspective. It shows us that throughout all time, God works to bring us salvation. *The Bible is salvation history.*
- † The covenants are the hinges upon which salvation history turns.



Salvation History & Covenants

- † Throughout salvation history, God acts through His covenants to extend the Family of God. He starts with just two people, Adam and Eve, and proceeds through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David until finally all nations are brought into the covenant through Jesus Christ
- † God's plan was always to make all men and women His sons and daughters through the covenants, summed up in Jesus' *New Covenant*, where God sends us "a Spirit of adoption, through which we can cry, Abba, 'Father!'"

Covenant



Contract

Promise

Sealed in your name

Exchange goods & services

Temporary

~ Prostitution

Covenant

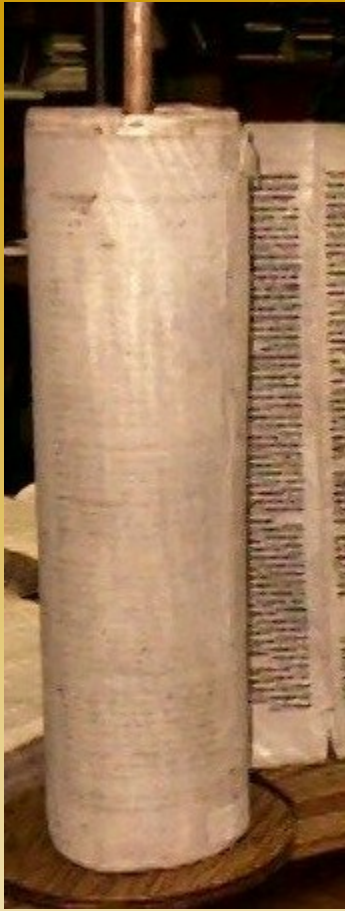
Oath

Sealed in God's Name

Exchange of Persons

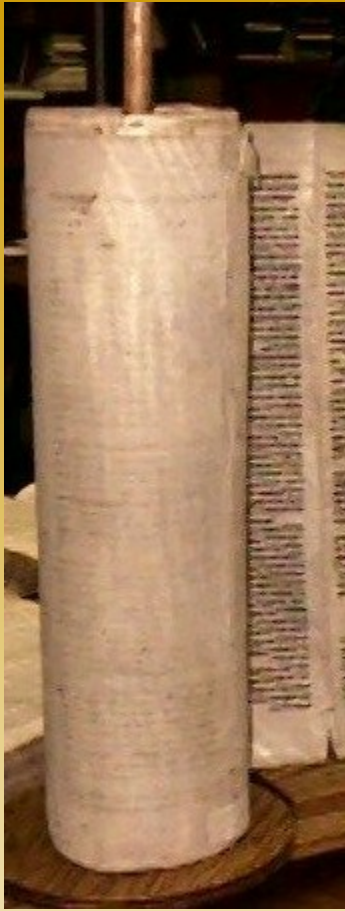
Extend family bonds

~ Marriage



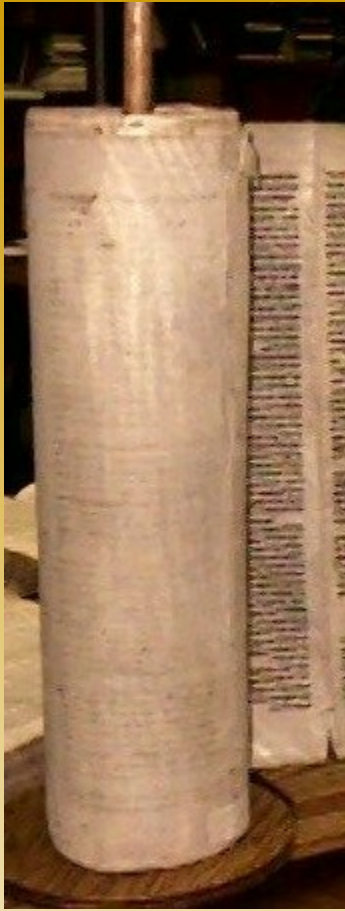
Covenant: Adam & Eve (Gn 1-2)

- † Although the word "covenant" is not used, some divine promises are made.
- † Applies to all human beings
- † *Life on Earth*: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it..." (1:28)
- † *Vegetarian Diet*: "I have given you every plant... and every tree with seed in its fruit... for food" (1:29)
- † *Male and Female*: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18; cf. 1:27)
- † *Disobedience and Death*: "...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (2:17)



Covenant: Noah and family (Gen 6-9)

- † Applies to all human beings
- † *Life*: God saves the family of Noah (6:18), telling them to *be fruitful and multiply*, and fill the earth (9:1, 7)
- † *Diet*: They may now also eat animals, but may not eat/drink their *blood*, and may not shed human *blood* (9:2-6)
- † *Covenant*: God promises *not to destroy* the whole human race again through a flood (9:8-11)
- † "*Sign*" of this covenant: The rainbow set in the clouds when it rains (9:12-17)



Covenant: Abraham and his descendents (Gen 12,15,17)

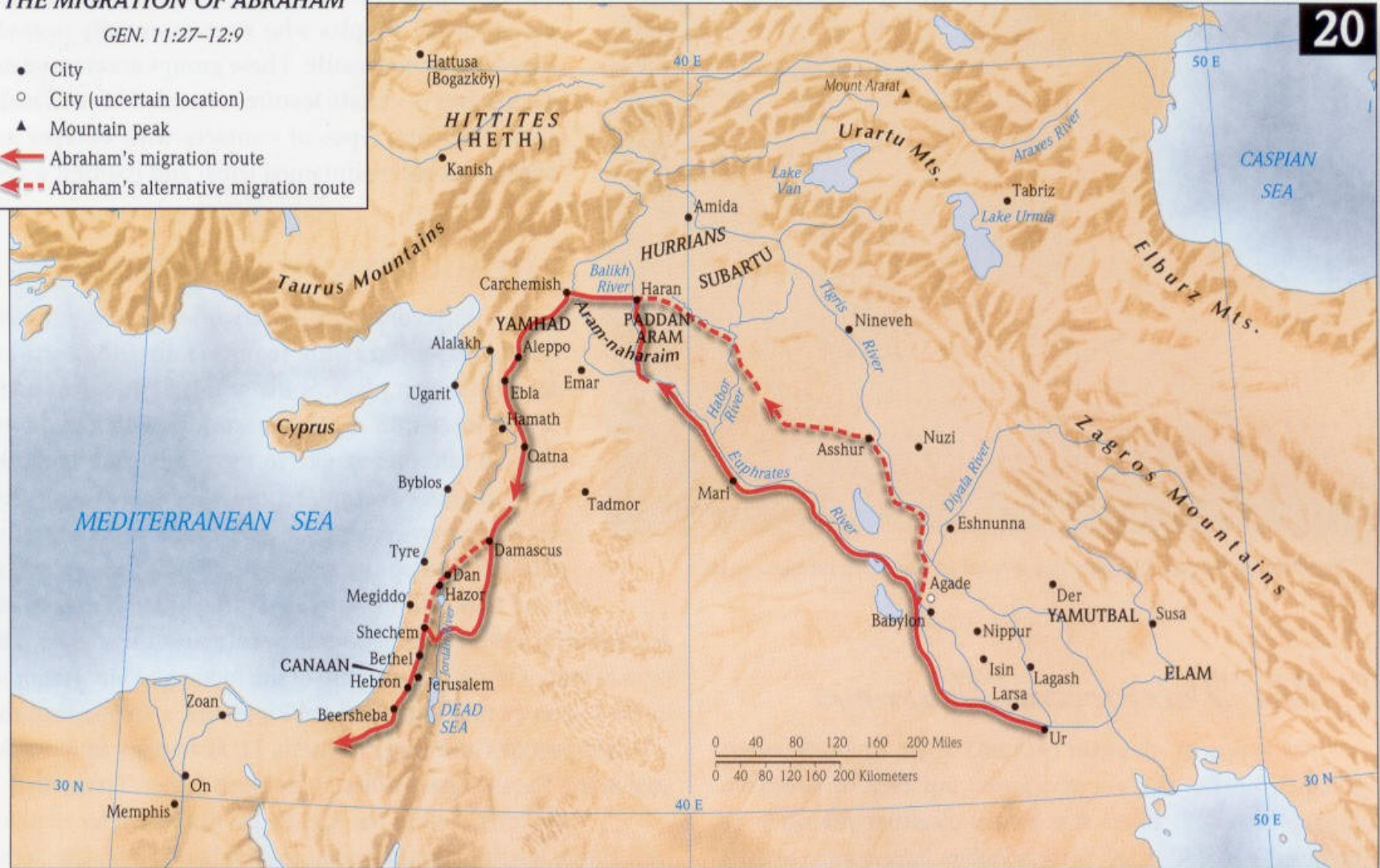
- † *Descendants*: Abraham's descendents will be numerous and will become a great nation (12:2; 15:5; 17:20; 18:18; etc.)
- † *Inheritance*: Descendents will inherit the "promised land," later called the land of Israel (12:1; 15:18-21; 17:8; etc.)
- † *All other nations*: All nations shall be blessed in him (12:3; 18:18) or through his offspring (22:18; 26:4)
- † *"Sign" of this covenant*: Circumcision of all male descendents (17:9-14, 23-27; 21:4; etc.)

Abraham's Journey

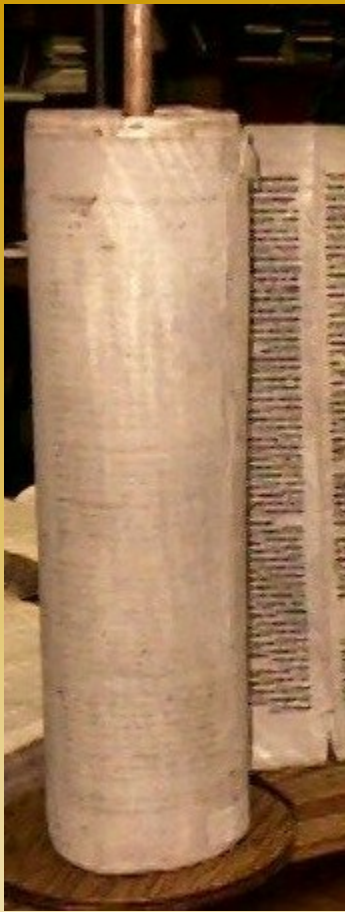
THE MIGRATION OF ABRAHAM

GEN. 11:27-12:9

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ← Abraham's migration route
- ←- - Abraham's alternative migration route



Covenantal Structure of Salvation History



1. Three-fold
Promise to Abraham

Abraham
Gen 12:1-3

2. Promise upgraded
to Covenants

1. Land Promise
(Gen 15)

2. Royal Dynasty
Promise (Gen 17)

3. Worldwide Blessing
Promise (Gen 22)

3. Three Covenants
fulfilled in Moses,
David and Jesus

Moses
Mosaic Covenant - Ex 24
Deuteronomic Covenant
(with Moses) – Deut 29

David
Davidic Covenant
2 Sam 7

Jesus
New Covenant in Jesus
Christ – Mark 14

Descendants of Abraham: Tribal and Priestly

Focus

1800 B.C.

Sarai/Sarah (wife) Abram/Abraham Hagar (Sarah's Egyptian slave girl)

Rebekah Isaac (younger) Ishmael (elder)

Esau (elder twin) Jacob (younger twin)

Leah Bilbah (Rachel's maid) Zilpah (Leah's maid) Rachel (younger)

1700 B.C. 1-Reuben 2-Simeon 3-Levi 4-Judah 9-Issachar 10-Zebulon 5-Dan 6-Naphtali 7-Gad 8-Asher 11-Joseph 12-Benjamin

1300 B.C. Moses Aaron Ephraim & Mannaseh

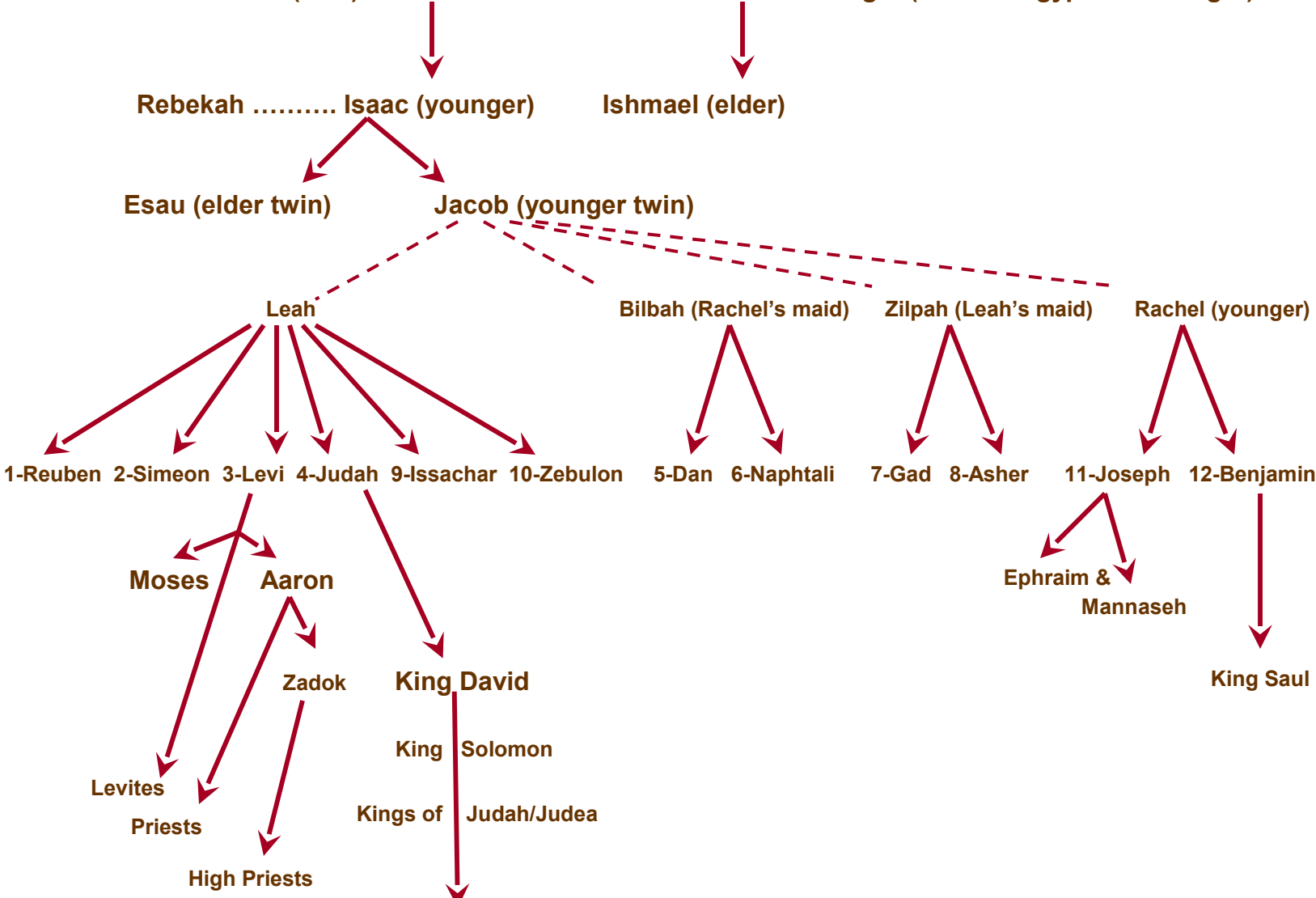
1000 B.C. Zadok King David King Saul

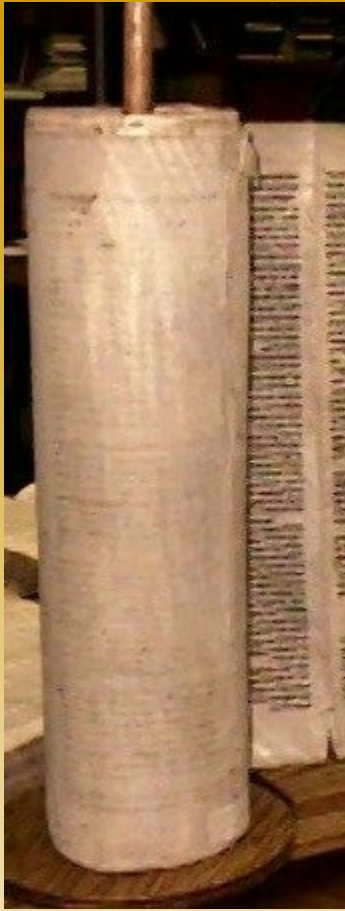
Levites King Solomon Kings of Judah/Judea

Priests High Priests

30 A.D.

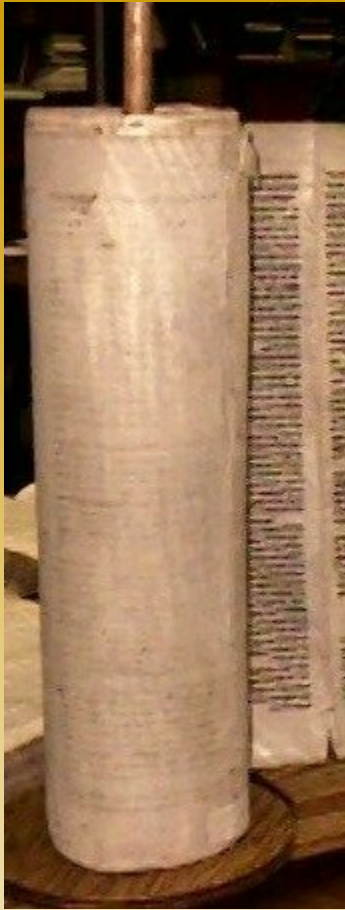
Jesus





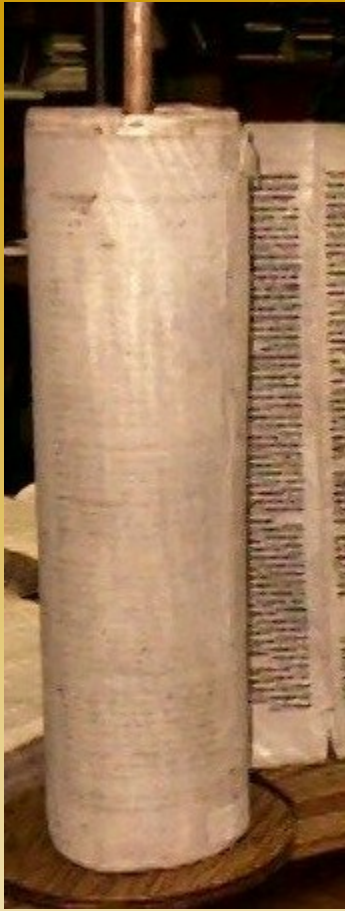
Covenant: Moses and the Israelites (Ex 20-34; Dt 5-11)

- † *Monotheism*: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (Dt 6:4; cf. Ex 20:1-3)
- † *Torah*: The Law given on Mount Sinai, or Mount Horeb (esp. Ten Commandments: Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5:1-21)
- † *Reciprocity of relationship*: "I will be your God, you will be my people" (esp. Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12)
- † *"Sign" of this covenant*: Stone tablets on which the Law is written (Ex 24:12; 31:18; etc.)



Exodus and Exile

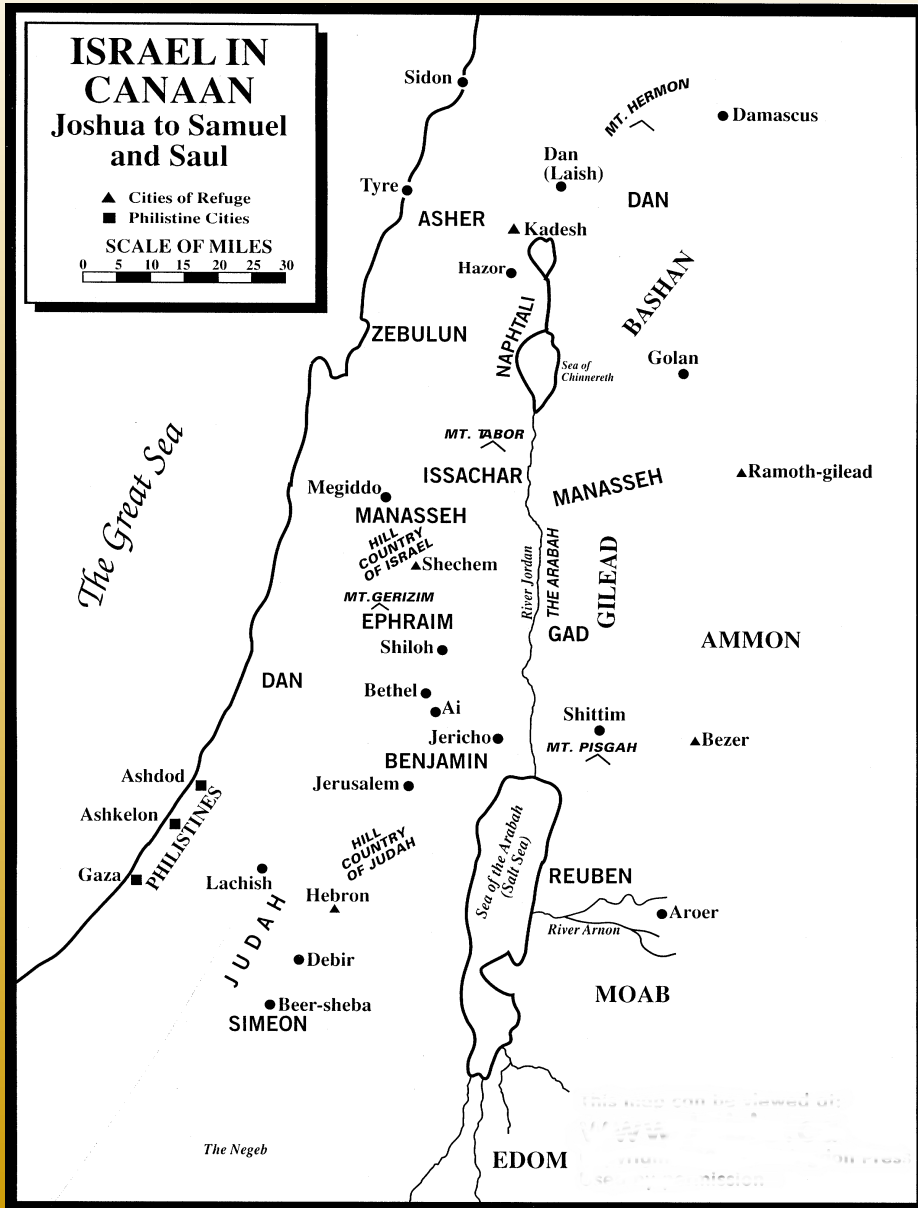
- † A series of readings telling the story of salvation history is proclaimed at the Easter Vigil.
- † The Book of Exodus tells the story of God's liberation of His people from slavery in Egypt.
- † God's covenant is a bond by which He freely chooses a relationship of constant and saving love with humanity.
- † Through God's covenant with the Hebrew people we learn that He chooses to set us free from slavery of every kind.
- † Moses led the Hebrew people from Egypt through the desert to the land God promised.



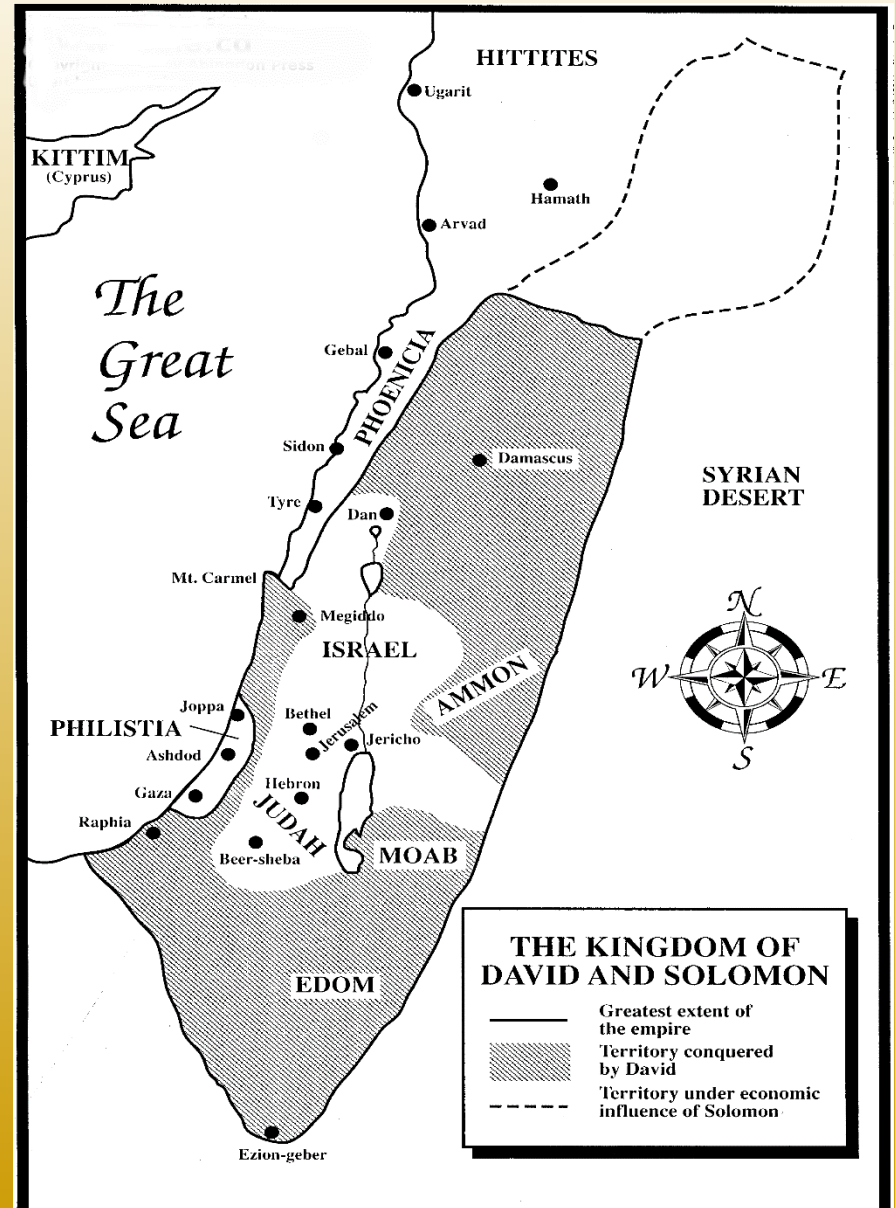
Exodus and Exile

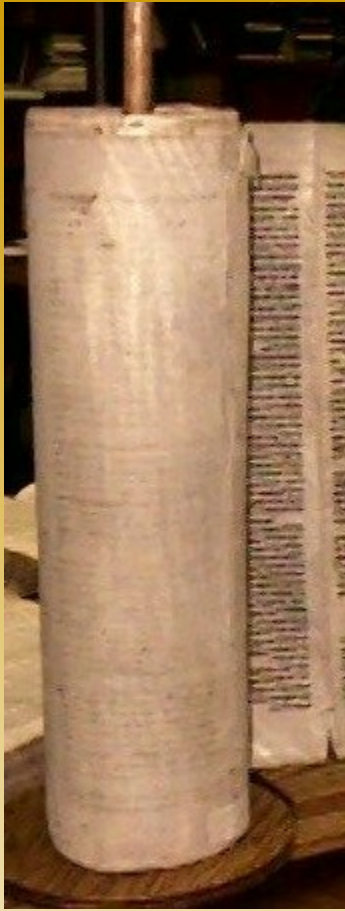
- † Christians understand that the story of God's deliverance of the people reaches its deepest meaning in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, which frees us from the slavery of sin.
- † The Exodus shows that God has preferential love for those at the margins of society.
- † The story of the exile of the Hebrew people in Babylon reveals to us God's abiding presence with us in times of difficulty.
- † The stories of exodus and exile offer us a model for understanding our own experiences.

Joshua to Samuel



United Kingdom





Covenant: David and the Kingdom (2 Sam 7)

Royal Dynasty Forever

- † God will establish forever David's "house"
- † Royal Dynasty through his descendants (7:11-16)

Temple

- † David's son (Solomon) will build God's "house"
- † First temple of Jerusalem (7:4-7, 13)

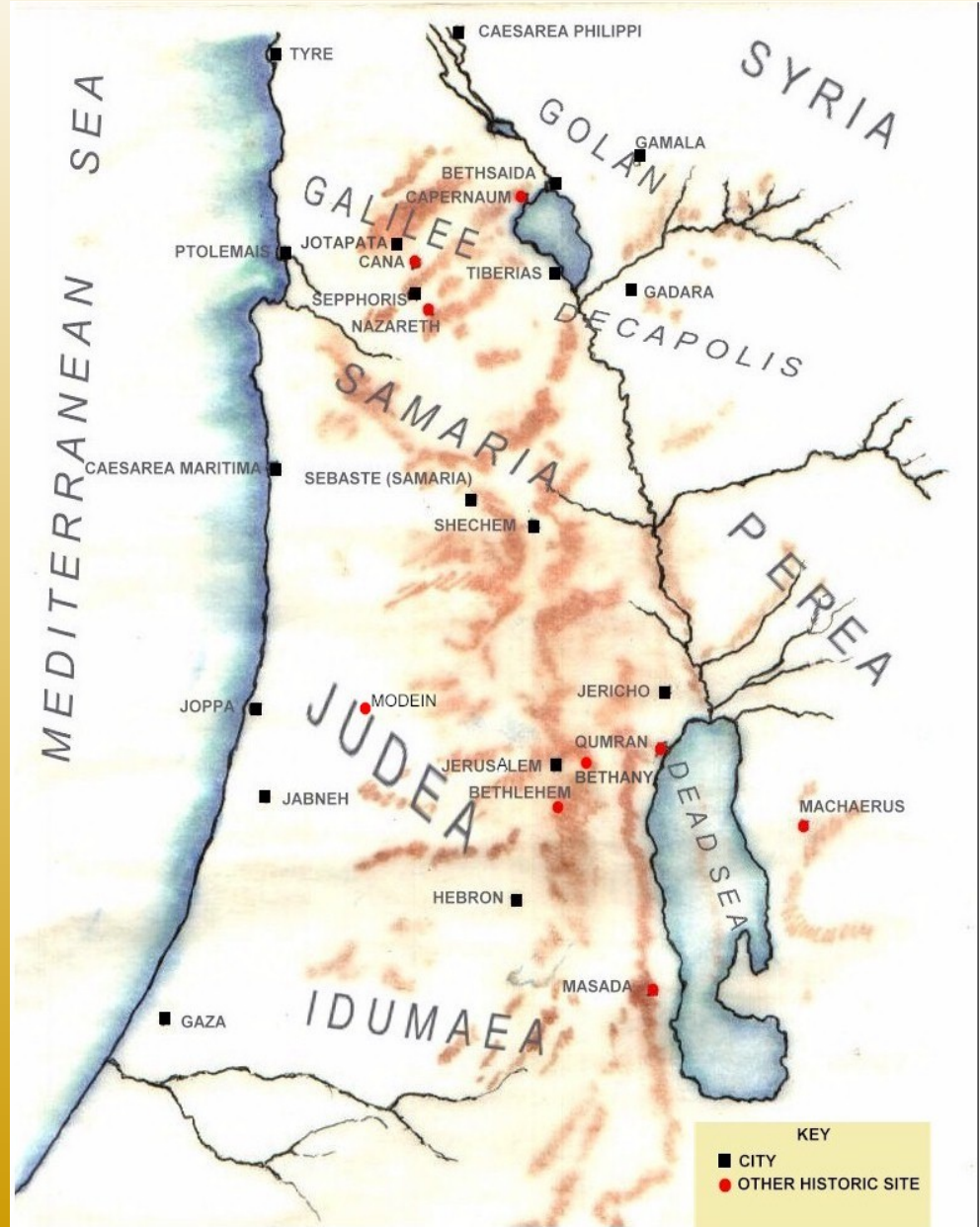
"Sign" of this covenant

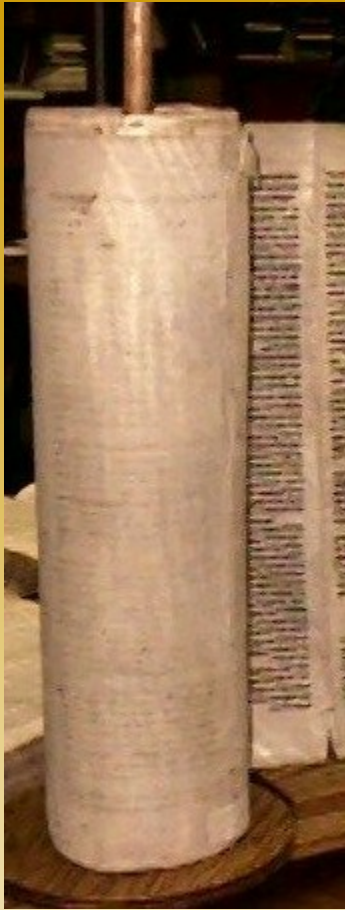
- † Descendants of David (1 Kings 1-3)
- † The temple itself (1 Kings 5-8)

Divided Kingdom



Israel 1st Century A.D.





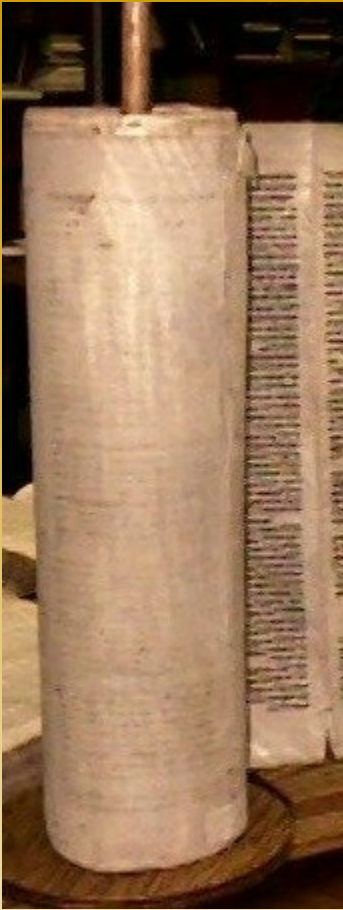
The New Covenant: Jesus

Foretold by Jeremiah

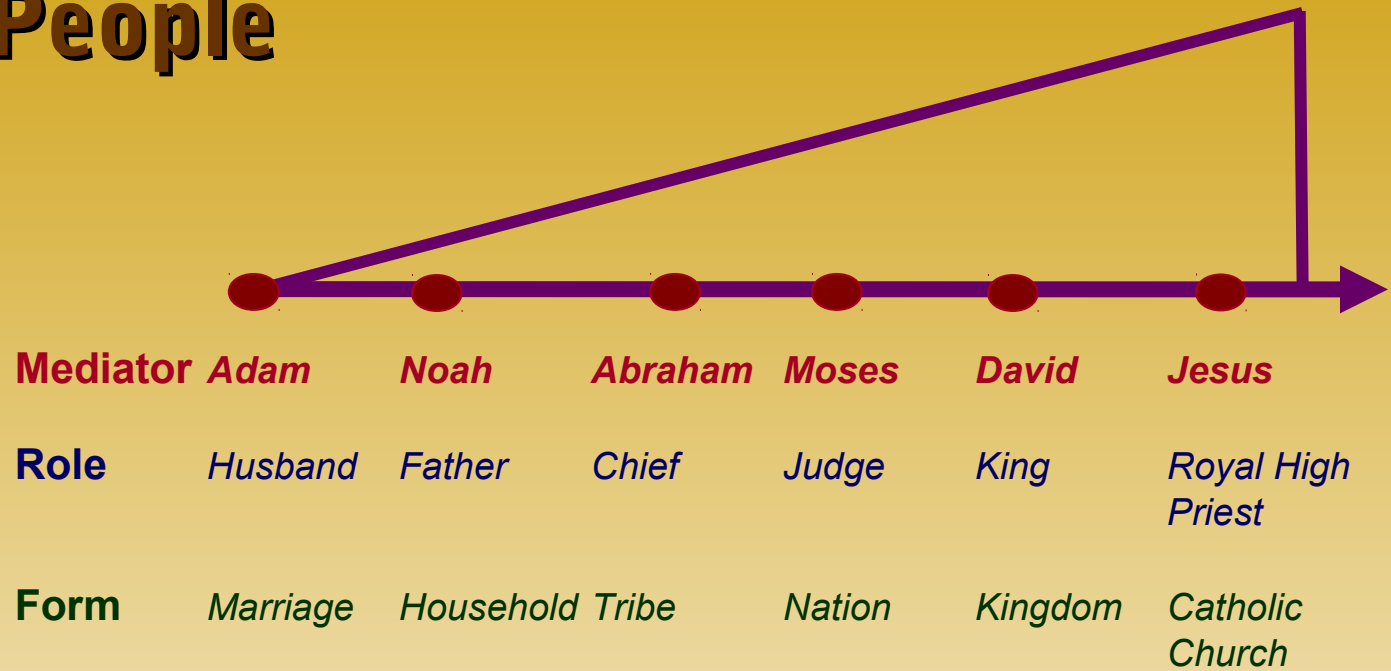
- † The Lord will make "a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer 31:31)
- † God's Law will be within people, written on their hearts (Jer 31:34)
- † This text is also quoted in the New Testament in Heb 8:8-12

Instituted by Jesus

- † At the Last Supper: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:20; cf. 1 Cor 11:25)
- † The Letter to the Hebrews calls Jesus "the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb 9:15; 12:24; see also 8:1-13)
- † Paul also speaks of Christian leaders as "ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor 3:6)



God's Covenants with His People



These key covenants serve as the outline for reading the whole Bible. If we know them and understand them, we'll have a good working understanding of the "plot" of the Bible.

7 Main Pillars of Ancient

Judaism

Monothelism

- There is only One God YHWH
- See the "Shema" prayer (Dt 6:4).
- Developed from earlier stage of Henotheism in which Yahweh was greatest among the gods, the king of gods

Election

- God's Chosen People are to be "Holy," "set apart; different from other nations"

Land

- Promised by God to be their land forever; a "land flowing with milk and honey"

Law

- Core in Decalogue, more in the rest of the Torah and ultimately in the whole Bible

Monarchy

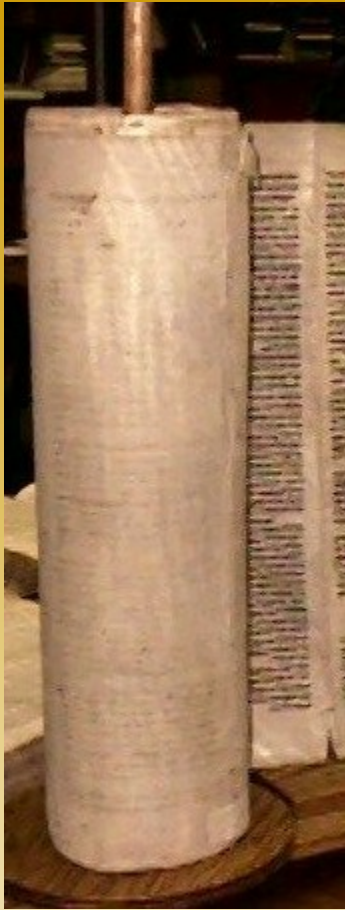
- Davidic dynasty ("Son of David") is supposed to rule over Israel forever

Temple

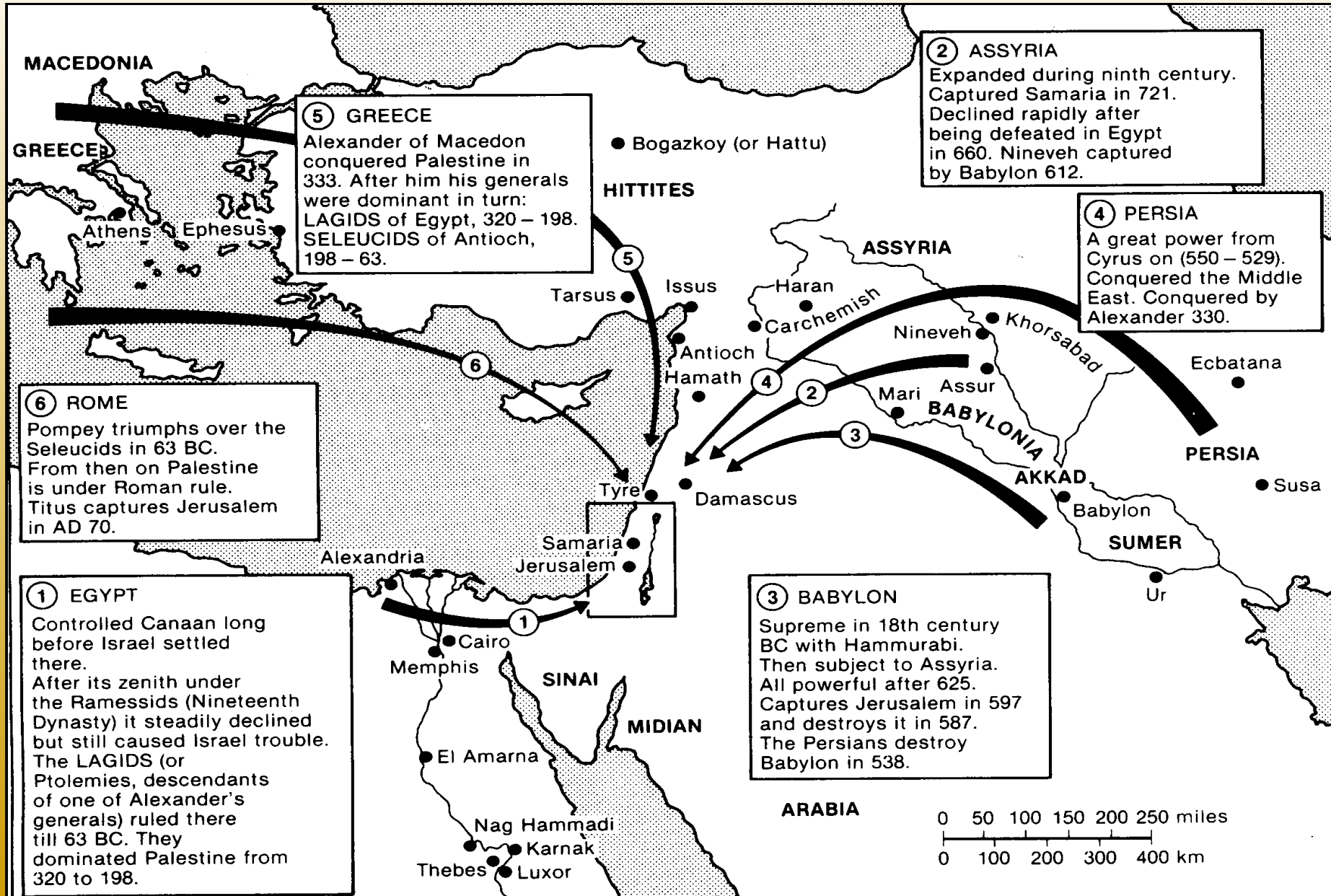
- God's "House" will be in Jerusalem; i.e., God will dwell in the midst of his people

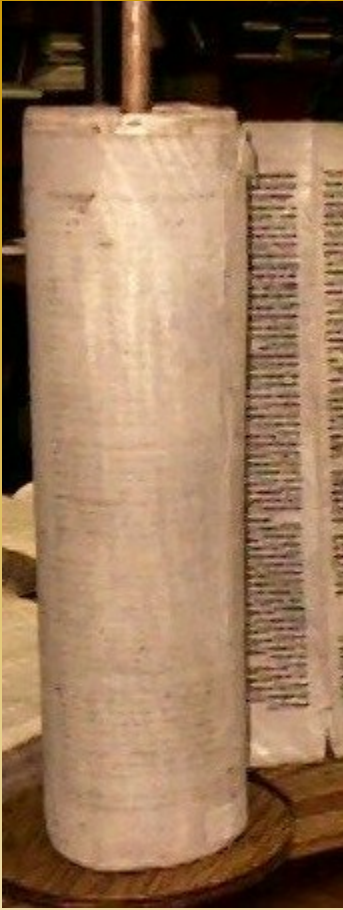
Messiah

- God will raise up an "anointed" leader to restore the nation and its covenants with God



Israel and the Nations



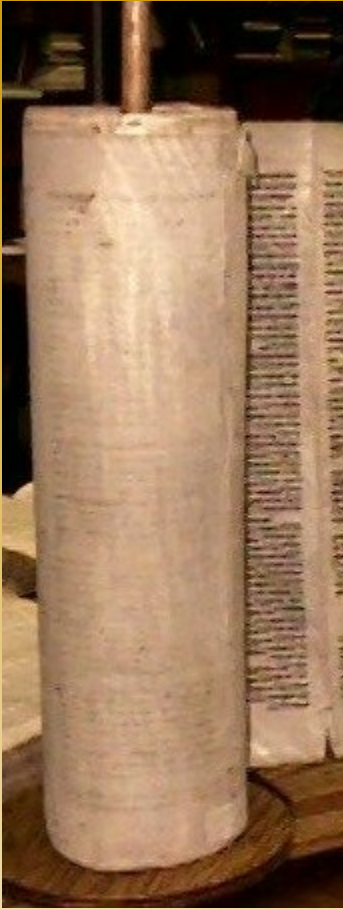


The Books of the Bible

A Brief Overview

Let's start at the beginning, with the Pentateuch (or Torah). Five books:

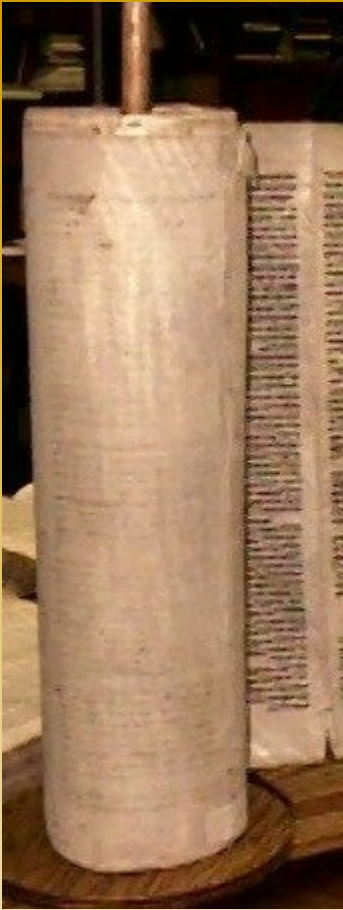
- † Genesis
- † Exodus
- † Leviticus
- † Numbers
- † Deuteronomy



In the beginning...

Genesis

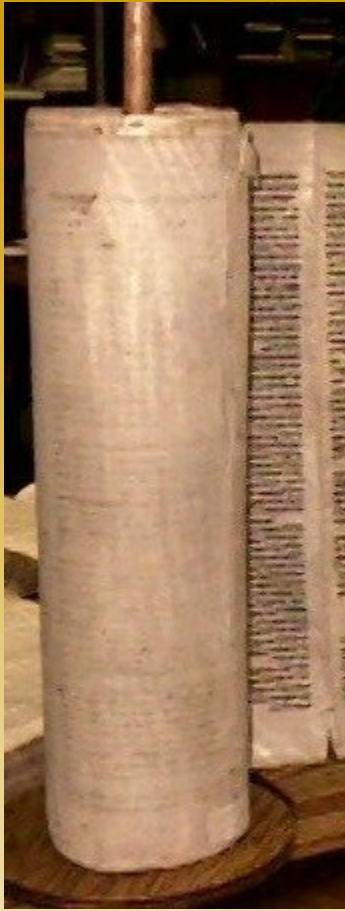
- † Creation stories
- † The Fall - consequences
- † God reveals Himself to Abraham
- † Covenants and promises
- † The patriarchs



Exodus

From Slavery to Liberation

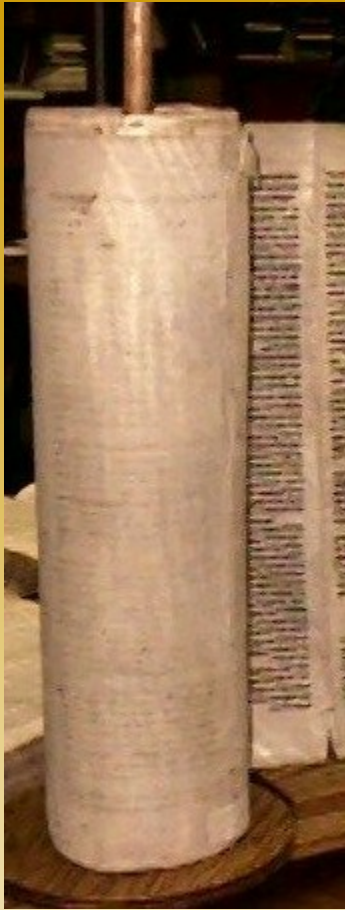
- † Moses' faith, *God's Power*
- † God reveals Himself and tells us His Name
- † Moses - a *type* of Christ
- † Christ in Exodus
- † The Law



Law, Wandering, Farewell

Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

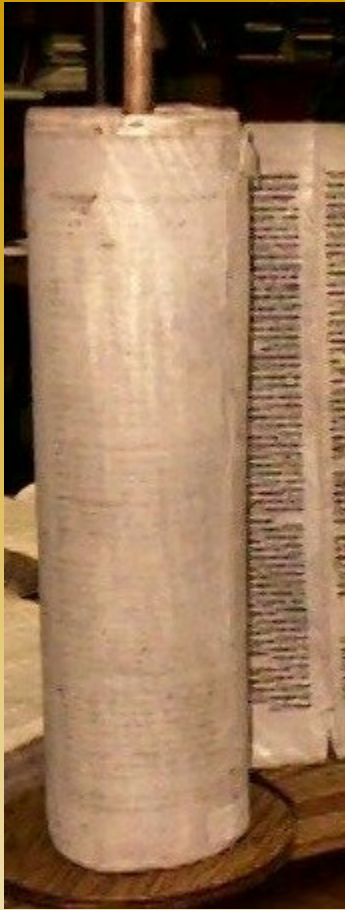
- † Leviticus - the book of laws
- † Numbers - Israel wandering in the wilderness - pain and optimism
- † Deuteronomy - Moses preaches to *all* the People of God
- † Shema - Deut 6:4-5
- † Choose Life - Deut 30:19-20



Conquest to Chaos

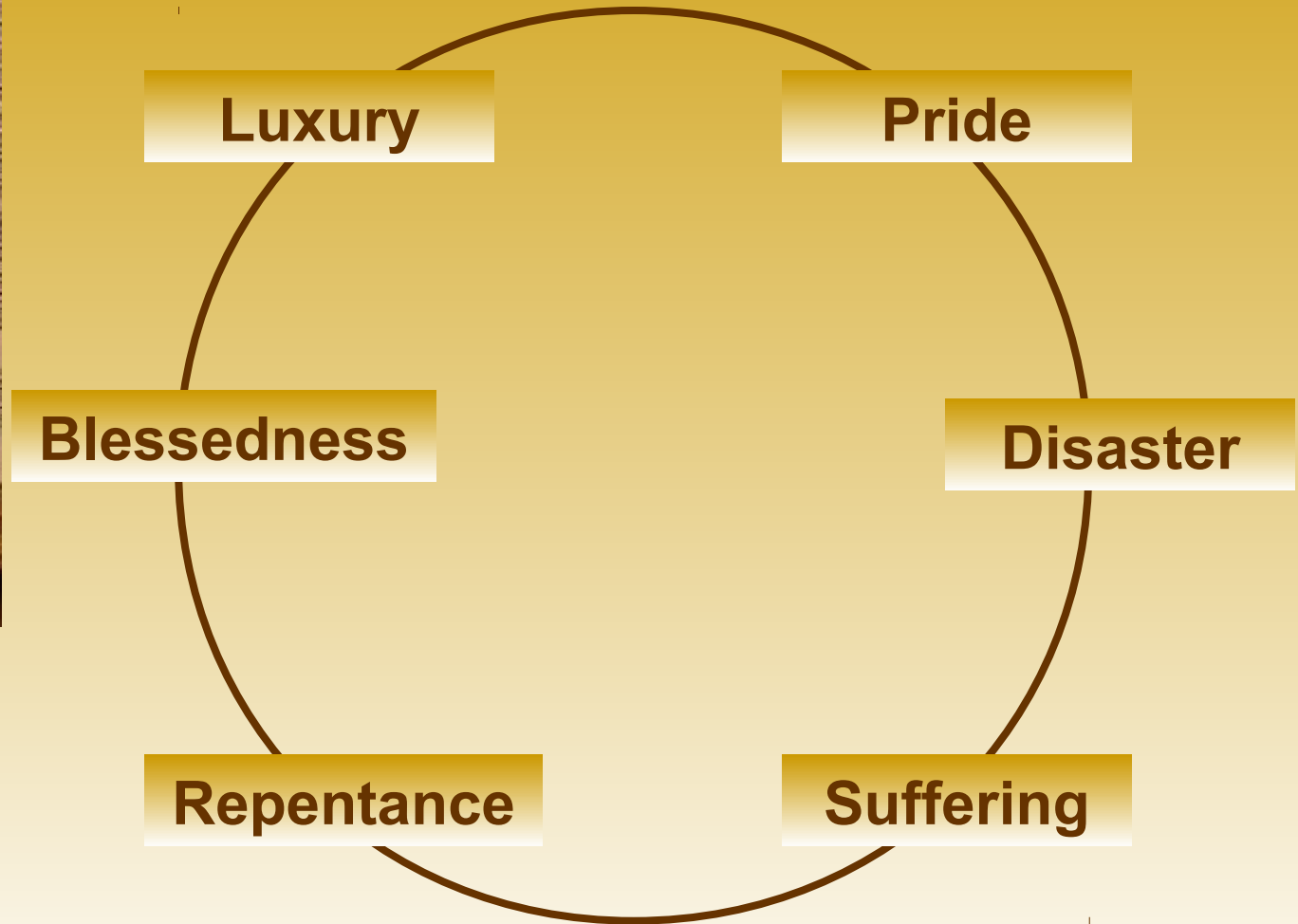
Joshua and Judges

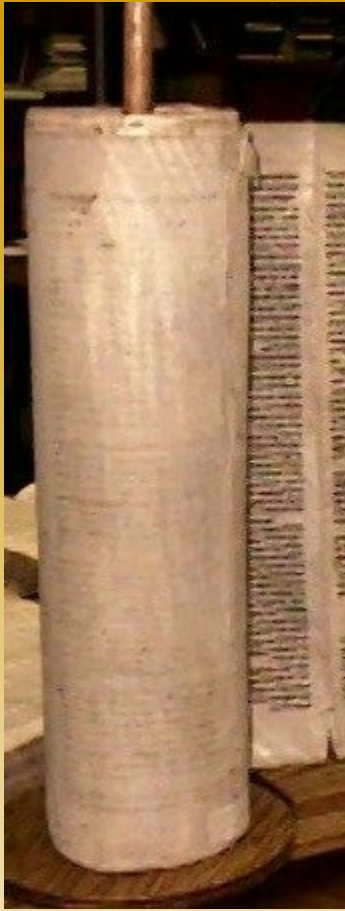
- † The Call to Follow - Spiritual Warfare
- † Joshua - a *type* of Jesus
- † Judges - repeated failures and repeated deliverances
- † The cycle of human history



Judges

Cycle of Human History

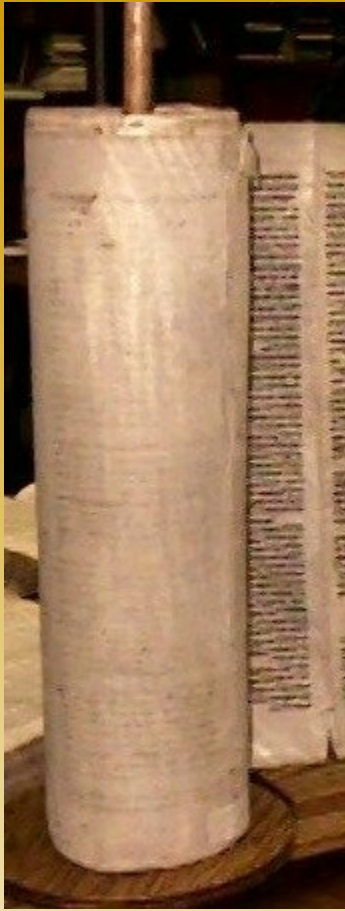




National Happiness from Personal Holiness

1st and 2nd Samuel

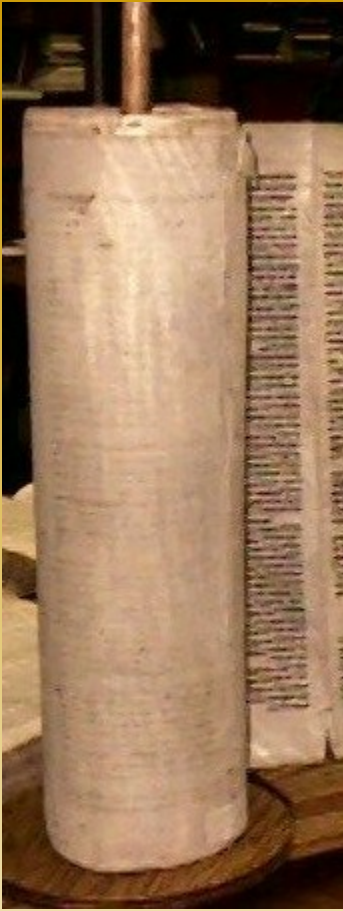
- † From weakness (Eli) to strength (Samuel)
- † We want a king!
- † Saul - all image, corrupt
- † David - a story of glory
- † David - a *type* of Christ
- † Lessons for our time



From Golden Age to Decline and Fall

1st and 2nd Kings

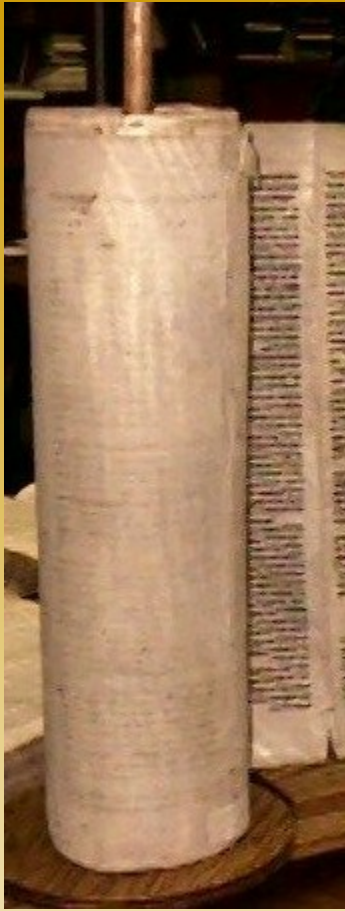
- † Solomon - the gift of wisdom
- † Got wealth? Build God's house
- † Temple as symbol of Christ
- † Solomon's failures
- † Divided kingdom - Israel loses its way
- † The two great prophets: Elijah and Elisha



Second (& Different) Look

1st and 2nd Chronicles

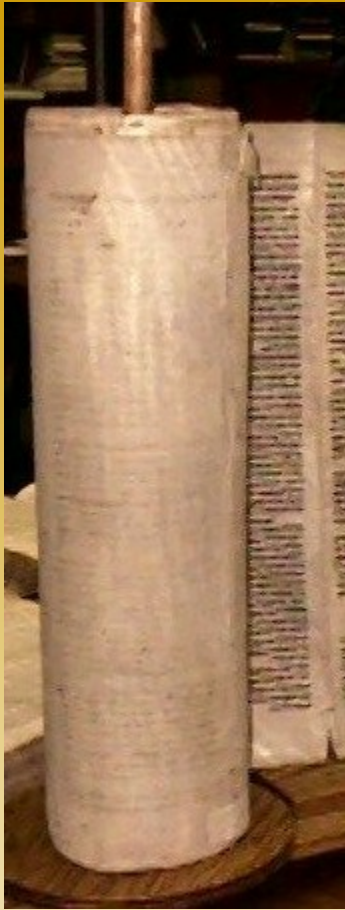
- † The Chronicles Approach to History
 - † More divine, less human
 - † More priestly point of view
 - † Focus on genealogies (last book of Jewish Scripture; Matthew's beginning)
 - † Idealizes
- † Focus on Judah, not Israel
- † Temple and its Liturgy foreshadow Christ



God Brings His People Home

Ezra and Nehemiah

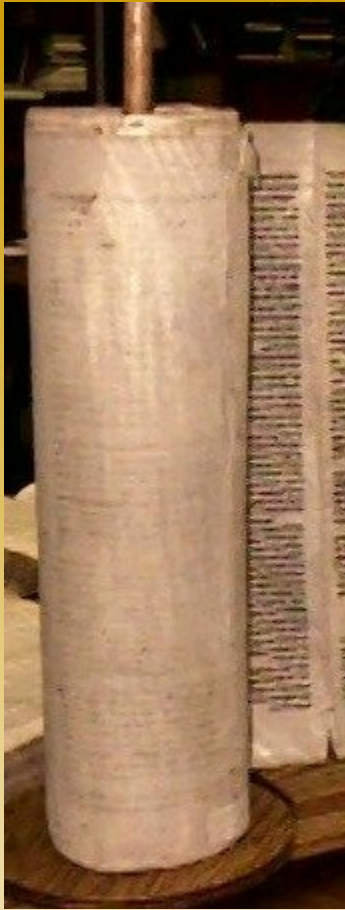
- † The “Axial Period” of world history
- † Only a remnant returns
- † 2nd Exodus under Cyrus
- † Christ symbolized in Ezra, Nehemiah & Zerubbabel
- † The people rebuild the city wall and bind themselves to the Law
- † Covenant restored



Biblical Heroines – Friendship and Courage

Ruth and Esther

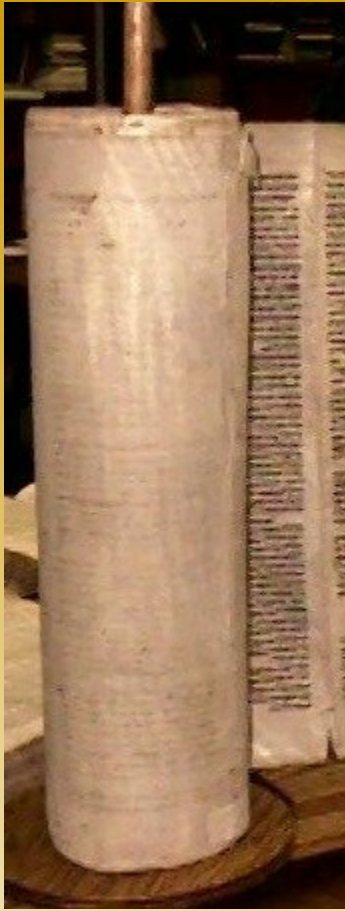
- † Ruth - the time of Judges
- † A woman of faithfulness and friendship
- † Esther - the time of Exile
- † A courageous woman saves her people



Encountering God in Darkness

Job

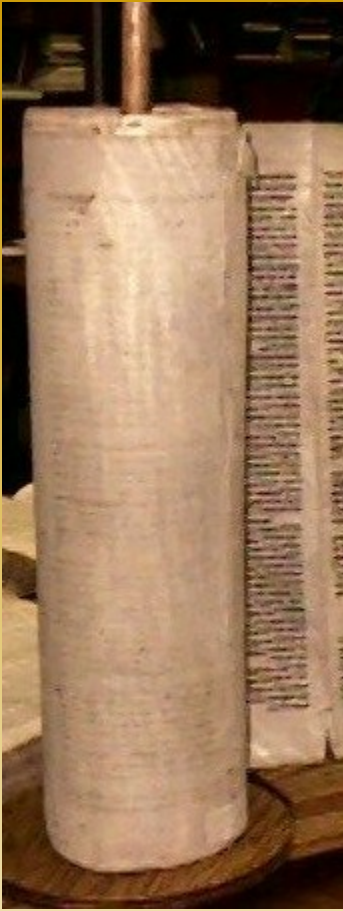
- † The problem of evil, suffering & injustice
- † Many Layers of Meaning
 - † Problem of evil
 - † Conflict between faith and experience
 - † Meaning and purpose of life
 - † Problem of identity
 - † The problem of God
- † The deep puzzle of Job 42:7



Our Prayer and Song Book

Psalms

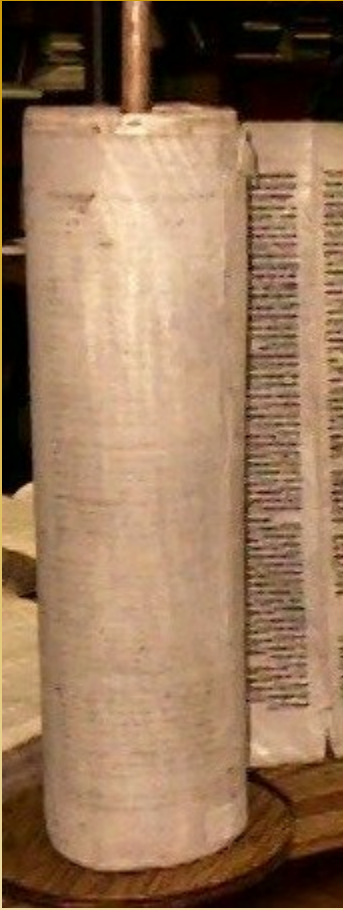
- † Psalms are meant to be used, not just read
- † Foundation of daily prayer
- † Overcoming the obstacles in Psalms - curses, hatred
- † Messianic Psalms
- † Favorites
 - † Psalm 23, 42, 51, 95, 115, 118, 139



A Book of Philosophy

Ecclesiastes

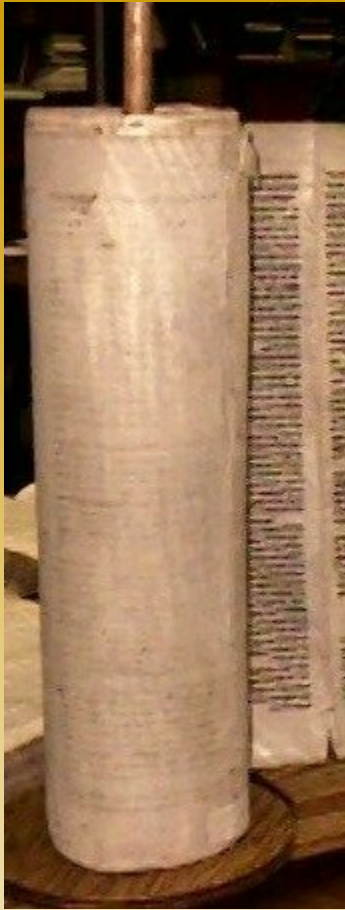
- † Wisdom of human reason: *God is silent*
- † Asks the question the rest of the Bible answers: *Why are we here?*
- † Central point: *vanity*
- † Failed lifestyles: *wisdom, pleasure, wealth and power, honor and prestige, legalistic external religion*
- † *Relevance to today*



Love Story: God and the Soul

Song of Songs

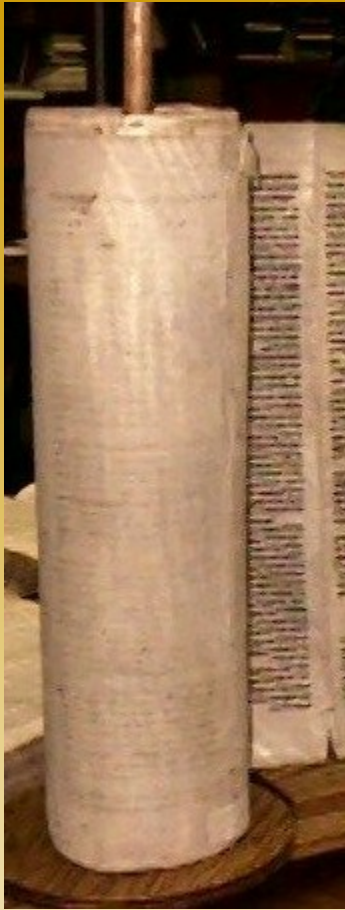
- † Allegoric poem where Solomon, the bridegroom, represents God and the bride is the Church, the new Israel.



God's Mouthpieces

The Prophets

- † No popular prophets
- † No earthly profit in prophecy
- † The word of the prophet always comes true
- † The prophet tells us God's mind
- † Prophets always show us two ways: the way of life and the way of death
- † Read them in conjunction with the relevant historical books



The Big Four

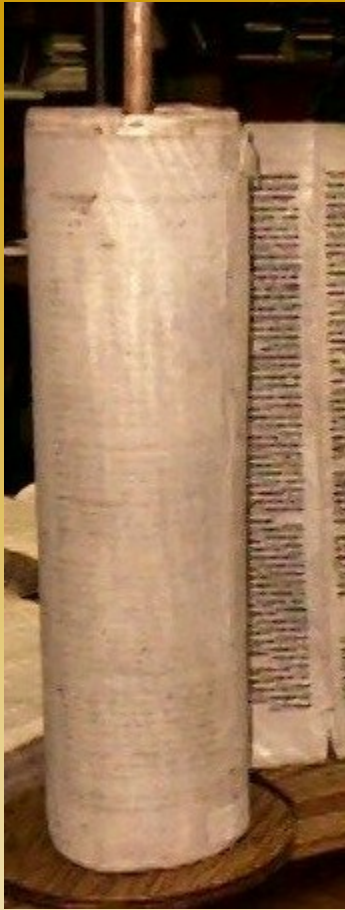
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

† Isaiah

- † Shakespeare of the prophets
- † Chapter 6 - the call of Isaiah - read first
- † Chapters 1-39: Justice and judgment
- † Chapters 40-66: Mercy and forgiveness
- † Two Isaiahs
- † Christ in Isaiah

† Jeremiah

- † The only alternative to disaster is "trust and obey" - surrender to God's will
- † A man of suffering - speaking to unrepentant, arrogant sinners
- † Chapter 31 - the New Covenant



The Big Four

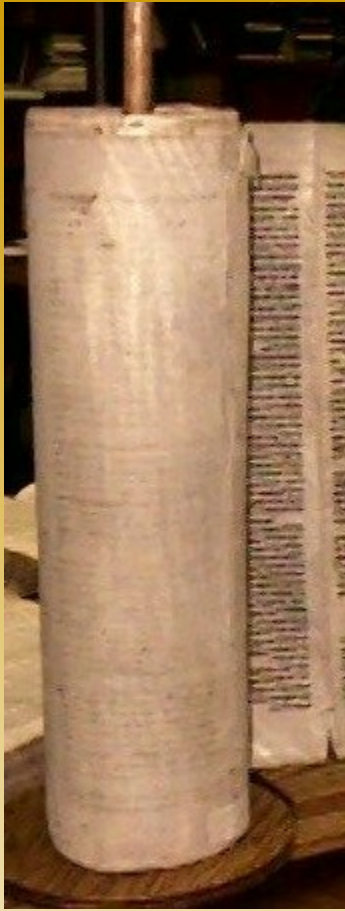
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

† Ezekiel

- † Priest and prophet - before and during the Babylonian captivity
- † Hope - return to the Promised Land
- † *Shekinah* - leaving the Temple
- † Filled with symbols and word pictures
- † Messianic prophecies

† Daniel

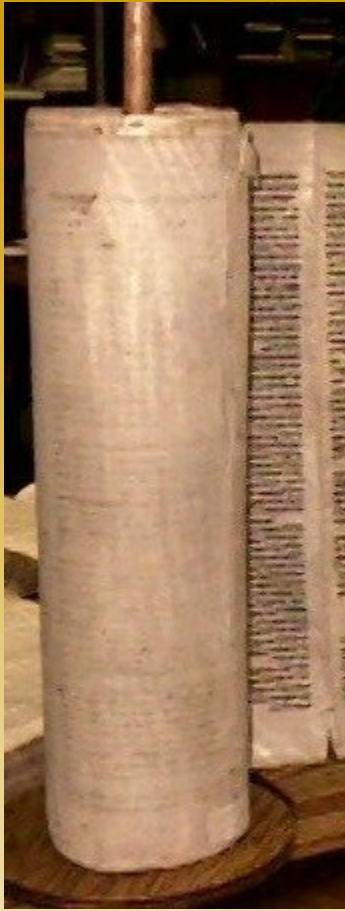
- † History from God's perspective - God the Lord of History, planning, directing
- † Visions of the future (2:34-35,44)
- † Chapter 7: Four kingdoms and the Messiah



The Minor Prophets

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah...

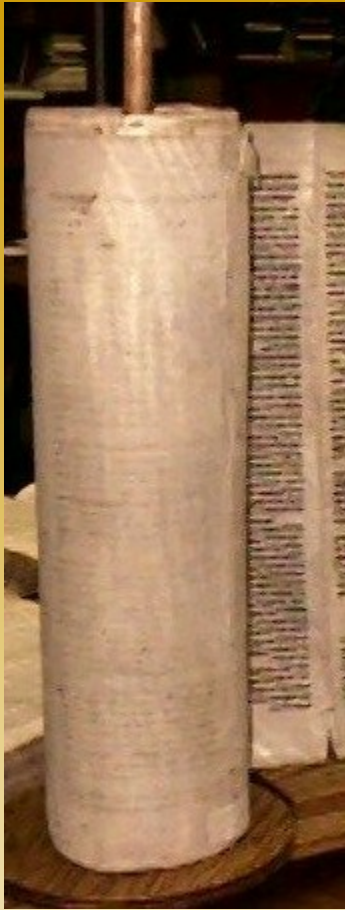
- † Hosea: The suffering of love rejected
- † Joel: Judgment or repentance - our choice
- † Amos: Prophet with a modern burden - a sick society
- † Obadiah: Message of crime and punishment
- † Jonah: Reluctant prophet scandalized by God's mercy
- † Micah: "Who is like God?"
- † Nahum: Destruction of Nineveh
- † Habakkuk: God writes straight with crooked lines
- † Zephaniah: The day of wrath
- † Haggai: Call to rebuild the Temple
- † Zechariah: Symbols, visions and messianic prophecies
- † Malachi: God has been neglected and evildoers will not go unpunished



The Deuterocanonical Books

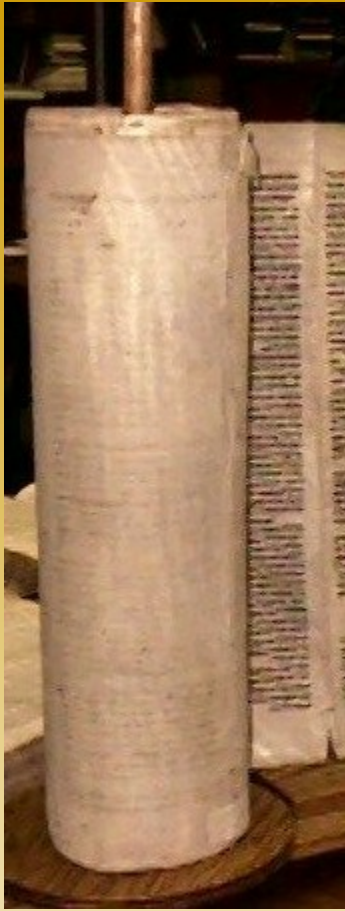
Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach...

- † Tobit: *God's providential care*
- † Judith: *A courageous woman saves her people*
- † Esther (Greek version): *religious interpretation made explicit*
- † Sirach (Ecclesiasticus): *Teachings of a great sage*
- † Baruch: *Speeches given to the exiles in Babylon*
- † Wisdom of Solomon: *The God behind the Law*
- † Daniel: *The song from the fiery furnace; Daniel, Bel and the dragon*
- † 1st Maccabees: *Resistance against tyranny*
- † 2nd Maccabees: *Praise for martyrs of the faith*



Exodus & Exile

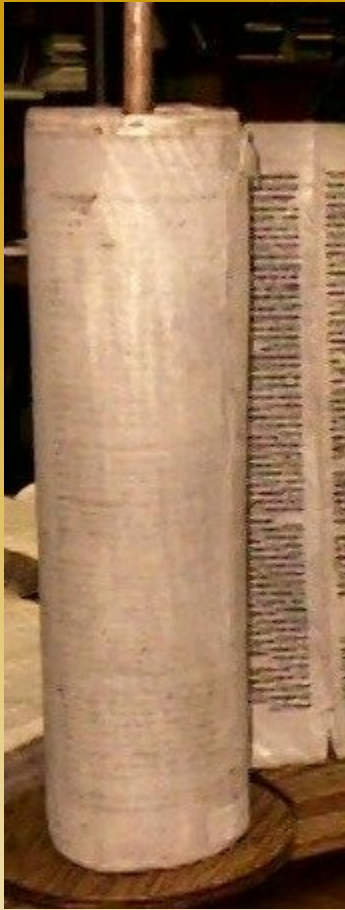
- † Easter Vigil Readings - story of salvation history
- † Exodus story - Liberation
- † Moses leads Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land
- † Jesus' death and resurrection - frees us from the slavery of sin
- † Covenant - A bond with God who freely chooses a relationship of constant and saving love with humanity
- † God chooses to free us from every kind of slavery
- † Exile in Babylon - God's abiding presence
- † Exodus and exile - understanding our own experiences



The Word Made Flesh

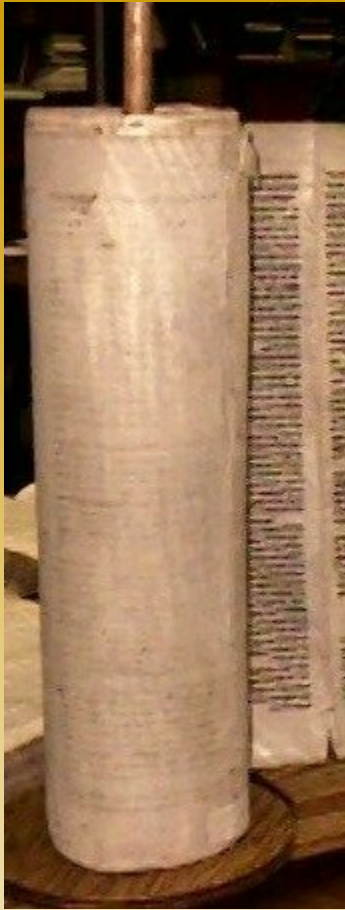
“But above all it's the gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I'm always finding fresh insights in their hidden and enthralling meanings.” - St. Therese of Lisieux

- † John's Gospel: reveals Jesus as the God's Word made flesh.
- † Jesus reveals God to us, does the work of the Father, and challenges believers to conversion.
- † Jesus fulfills the OT themes of creation and fall, freedom and slavery, covenant and redemption.



The Four Gospels

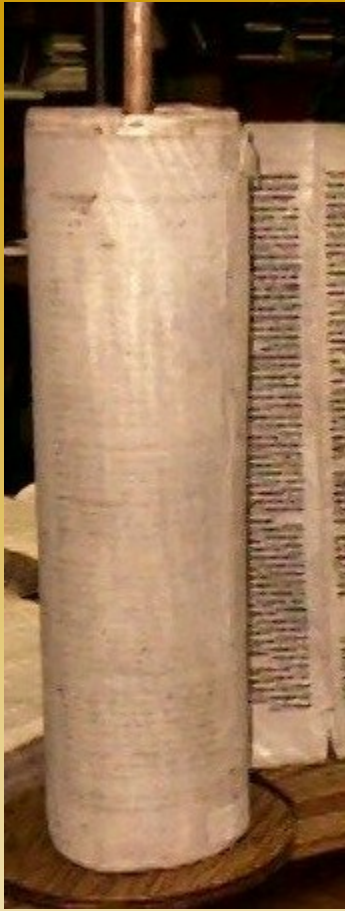
- † 4 Gospels in canon: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- † Written in light of Jesus' resurrection - the faith that Jesus continues to live in the community
- † Oral tradition preceded writing of Gospels
- † Each Gospel written to shape Jesus' message to the needs of a particular community of believers
- † Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark & Luke
- † John - more reflective, theological - focus on Jesus' life, death & resurrection; His divinity
- † John - a sense of the intimacy of God and the nearness of God's reign
- † The reign of God - when His love, mercy and justice will prevail - is at the center of the Gospel message



Studying Sacred Scripture

"No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who had made him known." - John 1:18

- † Begin your study with two basic understandings:
 - † The Bible is the Word of God
 - † Jesus is God's Word made flesh
- † It's our duty to continue Jesus' ministry - to become God's Word made flesh today
- † Through Sacred Scripture we hear God's call to go forth as the disciples did to prepare the world for the reign of God.



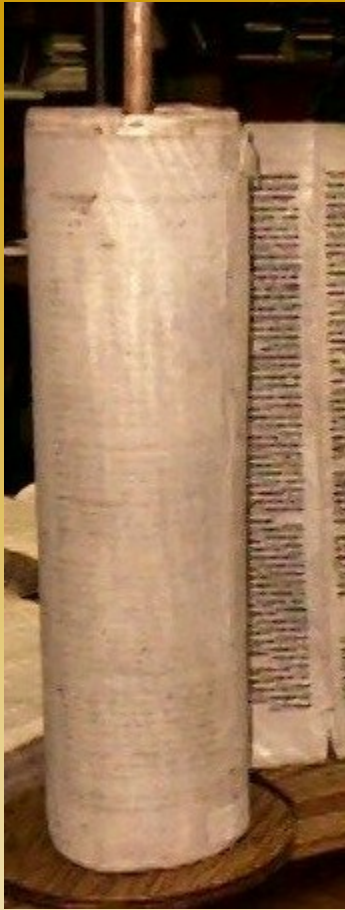
When reading the Bible...

Remember, it is Literature

- † It uses literary forms, devices, structures, figures...
- † Look for the “literary” clues that convey a meaning

It is Ancient

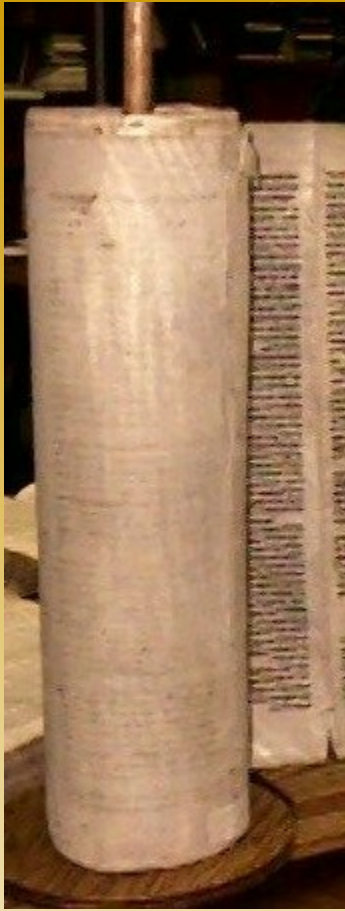
- † Its meaning is wrapped up in how the ancients viewed the world and history
- † Although interested in recording history, they were uninterested in “pure history”
- † History was more than politics and wars; it had a deeper significance



When reading the Bible...

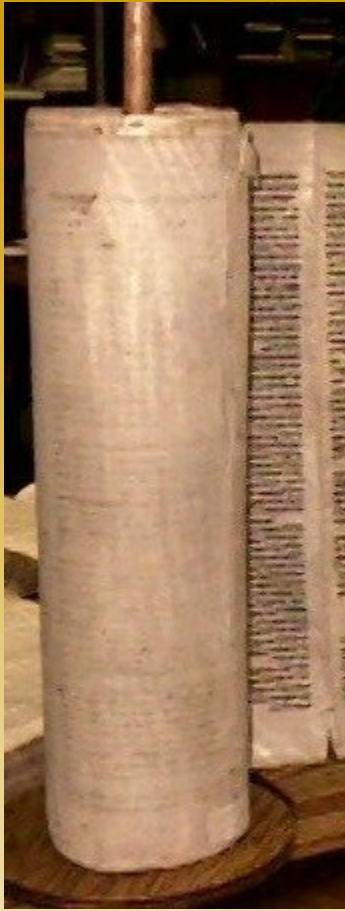
It is Religious

- † Unlike many people today, the ancients didn't think of religion merely as personal piety
- † The word "religion" comes from the Latin, "religare" - "to bind together"
- † For the ancients, everything - culture, history, economics, diplomacy - was bound together by religion
- † The Bible gives us history, *religious* history, history from God's perspective



Tips on reading the Bible

- † Pray to the Holy Spirit
- † Read the Bible itself before reading any commentaries
- † Read repeatedly and read often
- † Read aloud. This is how Scripture was meant to be read, allowing us to *hear God's Word*.
- † First read quickly, then go back and read slowly
- † Read without prejudice
- † Once you've listened, respond!
- † Don't confuse understanding with evaluating



Tips on reading the Bible

- † Ask basic questions: What does the passage mean? Do I believe it? So what?
- † Look for the big picture, the main point.
- † Once you've read a passage, go back, analyze it.
- † Be honest!
- † Let the Bible speak to you and it will show you both God and yourself.

Bible Reading Plan - 1

NARRATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS

