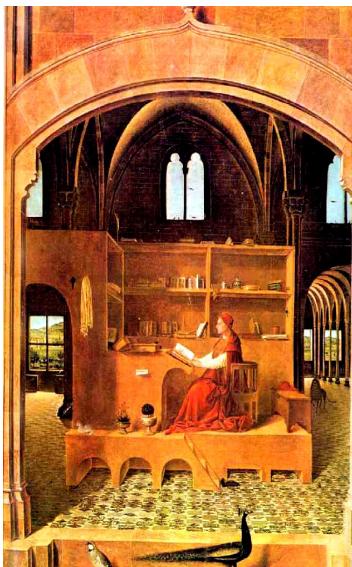


2013

Annual Edition

Volume 5



[www.sjbg.me](http://www.sjbg.me)

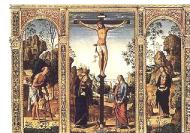
Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the Old Testament:	
Jeremiah 31:31-34 .....	2
Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the New Testament:	
2 Thessalonians 2:15 .....	3
Inerrancy Basics:	
Restricted Inerrancy is an Absurdity ...	4
The Church Fathers and Scripture:	
The School of Alexandria .....	5
St. Thomas Aquinas and Revelation:	
A Model for Biblical Studies .....	6
The Magisterium Speaks:	
Pope Leo XIII on Teachers and Defenders of God's Word .....	7
The Pontifical Biblical Commission:	
The Response of 1908, Part III .....	8
Addressing Bible Difficulties:	
Mark 2:23-28, Part III .....	9
The Biblical World:	
The Hebrew Kings of the United and Divided Kingdoms .....	10
The Life of Christ:	
The Miracles of Our Lord .....	11
Book Recommendation (out-of-print):	
<i>Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old and New Testaments</i> .....	12
Book Recommendation (in-print):	
<i>The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable &amp; Relevant?</i> .....	13

# *Veritas Scripturae*

## *The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild*

A publication that focuses upon the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy — in light of Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17)



### From the Director: Expansion

My *sensus Catholicus* recoils at change. Nonetheless, this latest issue of *Veritas Scripturae* (VS) will disclose some alterations.

The bulletin is now an expanded annual edition. VS will enlarge by three additional articles within each issue.

A second “Scripture Memorization and Exegesis” column will now enable one article to be dedicated to the Old Testament and one for the New Testament. This will aid the overall reading and comprehension of God’s inspired and inerrant words and deeds from all of Sacred History. Both Testaments are essential to the Catholic Faith.

The next additional piece is “The Life of Christ.” This column will examine various aspects of the Savior as recorded in the four canonical Gospels. The Church Militant can never spend enough time reading and studying the Evangelists.

Another “Book Recommendation” feature will increase the number to two: an “out-of-print” source and an “in-print” source. In our day, it is vital for Catholics to have a home library stocked with reliable books. This article will play a small part in building up one’s personal collection.

Godspeed,  
Salvatore J. Ciresi, M.A.

St. Jerome (A.D. 343-420) says:

“Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page” (Letter 22.17.2; A.D. 384).

“Constantly read the Bible; in fact, have it always in your hands. Learn what you have got to teach” (Letter 52.7.1; A.D. 394).

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (Commentary on *Isaiah* bk. 18, prologue; A.D. 408-410).

“Love the Bible and wisdom will love you...” (Letter 130.20; A.D. 414).

## Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the Old Testament:

### Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, says the **LORD**, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the **LORD**. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the **LORD**: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the **LORD**,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the **LORD**; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer 31:31-34).

Jeremiah prophesied around the years 627-582 B.C. A united Israel had been rent into two kingdoms earlier in 931 B.C.; the north retaining the name “Israel” for ten tribes, and the south called “Judah” for the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin (see “The Biblical World” column in this issue of *Veritas Scripturae*). The prophet, in his words quoted above, is addressing the Southern Kingdom — foretelling its restoration (and reunion with the north) after its devastation and sack of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The attendant dispersion of the masses followed earlier deportations in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C.

*A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (R. Fuller, gen. ed.) states: “This prophecy of the New Covenant in 31:31-34 is the culmination of Jeremiah’s teaching on God’s relation to man” (p. 603, 487j).



With that background, the restoration promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 places an emphasis on the theme of the covenant (a subject which deserves its own column). Aptly, the book of Hebrews, a work which explicates the superiority of the New Testament over the Old, cites the promise in Hebrews 8:8-12 (cf. 10:16-17). Here is a notable point: Jeremiah 31:31 discloses the lone Old Testament expression of “new covenant” (*b'rit chādhāshāh*). Consider its link to the Last Supper, where the Only Begotten solemnly speaks on “the new covenant in my blood” (Lk 22:20). Read the related text in 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

In addition, Jeremiah recalls the infidelity of the Chosen People to the Sinai covenant. God will remedy this situation when He reveals “my law” (*'eth-tōrāthī*) that will be “upon their hearts” (*w'āl-libbām*). This contrasts the law upon stone exteriorized on tablets (cf. Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:16; 34:1), although even that law was meant to be interiorized by the believer (cf. Dt 6:6; 11:18; 30:14). Consult J. Thompson, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Jeremiah*, p. 581.

Finally, the coming alliance will truly put away mankind’s “iniquity” (*la'āwōnām*) and “sin” (*ūlāchattā'thām*). The Old Testament anticipates a forgiveness only possible by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ (cf. Rom 3:25; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 Jn 2:1-2).

Abbe R. Poelman sums up Jeremiah, chapters 30 to 33: “They bring us back to wide horizons of hope, joy, and divine tenderness — the return of Israel, the new covenant, and the restoration to be effected by the Messias” (*How to Read the Bible*, pp. 59-60).

## Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the New Testament:

### 2 Thessalonians 2:15

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thess 2:15).

St. Paul’s two missives to the faithful in Thessalonica came from Corinth, around A.D. 51-52, during his second mission trip (cf. S. Bullough, *Scripture Textbooks for Catholic Schools VI: Saint Paul and Apostolic Writings*, pp. 45-46, 50-51, 60, 71 and J. Callewaert, *The World of Saint Paul*, pp. 100, 203). Within the second letter, the Apostle discloses Tradition as one of the sources or channels of revelation. This is fundamental for the Catholic Faith.

Other sections in the Pauline writings teach with similar language. The same book states: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us” (2 Thess 3:6). As well, 1 Corinthians 11:2 reads: “I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.”

Also significant are two extracts from the Johannine letters. One is 2 John 12: “Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink, but I hope to come to see you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.” The other is 3 John 13-14: “I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face.”

With the above passages taken into account, we return to the main verse of 2 Thessalonians 2:15. Here are some points for exegesis.

The term “traditions” (*paradoseis*) is a reference to both the “word” (*logou*) and the “letter” (*epistolēs*). True, sometimes “tradition” is placed in a negative light (cf. Mt 15:1-6; Mk 7:1-13; Col 2:8). But the term, as we have seen, is also employed in a positive sense. Here in 2 Thessalonians 2:15, St. Paul even identifies Holy Scripture (“letter”) with “traditions.” Both are an authority. The commentator Fr. Bernardine á Piconio explains, [“The oral tradition preceded the written tradition in time, in this as in other cases. Both are equally to be observed”](#) (*Catholic Standard Library: An Exposition of the Epistles of St. Paul* III:81). An aside: the *New International Version* (1984) is a popular translation, but it renders *paradoseis* into the word “teachings” (“traditions” is an alternate rendering). This blunts the force of the Apostle’s assertion on the necessity of the oral transmission of truth.



Another point is St. Paul’s command to “stand” (*stēkete*) and “hold” (*krateite*) to what was “taught” (*edidachthēte*). One implication drawn from such terms is that the catechesis passed to the faithful at Thessalonica, per the Apostle, should be guarded and protected. This charge, directed to Christians in pagan Macedonia, lays down a principle for the Church Militant in our era. We must guard and protect the Faith (in accord with one’s state or vocation) in a land far worse than the Roman Empire.

### Restricted Inerrancy is an Absurdity

A main controversy which clouds the Catholic Church's teaching on Biblical inerrancy is the following question: Is inerrancy restricted to the subjects of faith and morals (i.e., salvific matters), or is inerrancy unrestricted to include not only faith and morals but also areas of history and science (i.e., non-salvific matters)? The Catholic Church teaches unrestricted inerrancy.

It must be said plainly at the outset: restricted inerrancy is irrational. This position turns the Bible reader into an inquiring schizophrenic. Why? Because one who adheres to limited inerrancy must negotiate through whole books, or even chapters and verses of books for that matter, making qualifications as to what sections of Holy Writ are immune from error (faith and morals) and what sections are not (history and science).

This bizarre approach renders void the whole concept of "Salvation History." It also borders on absurdity when one considers how many books reveal doctrinal truths that are tightly interwoven among space-time events. The best example from the Old Testament is creation in Genesis 1—2. In this key segment, one of the most crucial from Divine Revelation, one finds salvific and non-salvific topics crisscrossing among two chapters. The main sample in the New Testament is undoubtedly the Incarnation in Matthew 1—2 and Luke 1—2. Many other instances may be found throughout God's Word.

"With unshakeable firmness, the Church teaches us that there is no error in the Bible."

The unrestricted inerrancy position makes better sense. It is the only teaching that coheres with the Sacred Page. God Himself discloses He is the God of truth (cf. Is 65:16; Jer 10:10; Jn 14:6; Rom 3:4; Rev 6:10) who cannot lie (cf. Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Ps 89:35; Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18; 1 Jn 2:27). The lines of evidence abound in the Bible (cf. 1 Ki 17:24; Ps 119:160; Is 45:19; Jn 17:17; Jas 1:18; Rev 21:5).

The "total inerrantist" also has Tradition on his side. The relevant tomes by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church will confirm this perennial doctrine. As well, the Magisterium is an ally: Scripture's freedom from all error is upheld in the germane ecclesiastical pronouncements that span from Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) through Pope Benedict XVI's *Verbum Domini* (2010).

Fr. A. M. Henry typifies the orthodox Catholic doctrine: *"With unshakeable firmness, the Church teaches us that there is no error in the Bible. This clear stand is of great importance: it implies and suggests a very high idea of Scripture. The whole of it is a word of God, an appeal from God to our souls. What it was in the past for its first recipients, it remains. The believer cannot pick and choose from among its contents under the pretext of a progress in the human sciences which would oblige the rejection of certain parts of its message"* (*Theology Library I: Introduction to Theology*, p. 48).

## The Church Fathers and Scripture:

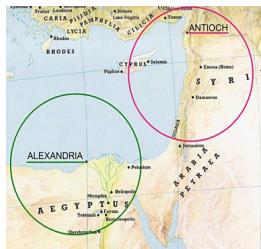
### The School of Alexandria

Mike Aquilina's popular work, *The Fathers of the Church*, states: "There were two major schools of biblical studies in the ancient Church. The school of Alexandria favored an allegorical reading of Scripture, and its most famous proponent was Origen, who is said to have written several thousand books. The school of Antioch, on the other hand, promoted a deep study of the literal sense of Scripture, emphasizing historical and linguistic scholarship. Perhaps the greatest exegete of the Antiochene school was Theodore of Mopseustia" (p. 31). The former institution will be the focus.

Alexandria was a city founded circa 331 B.C. by Alexander the Great in the northern tip of Egypt. The locale became a center of learning, famous for its libraries and also a popular residence of many intellectuals. At Alexandria, the Old Testament would be translated from Hebrew into Greek, known as *The Septuagint*. This rendering remains an important text for contemporary translations of the Holy Bible.

One reads about Alexandria in the New Testament. This city gave us Apollos, an early defender of Christianity (cf. Acts 18:24-28). As well, this Egyptian setting was the port for the ship which carried St. Paul to Malta (cf. Acts 27:6), terminating at Rome (cf. Acts 28:11-16).

St. Jerome's *On Illustrious Men* 36 (A.D. 392) connects St. Mark the Apostle with the founding of the school. Usually, the first headmaster (in the current use of the term) at Alexandria is tied to the famed St. Pantaenus. He had earlier been a missionary in Arabia and called the "bee of Sicily," who feasted on the flowers of the Prophets and Apostles, and spread his tremendous knowledge to his students. Other names linked to the Alexandrian school (besides Origen mentioned already) are St. Clement of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind.



Looking at the place of study, there was no formal building; the master taught from his own residence. This rector was the sole lecturer, with an occasional assistant. The education was not restricted to religious matters, as the profane sciences were part of the course of studies. These secular subjects were followed by instructions in morals and philosophy. The final end of study, naturally, was the Catholic Faith. St. Clement of Alexandria, in his tome *Miscellanies* 1.11.3 (A.D. 207), writes about the revered masters who "preserved the true tradition of the blessed doctrine in direct line from Peter, James, John, and Paul, the holy apostles, son inheriting from father (only few sons are like their fathers) and came with God's help to plant in us those seeds of their apostolic progenitors" (J. Ferguson, trans., *The Fathers of the Church* 85:30).

Of course, the great legacy of the school of Alexandria is its Biblical hermeneutics (i.e., exegesis or interpretation). This institute testified to the great value of the "spiritual sense" of Sacred Scripture. It is granted this appreciation of the different layers of meaning found in Holy Writ was not unique to Christians. Reading the word of God beyond the grammatical and historical sense (its literal meaning) can be traced back to the Old Testament epoch. Jews in Alexandria, who were influenced by Greek thought ("Hellenized"), practiced an interpretation of the Old Testament that went above the literal words of the text. Two well-known practitioners were Aristobulus (flourished circa 150 B.C.) and Philo (born circa 25 B.C.).

It was fitting that the inspired and inerrant New Testament authors would also utilize the spiritual sense when citing the Old Testament (cf. Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 10:1-4; Gal 4:21-31). The Fathers, at Alexandria, suitably followed the Biblical pattern.

## St. Thomas Aquinas and Revelation:

### A Model for Biblical Studies

Dr. Josef Pieper describes the Angelic Doctor this way: “From the moment that Thomas was officially accepted into the faculty of the University of Paris in 1257, he set himself to his ultimate task, which he was never thereafter to abandon. In spite of the variety of assignments that were heaped upon him, and in spite of the moving around he had to do, at bottom he remained all along and wherever he was, one thing above all: a teacher” (*Guide to Thomas Aquinas*, p. 89). With this fact in view, St. Thomas Aquinas’ three functions as a master in theology ought to be of interest to the student of the Holy Bible. The functions entail *legere*, *disputare*, and *praedicare*. Consider each one.

The first function, *legere*, “to read” the Sacred Page, meant to go through it line by line and comment upon it verse by verse. This was not undertaken in a cursory fashion, but instead was a deeper penetration of the inspired text. Two well known examples are Aquinas’ expositions on the books of Job and Matthew. Although celebrated for tomes such as the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas’ ordinary labors comprised his Bible commentaries.

The next function, *disputare*, was concerned with “the dispute.” This part of teaching moved by way of objections and responses on a particular theme. The dispute was sometimes private; within the school, and between the master (and assistant) and students.



Other times, the dispute was public; students and even masters from other schools could attend. One could easily imagine the unpredictability of such an activity (no surprise that some masters would dispense from this endeavor). Some of the disputes, later, would be put into writing after more elaboration and development.

The last function, *praedicare*, “declare,” points to preaching. Here one finds the methodological teaching of theology followed by its application to real life. Masters were proclaimers of Catholic truth. Naturally, classroom lectures would influence preached sermons at Holy Mass, and various presentations at universities, order houses, or even Vespers (cf. Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Volume 1: The Person and His Work*, pp. 54-74).

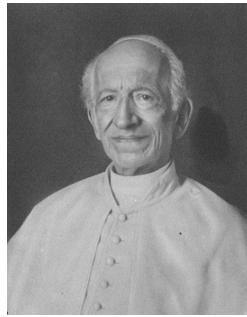
The three functions practiced by the Common Doctor give us a model for Biblical studies. Firstly, a line by line reading and comment upon the Holy Scriptures trains us to reverence every divine utterance in God’s Word as a real treasure. A composer would never skip over a note from a great piece of music; Catholics shouldn’t pass over a word in the Bible. Secondly, a believer cannot ignore problem passages within Divine Revelation. One must attempt to address difficulties with reasonable answers. Thirdly, for the clergy: sermon preparation requires time and effort. The preacher cannot take shortcuts.

## The Magisterium Speaks:

### Pope Leo XIII on Teachers and Defenders of God's Word

Pope Leo XIII (r. 1878-1903) promulgated in 1893 the first major papal encyclical dedicated to Holy Writ: *Providentissimus Deus* ("On the Study of Holy Scripture"). This text deserves attention. It possesses clarity, a use of scholastic language, and an intrepid approach aimed at the critics of God's Word. The Vicar of Christ's document is required reading for all those who cherish the Bible.

The encyclical's thirty-one pages cover a spectrum of technical matters. Not to be overlooked are the practical things. There is the Roman Pontiff's plea for teachers, as well as defenders, of the Sacred Page. Leo wastes little time in making such a request, and writes in the introduction: "We are not ignorant, indeed, Venerable Brethren, that there are not a few Catholics, men of talent and learning, who do devote themselves with ardor to the defense of the sacred writings and to making them better known and understood. But whilst giving to these the commendation they deserve, We cannot but earnestly exhort others also, from whose skill and piety and learning We have a right to expect good results, to give themselves to the same most praiseworthy work. It is Our wish and fervent desire to see an increase in the number of the approved and persevering laborers in the cause of Holy Scripture; and more especially that those whom divine grace has called to Holy Orders, should, day by day, as their state demands, display greater diligence and industry in reading, meditating, and explaining it."



The above section in *Providentissimus Deus* is an exhortation to both clergy and laity. Here are two observations.

Firstly, in regard to one's handling of the Bible, notice that the Holy Father assumes it is not enough to engage in the positive work alone of teaching and explaining the inspired text ("making them better known and understood"). There is also the negative task of guarding the written word ("the defense of the sacred writings"). In other words, the normal course of teaching Holy Writ requires one to also call out, oppose, and refute errors in the field of Biblical studies. This is not a pleasant duty. One who has addressed an audience knows how much more taxing it is to speak to a hostile group than one that is sympathetic. Nonetheless, this aspect can be done, by God's grace, forcefully but charitably. Of course, all is predicated upon one's state or vocation, and level of competence.

Secondly, Leo rightly expects more from the clergy ("those whom divine grace has called to Holy Orders") than the laity in this noble work of teaching, explaining and defending God's Word. The priesthood (and the episcopacy) is best equipped to hand down the riches within the Scriptures. The Holy Father assumes those with a vocation are in daily contact with the Divine Writings (presumably above and beyond the interaction that normally takes place during the offering of Holy Mass). The priest is the main catechist in a parish (and the bishop for a diocese). He is in the best position to teach and defend Divine Revelation.

## The Pontifical Biblical Commission:

### The Response of 1908, Part III

Last issue discussed some generalities for the office of prophet with respect to the Biblical Commission's 1908 text, *On the Character of the Book of Isaiah and Its Author*. This issue will address some particulars on authorship.

Consider the usage of Isaiah spread throughout the New Testament. The New Covenant writings employ this Old Testament prophet more frequently than the others added together.

The following chart (adapted from E. Young's *Who Wrote Isaiah?*, p.12) will list the relevant New Testament verses, the [snippets that name Isaiah](#), and the actual references to his book:

- Matthew 3:3 ("the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 40:3
- Matthew 8:17 ("the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 53:4
- Matthew 12:17 ("the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 42:1-4
- Matthew 13:14 ("the prophecy of Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 6:9-10
- Matthew 15:7 ("Well did Isaiah prophesy") ~ Isaiah 29:13
- Mark 1:2-3 ("Isaiah the prophet") ~ Isaiah 40:3
- Mark 7:6 ("well did Isaiah prophesy") ~ Isaiah 29:13
- Luke 3:4 ("the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet") ~ Isaiah 40:3-5
- Luke 4:17 ("the book of the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 61:1-2
- John 1:23 ("the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 40:3
- John 12:38 ("the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 53:1
- John 12:39-40 ("Isaiah again said") ~ Isaiah 6:10



- John 12:41 ("Isaiah said... saw... spoke") ~ Isaiah 53:1; 6:10
- Acts 8:28 ("reading the prophet Isaiah") ~ Isaiah 53:7-8
- Acts 8:30 ("reading Isaiah the prophet") ~ Isaiah 53:7-8
- Acts 28:25 ("The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet") ~ Isaiah 6:9-10
- Romans 9:27-28 ("Isaiah cries out") ~ Isaiah 10:22-23
- Romans 9:29 ("Isaiah predicted") ~ Isaiah 1:9
- Romans 10:16 ("Isaiah says") ~ Isaiah 53:1
- Romans 10:20-21 ("Isaiah is so bold as to say... he says") ~ Isaiah 65:1-2.

The diligent Bible student will do well in reading each of the New Testament passages in their proper contexts. One fact becomes obvious. The passages refer to a single person or book, called Isaiah, cited by the New Testament from among parts of the prophetic book that are hacked up by the critics into a "deutero-Isaiah" (chs. 1-39; 40-66) or even "trito-Isaiah" (chs. 1-39; 40-55; 56-66). In other words, the New Testament writers bear witness to the unity of Isaiah — not to a book with multiple authors. Notice how the book begins: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Is 1:1). This opening line makes sense if the text came from an individual — not from a group effort.

Next issue will examine more details on this subject of authorship.

## Addressing Bible Difficulties:

### Mark 2:23-28, Part III

The earlier columns which addressed the difficulty in Mark 2:23-28 (v. 26's reference to Abiathar vice Ahimelech) gave a variety of possible solutions.

Here is a review:

- 1) The clause *epi Abiathar archiereōs* refers to an epoch (i.e., a time period) and not to an occupancy (i.e., a tenure in office).
- 2) The clause indicates a location (i.e., chapter division) in the Old Testament.
- 3) Abiathar was named because he shared the high priesthood with his father Ahimelech.
- 4) Abiathar and Ahimelech were both present at the episode; Abiathar was more celebrated and thus more worthy to be identified as the high priest.
- 5) Abiathar and Ahimelech each had two names.

Another interpretation for Mark 2:26 asserts the Savior has named Abiathar in place of Ahimelech as a warning to the Pharisees. The ignoble Abiathar is the last high priest of his line, banished from his sacred office as well as from Jerusalem (cf. 1 Ki 2:26-27) because of his opposition to Solomon; the heir and son of David's kingdom. Abiathar embodies the end of an Old Testament order that will be fulfilled in the kingly advent of Christ Jesus — David's royal successor. Therefore, the Savior aligns Himself and His disciples with David and his men, while grouping the Pharisees with Abiathar. The lesson: if the Pharisees continue in their opposition to the Messiah in their midst, then they will reach the same tragedy as Abiathar (cf. S. Hahn, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: New Testament*, p. 22).

A final explanation for Mark 2:26 comes from Dr. Craig S. Keener:

*"Abiathar was not yet high priest when David was given the bread, but Mark employs the term in the standard manner of his day: "high priest" was applied to any member of the high priestly family with administrative power, which would have included Abiathar when David came to Ahimelech, Abiathar's father"* (*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, p. 142).



Besides the sources already mentioned to solve the intricacy of Mark 2:23-28, the following trail of additional Catholic scholarship testifies to the reasonableness of the proposed solutions. The witnesses are St. Thomas Aquinas' *Catena Aurea* (Thirteenth Century); Bishop F. Kenrick's *The Four Gospels, Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (1849) p. 225; Fr. G. Haydock's *Haydock Study Bible* (1859) p. 1321; Bishop J. MacEvilly's *An Exposition of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark* (1883) pp. 220-1; Pere M.J. Lagrange's *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (1930) pp. 23-24; Msgr. J. Dean's *The Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures: The New Testament, Volume I, The Synoptic Gospels* (1938) pp. 149-150; Fr. C. Callan's *The Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles* (1941) p. 205; Msgr. R. Knox's *A Commentary on the Gospels* (1952) pp. 76-77; Fr. C.C. Martindale's *Stonyhurst Scripture Manuals: The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (1956) p. 22; and Fr. G. Sloyan's *New Testament Reading Guide 2: The Gospel of St. Mark* (1960) p. 30.

## The Biblical World:

### The Hebrew Kings of the United and Divided Kingdoms

The United Kingdom of Israel gives us three kings for this key era of the Old Testament (all dates B.C.):

Saul: 1051-1011 (1 Sam 8:1—31:13)  
David: 1011-971 (1 Sam 16:1—1 Ki 2:12)  
Solomon: 971-931 (1 Ki 3:1—11:43).

The schism in 931 rent the empire into the Northern Kingdom (ten tribes), which retained the name “Israel,” and the Southern Kingdom (the remaining two tribes of Judah and Benjamin), called “Judah.”

Here are the kings of the Northern Kingdom (Israel):

Jeroboam I: 931-910 (1 Ki 11:26—14:20)  
Nadab: 910-909 (1 Ki 15:25-28)  
Baasha: 909-886 (1 Ki 15:27—16:7)  
Elah: 886-885 (1 Ki 16:6-14)  
Zimri: 885 (1 Ki 16:9-20)  
Omri: 885-874 (1 Ki 16:15-28)  
Ahab: 874-853 (1 Ki 16:28—22:40)  
Ahaziah: 853-852 (1 Ki 22:40—2 Ki 1:18)  
Jehoram: 852-841 (2 Ki 3:1—9:25)  
Jehu: 841-814 (2 Ki 9:1—10:36)  
Jehoahaz: 814-798 (2 Ki 13:1-9)  
Jehoash: 798-782 (2 Ki 13:10—14:16)  
Jeroboam II: 793-753 (2 Ki 14:23-29)  
Zechariah: 753 (2 Ki 14:29—15:12)  
Shallum: 752 (2 Ki 15:10-15)  
Menahem: 752-742 (2 Ki 15:14-22)  
Pekahiah: 742-740 (2 Ki 15:22-26)  
Pekah: 752-732 (2 Ki 15:27-31)  
Hoshea: 732-722 (2 Ki 15:30—17:6).

The kings of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) are as follows:

Rehoboam: 931-913 (1 Ki 11:43—14:31)  
Abijam: 913-911 (1 Ki 14:31—15:8)  
Asa: 911-870 (1 Ki 15:8-24)  
Jehoshaphat: 873-848 (1 Ki 22:41-50)  
Jehoram: 848-841 (2 Ki 8:16-24)  
Ahaziah: 841 (2 Ki 8:24—9:29)  
Athaliah (queen): 841-835 (2 Ki 11:1-20)

Joash: 835-796 (2 Ki 11:1—12:21)  
Amaziah: 796-767 (2 Ki 14:1-20)  
Azariah: 792-740 (2 Ki 15:1-7)  
Jotham: 750-731 (2 Ki 15:32-38)  
Ahaz: 735-715 (2 Ki 16:1-20)  
Hezekiah: 729-686 (2 Ki 18:1—20:21)  
Manasseh: 696-642 (2 Ki 21:1-18)  
Amon: 642-640 (2 Ki 21:19-26)  
Josiah: 640-609 (2 Ki 22:1—23:30)  
Jehoahaz: 609 (2 Ki 23:31-33)  
Jehoiakim: 608-598 (2 Ki 23:34—24:5)  
Jehoiachin: 598-597 (2 Ki 24:6-16)  
Zedekiah: 597-586 (2 Ki 24:17—25:30).

Dates for this epoch may be compared in Gleason Archer's *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*; Fr. Martin Hopkins' *God's Kingdom in the Old Testament*; and Edwin Thiele's *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*.

R. Youngblood, gen. ed., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 732), in the entry for the two books of Kings, has this assessment for this complex period:

“During the four centuries covered by these books, a total of 19 different kings ruled the nation of Israel, while 22 different kings (if David and Solomon are included) occupied Judah’s throne. The writer covers some of these kings with a few sentences, while he devotes several pages to others. Apparently, this author selected certain kings for major attention because they illustrated the conditions that led to the eventual collapse of the nations of Judah and Israel.

Some of these kings were honest, ethical, and morally pure. But the good kings always were the exception. The majority of the rulers led the people astray, some even openly encouraging them to worship false gods. Thus, the most familiar refrain in 1 and 2 Kings is the phrase, ‘He did evil in the sight of the Lord’ (2 Kin. 8:18).”



This inaugural column for “The Life of Christ” will look at the Blessed Savior’s miracles. A “miracle” may be defined as “an occurrence outside the course of nature, perceptible to the senses, and explicable only as the direct act of God Himself” (M. Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, p. 79).

The Gospels use a variety of terms for those divine events: “wonder” (*teras*), “sign” (*sēmeion*), “power” (*dynamis*), and “deed” (*ergon*). Helpful information on this aspect is found in W. Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels* (pp. 203-204).

The following list of miracles is adapted from Fr. F. Prat, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, pp. 518-520. A second reference is Fr. Hugh Pope, *The Catholic Student’s Aids to the Study of the Bible* IV:298-303. Parallel passages are included:

- Water to wine at Cana (Jn 2:1-11)
- Healing the royal official’s son (Jn 4:46-54)
- The first miraculous catch of fish (Lk 5:1-11)
- The possessed man at Capernaum (Mk 1:21-28 / Lk 4:31-37)
- Healing Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-15 / Mk 1:29-31 / Lk 4:38-39)
- The leper at Capernaum (Mt 8:1-4 / Mk 1:40-45 / Lk 5:12-16)
- Healing the瘫痪者 carried by four (Mt 9:1-8 / Mk 2:1-12 / Lk 5:17-26)
- Healing the servant of the centurion (Mt 8:5-13 / Lk 7:1-10)
- The son of the widow of Naim (Lk 7:11-17)
- The man with a withered hand (Mt 12:9-14 / Mk 3:1-6 / Lk 6:6-11)
- The cripple at Bethesda (Jn 5:1-15)



- The calming of the storm (Mt 8:23-27 / Mk 4:35-41 / Lk 8:22-25)
- The Gadarenes demoniacs (Mt 8:28-34 / Mk 5:1-20 / Lk 8:26-39)
- The woman with a hemorrhage and the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mt 9:18-26 / Mk 5:21-43 / Lk 8:40-56)
- Two blind men at Capernaum (Mt 9:27-31)
- The mute demoniac (Mt 9:32-34)
- First multiplication of loaves (Mt 14:13-21 / Mk 6:30-44 / Lk 9:10-17 / Jn 6:1-14)
- Walking on water (Mt 14:22-33 / Mk 6:45-52 / Jn 6:15-21)
- The possessed daughter of the Canaanite (Mt 15:21-28 / Mk 7:24-30)
- Second multiplication of loaves (Mt 15:32-39 / Mk 8:1-10)
- The deaf stammerer (Mk 7:31-37)
- The blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26)
- The lunatic at Tabor (Mt 17:14-21 / Mk 9:14-29 / Lk 9:37-43)
- The tribute of money (Mt 17:24-27)
- The man blind from birth (Jn 9:1-41)
- The mute demoniac (Mt 12:22-28 / Lk 11:14-20)
- The woman infirm for eighteen years (Lk 13:10-17)
- The man with dropsy (Lk 14:1-6)
- The raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44)
- The ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19)
- The blind men of Jericho (Mt 20:29-34 / Mk 10:46-52 / Lk 18:35-43)
- The accursed fig tree (Mt 21:18-22 / Mk 11:12-14, 20-25)
- Healing of Malchus’ ear (Lk 22:49-51).

The list excludes miracles concerning His person (e.g., the Incarnation), glorious life (e.g., the Resurrection), probable miracles (e.g., withdrawing from His enemies), or miracles grouped together (e.g., Jn 6:2).

## Book Recommendation (out-of-print):

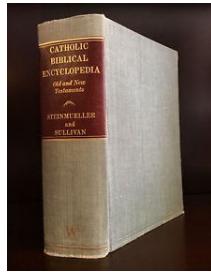
### *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old and New Testaments*

John E. Steinmueller and Kathryn Sullivan. *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old and New Testaments*. New York: Wagner, 1956, xvii + 1,845 pp.

The English speaking world has seen the publication of many reference works by Catholic scholars. An older text still worthwhile to own is the *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old and New Testaments*. Written by Msgr. John Steinmuller and Mother Kathryn Sullivan, the New Testament portion was released as a stand alone volume in 1950, followed by the Old Testament in 1956 into a combined volume. The review is the later edition.

The introduction in the New Testament section comes from Fr. James Voste, O.P., then secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. He says an encyclopedia should be a practical tool for both research and quick consultation; rich yet concise. Such a text should offer materials that are reliable, have a general acceptance, and are accessible. Originality and novelty are left to scientific reviews (cf. pg. v). His successor, Fr. Athanasius Miller, O.S.B., writes in the Old Testament introduction that both clergy and laity have in this encyclopedia a concise introduction and guide. It is an opus with a Catholic mentality, method, and fitting reverence for God's Word (cf. pg. vii).

Across the two testaments, there are approximately 4,600 entries for the Old and 1,700 for the New. Articles cover the usual range on biography (i.e., men and women), geography and archaeology (i.e., places), and doctrines (i.e., truths).



Here are a few samples. The entry on "Aaron" tells us, in part: "[On the journey to Mount Sinai, Aaron assisted Moses, and it was against both that the people murmured when they were threatened with famine in the Desert of Sin \(Ex. 16, 1-15\); it was Aaron who, together with Hur, held up the hands of Moses to insure victory over the Amalecites \(Ex. 17, 12\); it was Aaron who, together with the ancients of Israel, witnessed the sacrifice of Jethro, the Midianite father-in-law of Moses \(Ex. 18, 12\).](#)" An extract about "Crete" says: "[A large island in the Eastern Mediterranean \(area, 3326 square miles\), located south of the Aegean Sea. From east to west it measures 160 miles; from north to south it varies from 35 to 6 miles. Mountain ranges cover the island; Mount Ida \(8193 feet\) in the center is the most famous.](#)" A snippet for "grace" reads: "[The word grace \(Gk., \*charis\*\) is mentioned only eleven times in the Four Gospels, eight times in Luke and three times in John. In Luke it is used in the sense of thanks \(6, 32. 33. 34; 17, 9\), grace of speech falling from the lips of Jesus \(4, 22\), grace of Mary with God \(1, 30; cf. also 1, 28\), grace of God upon Jesus \(2, 40\) and of Jesus advancing in grace \(i.e., in its external manifestation\) before God and man \(2, 52\).](#)"

As expected, a book of this kind is dated in places. However, one may begin a study on any topic related to Holy Writ with a search in the dependable *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old and New Testaments*. Used copies may be procured from [bookfinder.com](#).

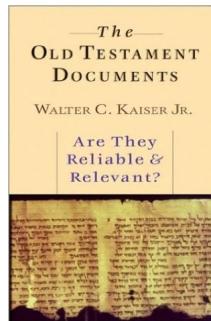
## Book Recommendation (in-print):

### *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?*

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 239 pp.

There is a shortage of new books, from Catholic circles, which have as their main topic the explanation and defense of the veracity of the Old Testament. This is lamentable; there are orthodox Catholic scholars capable of writing such tomes. In the meantime, one work from outside the fold that will fill the void is Dr. Walter Kaiser's *The Old Testament Documents*.

Kaiser is a renowned scholar in Evangelical academia; linked with "study" Bibles, commentaries, and related topics. He tackles a demanding subject and is realistic in his introduction: "Many years ago F. F. Bruce wrote a delightful volume entitled *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* which has been extremely useful for a wide spectrum of readers. It has been somewhat puzzling to many of us who read that volume years ago as students in college why a companion volume never appeared dealing with the Old Testament. Now that I have gotten into the project myself, I know part of the answer: It is a much more difficult and broader subject to handle than was the New Testament" (p. 10). Kaiser spent over eight years working on the project, and at the time of publication, had been studying such issues for over forty years. (A personal note: I use this book as a required text, when teaching the course "Old Testament Survey," at the graduate level).



*The Old Testament Documents* is spread over four main parts. Some chapter headings are "How Well was the Text of the Old Testament Preserved?", "How Reliable is Genesis 1-4?", "Does Archaeology Help the Case for Reliability?", "Are the Chronologies of the Old Testament Kings Trustworthy?", "How Reliable are the Wisdom Writings?", and "How Relevant is Old Testament Prophecy for Us?" One strategy Kaiser employs (he is not the first) in his response to the critics of the Bible is the following: "If we are to use the American system of jurisprudence, the claims of the text must be held to be innocent until proven guilty by evidences to the contrary" (p. 27). This is a sound rule.

The book interacts with a number of well-known controversies. Kaiser looks at the alleged dependence of Genesis on Near Eastern mythology (pp. 60-65) and the supposed three-deck universe of the Hebrews (pp. 75-77). He gives a defense of the Patriarchs (pp. 84-96) and confirms the exodus and conquest (pp. 109-118). Kaiser also provides clarity on the dates for the united and divided kingdoms (pp. 120-128) and sets down a theology of the wisdom books. He shows the reliability of the prophet Jeremiah (pp. 158-164).

Certain statements about the canon of Scripture are unacceptable (pp. 15-39); Kaiser doesn't accept the authority of the Catholic Church. But the rest of the book compensates for this problem. Please pray for this honorable scholar's conversion to the Catholic Faith.

**A.M.D.G.****J.M.J.**

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

"Jesus said to them, 'Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?'" (Mk 12:24).

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He [Christ] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk 24:27).

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:30-31).

[www.sjbg.me](http://www.sjbg.me)

To subscribe (no charge or obligation) to *Veritas Scripturae*, send your name and e-mail address to [salciresi@aol.com](mailto:salciresi@aol.com). Please type "VS subscription" in the subject line.

The St. Jerome Biblical Guild is an educational apostolate that explains and defends Sacred Scripture via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The apostolate takes its name from St. Jerome, "The Father of Biblical Studies," and labors by God's grace to accomplish the following: (1) explain the various Bible study tools and academic resources; for individual research or study groups, (2) present studies from Scripture on specific books such as the Gospel of St. Luke, or general themes such as the Biblical roots of home-schooling, (3) promote the classic exegetical methods and insights found within Tradition; with attention to the Church Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas, and (4) defend the Magisterial doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy; the latter the main focus of the apostolate. The Guild places itself under the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. As well, the Guild seeks the intercession of St. Jean-Marie Vianney and St. Thérèse of Lisieux for favors and protection. In all things, the apostolate seeks the greater glory of God (cf. 1 Chr 28:9; Ps 37:5; Jer 9:23-24; Jn 15:5; Col 3:17; Jas 4:13-15).

+ + +

Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi, founder and director of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild, served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and is now employed in the aviation sector. He earned his M.A. in Theological Studies, with a Scripture concentration, from the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College, where he serves on the faculty. His other ecclesiastical activities include past co-host of 'Cross Talk,' a Catholic radio program in Virginia; a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Catechetical Directory*; a former board member for a private Catholic school; a past columnist for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*; and a contributor to *The Latin Mass: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*.

Mr. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in Virginia.

