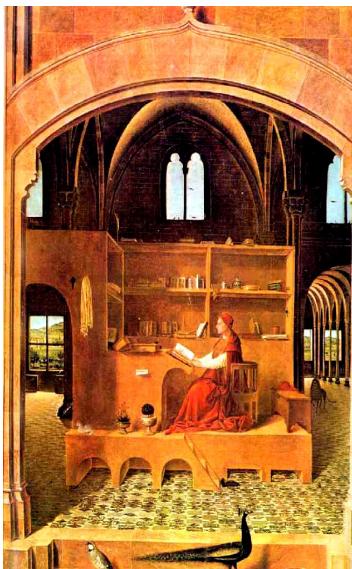


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# Veritas Scripturae

## The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild



A publication that focuses upon the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, and related Scriptural knowledge; 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: Opportunities for Grace

There has never been such an availability of book, video, and audio sources, for the study of the Holy Scriptures, as we find in our own day. This is a grace from the Triune God to the Church Militant. We must not overlook such intellectual aids.

First, books. As advantageous and convenient that computers may be, there still is nothing to replace a hardcover book. They likely will be produced forever. In addition to new books, older works are found at archive.org and bookfinder.com.

Second, videos. One may watch first class presentations right in one's home. It is also possible to obtain a degree in this manner.

Third, audio sources. Many of us commute to work, and spend a considerable amount of time driving (nearly 2.5 hours daily, sometimes, in my situation). This is one of the easiest and most convenient times to listen and learn about the Sacred Page in particular, and Catholic Faith in general. Consider the variety of high quality readings of the entire Bible (the master narrator, in my opinion, remains Alexander Scourby).

Sources for videos and audio files (and an array of podcasts) will be given attention in a future column.

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:

### Song of Solomon 8:6-7

“Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm;  
for love is strong as death,  
jealousy is cruel as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
a most vehement flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.  
If a man offered for love  
all the wealth of his house,  
it would be utterly scorned”  
(Song 8:6-7).

The Biblical book “Song of Solomon” also goes by the title “Song of Songs” in most contemporary Bibles. The *Douay Rheims* and *Knox* versions employ “Canticle of Canticles” — based upon *canticum canticorum* from the Latin Vulgate. The Greek Septuagint has *’asma asmatōn*. The Hebrew title reads *shîr hashîrîm asher lishlōmōh* (cf. J. Bergsma and B. Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible* I:641).

The Song is an inspired collection of songs or poems about love. Interpreters have said the book is an allegory of the divine love between Yahweh and His people Israel, between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church His bride, and between God and the soul (cf. Bergsma and Pitre, I:642-667). The book is a kind of “lyric dialogue” alternating among the female beloved, male lover, and the daughters of Jerusalem; who act as a chorus and are a bridge from one poem to the next (cf. K. Baker, *Inside the Bible*, p. 128). The literal sense points to a union in marriage, while the complementary spiritual sense points to a union with God (cf. J. Danielou, *Liturgical Studies III: The Bible and the Liturgy*, pp. 191-208).

Our pericope is rich enough to warrant many columns. Now, two simple points.

Firstly, the phrases “seal upon your heart” (*khachôthām ’al-libbekhā*) linked to the “seal upon your arm” (*khachôthām ’al-z’rō’ekhā*) may be the bride’s claim of inseparability from her groom. This is a pledge of loyal devotion to her lover; a fidelity that testifies to a genuine ardor. The image of the “seal” is broad; either as an imprint on wax, or the instrument itself worn on the finger or around the neck. These images reappear in texts such as Isaiah 49:14 and Haggai 2:23, which speak of a commitment in a tender union (cf. B. Arminjon, *The Cantata of Love: A Verse-by-Verse Reading of the Song of Songs*, pp. 344-345).



Secondly, the line “love is strong as death” (*kî-’azzâh khammâweth ’ahvâh*) describes this love between bride and groom. It is a love unconquerable in a way that death is powerful (because its unavoidable for man). The comparison stresses this love’s admirable force (cf. R. Murphy, *The Anchor Bible Reference Library: The Tree of Life, An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, p. 107).

Fr. Juan Arintero ends our brief study: “It is true that in this Canticle there are many things that are very difficult to understand, and not a few expressions that are apt to disconcert or shock at first sight, being apparently very daring and, of course, very different from the kind generally used today; and certain descriptions which, to human eyes, might well seem too realistic. Simple spiritual souls, however, who utterly refuse to read profane and unacceptable books, far from finding any base or coarse idea in this poem, encounter the purest delights in it, being much more uplifted and enchanted by it than by any other book” (*The Song of Songs: A Mystical Exposition*, pp. 29-30).

## Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the New Testament:

### Mark 2:1-13

“And when He returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and He was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, ‘Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Rise, take up your pallet and walk?” But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’ — He said to the paralytic — ‘I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.’ And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’ He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about Him, and He taught them” (Mk 2:1-13).

This healing at Capernaum is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26). The scene is near the Sea of Galilee, within its region, in northern Palestine. The Savior drew huge crowds throughout His public ministry. Some from good will, others merely curious, and not a few were opponents.



This Markan episode testifies to a horde of “many” (*polloi*), where there was “no longer room” (*mēketi chōrein*) — to the point where the multitudes “could not get near Him” (*mē dynamenoi prosengisai autō*). This environment leads to a stunning action: desiring the Godman to cure a “paralytic” (*paralytikon*), four men had “removed the roof” (*apestegasan tēn stegēn*) to gain entry to the busy house. Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange observes: “As the roofs in Galilee were made of beams joined together with reeds and stones, it was easy enough, by displacing one of the beams, to dig out an opening to let down the pallet, not however without filling the house with dust. It was rather useless after that to ask for a miracle; the faith of those men and of the paralytic was as evident as their desire” (*The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, p. 16).

When “Jesus saw their faith” (*idōn ho Iēsous tēn pistin autōn*), He proceeded to heal the lame man. This emphasizes a central aspect to the doctrine of the “Mystical Body of Christ”: the faith of one (in this case it was four) does have a vital affect on others. This is the social dimension to the Gospel; God’s graces, blessings, and favors often come to us by the deeds of others.

The line “But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” is filled with meaning. “Son of Man” (*huios tou anthrōpou*) hearkens back to the Messianic vision in Daniel 7:13-14. The Markan Gospel makes key use of this Messianic expression (cf. Mk 2:28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62). Linked with the “authority” (*exousian*) to “forgive sins” (*aphienai hamartias*), the conclusion is inevitable: Christ is claiming He is God. The cure is evidence of the Son’s Deity.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) is a sure guide; for both the interior life and the academic life. Ponder his example as it applies for today's student of God's Word: "Although this blessed man had been educated in none of the branches of learning, still, grasping the wisdom that is of God from above and enlightened by the rays of eternal light, he had a deep understanding of the Scriptures. For his genius, free from all stain, penetrated the hidden things of mysteries, and where the knowledge of the masters is something external, the affection of one who loves enters within the thing itself. At times he would read the sacred books and what he put into his mind once he wrote indelibly in his heart. His memory substituted for books, for he did not hear a thing once in vain, for his love meditated on it with constant devotion. This he would say was a fruitful way of learning and reading, not by wandering about through thousands of treatises. Him he considered a true philosopher who put nothing before his desire for eternal life. But he often said that that man would easily move from knowledge of himself to a knowledge of God who would set himself to study the Scriptures humbly, not presumptuously. He often explained doubtful questions word for word, and though he was unskilled in words, he set forth the sense and meaning admirably" (per Thomas of Celano's *Second Life of St. Francis* 2.68.102, taken from M. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, p. 446).

Now, two counsels from St. Francis. A voice of learning and exemplar of piety.

"At times he would read the sacred books and what he put into his mind once he wrote indelibly in his heart."

Firstly, the saint "would read the sacred books and what he put into his mind once he wrote indelibly in his heart." This is true wisdom. If not heeded, then it is possible the student of Holy Writ may turn his pursuit of knowledge into a joyless academic exercise. This Franciscan ideal of "mind" and "heart" points to the necessity of prayer and meditation in conjunction with one's studies and research. Naturally, the mind pertains to the intellect (which knows), and the heart to the will (which chooses and loves). Another way to put the matter: "head knowledge" and "heart direction." In practical terms, the Catholic striving to understand, teach, and defend Biblical inerrancy ought to have this sacred doctrine manifest itself by a holy life. Otherwise, we fall under St. Paul's rebuke as a "noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1).

Secondly, *Il poverello dio Dio* ("The little poor man of God") believed a man "would easily move from knowledge of himself to a knowledge of God who would set himself to study the Scriptures humbly, not presumptuously."

This requirement of humility undergirds the first counsel mentioned earlier. This meek spirit is especially needed when dealing with the subject of inerrancy. Those who have followed the debates and discussions on this teaching know its potential volatility. Many sincere Catholics have embraced the error of "limited inerrancy," and it is only by the grace and mercy of God that any of us were able to see the consequences of such a false position. Interacting with its adherents requires patience, which springs forth from a humble approach in imitation of St. Francis of Assisi.

## The Church Fathers and Scripture:

### An Appreciation of the East

"For one does not need to be a Greek scholar nor a theologian to honour the memory of the Greek Fathers. They lived a long way off, a long time ago and spoke a strange tongue. But they are joined to us in a closer bond than any tie of race or language, for they, like us, were citizens of that great Kingdom of God on earth that stretches over land and sea and knows no division of nations. These Greek Fathers were Catholics as we are. They belonged to the great united and visible Church in communion with the holy Roman See, where sat the bishop whom they, too, obeyed as the successor of the Prince of the Apostles. What they defended was the Catholic faith that we profess," states Fr. Adrian Fortescue in *The Greek Fathers: Their Lives and Writings*, page xxi. The Greek Fathers have given to the Christian faithful priceless contributions to help comprehend the Sacred Scriptures and explain and defend the Catholic Church.

The Greek speaking Fathers are sometimes called "Eastern Fathers" because of their proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. A popular textbook provides some additional clarity: "Often, the Fathers are divided into two lists — Greek and Latin — or Eastern and Western. The binary categories are problematic, since some Fathers used languages other than Greek and Latin (Syriac, for instance, or Coptic, or Armenian). Some Fathers, too, were Eastern in origin, but did their most important work in the West (Justin and Irenaeus, to cite just two examples). And some Fathers wrote originally in Greek, but their works survive mostly in Latin translation" (M. Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, p. 22).



With this general way of categorization in mind, consider some of the notable Greek (or Eastern) Fathers amongst their specific groups. The "Apostolic Fathers" include Pope St. Clement I of Rome (A.D. 30-101), St. Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 35-107), and St. Papias of Hierapolis (circa A.D. 130). The famed "Apologists" claim St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165), Athenagoras (2<sup>nd</sup> Century), and St. Theophilus of Antioch (2<sup>nd</sup> Century). Following this period one has St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215), Origen (A.D. 184-254), Eusebius (A.D. 260-340), and St. Athanasius (A.D. 297-373). The three "Cappadocians" are St. Basil the Great (A.D. 329-379), St. Gregory of Nazianz (A.D. 329-390), and St. Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 330-395). Near this era one also finds St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315-386), St. Epiphanius of Salamis (A.D. 315-403), St. John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407), and St. Cyril of Alexandria (A.D. 376-444). The later Fathers are St. John Climacus (A.D. 579-649), St. Maximus the Confessor (A.D. 580-662), and St. John Damascene (A.D. 675-749). Of course, this is not an exhaustive list.

The handling of the Divine Word by these Fathers in their sermons, Biblical commentaries, doctrinal works, and spiritual treatises is a great treasure for today's student of the Holy Bible. Look again to Fr. Fortescue: "Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom should be something more than mere names to us. They were great and mighty men who stand out very clearly in the long and changing line that stretches now over twenty centuries. It would be a gross ingratitude to forget they are just as important, did just as much for our cause as our own Latin Fathers" (p. xxi).

# St. Thomas Aquinas and Revelation:

## An Outline for the New Testament

A theological tome on St. Thomas Aquinas emphasizes: "During his entire career he fulfilled the office of 'master of the sacred page' (*magister in sacra pagina*) through continuous commentary on many books of the Bible" (T. Weinandy, et al., *Aquinas on Scripture*, p. ix). With this fact kept in view, the last issue of *Veritas Scripturae* gave consideration to the Angelic Doctor's lecture, *On the Commendation and Division of Sacred Scripture*. This very practical Thomistic schema (found in C. Baer's *Thomas Aquinas: Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 1-2), will now finish with the New Testament. Here is the outline (adapted in places):

### NEW TESTAMENT

#### A. The Origin of Grace

1. According to Christ's human nature. Distinguished according to three dignities which are joined to Christ as man

- a. King (**Matthew**)
- b. Prophet (**Mark**)
- c. Priest (**Luke**)

♦ Or again,

according to the mystery of Christ's

- a. Incarnation (**Matthew**)
- b. Passion (**Mark**)
- c. Resurrection (**Luke**)

2. According to Christ's divine nature (**John**)

#### B. The Power of the Grace of Christ (**Pauline Epistles**)

1. As head of the Mystical Body (**Hebrews**)



- 2. In the principle members of the Mystical Body
  - a. Spiritual matters
- i. Institution, instruction, and governance of the unity of the Church (**1 Timothy**)
- ii. Steadfastness against persecutors (**2 Timothy**)
- iii. Defense against heretics (**Titus**)
- b. Temporal matters (**Philemon**)
- 3. In the Mystical Body itself, i.e., the Church
  - a. In itself (**Romans**)
  - b. In the sacraments of grace
- i. In the sacraments themselves (**1 Corinthians**)
- ii. Dignity of the ministry of the sacraments (**2 Corinthians**)
- iii. Exclusion of superfluous sacraments (**Galatians**)
  - c. As it affects the unity it makes in the Church
    - i. Institution of unity (**Ephesians**)
- ii. Confirmation and progress of that unity (**Philippians**)
- iii. Defense of the unity of the Church
  - a. Against certain errors (**Colossians**)
  - b. Against present persecutions (**1 Thessalonians**)
  - c. Against future persecutions (**2 Thessalonians**)
- C. Exercise of the virtue of grace
  - 1. In the beginning of the Church (**Acts**)
  - 2. In the advancing of the Church (**Catholic Epistles**)
  - 3. In the term of the Church (**Revelation**)

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## The Magisterium Speaks:

### Vatican II's *Dei Verbum* 11: The Latin Text and its Translations

Most students of the Holy Bible interested in Biblical inspiration and inerrancy will eventually examine Vatican II's *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) from 1965. Number 11 in *Dei Verbum* is the focal point.

Here is the official Latin text from the Vatican website, with its [footnote numbers](#):

"Divinitus revelata, quae in Sacra Scriptura litteris continentur et prostant, Spiritu Sancto afflante consignata sunt. Libros enim integros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum omnibus eorum partibus, sancta Mater Ecclesia ex apostolica fide pro sacris et canonicis habet, propterea quod, Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti (cf. *Io* 20, 31; *2 Tim* 3,16; *2 Pt* 1, 19-21; 3,15-16), Deum habent auctorem, atque ut tales ipsi Ecclesiae traditi sunt (17). In sacris vero libris conficiendis Deus homines elegit, quos facultatibus ac viribus suis utentes adhibuit (18), ut Ipso in illis et per illos agente (19), ea omnia eaque sola, quae Ipse vellet, ut veri auctores scripto tradarent (20).

Cum ergo omne id, quod auctores inspirati seu hagiographi asserunt, retineri debeat assertum a Spiritu Sancto, inde Scripturae libri veritatem, quam Deus nostrae salutis causa Litteris Sacris consignari voluit, firmiter, fideliter et sine errore docere profitendi sunt (21). Itaque 'omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata et utilis ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in iustitia: ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum instrutus' (*2 Tim* 3,16-17, gr.)."

A popular translation is found in Fr. Austin Flannery's *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (pp. 756-757), which has different [footnote numbers](#):

"The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For Holy Mother Church relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Jn*. 20:31; *2 Tim*. 3:16; *2 Pet*. 1:19-21; 3:15-16), they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.<sup>1</sup> To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties<sup>2</sup> so that, though he acted in them and by them,<sup>3</sup> it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more.<sup>4</sup>

Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures.<sup>5</sup> Thus 'all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work' (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Gk. text.)"

Another common translation is from Fr. Walter Abbot's *The Documents of Vatican II* (pp. 118-119), also with different [footnote numbers](#).

[Footnote 31](#) was appended to Abbot's version and is not part of the official Latin text:

"Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Holy Mother Church, relying on the belief of the apostles, holds that the books of both the Old and New Testament in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Jn*. 20:31; *2 Tim*. 3:16; *2 Pet*. 1:19-20; 3:15-16), they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.<sup>27</sup> In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities,<sup>28</sup> so that with Him acting in them and through them,<sup>29</sup> they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted.<sup>30</sup>



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 firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth<sup>31</sup> which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.<sup>32</sup> Therefore 'all Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, for instruction in justice; that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work' (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text.)"

An analysis of both paragraphs of *Dei Verbum* 11 will continue in upcoming bulletins. This section of the Dogmatic Constitution conveys the orthodox teaching on Biblical inspiration and inerrancy. Nonetheless, *Dei Verbum* 11, and the document overall, have weaknesses (but no errors). The Constitution requires an attentive reading.

## The Pontifical Biblical Commission:

### The 1913 *Response* on the Pastorals and 1914 *Response* on Hebrews

The Biblical Commission's second *Response* from June 12, 1913 (the first *Response* on the same date appeared in the previous issue of *Veritas Scripturæ*) is *On the Authenticity, Integrity, and Time of Composition of the Pastoral Epistles*:

"1. Whether, having in view the tradition of the Church universally and firmly persevering from the beginning, as ancient ecclesiastical records testify in various ways, it is to be held for certain that the Epistles known as Pastoral, viz., the two to Timothy and the one to Titus, notwithstanding the efforts of certain heretics who have without cause eliminated them from the number of Pauline Epistles as being contrary to their own teachings, were written by the Apostle Paul himself and ever counted as genuine and canonical.

Answer: In the affirmative.

2. Whether the so-called 'fragmentary hypothesis,' advanced and set forth in various ways by certain recent critics who, without indeed any probable ground and actually fighting among themselves, contend that the Pastoral Epistles were made up at a later period by unknown authors from fragments of Epistles or from lost Pauline Epistles, and greatly added to, can create the slightest prejudice against the conspicuous and most firm testimony of tradition.

Answer: In the negative.

3. Whether the difficulties commonly advanced in various ways from the style and language of the author, from the errors, especially of the Gnostics, which are described as already current at the time, from the state of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which is supposed to be already in an evolved condition, and other such reasons to the contrary, in any way weaken the opinion which holds as ratified and certain the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles.

Answer: In the negative.

4. Whether, since not only from historical reasons and from ecclesiastical tradition in harmony with the testimony of the Eastern and Western Fathers, as well as from the very indications easily furnished both by the abrupt conclusion of the book of the Acts and by the Pauline Epistles written at Rome, especially the second to Timothy, the opinion as to the two Roman imprisonments of the Apostle Paul is to be held as certain, it can be safely affirmed that the Pastoral Epistles were written during the period between the liberation from the first imprisonment and the death of the Apostle.

Answer: In the affirmative."

The June 24, 1914 *Response* is *On the Author and the Manner and Circumstances of Composition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*:

"1. Whether so much importance should be attached to the doubts concerning the inspiration and Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews — which, owing chiefly to its misuse by the heretics, occupied the minds of some in the West in the first centuries — that when we take into account the abiding, unanimous and constant testimony of the Eastern Fathers, with which since the Fourth Century the whole Western Church has been in perfect accord; considering also the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs and of the Sacred Councils, that of Trent especially, and finally the continuous practice of the universal Church, we may hesitate in reckoning the Epistle with certainty not only among the canonical Epistles (for that has been defined to be of faith), but among the genuine Epistles of the Apostle Paul as well.

Answer: In the negative.



2. Whether the arguments generally advanced, drawn from the singular absence of St. Paul's name and the omission of the regular introduction and greeting in the Epistle to the Hebrews; from the faultlessness of its Greek, its accuracy in phraseology and polish of style; from the way in which the Old Testament is quoted and argued from in it; or from some discrepancies which are alleged to exist between its teaching and that of other Epistles of St. Paul, can in the least impair its Pauline authorship; or whether, on the other hand, the complete harmony of doctrine and principles; the similarity of the cautions and counsels; and the close correspondence in phrases and in the very words, proclaimed by some non-Catholic even, which are all discovered to exist between this and the other works of the Apostle of the Gentiles, do not rather go to prove beyond doubt this Pauline authorship.

Answer: In the negative to the first part, in the affirmative to the second part.

3. Whether the Apostle Paul must be accounted so to have been the author of this letter, that it must needs be asserted that he not only planned and composed it in its entirety under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but also that he put it in exactly the form in which it now stands.

Answer: In the negative, subject to further decision of the Church."

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## Addressing Bible Difficulties:

### Revisiting Tools for the Task

This column in past bulletins (*Veritas Scripturæ* 3.3; 3.4; 4.1) made mention of “Scholarly Tools for the Task”— a list of books to aid the explanation and the defense of God’s Word. It is now time to revisit this matter and supplement the earlier columns. Here are additional suggestions. We will follow, for the most part, the same categories as the previous articles.

Note well: this is not an endorsement of everything contained in such materials. One must “weed and sift” on occasion. Of course, many outstanding sources will be inadvertently omitted from the list below. In the end, a well-stocked personal library is a blessing.

#### Collections of Magisterial documents:

- R. Deferrari, trans., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*.
- R. Fastiggi, et al., *Heinrich Denzinger: Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*.
- J. Dupuis, et al., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*.

#### Dictionaries / Encyclopedias:

- D. Freedman, et al., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary 1-6*.
- K. Sakenfeld, et al., *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible 1-5*.
- M. Tenney, et al., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible 1-5*.

#### Atlases / Maps:

- J. Beck, ed., *The Baker Book of Bible Charts, Maps, and Time Lines*.
- J. Stirling, *An Atlas of the Acts*.
- P. Wright, *Holman QuickSource Bible Atlas*.



#### Background information:

- W. Kaiser, *A History of Israel*.
- L. Wood, *A Survey of Israel’s History*.
- E. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*.

#### Sacred and Ecclesiastical History:

- W. Carroll, *A History of Christendom 1*.
- H. Daniel-Rops, *Israel and the Ancient World*.
- J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller, *The History of the Primitive Church 1*.

#### Biblical Chronology:

- T. Cargal, et al., *The Chronological Guide to the Bible*.
- J. Egan, *The Fullness of Time: Essays in Biblical Chronology*.
- A. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology*.

#### Biblical Archaeology:

- E. Cline, *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction*.
- J. Holden and N. Geisler, *The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible*.
- K. Kitchen, *The Bible in its World: The Bible & Archaeology Today*.

#### Pictorial Aids:

- R. Baughman, *Bible History Visualized*.
- S. Jenkins, *Nelson’s 3-D Bible Map-book*.
- K. Malberg, *The Bible Overview Chart*.

The resources above may help answer many of the inevitable Bible difficulties discovered during one’s studies. A number of other sources, in-print and out-of-print, could lengthen the list. A future bulletin will supply more books.

"Moses is famous as the founder of a nation from the twelve tribes; Moses is equally famous as a legislator... but Moses is still greater as the prophet who was privileged to speak to Yahweh as a friend, face to face, to receive from him the revelation of the name Yahweh, and, acting upon his mandate, to establish the covenant with God. Moses' true grandeur thus lies not in the political and national spheres, nor in the juristic and legislative sphere, but in the religious sphere. He thus stands out above the narrow limitations of ethnic history and enters into the realm of the holy, with a claim upon all the peoples of every age. He marks one of the most decisive turning points in salvation history, and at the same time he is a great promise and expectation for the future: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren — him you shall heed,'" remarks Fr. Claus Schedl in *History of the Old Testament* II:214. Moses is one of our fathers in the Faith; all Christians would do well to venerate him.

One of the greatest accomplishments from Moses is his composition, as the substantial author, of the foundational five books of the Bible; known as the "Pentateuch" (i.e., Genesis through Deuteronomy). On this subject, one should consult two key documents from the Pontifical Biblical Commission: the 1909 *Response* and 1948 *Letter*. This foundation reveals main themes that are connected to the Gospel such as creation (Gen), worship (Ex), holiness (Lev), obedience (Num) and law (Dt). The Pentateuch is required reading for a keen grasp of Sacred History.



Moses points ahead to Jesus Christ. Consider the many parallels between Moses and the Savior (based upon P. Kreeft, *You Can Understand the Bible*, pp. 30-31):

- Both outsiders (Ex 3:1-10 / Jn 3:13).
- Both trained for their public missions (Ex 2:10 / Lk 4:1-14).
- Both performed miracles (Ex 7:8-11:10 / Jn 3:2).
- Both preserved as babies from wicked kings (Ex 2:1-10 / Mt 2:13-15).
- Both stood against evil (Ex 7:7 / Mt 4:1).
- Both fasted forty days (Ex 34:28 / Mt 4:2).
- Both controlled the sea (Ex 14:21 / Mk 4:39).
- Both fed a multitude (Ex 16:15 / Mt 14:19-21).
- Both showed the light of God's glory upon their faces (Ex 34:35 / Lk 9:29).
- Both endured rebellion from their own people (Ex 15:22-25 / Jn 5:39-47).
- Both were scorned by kin (Num 12:1-2 / Jn 7:5).
- Both gave aid to men by intercessory prayer (Ex 32:32 / Jn 17:9).
- Both were mouthpieces for God (Dt 18:18 / Jn 7:16-17).
- Both had seventy helpers (Num 11:16-17 / Lk 10:1).
- Both gave a law from a mountain (Ex 19:20-20:20 / Mt 5:1-7:28).
- Both established memorials (Ex 12:14 / Lk 22:19).
- Both reappeared after death (Mk 9:4 / Acts 1:3).

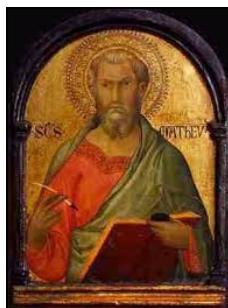
Mother Kathryn Sullivan leaves a final fact on Moses: "[In the Old Testament his name occurs more frequently than does the name of any other prophet](#)" (*God's Word and Work* I:15).

## The Life of Christ:

### A Preview to St. Matthew's Gospel

"No books in the world have so many readers and no writings have been translated into so many languages and probed by so many scholars as the Gospels," notes Fr. Joseph Kudasiewicz in *The Synoptic Gospels Today*, page vii. This is another confirmation that the four Gospels are the most valuable records of the divine words and sacred deeds of Jesus Christ. The Christian's time is put to great use who reads and meditates upon any one of the inspired tomes from Ss. Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Consider the first Gospel.

St. Matthew's Gospel consists of 28 chapters, 1,071 verses, and about 23,684 words (cf. R. Boyd, *World's Bible Handbook*, p. 380). There was an underlying Aramaic or Hebrew text behind the canonical Greek version of the Matthean record (cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *On the Author, Date of Composition, and Historical Truth of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* [1911]). It was directed mainly to a Jewish audience in Palestine, composed pre-A.D. 70 (cf. A. Fuentes, *A Guide to the Bible*, pp. 173-177 and A. Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 173-199). Matthew, known also as Levi the son of Alphaeus (cf. Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27), is the author. He appears in the lists of the Apostles in Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; and Acts 1:13. He is "Matthew the tax collector" (*Maththaios ho telōnēs*) per Matthew 10:3, who earlier had been called while "sitting at the tax office" (*kathēmenon epi to telōnion*) in Matthew 9:9. One source states: **"As a tax collector, Matthew would have mastered the art of writing and would have given careful attention to details"** (J. I. Packer, et al., *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*, p. 591). Patristic testimonies to Matthean authorship come from men such as St. Irenaeus, St. Papias, Tertullian, Origen, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome (citations are given in *Veritas Scripturae* 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; 1.6; 2.2; and 2.3). Tradition confirms Matthean authorship.



Main pericopes in St. Matthew's book are the genealogy (Mt 1:1-17); the "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt 5:1—7:29); the string of parables (Mt 13:1-52); the confession of Peter (Mt 16:13-20); the Last Supper (Mt 26:20-30); and the "Great Commission" (Mt 28:16-20). They are renowned portions amongst all four Evangelists.

The Gospel of Matthew does have some unique characteristics. The work makes frequent use of the Old Testament (cf. Mt 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15, 17-18, 23; 3:3; etc.). As well, St. Matthew has the three lone appearances of the term "church" in the four Gospels: Matthew 16:18 (*ekklēsian*) and 18:17 (*ekklēsia* and *ekklēsias*). Also, the Matthean text is commonly arranged into five "units": "The Sermon" (Mt 5—7); "Mission Instructions to the Twelve" (Mt 10); "Teachings about the Kingdom of God" (Mt 13); "Humility and Forgiveness within the Church" (Mt 18); and "The Last Things" (Mt 24—25).

The opening verse introduces the entire Matthean Gospel: **"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham"** (Mt 1:1). One hearkens back to Genesis with the expression "book of the genealogy" (*Biblos geneseōs*). The family tree then follows in verses 2 to 17, establishing the God-man's lineage. The phrase "Jesus Christ" links a name (*Iēsou*) to a royal title (*Christou*). "David" (*Dauid*) and "Abraham" (*Abraam*) are covenantal figures of Sacred History: a Jewish listener or reader would have rejoiced at the Messianic significance of the verse. This line is one of the many riches from St. Matthew.

Additional sources employed: D. Guthrie's *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 28-60; H. Lindsell's *Harper Study Bible*, p. 1435; C. Mitch and E. Sri's *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 15-28; and J. Steinmueller's *A Companion to Scripture Studies* III:37-64.

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

### *The Epistles of St. Paul: With Introductions and Commentary for Priests and Students*

Charles J. Callan, O.P. *The Epistles of St. Paul: With Introductions and Commentary for Priests and Students, Volumes I and II*. New York City: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1951. 659 and 488 pages.

Fr. Callan (1877-1962), a Dominican priest, produced a variety of works on Holy Scripture, theology, morals, and devotion. He was part of the founding of publications such as *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, *Dominicana*, and *The Thomist*. Callan was a seminary professor, and also consultor to the Pontifical Biblical Commission. He left valuable tomes on the Bible such as *The New Psalter*, *The Four Gospels*; *The Parables of Christ*; and *The Acts of the Apostles*. Among this group is *The Epistles of St. Paul*. Originally in two volumes, here is a brief review for the subsequent single volume edition.

Callan states in the preface: “Properly, therefore, to understand St. Paul and his writings, it is necessary, in the first place, to know something about the Apostle’s history, his training, education and labors, as well as the reasons that moved him to write, and the people to whom his letters were directed. And this done, if we would attain to anything like a thorough grasp of the wealth and sublimity of doctrine which the Epistles contain, it will be further required that we diligently study each letter as a whole and in its parts, subjecting every section and verse to careful analysis and proper scrutiny” (I:iii). A general introduction follows, which covers the main features of Paul’s life and writings (I:ix-xlv). This overview is well done, and right to the point.



Next, comes the specific introductions to each of the Pauline compositions. Callan begins with Romans (I:1-245) and ends on Hebrews (II:341-452). The books have the standard discussions found in the reliable commentaries. For example, the section on 1 Corinthians addresses the site of Corinth, its local church, the occasion and purpose of the Epistle, date and place of composition, author and canonicity, the book’s style and language, doctrinal significance, and division and analysis (I:246-259). Then follows the bibliography and commentary (I:260-445).

Here is a sample from Ephesians 1:6, “Unto the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he graced us in the beloved.” Callan writes: “**He graced us**. The verb here is aorist, referring to a definitely past action. It is a rare verb found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Luke i. 28, and its meaning here goes back to the corresponding word in the verse, *χάρις*, which we said meant *benevolence*. Therefore the sense of the verb *χαριτοῦν* in this passage is *to pursue with benevolence*. Hence the meaning is that God, pursuing us with His benevolence, has rendered us lovable or gracious. Explaining this verb St. Chrysostom says: ‘He not only delivered us from sin, but He made us lovable’; and Theodoret has: ‘The death of the Lord made us worthy of love’” (II:29, bold and italics in original).

The commentary may be read in full, or consulted merely for particular verses. *The Epistles of St. Paul: With Introductions and Commentary for Priests and Students, Volumes I and II* is still useful for contemporary Pauline research.

## Book Recommendation (in-print):

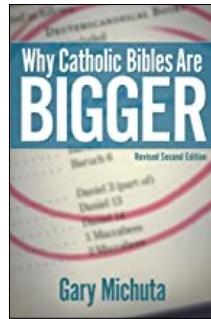
### *Why Catholic Bibles Are Bigger: Revised Second Edition*

Guest columnist: Michael Lofton, M.A.

Gary Michuta. *Why Catholic Bibles Are Bigger: Revised Second Edition*. El Cajon: Catholic Answers, 2017. 383 pages.

Catholics and Protestants share a commitment to the Sacred Page. In both traditions, the Word of God has priority in matters of faith and morals. However, which books belong to the category of inspired Scripture is disputed among the two. Knowing how these two traditions came to recognize which books belong in the Bible goes a long way in determining which tradition maintained the correct canon of Scripture. Gary Michuta does a tremendous job in surveying the history of the canon in both Judaism and Christianity; with a particular focus on the Christian tradition.

The thesis of the book is to refute the concept that there was an inherited closed canon in the First Century. Michuta also presents the case that it was the overwhelming position of early Christians to accept the Deuterocanonical books as Scripture. It is shown that this tradition was abandoned by Protestants without an adequate justification. Michuta examines the evidence for a pre-Christian canon in the First Century, followed by a history of the Second Century revolt of Bar Kokhba, which the author maintains as the point Judaism officially rejected the Deuterocanon (p. 77). A plethora of Patristic witnesses are examined, confirming that most Christians maintained the Deuterocanon was the inspired Word of God. However, St. Jerome was to be an exceptional case — he was the first Christian to reject the inspiration of the Deuterocanon (p. 145).



Despite St. Jerome's peculiar position, the status of the Deuterocanonical books remained firm in the Middle Ages, until assorted figures questioned them. This doubtful disposition towards the Deuterocanon was because of an exaggerated commitment to St. Jerome. This period of doubt was definitively rectified by the Council of Trent, settling the dispute in the Catholic tradition. The position of Protestantism differs from Trent, insofar as Protestants eliminated the Deuterocanon from their Bibles by first, denying their inspiration, and second, later removing them from printed editions of the Bible in the Nineteenth Century.

Michuta presents copious footnotes, with primary and secondary sources. He maintains an organized fashion by examining the history of the Deuterocanon, century by century. Several graphs are used for illustration, including a handy table showing the canons of various codices in the early Church (pp. 168-169).

Michuta does a remarkable job surveying the history of the Deuterocanon, along with the theories as to why Catholics and Protestants have different Bibles. He achieved his thesis, and presents a challenge to anyone who would reject the Deuterocanon as inspired Scripture. This book is suited for one who wishes to discern the apostolic witnesses to the canon of Scripture, and the reasons that Protestants removed the Deuterocanon from their Bibles.

The companion tome by Michuta, *The Case for the Deuterocanon: Evidence and Arguments*, rounds out the topic.

**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).

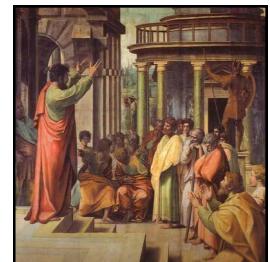
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The St. Jerome Biblical Guild is an educational apostolate that explains and defends Sacred Scripture via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The apostolate takes its name from St. Jerome, "The Father of Biblical Studies," and labors 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 is consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Sacred Heart of Jesus. 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).

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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 (1) past co-host of 'Cross Talk,' a Catholic radio program in Virginia, (2) a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Catechetical Directory*, (3) a former board member for a private Catholic school, and (4) writer for a variety of publications. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in Virginia.



Guest columnist Michael Lofton earned his M.A. in Theological Studies (Christendom College Graduate School of Theology) and is pursuing his Doctorate in Theology (Pontifex University). He is the founder of the St. Maximus the Confessor Institute and the Reason & Theology show ([reasonandtheology.com/blog](http://reasonandtheology.com/blog)).



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