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- “The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord” CCC 141
- “I AM the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.” Jn 6:35 NAB

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Sacred Scriptures

An Investigation of How Catholics
View Sacred Scriptures
Jason Collins, M.A.

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- Outline
- The Bible- come on... what’s really in it?
 - How Catholics read the Bible
 - Why don’t Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

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The Bible- what's in it

- The Bible is divided into two main sections. The first is what is commonly known as the Old Testament, but should rightly be called the Jewish Scriptures. While the second is the New Testament, or the Christian Scriptures
- The words of Old and New have fallen out of favor amongst Biblical scholars because they seem to suggest that Judaism is no longer relevant. CCC 123

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The Bible- what's in it

- We can further divide the Scriptures-
 - Jewish Scriptures
 - Torah (also known as the Pentateuch)
 - History
 - Prophets
 - Wisdom

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The Bible- what's in it

- We can further divide the Scriptures-
 - Christian Scriptures
 - Gospels
 - Acts
 - Letters
 - Revelation

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The Bible- what's in it

- Christian Scriptures
 - Gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
 - Acts-really a continuation of the Luke
 - Letters-Pauline Epistles and Catholic Epistles
 - Revelation- allegorically tells visions of John to seven churches

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Gospel of Matthew- written between 70-85 AD for Jewish converts. He has knowledge of Jewish customs and laws and portrays Jesus as a new Moses.
- The Gospel of Mark- written between 65 -70 AD written for Gentile converts. Almost half is concerned with Holy Week but ironically usually has more details than Matthew and Luke.

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Gospel of Luke- written 75-80 AD for Gentiles. Luke places the events of Jesus in the wider world.
- The Gospel of John- written 90-100 AD with a higher Christological tract than the synoptics that disagrees with them in some regards.

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The first three Gospels are commonly called the Synoptic Gospels.

Two-source Hypothesis

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graph TD; Mark[Mark] --> Matthew[Matthew]; Mark --> Luke[Luke]; Q[Q] --> Matthew; Q --> Luke;
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The diagram illustrates the Two-source Hypothesis. At the top, two boxes labeled 'Mark' (purple) and 'Q' (blue) are connected by a double-headed arrow. Below them, two boxes labeled 'Matthew' (purple and green) and 'Luke' (purple and green) are shown. Arrows point from 'Mark' to both 'Matthew' and 'Luke'. Arrows also point from 'Q' to both 'Matthew' and 'Luke'.

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Gospel of John shares some similarity with the synoptics, but in other areas is radically different.
- For example, in John, Jesus only performs seven miracles; including two not found in the synoptics: the Wedding at Cana and the raising of Lazarus.
- There is also no institution narrative of the Eucharistic.

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Is there one story or parable of Jesus that strikes you?

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Acts- really part two of Luke and details the growth of the Early Church from Israel to the capital city of the Roman Empire.
- The first half focuses on Peter, while the second half focuses on Paul.

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Pauline Epistles- Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, and Philemon

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The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Catholic Epistles- Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, Jude
- Finally, Revelation

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- By just going to Mass regular, you will hear most of the Gospels and a portion of the important parts of the rest of the Bible.
- Since right before Vatican II; Catholics have been encouraged to read, pray, and discuss the Bible.

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- First, we accept the Bible as the *inspired* word of God.
- “God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors; he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth” CCC 134 citing DV 11.
- Catholics are not bible literalists, for example the Church does not teach that creation only took six days.

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- Second, we read the Bible with a sense of tradition and an awareness of the time the passages were written.
- The historical-critical method is trying to understand the world behind the text as the author was composing the work.
- “In order to discover the sacred authors’ intention, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current” CCC 110.

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- Third, we look at the Bible (specifically books within it) as a whole.
- We call this narrative criticism, that is trying to understand the work as a story.
- For example, in John's gospel, Jesus performs only seven miracles (signs) and they build up to the resurrection, why?

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- Fourth, and perhaps most important, is that we pray with the Bible.
- Lectio divina-
 1. Read- slowly and several times
 2. Meditate-move towards meditating
 3. Pray- how did the text inspire you
 4. Contemplate- be in the presence of God

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How Catholics Read the Bible

- Prayer- Ignatian contemplation
 1. Beginning prayer- ask God to open your mind to the passage.
 2. Read slowly, place yourself in the text, participate in the passage both active and passive.
 3. Ending prayer- reflect on your experience and thank God for the time together.

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Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

- We read the text as a whole.
- To take a singular verse takes it out of its context.
- This context can be the verses around it, the stories around it, the book its from and possibly the entire Bible.

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Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

- We also believe that the Bible is a complex work of inspired text.
- There is a 2000-3000 year history of the Bible.
- This is where the other part of the deposit of faith enters: Tradition.

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Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

- Most scholars agree that the stories of Jesus were recited orally.
- As the apostles were martyred, the early Church realized they need to write the stories of Jesus for subsequent generations.
- It was the early Church leaders that determined which books were included in the canon of scripture.

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Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

- Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence. Dei Verbum 9

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