

ST. MAXIMUS CATECHISM CLASS 2010 HANDOUT
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE 4: THE CHURCH & HOLY SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last times spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the worlds...

Nicene Creed: “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who procedeth from the Father...who spake by the prophets.”

Exodus 24:3-4 “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Exodus 34:27-28 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

Deuteronomy 4:12-15 “And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.”

Deuteronomy 5:22 “These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.”

so to in some of the prophets.”

Deuteronomy 31:9 “And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

Jeremiah 36:18 And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

John 10:34-36 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III.xxviii.1 If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all these things in Scripture which are made the subject of the investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit; but we, inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than, the Word of God and His Spirit, are on that very account destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries.

St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation of the Word, ¶ 56.1-2 But you, taking occasion by this, if you light upon the text of the Scriptures, by genuinely applying your mind to them, will learn from them more completely and clearly the exact detail of what we have said. For they were spoken and written by God, through men who spoke of God.

St. John Chrysostom, Homily xxxvi on John 4:54ff As in gold mines one skillful in what relates to them would not endure to overlook even the smallest vein as producing much wealth, so in the holy Scriptures it is impossible without loss to pass by one jot or one tittle, we must search into all. For they are all uttered by the Holy Spirit, and nothing useless is written in them.

St. John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Bk 4.17 Through the Holy Spirit, therefore, both the law and the prophets, the evangelists and apostles and pastors and teachers spake. All Scripture, then, is *given by inspiration of God and is also assuredly profitable*. Wherefore to search the Scriptures is a work most fair and most profitable for souls.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

St. John Chrysostom, Homily 37 on John 5 Great is the profit of the divine Scriptures, and all-sufficient is the aid which comes from them. And Paul declared this when he said, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written aforetime for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4, I Corinthians 1:11). For the living oracles are a treasury of all manner of medicines, so that whether it be needful to quench pride, to lull desire to sleep, to tread under foot the love of money, to despise pain, to inspire confidence, to gain patience, from them one may find abundant resource.

Chrysostom Homily 9 On Colossians 3:16-17 This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures.

2 Peter 3:14-16 “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such thing, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given to him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

2 Peter 1:20-21 “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

St. Vincent of Lerins, A Commonitory, Chapter 2, p. 132

“We must, the Lord helping, fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law [Scripture], and then, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.”

“But here some one perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church’s interpretation? For this reason,--because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters.... [List of heretics who interpret variously follows.] Therefore, it is very necessary, on account of so great intricacies of such various error, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles, should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.

“Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense ‘Catholic,’ which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow *universality* if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.”

St. Athanasius the Great, On the Incarnation, ¶57 But for the searching of the Scriptures and true knowledge of them an honorable life is needed, and a pure soul, and that virtue which is according to Christ; so that the intellect, guiding its

path by it, may be able to attain what it desires and to comprehend it, in so far as it is accessible to human nature to learn concerning the Word of God. For without a pure mind and a modeling of the life after the saints a man could not possibly comprehend the words of the saints. . . . He that would comprehend the mind of those who speak of God must needs begin by washing and cleansing his soul, by his manner of living, and approach the saints themselves by imitating their works; so that, associated with them in the conduct of a common life, he may understand also what has been revealed to them by God, and thenceforth, as closely knit to them, may escape the peril of the sinners and their fire at the Day of Judgment, and receive what is laid up for the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,' whatsoever things are prepared for them that live a virtuous life, and love the God and the Father, in Christ Jesus our Lord: through whom and with whom be to the Father Himself, with the Son Himself, in the Holy Spirit, honor and might and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Fourfold Sense of Scripture

A. Historical:

1. the knowledge of past and visible things

B. Spiritual:

2. tropology, tropological: moral explanation pertaining to correction of life and practical instruction

3. allegory, allegorical; what happened in history prefigures the form of another mystery

4. anagogy, anagogical; a higher spiritual meaning

I Corinthians 14:6 "Now brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what use will it be to you unless I speak to you by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophecy, or by instruction?"

Matt 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-45 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of

the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

John 5:39 Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle [feeding 5000] that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

John 7:40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet.

John 5:45-47 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, who shall ye believe my words?