

WHAT IS THE NEW TESTAMENT?

1. What are the major divisions of the New Testament? How many different authors are there for the New Testament books?
2. What is the difference between a “literary”, a “historical”, and a “confessional” (faith to faith) approach to the NT?
3. What “literary” tools do we use since the NT is a series of written documents?
4. How does understanding the historical context help us in interpreting the NT? What tools does this discipline employ?
5. What does it mean that we read the NT as the Church’s Scripture, according to the authors?
6. Why do we Christians keep the Old Testament as part of our Bibles?

A CLOSER LOOK

Please read Luke 2:40-52 and answer the following questions.

- Read the immediate context of our passage (Luke 2:21-39 and Luke 3:1-21). How does this passage in style, structure and content seem like an add-on?
- What purpose do you think this story has for Luke, since the other gospels do not record any youth stories of Jesus?

- In ancient Jewish tradition, at age 12-13 a young man would have moved into the age of responsibility and gone to Jerusalem to receive a blessing. Why is this significant for Luke to include this story in his Gospel? What does it mean that Jesus speaks for the first time in the temple?
- The literary structure of the passage is a chiasmus. A chiasmus is the use of inverted parallelism of form or content that moves toward and away from a strategic point. The chiasmic outline is as follows:

A General statement about Jesus' growth, his wisdom and favor (v. 40)

B Geographical reference (vv. 41-42)

C Core of the story (vv. 43-50)

B Geographical reference (v.51)

A General statement about Jesus' progress in wisdom, maturity, and favor (v.52)

What is the point of the core of this story? Who is Jesus' "Father" now? Did Mary know at this moment how Jesus' life would unfold?

- How does this text foreshadow the last week of Jesus' life?
- Why is this passage placed here by Luke in his Gospel?