

Quiz on the Bible in the Orthodox Church

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Ann Arbor, MI

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For each of the scenarios below, you are given a situation and several possible responses. Circle all correct responses for an Orthodox Christian who knows how the Bible came to the Church and what our Church has to say about it.

1. A Mormon rings your doorbell and offers you a book, saying it is "another Testament of Jesus Christ." You say:

- A. "Ack! I don't know what to believe! I'm losing my religion!"
- B. "Sounds good! You can't have too many Testaments!"
- C. "This 'another Testament' ... What is the covenant contained in it—i.e., the promises, provisions, and parties involved?"
- D. "Which Ecumenical Council declared this book to be Scripture?"

2. On the Discovery Channel a religion expert says that scholars now know that the book of Exodus was not written by Moses alone, but was pieced together from a bunch of different documents. You say:

- A. "Ack! I don't know what to believe! I'm losing my religion!"
- B. "Lies! A pack of lies! Scholars are all of the Devil!"
- C. "Ho-hum. So what? Tell us something we didn't already know."
- D. "Isn't it amazing that the Bible draws together its unique message from so many sources of wisdom?"

3. At your local Interfaith discussion group, the rabbi gets up and says that the Christian belief in a Virgin Birth is based on a misinterpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, where the Hebrew says a *betulah* ('young woman') will conceive and bear a child; it does not say an *almah* ('virgin'). You say:

- A. "Ack! I don't know what to believe! I'm losing my religion!"
- B. "Is it possible that the Hebrew text was altered after the 1st century A.D.?"
- C. "So why then did Jewish rabbis, 200 years before Christ, knowingly translate that verse using the Greek word *παρθένος* ('virgin')?"

4. The televangelist on WACK-TV says that Jesus will come back to earth next June and rule as king on a literal throne for a literal 1000 years prior to the world coming to an end, and this all comes straight from the book of Revelation, chapter 20. You say:

A. "Ack! My church didn't tell me that! I'm losing my religion!"

B. "You mean to say that, from a book with a seven-headed beast and edible scrolls and a talking lamb, you want me to take that one verse dead literally?"

C. "Did you know that the Church almost left the book of Revelation out of the Bible just because of passages like that one which are so easily misinterpreted?"

5. Your Protestant neighbor says that the Orthodox Church has added books to the Old Testament that do not belong there, and therefore it has gone astray into false teachings. You say:

A. "Ack! I don't know what to believe! I'm losing my religion!"

B. "Those books were in the Old Testament of the Jews 200 years before Christ. If Jesus didn't want those books in the Bible, why didn't He have the Apostles take them out?"

C. "The 1st Ecumenical Council decided which books are in my Bible. Who decided which books belong in yours?"

6. Visiting a monastery in another state, you are informed that the abbot has a special gift of Bible interpretation, and that he knows that the command of Christ to "sell all you have and give to the poor" applies to you personally ... and the monastery stands ready to help you fulfill this command. You say:

A. "Ack! I'm losing my retirement!"

B. "My Bible (2 Peter 1:20) says that Scriptures aren't a matter of private interpretation. Which Fathers of the Church hold the same interpretation as the abbot?"

C. "Taking Bible verses out of context is interesting. Didn't the devil tempt Jesus in the wilderness like that?"