

The Canon of Scripture

The Issues

- The Meaning of Canon
- The Official Church Recognition
- The Biblical Criteria
- The Closing of the Canon

The Meaning of Canon

- *Canon*: comes through the Latin, from the Greek
- Used to refer to:
 - A straight rod/rule
 - A rule or a standard
 - A series or a list

The Canon of Scripture

1. The list of books acknowledged to be inspired.
2. The rule or standard of belief or practice.

Official Church Recognition: The Criteria

- Apostolicity
- Antiquity
- Orthodoxy
- Catholicity
- Lection
- Inspiration

Official Recognition: The History

- Age of Apostles
 - Paul
 - Peter
- Post-apostolic
 - Clement of Rome (c. 95 AD)
 - Ignatius (c. 115 AD)
 - Polycarp (c. 108 AD; a disciple of John)
 - Irenaeus (185 AD)
 - Hippolytus (170-235 AD)
 - The Muratorian Canon (170 AD)
 - Athanasius wrote (367 AD) he cited the 27 books of the NT as being the only true books from God
 - Council of Laodicea (363 AD)
 - Council of Hippo (393 AD)
 - Council of Carthage (397 AD)

The Biblical Criteria

- The OT
 - Jewish canon
 - Hebrew OT
 - Law
 - Prophets
 - Writings
 - Megilloth
 - Poetical books
 - Historical books
- Christ endorsed this canon
- Canon settled before Christ
 - Jewish scholarship
 - Josephus
- How?

How was OT Universally Accepted?

- Moses was unmistakably and undeniably validated as God's mouthpiece (Ex. 19; Num. 12)
- Moses predicted that others like him would continue to speak for God.
- Moses provided two criteria by which future prophets must be judged:
 - Deut. 18:21-22
 - Deut. 13:1-5
- Moses also seemed to indicate that God would often authenticate true prophets with miracles (Ex. 4:1-5).
- The true prophet's word was immediately accepted.

The Progression of Writing Prophets

- Moses
- Joshua
- Samuel
- 1 Chron. 29:29
- 2 Chron. 9:29
- 2 Chron. 12:15
- 2 Chron. 13:22
- 2 Chron. 20:34
- 2 Chron. 32:32
- 2 Chron. 33:19
- The Major & Minor Prophets

The Apocrypha

The Apocrypha: What It Is

- "Things that are hidden"
- The LXX minus the Jewish OT:
 - 1 & 2 Esdras
 - Tobit
 - Judith
 - The rest of Esther
 - The Wisdom of Solomon
 - Ecclesiasticus
 - Baruch
 - The Song of the Three Holy Children
 - Susanna
 - Bel & the Dragon
 - The Prayer of Manasseh
 - 1 & 2 Maccabees

The Arguments For

- The early versions of Scripture include them.
- The church fathers quote from them as authoritative.

The Arguments Against

- The Apocrypha's own statements
- The Jews never accepted them as canonical.
- The NT writers never cite.
- Jesus affirmed the Jewish canon.

The Arguments Against

- Church history argues against.
 - Melito, bishop of Sardis
 - Eusebius
 - Athanasius
 - Jerome
 - Gregory the Great
 - Cardinal Ximenes for Pope Leo X

A Summary of the Apocrypha

- Not inspired
- Not canonical
- Not authoritative
- Not to be treated differently from other human writings

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The New Testament Canon

The History

- In NT times
 - 1 Tim. 5:18
 - 1 Cor. 14:37-38
 - 2 Thess. 2:5
 - 2 Thess. 3:6, 14
 - 1 Thess. 2:13
- Early Church Fathers
 - Clement (95) – 8
 - Ignatius (115) – 7
 - Polycarp (108) – 15
 - Irenaeus (185) – 21
 - Muratorian Canon (170) – 24
 - Athanasius (367) – 27
 - The Councils (300s) – 27

The Biblical Criteria

- Pre-authenticated
- Chose apostles (sent ones)
- Authorized their writing
- Provided a list of inspired authors

The Individual Books

- Direct apostolic authorship
 - Matthew
 - John (Gospel, epistles, Revelation)
 - Peter (1 & 2)
 - James
 - Paul
 - Romans - Philemon

The Five Non-Apostolic

- Mark
- Luke
- Acts
- Hebrews
- Jude
- Mark → Peter
- Luke & Acts → Paul
- Jude → James; ½ brother of Christ
- Hebrews → under Paul's influence

The Closed Canon

The Closed Canon

- Age of OT prophets ended; no more apostles
- Church History
- Heb. 1:1-2
- Jude 3
- Rev. 22:18-19

The Attributes of Scripture

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- Necessity
- Perspicuity
- Sufficiency
- Infallibility
- Inerrancy
- Authority