

The Canon of The Scripture

A. Introduction

“ Canon “ means a ‘rule’ a measuring line, a standard, a model.

The word is most unusual because it is the same word meaning the same meaning wherever found - Latin, Greek, Hebrew, or English.

A book entitled to a place in Scripture is canonical - has met the standard, or rule, as the inspired Word of God.

B. Basic Scriptures:

(Luke 24:27,44; Matt.23:35; 2Tim.3:16; 2 Pt. 1:21; Heb. 1:1-3)

C. The Nucleus of This Truth

The 66 books that are in our Bible and how they became a part of the Word of God. Look at (2Tim. 3:16) _____

D. The Great Truth: “The Canon Of The Scripture “

a. The Old Testament Is A Prophetic Statement From God.

We start with the paramount idea expressed in (2Pt. 1:21)

“For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

A prophet was one who spoke for God — not only “fore-telling” but speaking as God inspired him. They were the mouthpiece of God.

Greek - [one who speaks in place of another]

The O.T. was written by men of God who declared and wrote the truths of God, predictive and non-predictive. There were those who were called “Prophets’ and there were those who possessed the “prophetic gift” such as Aaron (Exod. 7:1) and David (Acts 2:30).

The Old Testament Is The Inspired Word of God

The second premise is found in (2Tim 3:16) “All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

The O.T. claims to be the Inspired Word of God - (meaning “God Breath”):

In Genesis 1 count the number of times you find the phrase, “and God said.”

(Gen. 2:7 and 3:15) could only be recorded by the inspiration of God.

Look at (Exod. 32:16) _____

Write in (Leviticus 1:1) _____

Also (Numbers 36:13) _____

Also (Deut. 4:2) _____

Also. (Josh. 24:26) _____

All through the Old Testament you will find the same basic truths of the inspiration of God.

Jewish Tradition Ascribes the Old Testament Canon to Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue.

The tradition is based upon the fact of Ezra's zeal and ability.

He was "a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel". (Ezra 7:11). He was a man who "had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgements." (Ezra 7:10). These men were well qualified to take the oracles of God and determine their authenticity. That they arranged the inspired Word in substantially its present form, we have no good reason to doubt.

Jewish tradition may be more than tradition. There is abundant evidence that Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue played a vital role in establishing the canon of the Old Testament.

History Confirms the Old Testament Canon of Scripture.

Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, confirms the books of the Old-Testament canon when he wrote in 90 A.D., "Against Apion 1:8 " He says, " For we (meaning the Jews) have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing with and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty two books which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be Divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contains his laws and the tradition of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was a little short of three years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xeres, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books.

The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes, very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take it from

them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain Divine doctrine, and to persist in them, and if occasion be, willingly to die for them.”

The books which constituted the Old Testament canon were written in 22 books dating from Artaxerxes, king of Persia. In (Ezra 7:11-26) is recorded the decree of Artaxerxes on behalf of Ezra. In Nehemiah 2 is recorded the decree of Artaxerx on behalf of Nehemiah. So the writings of Josephus tell us the number of books in the Old Testament cannon and the end of the prophets (inspired speakers of God) came to a close with Ezra and Nehemiah.

No book was admitted to the Jewish canon which was not in existence at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Twenty two Old Testament Books Are The Same as the Thirty Nine Books In Our Testament.

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5 Books of Moses 13 Prophetical Books 4 Hymns To God

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1. Genesis 1. Joshua 1. Psalms
 2. Exodus 2. Judges & Ruth 2. Proverbs
 3. Leviticus 3. Two Books of Samuel 3. Ecclesiastes
 4. Numbers 4. Two Books of Kings 4. Song of Solomon
 5. Deuteronomy 5. Two Books of Chronicles
 6. Ezra & Nehemiah
 7. Esther
 8. Isaiah
 9. Jeremiah & Lamentations
 10. Ezekiel
 11. Daniel
 12. Books of 12 Minor Prophets
 13. Job
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a. The original Jewish canon, as named by Josephus, continued the books. listed above. These are the thirty-nine books that now make up our Old Testament — not one addition or subtraction.

b. The reason there are 39 books in our Old Testament is

* The Minor Prophets are 12 books, not 1 (Hosea to Malachi)

* Samuel, Kings, Chronicle are 2 books each, not 1

* Ezra and Nehemiah are 2 books each not 1

- * Ruth and Judges are separate
- * Jeremiah and Lamentations are separate

With these separations there are added 17 books to the 22 books, or series of writings, making a total of 39 books. Who divided the books?

c. When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, known as the Septuagint, they divided the original Hebrew Scriptures into:

- 5 Books of Moses — Law
- 12 Books of History — (Joshua to Esther)
- 5 Books of Poetry
- 17 Books of Prophecy — (Isaiah to Malachi)

Total: 39 Books in the Old Testament Canon

The Greek translation, made in Alexandria in the 3rd century B.C. became the Bible at the time because Greek had become “the tongue” in the then known world.

So, the same 22 books named by Josephus, translated into Greek, are the 39 books of our Old Testament.

6. Jesus and the New Testament Affirm the Old Testament Canon of Scripture

a. Look up (Luke 24:44) _____

b. The testimony of Jesus and the New Testament fulfilled all that had been promised in the Law, Prophets and Writings. The entire Old Testament is Christ centered. Look up (Luke 24:27) _____

B. The 27 Books Of The New Testament Canon Of Scripture

1. The New Testament Was Inspired by God, The Holy Spirit.

The valid test of a writer’s inspiration in the New Testament was his relationship to the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the great central fact of the gospel and through Him God made Himself known in the form of humanity. Jesus selected men divinely qualified to teach and record without error the facts and doctrines of His gospel.

Look at (Hebrews 1:1-2) and underline in your Bible .

2. The New Testament Books Were Written by an Apostle or a Companion (Amanuensis) of an Apostle.

a. Jesus promised the apostle that the Holy Spirit would reveal

to them what they could not understand while He was still on earth. Look at (John 16:12-15) and underline in your Bible. Also (Matthew 10:20). Look up (John 14:25-26).

b. These, and other promises, were given [primarily] to apostles for special assignment. They were also given to the church through the teaching of the apostles (Eph. 2:19-22).

c. The apostles spoke and wrote with Divine authority. Look at (1Cor. 2: 9-13) and underline verse 13 in your Bible. Paul declared his authority again in (Galatians 1: 11-12). _____

Now look up (Eph. 2:20) and underline in your Bible.

d. Examples of books written by companion, known as an amanuensis (secretary), of the apostles can be found in Mark was the companion of Peter, and Luke was the Companion of Paul.

Underline (1Peter 5:13) in your Bible.

Luke wrote the third gospel and was a companion of Paul during his journeys as Luke records in Acts.

Look up (Romans 16:22) and underline in your Bible.

3. All the New Testament Books Had Apostolic Authority.

All 27 books of the New Testament were placed in the canon after after they had been treasured by the churches. The churches exchanged letters and copied them, and sent them to other churches. Only letters with apostolic authority were accepted as a part of the canon.

The Council of Carthage, 397 A.D. said, "Nothing shall be read in the churches except the recognized canon."