

## Lesson #3: Canonization of the Bible

Our belief that the Bible is God's inspired text revealed to man naturally leads us to another important question. Since many other religious books were written during both the Old and New Testament periods what particular books are Scripture? What books should be recognized as God's authoritative revelation? Are any inspired books \_\_\_\_\_? Are any books \_\_\_\_\_ that should not be in our Bible? These are obviously very important questions for the people of God to answer.

Beliefs about the books of the Bible could best be divided into three groups.

1. Practicing \_\_\_\_\_ and conservative Christians alike have acknowledged \_\_\_\_\_ books of the OT.
2. Evangelical \_\_\_\_\_ have recognized \_\_\_\_\_ books of the NT.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ have a total of \_\_\_\_\_ books since they include the \_\_\_\_\_ as well.

### THE BASIC ISSUE CONCERNING THE CANON

- How did the 66 books of our Bible come to be singled out from the mass of early Christian \_\_\_\_\_? There are even books written during the time of the New Testament writers. Why don't we include those books in our Bible?
- Did God really guide humans to accomplish a \_\_\_\_\_ canon in a similar way he inspired the writings in the first place?

### THE LOGICAL NECESSITY OF A CANON

Not only is the idea of a "canon" reasonable, it is an absolute logical necessity. Without a fixed number of books as a \_\_\_\_\_ standard, we would be left to our own imaginations or reason to determine which books contain God's truth and which do not. With respect to Scripture there are a number of important things to keep in mind.

1. God has \_\_\_\_\_ himself to humanity through His Word
2. God is able to \_\_\_\_\_ His Word

3. God \_\_\_\_\_ to preserve His Word
4. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to think God wouldn't preserve the revelation of Himself through His Word if he had the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ to do so.

Since God's revelation has been committed to writings, it's logically necessary that God would preserve these writings.

### THE CANONCITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### A. The Contributions of the Masoretes

- 1) The Masoretes transmission process
  - a. The text was not to be \_\_\_\_\_ under any circumstance
  - b. Minute statistics were kept to ensure there were no errors. At the end of each book statistics such as the total number of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and even \_\_\_\_\_ were kept.

The Masoretes took painstaking steps to ensure that there was an accurate transmission of the text.
- 2) The Masoretic text – Three fold division
 

The result of the transmission process was the Masoretic text which contains \_\_\_\_\_ books. The subject matters is the same as the 39 books in our Bible's today! The difference is only in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the books.

#### The 3-fold division of the Masoretic Text is as follows:

*The Law* or the Pentatech (5 books) –

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers Deuteronomy

*The Prophets* (Originally 8 books, then 21) –

The Former Prophets (originally 4 books, then 6) – Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings)

Latter Prophets (Originally 4 books, then 15) – Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial (3 books), Minor: The 12 (originally 1 book, then 12)

*The Writings* (Originally 11 books, then 13) –

Poetical (3 books) – Psalms, Proverbs, Job

The Rolls (5 books) – Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther

Historical (originally 3 books, then 5) – Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

#### B. Tests of Old Testament Canonicity

- 1) Did the book indicate \_\_\_\_\_ was speaking through the writer and that it was considered authoritative?
- 2) Was the human author recognized as a \_\_\_\_\_ of God?
- 3) Was the book \_\_\_\_\_ accurate? Did it reflect a record of actual \_\_\_\_\_?

## CANONICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### A. Factors prompting the formation of the formal canon recognition and lists

- 1) False teacher regarding \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Persecution for the sake of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) Translation of the Scripture for \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) Inherent \_\_\_\_\_ quality of the New Testament books.

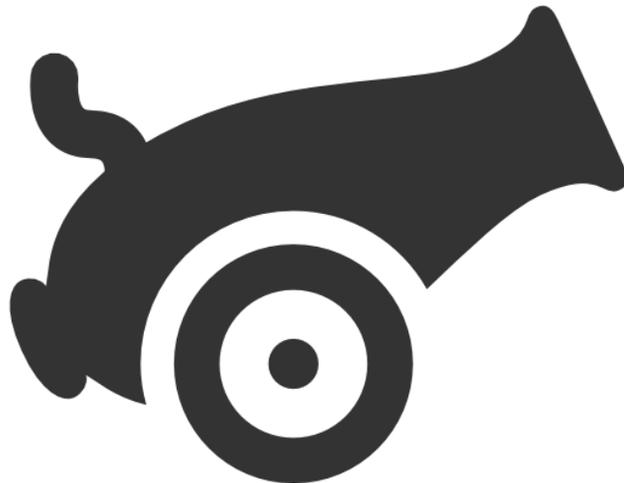
*The church did not create the canon – the canon created the church!*

### B. The formation of the canon

- 1) In the Apostolic Era: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. The writers recognized their own works were the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 4:15)
  - b. The NT writers referred to other NT books as \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Peter. 3:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:18)
  - c. NT epistles were read and circulated throughout the \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) In the Post-Apostolic Era: \_\_\_\_\_  
Early church fathers appealed to the Old Testament and New Testament books in refuting \_\_\_\_\_. You can't refute a heretic by your own opinion. The church had to have known what the canon was from the beginning.

### C. Criteria for discerning New Testament canonical books

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_: Surviving writers with clear evidence of origin from apostolic authority.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ to the "rule of faith"
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ acceptance



## THE ISSUE OF THE APOCRYPHA

While we hold to a canon that consists of just 39 books the Roman Catholic Church adds to that list of books. Between their testaments is a collection of \_\_\_\_\_ books that are called the "Apocrypha."

Perhaps the greatest acknowledgement we must make about the Apocrypha is that the Roman Catholic Church did not officially "canonize" the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (1546 AD). Furthermore, we must acknowledge that the Apocrypha \_\_\_\_\_ included and published in the 1611 King James Bible. In fact, the Apocrypha was part of the KJV Bible for \_\_\_\_\_ years until it was removed in 1885 AD.

Here are some major arguments used by Catholics to support the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the canon. Let's review and rebut these arguments ...

Catholic Argument	Rebuttal
Early Christians quote from the Apocrypha thus proving it belongs in the Bible	
The Apocrypha was included in the Septuagint (LXX)	
The seminal councils that finalized the 66 canonical books all Christians accept included the Apocrypha. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hippo (393)</li> <li>▪ Carthage (397, 419)</li> </ul>	

### Important Considerations for Refutation of the Apocrypha

1. The Apocrypha is not quoted in the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Apocrypha is never mentioned by Christ.
3. None of the Apocrypha writers claim their works were \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Apocrypha was not permitted among other sacred books for the first \_\_\_\_\_ centuries of the church.
5. None of the Apocrypha books were written in Hebrew or Greek.
6. The Apocrypha contains extraordinary statements which \_\_\_\_\_ themselves.
7. The Apocrypha includes doctrines that are \_\_\_\_\_ with the rest of the Bible.
8. The Apocrypha was not considered \_\_\_\_\_ by the church fathers.