

myBible

The Canonization of the Bible

The Anchor MBC – F.A.I.T.H. Night

What is Canonization and Why does it Matter?

Canonization -

- *Greek* – “rule” or “standard”
- *Hebrew* – qaneh, meaning a read or stalk
- The authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture



What is Canonization and Why does it Matter?

Why are some books included and not others?-

- See Joshua 10:13 and 1 Chronicles 29:29
- Compare Jude 14-15 with Enoch 2:1

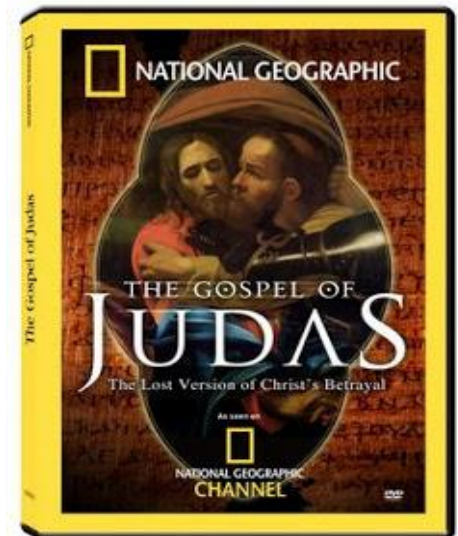
Jude 14–15 - *“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

Enoch 2:1 – “Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.”

What is Canonization and Why does it Matter?

Lots of questions to consider...

- See [Joshua 10:13](#) and [1 Chronicles 29:29](#)
- Compare [Jude 14-15](#) with Enoch 2:1
- What about other gospels? See [Luke 1:1-3](#)
- What about the Apocrypha?
- What about the Book of Mormon?



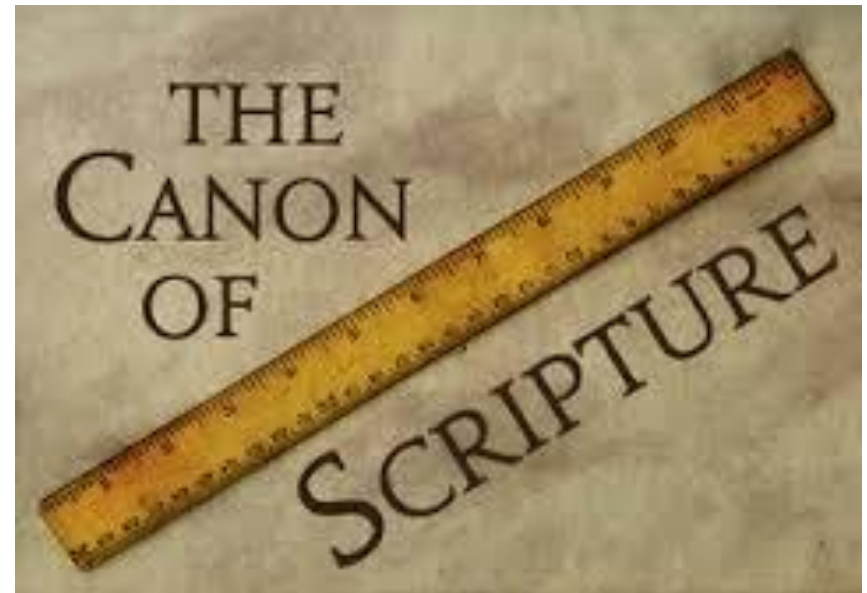
What is Canonization and Why does it Matter?

Important Questions:

- Why were some books included in canon and other rejected?
- What is the standard by which they determined which books should be kept?
- When did the canon close? How do we know it is closed?
- Where did the concept of canon come from?

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

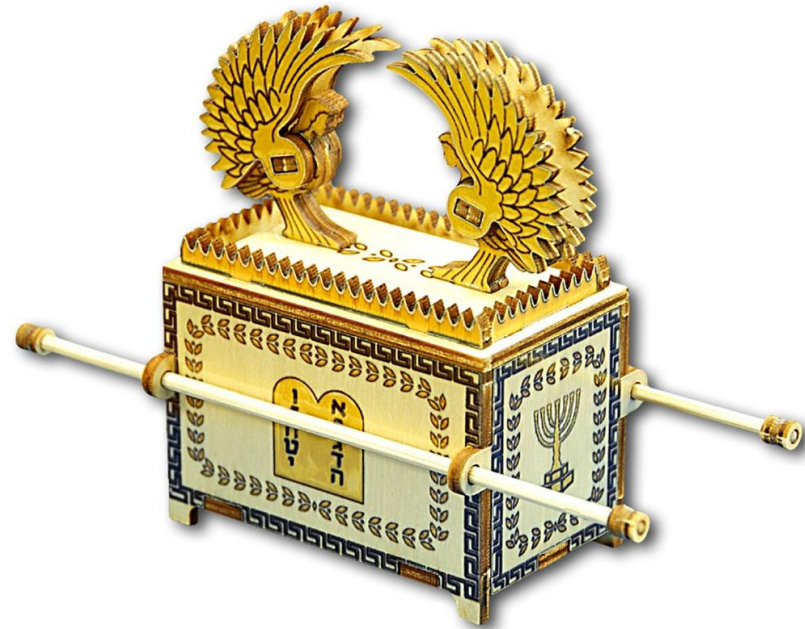
Deuteronomy 4:2 – *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”*



The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

Progression of Old Testament canonization

- Exodus 25:16
- Deuteronomy 31:24-26
- 1 Samuel 10:25
- 2 Chronicles 18:4-27 and Daniel 9:2



The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

“The books that were later placed into the Old Testament canon were of a self-authenticating nature and did not derive their authority from a person or an ecclesiastical decree. This point is crucial: the books did not receive their authority because they were placed into the canon; they were recognized by the nation of Israel as having divine authority and were therefore included in the canon.”

- Paul Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

- What then was the criteria used?



Flavius Josephus

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

- What then was the criteria used?

“and this is justly, or rather necessarily done, because every one is not permitted of his own accord to be a writer, **nor is there any disagreement in what is written**; they being **only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts** of things as **they learned them of God himself by inspiration**; and others have written what hath happened in their own times, and that in a very distinct manner also.”

- Josephus

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

- What then was the criteria used (continued)?
“... 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, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, **to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them**, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.”
- *Josephus*

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

- What then was the criteria used?
 - There is no contradiction in the written word
 - It was written by a prophet or one with divine authority
 - It originated through the inspiration of God
 - The Jews recognized and accepted it as divine material.

The Origin of Canon & the Canonization of the Old Testament

Law (Torah)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Deuteronomy

Prophets (Nebi'im)

The Former Prophets

Joshua
Judges
Samuel
Kings

The Latter Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
The Book of the Twelve

Writings (Kethubim)

Poetic Books

Psalms
Proverbs
Job

Five Scrolls

Song of Solomon
Ruth
Lamentations
Ecclesiastes
Esther

Historical Books

Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
Chronicles

Jesus' view of Old Testament Canon

- **Luke 24:44**
- **Matthew 23:34-35** (also **Genesis 4:8** & **2 Chronicles 24:20-22**)

The Canonization of the New Testament

Ephesians 2:20– *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”*

The Incorrect View	The Correct View
The Church is Determiner of Canon	The Church is Discoverer of Canon
The Church is Mother of Canon	The Church is Child of Canon
The Church is Magistrate of Canon	The Church is Minister of Canon
The Church is Regulator of Canon	The Church is Recognizer of Canon
The Church is Judge of Canon	The Church is Witness of Canon
The Church is Master of Canon	The Church is Servant of Canon

The Canonization of the New Testament

- What then was the criteria used?
 - There is no contradiction in the written word
 - It was written by a prophet or one with divine authority (an apostle)
 - It originated through the inspiration of God
 - The ~~Jews~~ Churches recognized and accepted it as divine material.

The Canonization of the New Testament

- Apostles had:
 - Qualifications ([Acts 1:20-22](#))
 - Credentials ([2 Cor. 12:12](#))
 - Enablement ([John 14:26](#))
- Prophets had:
 - Enablement ([Acts 11:27-28](#))
 - Authoritative Words ([1 Thess. 5:19-22](#))

The Canonization of the New Testament

- Time period: Written between 48 and 100 AD
- Churches copied, distributed, and likely collected New Testament books (Col. 4:16, 1 Thess. 5:27, Rev. 1:11)
- Public reading of Scripture was a significant part of New Testament church life (1 Tim. 4:13)

The Canonization of the New Testament

- Recognized internal authority:
 - Gal. 1:1, 2 Thess. 3:6-15, 1 Cor. 7:10-12
- Paul quotes Matthew or Luke:
 - **1 Timothy 5:18** – “For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”
 - **Matthew 10:10** – “Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”
 - **Luke 10:7** – “And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.”

The Canonization of the New Testament

- Peter recognizes Paul's writings as Scripture (**2 Peter 3:16**)
- Jude quotes Peter's writings and calls them apostolic and authoritative.
 - **Jude 1:17-18** – *“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.”*
 - **2 Peter 3:3** – *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”*

The Canonization of the New Testament

- Why canonize?
 - Heresies ([Acts 20:29-31](#))
 - Persecutions ([Rev. 3:10-11](#))

“It was the nineteenth year of the reign of Diocletian (*303 AD*), and the month Dystrus, or March, as the Romans would call it, in which, as the festival of the Savior’s passion was coming on, an imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the **destruction by fire of the Scriptures...**”

- *Eusebius*

	<div>Clement of Rome (60-100) Ignatius (d. 98 / 117) Polycarp (70-160) Justin Martyr (100-165) Marcion (140) Irenaeus (150-202) Muratorian Canon (c. 190) Clement of Alexandria (155-202) Tertullian (160-220) Hippolytus (170-235) Origen (185-254) Eusebius (260-340) Synod of Laodicea (363) Council of Hippo (393) Council of Carthage (419)</div>																	Reason for Question
Matthew		Q		Q	R	Q	F	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Mark			Q	Q	R	Q	F	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Luke		Q		Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
John		Q	Q	Q	R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Acts	Q		Q	Q	R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Romans	Q	Q	Q	Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
1 Corinthians	Q	Q	Q	Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
2 Corinthians		Q	Q		C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Galatians		Q	Q	Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Ephesians	Q	Q	Q	Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Philippians			Q		C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Colossians				Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
1 Thessalonians					C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
2 Thessalonians			Q	Q	C	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
1 Timothy		Q	Q		R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
2 Timothy		Q	Q		R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Titus	Q				R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Philemon					C		C				C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
Hebrews	Q		Q	Q	R				Q	Q	D	C	C	C	C	C	C	Uncertain Authorship
James					R				Q	Q	D	D	C	C	C	C	C	Which James wrote it? Audience?
1 Peter	Q		Q	Q	R	Q		Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
2 Peter					R	Q				Q	D	D	C	C	C	C	C	Different Greek than 1 Peter
1 John					R	Q	C		Q	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A
2 John					R	Q	C	Q	Q	Q	D	D	C	C	C	C	C	Personal Letter, 13 verses
3 John					R						D	D	C	C	C	C	C	Personal Letter, 14 verses
Jude					R		C		Q	Q	D	D	C	C	C	C	C	Quotes from non-inspired literature
Revelation					R		C	Q	Q	Q	C	C	C	D	C	C	C	Unique Apocalyptic literature
Quotations or Allusions (Q)		Fragment was missing (F)				Rejected (R)												
Recognized as Canon (C)		Identified as Disputed (D)																

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Apocrypha
 - From “Hidden” to “Books of questionable authenticity”
- Pseudepigrapha
 - Pseudo – false
 - Epigraph – inscription



Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- “The Apocrypha”
 - 15 Books
 - Historical (H)
 - Wisdom Literature (W)
 - Religious Instruction (R)
 - Apocalyptic (A)

Evangelical Titles	Catholic Titles
The Wisdom of Solomon (W)	The Book of Wisdom
Ecclesiasticus (W)	Ecclesiasticus
Tobit (R)	Tobias
Judith (R)	Judith
1 Esdras (H)	3 Esdras
1 Maccabees (H)	1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees (H)	2 Maccabees
Baruch (W)	Baruch 1-5
The Letter of Jeremiah (W)	Baruch 6
2 Esdras (A)	4 Esdras
Additions to Esther (R)	Esther 10:4-16:24
The Prayer of Azariah (W)	Daniel 3:24-90
Susanna (R)	Daniel 13
Bel and the Dragon (R)	Daniel 14
The Prayer of Manasseh (W)	Prayer of Manasseh

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Why is The Apocrypha rejected by Evangelical Christians? Recall the test:
 1. There is no contradiction in the written word
 2. It was written by a prophet or one with divine authority
 3. It originated through the inspiration of God
 4. The Jews recognized and accepted it as divine material.

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Apocrypha Theological Contradictions:
 - 2 Esdras 6:55 – “All this I have spoken before thee, O Lord, because thou hast said that it was for us that thou didst create this world.”
 - Compare with [Revelation 4:11](#).
 - Sirach 3:14-15 – “For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten: and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up. In the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered; thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fair warm weather.”
 - Compare with [Isaiah 64:6](#) and [Eph. 2:8-9](#).

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Apocrypha Theological Contradictions:
 - 2 Maccabees 12:40-45 – “Now under the coats of every one that was slain they found things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by the law. Then every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they were slain. All men therefore praising the Lord, the righteous Judge, who had opened the things that were hid, betook themselves unto prayer, and besought him that the sin committed might wholly be put out of remembrance. Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favor laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.”
 - Compare with [Luke 16:25-26](#)

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Apocrypha Authorship
 - All written during the “400 Silent Years”
- Apocrypha Inspiration
 - No clarity of affirmation that these were of God
- Apocrypha Acceptance by the Jews
 - The Jews do not even include these writings in their canon today.

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- What should I think of the Apocrypha?



The Apocrypha
The Wisdom of Solomon (W)
Ecclesiasticus (W)
Tobit (R)
Judith (R)
1 Esdras (H)
1 Maccabees (H)
2 Maccabees (H)
Baruch (W)
The Letter of Jeremiah (W)
2 Esdras (A)
Additions to Esther (R)
The Prayer of Azariah (W)
Susanna (R)
Bel and the Dragon (R)
The Prayer of Manasseh (W)

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Old Testament Pseudepigrapha:
- 1-3 Enoch, Sibylline Oracles, Treatise of Shem, Apocryphon of Ezekiel, Apocalypse of Zephaniah, 4 Ezra, Greek Apocalypse of Ezra, Vision of Ezra, 2-3 Baruch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Testament of the 12 Patriarchs, & the Testament of Job



Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch

Jude 14–15 - *“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

Enoch 2:1 – “Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.”

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- What about 1 Enoch? There are at least four possibilities:
 1. It could have been written after 2 Peter;
 2. A piece of literature that Peter's readers would have been familiar with;
 3. The writer may have been accommodating his audience's respect for the book, but doesn't personally endorse it; or
 4. 1 Enoch draws upon an authentic tradition that derives from the historical Enoch, and Jude endorses that saying, but not all of them.

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- What about New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha?

Luke 1:1 – *“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,”*

John 21:25 – *“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”*

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Distinguish between apocryphal writings and pseudepigrapha.
 - i.e. Didache (Teaching of the 12 Apostles), The First Letter of Clement (to Corinthians), Shepherd of Hermas (series of visions by a former slave, Hermas)
- There are many New Testament period writings:
 - Gospel Accounts – 27
 - Treatises – 6
 - Apocalypses – 15
 - Acts (of various apostles) – 10
 - Epistles – 4
 - Church Materials (Sermons, Songs, and Prayers) - 11

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- Agrapha – unwritten
- Agrapha are words of Jesus Christ that are not found in the four gospels of the Bible
 - See Acts 20:35, 1 Cor. 7:10, 9:14, 11:24-25, etc...
- Many agrapha are found in the apocrypha and pseudepigraphal gospels and writings.
 - Consider the following examples. Do you believe they are accurate? Why or why not?

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- **Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Paragraph 2** – “This child Jesus, when five years old, was playing in the ford of a mountain stream; and He collected the flowing waters into pools, and made them clear immediately, and by a word alone He made them obey Him. And having made some soft clay, He fashioned out of it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when He did these things. And there were also many other children playing with Him. And a certain Jew, seeing what Jesus was doing, playing on the Sabbath, went off immediately, and said to his father Joseph: Behold, thy son is at the stream, and has taken clay, and made of it twelve birds, and has profaned the Sabbath. And Joseph, coming to the place and seeing, cried out to Him, saying: Wherefore doest thou on the Sabbath what it is not lawful to do? And Jesus clapped His hands, and cried out to the sparrows, and said to them: Off you go! And the sparrows flew, and went off crying. And the Jews seeing this were amazed, and went away and reported to their chief men what they had seen Jesus doing.”

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- **Excerpt from The Gospel According to the Hebrews** –
“The second of the rich men (it saith) said unto him: Master, what good thing can I do and live? He said unto him: O man, fulfil (do) the law and the prophets. He answered him: I have kept them. He said unto him: Go, sell all that thou ownest, and distribute it unto the poor, and come, follow me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it pleased him not. And the Lord said unto him: How sayest thou: I have kept the law and the prophets? For it is written in the law: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and lo, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying for hunger, and thine house is full of many good things, and nought at all goeth out of it unto them.”
– Intended to be an addendum to [Luke 18:18-22](#)

Why Were Some Books Rejected?

- What should I think of the New Testament apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings?



Is Canon Closed?

- Seven reasons supporting the closure of canon:
 1. Ephesians 2:20 – the foundation is completed and the workers are dead
 2. Hebrews 1:1-2 – Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God
 3. Early church leaders recognized its closure
 4. Do you think a new or “lost” book could meet the four criteria in this day and age?
 5. 2 Peter 1:3 & 2 Timothy 3:16-17 speak of the sufficiency of God’s revelation
 6. Revelation 22:18-19 provides a warning that appears to be consistent with the closure of canon.
 7. The harmony with the closure of the Old Testament canon – both end anticipating Jesus.