

Lesson 6 - How We Got The Bible - Canonization (Part 2)

October 26, 2022

Thanks to Pastor Phillip for covering for me last week, and to Chris for recording and playing the previous week's video for those of you who were new to the class or didn't get the message that the class was canceled the week before.

Review:

We're talking about the fourth step in the process of bringing God's Truth to man, Canonization. What were the first three?

Revelation

Inspiration

Preservation

Now before we go on to anything new, I want to quickly review just a couple of things from last week, and then the rest of it will be on website. And this first one is just in case you are like me. This kind of thing bugs me and I can't go on with anything else until I get answers. What does the word Canon have to do with this?

Origins of the word, Canon. It originally referred to a "long slender wooden stem," a reed or what we would call a weed or a stick. **How do you get canon out of that?** Well it's related to the word "**cane**". It came from early Semitic languages. The **Assyrian word, (qanu),** meant a **tube or reed.** (By the way, the reason a large mounted gun is referred to as a cannon, is because it is a big tube.) the **Hebrew word is qaneh** and in **Arabic,** it's **qanah.**

So a weed or a stick would be used as an instrument to measure with. At first it was just a random length but eventually it came to be used in the same way we would of a **ruler** or a **yardstick** as a standard used for measurement. A ruler is 1' or 12". A yard stick is 3' or 36". Those are standard units of length. If a man says he is 6' tall, we immediately understand that. We know that a football field is 100 yards long. When we are building something we use those measurements in the process in order to make sure everything fits together.

Then as words and languages always do, it continued to change. (We'll talk more about that when we get into TRANSLATION.) And by the time it came into common use in the Greek language "*kanon*" or as it appears in the Greek text "*kavov*", it had evolved beyond the application as a rule of measurement, and came to mean a standard to be used in other arenas.

For instance, you have heard of Canon Law? Canon law is a set of ordinances and regulations made by the Pope and Church councils for the government of the Catholic Church and its members. It is the internal ecclesiastical law, the rule, the governing operational policy. On a national level, our constitution might be called the canon of the United States of America. We are a constitutional republic, and the job of the Supreme Court is interpret the constitution, and make sure that laws that are enacted are not in violation of the constitution. So as applied to the scripture, the 66 books included in the Bible, came to be called **The Canon of Scripture** because it is our standard for everything. It's our standard for what is truth and what is error. It is our standard for relationships. It is our standard for morality. Most of all it is our standard for salvation, for discipleship, for worship. It is the standard for our World View. The Bible is our measuring rod, our canon.

Ok last time you learned about the canonization of the Bible and how Ezra and Nehemiah were instrumental in the canonization of the Old Testament and that it was approved by none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. And you saw how the first century churches, without knowing it were lending credence to the canonicity of the letters from the apostles and others associated with them, and the records of the words and acts of Jesus, by reading them and accepting them in their congregations. Then you learned that there were some gatherings of

church leaders in the next 3 centuries called Church Councils that gave their approval of the canon of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. But here's something I want you to clearly understand about that. Along with that statement about the endorsement of the councils, needs to come and understanding that these religious bodies, whether Jewish rabbinical gatherings, or ecclesiastical meetings of church leaders, were not by their approval **providing** canonicity but simply recognizing the authority these writings already possessed.

New:

So what about the pseudo gospels and other non-canonical books?

Related Terms:

Pseudepigrapha, a term that means "false attribution", are texts whose named or claimed author is not the true author, or a work whose real author is attributed it to a figure of the past.

Apocrypha are works, usually written, of unknown authorship or of doubtful origin. The word apocryphal, Greek "*ἀπόκρυφος*" - *ἀπό (από)* = "from" + *κρύπτω (κρύπτω)* = "hide". It means to "*hide from*".

It was first applied by followers of Babylonian mystery religions and gnostics, to writings which were kept secret because they were supposedly the vehicles of esoteric knowledge considered too profound or too sacred to be disclosed to anyone other than the initiated. Apocrypha was later used of writings that were hidden not because of their supposed, mystic importance, but because of their questionable value to the church. In general use, the word apocrypha has come to mean "**false, spurious, bad, or heretical**".

The Apocrypha is also referred to by the Roman Catholic "church", as Deuterocanonical, meaning "belonging to the second canon") because they were added to the Catholic Old Testament canon, 1000 years after the close of the council of Nicaea. **But the Apocryphal books are not Scripture.** The Apocrypha consists of 15 books written in the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew. **They record some of the history of that time period** and various other religious stories and teaching. They also contain some specific Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory and prayer for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:39-46), and salvation by works, called (almsgiving – Tobit 12:9). Interestingly, the Catholic Church only added these books to their canon of scripture in A.D. 1546, during what came to be known as "the counter reformation", only 29 years after Martin Luther criticized these doctrines as unbiblical.

Some additional reasons for rejecting the Apocrypha as inspired are:

1. The Jews never accepted the Apocrypha as scripture.

2. The Apocrypha never claims to be inspired ("Thus saith the Lord" etc.) – In fact, **1 Maccabees 9:27** denies it. "So there was great distress in Israel, the worst since the time when prophets ceased to appear among them."

3. Jesus and the New Testament authors never directly quote the Apocrypha. Neither do they introduce it with labels that would suggest inspiration, such as "*as it is written*" or "*as the Scripture says.*" Some allusions have been detected, but no direct quotes or even paraphrases appear in the New Testament.

4. Matthew 23:35 – Jesus implied that the close of Old Testament historical scripture was the death of Zechariah (400 B.C.). "*so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.*"

Jesus refers to the first and last OT martyrs, respectively. There is no question that there were other faithful Jewish martyrs during the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew, but none of them were listed.

Malachi was the last Old Testament book recognized as canonical by Christ Himself. So this excludes any books written after Malachi and before the New Testament, which demonstrates conclusively that the books of the Apocrypha are outside of the canon of scripture.

Some Non-Canonical Books Listed In the Bible (Not Exhaustive)

Old Testament

The Acts of Solomon - **1Kings 11:41**. *“Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?”*

The Book of Jasher – Joshua 10:13 *“And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day.”*

The Book of the Wars of the Lord - Numbers 21:14;

1 Kings 11:41.

The Annals of King David - 1 Chronicles 27:24.

The Book of Nathan the Prophet - 1 Chronicles 29:29,
2 Chronicles 9:29.

The Book of Gad the Seer - 1 Chronicles 29:29.

The Book of Jehu - 2 Chronicles 20:34.

The Sayings of the Seers - 2 Chronicles 33:19.

The Chronicles of King Ahasuerus - Esther 2:23, Esther 6:1, Esther 10:2, Nehemiah 12:23.

New Testament

Two additional letters from Paul's to the Corinthians

1. **The Previous Letter:** Written before **1 Corinthians**. Mentioned in **1Corinthians 5:9** *“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people...”*

2. **The Tearful, or The Severe Letter:** Written between **1 and 2 Corinthians**. Referred to in **2 Corinthians 2:3–4**

“I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears.”

Paul's letter to the Ephesians before Ephesians - Ephesians 3:3

An Overview of Non-Canonical Jewish and Early Christian Literature

OTHER NON-CANONICAL ANCIENT JEWISH LITERATURE:

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

Several ancient Jewish writings are attributed to various biblical figures, although they were almost certainly not written by the authors, but rather by anonymous writers several centuries later:

1Enoch While not named, 1Enoch is quoted in the New Testament. **Jude 1:4, 1:6, 1:13, 1:14–15, 2 Peter 2:4; 3:13, John 7:38**. This has led some to question why 1Enoch was not included in the Canon. And that's a good question. The answer is the same as for the Old Testament books we saw cited. Remember there were numerous criteria that was considered, and those books while perhaps historically and even biblically accurate, did not exhibit significant evidence of inspiration. In **Acts 17:28**, Paul quoted a Greek poet, and in **Titus 1:12** he quoted a pagan Cretan prophet. That doesn't mean that those sources were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Those statements are now a part of the canonical text not because of the sources but because of the Biblical author who was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

- 2 Enoch (Slavonic Book of the Secrets of Enoch)
- 4 Baruch (a.k.a. Paraleipomena Jeremiou)
- Apocalypse of Abraham
- Apocalypse of Adam
- Apocalypse of Moses
- Book of Jubilees

- Books of Adam and Eve (Latin version)
- Life of Adam and Eve (Greek & Slavonic versions)
- Letter of Aristeas
- Martyrdom of Isaiah
- Joseph and Aseneth
- Psalms of Solomon
- Pseudo-Phocilides
- Revelation of Esdras
- Second Treatise of the Great Seth
- Sibylline Oracles
- Story of Ahikar
- Testament of Abraham
- Testament of Solomon
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarch

Other Ancient Jewish Literature:

- Dead Sea Scrolls – biblical and sectarian texts, (200 BC – 68 AD) **The dead sea scrolls did include some biblical texts that were of course canonical, such as a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah.**
- Philo of Alexandria – Jewish philosopher/exegete (20 BC–50 AD);
- Flavius Josephus – Jewish general and historian (37–100 AD): Jewish War; Antiquities of the Jews; etc.
- Rabbinic Literature – Mishnah, Tosefta, Midrashim, Targumim, Talmudim, etc. (200 – 1000 AD) These are basically commentaries on the Torah written by Rabbis.

New Testament Pseudepigrapha (not a complete list):

Apocryphal Gospels:

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas [Greek & Latin versions] An Arabic Infancy Gospel
 The Gospel of James
 The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary The Gospel of Mary [Magdalene] The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew The Gospel of Matthias
 The Gospel of Nicodemus [a.k.a. The Acts of Pilate] The Gospel of Bartholomew
 The Gospel of Peter
 The Gospel of Thomas [Coptic Sayings Gospel] The Gospel of Philip
 The Gospel of the Lord [by Marcion]
 The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles [various versions] The Gospel of the Nazareans
 The Gospel of the Ebionites The Gospel of the Hebrews The Gospel of the Egyptians The Secret Gospel of Mark The Gospel of Judas

Apocryphal Acts:

The Acts of Andrew
 The Acts and Martyrdom of Andrew The Acts of Andrew and Matthew The Acts of Barnabas
 The Martyrdom of Bartholomew The Acts of John
 The Mystery of the Cross [excerpt from Acts of John] The Acts of John the Theologian
 The History of Joseph the Carpenter
 The Book of John Concerning the Death of Mary The Passing of Mary
 The Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew The Martyrdom of Matthew
 The Acts of Paul
 The Acts of Paul and Thecla The Acts of Peter
 The Acts of Peter and Andrew The Acts of Peter and Paul
 The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles The Acts of Philip
 The Report of Pontius Pilate to Tiberius The Giving Up of Pontius Pilate
 The Death of Pilate The Acts of Thaddaeus The Acts of Thomas
 The Book of Thomas the Contender The Consummation of Thomas

Other Early Christian Pseudepigrapha:

The Teachings of Addueus the Apostle The Epistle of the Apostles Community Rule

The Correspondence of Jesus and Abgar John the Evangelist
The Narrative of Joseph of Arimathaea The Epistle to the Laodiceans
The Correspondence of Paul and Seneca
The Letter of Pontius Pilate to the Roman Emperor The Report of Pilate to Caesar
The Report of Pilate to Tiberius Excerpts from Pistis Sophia The Avenging of the Savior

Apocryphal Apocalypses:

The Ascension of Isaiah The Apocalypse of Adam The Revelation of Esdras
The First Apocalypse of James The Second Apocalypse of James
The Revelation of John the Theologian The Revelation of Moses
The Apocalypse of Paul The Revelation of Paul The Apocalypse of Peter The Vision of Paul
The Revelation of Peter Christian Sibylline Oracles