

The Canon of Scripture: God's Word is Trustworthy

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2 Tim. 3:12-17

***What standard was used to determine the 66 books of the Bible are the inspired word of God?**

2 Peter 1:21

Main Idea-The Bible is a library of 66 inspired books that are worthy of our trust.

1) Fulfilled prophecy. **There were 300+ OT prophecies fulfilled concerning Christ's first coming 2,000 yrs. ago (i.e. Birth (Micah 5:2; Mt. 2:1), Life (Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:6-9), Betrayal (Zech. 11:12-13;), Crucifixion (Is. 53; Ps. 22:1; Mt. 27:46).**

2) The Unity of Message. The Bible was written by 40 human authors over a period of 1600 years on 3 different continents (Europe, Asia & Africa) in 3 different languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic).

3) The Bible presents its Heroes truthfully with all their faults and weaknesses (**1 Tim. 1:15-16**). **Other religions glorify their heroes. The Bible shows real people with real sins, real tragedies and how God graciously redeemed & restored them for His own glory.**

4) Archeological Findings support the record of Scripture.

Is. 40:22

A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing. It was simply a matter of **God convincing** His human followers **which** books should be included in the Bible.

O.T. CANON (39 books/ Genesis-Malachi)--Jesus and the N.T. authors quote various parts of the O.T. Scriptures as divinely authoritative over 295 times. They used terms such as, "*it is written*," that is, it stands firmly written and it is indisputably true.

Jn. 10:35; Lk. 24:44

The Law (Gen.- Deut.), the Prophets (Is.-Mal.), and the Writings (History/ Josh.-Esther, Poetry & Wisdom/Job-Song of Songs). The measure the Church used for recognizing and collecting the Word of God was as follows:

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Was it written by a Prophet of God (**Deut. 31:24-26**)?

1. Did miracles confirm his message?
2. Does the book tell the truth about God, with no falsehood or contradiction?
3. Does the book evidence a divine ability to transform lives?
4. Was the book accepted as God's Word by its original audience? **EX. Israel accepted the 10 commandments as from God.**

NOTE ON THE APOCRYPHA-The Apocrypha (hidden writings) is a collection of 14 rogue books written after Malachi (about 200-150 B.C).

"Let Mary go away from us, for women are not worthy of life." **Jesus said**, "Low I shall lead her, so that I may make her a male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself a male will enter the kingdom of heaven."

- **The early church refused these as Scripture including Origen and Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin (Vulgate).**
- **Objections to these books cannot be overruled by dictatorial authority!**

N.T. CANON--During the 2nd century, the writings of the apostles were being read in the churches according to Justin Martyr (a Christian apologist).

1 Thess. 5:27

The N.T. books were regularly read in church assemblies as soon as they were written. They were held in high esteem by early Christians and carried the same authority as the O.T.

2 Pet. 3:15-16

Conclusion: The church didn't create the canon but recognized the 66 books that bore the marks of canonicity and were already authoritative within the church. The Church acknowledged, received, and submitted to the canon of Scripture.

The standard for evaluating a NT book was:

- The book had to be authored or endorsed by an apostle.
- The book had to be received as authoritative by the early church ("God-breathed").
- The book had to be consistent with the rest of Scripture.

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Ps. 119:89-90

Applications:

1. Study the whole Bible for the purpose of knowing and obeying God (**2 Tim. 3:16**).
2. Preach the whole Bible (**2 Tim. 4:4**).
3. Trust the sufficiency of the whole Bible (**Prov. 3:5-6**; ; **Rom. 12:2**).

Matt. 4:4

Questions for reflection and application

1. What are 4 proofs that point to the Bible as God's word?
2. What does canon mean, in the phrase 'canon of scripture'?
3. Name some of the standards that had to be met in order for a book to be an Old Testament or New Testament book.
4. Which of the 3 applications challenges you the most at this time?

Recommended Reading for a more thorough treatment of this topic:

How We Got the Bible by Neil R. Lightfoot.

www.monergism.com: Key word search - Canon of Scripture

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