
Bibliology 101: Canonization – Why These 66 Books?

Revelation and Inspiration: God Reveals Himself to Us

1. REVELATION: God Showing and Telling Us the Truth

- **General Revelation: What Everyone Everywhere Sees & Knows**
 - Creation – God Shows He Is Mighty (smarter & stronger)
 - Conscience – God Shows He Is Moral (right & wrong)
- **Special Revelation: What You Can Only Know By Being Told**
 - Direct, Prophets, Jesus, The Word

2. INSPIRATION: God Ensuring that His Exact Message Arrived

- **What Inspiration Is Not**
 - Mechanical, Conceptual, Partial, Neo-orthodox, Naturalistic
- **What Inspiration Is**
 - **A God-supervised result**
theopneustos (θεόπνευστος) = God-breathed
Inerrant: It is without error – Infallible: It cannot fail
 - **God + Man: Divine AND Human Authorship**
God moving men to write using their own personalities and vocabularies and experiences but supervising in such a way as to produce exactly what God desired to communicate.
 - **Verbal Inspiration: The Exact Word**
 - **Plenary Inspiration: Every Word**
- **So What?**
 - The Bible accurately tells you what God wants you to know
 - You can confidently trust the Bible as God's message
 - Learn the Bible. Believe the Bible. Live the Bible.

Canonization: Why These 66 Books?

How do we know what is part of the inspired written Word?
Why is this important?

1. The Word of God Is _____ to Our Lives

Deut 32:46-47 and He said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe--all the words of this law. 47 "For it [is] not a futile thing for you, because it [is] your life, and by this word you shall prolong [your] days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

2. The Word of God Is Specific & Separate, & Can Be _____

Deut 4:2 You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

The precise determination of the extent of the canon of Scripture is therefore of the utmost importance. If we are to trust and obey God absolutely we must have a collection of words that we are certain are God's own words to us. If there are any sections of Scripture about which we have doubts whether they are God's words or not, we will not consider them to have absolute divine authority and we will not trust them as much as we would trust God himself. (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*)

Canon of Scripture: That which has met the prescribed _____.

- Men did not choose what they wanted to be valid, but identified what was.
- The canon of Scripture is considered complete. God's revelation has ceased.

The Process of Canonization:

- **Transportation:** Most did not have all of Scripture right away
- **Time to Copy & Distribute:** Each took time (no printing presses...)
- **Testing:** Forged books being produced, requiring evaluation.

Criteria for Canonization – What Evidences Validated a Book?

1. Received?: _____ as God's Word as They Arrived

Has it had general acceptance with the people of God as the Word of God? This was determined biblically (2 Pet 3:16), historically (church fathers, writings and witnesses), and universally (by godly people since the time of the church fathers).

2. Authoritative?: Indicates _____ Authorship

Does it speak with divine authority, commanding attention as it communicates? Authoritative character (Heb 4:12) with an authoritative claim (1 Thes 4:15).

3. Prophetic?: Human Author Was a _____ for God

Was it written by a man of God (2 Pet 1:21) or someone closely connected to one? Was the content consistent with the acclaimed author, or was it forged (2 Thes 2:2)?

4. Authentic?: Compatible with Other _____ & Known Facts

Is it truthful, being compatible with other Scriptures and known facts (Acts 17:11; 1 Jn 4:1-6)? James was only accepted as authentic when its teaching was finally understood as being in harmony with the rest of Scripture.

What of the Apocrypha ("hidden")?

What of the Pseudapigrapha ("false writings")?

Summary:

- We have what was recognized, received, authenticated as the Word of God. (2 Pet 1:2-4; Ps 1:1-3)
- God's Word is complete, and all that we need for life and living.