

Fundamentals of the Faith
Lesson One—Introduction To The Bible, Part Two
Inerrancy And Chapter Review

A. **Definition of Canon:** Canonicity refers to the church’s recognition and acceptance of the books of Scripture as God’s inspired Word. The term itself comes from the Greek word *kanōn*, which originally meant a “reed” or a “rod.” Since a rod was frequently used as a measuring stick, the word began to convey the idea of a “standard” or “rule.”¹

B. **The Ultimate Determiner Of The Canon Is God:** The biblical view understands that the canon is a collection of divinely authoritative writings. It is not the church (or the people of God) that determines which books are inspired by God and are thereby Scripture. The writings themselves are vested with the authority of God on the basis of divine inspiration. They are the Word of God because they were written under the Spirit’s inspiration. The people of God (the church for the New Testament, Israel for the Old Testament) merely recognize the authority present within those writings.²

C. **What Makes Up The Canon Of Holy Scripture?**

1. The canon of Holy Scripture is made up of 66 books

a) 27 Old Testament Books, 39 New Testament Books

D. **The Bible Attests To Its Own Canonicity**

1. **1 Kings 2:2b-3**, *“Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that do and wherever you turn ”*

a) The “charge of the Lord” comes through the Law of Moses, which was written down.

2. **2 Peter 3:15-16**, *“ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.”*

a) Peter considered Paul’s writings to be inspired, grouping them with the “the other Scriptures”.

¹ John MacArthur, Richard Mayhue. *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*, 120

² *Ibid*, 120

3. **1 Timothy 5:18**, *“For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.””*

a) Paul considered Luke’s writings inspired, quoting a passage from his Gospel (10:7) along with a passage from Deuteronomy (25:4) and calling them both Scripture.

E. How were certain books chosen to be in the Bible?

1. The meticulous nature of Jewish transcription kept through the scribes.

a) The ancient Israelites kept a copy of the Scriptures in Jerusalem's first temple. They put it inside the Ark of the Covenant. This copy became known as “the Temple Scriptures.”

b) Even though the first temple was destroyed and the Jews were taken to Babylon, the Scriptures were preserved. In the Babylonian captivity a group of Levites who became known as the scribes painstakingly copied and disseminated the Scriptures to other Jews.

c) It was Ezra the priest, assisted by the priests and Levites of the Great Assembly or Synagogue, that completed the final editing and canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures in the late 5th Century BC.

2. The books of the Old Testament, in their divisions, were affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ: Luke 24:44, *“Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.””*

3. New Testament book inclusion was evaluated by three questions by the early church

a) Was the author an apostle or did it have apostolic authority?

(1) For example, John Mark wrote the gospel of Mark under the authority of Peter.

b) Does the document agree with the canon of truth?

(1) Since the book is inspired, it will not contradict Old Testament or authenticated New Testament canon.

c) Was the work accepted by the early church?

(1) Could the work be verified in early church history? Was it commented on by the early church fathers, or was it cited as scripture?

F. What about the Apocrypha?

a) **Apocrypha:** Books (letters) written 2-3 centuries before the time of Christ

(1) 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Children, Story of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees

b) **10 reasons why the Apocrypha should not be accepted as Scripture**

(1) The Roman Catholic Church did not officially canonize the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (1546 AD). This was in part because the Apocrypha contained material which supported certain Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory, praying for the dead, and the treasury of merit.

(2) Not one of them is in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians and poets of the Old Testament.

(3) Not one of the writers lays any claim to inspiration.

(4) These books were never acknowledged as sacred Scriptures by the Jewish Church, and therefore were never sanctioned by our Lord.

(5) They were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church.

(6) They contain statements which contradict not only the canonical Scriptures, but themselves; as when, in the two Books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in as many different places.

(7) The Apocrypha contains doctrines at odds with the canonical Scripture, such as prayers for the dead and sinless perfection.

(8) The apocrypha contains offensive materials unbecoming of God's authorship.

(a) *Ecclesiasticus 25:19 Any iniquity is insignificant compared to a wife's iniquity.*

Ecclesiasticus 25:24 From a woman sin had its beginning. Because of her we all die.

Ecclesiasticus 22:3 It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined, and the birth of a daughter is a loss.

(9) It teaches immoral practices, such as lying, suicide, assassination and magical incantation.

(10) The apocryphal books themselves make reference to what we call the Silent 400 years, where there was no prophets of God to write inspired materials.

New Testament Canon Timeline

Early Church Worship Follows Synagogue Pattern Of Worship

Reading and teaching/exposition

This led to a demand in more scrolls and letters to teach/exposit

Marcion (85-160)

Publishes list of canon

Luke, 10 Letters of Paul (no pastorals)

Muratorian Fragment (170)

Seeming response to Marcion

Largely upholds what we identify

Diocletian (245-311)

Orders burning of Christian works

Included in that order are the New Testament Scriptures

Constantine (272-337)

Legalizes Christianity

Commissions Eusebius to produce 50 NT's

Eusebius (260-340)

Divides all known writings into three groups

Acknowledged

Disputed

Heretical

His list did not include James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John

Jude in "Acknowledged" category

Revelation doubted...had not spread to Eastern church

Athanasius (AD 295-373)

Festal Letter of 365 defines the NT canon as the 27

Council of Hippo (393)

Canon of 27 books defined and accepted