

HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE? (Canonicity)

* *What does the word "canon" (kanōn, Gal. 6:16) mean with respect to the Bible?*

A. COMMON VIEWS on the COMPLETION of Scripture

1. One cultural myth fostered by best-selling fiction books like *The Da Vinci Code* claims that the early church _____ around A.D. 325 _____ for the rest of the church which books should be in the Bible and suppressed "forbidden" alternative "Gospels" of Jesus.
2. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that its infallible _____ decided which books should be in the Bible at the Council of _____ (A.D. 397).
3. The Evangelical Protestant view is that _____ created the canon of Scripture by the act of _____ as soon as an apostle or prophet wrote Scripture. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

* *Did the church later determine or confirm which books should be in the Bible?*

B. CHARACTERISTICS of a CANONICAL Book

1. The book claims _____. (Jer. 1:4-9; 1 Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:11-12)
2. The book was written by a _____, _____, or close associate. (Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 2 Peter 1:20)
3. The book is _____ with the rest of Scripture. (Acts 17:10-11)
4. The book has a _____, _____ quality. (Ps. 119:9-11; John 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2)
5. The book was _____ and _____ profitably by God's people. (Neh. 8:1-8; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16)

C. The OLD TESTAMENT CANON

1. _____ and fulfilled _____ played a significant role in authenticating a prophet's writing. (Exod. 4:28-30; Deut. 18:20-22)
2. The Old Testament canon was closed around _____ B.C. with the prophecy of _____.
3. The threefold division of the OT consisted of the _____, _____, and _____. (Luke 24:44)

* *Did Jesus affirm our OT canon of 39 books?* (Luke 11:50-51 cf. Gen. 4:8; 2 Chron. 24:20-22)

4. The extent of the OT canon was confirmed by the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher _____ (20 B.C. – A.D. 40), Jewish Roman historian _____ (A.D. 30-100), the Jewish _____ VII-VIII, 24, and 1 Maccabees 9:27.

* *How did the NT writers view the OT canon?*

* *What are the Apocrypha and why are they not canonical?*

D. The NEW TESTAMENT CANON

1. The writings and ministries of NT apostles and prophets were authenticated by their _____.
(Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4)
2. The NT canon was complete and authenticated by A.D. _____ with the apostle _____ writing the book of _____.

* *How did the apostles view NT books written by others?* (1 Tim. 5:18 cf. Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:16)

* *Did second- and third-century Christians know they possessed NT “Scripture”?*

3. The Pseudepigrapha and Apocryphal writings are not canonical because:
- a) they were written _____ the first century.
 - b) many of them contain _____ errors, such as Docetic Gnosticism (1 John 4:1-4), asceticism, salvation by works, and denials of Christ’s _____ & _____.
 - c) many of them lack any verifying _____ details or narrative.
 - d) most were written under a _____. (2 Thess. 2:2 cf. 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17)
 - e) there is good evidence that they were not _____ as Scripture on par with the rest of the NT or used for _____.

* *What should all of this mean to you?*