



The Development of Canon

Presented by Single Spoon Ministries

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What is Canon?

- Judaism, Islam and Christianity all to different extents take the Bible as revelation from God.
- Islam accepts the Torah, the Psalms and Gospels as revelation but the current form is corrupted.
- Judaism accepts the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings and add firstly the Mishnah and then the Talmud in various versions.
- Christianity accepts the bible with or without the apocrypha as revelation.



What is Canon

- Even among Christians there are different views:
 - The canon is the word of God and so is authoritative in our lives.
 - The bible or canon reveals the word of God
 - The bible, (including apocrypha), and tradition are authoritative in our church.



What is Canon?

- Christians place the bible in authority as revelation from God.
- Different levels of authority and views.
- Common theme of recognition of canon rather than writing to be canon.



An Inherited Canon

- Early Christians were Jews or proselytized gentiles.
- Christian church inherited the Jewish canon.



History of Canon

- Torah – Agreed around ~450 BC
- Prophets – before ~200BC
- Writings – Council of Jamnia 110 AD

(cf <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3259-bible-canon>)



Key Point

- When the New Testament refers to “Scripture” or other term for Canon they are usually referring to the Old Testament much as we have it today.
- Exceptions:
 - Septuagint
 - Other older writings
 - Developing Christian writings



Key Point

- Canon has a very long history of development: ~2000 BC to ~200 AD.
- The bible didn't appear magically from God.
- The bible is message from a specific life setting or Sitz, for a specific life setting or Sitz.
- Think more of preaching than what we think of as scripture.



Revelation?

- So what makes it special?
 - History of the salvation of God's people – Heil Geschichte (salvation history coined by Gerhard von Rad) (Gospel extends back into the Old Testament in this form)
 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2Tim 3:16
 - The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the Word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated. (UCA Basis of Union)



Recognition of Canon

Jewish tradition adopts the view that every word of Holy Writ was inspired by the Divine Spirit. This Spirit is believed, in every case, to have rested upon a prophet; and, consequently, every Biblical book was said to have been written by a prophet.

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Recognition of Scripture

- 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. 2Pet 3:15,16



Recognition of Canon

- Link between Authorship, Spirit and text as the basis of Authority.
- Problem:
 - Did Moses really write all the Torah?
 - Did the Apostles really write all the New Testament?
 - Did Isaiah of Jerusalem really write all of Isaiah?
 - Was 2Timothy written by Paul?



Recognition of Canon

- All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2Tim 3:16
- We recognise scripture because it behaves in this way.
- Ultimately my faith is not dependent on who the micro-authors were but on who the macro-author was.
- I believe because in the scripture I meet God.



Also Rans

- Apocrypha
- Pseudipigrapha
- Shepherd of Hermas
- Didache
- Various epistles, Gospels etc often of Gnostic and other heretical birth.