



The Origin of the Bible
Part 4 ~ The New Testament Canon



Series Outline

Accuracy of the Transmission (Lower Textual Criticism)

Old Testament

New Testament

The New Testament Canon

Inspiration (Scripture as God-Breathed)

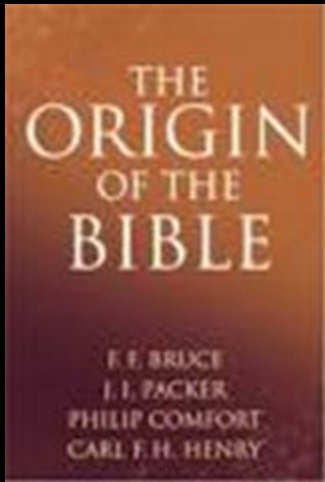
Inerrancy and Infallibility

Translation of Scripture

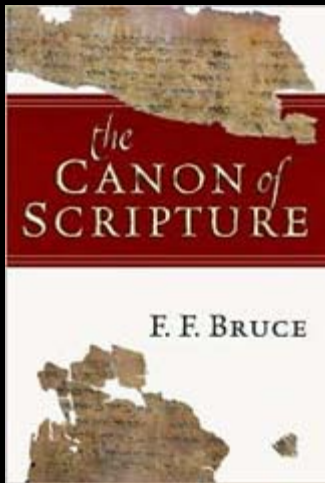




Series Outline



Authority and Inspiration
Inerrancy and Infallibility
Canon of the Old and New Testament
The Apocrypha
Bible Literature / Comparative Literature
Literary Genres
Bible Texts and Manuscripts
Bible Translation
Biblical Languages
History of the English Bible
Versions of the Bible



Old Testament Canon
Greek Old Testament
Christian Canon of the Old Testament (Eastern Church & Western Church)
Old Testament Canon During and After the Reformation
New Testament Writings
Early Heresies and the Development of the Canon
Church Fathers and the Canon
The Canon during the First Four Centuries
The Canon in the Middle Ages
Criteria for Canonicity
Criticism of the Canon





The New Testament Canon

Commonly Heard:

“They didn’t even have an accurate list of what books were in the canon until the 4th Century.”

“The decisions regarding which books to include, and which books to exclude, were politically motivated.”

“The Church tried to suppress the “true Christianity” in favor of Constantine’s Christianity.”

“The other gospels reveal the things that the Church was trying to conceal.”





The New Testament Canon

My Own Observations:

- Most of these statements are made by person who have never studied the development of the canon.
- The early heretics relied on the same books that were eventually part of the canon; the identity of the books was not the issue, but rather, their interpretation.
- The canon appears well established by the 2nd Century.
- The books which were not accepted as part of the canon are often easy to disregard.





The New Testament Canon

The Canon as a Response to Heresy

Marcion (teaching c. 138 ff. C.E.)

- Thought Paul was the only true apostle
- Rejected the Old Testament
- Taught that the God of the Old Testament was not the same as the Father in the New Testament
- *Antitheses, Gospel and Apostle*

Valentinus (teaching c. 135 ff. C.E.)

- *The Gospel of Truth*
- Saw scripture as allegorical
- Founded a gnostic school of thought searching for the mystical and the secret





The New Testament Canon

The Church's Response:

- Anti-Marcionite Prologues
- The Muratorian Fragment (or, Mauratorian List) (c. 170)
(all listed except 3 John, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, James and adds Wisdom)
- Irenaeus ~ *Against Heresies* (c. 177)
(uses authoritatively same books as Muratorian Fragment, but adds 1 Peter)
- Hippolytus (c. 170-235)
- Tertullian (teaching c. 196-212)
(first to use "testamentum" to refer to the N.T. corpus of writings)
(did not rely upon 2 Peter, 2 John and 3 John, or James)
- Clement of Alexandria (c. 202)
(relied upon Hebrews, although believed it was a Pauline epistle)





The New Testament Canon

The Church's Response:

- Origen (c. 185-254) – The Great Textual Critic – Hexapla (distinguished the undisputed books from those that were disputed [by some])

Undisputed: 4 Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John & Revelation(*)

Disputed: Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James and Jude

Other Disputed: Didache, Letter of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, Gospel according to the Hebrews, and Acts of Paul

- Eusebius of Caesarea (bishop of Palestine from 314 – 339)
Ecclesiastical History:

Acknowledged: 4 Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, 1 John, 1 Peter, Revelation

Disputed, but Recognized by Majority: James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John

Spurious: Acts of Paul, Shepherd, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Teachings of the Apostles, Revelation (*)





The New Testament Canon

The Church's Response:

- Athanasius (39th Festal Letter Announcing Easter, 367)
First complete recitation of all 27 books of the New Testament
- Council of Hippo (393)
- Council of Carthage (397)





The New Testament Canon

The Other Books (earliest likely around 150 C.E., most are 2nd and 3rd Century)

Arabic Gospel of the Infancy
Armenian Gospel of the Infancy
Bartholomew's Book of the Resurrection
Gospel of Bartholomew
Gospel of Basilides
Gospel of the Birth of Mary
Gospel of the Ebionites
Gospel According to the Hebrews
Protevangelium of James
History of Joseph the Carpenter
Gospel of Marcion
Gospel of Matthias
Gospel of the Nazarenes
Gospel of Peter
Gospel of Philip
Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew
Gospel of Thomas
Apostolic History of Abdias
Acts of Andrew
Story of Andrew
Acts of Andrew and Matthias
Acts of Thomas

Acts of Andrew and Paul
Acts of Barnabus
Acts of Bartholomew
Ascents of James
Acts of John
Acts of Martyrs
Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew
Passion of Paul
Acts of Paul and Thecla
Acts of Peter
Passion of Peter
Preaching of Peter
Slavonic Acts of Peter
Acts of Peter and Andrew
Acts of Peter and Paul
Passion of Peter and Paul
Acts of Peter and Twelve Disciples
Acts of Philip
Acts of Pilate
Acts of Simon and Judas
Acts of Thaddaeus





The New Testament Canon

The Other Books





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