

Systematic Theology: *The Doctrine of Scripture*

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Beginning Class 3

- ❖ God's Two Witnesses
- ❖ Special Revelation
- ❖ The Word of God
- ❖ Canonization
- ❖ Inspiration

God's Two Witnesses

{ Part 2: Special Revelation

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28

General vs. Special Revelation

General Revelation is God revealing Himself to everyone He has created through:

1. The Created Universe (Ps 19:1–6; Rom 1:18–21)
2. Reason (Rom 1: 20–22)
3. Morality (Rom 2:1–3, 14–15)

Special Revelation is the unique self-revealing action of God in history to particular people.

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Special Revelation

{ Canonization of the Scriptures, the
Written Word of God

Special Revelation

Special Revelation refers to the “Word of God” or the “Word of the Lord.” But what is the Word of God?

1. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God
2. The Spoken/Preached Divine Message (oracles of God)
3. The Written Divine Message (Torah, Prophets, NT)

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Jesus Christ, The Word of God

Jesus Christ Is:

1. The Incarnate Word of God (John 1:1–2, 14; Revelation 19:13)
 - “The Word of Life” (1 John 1:1–4)
 - “The True Light that enlightens every man” (John 1:9; 3:18–21).
 - “He whom God has sent speaks the words of God” (John 3:31–36; John 8; 12; 17).
 - “The only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14)

To the Pharisees He said:

- “And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent” (John 5:38).

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Jesus Christ, The Word of God

Jesus Christ Is The Incarnate Word of God Because:

- He is the only one who has seen God the Father (John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12)
- He is the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father and has explained the Father (John 1:18).
- He proceeded forth and came from God the Father (John 8:42).
- He actually speaks the words of God; the words that God gave Him to speak (John).
 “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man” (John 3:13).
- The Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39; Luke 24:25–27).



Jesus Christ, The Word of God

Jesus Christ Is The Word of God Because:

- He is the only one who has seen God the Father (John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12)
- He is the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father and has explained the Father (John 1:18).
- He proceeded forth and came from God (John 8:42), and speaks the words that God gave Him to speak (John 12:49; 17:8).
 - “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man” (John 3:13).
- The Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39; Luke 24:25–27).

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Jesus Christ, The Word of God

1. Jesus Christ Is The Exact Image of the Father

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

*Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; . . .” John 14:7–9*

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”

- Hebrews 1:1–3



Jesus Christ, The Word of God

Jesus Christ Is:

2. The Spirit of prophesy (Rev 19:10)
3. The Word of Christ (Colossians 3:16; Romans 10:17)
4. The wisdom of and from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30)



The Word of God: The Spoken Divine Message

The Oracles of God

“My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the Lord, “from now and forever.”” Isaiah 59:21

“for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. . . . But the word of the Lord endures forever.’

And this is the word which was preached to you.” 1 Peter 1:23, 25



The Word of God: The Written Divine Message

The Written Divine Message (Torah, Prophets, NT).

In other words, the Canon



Canonization: Critics

The question of canonicity is more than simply a question about what we should consider divinely inspired, or what is authoritative.

It is about whether the Christian Church in the form and doctrine of beliefs we see today and in history is the one true Spirit-filled body of Christ OR was it simply the one out of many equally valid “Christianities” that won out over the rest.

If we open the door to what is considered the canon, then we open the door to what is considered Christian, and the true Christian church.

Note: *Every organization is defined by its authoritative documents*



Canonization

Questions:

1. Does the Church determine the Canon?
2. What criteria determines which texts are divinely inspired and which are not?
3. When was the Canon determined or accepted?
4. Is the Canon closed or can it be added to?



Canonization

The Nature of Scripture:

“and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Timothy 3:15–17

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

- 2 Peter 1:20–21



Canonization

Definition of the Canon:

- ⌘ **Lexical meaning:** from κανων – “rod, ruler, standard for measure”
- ⌘ **Theological meaning:** “rule, standard, or norm” —the normative writings

The Description of Canonicity:

- ⌘ **Sacred Writings:** Kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Deut 31:24–36). Then kept in the Temple of Solomon after it was built (2 Kings 22:8).
- ⌘ **Prophetic Writings:** (Zech 7:12; Luke 24:27). Josephus recorded that only the books written from Moses to Malachi, in succession of Hebrew prophets, were considered by the Jews to be canonical (*Against Apion* 1.8).

“the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets” Zech 7:12.

- ⌘ **Apostolic Writings:** Acts 2:42

“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” Eph 2:20

*“the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit”
Eph 3:4–5*



Canonization: What Was Included?

Jesus Christ is the key to determining canonicity.

- He is the Prophet that the Lord Prophesied He would raise up:

*“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, **you shall listen to him.**”*

*“This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, **or I will die.**’”*

*“The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well. ‘I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put **My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.**”*

*‘It shall come about that **whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.**”*

Deuteronomy 18:15–18; cf. John 1:21; Acts 3:22; 7:37

- He confirmed that the OT canon was divinely inspired (Matt 5:17–19; 11:13; 22:36–40; Luke 16:16–17; 24:44–46)
- He was the one who sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth for the NT (Luke 24:49; John 14:26; 16:13–15)



Canonization: What Was Included?

Jesus Christ is the key to determining canonicity.

- He confirmed that the OT canon was divinely inspired (Matt 5:17–19; 11:13; 22:36–40; Luke 16:16–17; 24:44–46)
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Determination of Canonicity

Inadequate Views

1. **“Age determines canonicity.”** Reply:
 - Many ancient books are *not* in the canon (ex: *Wars of the Lord*—*Num. 21:14*).
 - Many new books were placed in the canon immediately (ex: *Deut. 31:24*; *Dan. 9:2*).
2. **“Language determines canonicity”** (e.g. Hebrew). Reply:
 - Not all of the OT is in Hebrew (*Dan. 2:4b-7:28*; *Ezra 4:8-6:18*; *7:12-26*).
 - Not all Hebrew books are in the canon (ex: *Book of Jasher*—*Josh. 10*; *The Apocrypha*; *First Enoch*; *2nd Temple Literature*).
3. **“Agreement with the Torah.”** Reply:
 - This is a test for exclusion, not inclusion.
 - Not all the things that Jesus said and did are included (*cf. John 21:25*).



Determination of Canonicity

Inadequate Views (Continued)

4. **“Religious value determines canonicity.”** Reply:
 - Not all inspiring books are inspired.
 - Confuses cause (inspired) with effect (inspiring).

5. **“Christian usage determines canonicity.”**
Reply:
 - Also confuses cause and effect (usage).
 - Then *Pilgrims Progress* and the *Left Behind* series should be in the canon, too! (Not to mention *Veggie Tales*.)



Determination of Canonicity

Inadequate Views (Continued)

6. **“In Tandem with Signs (Miracles), Wonders, or Fulfilled Prophecy makes it Canon. Reply:**
 - God specifically addresses this case (Deut 18:1-5)
 - Miracles, even the raising of the dead, are not sufficient for faith (Luke 16:31).
 - Satan has the power, if granted the authority by God, to produce signs, wonders, and fulfill prophecy (Job 1:16, 19; 2 Thess 2:9-12; Rev 13:13–15).



Determination of Canonicity

Adequate View:

1. Inspiration determines canonicity. In other words, canonicity is determined by God.
2. Conclusion:
 - God *determines* canonicity; man merely *discovers* it.
 - Books *receive* canonicity from God and *recognition* from the people of God.



Discovery of the Canon

The Bible provides its own tests to determine canonicity:

1. Was it written by a prophet? An apostle? An associate of an apostle? (*2 Peter 1:20-21; Eph 2:20*).

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,” (Heb 1:1 NKJ)



Discovery of the Canon

2. Were the writers confirmed by an act of God?

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know” (Acts 2:22 NKJ)

“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Heb 2:3-4 NKJ)



Discovery of the Canon

3. Does it tell the truth about God?

“when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” (Deut 18:22 NKJ)

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Gal 1:8 NKJ)



Discovery of the Canon

4. Does it have the power of God?

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12 NKJ)



Discovery of the Canon

4. Was it accepted by the people of God?

“In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Dan 9:2 NKJ)

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” (1 Thes 2:13 NKJ)

“and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” (2 Pet 3:15-16 NKJ)



Development of the Canon

The Progressive Development of the Old Testament

1. Moses wrote:

“So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book,” (Deut 31:24 NKJ)

2. Joshua added:

“Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.” (Josh 24:26 NKJ)

3. Samuel added his writing:

“Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.” (1 Sam 10:25 NKJ)

4. Prophets were collected: (Dan. 9:2; Zech 7:12)



Development of the Canon

The Progressive Development of the New Testament

1. The New Testament refers to the Old Testament Law and Prophets:

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” (Matt 5:17 NKJ)

*“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”
(Luke 24:27 NKJ)*

2. Paul quotes Luke as Scripture:

“For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” (1 Tim 5:18 NKJ)

3. Paul’s letters circulated among the churches (Col 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27).

4. Peter had Paul’s letters and called them “Scripture.” (2 Pet. 3:16)



Completion of the Canon

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;” (Heb 1:1–2)

1. In the “former days,” God spoke through the prophets.
2. In these “last days,” God spoke through His Son.
 - Christ and the apostles lived in the last days (Heb 1:1; 1 John 2:18)
 - Christ is God’s last word in these last days (Heb 1:1f)
 - Christ “fulfilled” all things (Matt 5:17–18)
 - Christ promised “all truth” to his apostles (John 14:26; 16:13)



Completion of the Canon

3. Christ's 12 apostles are the *only* official channel of His eyewitness teaching (*Luke 1:1-2; John 15:27; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3*).
4. The eyewitness apostles lived only in the first century (*John 15:27; Acts 1:31-32*).



Completion of the Canon

5. The 27 books of the New Testament are the only apostolically confirmed literature extant about Christ.
- Many books were written by eyewitness apostles (Matthew; John; 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Revelation)
 - Paul's letters were confirmed by apostolic teaching (Acts 15; Gal 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:15–16).
 - Mark was a disciple and secretary of Peter (1 Pet. 5:13)
 - Luke (Luke–Acts) was an associate of Paul (Acts 16; Col 4:16)
 - Hebrews was written by Paul or by an associate of Paul's (Heb 13:23)
 - James and Jude were associates of the apostles [and the half-brothers of Jesus] (Acts 15; James 1:1; Jude 1)

Therefore, the 27 books of the NT are God's last word in the last days, which means *the canon is closed.*



The Inspiration of the Scriptures

{ Major Views of the Word of God
Biblical Descriptions of Inspiration
Theories of Inspiration

Major Views of the Word of God

The Liberal view:

The Bible is man's word about God other religious matters. It contains experiences and stories of pious men and can be described as a collection of religious experiences and insights.

The Neo-Orthodox view:

The Bible becomes the Word of God. It is a record of man's encounters with God and is a combination of divine truth and human error. It is an imperfect but unique book which God uses as a means to encounter man. The Bible becomes God's Word to an individual as he/she experiences its reality in his or her life.



Major Views of the Word of God

The Neo-Evangelical view:

The Bible is the Word of God and the word of man. The parts that concern salvation, faith and practice are God's words. Those parts that speak to culture, science and history are man's words. Jesus Christ is the criterion by which the individual can determine which parts are inspired and which parts are merely human.

The Evangelical view:

The Bible is the Word of God. God is the author of the whole Bible. It is inspired by Him but written through human agents. It is true in every area in which it speaks.

The Fundamentalist view:

The Bible as translated and preserved in the King James Version is the Word of God for the English-speaking people today. Not only are the original autographs inspired, but also were the translators of the KJV.



Biblical Descriptions of Inspiration

Two Basic Texts:

Spirit-Moved Writers – 2 Peter 1:20–21

(Note the emphasis on the writers)

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

God-Breathed Writings – 2 Timothy 3:16–17

(Note the emphasis on the words)

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”



Biblical Descriptions of Inspiration

Supporting Texts:

“I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” (Deut 18:18 NKJ)

*“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”
(2 Sam 23:2 NKJ)*

“the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.” (2 Chr 34:14 NKJ)

“My words I have put in your mouth,” (Isa 59:21 NKJ)

“the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets.” (Zech 7:12 NKJ)

*“God...who by the Holy Spirit...by the mouth of Your servant David have said:”
(Acts 4:24-25 NKJ)*

“He [God] designates a certain day, saying in David,” (Heb 4:7 NKJ)



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Intuition theory (Liberal)

Inspiration is largely a high degree of insight. Inspiration is the functioning of a high gift, perhaps almost like an artistic ability but nonetheless a natural endowment. The Bible is great religious literature reflecting the Hebrew people's spiritual experiences.

The Illumination theory (Neo-Orthodox)

The Holy Spirit influenced the authors of Scripture by heightening their normal powers. There is no special communication of truth, or guidance in what is written, but merely an increased sensitivity with regard to spiritual matters. Thus, the work of inspiration is different only in degree, not in kind, from the Spirit's work with all believers. The result of this type of inspiration is increased ability to discover truth.



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Dynamic theory (Neo-Evangelical)

The Spirit of God works by directing the writer to the thoughts or concepts, and allowing the writer's own distinctive personality to come into play in the choice of words and expressions.

The Verbal Theory (Evangelical)

The Holy Spirit's influence extends beyond the direction of thoughts to the selection of words used to convey the message. Each word is the exact word God wants used at that point.



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Verbal Theory (Continued)

Specifically, “**Verbal-Plenary**” inspiration:

Verbal: Each and every word is inspired.

Plenary: All the Bible is equally inspired.



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Verbal Theory (Continued): Support

Arguments built on the tenses of verbs:

“But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matt 22:31-32 NKJ)

Arguments built on the case of nouns:

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” (Gal 3:16 NKJ)



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Verbal Theory (Continued): Support

Arguments built on the smallest parts of the letters:

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” (Matt 5:18 NKJ)

A “jot” is the Hebrew letter *yodh* י. A “tittle” is just the part of the Hebrew letter that distinguishes it from another letter.

Examples:

beth ב and *kaph* כ

daleth ד and *resh* ר.



Theories of Inspiration

(Erickson)

The Dictation Theory (Fundamentalist)

God actually dictated the Bible to the writers. Passages where the Spirit is depicted as tell the author precisely what to write is applied to the entire Bible. Those who hold to the verbal theory take pains to distinguish their position from this one



Definition of Inspiration

(Keathley)

“Inspiration is the inexplicable supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit over the writers of Scripture such that, without overwhelming the personalities of the writers, the Holy Spirit superintended their writings so that their words are the words of God.”



Beginning of Class 4

- { Review: General & Special Revelation
- { Review: Canonization
- History of the NT Canon Formation & Acceptance (More)
- Review: Inspiration
- Sufficiency of Scripture

Review: General vs. Special Revelation

General Revelation is God revealing Himself to everyone He has created through:

1. The Created Universe (Ps 19:1–6; Rom 1:18–21)
2. Reason (Rom 1:20–22)
3. Morality (Rom 2:1–3, 14–15)

Special Revelation is the unique self-revealing action of God in history to particular people.

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Review: Special Revelation – The Word of God

Special Revelation refers to the “Word of God” or the “Word of the Lord.” But what is the Word of God?

1. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God
2. The Spoken/Preached Divine Message (oracles of God)
3. The Written Divine Message (Torah, Prophets, NT)

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”

Matt 18:16; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Deut 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28



Review: Canonization

1. Who determines canonicity? God or the Church?
2. What are the tests of canonicity?
3. Is the Canon Closed (completed) or Open (still being added to)? How do you know?



The Canon of Scripture

Definition of the Canon:

- **Lexical meaning:** from κανων – “rod, ruler, standard for measure”
- **Theological meaning:** “rule, standard, or norm” – the normative writings

Key Note: “*When early Christians spoke of “Scripture,” what they meant was the Hebrew scriptures*” (Gonzalez, 75).



History of the NT Canon

The first list of NT books was compiled by Marcion in the mid-2nd century AD.

- Marcion was heavily influenced by Gnosticism: Anti-Jewish, Anti-Material.
- Rejected the OT.
- Accepted only Luke and Paul's epistles. Rejected all other gospels and epistles because they were corrupted with Jewish beliefs.
- His church rivaled the Orthodox (correct) Church for years.



History of the NT Canon

The list of the 27 books of the NT were compiled largely in response to the challenge posed by Marcion and other heretical groups.

- All accepted the OT except Gnostics and Marconites.
- It was customary for passages to be read from one or several of the four Gospels, and from Paul's epistles.
- Since no approved list, different Gospels (of the four) were read in different churches. The same regarding other NT books.



History of the NT Canon

Key:

The determination of the NT canon “was not done in a formal manner, through a council or special meeting. What actually happened was that a consensus developed gradually. While very soon there was general agreement as to the basic books to be included in the canon of the NT, it took a long time to come to an absolute consensus on every minor detail.”

- Gonzalez, 75



History of the NT Canon

Early Christians decided to include more than one Gospel in direct response to Gnostics, even though they acknowledged the differences between those texts.

- The differences legitimized the author and the writing.

“Many Gnostic teachers claimed that the heavenly messenger had trusted his secret knowledge to a particular disciple, who alone was the true interpreter of the message. . . . Such were . . . the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Truth*” (Gonzalez, 75).



History of the NT Canon

The core of the NT canon was established by the end of the 2nd Century (by 200AD), including the Four Gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters.

There was no consensus on the remaining books until later, but there was not much debate.

The Book of Revelation was considered scripture by the end of the 3rd century. It was questioned only after the conversion of Constantine.



History of the NT Canon

By the mid-4th Century, there was complete consensus that the 27 books were scripture.

“In this entire process the guiding concern was not theology in the abstract sense, but the life of worship, for the main question was, is this book to be read when the church gathers for worship?” (Gonzalez, 77).



Lost Gospels and Other Texts Excluded from the Canon

There were numerous, even hundreds, of Gospels and writings about the Acts of Mary and the apostles. Why were they excluded? Two main groups:

1. Texts, mostly from the 2nd century, that were considered scripture by certain groups while rejecting all others. They had no interest in being included with a list of authoritative texts.
2. Texts dating from the 3rd century and later including pious stories about Jesus. These were never rejected by the church, just not included.



Apostolic Succession

How do we know that the churches that existed and their bishops were part of the true church and not mixed in with heretical groups and beliefs?

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

- 2 Timothy 2:2



Review: Inspiration

Biblical (Evangelical) View: Verbal-Plenary

- The Spirit works with the language, vocabulary, experiences, and personality of each author to ensure that each word is exactly what the Spirit intended.
- Every word is inspired
- The verb tense is inspired
- The number (singular or plural) is inspired
- All Scripture is equally inspired



Review: Inspiration

Key Texts:

Spirit-Moved Writers – 2 Peter 1:20–21

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

God-Breathed Writings – 2 Timothy 3:16–17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”



Review: Inerrant & Infallible

Scripture Is:

Inerrant – Means that Scripture does not approve anything that is not true.

Infallible – Refers to possibilities. It means that the Word of God incapable of having errors.

“Infallibility necessarily results in the text's being free from error; without infallibility, the production of an inerrant text is accidental. It could have otherwise had errors.”

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/infallibility-and-inerrancy>



Sufficiency of the Scriptures

{ Do we need something else from God to know how to live?

Sufficiency of the Scriptures

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.” 2 Peter 1:2–3

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”
2 Tim 3:16–17



Sufficiency of the Scriptures

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.

They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;

In keeping them there is great reward.

Who can discern *his errors*? *Acquit me of hidden faults.*

Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*;

Let them not rule over me;

Then I will be blameless,

And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be acceptable in Your sight,

O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:7–14



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