

Canonization, Textual Criticism, & the KJV

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 4-13-16

Canonization

39 books of the OT - Protestants affirm these as canonical

OT Apocrypha (Gr. "hidden") - A collection of books preserved by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in a section between the OT and NT

- Jews uniformly _____ canonical status to anything after 450-400 bc
- LXX (Greek translation of the OT) included them → 2nd C. Latin translations
- Unchallenged until the Protestant Reformation
 - Council of Trent (16th C.)
- Protestants deny canonical status:
 - Not accepted as canonical at the time of Christ and the early church
 - Do not claim inspiration
 - Are not explicitly quoted in the NT
 - Denied by many early church fathers
 - Presence of historical errors and unbiblical doctrine
 - Fail the tests of canonicity (to be discussed below)
- Since 1827 English Bibles exclude their inclusion

27 books of the NT canon

Factors that led to the formation of the NT canon:

- Marcion - early heretic who promoted a false canon
- Presence of "other" gospels (NT Apocrypha)
- Persecution
- Mid 2nd - late 5th century process
 - Athanasius' 367 AD Easter-time festal letter - 27 book canon
 - Ratified by the councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397)

Criteria of Canonicity

- _____ - 1st century apostolic connections
- _____ - cohesion of doctrine and ethics, sans contradiction
- _____ - early, widespread usage

Summary

- The gathering of the New Testament documents began within the first century.
 - Paul referred to Luke's Gospel as 'scripture' (1 Tim 5:18 cites both Deut. 25:4 and Luke 10:7 as such).
 - Peter recognized that Paul's writings were 'scripture' (2 Peter 3:15-17), referring to them as authoritative and like 'the other scriptures,' and he warns his readers to beware of those who twist the meanings to their own destruction.
- Gained momentum in the 2nd century, concluding in AD 393/397
- F.F. Bruce: "The NT books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, Church councils did not impose something new upon the Christian communities but codified what was already the general practice of those communities."
- Bruce Metzger: "The canon was not the result of a series of contests involving church politics. ... (It) is a *list of authoritative books* more than it is an authoritative list of books. These documents didn't derive their authority from being selected; each one was authoritative before anyone gathered them together." (emphasis added)