

Twelve Lessons

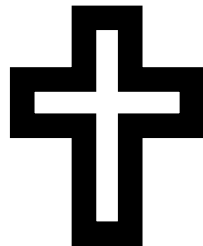
on

Canon of the KJV Bible

Compiled and Written

by

Ronnie Simpson, Ph.D., Th.D., LL.D., D.D.



Macedonia Baptist College

9722 Hwy 601

Midland, NC 28107

(704) 784-4200

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CANON OF THE BIBLE – LESSON 1

Introduction – In order to teach the Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, we need to know the answers to these questions:

1. In what way were the individual books of Scripture, as inspired by God, gathered together?
2. According to what criteria was their authority recognized and why were these chosen when other religious works were resolutely set aside?
3. At what times and under what circumstances was the present list of inspired books (66), called the Canon, drawn up?

Lesson Goals:

1. To lay a foundation for the truth about the reason for our belief that the KJV 1611 is the correct version of the Bible. Ps. 12:6 – *“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”*
2. To define the word “canon” and prove that God put the 66 books of the Bible into one book.
3. To present the facts of the true Bible in its importance as the “sole authority for what Baptists believe and practice.”
4. To thoroughly convince the student of the Bible’s accuracy and inerrancy from the Scripture and from History.

Definition of Terms or Phrases:

1. Canon – means a straight reed, rod, rule, standard, boundary, sphere, line, or territory.
2. Miracle – In general terms miracles may be defined as supernatural manifestations of divine power in the external world, in themselves special revelations of the presence and power of God (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).
3. Inspiration – “A supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness” (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).

I. DEFINITION – “Canon” (taken from the Greek) means a rule which serves as a measure; and then by extension, that which is measured. Like taking a tape measure and making a pattern from which other things are made.

A. Gal. 6:16 – This word was used to designate the rule of doctrine set forth by the Apostle Paul. *“And as many as walk according to this rule (Strong’s 2583 – kanon), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”*

B. Canon – means a straight reed, rod, rule, standard, boundary, sphere, line, or territory. A Book is Canonical if the Jewish synagogue or the Christian Church recognized it as the bearer of the revelation communicated by the Spirit of God.

C. There Are FIVE TESTS of Canonicity – Meaning how a Book was accepted as part of the Bible.

1. Is it Authoritative? Did it come from the hand of God? Does this particular book come with a divine “thus saith the Lord.”
2. Is it Prophetic? Was it written by a man of God?
3. Is it Authentic? “If in doubt, throw it out?”
4. Is it Dynamic? Did it come with the life-transforming power of God?
5. Was it Received, Collected, Read, and Used? Was it accepted by the people of God. Peter acknowledged Paul’s work as Scriptural parallel to Old Testament Scripture (II Pet. 3:16).

II. DIVINE INSPIRATION – As the determinant on Canonicity

A. The Library (Bible – Biblos – Books) of the 66 Books that make up the Scriptures must contain only inspired Texts.

1. The word “bible” comes from the Greek word *biblion* (*bib-lee’-on*); a roll, bill, book, scroll, writing.
2. Rev. 20:12 – *“And the books were opened,”* (*kai bible enoichthesan*) *“And the (numerous) scrolls were opened,”* unrolled for review and usage, perhaps the 66 books of the Bible. There is also the book (record) of memory, the conscience of man to be challenged, Luke 19:25,31; Rom. 2:16; John 5:30; Matt. 12:36,37; John 12:48 (Garner Baptist Commentary).

B. Question? Are men capable of discerning inspiration to the point of knowing which Book belongs in the Canon? NO! NOT within themselves!

C. We Must Believe:

1. That God is a Miracle Working God

2. That the Bible is a Miraculous Work of God.
3. Three Miracles Must be at Work
 - a. The Miracle of Inspiration – to the sacred writers – II Tim. 3:16 – Inspiration. “A supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness” (B. B. Warfield, “Inspiration,” Int. Stand. Bible Ency., p. 1473).
 - b. The Miracle of Illumination – to the open-hearted individual reader, that he may understand the inspired text. Luke 24:45 – “*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.*” Illumination is a synonym for the word “enlightened” (from Grk. *photizo*, to “give light”). A term meaning imbued with a saving knowledge of the gospel, and so applied to Christians (Heb. 6:4; 10:32). In the early Christian church it was used to denote the baptized.
 - c. The Miracle of Discernment – to the body of Believers, for the recognition of the books of divine origin and for the inclusion of these books in the Canon.
4. It is evident that a mysterious and infallible instinct guided both Israel and the Church to those sacred writings which they were to assemble and preserve for the salvation of the work.

III. THE CANON IS THE FRUIT OF DIVINE INSPIRATION, NOT THE RESULT OF THE CHURCH'S APPROVAL.

A. Point! The acceptance of the 66 books by the Church did not make the books Canonical. They were “the very word of God” **COMPLETE AND WITHOUT ERROR “BEFORE”** the Church approved them!

B. When the Canon came together – ALL the Church could do was bow in recognition of that which already existed! AMEN!

1. When the Law was given to Israel, it was the Word of God complete, though the rest of the Bible was not written.
2. Six centuries before Malachi, the Psalmist wrote in Ps. 19:7 – “*The law of the Lord is perfect.*”
3. Although the Canon was not given at one stated time, It was completely perfect as it was given. This is called “Progressive Revelation.” Revelation (Grk. *apokalupsis*, an “uncovering or unveiling”) refers to the truths or facts that God has made known and progressive refers to the process that God has used over a period of time
4. Illustrate – A Lady walks through a flower shop. The owner gives her a flower, then another and another until a whole bouquet exists and is admired before it is complete.

IV. THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Entrusted to the Jews – Rom. 3:2 – “...because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

1. ORACLE (Heb. *debir*, from *dabar*, to “speak”; Grk. *logion*, “utterance” of God).
2. The oracles speak of the divine communications given to the Hebrews. The manner of such utterances was various: God speaking sometimes face to face, as with Abraham and Moses; sometimes by dreams and visions, as with Joseph and Pharaoh; sometimes by signs and tokens, as with Gideon and Barak; sometimes by word of prophecy; and sometimes by a regularly organized system of communication, as with Urim and Thummim.

B. Notice this Statement – By a contemporary of the Jews, “The Jews would die ten thousand times rather than to permit one single word to be altered of their Scripture.” Philo of Alexandria.

1. Three Divisions of the O.T. Canon
 - a. The Law (Torah)
 - b. The Prophets (Nebiim)
 - c. The Writings (Kethubim)
2. Jesus Authenticated these in Luke 24:44 – The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms & 39 books.
3. There is no Historical account of how the books were Canonized but in A.D. 90 – Jewish rabbis met at Jamnia (Jaffa) and at that meeting all 39 books of the O.T. were in the Canon. This is the earliest date of accepted Canonization.
4. Professor Robert Dick Wilson of Princeton Theological Seminary, a man who had mastered 45 ancient languages and dialects and who studied the Old Testament Hebrew for thirty years to prove its validity states: “I have seen the day when I set out on some Bible research with fear and trembling wondering what I should discover but now all that fear has passed. The result of those thirty years’ study which I have given to the text has been this: I can affirm that there is not a page of the Old Testament concerning which we need have any doubt. We can be absolutely certain that substantially we have the text of the Old Testament that Christ and the Apostles had, and which was in existence from the beginning.”