

The Azimuth Institute

Directional Study Notes

Bible Doctrine

11/17/15

The Canonicity of the Bible

A canon is a measuring rod, rule or standard.

In reference to the Bible, the Canon refers to those books that have been measured and found worthy to be a part of the Bible.

“The Bible is not an authorized collection of books, but rather a collection of authorized books.”

A. Determined by God

1. The Old Testament was written and collected by the Jewish people.

a. Jesus quoted from or alluded to every book in the Old Testament with the possible exception of Esther.

b. Unlike our English Bible, the Hebrew Bible starts with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles

Jesus said in Luke 11:51 *from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.*

The blood of Abel is found in Genesis 4:8 and the blood of Zechariah is found in 2 Chronicles 24:21 thus affirming that Jesus believed everything in between.

This served to affirm that Jesus believed everything in between.

It was firmly established well before Christ. Of course, no doubt God was involved in this process.

c. Our English Old Testament is not in chronological order. Instead, it is in five divisions.

i. Law

ii. History

iii. Poetry

iv. Major Prophets

v. Minor Prophets

2. The New Testament books were decided by apostolic authority.

It is in five divisions as well.

- i. Gospels
- ii. History
- iii. Pauline Epistles
- iv. General Epistles
- v. Prophecy

B. Recognized by man

There were books that were rejected that we call the apocryphal books.

These books were written during the intertestamental period between Malachi and Matthew.

1. They never claimed to be inspired.
2. Some of the teachings are heretical. I.e. sinless perfection, worship of angels, prayers for the dead, etc...
3. Never recognized by the early church.
4. They were not allowed a place in the Canon until 400 years after Christ by Jerome in the Latin Vulgate under pressure of the Roman Catholic Church.
5. They contradict the Bible and themselves.

C. The canon was closed by 96 A.D. with the book of Revelation.

In regards to the finalization of the Canon, most will agree that the Old Testament Canon was closed by the year 300 B.C. and the New Testament was closed at the Third Council of Carthage in 397 A.D.

The Study and Interpretation of the Bible

A. Principles of Bible Study

We as Christians have the ability to understand the Bible.

The Holy Spirit is our teacher.

Joh 16:13 *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

This is called “illumination”.

Illumination is the Holy Spirit giving the believer the ability to understand the Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Why would God give us a book that we couldn't understand?

1. Be persistent in Bible study.

Jos 1:8 *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

The word “meditate” means to muse or to ponder.

2. Make it personal.

You must find a way that works for you.

I.e. number of chapters per day, the Bible is a year program, until you're tired, ribbon moving, etc...

3. Let it purify you.

The Bible has the ability to cleanse our minds and motivate us to think like God.

I.e. trash in trash out.

Psa 119:19 *I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.*

Eph 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*