

The Canonical Scriptures

Belgic Confession, Article 4-6

1. THE QUESTION OF CANON: Where does the _____ of _____ in our Bibles come from?
 - a. Last week we studied the doctrine of “inspiration,” the confession of faith that all Scripture is “_____.”

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - b. This is part of a pattern established in the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament, a pattern that led to what we now call the _____ of Scripture:
 - c. The canonical books are those that the church received as representing the _____ of the apostles to Jesus Christ, arising out of the “apostolic matrix” of the early church.

2. THE ANCIENT CONSENSUS: There is overwhelming _____, even in the earliest testimonies of the church, regarding the Canon of Scripture.
 - a. The church acknowledged the Canon definitively in _____ to 2nd century challenges: Marcion wanted to eliminate the _____. Montanus wanted to add _____ revelation.
 - b. The Scriptures are not established by the institutional authority of the church, but are _____ by the church.
 - c. The idea of canon is a principle _____ to Scripture, not a measure imposed upon Scripture from without. God’s Word calls, summons, gathers, and _____ his people.

3. TWO TESTAMENTS: A great treasure of the Reformed tradition (in continuity with the church before the Reformation) is our particular emphasis upon the _____ of Scripture.
 - a. The Old and New Testaments stand side by side as _____ to Jesus Christ (cf. Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, especially verses 44-48).
 - b. This internal unity testifies to the _____ of Scripture, the _____ of Christ, and the _____ of God.
 - c. We praise God when we say with the psalmist, “O, how I _____ your law! (Psalm 119:97)”

The Old Testament, in Hebrew order: The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (“Writings”)

The Law, The Books of Moses (Torah)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Former Prophets (Nevi'im)

Joshua
Judges
Samuel (1&2)
Kings (1&2)

Latter Prophets (Nevi'im)

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
The Book of the Twelve:
Hosea, Joel,
Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah,
Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai,
Zechariah, Malachi

Writings (Khetuvim)

Psalms
Proverbs
Job
Song of Solomon
Ruth
Lamentations
Ecclesiastes
Esther
Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
Chronicles (1&2)

The New Testament, as listed in the Belgic Confession

the four Gospels
Matthew,
Mark,
Luke,
John;
the Acts of the Apostles;
the thirteen letters of Paul
to the Romans;
the two letters to the Corinthians;
to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,
Colossians;
the two letters to the Thessalonians;
the two letters to Timothy;
to Titus, Philemon;
the letter to the Hebrews;
the seven letters of the other apostles
one of James;
two of Peter;
three of John;
one of Jude;
and the Revelation of the apostle John

“[T]he Bible is not the *object* of our varied gazes; rather, it is the *subject*. The Divine Word, the Bible, acts *on us*, not us on the Bible. How do we, as constructing agents of sermons, preach so that we are recipients, rather than givers of the Word? Gregory the Great famously said, long ago, that the Bible is like a ‘river, both shallow and deep, in which a lamb may walk and an elephant swim’; but his point was that ‘the divine Word,’ as he put it, is itself active in different ways for each person: it ‘causes trouble’ for the ‘learned’ with its ‘mysteries,’ he says, even while it ‘brings joy’ or ‘encourages’ the ‘simple’ with its ‘clarity;’ it ‘nourishes little ones’ and ‘strikes’ the learned with ‘wonder.’ The ‘Word’ *does* something to people: grasping this is itself a way of getting at its meaning and the character of God both.”

Ephraim Radner, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Eerdmans, 2016), 275.