

2 - Early Struggles: Revelation and Canon

“...it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus...”

~ Luke 1:3 ~

I. Theological Presuppositions

A. The self-attesting nature of Scripture

B. The necessity of the Spirit's work to understand Scripture

C. The kind purpose of God in providing and preserving His Word

D. The sinister methods of Satan to obscure or obliterate Scripture

II. Considering the Canon

A. Definition

1. **Webster:** A law or rule in general; The genuine books of the Holy Scriptures, called the sacred cannon, or general rule of moral and religious duty, given by inspiration.
2. **Dr. Michael J. Kruger:** “The collection of scriptural books that God has given to His corporate church.”

B. Clarification

1. **Theological reality precedes and undergirds the Historical process**
2. **Recognition vs Determination**

C. **Criteria:** What is true of the books that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ received and recognized as the inspired and inerrant Word of God?

1. **Apostolic Origin**
2. **General Consensus**
3. **Divine Imprint**

And he who reads the words of the prophets with care and attention, feeling by the very perusal the traces of the divinity,³⁴ that is in them, will be led by his own emotions to believe that those words which have been deemed to be the words of God are not the compositions of men. The light, moreover, which was contained in the law of Moses, but which had been concealed by a veil, shone forth at the advent of Jesus, the veil being taken away, and those blessings, the shadow of which was contained in the letter, coming forth gradually to the knowledge (of men).

- Origen, De Principiis 4.1.6

III. Formation of the Canon

A. Historical Development

1. Necessity

2. Complexity

B. Internal Witness

1. The NT authors knew they were writing Scripture

2. The Church would have expected this

C. Historical Verification

1. Recognition

“The Canon of the New Testament was completed when the last authoritative book was given to any church by the apostles, and that was when John wrote the Apocalypse, about A.D. 98.”

- BB Warfield

2. Early Lists

a. Muratorian Canon

b. Origen

So too our Lord Jesus Christ...sent his apostles as priests carrying well-wrought trumpets. First Matthew sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel, Mark also, and Luke, and John, each gave forth a strain on their priestly trumpets. Peter moreover sounds with the two trumpets of his Epistles; James also and Jude. Still the number is incomplete, and John gives forth the trumpet sound through his Epistles [and Apocalypse]; and Luke while describing the deeds of the apostles. Latest of all, moreover, that one comes who said, “I think that God has set us forth as the apostles last of all” ([1 Cor 4:9](#)), and thundering on the fourteen trumpets of his Epistles he threw down, even to their very foundations, the wall of Jericho, that is to say, all the instruments of idolatry and the dogmas of the philosophers. (250 AD)

WCF 1.5 - We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

Resources from Dr. Michael J. Kruger

[Ten Misconceptions About the NT Canon](#)

[Ten Basic Facts About the NT Canon that Every Christian Should Memorize](#)

[Ligonier: The New Testament Canon](#)