

Bible Doctrines I

Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute

Class Three

The Doctrine of the Bible

Text: Psalm 68:11 *“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.”*

Introduction: In class two, we began studying the doctrine of the Bible. We studied inspiration and preservation. In this class, we will study canonization, translation, and illumination. Because this course is designed to teach all the major doctrines of the Bible, we can only give an overview of each of these topics. We continue with point III of our outline:

III. CANONIZATION

A canon is a measuring rod, rule, or standard. In reference to the Bible, the Canon means those books measured and found satisfactory as a part of the inspired Word of God. **Canonicity is a book’s right to be included in the Biblical Canon because God has determined it so and man has recognized it as inspired by God.**

Canonicity must be viewed in two stages. Canonicity is determined by God and recognized by man. Man’s attitude does not dictate if a book is canonical. While there were 5 criteria for a book to be considered ‘canonical’ (a part of the canon of scriptures), we must understand that Jesus Himself quoted much Scripture from the Old Testament and referred to them as Scripture from God.

Example: Psalms 118:22-23 (*“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”*) are quoted in Matthew 21:42 (*“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”*)

Example: Isaiah 61:1-2 (*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;”*) are quoted in Luke 4:16-21.

Christ also pre-authenticated New Testament Scripture: John 16:13--*“things to come”*. *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you **things to come.**”* In the very next chapter 17:17, we read *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* So, we recognize that the Spirit of Truth guided them into all truth and shewed them *“things to come”* according to Revelation 1:1, 19.

Among all the books and letters that were written in those early days, how did the early church recognize God’s Word? **The following five questions were posed by the early church leaders as an aid in accurately recognizing Scripture.** These questions allowed them to recognize the canonicity of the 66 books of the Bible.

1. **IS IT AUTHORITATIVE?**

- Does this book have the authority of God behind it?
- They looked for phrases such as *“thus saith the LORD”* and *“the word of the LORD came”*. They were considered significant! The phrase *“thus saith the Lord”* is found 413 times in the Bible. The phrase *“the word of the Lord came”* is found 92 times in the Bible. Those were phrases that were not used lightly in Hebrew writing!

2. **IS IT PROPHETIC?**

- Was the book written by a man of God (a prophet or one with apostolic authority)?

- The Bible says that “*the testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy*” in Revelation 19:10. The evidence of Jesus Christ is the breath of scripture!!! Scripture prophesied about Jesus Christ. Every page of the Old Testament predicted a coming Redeemer. Jesus said “*Search the scriptures...for these are they which testify of Me*”. The New Testament repeatedly predicts that Jesus is coming again!!!
- II Peter 1:19-21 links scripture and prophecy: “*We have also a more sure **word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no **prophecy of the scripture** is of any private interpretation. For the **prophecy** came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God **spake** as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*”

3. IS IT AUTHENTIC?

- This question would attempt to determine whether a certain book reveals God’s truth. Since the book of Titus told us that God cannot lie and Hebrews reveals His immutability, and since John 16:13 told us that the Holy Ghost would guide them into all truth, they looked for authenticity! If somebody gave me an envelope with fifty \$100 bills in it, I would immediately check to see if I had been given the real thing. There is such a thing as fool’s gold and there is such a thing as a fool’s bible. The Book of Mormon and the Koran and the Rheims-Duoy Version are modern examples of a fool’s Bible in that they contradict themselves repeatedly! The same God Who gave the Word revealed the canonicity of its 66 books through their complete authenticity. 1,500 years, 40 men, 66 books, and not one contradiction!!!
- A book that taught prayer for the dead was not considered authentic. The early church rejected the Apocrypha because of its failure to agree with Scriptures. They correctly recognized that the Apocrypha was not a part of the Canon of Scriptures!
- Contradictions as to time, place, authorship, and events would be clear indication that the letter or the scroll or the manuscripts or the books were not inspired.

4. IS IT DYNAMIC?

- This question seeks to discover whether a book possesses the power of God. Is the book able to change lives? Since Jesus Christ is the One Who changes lives, each book should have as its theme Jesus Christ. Luke 24:44 records that the entire Old Testament speaks of Christ: “*And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.*”
- Hebrews 4:12 “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”
- Isaiah 55:11 “*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*”
- I Thessalonians 2:13 “*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*”

5. WAS IT RECEIVED, USED, AND PRESERVED BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD?

- II Peter 3:15-16 indicates that the writings of Paul were immediately accepted as canonical. “*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*”

- The other books of the Bible were quickly accepted and used as Scripture as they became available. The early Jews worked hard to preserve the writings of both the Old and New Testaments. The writings of the early Church leaders consistently quoted from these sources as being authoritative.
- Sir David Dalrymple reconstructed the entire New Testament except for 11 verses by using the quotations of church leaders in the Second and Third century: *“Sir David Dalrymple (1726 – 1792) was a Scottish judge and historian who wrote three volumes on early Christian Church history called, "Remains of Christian Antiquity". Dalrymple was an expert in the writings of the early church fathers. After careful examination of the writings of these fathers he wrote, "...as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses."*

A. The Canonicity of the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament's three main sections were approved by Christ. Luke 22:44: The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms!
2. Jesus Christ approved the Old Testament Canon. Luke 11:5 - The blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias. (The blood of Abel: Genesis 4:8; The blood of Zacharias: II Chronicles 24:21) In the Hebrew Bible the order of books were from Genesis to II Chronicles.
3. Quotations of the Old Testament by Christ show His approval of the Canon. In the four Gospels there are at least 35 direct references to the Scriptures by the Son of God!

B. The Canonicity of the New Testament was pre-authenticated by Christ.

1. Christ pre-approved of the New Testament by promises He made to His apostles. John 16:13; 14:26
2. The apostles were aware that God was giving them His precious Word. John 20:30-31; I Corinthians 2:13
The writer of a New Testament book had to be an individual with apostolic authority. When the Apostle John finished the book of Revelation the canon was complete!

C. The Canonicity of the Apocrypha rejected!

1. They never claim inspiration for themselves.
2. Some of their teaching is heretical. Such as Sinless perfection, the worship of angels, prayer for the dead, and almsgiving for salvation
3. They were never sanctioned by the early church.
4. They were never allowed a place in the canon for the first four centuries after Jesus Christ!
5. Books in the Apocrypha not only contradict the Bible, but they also contradict each other.
6. The quality of the Apocrypha is far below that of the Bible, even to the point of occasionally teaching sin such as lying, suicide, black magic, and assassination!
7. They were never received by the people of God!