

# UNIT 3: God's Revealing Work

## Section 5: Canonicity

*Theological Works:*  
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### INTRODUCTION:

Our discussion in section 4 on authority brings us to contemplate a very important related concept, that of “canonicity.” This term derives its origin from the Greek word *kanōn* (*kanōn*) which means rule or measuring rod. Therefore, a discussion of canonicity revolves around what books ought to be accepted as genuinely belonging to “the Scriptures” (what books make up the Bible?). We’ve already acknowledged the uniqueness of Scripture in the fact that unlike other writings, these are both human and divine. “All Scripture is God breathed...” We’ve also seen that far from being dependent upon the church for their authority, the scriptures have authority in and of themselves (being God’s very Word). Rather than being ruled by the church, the church is ruled by the Scriptures! We have emphatically explained, as well, that we “receive” the authority of Scripture rather than “giving” authority to the scripture. So what books have been received as God’s Word? How is it that our bibles have 66 books in them? This is a very important discussion and closely related to “authority”...

**Q1: What is the Canon – what books are included?**

**Q2: How has the discussion of Canonicity progressed historically?**

**Q3: What factors led to recognition of the Canon?**

## I. Approaching Canonicity

### A. Definitions

1. Canon – (see above) a measuring device that serves as an official or authoritative standard.
  - a. The concept of “standardization” is well-known to us all, although perhaps we seldom contemplate the consequence of a world w/o standards...
    - (1) If there were not “agreed-upon” standards all sorts of problems would develop.
    - (2) Without standardized Law how would you know if you were behaving correctly?
    - (3) Without some amount of standardized language – vocabulary & grammar, communication would become much more difficult...
    - (4) Without standardized tests, how do we evaluate performance and identify areas for improvement (even if we believe the particular test criteria needs to be improved, the underlying concept of these tests is not bad).
    - (5) Without standardized technology/computer codes all sorts of compatibility issues would result.
    - (6) Without standardized Currencies, Weights, Lengths, and Qualities (rules of reference) how could businesses operate?
    - (7) *Ex) ISO* – International Organization for Standardization
      - The name actually derives itself from the Gr (ἴσος) meaning “equal” it is technically not an “acronym” although it comes close in English.
      - From Wikipedia, “ISO is an international-standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. Founded on February 23, 1947, the organization promulgates worldwide proprietary industrial and commercial standards. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>[1]</sup> While ISO defines itself as a non-governmental organization, its ability to set standards that often become law, either through treaties or

national standards, makes it more powerful than most non-governmental organizations. In practice, ISO acts as a consortium with strong links to governments.”

○ Quick Example: **The Meter**

- On October 14, 1960 the world adopted a NEW international standard of length – a wavelength of light – replacing the “meter bar” located in Paris which had served as the standard for over 70yr (since 1889)
- The old standard consisted of the distance between two engraved lines on a platinum-iridium bar. Duplicates of the bar were maintained in standards laboratories of other countries throughout the world, but from time to time it was necessary to return the duplicates to Paris for recalibration to ensure accuracy. This led some scientists to wonder about the exactness of the duplicates and the stability of the international standard bar (if recalibrations were required for the duplicates, what assurance was there that the standard bar was staying constant).
- The new standard definition of a meter as 1,650,763.73 wavelengths of the orange-red line of krypton 86 corresponds to a “constant of nature,” an “immutable” quantity that can be reproduced with great accuracy in any well-equipped laboratory. Trips to Paris for “recalibration” are now unnecessary.
- By the way, the inch is now defined as equaling 41,929.399 wavelengths of the krypton light.

(8) Without a standard in spiritual things, how would we be certain as to who God is, what the way of salvation is, or what the Lord desires from us?

- b. In Bibliology, canon refers to the official collection or list of writings that are authoritative for Christianity – the list of writings comprising written revelation.
2. Homologoumena – writings (or books) that have always been recognized by all as authoritative. These are undisputed books that are included in the canon.
3. Antilegoumena – writings (or books) that have been questioned or disputed as authoritative by some for varying reasons, but were accepted as canonical.
- a. OT
- (1) Song of Solomon – thought to be too sensual – unbecoming scripture
  - (2) Ecclesiastes – thought to be too skeptical – conjectures life without God
  - (3) Esther – thought to be unspiritual – absence of God’s name
  - (4) Ezekiel – thought to be anti-mosaical – criticizing sacrifices
  - (5) Proverbs – thought to be illogical
- b. NT
- (1) Hebrews – anonymity
  - (2) James – apparent conflict with Paul
  - (3) 2 Peter – genuineness (some believed it is not from Peter)
  - (4) 2&3 John – questions on extent of distribution
  - (5) Jude – distribution questions as well as apocryphal citations
  - (6) Revelation – difficult genre (apocryphal)
4. Pseudepigrapha – lit. “false writings” – writings that have been rejected as spurious and unauthentic. They falsely claim to be written by biblical authors or well known prophets.

5. Apocrypha – lit. “hidden/hard to understand writings” – writings accepted by some and rejected by others... These are called the deuterocanonical writings by Catholics (meaning “2<sup>nd</sup> Rule/Standard” or “added later to the canon”)

### *B. The Basis for Canonicity*

1. In evangelical theology, writings are included in the canon based on their divine authorship (being breathed out by God). The authority of any canonical work is located in the fact that it is inspired by God and therefore is a Word from God. (see our previous sections of discussion – Inspiration, Inerrancy, Authority).
2. Faulty Appeals...
  - a. Age Determines Canonicity – many ancient books are not included in the canon, while many ‘new’ books were included immediately.
  - b. Language Determines Canonicity – Not all of the OT was written in Hebrew (**Dan 2:4b-7:28, Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26**) and not all Hebrew books are in the canon.
  - c. Agreement with OT/NT – This is more a test for exclusion than inclusion. And remember not all things Jesus said and did are included (**Jn 21:25**).
  - d. Religious Value/Christian Usage – not all “inspiring books” are inspired. Just because a book glorifies the Lord does not mean it was “breathed out by God.” And just because a book is used by many Christians does not mean it is to be included in the canon.
3. True Recognition
  - a. A common mistake of inadequate views of canonization is that they purport the Canon to have been established by men, rather than by God... The Roman Catholic Church commits this error most grievously, believing they were the codifiers of the Canon, having established what was to be taken as Scripture. This further led them to believe that they exercise authority over Scripture – a point the Reformers argued adamantly against in the doctrine of Sola Scriptura!
  - b. Inspiration determines canonicity. God determines canonicity, man only discovers it! Books receive canonicity from God and recognition from the people of God. Thus, the development of the canon should not be regarded as a democratic process!
  - c. **Norman Geisler**, “A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the people of God. Rather it is accepted by the people of God because it is the Word of God. That is, God gives the book its divine authority, not the people of God. They merely recognize the divine authority which God gives to it.”

#### **Incorrect View**

The Church is Determiner of Canon  
 The Church is Mother of Canon  
 The Church is Magistrate of Canon  
 The Church is Regulator of Canon  
 The Church is Judge of Canon  
 The Church is Master of Canon

#### **Correct View**

The Church is Discoverer of Canon  
 The Church is Child of Canon  
 The Church is Minister of Canon  
 The Church is Recognizer of Canon  
 The Church is Witness of Canon  
 The Church is Servant of Canon

## **II. The OT Canon**

### *A. Recognition*

1. God’s Word was immediately received by His people.
2. It was recognized by His people through a number of evidences:

- a. The book was written by a prophet/spokesman of God.
- b. The Word of God was confirmed by acts of God – miracles, fulfilled prophecy, etc.
  - (1) Moses was given miraculous powers to prove he was sent by God (Exodus)
  - (2) Elijah triumphed over the false prophets through God’s miraculous provision (I Kings 18)
  - (3) Jesus was attested to by signs and wonders (Acts 2:22)
- c. The Message told the truth about God, in no way contradicting what God had already said. No Word from God will contradict any other Word from God.
- d. It came with the power of God. The presence of God’s transforming power was a strong indication that a given book had His seal upon it.
  - (1) **Isaiah 55:11** So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.
  - (2) **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
  - (3) **1 Thessalonians 2:13** For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
  - (4) **Remember this is akin to: John 10:27** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

## B. Close of the OT

1. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, prophesy ceased. With the disappearance of the *order of the prophets* came the end of special revelation (until the time of Christ) – *400yr of silence*
2. *Evidences:*
  - a. *Indication from Christ?* **Matt 11:13** "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until (έως – up to the time of, to the point of, as far as) John." **Luke 16:16** "The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until (μέχρι – as far as, to the extent of) John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.
  - b. Recognition of the absence of prophecy in the inter-testamental period by Jews:
    - (1) **1 Maccabees 9:27** There had not been such great distress in Israel since the time prophets ceased to appear among the people.
    - (2) **1 Maccabees 14:41** "The Jewish people and their priest have, therefore, made the following decisions. Simon shall be their permanent leader and high priest until a true prophet arises.
    - (3) **Josephus, Contra Apionem, 1.8:** "From the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets wrote... from Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded because the exact succession of the prophets has ceased. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared to add anything to them, or take anything from them, or to alter anything in them."

- (4) **Babylonian Talmud** 7-8.24: “After the later prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the H.S. departed from Israel.”
- c. References to the OT (Hebrew Bible) as a fixed collection consisting of 3 parts:
- (1) תורה (Torah – Law) נביאים (Nebhi'im - Prophets) כתובים (Ketubhim - Writings)
  - (2) *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*– 24 books
    - **Torah:** Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (**5**)
    - **Prophets:** Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, **the Book of the Twelve** (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). (**8**)
    - **Writings:** Psalms, Job, Proverbs, **the Five-Rolls (Megilloth)** (Ruth [Feast of Weeks/Pentecost – thankfulness for crops], Song of Solomon [Passover – thankfulness for deliverance from Egypt], Ecclesiastes [Feast of Tabernacles – reminder of 40yr of wilderness wandering], Lamentations [Ninth of Av – mourning destruction of the temple], Esther [Purim – commemorating the Lord’s deliverance of the Jews from Haman’s plot]), Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles (**11**)
  - (3) **Philo**, *On the Contemplative Life*, (25) “And in every house there is a sacred shrine which is called the holy place, and the monastery in which they retire by themselves and perform all the mysteries of a holy life, bringing in nothing, neither meat, nor drink, nor anything else which is indispensable towards supplying the necessities of the body, but studying in that place the laws and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets, and hymns, and psalms, and all kinds of other things by reason of which knowledge and piety are increased and brought to perfection.”
  - (4) **Josephus** *Contra Apionem*, 1.8.: “For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, which contain all the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death... the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.”
    - Josephus refers to sacred scriptures divided into three parts: the five books of the Torah; thirteen books of the Nevi'im, and four other books of hymns and wisdom.<sup>[13]</sup> The number of 22 books mentioned by Josephus does not correspond to the number of books in the current canon. Some scholars have suggested that he considered Ruth part of Judges, and Lamentations part of Jeremiah. Other scholars suggest that at the time Josephus wrote, such books as Esther and Ecclesiastes were not yet considered canonical.
    - Josephus' canon is "not identical to that of the modern Hebrew Bible". And thus, Michael Barber warns that "one should be careful not to overstate the importance of Josephus." In support of this caveat, Barber points out that "Josephus was clearly a member of the Pharisaic party and, although he might not have liked to think so, his was not the universally accepted Jewish Bible—other Jewish communities included more than twenty-two books.”
  - (5) The NT:

- **John 1:45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
- **Matthew 5:17-18** "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
- **Matthew 7:12** "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
- **Matthew 22:40** "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
- **\*\*Luke 24:44** Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- **\*\* Luke 11:51** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.' – Abel the 1<sup>st</sup> martyr to Zechariah the last martyr recorded in the OT (Gen 4:8, II Chron 24:21) – remember these are 1<sup>st</sup> and last books of the OT Canon by Jewish ordering! Jesus points to the beginning to the end of the OT... *like us saying Genesis to Malachi!*
- **Also** note that Christ in all His appeals to the OT never corrected the books that were appealed to – just wrongful interpretations of those books!
- **\*Also** – see the vast number of quotations of the OT in the NT – including vast amounts of quotations from the writings (especially Psalms) which bears witness to the NT belief regarding OT scripture! – see also **II Tim 3:16-17**.
- **Seen in the preaching practice of the apostles as well:**
  - **Acts 28:23** When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.
  - **Romans 3:21** But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
- d. **Dead Sea Scrolls** – Many of the books of the OT were found (except Esther). However some non-canonical books were also found in total or fragmentary form.
- e. **Council of Jamnia (90AD)**
  - (1) A council of rabbis met, not to fix the canon (as some have proposed) but to question the right of certain books to remain in the canon...
  - (2) Questions were raised regarding Esther, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Ezekiel... (see above - *Antilegoumena*)

### C. Non-Canonical Books

1. Pseudepigrapha – Some comprising the OT pseudepigrapha: 1,2,3 Enoch, 4<sup>th</sup> Ezra, Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs, etc.

2. Apocrypha – The apocryphal books of the OT were accepted by the Roman Catholic church in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century at the Council of Trent and rejected by the Reformers... These are normally called “deuteron-canonical books” by the Roman Catholic Church.
  - a. The additions:
    - (1) Additions to the book of Esther
    - (2) Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Azariah & the Song of Three Jews, and Susanna (appended to Daniel)
    - (3) Prayer of Manasseh
    - (4) Ecclesiasticus
    - (5) Wisdom of Solomon
    - (6) Tobit
    - (7) Judith
    - (8) Baruch
    - (9) Letter of Jeremiah (part of Baruch in Catholic Bible)
    - (10) 1 & 2 Maccabees
    - (11) 1 & 2 Esdras
3. Reasons for rejecting the apocrypha:
  - a. Lack of evidence for its recognition (see Geisler and Nix)
    - (1) Philo never quotes from the Apocrypha as inspired, neither did Josephus recognize it as scripture. Jesus and the NT writers never quote from the Apocrypha, while there are hundreds of quotations from the OT.
      - o Note: Jude 14-15 is a citation from 1 Enoch 60.8 and 1.9, and Paul does quote Greek authors at least twice (Acts 17:28, Titus 1:12), but never are these words introduced with a phrase like “Scripture says” and neither the writings of these pagans nor the writings of 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch are from the Apocrypha.
    - (2) Many great early church leaders spoke out against the Apocrypha as inspired – Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Athanasius.
    - (3) Jerome, the great scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon saying that “the church reads them for example of life and instruction of manners” but does not “apply them to establish any doctrine.” He disputed with Augustine on this point – it wasn’t until literally “over his dead body” that the apocryphal books were brought into the Latin Vulgate from the Old Latin version.
    - (4) Many RC scholars alongside Luther and the Reformers rejected the canonicity of the Apocrypha... It wasn’t until the counter-Reformation Council of Trent (1545-1563) that the apocryphal books received full canonical status by the RC Church.
  - b. The Jews and Early church seem to reject these writings...
  - c. There are historical and geographical inaccuracies and anachronisms throughout
  - d. They teach doctrines that are at variance with inspired Scripture
  - e. They display an artificiality of subject matter and styling out of keeping w/ inspired scripture
  - f. Suspicious reasons for its acceptance by the RC Church (legitimatization of some of their doctrinal practices – seeking justification...)
  - g. Lack of claims/evidence of divine inspiration...
  - h. **i.e. 2 Maccabees 15:38-39** “If it is well written and to the point, that is what I wanted; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that is the best I could do.”<sup>39</sup> Just as it is harmful to

drink wine alone or water alone, whereas mixing wine with water makes a more pleasant drink that increases delight, so a skillfully composed story delights the ears of those who read the work. Let this, then, be the end.”

- i. **Other arguments not convincing:**
  - (1) Argument for catacomb drawings depicting apocryphal book content – this is hardly a test for canonicity! There are numerous events from the OT not drawn on the walls but this doesn’t exclude canonicity. And by reverse logic – just having a painting on a wall doesn’t grant it scriptural status.
  - (2) The fact that apocryphal books were found in Qumran (the dead sea scrolls) does not prove they belong in the canon. There were virtually hundreds of fragments of text discovered (including many different works of antiquity) that are not scripture.
- j. **Conclusion:** The apocrypha is NOT Scripture, but that is not to say that there is no value to them at all... if nothing else they have value for historical & linguistic research.
- k. **\*Hand out copies of p30-31** from Evidence that Demands a Verdict by McDowell

### III. The NT Canon

#### A. Recognition

1. The writings of the apostles or *students* associated with them were recognized as divinely inspired upon their formation. This is based upon the authority of the apostolic office which came from Jesus Himself.
  - a. **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
  - b. **John 16:13-14** "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.
  - c. **Ephesians 2:20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,
  - d. **Acts 2:42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
  - e. **The “students” of apostles clause explains the presence of Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, and Jude**
    - (1) **Mark** was most likely closely associated with Peter (Paul as well)
    - (2) **Luke** was associated with the apostle Paul (explaining Gospel of Luke and Acts)
    - (3) **Jude** apparently was connected with James – brother of James... brother of Jesus...
    - (4) Hebrews... interesting case...
      - o There were many within the church that assumed Pauline authorship, even though the book is strictly anonymous...
      - o There were those who from early times rejected Pauline authorship in favor of one or another of several suggestions.
      - o Origin (died in 254AD) mentions several theories and concludes, “But who actually wrote the epistle, only God knows.”
      - o **Grudem**, “We see from statements like these, that the acceptance of Hebrews was not entirely due to a belief in Pauline authorship, but rather the intrinsic qualities of the book itself must have finally convinced the readers, as they

continue to convince believers today, that whoever its human author may have been, its ultimate author can only have been God Himself.”

2. It should be noted that there is evidence these writings were being collected, copied, and distributed as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD (**2 Pet 3:15-16, I Tim 5:18, Col 4:16**).
3. Why the specific need for canonization?
  - a. The early church needed to know what was its authoritative standard for belief and behavior was, just as we do today.
    - (1) **Deuteronomy 32:46-47** he said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, *even* all the words of this law. <sup>47</sup> "For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.
    - (2) **Deuteronomy 4:2** "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.
    - (3) **Revelation 22:18-19** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.
  - b. Especially, as heretical writings began to circulate, the counterfeit needed to be identified and shunned.
  - c. This became all the more practically important as the edict of Diocletian (AD 303) which called for the destruction of the sacred books of Christians. Christians were being put to death for the Word of God. It was important to identify what was the word of God.
4. Extra-biblical Evidence:
  - a. Early Church Leaders quote from NT writings (Letters of Ignatius, Polycarp, etc)
  - b. Justin Martyr, Apology (1.67.3), Dialogue with Trypho (66.3)
  - c. Melito of Sardis (Eusebius makes mention of him)
  - d. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement (of Alexandria), Origen, Eusebius all mention 22 to all 27 books of the NT, although they may include other writings...
  - e. Athanasius, Festal Letter 39 (367AD) – 1<sup>st</sup> complete list of all 27 NT books w/ no additions. Interestingly, he implies that these are normative and have been for at least a century! This was agreed upon by councils at Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397&419 AD).
    - “Again it is not tedious to speak of the books of the NT. These are the four gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans, then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.”

- Shortly after this, Jerome and Augustine also defined the NT canon as these 27 books.
- f. **Note:** Since the Councils of Hippo and Carthage there has been no serious questioning of the 27 accepted books of NT by Roman Catholics, Protestants, or Eastern Orthodox Church.
- (1) **Note:** Many are aware of Luther’s unnecessary concerns regarding James (mainly due to his fight with Rome regarding justification by faith alone)... He called it ‘an epistle of straw’ but only in reference to what Luther considered the ‘chief books’ of the NT – John, 1<sup>st</sup> John, Paul’s epistles (especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians) and 1<sup>st</sup> Peter).
  - (2) **But...** as **Douglass Moo** points out in his commentary on James “Although Luther placed James near the end of his German translation of the NT, he did not exclude it from the Canon, and he cited over half of the verses in James as authoritative in various parts of his writings...”
  - (3) **Luther says of James,** “I cannot include him among the chief books, though, I would not prevent anyone from including or extolling him as he pleases, for there are otherwise many good sayings in him.”
5. **Rejected NT Apocrypha:**
- a. Partial List: Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, Epistle to the Corinthians, Ancient Homily, Shepherd of Hermas, Didache Teaching of the Twelve, Apocalypse of Peter, Acts of Paul and Thecla, Epistle to the Laodiceans, Gospel According to the Hebrews, Epistle to Polycarp to the Philippians, Seven epistles of Ignatius...
  - b. Why were these rejected?
    - (1) None enjoyed more than a temporary or local recognition
    - (2) No major canon or church council included them as inspired books of the NT
    - (3) The limited acceptance they had was due to connections they attempted to make in references to canonical books (Laodicea – Col 4:16, Epistle to the Corinthians – two references to other letters from Paul in I&II Corinthians), or alleged Pauline authorship (Acts of Paul).

## B. Close of the NT

1. Just as the OT was closed with the end of the OT prophets, so the NT came to a close with the end of the Apostles. With the end of that office (John’s death ~90AD) so the canon closed... We also see the order of God’s design of revelation – He begins with Genesis and Creation, and ends in Revelation by speaking of the summing up of all things and a new Creation.
2. Christ prayed for those who would “believe in [Him] through [the apostles’ word]” (**Jn 17:20**)
3. **Apostles were those who had witnessed Christ’s resurrection: Acts 1:21** "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us--<sup>22</sup> beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us-- one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection."
4. **Even Paul appealed to this fact – an apostle was one who witnessed the risen Christ: 1 Cor 15:7** “then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; <sup>8</sup> and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

## **Conclusion:**

Quad Semper Quad Ubique Quad Ab Omnibus receptus est.

“That which always, that which everywhere, that which by all is received.”

David Dockery, Kenneth Matthews, and Robert Sloan conclude concerning the Bible’s canon: “No Christian, confident in the providential working of his God and informed about the true nature of canonicity of His Word, should be disturbed about the dependability of the bible we now possess.” God who is in control of history has seen to it that we have what we absolutely need. **Grudem**, “Just as God was at work in creation, in the calling of his people Israel, in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and in the early work and writings of the apostles, so God was at work in the preservation and assembling together of the books of Scripture for the benefit of His people for the entire church age. Ultimately, then, we base our confidence in the correctness of our present canon on the faithfulness of God.” We also can contemplate this secondarily from the perspective of how we have come to be persuaded that the Scriptures are indeed God’s word – and for this I remind us of our discussion from Authority. Ultimately the H.S. bears witness in our hearts convincing us as we read the Scriptures that these are in fact God’s Word, and secondly we can look to several objective tests which the Bible alone uniquely fulfills. It is completely internally coherent, perfectly historically accurate, tells of specific prophecy fulfilled, etc.