

Beyond Mere Words

Wk1: The Making of the Bible and the Canon

Mystic view (Golden Tablets view)

Single author (Dictatorial view)

Author & Editor(s) (Communal view)

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 and 34:10-12

Proverbs 1:1, 25:1, 30:1, 31:1

Jeremiah 36:32

Luke 1:1-4

THE MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES IS ITSELF, AS A WHOLE: THE CANON.

Canon = from *kanon* (Greek) = rule/standard > came to mean 'list'

Biblical Canon = Authoritative list of religious text

Ultimately, you can think of Canon as **the texts that faithfully guide the church in living out the gospel.**

How did we get the Canon?

- Hebrew Canon
 - TaNaK

Torah (teaching)	Nevi'im (prophets)	Ketuvim (writings)
Genesis - Exodus Leviticus - Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua - Judges Samuel - Kings Isaiah - Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve Hosea - Joel Amos - Obadiah Jonah - Micah Nahum - Habakkuk Zephaniah - Haggai Zechariah - Malachi	Psalms - Job Proverbs Ruth - Song of Songs Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther - Daniel Ezra-Nehemiah Chronicles

- Dead Sea Scrolls 150BCE "We have written so that you may understand the book of Moses and the books of the prophets and of David."
- Luke 24:44 "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- Matthew 23:31-35 "...from the blood of that righteous man Abel to the blood of Zechariah.."
- New Testament Canon
 - Attributes of Book recognized as Scripture (as discussed by church Fathers)
 - Connection to the teaching of the apostles
 - Widespread continues usage (think the books that went 'viral')
 - Orthodox Teaching (tradition before text) (2 Thessalonians 2:15)
 - Witnesses to the NT canon:
 - Manuscript evidence for a NT collection
 - Egyptian papyri have the Gospels/Acts together in the mid-100s AD
 - Egyptian papyri have a collection of Paul's letters by 100AD.
 - Early church leaders mentions books being widely used
 - Irenaeus of Lyons (France): 130-200 AD
 - Muratorian List (Italy): 170-210 AD
 - Eusebius (Palestine): 260-340
 - Athanasius' Letter (Egypt): 367 AD

There was never any council that decided what was in or not in the Bible. The canon grew out of the church's worship gatherings (Colossians 4:16). You see this reflected as well in the early lists of the NT Books

THE MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES IS ITSELF, AS A WHOLE: THE CANON.

1. What we have is the finished texts.
 - a. We don't have text drafts or works unbound from their smaller collections (i.e. Torah, Psalm, Book of the Twelve)
 - b. Any editing that took place to form a text is part of the inspired text
 - i. The author is not inspired.
 - ii. The text is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - c. Accepting the reality that there is intentional editorial shaping is important to understanding the works as they are. (The structure and arrangement of the books is as important as the content) *effects how we think of narratives particularly
 - i. Book of Psalms is not a like simply an ancient hymnal...it's a book divided into 5 parts
 1. Psalm 41:13
 2. Psalm 72:19
 3. Psalm 89:52
 4. Psalm 106:48
 5. Psalm 146-150
 - ii. The Gospel's are not chronological biographies, they are arranged to tell a story
 1. Luke 1:1-4 (Acts 1:1-3)
 2. John 20:30-31; 21:25
 - iii. The order of the Hebrew Scriptures was intentional**
2. We must consider each textual work within to the broader collection and conversation to which they were contributing.
 - a. Important setting is not necessarily that of the historical event(s) but of the canonical form or the work. (Canonical Context)
 - b. How does this 'work' continue and contribute to the conversation of 'the story of God' for the people of that time?
 - i. It's not just about where they have been as a people
 - ii. It's about where they are going as people (i.e. future hope)
 - c. Canonical context still understands that the text has a center.
 - i. The Bible is not to be read as flat document, but a dynamic layered document.
 1. Hebrews 1:1-3
 2. John 1:18
 - ii. What is the center of the Bible? (Jesus)
 1. Luke 24:26-27 and 24:44-45
 2. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
 - d. Did the NT authors think they were contributing to Scripture?
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 14:37-38
 - iii. 2 Peter 3:15-16
 1. *letters = *graphe* = Scripture
 2. *other=another of the same kind
 - iv. It used to be said that the New Testament writers "didn't think they were writing 'Scripture.'" That is hard to sustain historically today. The fact that their writings were, in various senses, "occasional"...is not to the point. At precisely those points of urgent need (when, for instance, writing Galatians or 2 Corinthians) Paul is most conscious that he is writing as one authorized, by the apostolic call he had received from Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Spirit, to bring life and order to the church by his words. (N.T. Wright, *The Last Word*, 51)

Application:

1. Read the books of the Bible as they are and as a whole.
2. Read each book of the Bible within the broader collection of text (i.e. the Canon).
3. Read each book considering the setting at the time of canonical form of the book (i.e. Canonical Context).
4. Read the Bible in light of Jesus (more on this in weeks to come).