

The Doctrine of Scripture (2)

The Canonicity, Transmission & Translation of the Bible

Canonicity (pt 2)

The Expansion of the Canon: *New Testament Canonicity*

- What necessitates the expansion of the canon of Scripture?
 - the coming of Jesus the Messiah in fulfillment of the Scriptures (“new covenant”)
 - the need for an authoritative record and interpretation of Jesus’ coming

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Internal Evidences

1. Jesus
 - His teaching was authoritative like Scripture (Matt. 5:17-48; 7:29)
 - He anticipated authoritative teaching through the apostles (Matt. 28:20; John 14:26, 16:13)

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Internal Evidences

2. The Apostles
 - *1 Corinthians 14:37*
 - *Galatians 1:6-12*
 - *2 Peter 3:1-2*
 - *2 Peter 3:16* – “the rest of Scripture”

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Key questions:

- *What was the test of canonicity? What was the principle that led to the selection of these books now in our NT?*
- *How and when did this recognition come about?*

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Inadequate View of NT Canonicity

1. “Process” of recognition
 - during the first 200 years of the church numerous letters/documents contended for recognition
 - as Christianity was legalized (A.D. 313) the need for a recognized canon was essential
 - Eusebius (330) produced 50 Bibles for Constantine
 - Council of Carthage (397) – determined the canon

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Inadequate View of NT Canonicity

2. Criteria of Canonicity

- authorship
- orthodoxy
- wide acceptance
- evidence of inspiration

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Historic View of NT Canonicity

1. Only one criterion for canonicity

- *authorship* – apostolic authority (apostolicity)
 - the apostles, including Paul, were appointed by Christ and recognized as His authoritative spokesmen

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Historic View of NT Canonicity

2. Process of production not recognition

- the writings of the apostles were immediately received as authoritative and normative for the church
- the NT canon is limited to the apostolic age – no divinely authoritative writings after the apostles

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Historic View of NT Canonicity

3. Historical recognition

- church leaders and councils in the 4th century did not establish the canon; they simply vindicated what had been long since established
- historical evidence shows that the NT canon was known and recognized before A.D. 150