

Scripture: Theology, Text & Transmission

Companion slides for lesson #10

Popular Misconceptions about the Canon

*“The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman Emperor **Constantine**... [He] commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up and burned.”*

-- from Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, p. 251, 254

Quoted in HGWB p. 58.

Popular Misconceptions about the Canon

“...supporting our faith with ‘The Bible says’ communicates the foundation of our faith is the Bible. As we’ve discovered, it’s not. Not unless there weren’t any Christians until after the Bible was assembled in the fourth century. ‘The Bible says’ insinuates that the roots of our faith go no deeper than the fourth-century decision to combine first-century documents with the Jewish Scriptures.”

– Andy Stanley,
Irresistible: Reclaiming the New That Jesus Unleashed for the World, p. 301

Quoted in SS p. 148, emphasis added.

Threefold OT Canon

| T – Torah (Law) | N – Nevi'im (Prophets) | K – Ketuvim (Writings) |
|------------------|--|---|
| 5 books of Moses | 4 former (Josh, Judg., Sam., Kings) | 3 books (Psalms, Prov. Job) |
| | 4 later (Isa., Jer., Ezek., "The 12" minor prophets) | 5 scrolls (Song of Sol., Ruth, Lamentations, Eccl., Esther) |
| | | 3 others (Dan., Ezra-Neh., Chron.) |

24 book count (4 Ezra, Babylonian Talmud, Jerome, and today's Hebrew Bible) = chart above

22 book count (Josephus and Origen) = combine Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah

39 book count (English Bible) = split Sam., Kings, Chron., Ezra-Neh. into 2 books (+4); split 12 minor prophets (+11)
24+15=39

~ from HWGB, p. 29; and cf. SS, p. 113

The Apocrypha

| Roman Catholic | R.C. Appendix | Greek Orthodox | Slavonic/Russian |
|---|--------------------|--|------------------|
| Tobit, Judith | | All R.C. Apocrypha + Psalm 151 | |
| Additions to Esther | 3 Esdras = | = 1 Esdras = | = 2 Esdras |
| Wisdom of Solomon | 4 Esdras = | - | = 3 Esdras |
| Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) | Prayer of Manasseh | | |
| Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah | | 3 Maccabees | |
| Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah & 3 Jews; Susanna; Bel & the Dragon) | | 4 Maccabees (in appendix to Greek Bible) | |
| 1 & 2 Maccabees | | | |

Also note Ethiopic Church had a wider canon (1 Enoch & Jubilees)

~ from The Apocrypha, NRSV, p. xi

Christian Quotes of the Apocrypha

| Apocryphal book | Quoted or paraphrased |
|---------------------|---|
| Tobit | Polycarp |
| Judith | 1 Clement |
| Sirach | Didache, 1 Clement |
| Wisdom of Solomon | Didache, 1 Clement, and listed in early canon list of NT books! |
| Baruch | Irenaeus, Ambrose, Basil, Clement of Alex., Tertullian, Theodoret – but was believed to be part of Jeremiah |
| Additions to Daniel | Irenaeus |
| Prayer of Manasseh | Apostolic Constitutions |

Early Christian OT Canon lists

| Witness | Torah + Prophets | Writings |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Bryennios List (ca. AD 150) | All | All |
| Melito of Sardis (AD 170) | All | All |
| Origen (AD 220) | All + Ep. of Jer. | All |
| Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 350) | All + Ep. of Jer./Baruch | All |
| Mommsen List (AD 359) | All + 1-2 Maccabees | All + Tobit, Judith, Ps. 151 - Lamentations |
| Hilary of Potiers (AD 367) | All + Letter of Jer. | All + Tobit, Judith |
| Athanasius (AD 367) | All + Ep. of Jer./Baruch | All - Esther |
| Gregory Nazianzus (AD 390) | All | All - Esther |
| Augustine (AD 397) | All + Ep. of Jer./Baruch | All + To, Ju, 1-2 Macc., Wis Of Sol. + Sirach |
| Jerome (AD 403) | All | All |

Origen listing all 27 books in AD 250

“But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing “trumpets hammered thin,” the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles [and Revelation], and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, “I think God displays us apostles last,” and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations (Hom. Jos. 7.1).”

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Michael Kruger, “What is the Earliest Complete List of the Canon of the New Testament?”

[//www.michaeljkruger.com/what-is-the-earliest-complete-list-of-the-canon-of-the-new-testament/](http://www.michaeljkruger.com/what-is-the-earliest-complete-list-of-the-canon-of-the-new-testament/)

Early Christian NT Canon lists

| Witness | Writings |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Origen (AD 220) | All |
| Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 350) | All |
| Augustine (AD 397) | All |
| Jerome (AD 403) | All |

~ from SS, appendix 2