

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE: PART II

The Makeup of God's Word



# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

- The Nature of God's Word (Scripture's Doctrine)
- **The Makeup of God's Word (Scripture's Canon)**
- The Preservation of God's Word (Scripture's Text)
- The Transmission of God's Word (Scripture's Translation, 3 Parts)
- The Interpretation of God's Word (Scripture's Meaning, 6 Parts)



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Canon
  - What it means:



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Canon
  - What it means:

(ok, probably not!)



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Canon
  - What it means:

It is from the Hebrew word *qāneh*, meaning “reed” (Gk: κανών)  
Reeds were used as measuring sticks; the implication is that the  
canon is the measure of God's word



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Canon
  - What it means
  - Why it is important

In order to determine *what* God has spoken to us, we must first recognize *where* God has spoken.



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“We do not have detailed information about the discussion that likely surrounded the inclusion or rejection of writings into the Old Testament.... [Yet] it seems clear that by the time of Jesus, most Jews were in agreement as to their own canon—a list that matches our current Old Testament in content”

Robert Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

<sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Matthew 23:34-45 (cf. Luke 11:49-51)

Not meaning from A-Z! But, rather, from the first recorded murder (Abel, Gen 4:8) to the last (Zechariah, 2 Chr 24:20-22).





# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures

Luke 24:44-45

The Psalms, as the longest book in the OT "writings" was often used as a designation for the entire group



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Tim 3:16-17

The mentioning of a singular "Scripture," as opposed to many "Scriptures," implies that Paul conceived of God's word as a definite and well known group of books



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“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 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. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, 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...



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them.”

Josephus, *Contra Apion*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Jesus affirmed the known canon of his time
  - This canon is undoubtedly the same we have today
  - Paul, likewise, seems to believe the question of "Scripture" settled
  - Therefore, we have good reason to believe our 39 books are indeed what the Jews, Jesus, and the early Church believed were the words of God



# OT Contents

English Protestant	Roman Catholicism	Greek Orthodox	Josephus	Modern Hebrew	1 <sup>st</sup> Century Jewish
<b>Pentateuch:</b>	<b>Pentateuch:</b>	<b>Pentateuch:</b>	<b>Law:</b>	<b>Law:</b>	<b>Law:</b>
Genesis	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis
Exodus	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus
Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus
Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy
<b>Historical:</b>	<b>Former Prophets:</b>	<b>Former Prophets:</b>	<b>Former Prophets:</b>	<b>Former Prophets:</b>	<b>Former Prophets:</b>
Joshua	Joshua	Joshua	Joshua	Joshua	Joshua
Judges	Judges	Judges	Judges + Ruth	Judges	Judges
Ruth	Ruth	Ruth	Samuel a, b	Samuel a, b	Samuel
1 Samuel	1 Samuel	1 Samuel	Kings a, b	Kings a, b	Kings
2 Samuel	2 Samuel	2 Samuel			
1 Kings	1 Kings	1 Kings	<b>Writings:</b>	<b>Writings:</b>	<b>Writings:</b>
2 Kings	2 Kings	2 Kings	Psalms	Psalms	Psalms
1 Chronicles			Job	Job	Job
2 Chronicles	<b>Writings:</b>	<b>Writings:</b>	Proverbs	Proverbs	Proverbs
Ezra	Psalms	Psalms	Song of Songs	Ruth	Ruth
Nehemiah	Job	Job	Ecclesiastes	Song of Songs	Song of Solomon
Esther	Proverbs	Proverbs	Esther	Ecclesiastes	(Songs)
	Ruth	Ruth	Daniel	Lamentations	Ecclesiastes
<b>Poetry:</b>	Song of Solomon	Song of Solomon	Ezra-Nehemiah	Esther	Lamentations
Job	(Songs)	(Songs)	Chronicles a, b	Daniel	Esther
Psalms	Ecclesiastes	Ecclesiastes	<b>Latter Prophets:</b>	Ezra	Daniel
Proverbs	Lamentations	Lamentations	Isaiah	Nehemiah	Ezra-Nehemiah
Ecclesiastes	Esther	Esther	Jeremiah +	Chronicles a, b	Chronicles
Song of Songs	Daniel	Daniel	Lamentations		
	Ezra-Nehemiah	Ezra-Nehemiah	Ezekiel	<b>Latter Prophets:</b>	<b>Latter Prophets:</b>
<b>Major Prophets:</b>	Chronicles	Chronicles		Isaiah	<i>Major Prophets</i>
Isaiah	<b>Latter Prophets:</b>	<b>Latter Prophets:</b>		Jeremiah	Isaiah
Jeremiah	<i>Major Prophets</i>	<i>Major Prophets</i>		Ezekiel	Jeremiah
Lamentations	Isaiah	Isaiah			Ezekiel
Ezekiel	Jeremiah	Jeremiah			
Daniel	Lamentations	Lamentations			
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel			



# OT Contents

English Protestant	Roman Catholicism	Greek Orthodox	Josephus	Modern Hebrew	1 <sup>st</sup> Century Jewish
<b>Minor Prophets:</b>	<b>Minor Prophets</b> <i>(The Book of the 12):</i>	<b>Minor Prophets</b> <i>(The Book of the 12):</i>	<b>Minor Prophets*</b> <i>(The Book of the 12):</i>	<b>Minor Prophets:</b>	<b>Minor Prophets*</b> <i>(The Book of the 12):</i>
Hosea	Hosea	Hosea	Hosea	Hosea	Hosea
Nahum	Nahum	Nahum	Nahum	Nahum	Nahum
Joel	Joel	Joel	Joel	Joel	Joel
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Amos	Amos	Amos	Amos	Amos	Amos
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Zephaniah
Obadiah	Obadiah	Obadiah	Obadiah	Obadiah	Obadiah
Haggai	Haggai	Haggai	Haggai	Haggai	Haggai
Jonah	Jonah	Jonah	Jonah	Jonah	Jonah
Zechariah	Zechariah	Zechariah	Zechariah	Zechariah	Zechariah
Micah	Micah	Micah	Micah	Micah	Micah
Malachi	Malachi	Malachi	Malachi	Malachi	Malachi
	<b>Apocrypha:</b>	<b>Apocrypha:</b>	<i>*(these are considered one book collectively by Josephus)</i>		
	Tobit	Tobit			
	Judith	Judith			
	Addition to Esther	Addition to Esther			
	Wisdom of Solomon	Wisdom of Solomon			
	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)			
	Baruch (+Letter of Jeremiah)	Baruch (+Letter of Jeremiah)			
	Prayer of Azariah	Prayer of Azariah			
	Susanna	Susanna			
	Bel and the Dragon	Bel and the Dragon			
	1 & 2 Maccabees	1 – 4 Maccabees			
		1 Esdras (or 3 Ezra)			
		Prayer of Manasseh			
		Psalm 151			



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

Apocrypha: Additional books added to the OT that Protestants do not consider Scripture, although Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics do (“deuterocanonical”)





# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

The question is, *should* we consider them Scripture?



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“Though Philo quotes all books of the Pentateuch, most of the books of the Prophets and several of the books of the Hagiographa [the OT section including Psalms and Job], often with formulas recognizing the divine authority, he never once quotes a book of the Apocrypha”

Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time...”

Josephus, *Contra Apion*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“You are invited therefore to read it with goodwill and attention, and to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to have rendered some phrases imperfectly. For what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language. Not only this book, but even the Law itself, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books differ not a little when read in the original.”

Prologue to Sirach, *NRSV*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

<sup>45</sup>“‘Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; <sup>46</sup> but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. <sup>47</sup> For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.’”

4 Esdras 14:45-47, *NRSV*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization

“But they [the apocryphal writings] are an invention of heretics, who write them when they choose, bestowing upon them their approbation, and assigning to them a date, that so, using them as ancient writings, they may find occasion to lead astray the simple”

*Athanasius, Festal Letter; 367, a.d.*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

The question is, should we consider them Scripture?

**No.**

Jews didn't. Paul didn't. The translators of the Septuagint didn't. Augustine, Athanasius, Aquinas didn't. And neither did RCC until the Council of Trent in 1546



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

**Pseudepigrapha:** Spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ





# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

Want to be invisible?

“First, then, is the marvelous invisibility. Taking the egg of a Falcon, gild half of it and smear the other half with cinnabar. Wearing this, you will be invisible when you say the [divinely revealed] name”

*Eighth Book of Moses, 234-235*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

Jacob could crush stones in his hands like plaster; Judah jumped around the enemies army like a flea, killing 80,496 armed men in one day.

*Midrash Vayissa'u*



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The Old Testament's Canonization
  - Extra Tidbits:

**Pseudepigrapha:** Spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ

**Mishna:** Authoritative Jewish oral tradition

**Talmud:** Rabbinic commentary on the Mishnah



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Did we need a New Testament canon?

Oral transmission necessitated it

Budding heresies necessitated it

Persecution necessitated it

New forms of binding (the codex) necessitated it



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Did we need a New Testament canon?

<sup>31</sup> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt-- a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD.

Jeremiah 31:31-32



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Did we need a New Testament canon?

I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore.

Ezekiel 37:26



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Did we need a New Testament canon?

And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Luke 22:20

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:25



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Did we need a New Testament canon?

<sup>1</sup> Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. <sup>2</sup> In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Hebrews 1:1-2





# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

How did we recognize our New Testament canon?

3 Tests:

- Apostolicity
- Catholicity
- Theological Unity



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

## Apostolicity

Was the book recognized as being penned by an apostle, or someone who had a close relationship with an apostle?



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

## Apostolicity

### Apostolic Authors:

Paul's epistles

Matthew

John, 1-3 John, Revelation

1 & 2 Peter

James

Hebrews?

### Apostolic Influence:

Mark

Luke – Acts

Jude

Hebrews?



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Catholicity

Was the book recognized by wide geographic regions  
within the Church?



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

## Theological Unity

Was the book recognized to stand in line with theology of the Christian faith as exemplified by the apostles, i.e. the Rule of Faith?



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

  - Test Case: The Book of Revelation

- Strong early reception in the church
- Authored by an apostle
- Rejection began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> C by Gaius, who objected to Millennial ideas – he then misattributed the authorship to a heretic
- Therefore, bumps toward canonization had little to do with historic problems



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

  - Test Case: The Book of 2 Peter

- No theological problems
- Some doubts about Peter's authorship
- Limited in geographical spread
- However, many accepted it as legitimate, and it was used widely after a time



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

Test Case: The Book of 1 Clement

- Clement was unanimously the author; connected to Paul (Phil 4:3) and Peter
- It was widely held and used in the early church
- But some theological problems (OT use, fanatical beliefs [Pheonix!]) but generally solid
- Yet, even with all these advantages, it was still held as a good book, but not Scripture





# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

## ■ The New Testament's Canonization

### Rejected Books:

#### Pseudonymous:

Epistle of Barnabas

2 Clement

Epistle to the Laodiceans

Preaching of Peter

Apocalypse of Peter

Gospel of Thomas

#### Influential, but not included:

1 Clement

Didache

Shepherd of Hermas

Gospel accd. to the Hebrews

#### Geographically Limited:

Gospel accd. to the Egyptians



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization – A Timeline

1. Clement of Rome (c. 60-100) makes loose quotations from Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter.
2. Ignatius (c. 60-117) alludes to Matthew, Luke, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, James, 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation.
3. Polycarp (c. 69-155) recognized at least 16 works as canonical.
4. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) was aware of at least the following biblical books: all 4 gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, and 1 Peter.



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization

5. By approximately 140 the heretic Marcion chose 11 New Testament books as canonical.
6. Irenaeus (c. 130-202) quotes extensively from the NT and identifies the following books as canonical: all 4 gospels, Acts, Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1&2 John, possibly Jude, and Revelation.
7. Eusebius (c. 265-339) identifies the following as books of the NT: the gospels, Acts, Epistles of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation.
8. Athanasius (c. 296-373) identifies all the NT books in his Festal Letter of 367



# THE MAKEUP OF GOD'S WORD

- The New Testament's Canonization
  - The early Church was very careful about the process
  - Books being widely used and “helpful” wasn't enough
  - There were limited books up for consideration
  - In the end, we are right to think that the Church recognized the right books!

