

OLD TESTAMENT CANONICS  
IN OUTLINE

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## THE DEFINITION OF CANONICITY

- I. The Literal Meaning of "Canon"
  - A. The Hebrew Qneh
    1. Ezekiel 40:3:
    2. Ezekiel 42:16:
  - B. The Greek Kanoon
- II. The Metaphorical Meaning of "Canon" and Its Derivatives
  - A. The Primary Meaning
    1. In secular literature
    2. In the New Testament
      - a. Galatians 6:16
      - b. Philippians 3:16
  - B. The Secondary Meaning
- III. The Technical Theological Meaning of "Canon" of Its Derivatives
  - A. The Primary Meaning of the Verb
  - B. The Primary Meaning of the Noun and Adjective (Martin Chemnitz, Examen Concilii Tridentini, VI:3)
- IV. The Implications of Canonicity
  - A. Infallibility
  - B. Absolute Consistency
  - C. Absolute Authority
    1. Historical statements
    2. Commands
      - a. Individual commands
      - b. General commands
        - (1) Civil law
        - (2) Ceremonial law
        - (3) Moral law

## THE SOURCE OF CANONICITY

- I. Erroneous Theories of the Source of a Written Canon
  - A. The Content of a Book (e.g., the Gospel)
  - B. The Readers of a Book (e.g., the Church)
- II. The Only Possible Source of a Written Canon: Divine Authorship
  - A. Its Rationale: The Argument from Supreme Authority
    - 1. There can be no book with supreme authority unless its author possess supreme authority.
    - 2. But the canon is a book with supreme authority.
    - 3. Therefore there can be no canon unless its author possess supreme authority.
    - 4. But only God possesses supreme authority.
    - 5. Therefore there can be no canon unless its author be God.
  - B. Its Effect: The Self-Authentication of the Canon.

## THE CRITERIA OF CANONICITY

- I. The Direct Criterion: Prophetic Authorship
  - A. The Terminology of the Old Testament
    1. 1 Kings 12:22
    2. 1 Kings 14-18
    3. Haggai 1:13
    4. 1 Samuel 9:9; Isaiah 30:9-10
    5. Hosea 9:7; cf. Micah 3:8
    6. Ezekiel 3:17
  - B. The Institution of the Prophetic Office in Israel
    1. Exodus 4:10-17
    2. Exodus 7:1
    3. Exodus 4:28-30
  - C. The Claims of the Prophets Themselves
    1. Concerning their oral message
      - a. 1 Kings 22:14
      - b. Amos 1:3
      - c. Isaiah 1:2
      - d. Jeremiah 1:11
      - e. Ezekiel 1:3
    2. Concerning their written message
      - a. Exodus 24:4; 34:27
      - b. Deuteronomy 27:8
      - c. Isaiah 8:1; 30:8
      - d. Jeremiah 30:2; 36:4, 18, 27-32
  - D. The Claims Made for Some Prophets by Others
    1. Ezra 1:1
    2. Nehemiah 9:30
    3. Zechariah 7:12

E. The Reluctance of Some Prophets

1. Amos 3:8
2. Jeremiah 20:9
3. Numbers 22-24; 2 Peter 1:21

II. The Indirect Criteria

A. The Immediate (Original) Indirect Criteria

1. The enunciation of the criteria
  - a. Exodus (4:1-9; 30-31)
  - b. Deuteronomy (13:1-5; 18:21-22)
2. The application of the criteria
  - a. Micah (5:2)
  - b. Zechariah (9:9)
  - c. Daniel (9:25)
  - d. Ezekiel (26)

B. The Testimony of Contemporaries

1. Joshua 1:7-8
2. Daniel 9:2
3. Jeremiah 26:18
4. Ezra 5:1

C. The Testimony of Ancient Jewry in General

D. The Indirect Criterion Par Excellence

THE GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE CRITERIA

I. Definitive Evidence of the Scope of the Old Testament Canon

A. The Ascription of the Palestinian Jewish Canon to Prophets

- 1. The ascription of the Pentateuch to Moses
- 2. The ascription of the other books to other prophets

a. Individually

- (1) Matthew 1-2
- (2) Matthew 24:15
- (3) Acts 2:29-30

b. Collectively

- (1) Matthew 5:17
- (2) Luke 16:16
- (3) Acts 24:14
- (4) Luke 24:25-27
- (5) Matthew 11:13

B. The Designation of the Palestinian Jewish Canon as a Norm

1. As "scripture"

- a. Matthew 21:42-43; Psalm 118
- b. Matthew 22:29
- c. Matthew 26:54, 56
- d. John 13:18
- e. John 17:12
- f. Luke 24:45
- g. John 7:38
- h. John 10:35; cf. 5:18

## 2. As "the law"

- a. Matthew 5:18
- b. John 10:34; Psalm 82:6
- c. John 15:25; Psalm 35:19

## C. The Ascription of the Palestinian Jewish Canon to God

## 1. Statements of Christ

- a. John 10:35
- b. Mark 7:9-13
- c. Matthew 22:43; Psalm 110; 2 Samuel 23:2
- d. Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 2:24

2. The loci classici of the apostles

- a. 2 Timothy 3:16
- b. 2 Peter 1:21

## D. The Ascription of the Custodianship of the Old Testament Canon to the Jews

- 1. Romans 3:2
- 2. Matthew 23:2-3
- 3. Acts 23:6-10
- 4. Acts 26:5

## II. Corroborating Evidence of the Scope of the Old Testament Canon

## A. The Limitation of Old Testament History to the Palestinian Jewish Canon

- 1. Matthew 23:35
- 2. 2 Chronicles 24:20

## B. The Extensive Use of the Palestinian Jewish Canon

- 1. Citations of canonical writings
- 2. Supposed citations of pseudo-canonical writings



- a. Jude 9; cf. the Assumption of Moses
- b. Jude 14; cf. 1 Enoch 1:9
  - (1) Considerations
    - (a) The tense of the verb in Jude 14
    - (b) The nature of Enochian literature
    - (c) The lack of certain formulae in Jude 14
  - (2) Conclusions (cf. Acts 17:38; Titus 2:12)

## THE SPECIFIC APPLICATION OF THE CRITERIA OF CANONICITY

- I. The Homologoumena
- II. The So-Called Antilegomena
  - A. The supposed dispute concerning these books in general
    1. Its historical background: Shammai and Hillel
    2. Questions concerning its nature
  - B. The supposed dispute concerning each book in particular
    1. Ecclesiastes
      - a. Yadaim 3:5
      - b. Shabbath 30b
      - c. Ecclesiastes 12:13
    2. The Song of Solomon (Yadaim 3:5)
    3. Ezekiel (Shabbath 13b)
    4. Proverbs
      - a. Shabbath 30b
      - b. Proverbs 26:4-5
    5. Esther
      - a. Suggested evidence (1:20; 5:4,13; 7:7)
      - b. Definite evidence (4:13-14)
  - C. The canonicity of these books
    1. The canon enumerations of the early Christian era
      - a. Numerical references
        - (1) 2 Esdras
        - (2) Taanith (8)
        - (3) Shemoth Rabbah (156)
        - (4) Koheleth Rabbah (116)
        - (5) Josephus, Contra Apionem (I,8)
        - (6) Tertullian
        - (7) Hilary of Poitiers

## b. Lists

- (1) Baba Bathra (14-15)
- (2) Melito of Sardis
- (3) Origen
- (4) Eusebius
- (5) Athanasius
- (6) Gregory of Nazianzus
- (7) Amphilochus
- (8) Cyril of Jerusalem
- (9) Jerome
- (10) The Supposed Canon of the Council of Laodicea

## 2. Ezekiel

- a. 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ezekiel 37:27
- b. 2 Corinthians 6:17; Ezekiel 20:34

## 3. Proverbs

- a. Romans 12:20
- b. 2 Peter 2:22
- c. James 4:6

## 4. The School of Hillel

## 5. The Song of Solomon and Esther

## 6. The Song of Solomon in particular

## III. The Pseudepigrapha

## A. General remarks

## B. Specific examples

1. 1 Enoch (including the Book of Noah)
2. 2 Enoch (the Book of the Secrets of Enoch)
3. The Books of Adam and Eve
4. The Martyrdom of Isaiah

5. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
6. The Jewish Sibylline Oracles
7. The Testament of Moses
8. 2 Baruch (the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch)
9. 3 Baruch (the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch)
10. The Psalms of Solomon
11. 3 Maccabees
12. 4 Maccabees
13. The Book of Jubilees

## THE APOCRYPHA

- I. Preliminary Remarks
- II. General Isagogics of the Apocrypha
  - A. Language
  - B. Authorship
  - C. Genre
    - 1. Historical
    - 2. Didactic
    - 3. Devotional
    - 4. Epistolary
    - 5. Apocalyptic
  - D. Date
  - E. Value
    - 1. Historical (1 Maccabees 3:58-4:25)
    - 2. Religious
      - a. With reference to New Testament exegesis
        - (1) Background information (e.g., 2 Esdras 13)
        - (2) Possible usage
          - (a) Romans 1:20-32; Wisdom 13-14
          - (b) Romans 9:21; Wisdom 15:17
          - (c) Hebrews 1:3; Wisdom 7:26
          - (d) Ephesians 6:13-17; Wisdom 5:18-20
          - (e) Matthew 6:14; Sirach 28:2
      - b. With reference to the history of doctrine
      - c. With reference to intrinsic merits
        - (1) Examples of faith (e.g., 2 Maccabees 7)
        - (2) Statements of truth (e.g., 1 Esdras 4:41; Sirach 2:10)

## F. Canonicity

1. The authentic position
  - a. The prologue to Ecclesiasticus
  - b. 1 Maccabees 4:44-46
  - c. 1 Maccabees 14:41
  - d. 1 Maccabees 9:27
2. The alternate positions
  - a. The Palestinian canon theory
    - (1) Its rationale
    - (2) Its invalidity
  - b. The Alexandrian canon theory
    - (1) Its rationale
    - (2) Its invalidity
      - (a) Psalm 151
      - (b) Philo Judaeus
      - (c) Aquila
      - (d) The contents of the Septuagint
      - (e) The relationship between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism
  - c. The open canon theory
    - (1) Its rationale
    - (2) Its invalidity
      - (a) The Septuagint
      - (b) The canon enumerations of the early Christian era
      - (c) The custodianship of the Old Testament canon  
(Rom. 3:2, etc.)

## III. Special Isagogics of the Apocrapha

### A. 1 Esdras

- B. 2 Esdras
- C. Tobit
- D. Judith
- E. Additions to Esther
- F. Wisdom of Solomon
- G. Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach
- H. Baruch
- I. Letter of Jeremiah
- J. Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Youths
- K. Susanna
- L. Bel and the Dragon
- M. Prayer of Manasseh
- N. 1 Maccabees
- O. 2 Maccabees

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE CANON

### I. The Hebrew Form

#### A. The Number of Divisions

##### 1. The (earlier) twofold division

###### a. The usage of the New Testament

(1) Matthew 5:17

(2) Luke 16:16

###### b. The usage of the apocrypha (2 Maccabees 15:9)

###### c. The usage of the Qumran community (1 QS I, 3; VIII, 15)

###### d. The construction of the Septuagint

##### 2. The (standard) threefold division

###### a. The prologue to Ecclesiasticus

###### b. Luke 24:44 possibly

###### c. Philo (De Vita Contemplativa III, 25)

###### d. Josephus (Contra Apionem I, 8)

###### e. Baba Bathra 14b-15a

#### B. The Number of Books

##### 1. The (standard) twenty-four book division

###### a. The Law (Torah) (5)

(1) B<sup>e</sup>rēshīth

(2) Sh<sup>e</sup>mōth

(3) Wayyiqra'

(4) B<sup>e</sup>midhbar

(5) Hadd<sup>e</sup>bārīm



## b. The Prophets (Nebhi'im) (8)

## (1) The Former Prophets (4)

- (a) Yehōshua
- (b) Shōphēṭīm
- (c) Sheṁū'ēl
- (d) Melakhīm

## (2) The Latter Prophets

## (a) The Major Prophets (3)

- [1] Yēsha'yāhū
- [2] Yirmeyāhū
- [3] Yehēzqē'l

## (b) The Minor Prophets: The Twelve or Dodekapropheton (1)

- [1] Hōshēa'
- [2] Yo'ēl
- [3] 'āmōs
- [4] 'ōbhadyāh
- [5] Yōnāh
- [6] Mikhāh
- [7] Naḥūm
- [8] Ḥ<sup>a</sup>bhaqqūq
- [9] Ṣ<sup>e</sup>phanyāh
- [10] Haggay
- [11] Z<sup>e</sup>kharyāh
- [12] Mal'akhi

## c. The Writings or Hagiographa (Kethubhim) (11)

## (1) The Poetic Writings (3)

- (a) Tehillim
- (b) Mishlē
- (c) 'iyobh

## (2) The Five Rolls or Scrolls (Megilloth) (5)

(a) Shīr-Hashshīrīm

(b) Rūth

(c) 'ēkah

(d) Qōheleth

(e) 'ester

## (3) The Historical Writings (3)

(a) Dāniyē'l

(b) 'ezra'-Nehemyāh

(c) Dibre-Hayyāmīm

## 2. The twenty-two book division

a. Josephus (Contra Apionem I, 8)b. Jerome (Prologus Galeatus)

## II. The Topical Division

## A. Its History

1. The Septuagint

2. The Vulgate

3. The English version

## B. Its Value

1. The books of law: necessity (5)

a. Genesis

b. Exodus

c. Leviticus

d. Numbers

e. Deuteronomy

2. The books of history: preparation (12)
  - a. Joshua
  - b. Judges
  - c. Ruth
  - d. I Samuel
  - e. II Samuel
  - f. I Kings
  - g. II Kings
  - h. I Chronicles
  - i. II Chronicles
  - j. Ezra
  - k. Nehemiah
  - l. Esther
3. The books of poetry: aspiration (5)
  - a. Job
  - b. Psalms
  - c. Proverbs
  - d. Ecclesiastes
  - e. Song of Solomon
4. The books of prophecy: expectation (17)
  - a. Isaiah
  - b. Jeremiah
  - c. Lamentations
  - d. Ezekiel
  - e. Daniel
  - f. Hosea
  - g. Joel
  - h. Amos

- i. Obadiah
- j. Jonah
- k. Micah
- l. Nahum
- m. Habakkuk
- n. Zephaniah
- o. Haggai
- p. Zechariah
- q. Malachi

## ALTERNATE THEORIES OF CANONICITY

### I. Older Critical Theories

#### A. Antiquity as Determinative of Canonicity (J. G. Eichhorn)

1. Delineation of the theory
2. Responses
  - a. Its logical groundlessness
  - b. Its historical groundlessness

#### B. Composition in Hebrew as Determinative of Canonicity (F. Hitzig)

1. Delineation of the theory
2. Responses
  - a. Its logical groundlessness
  - b. Its historical groundlessness

#### C. Agreement with the Torah as Determinative of Canonicity (G. Wildeboer)

1. Delineation of the theory
2. Responses
  - a. Its logical groundlessness
  - b. Its historical groundlessness

### II. More Current Theories

#### A. Valuable Religious Content as Determinative of Canonicity (e.g., the Gospel)

1. Delineation of the theory (especially in Elimate canonicity)
2. Responses
  - a. Its logical groundlessness
  - b. Its historical groundlessness
  - c. Its self-contradictory result
  - d. Its subjectivity
    - (1) In definition
    - (2) In application

V. The Church as Determinative of Canonicity

1. Varieties of the theory

- a. Traditional Romanism
- b. Modern higher criticism

2. Responses

- a. Its logical groundlessness (cf. John 16:13)
- b. Its historical groundlessness
- c. Its self-contradictory result
- d. Its subjectivity
  - (1) In definition
  - (2) In application

## THE HISTORY OF THE CANON

### I. The Formation of the Canon

#### A. The Critical View

##### 1. Delineation

- a. The fixation of the Pentateuch (c. 400 B.C.)
- b. The fixation of the Prophets (c. 200 B.C.)
- c. The fixation of the Writings (c. 100 A.D. by the "Council of Jamnia")

##### 2. Response

#### B. The Authentic View

##### 1. Contemporary acceptance of the books of the prophets and the gradual growth of the canon

- a. Deuteronomy 17:18;31:9,24-26
- b. Joshua 24:26
- c. 1 Samuel 10:25
- d. Ezekiel 13:9
- e. 2 Chronicles 34:15
- f. 2 Kings 25:9

##### 2. The use of copies and collections

- a. Deuteronomy 17:18-19
- b. Jeremiah 49:14-16; Obadiah 1-4
- c. Jeremiah 26:17-18; Micah 3:12
- d. Isaiah 12; Psalm 27:1
- e. Zechariah 9:10; Psalm 72:8
- f. 1 Chronicles 15:16-22
- g. Daniel 9:2

##### 3. The end of the canon's growth

- a. The Palestinian Jewish canon
- b. Josephus (Contra Apionem I,8)

- c. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 7-8, 24)
- d. The apocrypha
  - (1) The Prologue to Ecclesiasticus
  - (2) 1 Maccabees
    - (a) 4:44-46
    - (b) 9:27
    - (c) 14:41
- e. The Qumran community (1 QS IX, 11)
- f. The pseudepigrapha
- 4. The fixation of the canon
  - a. The need of the theocracy (Mal. 3:1)
  - b. The work of Nehemiah (2 Macc. 2:13)
  - c. The Ezra Legend (2 Esdras 14)
  - d. The work of the Great Synagogue (Baba Bathra 14b-15a)
  - e. The place of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles
  - f. The Jewish tradition (Kimchi; Levita)

## II. The Treatment of the Canon

### A. In Ancient Times

- 1. The debates between the schools of Shammai and Hillel
- 2. The Academy of Jabneh: the discussion of Ecclesiastes and possibly the Song of Solomon at Jamnia
- 3. The church fathers of the second and third centuries
  - a. The majority
  - b. The minority
    - (1) Melito of Sardis
    - (2) Origen
    - (3) Africanus



4. The Greek fathers of the fourth century
    - a. Eusebius
    - b. Athanasius
    - c. Cyril of Jerusalem
    - d. Gregory of Nazianzus
    - e. Amphilochus
    - f. Epiphanius
  5. Augustine and the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397 and 419)
  6. Jerome and the Vulgate
- B. In Medieval Times
1. The Decretum Gelasianum (probably indicative of Roman usage at the beginning of sixth century)
  2. The Medieval Vulgate
  3. The theologians of medieval times
    - a. The majority
    - b. The minority
      - (1) Gregory the Great
      - (2) Walafrid Strabo
      - (3) Hugh of St. Victor
      - (4) Hugh of St. Cher
      - (5) Nicholas of Lyra
  4. John Wyclif
- C. In Modern Times
1. Carlstadt (Andreas Bodenstein): De Canonicis Scripturis Libellus (1520)
  2. Luther and the Confessors
  3. The Council of Trent (April 8, 1546)
  4. The Sixto-Clementine Vulgate of 1592

5. The Book of Common Prayer (1549) and the Thirty-nine Articles (1563)
6. The appearance of copies of the English Bible without the apocrypha (1599)
7. The King James Version of 1611
8. The Westminster Confession (1646)
9. The Confession of Dositheus (1672)
10. The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion (1784)