

~**CANON (1100)**

(Of the Bible)

· **Hebrew Scriptures**

· **Christian Greek Scriptures**

- **Originally the reed Hebrew, *qa-neh*' served as a rule or measuring device.**

- **And he proceeded to bring me there, and, look! There was a man. His appearance was like the appearance of copper, and there was a flax cord in his hand, and a **measuring reed**, and he was standing in the gate. (Ezekiel 40:3)**

- **And the man began to speak to me; Son of man, see with your eyes, and with your ears hear, and set your heart upon all that I am showing you, because for the purpose of my showing you, you have been brought here. Tell everything that you are seeing to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 40:4)**

- **And, look! There was a wall outside the house all round about. And in the hand of the man there was the measuring reed of six cubits, by a cubit and a handbreadth. And he began to measure the breadth of the thing built, **one reed**, and the height, **one reed**. (Ezekiel 40:5)**

- **Then he came to the gate, the front of which is toward the east, and went up by its steps. And he began to measure the threshold of the gate, one reed in width, and the other threshold, **one reed** in width. (Ezekiel 40:6)**

- **And the guard chamber was one reed in length and **one reed** in width, and between the guard chambers there were five cubits, and the threshold of the gate beside the porch of the gate toward the interior was **one reed**. (Ezekiel 40:7)**

- **And he proceeded to measure the porch of the gate toward the interior, **one reed**. (Ezekiel 40:8)**

- **And I saw that there was a high platform for the house all around. As regards the foundations of the side chambers, there was a **full reed** of six cubits to the joining. (Ezekiel 41:8)**

- He measured the eastern side with the **measuring reed**. It was **five hundred reeds**, by the **measuring reed**, round about. (**Ezekiel 42:16**)
- He measured the northern side, **five hundred reeds**, by the **measuring reed**, round about. (**Ezekiel 42:17**)
- The southern side he measured, **five hundred reeds**, by the **measuring reed**. (**Ezekiel 42:18**)
- He went around to the western side. He measured **five hundred reeds**, by the **measuring reed**. (**Ezekiel 42:19**)
- The apostle Paul applied Greek *ka-non'* to the **territory** measured out as his assignment, and again to the **rule of conduct** by which Christians were to measure how they acted.
- For our part we will boast, not outside our assigned boundaries, but according to the **boundary of the territory** that God **apportioned** to us by **measure**, making it reach even as far as you. (**2 Corinthians 10:13**)
- Really we are not **overstretching ourselves** as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in declaring the Good News about the Christ. (**2 Corinthians 10:14**)
- No, we are not boasting outside our **assigned boundaries** in the labors of someone else, but we entertain hope that, as your faith is being increased, we may be made great among you with reference to our territory. Then we will abound still more. (**2 Corinthians 10:15**)
- To declare the Good News to the countries beyond you, so as not to **boast in someone else's territory** where things are already prepared. (**2 Corinthians 10:16**)
- And all those who will **walk orderly by this rule of conduct**, upon them be peace and mercy, even upon the Israel of God. (**Galatians 6:16**)
- The Bible **canon** came to denote the **catalog of inspired books worthy of being used as a straightedge in measuring faith, doctrine, and conduct**.

See Also BIBLE

- The mere writing of a religious book, its preservation for hundreds of years, and its esteem by millions do not prove it is of divine origin or **canonical**. It must bear credentials of Divine Authorship demonstrating that it was inspired by God. The apostle Peter states,
- For **prophecy was at no time brought by man's will**, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by Holy Spirit. (**2 Peter 1:21**)
- An examination of the Bible **canon** shows that its contents measure up to this criterion in every respect.

•• Hebrew Scriptures

- The Bible began with the writings of Moses, **1513 B.C.E.** In these are preserved God's commandments and precepts to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as the regulations of the Law covenant.
- What is called the **Pentateuch** includes the **five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy**. Job, apparently also written by Moses, fills in history after the death of Joseph **1657 B.C.E.**, and before Moses proved himself to be an integrity-keeping servant of God, a time when there was no one like Job in the earth.
- And Yehowah went on to say to Satan; Have you set your heart upon my servant Job, that there is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad? (**Job 1:8**)
- And Yehowah went on to say to Satan; Have you set your heart upon my servant Job, that there is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad? Even yet he is holding fast his integrity, although you incite me against him to swallow him up without cause. (**Job 2:3**)
- Moses also wrote (**Psalms Chapter 90**) and, possibly. (**Psalms Chapter 91**)
- That these writings of Moses were of **divine origin, inspired of God, canonical**, and a **safe guideline for pure worship**, there can be no

doubt, in the light of internal evidence. It was not through Moses initiative that he became the leader and commander of the Israelites, at first Moses drew back at the suggestion.

- **And now come and let me send you to Pharaoh, and you bring my people the sons of Israel out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:10)**
- **However, Moses said to the true God; Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I have to bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? (Exodus 3:11)**
- **Moses now said to Yehowah; Excuse me, Yehowah, but I am not a fluent speaker, neither since yesterday nor since before that nor since your speaking to your servant, for I am slow of mouth and slow of tongue. (Exodus 4:10)**
- **At that Yehowah said to him; Who appointed a mouth for man or who appoints the speechless or the deaf or the clear-sighted or the blind? Is it not I, Yehowah? (Exodus 4:11)**
- **So now go, and I myself shall prove to be with your mouth and I will teach you what you ought to say. (Exodus 4:12)**
- **But he said, Excuse me, Yehowah, but send, please, by the hand of the one whom you are going to send. (Exodus 4:13)**
- **Then Yehowah's anger grew hot against Moses and he said; Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I do know that he can really speak. And, besides, here he is on his way out to meet you. When he does see you, he will certainly rejoice in his heart. (Exodus 4:14)**
- **Rather, God raised Moses up and invested in him such miraculous powers that even Pharaoh's magic-practicing priests were compelled to acknowledge that what Moses did originated with God.**
- **However, Moses in answering said; But suppose they do not believe me and do not listen to my voice, because they are going to say; Yehowah did not appear to you. (Exodus 4:1)**
- **Then Yehowah said to him; What is that in your hand? To which he said; A rod. (Exodus 4:2)**
- **Next he said; Throw it on the earth. So he threw it on the earth,**

and it became a serpent, and Moses began to flee from it.
(Exodus 4:3)

- Yehowah now said to Moses; Thrust your hand out and grab hold of it by the tail. So he thrust his hand out and grabbed hold of it, and it became a rod in his palm. (Exodus 4:4)
- In order, that, to quote him, they may believe that Yehowah the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you. (Exodus 4:5)
- Then Yehowah said to him once more; Stick your hand, please, into the upper fold of your garment. So he stuck his hand into the upper fold of his garment. When he drew it out, why, here his hand was stricken with leprosy like snow! (Exodus 4:6)
- After that he said; Return your hand into the upper fold of your garment. So he returned his hand into the upper fold of his garment. When he drew it out of the upper fold of his garment, why, here it was restored like the rest of his flesh! (Exodus 4:7)
- And it must occur that, to quote him, if they will not believe you and will not listen to the voice of the first sign, then they will certainly believe the voice of the later sign. (Exodus 4:8)
- Still, it must occur that, if they will not believe even these two signs and will not listen to your voice, then you will have to take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry land, and the water that you will take from the Nile River will certainly become, yes, it will indeed become blood on the dry land.
(Exodus 4:9)
- Yehowah now said to Moses; Say to Aaron, stretch your rod out and strike the dust of the earth, and it must become gnats in all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 8:16)
- And they proceeded to do this. So Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and the gnats came to be on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 8:17)
- And the magic-practicing priests tried to do the same by their secret arts, in order to bring forth gnats, but they were unable. And the gnats came to be on man and beast. (Exodus 8:18)

- Hence the magic-practicing priests said to Pharaoh; It is the finger of God! But Pharaoh's heart continued to be obstinate, and he did not listen to them, just as Yehowah had spoken. (Exodus 8:19)
- So it was **not Moses' personal ambition to be an orator and writer**. Rather, in obedience to God's command and with the divine credentials of Holy Spirit, Moses was moved first to speak and then to write down part of the Bible **canon**.
- Yehowah now said to Moses; **Write this as a memorial** in the book and propound it in Joshua's ears, I shall completely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens. (Exodus 17:14)
- Yehowah himself set the precedent for having laws and commandments written down. After speaking to Moses in Mount Sinai, Yehowah **proceeded to give Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone written on by God's finger**.
- Now as soon as he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai he proceeded to give Moses **two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone written on by God's finger**. (Exodus 31:18)
- Later we read, And Yehowah went on to say to Moses; **Write down for yourself these words**.
- And Yehowah went on to say to Moses; Write down for yourself these words, because it is in accordance with these words that I do conclude a covenant with you and Israel. (Exodus 34:27)
- Yehowah, therefore, was the one who communicated with Moses and instructed him to write down and preserve the first five books of the Bible **canon**. No council of men made them **canonical**, from their inception they had divine approval.
- As soon as Moses had finished writing the words of this Law in a book; he commanded the Levites, saying; Taking this book of the law, you must place it at the side of the ark of the covenant of Yehowah your God, and it must serve as a witness there against you.
- Then Moses wrote this Law and gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, the carriers of the ark of Yehowah's covenant, and to all the

older men of Israel. (**Deuteronomy 31:9**)

- And it came about that as soon as Moses had finished writing the words of this Law in a book until their completion. (**Deuteronomy 31:24**)
- Moses began to command the Levites, the carriers of the ark of Yehowah's covenant, saying; (**Deuteronomy 31:25**)
- Taking this book of the Law, you must place it at the side of the ark of the covenant of Yehowah your God, and it must serve as a witness there against you. (**Deuteronomy 31:26**)
- It is noteworthy that Israel acknowledged this record of God's dealings and did not deny these facts. Since the contents of the books in many instances were a discredit to the nation generally, the people might well have been expected to reject them if possible, but this never seems to have been an issue.
- Like Moses, the priestly class were used by God both to preserve these written commandments and to teach them to the people. When the Ark was brought into Solomon's temple, **1027 B.C.E**, nearly 500 years after Moses began writing the Pentateuch, the **two stone tablets were still in the Ark**.
- There was **nothing in the Ark but the two stone tablets which Moses had deposited there in Horeb**, when Yehowah had covenanted with the sons of Israel while they were coming out from the land of Egypt. (**1 Kings 8:9**)
- And 385 years after that, when the very book of the Law was found in the house of Yehowah during Josiah's 18th year, **642 B.C.E**, the same high regard for it was still shown.
- And it came about in the eighteenth year of King Josiah that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the secretary to the house of Yehowah, saying; (**2 Kings 22:3**)
- Later Hilkiyah the High Priest said to Shaphan the secretary; The very book of the Law I have found in the house of Yehowah. So Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he began to read it. (**2 Kings 22:8**)
- Then Shaphan the secretary came in to the king and replied to

- the king and said, Your servants have poured out the money that was to be found in the house, and they keep putting it into the hand of the doers of the work, the ones appointed, in the house of Yehowah. (2 Kings 22:9)**
- **And Shaphan the secretary went on to tell the king, saying; There is a book that Hilkiyah the priest has given me. And Shaphan began to read it before the king. (2 Kings 22:10)**
 - **And it came about that as soon as the king heard the words of the book of the Law, he immediately ripped his garments apart. (2 Kings 22:11)**
 - **Then the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest and Ahikam the son of Shaphan and Achbor the son of Micaiah and Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the kings servant, saying; (2 Kings 22:12)**
 - **Go, inquire of Yehowah in my own behalf and in behalf of the people and in behalf of all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is Yehowah's rage that has been set afire against us over the fact that our forefathers did not listen to the words of this book by doing according to all that is written concerning us. (2 Kings 22:13)**
 - **Accordingly Hilkiyah the priest and Ahikam and Achbor and Shaphan and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah the son of Harhas, the caretaker of the garments, as she was dwelling in Jerusalem in the second quarter, and they proceeded to speak to her. (2 Kings 22:14)**
 - **In turn she said to them; This is what Yehowah the God of Israel has said; Say to the man that has sent you men to me. (2 Kings 22:15)**
 - **This is what Yehowah has said; Here I am bringing calamity upon this place and upon its inhabitants, even all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. (2 Kings 22:16)**
 - **Due to the fact that they have left me and have gone making sacrificial smoke to other gods in order to offend me with all the work of their hands, and my rage has been set afire against this place and will not be extinguished. (2 Kings 22:17)**
 - **And as to the king of Judah who is sending you to inquire of**

Yehowah, this is what you should say to him; This is what Yehowah the God of Israel has said; As regards the words that you have heard. (2 Kings 22:18)

- **For the reason that your heart was soft so that you humbled yourself because of Yehowah at your hearing what I have spoken against this place and its inhabitants for it to become an object of astonishment and a malediction, and then you ripped your garments apart and began weeping before me, I, even I, have heard, is the utterance of Yehowah. (2 Kings 22:19)**
- **That is why here I am gathering you to your forefathers, and you will certainly be gathered to your own graveyard in peace, and your eyes will not look upon all the calamity that I am bringing upon this place. And they proceeded to bring the king the reply. (2 Kings 22:20)**
- **Similarly, there was great rejoicing when, after the return from Babylonian exile, Ezra read from the book of the Law during an eight-day assembly.**
- **And Ezra proceeded to open the book before the eyes of all the people, for he happened to be above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood up. (Nehemiah 8:5)**
- **Then Ezra blessed Yehowah the true God, the great One, at which all the people answered, Amen! Amen! With the lifting up of their hands. They then bowed low and prostrated themselves to Yehowah with their faces to the earth. (Nehemiah 8:6)**
- **And Jeshua and Bani and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, even the Levites, were explaining the Law to the people, while the people were in a standing position. (Nehemiah 8:7)**
- **And they continued reading aloud from the book, from the Law of the true God, it being expounded, and there being a putting of meaning into it, and they continued giving understanding in the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8)**
- **And Nehemiah, that is, the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the copyist, and the Levites who were instructing the people proceeded to say to all the people; This very day is holy to Yehowah your God. Do not mourn or weep. For all the people**

were weeping as they were hearing the words of the Law.
(**Nehemiah 8:9**)

- **And he went on to say to them; Go, eat the fatty things and drink the sweet things, and send portions to the one for whom nothing has been prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel hurt, for the joy of Yehowah is your stronghold. (**Nehemiah 8:10**)**
- **And the Levites were ordering all the people to be silent, saying, Keep quiet! For this day is holy, and do not feel hurt. (**Nehemiah 8:11**)**
- **So all the people went away to eat and drink and to send out portions and to carry on a great rejoicing, for they had understood the words that had been made known to them. (**Nehemiah 8:12**)**
- **And on the second day the heads of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, gathered themselves together to Ezra the copyist, even to gain insight into the words of the law. (**Nehemiah 8:13**)**
- **Then they found written in the Law that Yehowah had commanded by means of Moses that the sons of Israel should dwell in booths during the festival in the seventh month. (**Nehemiah 8:14**)**
- **And that they should make proclamation and cause a call to pass throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying; Go out to the mountainous region and bring in olive leaves and the leaves of oil trees and myrtle leaves and palm leaves and the leaves of branchy trees to make booths, according to what is written. (**Nehemiah 8:15**)**
- **And the people proceeded to go out and bring them in and make booths for themselves, each one upon his own roof and in their courtyards and in the courtyards of the house of the true God and in the public square of the Water Gate and in the public square of the Gate of Ephraim. (**Nehemiah 8:16**)**
- **Thus all the congregation of those who had come back from the captivity made booths and took up dwelling in the booths, for the sons of Israel had not done that way from the days of Joshua the**

son of Nun until that day, so that there came to be very great rejoicing. (**Nehemiah 8:17**)

- **And there was a reading aloud of the book of the Law of the true God day by day, from the first day until the last day, and they went on holding the festival seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (**Nehemiah 8:18**)**
- **Following Moses death, the writings of Joshua, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, were added. Kings David and Solomon also made contributions to the growing canon of Holy Writings.**
- **Then came the prophets from Jonah to Malachi, each contributing to the Bible canon, each endowed with miraculous prophetic ability from God, each in turn meeting the requirements of true prophets as outlined by Yehowah, namely, they spoke in the name of Yehowah, their prophecy came true, and they turned the people toward God.**
- **In case a prophet or a dreamer of a dream arises in your midst and does give you a sign or a portent. (**Deuteronomy 13:1**)**
- **And the sign or the portent does come true of which he spoke to you, saying; Let us walk after other gods, whom you have not known, and let us serve them. (**Deuteronomy 13:2**)**
- **You must not listen to the words of that prophet or to the dreamer of that dream, because Yehowah your God is testing you to know whether you are loving Yehowah your God with all your heart and all your soul. (**Deuteronomy 13:3**)**
- **However, the prophet who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded him to speak or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. (**Deuteronomy 18:20**)**
- **And in case you should say in your heart; How shall we know the word that Yehowah has not spoken? (**Deuteronomy 18:21**)**
- **When the prophet speaks in the name of Yehowah and the word does not occur or come true, that is the word that Yehowah did not speak. With presumptuousness the prophet spoke it. You**

must not get frightened at him. ([Deuteronomy 18:22](#))

- **When Hananiah and Jeremiah were tested on the last two points, both spoke in Yehowah's name, only the words of Jeremiah came to pass. Thus Jeremiah proved to be Yehowah's prophet.**
- **At that Hananiah the prophet took the yoke bar from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it. ([Jeremiah 28:10](#))**
- **And Hananiah went on to say before the eyes of all the people: This is what Yehowah has said; Just like this I shall break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon within two full years more from off the neck of all the nations. And Jeremiah the prophet proceeded to go his way. ([Jeremiah 28:11](#))**
- **Then the word of Yehowah occurred to Jeremiah, after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke bar from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, saying; ([Jeremiah 28:12](#))**
- **Go, and you must say to Hananiah; This is what Yehowah has said; Yoke bars of wood you have broken, and instead of them you will have to make yoke bars of iron. ([Jeremiah 28:13](#))**
- **For this is what Yehowah of armies, the God of Israel, has said; A yoke of iron I will put upon the neck of all these nations, to serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and they must serve him. And even the wild beasts of the field I will give him. ([Jeremiah 28:14](#))**
- **And Jeremiah the prophet went on to say to Hananiah the prophet: Listen, please, O Hananiah! Yehowah has not sent you, but you yourself have caused this people to trust in a falsehood. ([Jeremiah 28:15](#))**
- **Therefore this is what Yehowah has said; Look! I am sending you away from off the surface of the ground. This year you yourself must die, for you have spoken outright revolt against Yehowah. ([Jeremiah 28:16](#))**
- **So Hananiah the prophet died in that year, in the seventh month. ([Jeremiah 28:17](#))**
- **Just as Yehowah inspired men to write, it logically follows that he would direct and watch over the collecting and preserving of these**

inspired writings in order, that mankind would have an enduring **canonical straightedge for true worship.**

- **According to Jewish tradition, Ezra had a hand in this work after the exiled Jews were resettled in Judah. He was certainly qualified for the work, being one of the inspired Bible writers, a priest, and also a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses.**
- **And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah (Ezra 7:1)**
- **The son of Shallum the son of Zadok the son of Ahitub. (Ezra 7:2)**
- **The son of Amariah the son of Azariah the son of Meraioth. (Ezra 7:3)**
- **The son of Zerariah the son of Uzzi the son of Bukki. (Ezra 7:4)**
- **The son of Abishua the son of Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the chief priest. (Ezra 7:5)**
- **The said Ezra himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. (Ezra 7:6)**
- **Consequently some of the sons of Israel and of the priests and the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers and the Nethinim went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. (Ezra 7:7)**
- **At length he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, that is, in the seventh year of the king. (Ezra 7:8)**
- **For on the first day of the first month he himself appointed the going up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. (Ezra 7:9)**
- **For Ezra himself had prepared his heart to consult the Law of Yehowah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice. (Ezra 7:10)**

- And this is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest the copyist, a copyist of the words of the commandments of Yehowah and of his regulations toward Israel. (**Ezra 7:11**)
- Only the books of Nehemiah and Malachi remained to be added. The **canon** of the Hebrew Scriptures, therefore, was well fixed by the end of the **Fifth Century B.C.E.**, containing the same writings that we have today.
- The **canon** of the Hebrew Scriptures was traditionally divided into three sections, the **Law**, the **Prophets**, and the **Writings**, or **Hagiographa**, contained in 24 books, as shown.
- By further combining Ruth with Judges, and Lamentations with Jeremiah, some Jewish authorities counted 22, the same as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In his prologue to the books of Samuel and Kings, Jerome, though seeming to favor counting 22, said; **Some would include both Ruth and Lamentations among the Hagiographa, and thus would get twenty-four books.**
- The Jewish historian Josephus, in answering opponents in his work **Against Apion [I, 38-40,8]** around the year **100 C.E.**, confirms that by then the **canon** of the Hebrew Scriptures had been fixed for a long time.
- **He wrote; We do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time. Of these, five are the books of Moses, comprising the Laws and the traditional history from the birth of man down to the death of the lawgiver. From the death of Moses until Artaxerxes, who succeeded Xerxes as king of Persia, the prophets subsequent to Moses wrote the history of the events of their own times in thirteen books.**
- **The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life.**
- **Canonicity** of a book therefore does not rest in whole or in part on whether some council, committee, or community accepts or rejects it. The voice of such non-inspired men is valuable only as witness to what God himself has already done through his accredited representatives.

- The exact **number** of books in the Hebrew Scriptures is not important, whether a certain two are combined or left separated, nor is the particular order in which they follow one another, since the books remained as separate rolls long after the **canon** was closed.
- Ancient catalogs vary in the order the books are listed, as, for example, one listing places Isaiah after the book of Ezekiel. What is most important, however, **is what books are included**. In reality, only those books now in the **canon** have any solid claim for **canonicity**. From ancient times efforts to include other writings have been resisted.

Two Jewish councils held at Yavne or Jamnia, a little South of Joppa, about **90 C.E.** and **118 C.E.** respectively, when discussing the Hebrew Scriptures, expressly excluded all Apocryphal writings.

- Josephus bears witness to this general Jewish opinion of the Apocryphal writings when he says; **From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets.**
- **We have given practical proof of our reverence for our own Scriptures. For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable, and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to die for them. [Against Apion, I, 41-43 [8]**
- This long historical position of the Jews toward the Hebrew Scripture **canon** is very important, in view of what Paul wrote to the Romans. The Jews, the apostle says, were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God, which included writing and protecting the Bible canon.
- What, then, is the superiority of the Jew, or what is the benefit of the circumcision? (**Romans 3:1**)
- A great deal in every way. First of all, because they were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God. (**Romans 3:2**)
- Acknowledging but by no means establishing the Bible **canon** that God's Holy Spirit had authorized were early councils, Laodicea, **367 C.E.**, Chalcedon, **451 C.E.**, and so-called church fathers who were

singularly unanimous in accepting the established Jewish **canon** and in **rejecting the Apocryphal books**.

- **Examples of such men include:**

Justin Martyr, Christian apologist (died c. 165 C.E.)

Melito, bishop of Sardis [2nd century C.E.]

Origen, Biblical scholar [185?-254? C.E.]

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers [died 367? C.E.]

Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia [from 367 C.E.]

Gregory [257?-332 C.E.]

Rufinus of Aquileia, the learned Translator of Origen [345?-410[C.E.]

Jerome Biblical scholar of the Latin church and compiler of the **Vulgate. [340?-420 C.E.]**

- **In his prologue to the books of Samuel and Kings, after enumerating the 22 books of the Hebrew Scriptures, Jerome says; **Whatever is beyond these must be put in the apocrypha**.**
- **The most conclusive testimony on the **canonicity** of the Hebrew Scriptures is the unimpeachable word of Jesus Christ and the writers of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**. Though they nowhere give an exact number of books, the unmistakable conclusion drawn from what they said is that the **canon** of the Hebrew Scriptures did not contain the Apocryphal books.**
- **If there was not a definite collection of Holy Writings known and recognized by them and those to whom they spoke and wrote, they would not have used such expressions as the Scriptures**
- **In reply Jesus said to them; You are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. (**Matthew 22:29**)**
- **Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, arrived in Ephesus, and he was well versed in the Scriptures. (**Acts of Apostles 18:24**)**
- **The holy Scriptures.**
- **Which he promised aforetime through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. (**Romans 1:2**)**
- **The holy writings.**

- **And that from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15)**
- **The Law, often meaning the whole body of Scripture.**
- **Jesus answered them; Is it not written in your Law; I said; You are gods? (John 10:34)**
- **Therefore the crowd answered him; We heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever, and how is it you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? (John 12:34)**
- **But it is that the word written in their Law may be fulfilled; They hated me without cause. (John 15:25)**
- **The Law and the Prophets, used as a generic term meaning the entire Hebrew Scriptures and not simply the first and second sections of those Scriptures**
- **Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17)**
- **All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them, this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean. (Matthew 7:12)**
- **On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:40)**
- **The Law and the Prophets were until John. From then on the kingdom of God is being declared as Good News, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it. (Luke 16:16)**
- **When Paul referred to the Law, he quoted from Isaiah.**
- **In the Law it is written: With the tongues of foreigners and with the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and yet not even then will they give heed to me, says Yehowah. (1 Corinthians 14:21)**
- **For by those stammering with their lips and by a different tongue he will speak to this people. (Isaiah 28:11)**

- **It is most unlikely that the original Greek Septuagint contained Apocryphal books. But even if some of these writings of doubtful origin crept into subsequent copies of the Septuagint circulated in Jesus day, neither he nor the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from them even though using the Septuagint they never cited as Scripture or the product of Holy Spirit any Apocryphal writing.**
- **So, not only do the Apocryphal books lack internal evidence of divine inspiration and attestation by ancient inspired writers of Hebrew Scriptures but they also lack the stamp of approval by Jesus and his divinely accredited apostles.**
- **However, Jesus did approve the Hebrew canon, referring to the entire Hebrew Scriptures when he spoke of all the things written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms, the Psalms being the first and longest book in the section called the Hagiographa or Holy Writings.**
- **He now said to them; These are my words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all the things written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled. (Luke 24:44)**

See Also APOCRYPHA

- **Jesus words at are also very significant;**
- **That there may come upon you all the righteous blood spilled on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. (Matthew 23:35)**
- **So that the blood of all the prophets spilled from the founding of the world may be required from this generation. (Luke 11:50)**
- **From the blood of Abel down to the blood of Zechariah, who was slain between the altar and the house. Yes, I tell you, it will be required from this generation. (Luke 11:51)**
- **That there may come upon you all the righteous blood spilled on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Time-wise, the prophet Urijah was put to death during the reign of**

Jehoiakim more than two centuries after Zechariah's murder near the end of Jehoash's reign.

- **And there also happened to be a man prophesying in the name of Yehowah, Urijah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. And he kept prophesying against this city and against this land in accord with all the words of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 26:20)**
- **And King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the princes got to hear his words, and the king began seeking to put him to death. When Urijah got to hear of it he at once became afraid and ran away and came into Egypt. (Jeremiah 26:21)**
- **But King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt, Elnathan the son of Achbor and other men with him to Egypt. (Jeremiah 26:22)**
- **And they proceeded to bring Urijah out from Egypt and to bring him to King Jehoiakim, who then struck him down with the sword and cast his dead body into the graveyard of the sons of the people. (Jeremiah 26:23)**
- **So if Jesus wanted to cite the whole list of martyrs, why did he not say from Abel to Urijah? Evidently it was because the instance concerning Zechariah is found at;**
- **And God's spirit itself enveloped Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, so that he stood up above the people and said to them, This is what the true God has said; Why are you overstepping the commandments of Yehowah, so that you cannot prove successful? Because you have left Yehowah, he will, in turn, leave you. (2 Chronicles 24:20)**
- **Finally they conspired against him and pelted him with stones at the king's commandment in the courtyard of Yehowah's house. (2 Chronicles 24:21)**
- **And hence near the end of the traditional Hebrew canon. So in this sense Jesus' statement did embrace all the murdered witnesses of Yehowah mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, from Abel listed in the first book Genesis, to Zechariah cited in the last book, Chronicles, which, by illustration, would be like our saying from Genesis to Revelation.**

•• **Christian Greek Scriptures**

- The writing as well as the collecting of the 27 books comprising the **canon** of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** was similar to that of the Hebrew Scriptures. Christ gave gifts in men, yes, he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers.
- Wherefore he says; When he ascended on high he carried away captives. He gave gifts in men. (**Ephesians 4:8**)
- And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers. (**Ephesians 4:11**)
- With a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:12**)
- Until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:13**)
- With God's Holy Spirit on them they set forth sound doctrine for the Christian congregation and, by way of a reminder, repeated many things already written in the Scriptures.
- For this reason I shall be disposed always to remind you of these things, although you know them and are firmly set in the truth that is present in you. (**2 Peter 1:12**)
- But I consider it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to rouse you up by way of reminding you. (**2 Peter 1:13**)
- Beloved ones, this is now the second letter I am writing you, in which, as in my first one, I am arousing your clear thinking faculties by way of a reminder. (**2 Peter 3:1**)
- However, I am writing you the more outspokenly on some points, as if reminding you again, because of the undeserved kindness given to me from God (**Romans 15:15**)
- Outside the Scriptures themselves there is evidence that, as early as **90-100 C.E.**, at least ten of Paul's letters were collected together. It

is certain that at an early date Christians were gathering together the inspired Christian writings.

- We read that near the close of the **1st Century**, Clement bishop of Rome was acquainted with Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. After him, the letters of both Ignatius bishop of Antioch and Polycarp bishop of Smyrna attest the dissemination of the Pauline letters by the second decade of the **2nd Century**. (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, edited by G. W. Bromiley, 1979, Vol. 1, p. 603)

- These were all early writers Clement of Rome circa **30?-100? C.E**, Polycarp, **69?-155? C.E**, and Ignatius of Antioch **late 1st and early 2nd Centuries C.E**. Who wove in quotations and extracts from various books of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**, showing their acquaintance with such **canonical** writings.

- **Justin Martyr**, died **circa 165 C.E** in his **Dialogue With Trypho**, a Jew (**XLIX**), used the expression it is written when quoting from Matthew, in the same way the Gospels themselves do when referring to the Hebrew Scriptures.

- The same is also true in an earlier anonymous work, **The Epistle of Barnabas (IV)**. **Justin Martyr** in **The First Apology (LXVI, LXVII)** calls the memoirs of the apostles **Gospels**. [*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, pp. 220,139,185,186]

- **Theophilus of Antioch**, **2nd Century C.E**, declared: **Concerning the righteousness which the Law enjoined, confirmatory utterances are found both with the prophets and in the Gospels, because they all spoke inspired by one Spirit of God**. **Theophilus then uses such expressions as says the Gospel quoting**, [*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1962, Vol. II, pp. 114,115, **Theophilus to Autolytus (XII, XIII)**]

- **But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)**

- **However, I say to you that everyone divorcing his wife, except on account of fornication, makes her a subject for adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)**

- **However, I say to you; Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you. (Matthew 5:44)**

- For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? (**Matthew 5:46**)
- But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing. (**Matthew 6:3**)
- **And the divine word gives us instructions;**
- But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing. (**Matthew 6:3**)
- Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax, to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute, to him who calls for fear, such fear, to him who calls for honor, such honor. (**Romans 13:7**)
- Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another, for he that loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. (**Romans 13:8**)
- By the end of the **Second Century** there was no question but that the **canon** of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** was closed, and we find such ones as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian recognizing the **writings comprising the Christian Scriptures as carrying authority equal to that of the Hebrew Scriptures.**
- Irenaeus in appealing to the Scriptures makes no fewer than 200 quotations from Paul's letters. Clement says he will answer his opponents by the **Scriptures which we believe are valid from their omnipotent authority, that is, by the Law and the prophets, and besides by the blessed Gospel.** [*The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. II, p. 409, The Stromata, or Miscellanies.*]
- The **canonicity** of certain individual books of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** has been disputed by some, but the arguments against them are very weak. For critics to reject, for example, the book of Hebrews simply because it does not bear Paul's name and because it differs slightly in style from his other letters is shallow reasoning. **B. F. Westcott** observed that **the canonical authority of the Epistle is independent of its Pauline authorship.** [*The Epistle to the Hebrews, 1892, p. lxxi*]
- Objection on the grounds of unnamed writership is far outweighed by the presence of Hebrews in the **Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 2**

(P 46) dated within 150 years of Paul's death, which contains it along with eight other letters of Paul.

- Sometimes the **canonicity** of small books such as James, Jude, Second and Third John, and Second Peter is questioned on the grounds that these books are quoted very little by early writers. However, they make up all together only one thirty-sixth of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** and were therefore less likely to be referred to.

- In this connection it may be observed that Second Peter is quoted by Irenaeus as bearing the same evidence of canonicity as the rest of the Greek Scriptures. The same is true of Second John. [**The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, pp. 551,557,341,443, Irenaeus Against Heresies**]

- Revelation, also rejected by some, was attested to by many early commentators, including Papias, Justin Martyr, Melito, and Irenaeus.

- The real test of **canonicity**, however, is not how many times or by what non-apostolic writer a certain book has been quoted. The contents of the book itself must give evidence that it is a product of Holy Spirit.

- Consequently, it cannot contain superstitions or demonism, nor can it encourage creature worship. It must be in total harmony and complete unity with the rest of the Bible, thus supporting the authorship of Yehowah God. Each book must conform to the divine pattern of healthful words and be in harmony with the teachings and activities of Christ Jesus.

- Keep holding the pattern of healthful words that you heard from me with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus. (**2 Timothy 1:13**)

- That is why I am sending Timothy to you, as he is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will put you in mind of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation. (**1 Corinthians 4:17**)

- The apostles clearly had divine accreditation and they spoke in attestation of such other writers as Luke and James, the half brother of Jesus. By Holy Spirit the apostles had discernment of inspired utterances as to whether such were of God or not.

- Now there are varieties of gifts, but there is the same spirit. (**1**

Corinthians 12:4)

- To yet another operations of powerful works, to another prophesying, to another discernment of inspired utterances, to another different tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. (**1 Corinthians 12:10**)
- With the death of John, the last apostle, this reliable chain of divinely inspired men came to an end, and so with the Revelation, John's Gospel, and his epistles, the Bible **canon** closed.
- The **66 canonical** books of our Bible in their harmonious unity and balance testify to the oneness and completeness of the Bible and recommend it to us as indeed Yehowah's Word of inspired truth, preserved until now against all its enemies.
- But the saying of Yehowah endures forever. Well, this is the saying; this which has been declared to you as Good News. (**1 Peter 1:25**)
- For a complete listing of the 66 books that make up the entire Bible **canon**, the writers, when the books were completed, and the time covered by each, see Table of Bible Books in Order Completed under BIBLE. individual article for each Bible book.

JEWISH CANON OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Law	The Prophets	The Writings (Hagiographa)
1. Genesis	6) Joshua	14) Psalms
2. Exodus	7) Judges	15) Proverbs
3. Leviticus	8) 1,2 Samuel	16) Job
4. Numbers	9) 1,2 Kings	17) Song of Solomon
5. Deuteronomy	10) Isaiah	18) Ruth
11) Jeremiah	19) Lamentations	
12) Ezekiel	20) Ecclesiastes	
13) The Twelve Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos; Obadiah, Jonah, Micah;	21) Esther	
Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah; Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)	22) Daniel	
	23) Ezra, Nehemiah	
	24) 1,2 Chronicles	

