

Systematic Theology I — Student Handout  
Instructor: Dr. Mike Sage

**Take good notes on separate notebook/legal pad**

Chapter 3: The Canon of Scripture

What You Should Learn From Today's Lecture:

- Define the canon of Scripture and explain why it matters for Christian obedience.
- Understand why adding to or subtracting from God's words is a serious matter.
- Trace the basic development and completion of the Old Testament canon.
- Trace the basic development and recognition of the New Testament canon.
- Explain why the canon is closed and why no further Scripture is to be expected.

1. Explanation and Scriptural Basis

Definition of "canon" and why it is essential:

Key Scripture emphasis: "God's words are our life" and must not be altered:

2. The Old Testament Canon

Where the canon begins (earliest written words):

How the collection grew (Moses, Joshua, prophets):

How and when the Old Testament canon reached completion:

3. The New Testament Canon

Why New Testament Scripture is connected to the apostles:

Early recognition of apostolic writings as Scripture:

How books not written directly by apostles were received:

4. Why the Canon Is Closed

How God's revelation culminates in Christ and why that means finality:

Warnings against adding to or taking away from God's words:

5. Confidence in the Canon

Our confidence based on God's faithfulness:

How the Holy Spirit and historical recognition confirm the canon:

#### Things to Know (Exam Review Section)

1. The canon of Scripture is the list of all the books that belong in the Bible.
2. Scripture is “your very life,” so God’s people must know which writings are God’s words.
3. Adding to or subtracting from God’s words prevents full obedience.
4. The Old Testament canon begins with God’s written words given through Moses.
5. The Old Testament canon reached completion when further prophetic revelation ceased.
6. Jesus and the New Testament authors treated the Hebrew Bible as Scripture, no more and no less.
7. The New Testament canon is connected to apostolic authority and the record of Christ’s work.
8. The church does not make books Scripture; it recognizes what God has authored as Scripture.
9. The canon is closed because God’s climactic revelation is in His Son and recorded in the New Testament.
10. God’s faithfulness is the ultimate foundation for confidence in the canon.
11. A question on the exam will ask if you did the assigned reading.

#### Closing Summary

Chapter 3 teaches that the canon is foundational because God’s people must know which writings are God’s words. The Old Testament and New Testament canon were recognized through God’s work in redemptive history, and the canon is now closed because God’s final revelation is in Jesus Christ and is recorded in Scripture.

#### ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 3 — THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE