

Bibliology: How we got the Bible

ATCO Wednesdays Teaching Series 10/1/25

Lesson Six

THE CANON OF THE OT: In the Reformation Period (1517 – Middle 17th Century)

I. The Old Testament in the Reformation Period (1517 – Mid 17th Century)

- Begins when Martin Luther nails his “95 Theses” to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany (Oct. 31, 1517)
- Centers around the Council of Trent in 1545

II. Before the Council of Trent

- Cardinal Ximenes
 - Major Catholic leader who was responsible for the purity of the Catholic Church
 - **1517** – Finished a Bible that prefaced the Apocrypha books as non-canonical
 - **1522** – This Bible was published five years after Ximenes’ death and after the pope granted license for its distribution
- The Leipzig Disputation
 - **1519** – Debate between Martin Luther and Roman Catholic theologian, Johann Maier von Eck
 - Martin Luther – Apocrypha books are not in the canon and not useful for doctrinal claims, only useful for edification
 - Johann Maier von Eck – Apocrypha books are Scriptural
- Erasmus of Rotterdam
 - **1525**
 - Admitted the importance of Apocrypha books in the church
 - Did not believe Apocrypha books carried the same weight as books from the Hebrew Canon

- Cardinal Cajeton
 - **1532**
 - Tasked with examining Martin Luther's teachings after he had been excommunicated from the Catholic Church
 - Agreed with Luther that Apocrypha and Canon books are different
 - a. Hebrew Canon is Scriptural
 - b. Apocrypha is not Scriptural
- Before the Council of Trent, Protestants and Roman Catholics mostly agreed: (1) The OT Canon is made up of the books from the Hebrew Canon lists (2) The Apocrypha books are not Scriptural, but can be used for edification

III. The Council of Trent (1545 – 1563)

- Three sessions; 25 total meetings
- Met for the purpose of giving a Roman Catholic response to the Reformation of the Protestants
- Listed all the books of the Hebrew Canon and the Apocrypha as Scriptural
- Announced a formal curse (anathema) on anyone who disagreed with them

IV. After the Council of Trent

- Most Roman Catholics – Apocrypha books are Scripturally authoritative
- Most Protestants – Apocrypha books are not Scripturally authoritative¹
 - Good to read; not good for doctrine
 - Books; not Bible
- 1640 edition of The Geneva Bible is the first English Bible to omit the Apocrypha

¹ 1561, Article VI of the Belgic Confession; 1562, Article VI of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles; 1647, Chapter 1.3 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

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