

Bibliology: How we got the Bible

ATCO Wednesdays Teaching Series 9/10/25

Lesson Five

THE CANON OF THE OT: Early Christianity to the Reformation Period (1st Century AD – 1517)

Question to be answered: *How the 39 books of the OT came to be recognized as authoritative Scripture?*

“Canon”

- Means: “authority”
- Not to be confused with “cannon” an instrument of war

Evidence for the Canon

- CANON LISTS
- ANCIENT STATEMENTS
- MANUSCRIPTS
- SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS

The Hebrew Canon – Jewish OT

- 22 Books divided into three groups:
 - 5 books of Moses containing laws and traditions
 - 13 books by prophets who wrote the history of their own times
 - 4 remaining books, containing hymns and instructions for life
- The following groups of books were combined and counted as one book:
 - Judges and Ruth
 - 1 and 2 Samuel

- 1 and 2 Kings
 - 1 and 2 Chronicles
 - Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Jeremiah and Lamentations
 - The 12 minor prophets (Hosea – Malachi)
- The Bible used by Jesus and the New Testament Apostles

The Early Christian Old Testament

- Two major criteria for including a book in the OT Canon:
 - *(1) Was the book in the Hebrew Canon?*
 - *(2) Was the book read and accepted in the churches?*
- **Contents of the Apocrypha**
 - *Six key Apocrypha books in early Christianity

Catholic Apocrypha (or deuterocanonical books and additions)	Greek Orthodox “books to be read” (anaginōskomena)
*Tobit *Judith *Wisdom of Solomon *Ecclesiasticus (aka Ben Sira or Sirach) *1–2 Maccabees Additions to Esther Additions to Daniel (“The Prayer of Azariah,” “The Hymn of the Three Young Men,” Susana, Bel and the Dragon) Baruch (includes Epistle of Jeremiah)	Tobit Judith Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (aka Ben Sira or Sirach) 1–2 Maccabees Additions to Esther Additions to Daniel (“The Prayer of Azariah,” “The Hymn of the Three Young Men,” Susana, Bel and the Dragon) Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah 1 Esdras 3 Maccabees Psalm 151

- Jerome (*Helmed Prologue*) – Two categories of the OT:
 - Canonical (authoritative writings)
 - Edificatory (useful writings)
- AD 200
 - Philo
 - Josephus

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