
SUMMARY

The message from Sunday was in many ways a *part two* from the previous weeks message on transmission. While last week covered the writing down of scripture, this week looks at how the books of the Bible came to be recognized as authoritative and why other books written at this time were not acknowledged as such. This is referred to as the *canon* of scripture.

GROUP QUESTIONS *(For use with your family, roommates, Community or Bible Group, or individually)*

Share something from the message or passages that surprised, encouraged, or troubled you.

Why is the statement below important in understanding the canon?

*The books did not **receive** their authority because they were placed in the canon, rather their authority was **recognized** by the nation of Israel (OT) and by the early church (NT) as having divine authority and were therefore included in the canon.*

Here are the criteria that the Jewish community and the early church seemed to use when they were considering which books made it into the canon. Discuss these. Why would these matter and how would these set the books of scripture apart from other books?

1. It claims to be God's word.
2. It was written by a prophet, apostle, or someone having divine authority.
3. It is in agreement with the rest of the canon.
4. It was recognized as authoritative and from God by Israel (OT) and by the church (NT).

Read Luke 24.44 and Luke 11.49-51. How do these passages demonstrate Jesus' affirmation of the Old Testament? Do you recall how this relates to the Apocrypha?

Read 2 Peter 3.8-18. What is this passage about? What do we learn about scripture from Peter's comments concerning Paul's writings?

Read Hebrews 1.1-3. What is it saying?

This passage shows us that Jesus is the final revelation. The conclusion we make from this is that the Apostolic witness to him (the New Testament) is therefore sufficient. There is no new or secret (gnostic) revelation. The canon is closed with the Apostles writings.

Spend some time discussing this and any other thoughts regarding the formation of the canon. If you have any questions please email Pastor Rob (rob@seasidechurch.com)

RESOURCES

The Journey from Text to Translations, Paul D. Wegner
The Bible Project Podcast: *How to Read The Bible*