

Sabbath School

Topic: WCF 1.2 & 1.3: The Canonical Books of Scripture

Date: 3/22/2020

WCF 1.2

Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these: Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; Of the New Testament: The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistles to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The First and Second Epistles of Peter, The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation. All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.[a]

a: Luke 16:29, Luke 16:31, Ephesians 2:20, 2 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 22:18-19

WCF 1.3

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.[a]

a: Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44, Romans 3:2, 2 Peter 1:21

Related Texts

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q.3. What is the word of God?

A: The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God,[1] the only rule of faith and obedience.

Q.4. How doth it appear that the scriptures are the word of God?

A: The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.

§1. Introduction: What is the Canon?

1. The term canon defined
2. What we mean by canon — rule of faith and practice
3. Is canon only a list of names of books? No, content also.
4. Characteristics of a canonical book:

1. Written by Divine Inspiration
3. Written by Divine Command (Inspiration alone not sufficient)

Commands to write: Ex. 17.14, Dt. 31.19, Is. 8.1, Jer. 36.2, Hab. 2.2, Rev. 1.11

2. Set apart to be a Publick rule of faith by God

"Neither does a book written by some extraordinary servant of God and upon the direction of the Spirit become a part of Holy Scripture unless it is publicly given to the church by divine authority and set apart to be its canon or rule."

(William Ames, trans. John Dykstra Eusden, *The Marrow of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 1.34.9, p. 186.)

§2. Identifying the Canon

1. Internal Marks (WLC 4)
2. External Marks
 - A. Establishment in the Church as a Testimony (Ps. 78.5-6; Rom. 3.2)
 - Papist Abuse Noted
3. Have any Canonical Books Perished? We deny against the Papists.

Mt. 5.18.

Book of Jasher, Epistle to the Laodiceans, etc.?

§3. The Church and the Canon

Does the Church determine the Canon?

§4. Why the Apocrypha is not Canon