

How do we know the canon is now closed (that there will not be any more books added)?

- God said so (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19)
- These truths form the foundation for what we will continue to examine next week
 - Inspiration of Scripture
 - Authority of Scripture
 - Sufficiency of Scripture

Sola Scriptura Part I

The Canon of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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- The canon of Scripture is the list of books that belong in the Bible
- Specifically, the canon includes the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament

How do we know that we have list that God intended?

Old Testament

- The writers of the Old Testament claimed to be writing God's Word (Isaiah 51:6; Jeremiah 36:5-6; Malachi 1:1)
- Both Jesus and the New Testament writers extensively quote from the Old Testament as the Word of God (Matthew 19:5 cf. Genesis 2:24)
- The Old Testament canon was well-established among the Jews by the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, and Jesus never challenged it
- In fact, Jesus essentially affirmed their understanding of the Old Testament canon just before his ascension (Luke 22:44)

- “The Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” was a sort of shorthand that meant the entire Old Testament canon

New Testament

- The New Testament writers recognized that their writings were Scripture
 - Peter considered the letters of Paul to be Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16)
 - Paul considered the writings of Luke to be Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Luke 10:7)
- The New Testament writers asserted an authority for their writing that was reserved for Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; John 21:24)
- The apostles put their writing on the same level as the Old Testament prophets (Ephesians 2:20; 2 Peter 3:2)

How do we know there aren't other books that should have been included?

Apocrypha

- None of the books of the Apocrypha claim to be Scripture
- The Jews knew of the Apocrypha, but did not consider it Scripture

- Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever quote any of the Apocrypha in the New Testament
- There are doctrines in the Apocrypha that contradict Scripture (purgatory, God hears the prayers of the dead, the pre-existence of souls, etc.)
- The early church didn't recognize the Apocrypha as Scripture

False Gospels, Epistles, and Apocalypses

- Books such as the Gospel According to Thomas or the Gospel According to Mary are clear forgeries (usually from years after they claim)
- They contain teachings that are inconsistent with Scripture

Orthodox but Non-Canonical Epistles

- They don't claim to be Scripture
- They often contain minor errors, which does not happen in Scripture

How do we know there are no lost books?

- God has promised to preserve his Word (Isaiah 40:8; Luke 21:33; Psalm 12:6-7)