



HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

BASICS OF LOWER CRITICISM

- Different texts are given different priority
- The reading that best explains the origin of variants should be preferred
- Shorter readings are preferable
- More difficult readings are usually preferable
- Versions that are not harmonized with similar material are preferable
- On infrequent occasions, critics must use conjecture

OUR OBJECTIVES THIS WEEK

- To chart the history of God's people collecting written materials which they saw as inspired
- To view some historical documentation about the solidifying or closing of the canon of the Hebrew Bible
- To discover the Christian approach to what the Jews accepted as Scripture

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COLLECTING INSPIRED WORKS

The Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible—was accepted very early and often as the word of God

- Those who heard Moses (**Exodus 24:7**)
- The leader of the very next generation (**Joshua 23:6-8**)
- The greatest king in Israel's history (**I Chronicles 16:40**)
- Judah's greatest restorer of faithfulness (**II Kings 23:3**)
- Divinely appointed leaders near the close of the Old Testament era (**Nehemiah 8:14**)
- Early and late literary prophets (**Hosea 8:12; Daniel 9:11**)

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COLLECTING INSPIRED WORKS

Moses was neither the only (**Exodus 14:20**; **Numbers 12:6**) nor last (**Deuteronomy 18:15-22**) prophet of his time—others came soon after the time of Moses (**Judges 4:4**; **6:8**) and were soon called upon to write (**I Samuel 10:25**; **I Chronicles 29:29**)

- To simply record history (**II Chronicles 9:29**)
- To preserve their oracles (**Deuteronomy 31:24-26**; **Isaiah 30:8**; **Jeremiah 25:13**; **Ezekiel 43:11**; **Daniel 7:1**)
- To send the word of God elsewhere (**II Chronicles 21:12**; **Jeremiah 29:1**)

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COLLECTING INSPIRED WORKS

Most references to inspiration are internal (within the specific book itself), but there are some exceptions

- Divine origin for psalms, in general
(**II Samuel 23:1-3; I Chronicles 25:1**)
- Apparent reference to a collection of prophetic writings (**Isaiah 34:16**)
- Viewing a more or less contemporary book as the word of God (**Daniel 9:2**)

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WHEN WAS IT COMPLETE?

The apocrypha connects Judas Maccabeus (active c. 165 BC) to a definite collection of writings:

“Judas collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war which had come upon us, and they are still in our possession” (II Maccabees 2:14)

A cessation of prophecy is also described:

“There was a great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them” (I Maccabees 9:27)

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WHEN WAS IT COMPLETE?

Jewish historian Josephus describes the unequaled antiquity of Scripture in ***Against Apion*** (c. 95 AD):

“We do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other: Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but twenty-two, and contain the record of all time. [...] From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets.”

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Books of Moses (the Law):

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

Books of the Prophets:

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Samuel
4. Kings
5. Isaiah
6. Jeremiah
7. Ezekiel
8. The Twelve (Hosea to Malachi)

The Writings (or the Psalms):

1. Psalms
2. Proverbs
3. Job
4. Song of Songs (or Solomon)
5. Ruth*
6. Lamentations*
7. Ecclesiastes
8. Esther
9. Daniel
10. Ezra & Nehemiah
11. Chronicles

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O.T. CANON IN THE N.T.

For believers, Jesus settles the question of what to accept as Scripture (among Old Testament books)

- He quoted freely and authoritatively from the Hebrew Bible (**John 7:38; Matthew 4:1-11; 15:4**)
- He alluded to the same method of grouping the books together that Josephus used and accepted (**Luke 24:44**)
- He even subscribed to the arrangement of books known at the time (**Luke 11:51; Genesis 4:8; II Chronicles 24:20-21**)

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O.T. CANON IN THE N.T.

The apostles and Christian prophets followed suit

- “The Scripture” (**Acts 8:32; Romans 4:3**)
- “The Scriptures” (**Acts 17:11**)
- “The Holy Scriptures” (**Romans 1:2; II Timothy 3:15**)
- “It was written” (**John 2:17**)
- Note that while Jesus and the New Testament writers quote extensively from almost all of the Old Testament, they do not quote from the apocrypha

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