

Canon of Scripture

A Practical and Spiritual Perspective

Canon of Scripture



Timeline and Background

Definitions | Timeline | Manuscripts | Translations



Tying the Old and New Testaments Together

Individually Incomplete | Covenants | Theme



Determining the Canon

Church or God | Authority | Criteria



Essence of the Canon

Everlasting Truth | God Breathed | Perfect

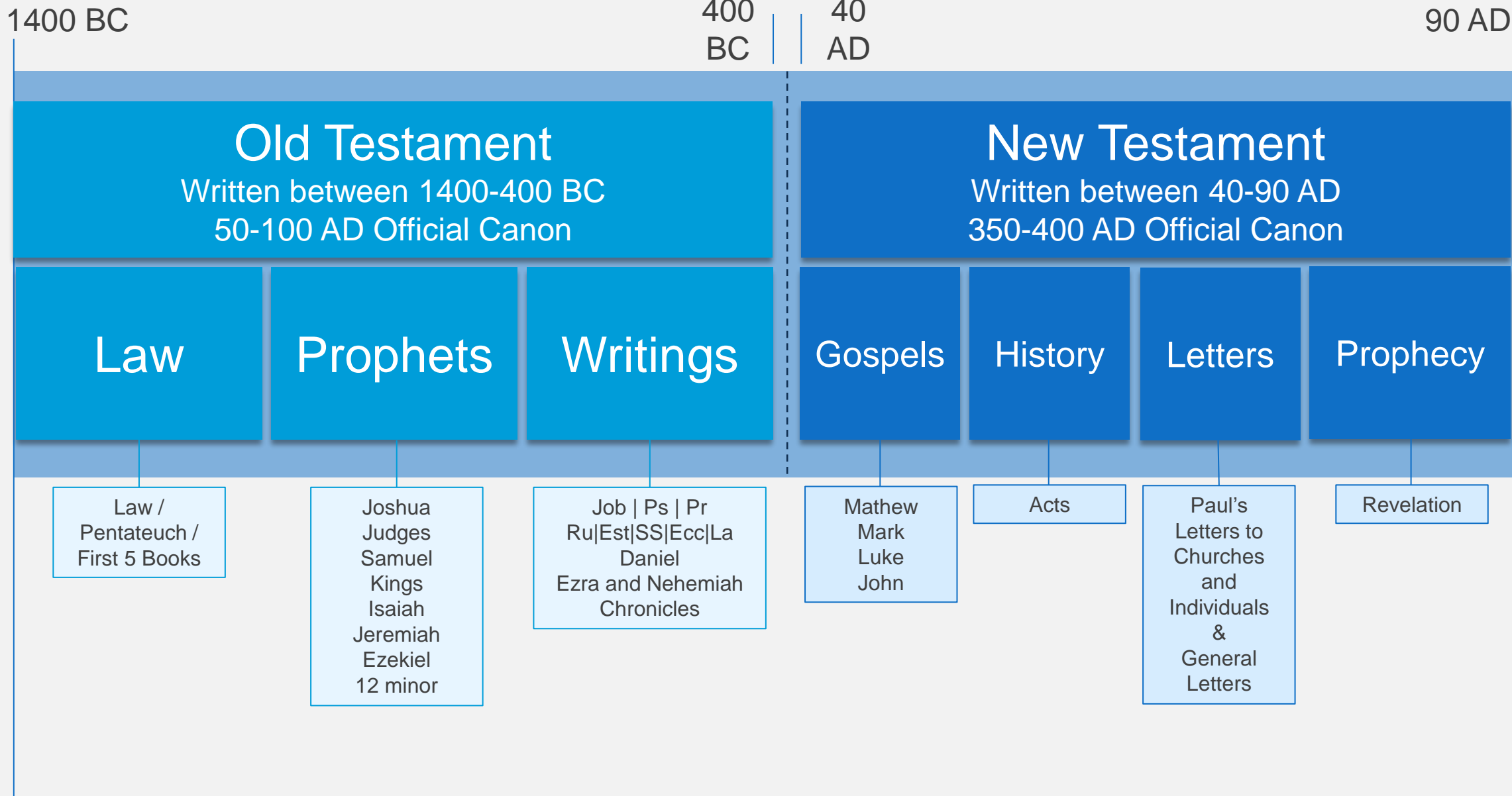
Timeline and Background

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Key Definitions

Scripture	Writings recognized as being holy, sacred, and authoritative
Canon	The rule or standard used to determine which writings are scripture
Apocryphal	Writings that do not meet the standards of canon, but accepted by some as scripture
Autograph	Original manuscripts written directly by the authors, not copies or translations
Transmission	Process of copying the autographs over time
Translation	Translating the copies of the autographs into another language
Textual Criticism	Comparing manuscripts and their variations with the goal of getting as close to the autographs as possible
Inspiration	All Scripture is God-breathed, the Holy Spirit influenced men to write His words
Infallible	Scripture is not capable of having any errors
Inerrant	Scripture does not have any errors

Development of the Bible



Manuscripts

OLD TESTAMENT



Original Languages

Primarily Biblical Hebrew with some Aramaic



Important Translations / Manuscripts

Septuagint LXX (ca. 200 BC)

- ❖ Greek translation which included apocryphal books
- ❖ Most (~80%) NT citations of the OT are from the LXX

Masoretic Text MT (ca. 1000 AD)

- ❖ Hebrew version that did not have any apocryphal books
- ❖ Most English translations of the Bible use this manuscript

Dead Sea Scrolls (ca. 200 BC)

- ❖ Most of the scrolls are in Hebrew and resemble the MT

NEW TESTAMENT



Original Language

Greek



Important Translations / Manuscripts

3 Groups Based on Geography

- ❖ Alexandrian – considered best copied and most accurate
- ❖ Western – appear to be less accurate than Alexandrian
- ❖ Byzantine – contains majority of the Greek manuscripts (~80%), but have the most variations

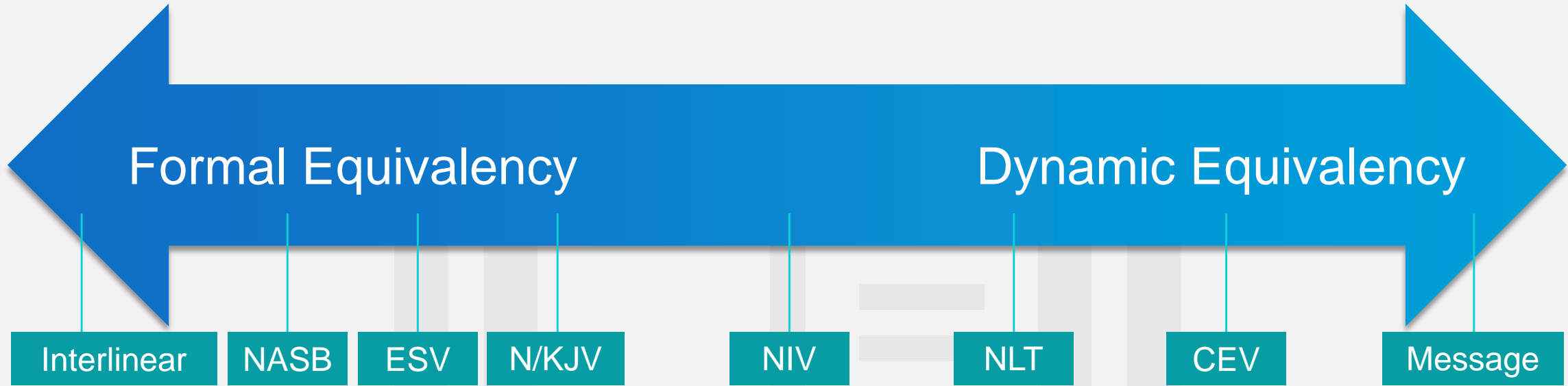
Textus Receptus (ca 1500 AD)

- ❖ Dutch scholar Erasmus created the first complete Greek NT, which the KJV is based on

Four Primary Codices (ca 300-400 AD)

- ❖ Vaticanus | Sinaiticus | Alexandrinus | Ephraemi
- ❖ Contained OT and NT, but not entirely intact now
- ❖ Modern English translations prefer these because they are older and presumed to be closer to the originals

English Translations



Revival of the Exiles

They read from the book, from the Law of God, **clearly**, and they **gave the sense**, so that the people **understood** the reading. *Neh 8:8 ESV*

Constant Attacks

...“**Did God actually say**, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” *Gen 3:1 ESV*

LXX vs MT | Textus Receptus vs Codices

While there are variations and disputes, it is not enough to change Christian doctrines or practices. The manuscripts and English translations agree the vast majority of the time ~95%+.

Tying the Old and New Testaments Together

Individually Incomplete | Covenants | Theme

OT Looked Forward and NT Looked Back

JOHN THE BAPTIST

“Behold, I will send you **Elijah the prophet** before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. *Mal 4:5*

And if you are willing to accept it, **John himself is Elijah** who was to come. *Matt 11:14*

GENEALOGY OF JESUS

From Adam to Abraham to David *1Chron 1-3*

The record of the genealogy of **Jesus** the Messiah, the **son of David**, the **son of Abraham**. *Matt 1:1*

PROPHET LIKE MOSES

I will raise up for them a **prophet like you** from **among their brothers**. And I will put my words in his mouth, and **he shall speak** to them **all that I command him**. *Deut 18:18*

...a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son, **listen to Him!**” *Mk 9:7*

Some of the people...were saying, “This certainly is the **Prophet**.” *Jn 7:40*

KING FROM DAVID

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the **stump of Jesse**, ... **2** And the **Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him**, the Spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of **knowledge** and the **fear of the LORD**. **3** ...He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or ... what his ears hear **4** but with **righteousness**... *Is 11:1-4*

in whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge. *Col 2:3*

David thus **calls Him Lord**, so how is He his son? *Lk 20:44*

NT Parallels OT Patterns

Redemption → Covenant → Proclamation

OT

Israel → Blood of Animals → Law

NT

Sinner → Blood of Jesus → Gospel

The New Covenant is a continuation and fulfillment of the Old Covenant(s)

PROCEEDS
FROM ISRAEL

Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of **Israel** and the house of **Judah**” *Jer 31:31*

72 To show mercy toward our **fathers**, and to **remember His** holy **covenant**, **73** The oath which He swore to **Abraham** our **father** *Lk 1:72-73*

26 And so **all Israel will be saved**;... **27** “This is **My covenant with them**, when I take away their sins.” *Rm 11:26-27*

FULFILLED IN
JESUS

...“this is My **blood** of the **covenant**, which is...for the forgiveness of **sins**. *Mat 26:28*

...“This cup that is poured out for you is the **new covenant** in my **blood**. *Lk 22:20*

This makes **Jesus** the guarantor of a **better covenant**. *Heb 7:22*

OFFERED TO
ALL

Who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a **new covenant**, not of the **letter** but of the **Spirit**. For the **letter kills**, but the **Spirit gives life**. *2Cor 3:6*

...in Christ Jesus the **blessing of Abraham** might come **to the Gentiles**, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. *Gal 3:14*

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The Central Theme

ALL OF THE OT POINTS TO JESUS

...“We have found Him of whom **Moses** in the Law **and** also the **Prophets wrote**, **Jesus** of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” *Jn 1:45*

“You search the **Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that **testify about Me**; *Jn 5:39*

44...“all things which are **written about Me** in the **Law of Moses** and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** must be fulfilled.” 45 Then He opened their minds to **understand** the **Scriptures** *Lk 24:44-45*

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this **Scripture** he preached **Jesus** to him. *Ac 8:35*

OT FULFILLED IN JESUS

“Everyday I was with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to **fulfill the Scriptures**.” *Mk 14:49*

Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” *Ac 10:43*

10 As to this **salvation**, the **prophets** who prophesied of the grace that would come to you **made careful searches** and inquiries,

11 **seeking to know** what **person or time** the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow

12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which **now have been announced to you through** those who preached **the gospel** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look. *1Pet 1:10-12*

Natural Grouping of Books

ETERNITY PAST AND CREATION



SIN AND FALL OF MAN



JUDGEMENT FLOOD



ISRAEL CHOSEN TO BRING MESSIAH



ARRIVAL OF JESUS



CHURCH AND PROCLAMATION OF GOSPEL



CHRIST'S RETURN AND ETERNITY FUTURE

- Man is sinful and doomed by his choices, unable to save himself
- The sacrifice of animals is not sufficient to save him
- His salvation must come from God who created him
- Jesus is the perfect sacrifice
- So all glory goes to God forever

Determining the Canon

Church or God | Authority | Criteria

Church or God

Various Councils Determined the Books

OT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Completed around <u>400 BC</u> and officially canonized around <u>50-100 AD</u>❖ Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Churches accept the <u>Apocrypha</u>
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Completed around <u>90 AD</u> and officially canonized around <u>350-400 AD</u>❖ Same 27 books for Catholics and Protestants, but their interpretations can be very different❖ <u>Apocryphal books</u> were written similar to the Gospels/Acts/Letters/Revelation❖ Apocryphal books are not recognized by the vast majority of Christianity

Many Books Were Already Considered Scripture Before the 'Official' Canonization

Polycarp (ca. 100) Bishop of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Knew John the Apostle personally❖ Affirms Paul's authority as an apostle and distinguishes it from his❖ Exhorts others to read Paul's letters and appears to refer to them as Scripture
Ignatius (ca. 110) Bishop of Antioch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Affirms the authority of the apostles and quotes several Pauline letters❖ Mentions he is unworthy to give commands like Paul/Peter in a letter to the Ephesians
Papias (ca. 125) Bishop of Hierapolis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Heard John the Apostle speak, who mentioned how Mark was careful not to leave anything out or include any falsehood as Peter's interpreter
Justin Martyr (ca. 150) Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Makes mention of reading from the four Gospels in the Sunday gathering

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OT was to be Written/Read Under God's Authority

Then the **Lord said** to Moses, "**Write** this as a memorial in a **book** and **recite** in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek..." *Ex 17:14*

...after the death of Moses...the **Lord spoke to Joshua** the son of Nun *Jos 1:1*

18 ...when he sits on the throne...he shall **write** for himself a **copy** of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. **19** ...he shall **read** it all the days of his life...**carefully observing all the words**... *Deut 17:18-19*

...**write** it on a **tablet** before them and inscribe it on a **scroll**, that it may serve in the time to come as a **witness forever**. *Is 30:8*

"**Thus says the LORD**, the God of Israel, '**Write** all the words which **I have spoken** to you in a **book**. *Jer 30:2*

Then the **LORD** answered me and **said**, "**Record** the vision and **inscribe** it on **tablets**, that the one who **reads** it may run. *Hab 2:2*

...I, **Daniel**, observed...which was revealed as the **word of the Lord to Jeremiah** the prophet... *Dan 9:2*

...Ezra...a scribe skilled in the **law** of Moses, which the LORD **God** of Israel **had given**... *Ezr 7:6*

And all the people gathered as one man...and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the **law** of Moses which the **LORD had given** to Israel. *Neh 8:1*

NT was to be Written/Read Under God's Authority

...the **Holy Spirit**, whom the **Father** will send in **My name**, He will **teach** you all things, and bring to your **remembrance** all that **I said** to you. *Jn 14:26*

41 ...**witnesses** who were **chosen beforehand by God**, that is, to us **who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead**. **42** And He **ordered** us to **preach**...and **testify** that this is the One... *Ac 10:41-42*

And **my message** and **my preaching** were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in **demonstration of the Spirit** and power *1Cor 2:4*

“...when you **received** the word of God which you **heard** from us, you accepted it **not** as the **word of men**, but for what it really is, the **word of God**...” *1Th 2:13*

2 ...**remember** the **words** spoken beforehand by the **holy prophets** and the **commandment of the Lord** and Savior spoken by your **apostles**. **16** ...in all **his [Paul's] letters**...the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the **Scriptures**, to their own destruction. *2Pet 3:2,16*

If anyone does not **obey** what we say in this **letter**, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. *2Th 3:14*

When this **letter** is **read among you**, have it **also read in the church** of the Laodiceans... *Col 4:16*

8 ...if I boast somewhat further about **our authority**, which **the Lord gave** for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, **9** for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by **my letters**. *2Cor 10:8-9*

Criteria – General Guidelines

OLD TESTAMENT

- ✓ Written by a Prophet of God
- ✓ Writer claimed to speak on behalf of God
- ✓ Conformed to the other books
- ✓ Authors reference each other and events
- ✓ Written in Hebrew/Aramaic
- ✓ Not written after ~400 BC
- ✓ Several copies of the book

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS (APOCRYPHA)

- × Doctrines – Prayers for dead/to saints, purgatory, etc.
- × Not quoted in other books of Scripture
- × Historical errors
- × Written primarily during IT period

NEW TESTAMENT

- ✓ Written by Apostles or closely connected to them
- ✓ Writer claimed to speak on behalf of God
- ✓ Conformed to the other books
- ✓ Authors reference each other and events
- ✓ Saw resurrected Jesus
- ✓ Accepted by most Christians
- ✓ Several copies of the book

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

- × Unusual doctrines not consistent with other books and/or pushing an agenda
- × Written under a false name (pseudonymously)
- × Not many copies of the books
- × Not accepted by vast majority of Christians

The natural person does not accept the **things of the Spirit of God**, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are **spiritually discerned**.

1Cor 2:14

Essence of the Canon

Everlasting Truth | God Breathed | Perfect

What is Truth?

JESUS IS THE TRUTH

37 ...For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to **testify to the truth**.

Everyone who is **of the truth** **hears my voice.**”

38 Pilate said to Him, “**What is truth?**” ...

Jn 18:37-38

...“**I am** the way, and **the truth**, and the life...

Jn 14:6

JESUS IS WISDOM

The LORD by **wisdom** founded the earth... *Pr 3:19*

Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? **What is His name or His son's name?** Surely you know! *Pr 30:4*

in whom **[Christ]** are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge. *Col 2:3*

JESUS IS SCRIPTURE

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

14 And the **Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the **only begotten from the Father**, **full of** grace and **truth**.

Jn 1:1-3,14

The sum of Your word is **truth**, and every one of Your **righteous** ordinances is **everlasting**. *Ps 119:160*

Scripture is Inspired by God and Perfect

INSPIRED

All Scripture is **inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in **righteousness**; *2Tim 3:16*

Forever, O Lord, Your word is **settled in heaven**. *Pss 119:89*

INFALLIBLE

5 Every word of God proves **true**; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
6 Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar. *Pr 30:5-6*

All Your commandments are **faithful**... *Pss 119:86*

INERRANT

The **words of the LORD** are **pure** words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, **purified seven times**. *Pss 12:6*

The law of the LORD is **perfect**, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is **sure**, **making wise** the simple. *Pss 19:7*