CANNON - What is, What Isn't....and Why?

STUDY GUIDE | CANON AND BIBLICAL WRITINGS

Finding the Ancient Path | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Q7VdC_QhpM

Teaching Purpose

To understand the speaker's overview of how biblical books were recognized, why other ancient writings remain outside some canons, and how to study such works responsibly. The Teaching is an overview rather than an exhaustive historical survey.

Quick Answer

A biblical canon is a community's recognized collection of authoritative sacred writings. This Teaching examines why certain books were received and others disputed or excluded, and encourages careful, contextual reading of ancient works without automatically treating every book quoted in the Bible as Scripture.

Core Distinction

Quoting or referring to an ancient work is not the same as granting the entire work canonical authority. The speaker argues for testing additional writings against the Torah and the accepted biblical text; his treatment reflects a particular Protestant/Torah-observant perspective, not a universal canon shared by all Christian traditions.

Teaching Outline and Key Takeaways

Introduction

Introduces the question of which writings belong in Scripture; frames the session as an overview prompted by questions about Enoch and Jasher.

How do you know the Bible is Gods word

Answers the question of trusting the Bible with an appeal to faith and God's preservation, alongside the speaker's appeal to historical and archaeological evidence.

Old Testament books that were almost rejected

Surveys books that were disputed in reception, including Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Ezekiel, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Revelation, and Jude.

Biblical Canon

Defines a canon and sketches the gradual recognition of the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament writings in religious communities.

Old Testament Canon

Describes inspiration, prophetic association, and consistency with the Torah as the speaker's key criteria for Hebrew Scripture.

Old Testament Verses

Discusses Exodus 24, 2 Samuel 23, Psalm 119, and Isaiah; explains why the Jewish 24-book counting corresponds to the Protestant 39-book Old Testament.

New Testament

Presents apostolic connection, doctrinal consistency, and compatibility with Hebrew Scripture as criteria for New Testament reception; uses Marcion as a counterexample.

Original Form

Distinguishes the received biblical writings from modern translation decisions and cites 2 Timothy 3, 2 Peter 1, and Hebrews 4 regarding Scripture's inspiration and power.

Holy Spirit Inspired

Asks how a community can recognize the work of the Spirit in writings rather than mere claims of authenticity.

Doal Consistency

Focuses on doctrinal coherence with established Scripture and apostolic teaching as a proposed recognition criterion.

Self Authentication

Discusses internal testimony or self-authentication and the speaker's view that historical evidence may reinforce confidence.

Historical Validation

Emphasizes the relationship between ancient claims and independently recognizable people, communities, and events.

Discernment

Describes collective discernment through prayer, study, and community reception rather than arbitrary selections.

Exclusion from Canon

Introduces writings outside the Protestant canon, including the deuterocanonical books commonly called the Apocrypha.

What is Psiudepigrapha

Defines pseudepigrapha and names ancient texts with disputed or attributed authorship, including Enoch and several noncanonical gospels.

Lack of Hebrew Originals

Notes the speaker's argument about Hebrew or Aramaic originals when assessing some deuterocanonical writings.

Disputed Use

Discusses Jewish reception, later composition, and the speaker's concern about treating extracanonical writings as hidden superior knowledge.

Theological Discrepancies

Summarizes the speaker's theological objections to certain deuterocanonical interpretations, including prayer for the dead.

Early Church Consensus

Returns to questions of early church reception and to the distinction between the Septuagint, Hebrew canon, and later church lists.

First Enoch

Explains that Jude quotes a tradition also found in 1 Enoch, while arguing that quotation alone does not canonize an entire source.

Fallen Angels

Discusses parallels between 1 Enoch and New Testament judgment or angelic themes without claiming that every parallel is a direct quotation.

Enoch

Explores disputed authorship, manuscript transmission, and the fact that 1 Enoch is canonical in Ethiopian Orthodox tradition.

Joshua

Examines biblical references to the Book of Jasher in Joshua 10 and 2 Samuel 1, distinguishing an ancient cited work from later books using the same title.

Reasons

Summarizes why the speaker does not treat later books titled Jasher as the biblical source mentioned in Joshua and Samuel.

The Little Genesis

Introduces Jubilees, also called Little Genesis, then concludes with questions and fellowship on church fathers, disputed writings, reading beyond the canon, and Torah as a foundation.

Key Scriptures — Contextual Notes

- Exodus 24:4 - Moses records the words of the LORD in the covenant narrative; the speaker cites this as internal testimony of Scripture.
- 2 Samuel 23:2 - David attributes his prophetic speech to the Spirit of the LORD.
- Psalm 119:160 - The psalm celebrates the truth of God's word and the endurance of His judgments.
- Isaiah 55:10-11 - God describes His word as accomplishing the purpose for which He sends it.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - Paul presents inspired Scripture as useful for teaching, correction, and training in righteousness.
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 - Peter emphasizes prophecy as given through people moved by the Holy Spirit.
- Hebrews 4:12 - The word of God is described as living, active, and able to discern the heart.
- Jude 1:14-15 - Jude invokes a prophecy attributed to Enoch concerning divine judgment; compare the similar wording in 1 Enoch.
- Acts 17:28 - Paul cites nonbiblical poets while addressing the Athenians; quotation does not by itself make the whole source Scripture.
- Joshua 10:12-13 - Joshua recounts the day of the sun and moon standing still and refers to the Book of Jasher.
- 2 Samuel 1:17-18 - David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is associated with the Book of Jasher.
- Genesis 6:1-4 - The brief biblical account of the sons of God and mighty men provides one comparison point for later Enochic traditions.
- 1 Peter 1:10-12 - Peter discusses prophets who searched into the salvation to be revealed, an example of the importance of prophetic witness.
- John 20:29 - Yeshua blesses those who believe without seeing; useful context for the opening faith discussion.

Reflection and Discussion Questions

- What is meant by 'canon,' and how does it differ from the larger category of ancient religious literature?
- What reasons does the speaker give for trusting the recognized Scriptures? Which are matters of faith and which are historical claims?
- Why did different communities debate the status of Hebrews, James, Jude, or Revelation?
- How does a quotation from an extracanonical work differ from declaring that entire work inspired Scripture?
- What are the similarities and differences among Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Ethiopian Orthodox biblical canons?
- What would careful study of Jasher, Jubilees, or 1 Enoch look like without presuming canonical authority?
- Which of the speaker's historical claims would benefit from checking primary sources or manuscript evidence?

- How does the closing fellowship model disagreement, humility, and continued study?

Practical Study Applications

- Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 in their literary contexts; note what each text does and does not say about later canon lists.
- Compare Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18; record exactly what each passage says about Jasher before inferring anything about later works with the same name.
- Read Jude 1:14-15 alongside a reputable edition of 1 Enoch 1:9; distinguish a cited tradition from the status of an entire book.
- When reading church history, record the community and date attached to a particular canon rather than assuming one universal decision.
- Discuss different canons respectfully with believers from Catholic, Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Jewish, and Protestant traditions.
- Build a small comparison chart of the 24-book Hebrew and 39-book Protestant Old Testament orders, showing which books are grouped together.
- List the questions that arise from the human authorship of Hebrews, then distinguish authorship questions from doctrinal interpretation.
- Trace the names 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Jubilees, and Jasher in reference resources; do not assume that books with similar names have the same age or origin.
- Read a historically grounded overview of the Council of Hippo, Carthage, and the Council of Trent; record the exact decisions and their dates.
- Practice explaining to a friend the difference between a book being historically useful, being quoted, and being received as canonical Scripture.