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THE CANONIZATION OF THE BOOKS OF THE JEWISH, CATHOLIC, AND PROTESTANT SCRIPTURES

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The Canonization of the Books of the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant Scriptures

Abstract

The three Canons of Judaism, Catholic Christianity, and Protestant Christianity all claim more authority or consistency than what they have. Judaism puts too much authority on an unknown group in 200 CE that was not regarded until 400 years later in the Mishnah. Catholicism emphasizes the divinity of scriptures that the early church fathers almost universally disbelieved. Protestantism held that the Canon put forward by Calvin was entirely equal in its truth and that it should not be changed even in the face of changing beliefs or new discoveries. However, just because a Canon has been altered or closed in a doubtful way, that does not mean it is wrong or that the Holy Spirit did not influence it. Things change, things are discovered, and people need to be ready to accept truth even if it is not what they have been taught.

Introduction

The Biblical Canons did not fall out of the sky in their current form; they evolved and changed, were added to and subtracted from. There are four major Biblical Canons or scriptures: the Tanakh of the Jews, the Catholic Bible of Trent, the Orthodox Bible of the Septuagint, and the Protestant Bible of Calvin. In order to be fair, this thesis will take a semi-

secular view in that it will not consider the work of the Holy Spirit in establishing a canon or a church's or person's divine authority. If looked at in this manner, the canons were not formed and closed in a complete or consistent way.

Background

With the spread of Christianity starting in the first century AD, there also began a 2000-year continuous conflict between what would become some of the world's largest religions. These religions have been used to justify slavery and its later abolishment, the crusades to capture Jerusalem and the later founding of Israel as a country, and much more. There are many denominations and even more interpretations within them. The Word of God has been the foundation for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. For the purposes of this paper the religions considered will be Judaism, Catholic Christianity, and Protestant Christianity. These three each have a different canon or set of books: the Tanakh containing 24 books, the Catholic Canon of Trent containing 73 books, and the Protestant Canon of Calvin containing 66 books.

Chart A below compares the Tanakh and the Old Testaments of Catholicism and Protestantism. The far-left column is how the Jewish books are organized in the Tanakh but the column just to the right are the books of that canon arranged in an order like that of the two Christian denominations for comparison purposes. The empty spaces mark where one canon does not include the same title section or book as another canon.

| Chart A | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Judaism (Jewish Virtual Library) | Judaism – In Christian order for comparison | Protestant Old Testament (ESV) | Catholic Old Testament (New American Bible) |
| Tanakh <i>Torah - Law</i> | Tanakh | Old Testament <i>Law</i> | Old Testament <i>Pentateuch</i> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy <u>Nevi'im - Prophets</u> Joshua Judges Samuel Kings Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve 1. Hosea 2. Joel 3. Amos 4. Obadiah 5. Jonah 6. Micah 7. Nahum 8. Habakkuk 9. Zephaniah 10. Hagai 11. Zechariah 12. Malachi <u>Ketuv'im - Writings</u> Psalms Proverbs Job Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah Chronicles | Genesis (T) Exodus (T) Leviticus (T) Numbers (T) Deuteronomy (T) Joshua (N) Judges (N) Ruth (K) Samuel (1&2) (N) Included Kings (1&2) (N) Included Chronicles (1&2) (K) Included Ezra (K) Nehemiah (K) Esther (K) Job (K) Psalms (K) Proverbs (K) Ecclesiastes (K) Song of Solomon (K) Isaiah (N) Jeremiah (N) Lamentations (K) Ezekiel (N) Daniel (K) Hosea (N) Joel (N) Amos (N) Obadiah (N) Jonah (N) Micah (N) Nahum (N) | Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy <u>History</u> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther <u>Poetry</u> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon <u>Prophets</u> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum | Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy <u>Historical Books</u> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Tobit Judith Esther+ Esther Additions 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees <u>Wisdom Books</u> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Wisdom Sirach <u>Prophetic Books</u> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel+ Additions Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum |
|---|---|--|--|

| | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Habakkuk (N) | Habakkuk | Habakkuk |
| | Zephaniah (N) | Zephaniah | Zephaniah |
| | Haggai (N) | Haggai | Haggai |
| | Zechariah (N) | Zechariah | Zechariah |
| | Malachi (N) | Malachi | Malachi |

All three religions set apart the books of Moses under the names Torah, Law, and Pentateuch. Protestantism and Catholicism have the same order and even groupings. The Law corresponds to the Pentateuch, History to Historical books, Poetry to Wisdom books, and prophets to prophetic books. The main difference comes in the 7 “apocryphal” or deuterocanonical books: Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch, along with some additions to Esther and Daniel. The term “apocrypha” was used to designate books outside of the Canon and in this case the seven books in the Catholic Canon. Catholicism holds that the books in the Tanakh were protocanonical since they were made canonical first and that the seven “apocryphal” books were deuterocanonical since they were added to their canon later.

Argument 1: Judaism

Jewish scholars point to the fixing of the Jewish, or Hebrew, canon at around 200 BCE (Lim 2). At that time a prologue found in the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, also known as Sirach or Ben Sirach, mentions three divisions among the holy books: “the law... the prophets... and the others that followed them” (Gallagher and Meade 9) This could mean the three sections of Law, Prophets, and writings, or it could mean the last section, “and others” were not yet decided upon.

Josephus’s defense of Jewish history in his book *Against Apion* is the first time the Jewish Canon is listed. He lists a total of 22 books, two short of the 24 books that modern Jews use. He gave them as 5 books of Moses, 13 of Prophets, and 4 of hymns and advice. He

believed that from Artaxerxes (about 450 BCE) to his time (about 100 CE) no divine books had been written and so he did not use the Deuterocanon, all of which are assumed to have been written during those 500 years. Unfortunately, he did not give the names of each of the books he considered canonical, only the section names and number. (Josephus 1.8).

If the books are numbered as 22 of the Hebrew Canon, Lamentations is often an extra section tagged onto the back of Jeremiah, but if numbered 24 it is listed as its own books in the hymn section. With Josephus's Canon there is a possibility that Lamentations was its own book as a hymn, but this means it would replace one of the books in the hymn group. Both Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon were in dispute during early CE, so one might not have been listed in favor of Lamentations (Lim 1-3).

The Talmud is a compilation of commentaries and lists finished around 600 CE and used authoritatively in Judaism. Within the Talmud is the Mishnah, dated 200 CE. In the Mishnah, the section called Baba Bathra, contains the earliest list of Jewish books from a fully Hebrew source as Josephus wrote at Rome in Greek. The canon list provided there is the one used by Jews today. (Gallagher and Meade 67, 69).

The books of Moses have never been in dispute, so the Torah would match Josephus's first section. Ruth would be added on to Judges as is done occasionally throughout history. Ezra and Nehemiah are also often added together in the form of Esdras. The Twelve, all twelve of the minor prophets, would be considered one book. A main difference between the two variants of the Hebrew Canon is that Chronicles, Daniel, Esdras, and Ruth all fall under Prophets in Josephus's version rather than in writings or advice like in the Talmud. The books of Lamentations, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Job are all very poetic and would fall under the last category in Josephus's list. Sometimes Lamentations is included with

Jeremiah. Job has some prophetic elements but they are seldom included among prophetic books. This leads to Josephus having a much different order, and possibly a different canon than the one put forth in the Talmud.

| Chart B | |
|--|--|
| Josephus (Around 90 CE) [10, page 63-64] | Babylonian Talmud (Around 200 CE, same as Modern Judaism) [10] |
| <p>A theory of Josephus's Account</p> <p><u>Books of Moses</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy <p><u>Books of Prophets</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job 2. Joshua 3. Judges + Ruth 4. Samuel 5. Kings 6. Isaiah 7. Jeremiah + Lamentations? 8. Ezekiel 9. The Twelve (Includes Hosea +Joel +Amos +Obadiah +Jonah +Micah +Nahum +Habakkuk +Zephaniah +Hagai +Zechariah +Malachi 10. Daniel 11. Chronicles 12. Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) 13. Esther <p><u>Hymns and Advice</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psalms 2. Proverbs 3. Ecclesiastes/Song of Solomon/Lamentations? | <p>Tanakh</p> <p><u>Torah - Law</u></p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p><u>Nevi'im - Prophets</u></p> <p>Joshua Judges Samuel Kings Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve +Hosea +Joel +Amos +Obadiah +Jonah +Micah +Nahum +Habakkuk +Zephaniah +Hagai +Zechariah +Malachi</p> <p><u>Ketuv'im - Writings</u></p> <p>Psalms Proverbs Job Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| 4. Ecclesiastes/Song of Solomon/Lamentations? | Daniel Ezra Nehemiah Chronicles |
|---|--|

The issue with the Hebrew Canon is that it could not have been closed authoritatively during the previously mentioned 200-100 BCE date since the canon was uncertain even within Rabbinic Judaism.

There existed three groups from the return from the Babylonian exile under Artaxerxes in 450 CE and the conquering of Israel in 70 CE: the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the community of Qumran. The Sadducees made up a wealthy minority and they practiced and focused on sacrifices more than the Pharisees and Qumranites (HaTorah). They believed only in the Torah and so rejected the teachings of the prophets and writings (Study Bible 1799). The Pharisees believed in the Hebrew books, most likely those listed by Josephus, but did not uphold the Deuterocanon. They were also the only group to survive the destruction of Israel and so would later become Rabbinic, or Modern, Jews (HaTorah). The last group were Qumranites. They had left Jerusalem around 150 BCE and moved near the dead sea (Lim 11). Their group was small, so small a group their canon is not certain. What is unquestionable is that they did not have the book of Esther and did not celebrated Purim, unlike the Pharisees. The Qumranites also had deuterocanonical books as well as the pseudepigraphal books, books believed by few or no Christians today, such as Enoch. They were also the only group not to practice sacrifice. (Study Bible 1799)

While it is true that Pharisaic Judaism made up the majority of Jews from 400 BCE to the end of the other two groups in 70 CE, they continued practicing animal sacrifice until the temple's destruction (Schwartz). Subsequently, the Pharisees adopted the Qumranite stance on

sacrifice and so nullified the practice. The rejection of animal sacrifice represented a major shift in the religion. Instead of costly, bloody, and formal sacrifice people could instead be forgiven through prayer. This massive change could only have happened through a dramatic reinterpretation of the scriptures. This reinterpretation could only have occurred if the practices for the religion were not firmly set.

Now while a canon was not firmly established, it is likely that some group did provide a list of books in earlier years. Going back to the prologue of Sirach, there were two complete groupings, the law and the prophets. These were followed by another group simply labeled as “the others that followed them.” However, the reason why a group would close a canon would be to confirm the practices and beliefs of that original group. The unknown original group thought to have closed the canon would have believed in all the books of the Hebrew canon. Whether they numbered them as 22 or 24 cannot be discerned. They also had to have believed that sacrifice was the only way to gain forgiveness since the Qumranites, the first group to abolish sacrifice, did not begin organizing and removing the practice until 50 years later (HaTorah). To claim one action of this group, the setting of the Canon, as authoritative is to claim the whole group as authoritative. Since this group also believed the practice of sacrifice, that practice should also be held as authoritative.

On the other hand, if the group was merely confirming certain books to be true without closing the Canon or finalizing the beliefs, there would be no issue with sacrifice. This does not take into account God’s hand in the matter. If God had selected these books which were later rejected, there would also be no issue with sacrifice. On the human front alone, there are problems with the setting of this canon: problems with the order of the Canon, with the authority

of the unknown setters of the Canon, and the differing accounts of the Canon from Josephus and the Talmud.

Argument 2: Early Christianity

During the time of the apostles, there existed no certain canon among Christians. Some, such as Jude who wrote the New Testament book of the same name, held inspired books such as 1 Enoch, (Jude 1:14-16) which few Christians believe today. During Paul's time there were even false copies circulating among the different churches (2 Thessalonians 2:2, 3:17). The earliest surviving list would not be written until almost 150 years after the advent of Christianity in 170 CE by Melito of Sardis (Gallagher and Meade 78). Melito's Canon unlike other canons later produced, does not contain a New Testament, and focuses solely on the Old Testament.

The next list would not be written until the 3rd century by Origen. Origen listed what he believed to be the Old Testament which matched the list of books found in the Babylonian Talmud with the exception that he included the Epistle of Jeremiah and 1 Esdras. He also said Maccabees was not scripture but should be read (Gallagher and Meade 95-96, 98). Eusebius of Caesarea listed all of the books Origen quoted as inspired and formed a canon in Origen's name. In this list, all the books of the Protestant New Testament are found with the exception of 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John which are listed as doubted. Eusebius also wrote a list of his own. His Old Testament matches that of Origen (Scheetz 2); however his New Testament removes even more books, those of James and Jude.

Several years after Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem listed another set of books. However, instead of writing a canon based on the books he believed to be scripture, he listed out the books believed by the general populace (Gallagher and Meade 110-111). He provides the first Christian

list to include Esther, the deuterocanonical Baruch and additions to Daniel, Susannah and Bel and Dragon, and going back on previous canon lists includes 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John.

Finally towards the end of the 4th century came Athanasius of Alexandria. He is the one both Protestants and Catholics point to as the founder of their canons. The only difference between Athanasius’s list of canonical books and that of Cyril’s is that Athanasius gives less authority to Esther. Athanasius confirms the books that Cyril presents as canon, then he gives a separate set of books that should be read but not believed or held as scripture. This list consisted of Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, Didache, and the shepherd of Hermas (Scheetz 5-6). Chart C below lists out all the books these early church fathers held canonical.

| Chart C | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Melito (2 nd Century) | Origen (3 rd Century) | Eusebius (4 th Century) | Cyril (4 th Century) | Athanasius (375 CE) |
| Genesis | Genesis | Genesis | Genesis | Genesis |
| Exodus | Exodus | Exodus | Exodus | Exodus |
| Leviticus | Leviticus | Leviticus | Leviticus | Leviticus |
| Numbers | Numbers | Numbers | Numbers | Numbers |
| Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy |
| Joshua | Joshua | Joshua | Joshua | Joshua |
| Judges | Judges | Judges | Judges | Judges |
| Ruth | +Ruth | +Ruth | +Ruth | +Ruth |
| 1 Kingdom | 1 Kingdom | 1 Kingdom | 1 Kingdom | 1 Kingdom |
| 2 Kingdom | 2 Kingdom | 2 Kingdom | 2 Kingdom | 2 Kingdom |
| 3 Kingdom | 3 Kingdom | 3 Kingdom | 3 Kingdom | 3 Kingdom |
| 4 Kingdom | 4 Kingdom | 4 Kingdom | 4 Kingdom | 4 Kingdom |
| 1 Paralipomena | 1 Paralipomena | 1 Paralipomena | 1 Paralipomena | 1 Paralipomena |
| 2 Paralipomena | 2 Paralipomena | 2 Paralipomena | 2 Paralipomena | 2 Paralipomena |
| | 1 Esdras | 1 Esdras | 1 Esdras | 1 Esdras |
| 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) | 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) | 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) | 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) | 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah) |
| | Esther | Esther | Esther | |
| Job | Job | Job | Job | Job |
| Psalms | Psalms | Psalms | Psalms | Psalms |
| Proverbs | Proverbs | Proverbs | Proverbs | Proverbs |
| Wisdom | Wisdom | Wisdom | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Isaiah Jeremiah | Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Isaiah Jeremiah +Lamentations | Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Isaiah Jeremiah | Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Isaiah Jeremiah +Baruch +Lamentations +Epistle Ezekiel Daniel +Susannah +Bel and Dragon The Twelve | Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Isaiah Jeremiah +Baruch +Lamentations +Epistle Ezekiel Daniel +Susannah +Bel and Dragon The Twelve |
| Ezekiel Daniel | Ezekiel Daniel | Ezekiel Daniel | | |
| The Twelve | The Twelve <i>1 Maccabees?</i> | The Twelve <i>1 Maccabees?</i> | | |
| | Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Letters of Paul James 1 Peter <i>2 Peter?</i> 1 John <i>2 John?</i> <i>3 John?</i> Jude Revelations | Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Letters of Paul 1 Peter 1 John <i>Revelations?</i> | Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Letters of Paul James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude | Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Letters of Paul James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude Revelations |
| | | | | <u><i>To be read</i></u> <i>Wisdom</i> <i>Sirach</i> <i>Esther</i> <i>Judith</i> <i>Tobit</i> <i>Didache</i> <i>Shepherd</i> |

The earliest Church fathers, Melito, Origen, and Eusebius, were all critical of the deuterocanonical books with the last two disregarding the late letters of John and Peter. The chart also shows how people came to believe more books over time, including the letters and most of the Deuterocanonical additions with the exception of Wisdom and Maccabees. In Athanasius's

Canon he keeps the additions to Daniel and Baruch but places the rest of the Deuterocanon into a separate list of his own apocrypha, or books to read but not upon which to build church dogma.

Athanasius also included Esther, part of the modern canon, along with Didache and the Shepherd of Hermas, which are both pseudepigraphal books, in the apocrypha. Although he puts those three books in the apocrypha, he does not do so with Maccabees, showing that he believed Maccabees to be even less trustworthy than those books known and agreed upon to be false.

The translation that these early church fathers used is the Septuagint. While the Septuagint was originally the Torah translated into Greek by Jews in Egypt 200 CE, it came to mean the collection of scrolls and documents of religious books, including all those within the Hebrew Bible along with other books such as the Deuterocanonical and Pseudepigraphal ones. Jews and early Christians came together to translate them and finished in 200 CE (Cook 1). Due to its multiple translators and unique audience of Greek-speaking Jews, it balances original language along with Hellenistic symbolism. This is most noticeable whenever numbers are involved or in the poetic books of Psalms that has a different numbering system (Cook 2). Unfortunately the multitude of translators, styles, and sources led to multiple mistakes in translation which caused Jews to later reject it and the new books found in it (Cook 4-5).

The last, and one of the most important, early church fathers this thesis will cover is St. Jerome. He revolutionized the Biblical world by being the first to use the Jewish Tanakh for the Old Testament rather than translate from the Septuagint and so he left out the Deuterocanon. He finished his translation by 380 CE and became the foundation for most future translations (Gallagher and Meade 197-200). However his work was not accepted as two years later in 382 CE the local Council of Rome affirmed the canon of Athanasius but included all of Athanasius's

“apocryphal” books, with the exception of Didache and the Shepherd of Hermas, according to Chapter II of the Gelasian Decree.

At the Council of Trent in 1546, just after the Protestant Reformation, in Session 4, Decrees 1 and 2, the Council would declare Jerome’s vulgate to be the standard for the Church. However, they held to the canon produced at the Council of Rome. The canon of the Council of Rome was only in part from Jerome as it was completed by translations from other sources. Jerome in his prologues categorically denied the books of Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Tobit, and Maccabees yet the Council held those books as truthful.

Some have argued that Jerome later held the Deuterocanon as inspired by referencing *Against Rufinus*, written 402 CE, where he says he has submitted to the authority of the Church, even though they “read the version of Theodotian [Deuterocanonical variant of the book of Daniel] the heretic and Judaizer”. However five years later in 407 CE, in a letter defending the prophecies of Daniel, he recognizes the Church still uses the Theodotian version of Daniel and its Deuterocanonical portions. However this time he calls those additions “fables” and not in the original text. He also questions why the Church would use the translation of an unbeliever, Theodotian, instead of a Christian, himself. This means he still held to his original translation without the additions five years after he supposedly submitted to the church.

| Chart D | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Jerome’s Vulgate in 380 | Vulgate at Councils of Rome and Trent |
| <u>Old Testament</u> | <u>Old Testament</u> |
| Genesis | Genesis |
| Exodus | Exodus |
| Leviticus | Leviticus |
| Numbers | Numbers |
| Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy |
| Joshua | Josue |
| Judges | Judges |
| +Ruth | Ruth |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Kings (1-4) Chronicles (1&2) Ezra Nehemiah</p> <p>Esther</p> <p>Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs</p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah +Lamentations</p> <p>Ezekiel The Twelve prophets Daniel</p> | <p>Kings (1-4) Paralipomenon (1&2) Esdras Nehemias Tobias Judith Esther +Additions Job Psalter Proverbs Ecclesiastes Canticle of Canticles Wisdom Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Isaias Jeremias +Lamentations +Baruch Ezechiel Twelve Minor Prophets Daniel +Additions Maccabees (1&2)</p> |
| <p><u>Apocrypha</u> Additions to Daniel Additions to Esther Wisdom Sirach Judith Tobit Shepherd of Hermas Maccabees (1&2)</p> | |
| <p><u>New Testament</u> Matthew Mark Luke John Paul's Letters Acts James Peter (1&2) John (1,2,&3) Jude Revelations</p> | <p><u>New Testament</u> Matthew Mark Luke John Paul's Letters Acts James Peter (1&2) John (1,2,&3) Jude Revelations</p> |

The Council of Rome and then Trent's two most important sources for the canon were Jerome and Athanasius. Both rejected the Deuterocanon, yet the church supported it. If the Holy Spirit does work through the church, then there is no problem as the church is divine and Jerome and Athanasius were only humans. As was mentioned in the Judaism section, on the human front alone, there are problems.

Argument 4: Protestantism

The Protestant Reformation really started with Martin Luther writing the 95 Theses against the Catholic practice of selling indulgences. 17 years later in 1534 he would translate the Bible into common German, one of the first times the Bible was translated into the vernacular in over 1000 years. Luther's Bible has four sections: the Old Testament, and Apocrypha, the New Testament, and dubious books (Loader 5-6). Luther, like Athanasius, includes Esther in the apocryphal section along with the Deuterocanon. But unlike Athanasius, he separates the books James, Hebrews, Jude, and Revelations (Venter 3).

Luther's criterion for canon was that it forwarded Christ. Since Esther, without the Septuagint's additions, did not mention God, it was not canon. He followed similar patterns to James, which he thought restrictive, and Revelations, which he thought fake. He left out Hebrews and Jude because he cited that the early fathers had reservations concerning them (Loader 6). Most importantly was that he thought none of these books forwarded scripture. Due to this criterion for books, they could be added to and subtracted from the canon if the time calls for it. (Venter 3)

After Luther, came Calvin. Calvin is the founder of most of Protestantism and as such his canon is the one most Protestants use. His opinion on scripture was quite different. The

important thing was not whether the book forwarded Jesus but how the reader was moved closer to Jesus by reading the book. In this case, the books had to be a unified scripture all of equal value and tell one continuous story. (Loader 7). The continuous story he selected was the one put forth by Jerome.

| Chart E | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Martin Luther's Bible | Calvin's Bible = ESV, KJV, NIV, NLT |
| <u>Old Testament</u> | <u>Old Testament</u> |
| Genesis | Genesis |
| Exodus | Exodus |
| Leviticus | Leviticus |
| Numbers | Numbers |
| Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy |
| Joshua | Joshua |
| Judges | Judges |
| Ruth | Ruth |
| 1 Samuel | 1 Samuel |
| 2 Samuel | 2 Samuel |
| 1 Kings | 1 Kings |
| 2 Kings | 2 Kings |
| 1 Chronicles | 1 Chronicles |
| 2 Chronicles | 2 Chronicles |
| Ezra | Ezra |
| Nehemiah | Nehemiah |
| Job | Job |
| Psalms | Psalms |
| Proverbs | Proverbs |
| Ecclesiastes | Ecclesiastes |
| Song of Solomon | Song of Solomon |
| Isaiah | Isaiah |
| Jeremiah | Jeremiah |
| Lamentations | Lamentations |
| Ezekiel | Ezekiel |
| Daniel | Daniel |
| Hosea | Hosea |
| Joel | Joel |
| Amos | Amos |
| Obadiah | Obadiah |
| Jonah | Jonah |
| Micah | Micah |
| Nahum | Nahum |
| Habakkuk | Habakkuk |

| | |
|--|---|
| Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi | Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi |
| <u>Apocrypha</u> Wisdom Sirach Esther Judith Tobit | |
| <u>New Testament</u> Matthew Mark Luke John Paul's Letters Acts Peter (1&2) John (1,2,&3) | <u>New Testament</u> Matthew Mark Luke John Paul's Letters+ +Hebrews Acts James Peter (1&2) John (1,2,&3) Jude Revelations |
| <u>Doubtful</u> Hebrews James Jude Revelations | |

While Calvin's Canon is the same as one of the greatest early fathers, Jerome, that does not make it the best one. He is guilty of the same two mistakes that the setters of the Tanakh made: believing that the Bible is as strong as its strongest link and that God stopped talking. There have been serious charges made against the truth or inspired nature of some books of the Bible such as the historicity of Exodus, the prophecy of Daniel, and the inspired nature of Esther and Jude. The inability to critically analyze a book and just wave off historical errors as allegory, such as the case with Judith's historical inaccuracies, turns Christianity from a free religion to a dogmatic cult.

Conclusion

The way each of the three canons, the Tanakh, Catholic, and Protestant, were all formed leaves questions unanswered. All were formed without certainty, assumed the authority of a dubious tradition or manuscript, and overlooked challenges to their canon. However, the God of Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism is the same God.

But there is hope. According to Matthew 17:3, both Moses and Elijah made it to Heaven. It is guaranteed that they never read Paul's letters or the minor prophets. One additional thing is that the Torah was never doubted by the Jews nor were the Gospels by the early Church fathers. With that alone there is foundational consistency to Christianity. We should remember it is not the number of our books that make us Christian, but our relationship with Christ.

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