

An aerial photograph of a dense evergreen forest covered in a thick layer of snow. A dark, winding road with white dashed lines runs horizontally across the middle of the image, curving slightly to the right. The trees are dark green and heavily laden with snow, creating a textured, monochromatic scene.

The Unity of the Bible

Understanding the arch of Scripture from beginning to end



THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

How did the Jews decide which books to include in the canon?

canon κανών

“reed; measuring rod;
standard of measure”

the authoritative list of all the books
that belong in the Bible

the written word of God



And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 31:18 (ESV)

And the Lord said to Moses, “**Write these words**, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

Exodus 34:27 (ESV)



When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, “Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God,

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 (ESV)

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

Deuteronomy 7:6 (ESV)

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the **Law** of Moses and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** must be fulfilled.”

Luke 24:44 (ESV)

TANAKH

Law - Torah (תּוֹרָה)

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

Prophets - Nevi'im (נְבִיאִים)

Former Prophets

- Joshua
- Judges
- Kings
- Samuel

Latter Prophets (major)

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel

Latter Prophets (minor)

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Malachi
- Zechariah

Writings - Ketuvim (כְּתוּבִים)

- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Job
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Ruth
- Lamentations
- Esther
- Daniel
- Ezra-Nehemiah
- Chronicles

The Closing of the OT Canon

The final prophets

- Haggai - 520 B.C.
- Zechariah - 518 B.C.
- Malachi - 435 B.C.

The final history

- Ezra - 458 B.C.
- Nehemiah - 433 B.C.
- Esther - 435 B.C.
- 2 Chron. - 400 B.C.

“So they tore down the altar and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell what to do with them.”

1 Maccabees 4:45-46 (about 100 B.C.)

“such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.”

1 Maccabees 9:27; cf. 14:41 (about 100 B.C.)

“From Artaxerxes (464–423 B.C.) to our own times a 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”

(Against Apion 1.41)

“After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi had died, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel...”

Babylonian Talmud Yomah 9b, repeated in Sota 48b, Sanhedrin 11a, and Midrash Rabbah on Song of Songs, 8.9.3)

There is no disagreement between Jesus and his disciples nor the scribes and Pharisees as to the canonical content of the Scripture.

WHAT ABOUT THE APOCRYPHA?



Latin Vulgate

Jerome
completed in A.D. 404

The Apocrypha

- Not listed as canonical by bishop Melito in A.D. 170, who listed OT canon for Christians
- Origin (184-253) affirmed none of the Apocryphal books and specifically stated that Maccabees was “outside” the canonical books
- Eusebius (260-339) agreed with Origin
- Athanasius (296-373) wrote in AD 367 naming some of the Apocryphal books and stating “these are not indeed included in the Canon.”



THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

WHAT IS THE UNIFYING MESSAGE OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT?

God graciously does for his people
what they cannot do for themselves
for their joy and his glory.

“But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power,
so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Exodus 9:16 (ESV)

Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?

2 Samuel 7:22-23 (ESV)

From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.

Isaiah 64:4 (ESV)

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

next week