

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1.2 Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these: Of the Old Testament Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Of the New Testament Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude, Revelation. All of which are given by the (e) inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

(e) 2 Timothy 3:16

1.3 The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of (f) divine inspiration, are no part of the canon (or rule) of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

(f) Luke 24:27,44; Romans 3:2

1. The Definition of Scripture

- a. Paragraph 1.2 defines the Holy Scripture Extensively by listing out the 66 books contained in the Old and New Testament. These 66 books make up the canon of Christian Scripture and clarify more explicitly what is meant when the confession says, "Holy Scripture."
- b. The Holy Scriptures are defined Intensively by identifying them as inspired by God and as the authoritative rule of faith and life for the Christian.
- c. Paragraph 1.3 defines the Holy Scriptures Exclusively by clarifying that the Apocryphal books, which Roman Catholicism believes to be canonical, are not part of the canon of Scripture.

2. Canon: Definition and History

- a. The Scriptures are *Holy*
- b. The Scriptures are *God's* Word
- c. The Scriptures are a *Written* word
- d. The recognition of the Old Testament canon (Genesis – Malachi) was largely settled and stable before the time of Jesus. The last of the OT books were written in the mid-5th century BC, (Ezra-Nehemiah, and Esther).
- e. The recognition of the New Testament Canon (Matthew – Revelation): By end of second century, a core of 22 out of the 27 NT books was recognized. Those books left out of the list of 22 were: 2 Peter, Jude, James, 2-3 John. By A.D. 367, all 27 NT books were listed together in the Thirty-ninth Paschal Letter of Athanasius. Also, in A.D. 397 at the Council of Carthage, a final list was established for which books belonged to the NT canon.
- f. Three attributes of all canonical books
 - i. Divine qualities: beauty, excellency, power and efficacy, unity and harmony
 - ii. Corporate reception – among Bible believing Christians, no major debates over canon
 - iii. Authoritative Authors: all NT books written by either a recognized apostle or by someone in close relation to one of the apostles (Mark, Luke-Acts, Hebrews, Jude)
- g. The Confession communicates to us that the Canon of Holy Scripture is closed, therefore no additions to the Holy Scriptures are necessary or to be expected.
 - i. "...those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased." (1.1)

- ii. "...unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men." (1.6)
- iii. Holy Scripture is the final authority/standard for the resolution of all controversies of religion, etc. concerning the Christian faith. (1.10)
- iv. Heb. 1:1-2. The final word concerning the Christian faith was communicated through Jesus Christ and was put into writing by His apostles.
- v. Heb. 22:18-19. This warning not to add to the "words of the book of this prophecy" is often extended and applied to the broader context of the whole Bible.
- h. The Scriptures are *given by the Inspiration of God* (1 Tim. 3:16). "Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible." (Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 420)
- i. The Scriptures are the *Rule of faith and life*
 - i. Rule: "A standard... a criterion, test, canon" (Oxford English Dictionary)

3. Apocrypha: Definition and History

- a. Apocrypha means "things that are hidden"
- b. There are two groups of Apocryphal writings
 - i. NT Apocrypha – a large array of books that look similar to NT writings in style and genre. Circulated in early Church times, all dated to second or third century or later, out of accord with rule of faith, no serious argument to add them to canon.
 - ii. OT Apocrypha was written between end of OT writings and coming of Christ
 - a. It gives us insight into Second Temple Judaism, Hellenization of Jewish people and Maccabean revolt.
 - b. It was never accepted by Jewish community as Scripture.
 - c. Luke 24:27; 44. When Jesus refers to the Scriptures, He is referring to the Tanakh (Torah, Nevi'im, and Kethuvim) which is the OT as we know it today.
 - d. Rom. 3:2. The Jews were entrusted with the OT Scriptures as "oracles of God."
 - e. Included in the Septuagint (Greek translation of OT) and the Vulgate (Latin translation completed in 404 AD).
 - f. In 1546, at the council of Trent, Roman Catholics officially declared Apocrypha to be part of canon (with the exception of 1 & 2 Esdras and Prayer of Manasseh).
 - iii. Different positions on the Apocrypha: Roman Catholic – Anglican (39 Articles) – Westminster Confession and beyond...
- c. Three Negatives to define the Apocrypha
 - i. Not Divinely Inspired. Clarifies the place of Apocryphal books in relation to Holy Scripture. Contrast Inspired vs "not being of divine inspiration."
 - ii. Not Canonical, "*are no part of the canon.*" How do we know canon is closed/accurate? Trust the faithfulness of God to preserve His Word. The Holy Spirit testifies, and History.
 - iii. Not Authoritative, "*are of no authority...*" for the church of God (compare w/ other statements about authority)