

Introduction to Canon of Scripture and Textual Criticism

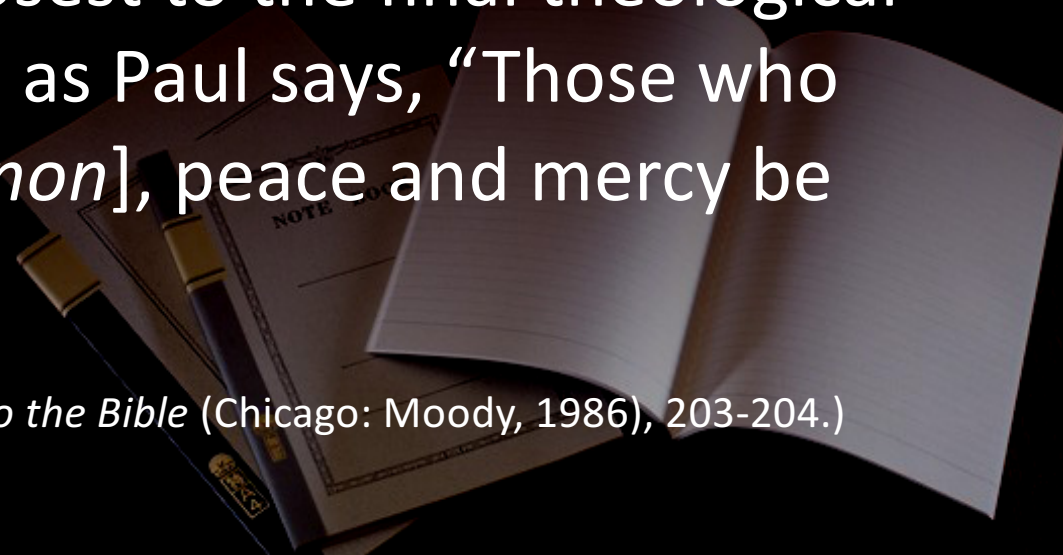
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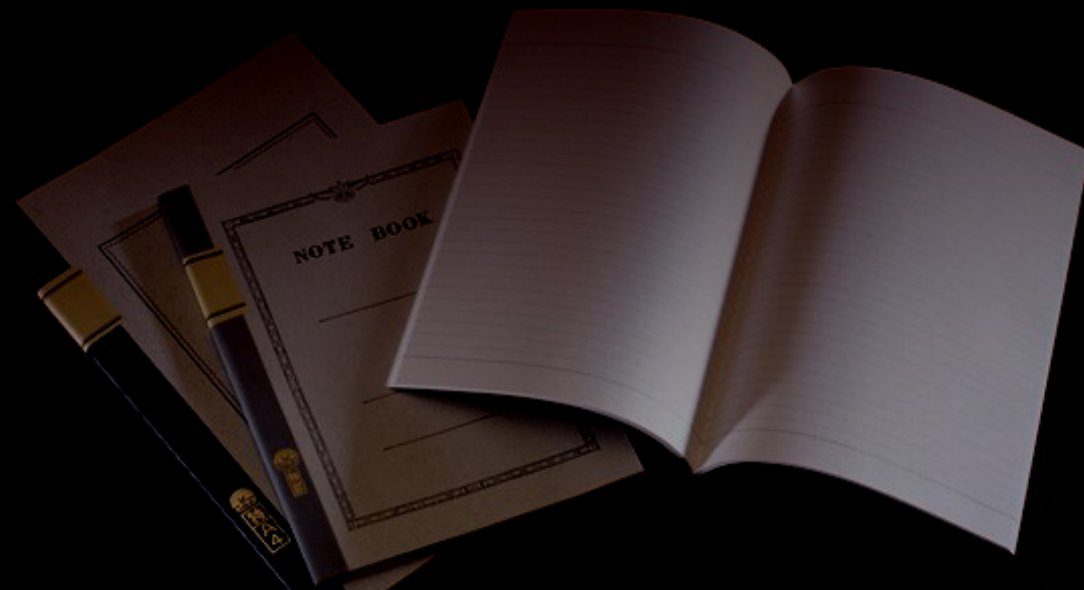
Canonicity

- The original meaning of the term canon can be traced to the ancient Greeks, who used it in a literal sense: a *kanon* was a rod, ruler, staff, or measuring rod.
- The Greek word *kanon* is probably a derivative of the Hebrew *kaneh* (reed), an Old Testament term meaning measuring rod (Ezek. 40:3; 42:16)...
- Galatians 6:16 comes closest to the final theological significance of the word, as Paul says, “Those who will walk by this rule [*kanon*], peace and mercy be upon them.”
- (Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 203-204.)



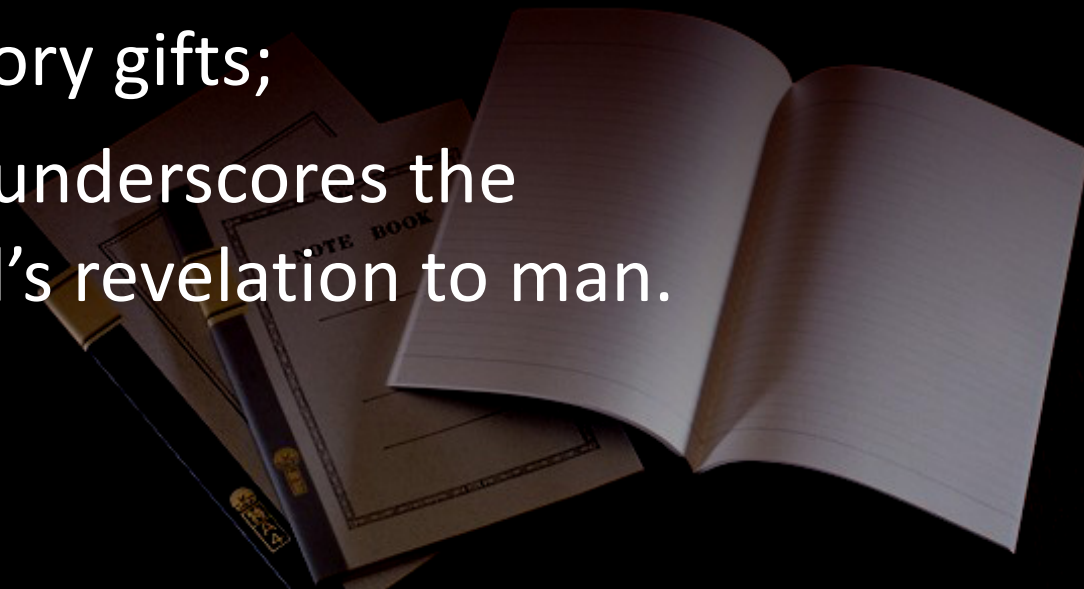
Canonicity

- During the early generations of the church the idea of the canon referred primarily to the rule of truth or the rule of faith as descending from Christ and the apostles. Soon thereafter and also more recently the term has come to refer to the list of books considered authoritative as Scripture.



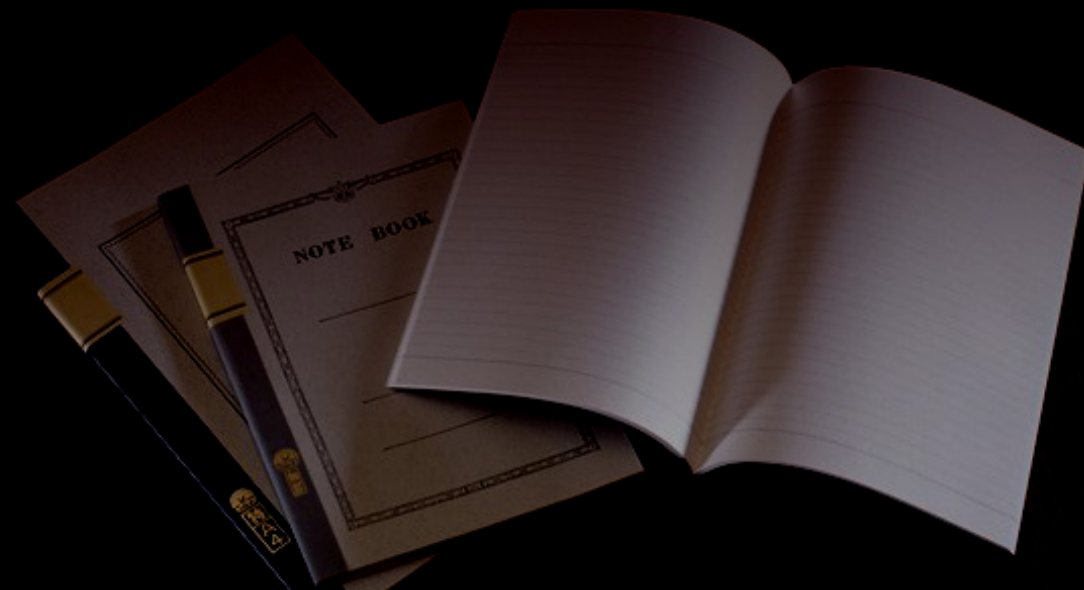
Canonicity

- The idea of a closed canon is emphasized in several contexts:
 - Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:2 highlight the completeness of the Law;
 - Amos 8:11 reveals a stoppage in new revelation for an extended period of time;
 - 1 Corinthians 13:9-12 outlines that there would be a final end to revelatory gifts;
 - Revelation 22:18-19 underscores the completeness of God's revelation to man.



Textual Criticism

- Higher Criticism
 - Dealing with author identity
 - Issues like authorship, timing, cultural background
- Lower Criticism
 - Dealing with the reliability of the text itself
 - Especially focused on manuscript variants



The Big Question

- If we are basing our entire worldview on this text, it better be reliable.
- Should we and can we trust what we have today as the authoritative word of God?

