

*Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 5/1 (1994):68-105.  
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## DIVINE INSPIRATION AND THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

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### Introduction

An undeniable relationship exists between the divine inspiration of the Bible and the resulting canon of the Bible. Inspiration is historically affirmed among Jews and Christians as the essential, internal quality of Scripture from which its authority derives. While some insistent voices deny any connection between inspiration and canonization,<sup>1</sup> the opposite point of view is even more widely held.<sup>2</sup>

In this century extensive discussion on the question of the biblical canon has heated up again, particularly since the 1960's.<sup>3</sup> Debate has been stimulated in part by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>4</sup> and because reinvestigations of canon questions have indicated that the old critical consensus has significant flaws. Discussions continue unabated into the present.<sup>5</sup> A new consensus on the canon is in the making.

One of the major issues revolves around the idea whether the concept of "canon" and the canonization of the Bible is to be radically separated from the concept of "Scripture"<sup>6</sup> and not just from the concept of inspiration. In regard to the OT it is said by some scholars that the canon is not fixed until long after the Christian era began some point between A.D. 90 to as late as the fourth century A.D.<sup>7</sup>

For the NT external criteria for canonization such as apos-

tolicity, orthodoxy, antiquity, catholicity, spiritual value and acceptance by the church are increasingly predominant.<sup>8</sup> These criteria tend to place the process of canonization and its authority into the hands of the Church.

### Origin of the Canon: On What Basis?

**Human Agencies or Divine Agency?** The matter of the forces and/or sources which authorize biblical writings to be canonical are of crucial importance. The issue is whether (1) the Bible is the product of human decisions based on socio-cultural norms and events in the history of the past which can be reactualized in the present, or whether (2) humans came to recognize the authority of Scripture because of an inherent nature and quality of the writings of the Bible as the self-authenticating, self-validating Word of God.

Did human agencies, that is, rabbis, bishops, councils, and/or communities "determine" which of the Bible's books belong to the canon and, thereby, make it into Holy Scripture? The verb "determine" is used in the sense of formal decisions made on the basis of immanent, non-supernatural socio-cultural norms. Alternatively, did individuals, entities and/or communities "recognize" on the basis of the internal nature and quality which writings were canonical?

Historically Protestants have held that the canonization of the Bible of both the Old and New Testaments is the product not of human beings but the work of the Holy Spirit which produced the biblical books. By virtue of their inspiration, and its resultant internal self-authentication and self-validation, biblical books were "recognized" as canonical.

The verb "recognize" is distinctly different from the verb "determine." The former verb affirms the inherent supernatural origin, nature, and authority of the biblical books *as the cause* for their canonical status. Whereas the latter term "determine" is meant to communicate the power of purely human authorization of the canon by whatever religious, sociological and historical forces are considered to have been at work individually and/or collectively. Similarly, was the canonization of the Bible a process of development over many years, even centuries? Was the OT canon formed in three distinct stages as is widely supposed ever since a three-part

canon was proposed by post-New Testament Judaism? Was the OT canon fixed for the first time by vote of a Jewish synod/council in A.D. 90?

Is the Bible the product of the Church?<sup>9</sup> Did the Roman Catholic council fathers on April 8, 1546, at the Council of Trent, close the biblical canon? In the latter case, the Church could have an "open" canon as well as a "closed" one. The body which "closed" the canon could alter the canon by the inclusion or exclusion of additional books through subsequent decision(s).

**Incarnational View of Scripture and Canon.** The Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) speaks of "the Word of God [Scripture]" that "preserves the Church of God,"<sup>10</sup> therewith giving priority to the Bible over the Church. In the Reformation view any authority must be tested by its fidelity to Scripture.

Indeed, the Bible manifests the incarnation of God's Word in written form, "the Holy Scripture is God's Word, written, and so to say 'in-lettered,' just as Christ is the eternal Word of God incarnate in the garment of his humanity. And just as it is with Christ in the world, as he is viewed and dealt with, so it is also with the written Word of God."<sup>11</sup> Luther evidently held a high incarnational view of Scripture. The Bible is God's Word "in-lettered." A more recent way of expressing this idea is to speak of the Bible as the "inscripturated" Word of God.

The high incarnational view of Scripture holds that as "the divinity and power of God are embedded in the vessel of Christ's incarnate body, so the same divinity and power of God are embedded in Scripture, a vessel made of letters, . . . In order to grasp the biblical revelation in its fullness it is necessary to conceive of Scripture in terms of the divine-human nature of Christ."<sup>12</sup> Such a high view of Scripture is based and grounded in a high view of the incarnation where the earthly Jesus Christ is a manifestation of the indivisible union of the divine and the human. In analogy with Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the Bible consists equally of an indivisible union of the divine and the human just as is manifested in the Son of God.

Ellen G. White holds to a high incarnational view of the Bible as well. She speaks of the very "union of the divine and the human" as regards the Bible in analogy to that in the Son of God. She wrote,

"The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' John 1:14."<sup>13</sup> The "union of the divine and the human" of which the Bible is made up also impacts on the understanding of the nature and development of the canon. It follows that the canon cannot be simply perceived to be the result of human action or interest. The canonization process is interwoven with the "union of the divine and the human" of which the Bible partakes.

#### The Nature of the Canon

**The Term "Canon" Defined.** The English word "canon" derives from the Greek *ho kanon* via the Latin. It has a Hebrew background and is said to reach back even to ancient Sumerian.<sup>14</sup>

The term has a rich history of usage in both non-Christian<sup>15</sup> and Christian circles.<sup>16</sup> A basic meaning is provided with such designations as "measuringrod" or "measuringstick."<sup>17</sup> "The word [*kanon*] came to mean among the Greeks that which is a standard or norm by which all things are judged and evaluated, whether the perfect form to follow in architecture or the infallible criterion (*kritérion*) by which all things are to be measured."<sup>18</sup>

In later Christian usage it came to mean the authoritative (canonical) list of books which belong to the Bible.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to understand that the later usage of "canon" as a "list" of books is but one definition of a later period for this term. The earlier and more prominent usage of the term "canon" as the "rule," "standard," or "norm" for belief and practice is the more significant one. As such the "canon" is the standard of inspired and holy Scripture by which Christian teaching and action must be regulated.

**New Testament Usage.** The term "canon" is used in the NT four times (Gal 6:16; 2 Cor 10:13-16; some manuscripts contain the word also in Phil 3:16). Galatians 6:16 reads, "As for those who will follow this rule [*kanon*]<sup>20</sup>—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (NRSV). Here the meaning of "canon" is the "measuring rule" by which all things of the new creation are

measured. It is the "norm" and "standard" or "measure of assessment"<sup>21</sup> by which one's own action and those of others are measured. In Philippians 3:16 the word is employed in the same sense.

The passage of 2 Corinthians 10:13-16 is linguistically difficult to translate; there is some ambiguity. However, Paul seems to defend his apostolic authority by noting that he has a "canon" "or standard for his work and for the associated claim to apostolic validity which he has not conferred on himself but received from God."<sup>22</sup> The "canon" or "standard" is not of his own making but given to him by God.

**Post-NT Usage.** The designation "canon" is used in post-New Testament writings from the middle of the second century on in the sense of a "measure of judgment" which is determinative for the church in terms of what is true and what is false.<sup>23</sup>

By the fourth century A.D. the term "canon" came to be applied to the list of writings that belonged to and formed the body of authoritative Scriptures.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the word "canon" has come to be defined within the Christian community as "the list of the writings acknowledged by the Church as documents of divine revelation."<sup>25</sup>

Historically the term "canon" refers to both the shape (*normens normata*) of the Scriptures and the authoritative function (*norma normens*) of Scripture.<sup>26</sup> "Canon" also means the authority with which Scripture is used. The widely quoted Westminster Confession, written in 1647 and one of the most influential creeds of Calvinism, states in its article on Scripture, "All [of the sixty-six books] which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life."<sup>27</sup> What role does inspiration play in providing the "canon" as *normens normata*, its essential quality, and its *norma normens*, its norming function which is different from other documents which were not canonized?

#### The Scope of the Biblical Canon

The scope of the Bible—what books are included in it—is of pivotal interest. There is a radical difference between Roman Catholics (and certain Orthodox communions) and Protestants regarding the books which belong to the OT. On the other hand, there

is full agreement among all Christians regarding the books which belong to the NT.

**The Development of the OT Canon.** The post-NT three-part division of the OT has been used as the foundation for the widely held view that the canon of the OT developed in three stages over a long period of time. It is claimed that the "law" (Torah) came to be canonized first. Subsequently the "Prophets" (Nebi'im), and in a final and third stage the Writings (Kethubim=Hagiographa) were canonized.

A three-stage development of the OT canon "is completely hypothetical: there is no evidence for it, either in the OT itself or elsewhere."<sup>28</sup> This means that the widely held hypothesis or scholarly reconstruction of the supposed development of the OT canon is simply that. There is no historical basis for it. Therefore, it may be prudent not to assume too much as we think about the development of the canon.

As an alternative view we suggest that the canon developed at the very point when the biblical books were written under inspiration. The origin of the biblical books by divine inspiration is the source for the recognition by contemporaries and later communities that these books hold divine authority in themselves. Consequently, divinely inspired writings are canonical from the beginning because of their inherent nature as inspired documents. Thus, the authority of the biblical writings manifested in their divine inspiration is the root cause for the origin of the canon.

**Roman Catholic Canon of the OT.** The Roman Catholic Church has a larger canon for the OT than the canon of the Hebrew Bible with 39 books taken over by Jesus Christ and the apostles and followed by Protestantism in general.

In April 8, 1546, at the Council of Trent, the Council Fathers determined that the so-called deuterocanonical books such as Tobit, Judith, 1-2 Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, Wisdom, and the Additions to Daniel and Esther were just as canonical as the other OT books. Since that time the designation "protocanonical" has been used for the 39 books of the OT canon which Protestants and Catholics have in common and the designation "deuterocanonical" has been used for the books which only Catholics recognize as canonical.

According to the Council of Trent both proto-canonical and deuterocanonical writings have no distinction in quality, value and importance. All recognized canonical writings are on the same level. Thus the Roman Catholic Church has made a permanent ruling regarding the extent and the qualitative value of the Bible for Catholics.<sup>29</sup>

The decision of the Council of Trent poses two fundamental questions which continue to divide true Protestantism from Catholicism. (1) On what basis should the so-called deuterocanonical books, the additions to the canon in the Roman Catholic Bible, be honored as Scripture? (2) On what basis is canonical authority granted? Is it Scripture with its internal authority based on divine inspiration? Or, is it the communal entity called the Church? Since the Council Fathers decided what is Scripture, it is a given that they, and with them the prior tradition of the Church, stand above Scripture. Granting Scriptural books their canonical status, places Church authority above Scripture authority.

Should Scripture, on the other hand, manifest an inherent, divine authority based on its divine inspiration, which any later religious community or church recognizes, then Scripture stands above the religious community whether Jewish or Christian. To put it in the words stated by many others: Does the Church create Scripture? Or, does Scripture create and maintain the church? In opposition to historic Reformation Protestantism the Council of Trent maintained, and not surprisingly, that "the canon cannot be derived from Scripture itself."<sup>30</sup> This position is nonnegotiable and of essential importance for the superior authority claimed to be vested in the Church, its magisterium and its tradition, as compared to the position held consistently among mainline Protestants that the Scriptures are self-authenticating.

Let us return to the question of the deuterocanonical books which are part of the Roman Catholic Bible. The volume of material contained in Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, 1-2 Maccabees, and supplements to Esther and Daniel, is about two-thirds the size of the NT. The debate does not revolve about the usefulness of these writings. The debate focusses on the matter of belonging to the Bible and having full Scriptural

authority. Do these writings deserve a place in the "canon" of the Bible?

In addressing this question we have to inform ourselves on a number of items. First, these writings do not derive from biblical "prophets." This is to say that they are not inspired. Second, there are historical contradictions between 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. It is generally acknowledged that there is a different level of accuracy between 1 Maccabees and Judith, or even 2 Maccabees. Thus, historical accuracy is compromised in these writings. Third, the additions of Esther are found only in Greek manuscripts. No original Hebrew manuscript or fragment thereof is known and it is usually concluded that it was composed in post-OT times in Greek. The books of Tobit and Judith existed only in the Greek language as well. The recognized canonical OT was written in Hebrew/Aramaic and not in Greek. Fourth, all so-called deuterocanonical books were produced in a period of time subsequent to the "prophetic period" which closed around 400 B.C.<sup>31</sup> Fifth, the NT does not quote these books as it quotes the OT books.<sup>32</sup> The NT recognizes as "prophetic" and inspired only the books which belong to the "law and the prophets," but not the apocrypha to which the so-called deuterocanonical writings are counted.<sup>33</sup> Sixth, the early church fathers, many of whom quote Scripture as Scripture, do not quote these books on par with what they held as Scripture. Seventh, the so-called deuterocanonical books were preserved in the North African metropolis Alexandria, but not in Palestine. These writings breath a different spirit as any reader can easily detect.<sup>34</sup> Eighth, the Hebrew canon contains 22 (respectively 24) books, that is, our 39 OT books, and these writings are not among them from the earliest times such numbers are mentioned<sup>35</sup> to the post-NT listings.<sup>36</sup> In conclusion, the additional writings of the Roman Catholic Bible do not merit to be on par with Scripture if the OT canon is limited to those books which Jesus, the apostles, the Jews, and the early Church recognized as Scripture.

#### "Biblical Inspiration" and Canon Formation

A sound methodology demands that we listen to what the biblical writings themselves have to say about their origin by divine inspiration. This is essential because biblical authority is based on

inspiration and so is the canon. Since space limitations do not permit a full-fledged study, we will try to make our presentation representative of the Scriptural position.

**Inspiration: the Testimony of the OT.** The OT does not use the word "inspired" or "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*). This language is only employed by Paul. Nevertheless the OT strongly maintains its divine origin.

The OT has its own way of speaking about its divine origin and divine inspiration, and, thus, of its resultant canonicity. We refer to some high points expressed by its own self-testimony.

1. "Prophet(s)." The Hebrew language used the term *beyad*, "through," literally "by the hand of," to communicate that God spoke "through" his "prophets" (*nebi'im*). Isaiah 20:2 says that "at that time the Lord spoke through [*beyad*] Isaiah the son of Amoz." Jeremiah 37:2 reports that the people did not listen "to the words of the Lord which He spoke through [*beyad*] Jeremiah the prophet [*nabi'*]" (cf. Jer 50:1). The "word of the Lord" came "through [*beyad*]" Haggai (1:1, 3; 2:1) and Malachi (1:1). "The word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through [*beyad*] his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet [*nabi'*], . . ." (2 Kgs 14:25, NASB). Collectively it is stated that Yahweh warned Israel and Judah "through [*beyad*] all his prophets [*nebi'im*]" (2 Kgs 17:13, cf. 23).

By the time of Ezekiel the Lord can speak of "the former days" during which He spoke "through [*beyad*] My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years" (Ezek 38:17, NASB). In the book of Daniel the lamentation is expressed that Israel refused to obey "the voice of the Lord our God" and the "teachings [*toroth*] which He set before us through [*beyad*] His servants the prophets" (Dan 9:10, NASB). This latter passage is informative about what God has provided "through His prophets," namely, the Lords's "voice" and His "teachings." Prophets "prophesy" (Ezek 38:17) and they provide divine "teachings" (Dan 9:10).

Yahweh spoke "through [*beyad*] His servants the prophets" (2 Kgs 21:10, NASB; cf. 2 Kgs 24:2; 2 Chron 29:25). The author of the books of 1-2 Samuel is included among the "prophets" (1 Samuel 3:20) as is the well-known prophet Isaiah (Isa 37:2). In a com-

prehensive summary statement Ezra speaks of the "commandments" of God which Israel had forsaken but which God "commanded by [*beyad*] Thy servants the prophets" (Ezra 9:10-11, NASB).

It is noteworthy that "Thy Spirit" admonishes the people "through [*beyad*] Thy prophets" (Neh 9:30, NASB). What the "prophets" say is what the "Spirit" says.

The same designation *beyad*, "through" in the sense of "by the hand" of, is used for God giving His "law" "through [*beyad*] Moses" (Neh 8:14; 9:14; 10:29[30]). There are numerous passages which simply state that God/Yahweh commanded or spoke "through (*beyad*) Moses" (Josh 14:2; 20:2; 21:8; 22:9; Judg 3:4; 1 Kgs 8:53, 56; 2 Chron 33:8; 35:6) or the "book of the law of the LORD given by [*beyad*] Moses" (2 Chron 34:14, NASB) Both Moses, a "prophet" himself, and the "prophets" are the agents "through (*beyad*)" whom God revealed the "law and the prophets," the OT.

2. "The Word of the LORD." The phrase "the word of the LORD" (*debar Yahweh*) is used 269 times in twenty-eight different books of the OT.<sup>37</sup> The parallel expressions, "words of the LORD" (*dibreiy Yahweh*), is used seventeen times in eight books<sup>38</sup> and, "words of God" (*dibreiy Elohim*),<sup>39</sup> appears three times. The phrase, "word of the Lord God" (*debar Adonay Yahweh*), appears a few times.<sup>40</sup> So does the phrase, "word of God" (*debar (ha)Elohim*).<sup>41</sup> More than 300 usages of these respective phrases testify to the fact that the OT perceived itself as deriving from God. It is the "Word of God."

An investigation of these phrases reveals that they most frequently refer to visions and prophetic revelations. About 75% of the usages refer to the divine words which came to the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and all the persons known as "prophets" in the OT. In these instances the expressions mean most often that the "word of Yahweh" is the "word of God" which the prophet proclaims to his contemporaries and has written in his book.

These expressions indicate that what the prophet announces is not simple "a word" from God. Rather, it "is always called *the* word of God."<sup>42</sup> Ludwig Koehler, the famous lexicographer of the Hebrew language, has noted that in this usage "the real foundation

of the biblical doctrine of inspiration of the Holy Scripture is to be found."<sup>43</sup>

In approximately 20% of the usages, the phrase, "word[s] of the LORD/God," refers to the divine laws God gave to Israel, including the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments are designated as "the word of Yahweh" (Deut 5:5; 1 Chron 15:15; etc.)<sup>44</sup> or "the words of Yahweh" (Exod 24:3-4; etc.).<sup>45</sup>

This conspectus of usages reveals that the OT extensively presents itself as deriving from God as the "word of God" which human "prophets" wrote in human languages.

3. "*Declares the Lord.*" A dominant phrase translated as "declares the LORD/Yahweh" or "(thus) says the LORD/Yahweh" is *ne'um Yahweh*. It appears no less than 364 times in the OT.<sup>46</sup>

This phrase is extensively used in the prophetic books of the OT. But it also appears in Genesis 22:16; Numbers 14:28; 1 Samuel 2:30; Psalms 110:1; 2 Kings 9:26; 19:33; 22:19 and 2 Chronicles 34:27.

The usage reveals that it is employed most frequently at the beginning, middle, or end of a saying of Yahweh given by a prophet to support the first person or "I" report of Yahweh. The purpose of this expression is to stress "the origin of the message of the prophets as deriving from divine revelation and to witness to their divine commissioning."<sup>47</sup> We find here a major OT expression which testifies to the inspiration of the OT.

4. "*(Thus) says Yahweh.*" The phrase, "thus says Yahweh (LORD)" (*koh 'amar Yahweh*), is used 291 times in the OT.<sup>48</sup> The same phrase without the "thus" (*koh*) is used another 76 times. It is an expression which states in plain language that Yahweh/God speaks in the OT.<sup>49</sup> It is also an expression which declares that what is said in the OT is of divine origin, the revelation being rooted in God Himself. Furthermore, it communicates that a divine proclamation is being presented by the prophet who is speaking to the people.

These three expressions and their variations are used way over one thousand times in the OT. This abundant usage is overwhelming because it is distributed so extensively. It is the OT's way of saying that it is God-derived and "God-breathed." It uses this language to tell the readers that it is inspired and authoritative.

**Inspiration and Canonicity.** Canonicity is rooted in inspiration. Only inspired books are the "Word of God" and "Scripture" and only inspired books are canonical. Inspiration brings with itself the canon and canonicity.

Canonicity is not an authority assigned to the Bible from the outside. To the contrary, it is derived from and inherent in the very nature of the documents which belong to the Bible. Inspiration causes the inspired writing to be "Word of God" since inspiration comes from God and the "Word of God" derives from Him. Therefore, the inspired Word of God is by its very nature "Scripture" and is canonical from the moment it is recorded in written form by the hands of the inspired writers.

**Inspiration: The NT Testimony About the OT.** We turn now to the testimony of the NT about the OT. It makes explicit claims about the OT which are normative in Scripture. It also makes explicit claims about itself. Both areas need to be investigated.

1. "*Prophecy and Prophets.*" The apostle Peter insists that "no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21, RSV). "Prophecy" is the result of the movement of the Holy Spirit on persons called "prophets."

"Prophecy" in this sense is Holy Spirit originated. The Holy Spirit moved human beings, "prophets," who spoke from God. What they speak is "from God." Since their messages originate from God, what these "spoke from God" is the "word of God."

"Prophecy" is not the fruit of human "impulse." It is not the result of human imagination, thought, or genius. It never came "by the impulse of man," writes Peter, but has its origin in God who by means of the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets with His message.

The phrase "impulse of man" needs further attention. The contrast in this text is between the "impulse of man" and the Holy Spirit's activity on man. The difference is between human impulse and divine activity. The difference is between the horizontal dimension of human thought and experience based on the socio-cultural environments of the human agent and the vertical dimension manifested in the divine inbreaking of God into the historical process by means of the Holy Spirit. The latter actually touches

human beings and provides them with divine revelation in a cognitive manner.

The horizontal dimension, the "impulse of man," is inherent in any human being. It is part of general human experience within the sphere of any person's socio-cultural context and the prior human contexts to which history testifies. All human beings share in this horizontal dimension; it is part and parcel of being a human being.

The vertical dimension is expressed in the phrase, "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This is the dimension of the supernatural. It is the inbreaking of the divine Spirit into selected human beings, that is to say the "prophets." It is not part and parcel of the universal experience of all human beings. These specially chosen human beings, the "prophets," are touched by the Holy Spirit in a special, revelatory way.

Persons that speak prophetically are "moved" by the Holy Spirit because the divine Spirit gives them actual, cognitive information to which they had no access to before, and which they needed to communicate. What these Holy Spirit-endowed persons communicate, they "spoke from God." They did not speak on their own. The radical separation between what is "spoken from God" and what is of "human impulse" cannot be overemphasized.

"Prophecy," as the term is used in 2 Peter 1:21, is connected with the phrase "prophecy of Scripture" in vs. 20. It is not restricted to the so-called prophetic parts or books of Scripture alone. That is, it is not restricted to the second part of the Hebrew canon, the *Nebi'im* of post-NT times which include the Former and Latter Prophets. It is not restricted either to the second part of the OT of pre-NT times which includes all 34 books aside from the Pentateuch.

The term "prophecy" refers to that which was written by the inspired "prophets who prophesied" (1 Pet 1:10), that is to say, "by men moved by the Holy Spirit [who] spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21). Who may be included in the term "prophets"? The NT uses such expressions as "law/Moses and the prophets"<sup>50</sup> with the "prophets" seemingly referring to the entire OT outside the Pentateuch.

The "prophets" are spoken of by themselves as in Luke 1:70, "As He [God] spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old"

(NASB) with a quotation following from the Psalms and a reference to Abraham. The impression is left that in this instance "prophets" is an inclusive term going far beyond the second part of the OT canon, actually including the "Law" and the "Writings."

The inclusive usage of the designation "prophets" for the whole of the OT Scripture may also be intended in Jesus' saying, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (Lk 24:25, NASB). This seems likely since Jesus explains to the disciples on the road to Emmaus "all the Scriptures," namely, "Moses and the prophets" (vs. 27). The phrase "all that the prophets have spoken" seems to be identical with the phrase "all the Scriptures,"<sup>51</sup> expressing the totality of the Bible of Jesus' day, the OT.

The phrase "the Scriptures of the prophets" which Jesus employs in Matthew 26:56, and which were to be fulfilled in Him, again seem to include the whole OT.<sup>52</sup> If this is the case, then the term "prophets" in the phrase "the Scriptures of the prophets" are the persons which produced the OT Scriptures under inspiration. Once more there is an inclusive use of the term "prophets" as the those who produced the whole of the OT under inspiration.

The apostle Paul also speaks in Romans 16:26 of the "Scriptures of the prophets." This expression refers to the entire OT writings and not simply to a part of it.<sup>53</sup> It gives testimony to the fact that the writers of all of the Scriptures, the entire OT, are perceived as "prophets."

The opening of the letter to the Hebrews confirms this inclusive usage of the designation "prophets" as the writers who produced the entire OT. The author states that God had spoken to the ancient Hebrew ancestors, that is, the "fathers" who are not simply the patriarchs but the Hebrews of OT times, "in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1, NRSV). The term "prophets" is a comprehensive designation inclusive of every writer of the OT. "Prophets" in this passage refers to persons in whom "God dwells . . . and speaks forth from them, . . ."<sup>54</sup> It is a designation expressing the function of divine inspiration since it is "God" who "spoke" through them.

The inspired revelation of the OT given by the "prophets," who

are divinely appointed inspired human writers, has God as its Author just as God "has spoken" now through His own Son who may be seen to be the "Prophet." The inclusive usage of "prophets" is supported by the inclusive usage of "Son."

This introduction to Hebrews, with the revelation through the "prophets" (the entire OT) and now through the "Son," is similar in wording to 2 Peter 3:2: "Remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles." Here too the "words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets" seem to refer to the OT as a whole just as "the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" refers to what is preserved in the NT as a whole.

God spoke in the OT through the "prophets," and God manifests Himself uniquely through the Son in the NT who "[spoke] by your apostles." Thus, Scripture comes to us through both the "prophets" (the entire OT) and the "apostles" (the entire NT). Both categories of inspired persons, "prophets" and "apostles," are the divinely appointed human agents to speak and to write for God.

This conspectus of key passages using the term "prophets" in an inclusive sense leads to the conclusion that the term "prophets" is used comprehensively for inspired persons who wrote the OT.<sup>55</sup> The correlation of "holy prophets" and "your apostles" in 2 Peter 3:2 is of significance. Corresponding to the "prophets" as the designation for the inspired writers of the OT is parallel designation "apostles" as the inspired writers of the NT. They are the authoritative spokespersons for Jesus Christ whose "apostles" they are.<sup>56</sup>

Moses was designated a "prophet" (Deut 34:10; 18:15, 18) and thus qualifies as being among the "prophets" who wrote Scripture. Moses is credited with having written the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible (Josh 1:7-9; 24: 25, 26; 1 Kgs 2:2-4; Ezra 7:6, 7, 23-26; etc.) which were considered as authoritative Scripture throughout OT times.<sup>57</sup>

At a time when two men were prophesying and when Moses was asked to restrain them, he said, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num 11:29, NASB). This statement expresses a wish that

all of the Lord's people might be prophets. However, this is not the case. "Prophets" are specially endowed persons. Moses makes the very point that the entire community of Israel does not function in the role of a prophet. There is no community wide prophecy and no community inspiration of all Israel.

Is it different in the NT church, the early Christian community? On the basis of the Divine promise (John 14-16), the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost (Acts 2). Those on whom the Holy Spirit fell did not turn out to be "prophets." Rather, they were enabled miraculously to speak foreign languages so as to proclaim the Good News with power as quickly as possible (Acts 2:2-13).<sup>58</sup> Every true follower of Christ in the community of faith has the gift of the Holy Spirit as Paul insists when he writes to the Romans, "Indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Rom 8:9, NASB). "This did not mean that all of them received the specific gift of prophecy: the gift of prophecy . . . was but one of several gifts of the Spirit distributed among the members of the church."<sup>59</sup>

The reception of the Holy Spirit by believers is to be distinguished from the role of a "prophet." The role of "prophet" involves a special calling and endowment of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:29).

Bible writers were fully aware that what they wrote was not the product of their own impulse. David expressed the conviction that his words originated from the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (2 Sam 23:2, NASB).

Daniel recognized that the book of the Jeremiah was "the word of the LORD" (Dan 9:2, KJV) and the angel Gabriel referred to the "scripture of truth" (Dan 10:21, KJV).

Jesus appealed to the Bible of his day, the OT, as the word of ultimate authority when He met the Devil's temptation in the wilderness. Jesus resisted the Devil by stating, "It is written," quoting Scripture (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Satan responded by misconstruing Scripture, to which Jesus replied again, "It is written."

Jesus and the apostles repeatedly appealed to "Scripture" as the Word of God which is fulfilled (Lk 4:21; 22: 37; Mk 12:10; Matt 26:54; John 7:38; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36-37; Acts 1:16;



etc.). Scripture comes by the "prophets" (Matt 26:56; Rom 1:2; 16:26) who speak by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).

Jesus Christ himself insists that "all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John [the Baptist]" (Matt 11:13, NASB). The whole of the OT is said to be prophetic in nature. It "prophesied" or "spoke."<sup>60</sup>

The author of the letter to the Hebrews sees the Holy Spirit as the primary Author of both the warning, "Today, when you hear his voice . . ." (Heb 3:7-11, RSV, citing Ps 95:7-11) but also of the meaning and ritual of the Mosaic tabernacle. "The Holy Spirit was showing thereby that while the first tabernacle was still standing, the way into the sanctuary had not yet been revealed" (Heb 9:8, NAB).

When Joel, the "prophet" (Acts 2:16) spoke, it was "God" speaking (vs. 17). Likewise "God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:21, NASB) and Moses is the first one cited (vs. 22). What is written by the "prophets," by Moses and the subsequent inspired prophets of the OT is from God. God "announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that Christ should suffer, . . ." (Acts 3:18, NASB).

The "Holy Spirit [spoke] through the mouth of our father David Thy servant" (Acts 4:25, NASB) quoting from Psalm 2. The idea of God speaking "through" the prophets is repeated several times in the NT.

On a comprehensive level Yahweh had proclaimed His words "through [*beyad*] the former prophets" (Zech 7:7). The designation "former prophets" includes "the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit" (vs. 12, NASB). If by "law [*torah*]" the "law" of Moses is meant, then the designation "former prophets" refers to all prophets from Moses to Zechariah.

God not only used the "prophets" as speakers and preachers, He used them also to write down their words.<sup>61</sup> In Mark 1:2 the writing comes from a "prophet." The NT employs such phrases as "it has been written by the prophet" (Matt 2:5) or "all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man" (Lk 18:31, NASB). Paul speaks of the promise given "through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" (Rom 1:2, NASB). What the prophets wrote is

inspired Scripture. It was the operation of the Holy Spirit which enabled the "prophets" to utter their words.<sup>62</sup>

Paul affirms that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). Thus, "all Scripture" is "God-breathed," which is the literal translation of the Greek term *theopneustos*.<sup>63</sup> Although "all Scripture" is written by the prophets, its content and message derive from God Himself.

Jesus Christ Himself maintained that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35, NASB). Thus, he upheld its unity and coherence because its source and origin was in God. The entire Bible of both Testaments is conceived of as deriving from "prophets"<sup>64</sup> and thus by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. "*Scripture*" and "*Sacred Writings*." The view expressed in the NT on the nature of "Scripture" and the usage of "sacred writings" (2 Tim 3:15) is instructive for the origin of Scripture and its authority.

a. "*Scripture*" as Used by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ referred to "Scripture" in his statement, "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39).<sup>65</sup> It is universally acknowledged that "Scripture" as here used by Jesus refers to the Hebrew Bible of the OT as a whole.

Jesus endorsed thereby the understanding that His Bible is inspired Scripture and carries within itself the authority for discovering (a) eternal life and (b) Jesus Christ Himself because they "bear witness of Me."

Jesus Christ refers in a number of instances to the totality of "Scripture" as the authoritative Bible of His day. Such expressions and phrases as "they [disciples] believed the Scripture" (John 2:22), "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), "the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12), and "they did not understand the Scripture" (John 20:9) give ample evidence for His view of what Scripture is.

The designation "Scripture" does not in every instance mean the entire OT. In specific contexts this designation refers to a passage within the Bible. When used in this restricted sense, it is so qualified in a special way. For example, Jesus in his inaugural address in the synagogue in Nazareth referred to "this Scripture" referring to the passage of Isaiah 61 (Lk 4:21). In John 19:37 Jesus speaks of "another Scripture" and means Zechariah 12:10. In Mark

12:10 Jesus refers to "this Scripture" of Psalm 118:22-23. These instances from the Gospels restrict the meaning of "Scripture" to individual passages within the OT with such terms as "this" and "another." This restricted usage of Scripture is safeguarded by its contexts and special pronouns.

b. *"Scripture" in Peter's Writings.* The same unity and totality of OT Scripture is intended by the apostle Peter in his reference to "Scripture" in 1 Peter 2:6 and his famous statement about "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Pet 1:20). These passages emphasize and affirm the "unified totality of Scripture."<sup>66</sup>

c. *"Scripture" in Paul's Writings.* The early Christian usage of the term "Scripture" to refer to the totality and unity of the OT is supported in several passages by the apostle Paul also.

The designation "sacred writings" (*hiera grammata*) in 2 Timothy 3:15 which Timothy had known from childhood "refers to the Old Testament as a whole."<sup>67</sup> This is one way in which the entire Bible of those who lived previous to the time of the full NT (see also 2 Tim 3:16).

Paul writes in Galatians 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand . . ." (NASB). "Scripture" here is personified to stand for God Himself. This so-called hypostatizing of Scripture shows that "Scripture" is regarded in its "essential unity as a declaration of the divine will."<sup>68</sup>

d. *"Scripture" in the Book of Acts.* "Scripture" in Acts 1:16 is that "which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David" (vs. 17, NASB). In Acts 8 we also find the report that "the passage of Scripture" (vs. 32) which the Ethiopian eunuch was reading came from Isa 53:7-8. The distinction here is that the term "passage" is used when a part of the totality of "Scripture" is read. "Scripture" itself is the totality of the Bible.

The consistent picture in the NT is that the OT is "Scripture," the "Word of God" produced by the "prophets" who spoke through the Holy Spirit. The "prophets" wrote it down (Exod 17:14; 24:4; Deut 31:9; Josh 24:26; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 3:2; Jer 30:2; cf. Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 2:3; 1 Pet 5:12; 2 Pet 3:1; 1 John 1:4, 2:12, 26; Jude

3; etc.). Jesus Christ and the apostles accepted it as authoritative, inspired "Scripture."

**Inspiration: The NT Testimony About Itself.** What does the NT say about itself? Is it using such designations as "Scripture" and "word of God" for itself?

1. *Scripture(s).* A brief consideration of 1 Timothy 5:18 is appropriate. "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'" (NASB). The first quotation derives from Deuteronomy 25:4 and holds it to be "Scripture."

The second quotation consists of a saying of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:7: "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (cf. Matt 10:10). Jesus' own saying is covered by the introductory formula for Scripture quotation, "for the Scripture says."

It has been suggested that Paul refers to the canonical Gospel of Luke as Scripture. We cannot be fully certain about this, but the wording affirms that at least a saying of Jesus (or a collection of his sayings as a Gospel) had the status of "Scripture" when Paul wrote 1 Timothy.<sup>69</sup> "It is striking that Paul puts this verbatim quote from Luke's gospel on the same level as the OT and calls both citations 'Scripture'."<sup>70</sup>

The second example comes from the book of Acts. The preaching of "the good news" by Philip is designated to be "the word of God" (Acts 8:12, 14). The proclamation of the gospel is repeatedly described as "the word of God" (Acts 11:1; cf. 12:24; 13:46; 17:13; 18:11; 19:20). This reveals that the apostolic preaching and teaching is designated "the word of God."

The third example derives from Peter. The reference to "the rest of the Scriptures" in 2 Peter 3:16—within the argument concerning the letters of Paul "in which are some things hard to understand" (NASB)—indicates that Peter's use of "Scriptures" here "places Paul's writings on a level with other inspired Scripture."<sup>71</sup> Evidently the Pauline corpus of letters are here reckoned as belonging to "the other Scriptures."<sup>72</sup> This manner of referring to Paul's letters as "Scriptures" alongside the OT indicates that they had been recognized as being on the same level. They were both viewed as being of divine origin and authoritative.

Since the "Scriptures" include Paul's letters, it can be sug-

gested that they have (as do all the other "Scriptures") intrinsic canonicity. They are as canonical as the Scriptures of the OT.

The fourth example derives from Paul. The apostle Paul makes reference to "the mystery of Christ," which was not made known in previous ages, and which "has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph 3:4-5, NKJV). This passage gives evidence that the apostolic preaching and writing is Spirit-originated in the sense that it is revelation by the Holy Spirit in the same way as the messages of the "prophets" were revelation in the OT age. This is in harmony with the claim of Paul that "the gospel which was preached by me . . . came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12, NKJV).

John the Revelator provides a fifth example. He maintains "I was in the Spirit" (Rev 1:10) when he was given "the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things that he saw" (1:2).

At the conclusion of the book of Revelation there is the repeated emphasis on "the words of the prophecy of this book" (Rev 22:10, 18, 19). "The words of the prophecy of this book" are the very "word of God" (Rev 1:2).

Our review of major statements using the term "Scripture(s)" and "word of God" in the NT reveals that these designations were extended to include the NT writings. F. F. Bruce notes insightfully, "When the New Testament writings were later included with the Old Testament as part of 'all scripture' [2 Tim 3:15-15], it was natural to conclude that they too were 'inspired by God'."<sup>73</sup> This conclusion seems sound. The Word of God made up of both the Old and the New Testaments is "inspired by God." It is authoritative not because humans vested it with any authority. Authority is not assigned to it by the community. It carries authority because Scripture originated through the Holy Spirit by means of inspiration and was written down by inspired prophets and apostles.

2. "All Scripture." We may at this time return to the expression "all Scripture" in the famous passage of 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (NASB).

The phrase "all Scripture" is the most widely used rendering of the original Greek words *pasa graphe* which Paul wrote.<sup>74</sup> One

English version translates, "every scripture" (ARV) and recent dynamic renderings read "every inspired scripture" (NEB, REB).

The latter rendering, "every inspired scripture," does not seem to reflect faithfully what Paul wrote. This rendering is syntactically debated.<sup>75</sup> The Greek grammarian C. F. D. Moule wrote that the rendering "every inspired scripture" "is most unlikely . . . [and] much more probably [the phrase] means *the whole of scripture [is] inspired.*"<sup>76</sup>

What difference would it make to say "all Scripture" or "every scripture"? James Barr notes that "if the meaning is 'every scripture', then the word 'scripture' does not designate the entirety of the Bible; rather, it is a word for each individual passage or sentence."<sup>77</sup> In other words, the rendering "every scripture" refers distributively to every individual passage in Scripture. It means "every passage of Scripture"<sup>78</sup> in a distributive sense and not "Scripture" as a totality and complete unit. The distributive sense means that as one looks at the various parts of the Bible in whatever Scripture passage is considered, it is inspired by God.

Contrariwise, if Paul means "all Scripture," using this expression in the non-distributive, collective sense, then "all Scripture" refers to the Bible in its entirety.

The likelihood that Paul is using *pasa graph* in a collective sense of "all Scripture" is high, because this is the normal usage of the term in the NT and in Paul's letters. The idea that there is a Scripture passage that is not inspired by God is not the viewpoint of Paul or any other biblical writer.<sup>79</sup> Scripture is not the result of human impulse, human reason, mere human research, or the like, but of being "breathed [inspired] by God" (*theopneustos*).

The evidence considered above seems to indicate that the NT, as the OT before it, is clearly given by means of the Holy Spirit. It is the word of the "Son" (Heb 1:1-2) or "the Lord's commandment." Paul insists in writing to the Corinthians about their problem, "the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Cor 14:37, NASB). The NT originates in the same way as does the OT. It follows that the inspiration of the NT writings gives it canonical status in the same way in which the OT writings have inherent canonical status.

### The Closing of the OT Canon: A New Consensus

Recent investigations on the closing of the OT canon have consistently pointed to a closing in pre-Christian times.<sup>80</sup> This is a significant departure from widely accepted critical thinking which held sway for about 100 years. It opens a new chapter in our understanding of the origin and development of the OT canon. These studies indicate that the nineteenth and twentieth century critical consensus on the canonization of the OT is undermined from studies within the critical camp of scholarship and without it, and must even be replaced.

Due to restrictions in space, we will only mention six major authorities. Four belong to the critical tradition of scholarship, as their views on the book of Daniel will show. Two belong in the camp of evangelical scholarship. Their agreement on basics indicates that this emerging consensus is not a partisan issue.

*Sid Z. Leiman.* In 1976 Sid Z. Leiman published his massive dissertation which investigates the full range of Rabbinic evidence for the canonization of the Hebrew Bible. He continues to hold to a three-part process of the canonization of the OT. He maintains that the text of Scripture is unequivocal on the canonization of the "Law." Leiman concludes, "The canonization of the Covenant Code, the Decalogue, Deuteronomy, and perhaps the entire Torah is assumed to have occurred during the lifetime of Moses."<sup>81</sup> This implies that the history of the process of canonization did not simply begin in the time of Josiah around 622/21 B.C. when the book of Deuteronomy had been discovered in the Temple (2 Kgs 22=2 Chr 34).

In the view of the rabbis, the Prophets (Nebi'im), Leiman shows, were canonized between 500 and 450 B.C. The Writings (or Hagiographa), the third part of the Jewish canon, was canonized around 200 B.C., or earlier. But since the book of Daniel is claimed by liberal scholars not to have been completed until 164 B.C., according to the Maccabean authorship hypothesis, Leiman claims that final canonization of the Writings took place during the Maccabean crisis. "It is a fair assumption," he writes, "that the present form of Daniel was canonized by the Maccabees ca. 164 B.C. In the light of that probability, and in the light of 2 Macc 2:14-15, we would suggest that the Hagiographa was canonized and closed under the

auspices of Judah Maccabee shortly before the death of Antiochus IV (164/163 B.C.)."<sup>82</sup>

*S. Talmon.* Shemaryahu Talmon published in 1987 an important essay, "Holy Writings and Canonical Books in Jewish Perspective—Considerations Concerning the Formation of the Entity 'Scripture' in Judaism."<sup>83</sup> He argues for a sequential three-stage development of the canon of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>84</sup> The Bible was written over a period of ca. 1000 years, "between ca. 1200 and ca. 200 B.C.E."<sup>85</sup>

The "Torah," which is understood to derive from Moses, was promulgated by such kings as Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 17:7-9), Hezekiah (2 Chron 31:21), Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8ff.; 2 Chron 34:16ff.) and such national personalities as Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8:2-8).<sup>86</sup>

It is evident that the "holiness" of the Torah is to be equated with being "composed under divine inspiration."<sup>87</sup>

The corpus of Prophets and the Psalms are equally ascribed to "divine inspiration."<sup>88</sup> In this way these writings were accorded "holiness" which caused them to be counted among the "Holy Writings."<sup>89</sup> The historical and wisdom literature also manifest inspiration.<sup>90</sup>

Extended family entities together with religious and national communities during OT times received these types of inspired literature in reading and usage, contributing to its ascription as authoritative and canonical literature.<sup>91</sup>

Talmon concludes that the canon of Hebrew Scripture was completed by the early Hellenistic period in the middle of second century B.C.<sup>92</sup>

Evidently, Talmon agrees with Leiman on the closing of the canon and points out that the later rabbinic discussions at Jamnia have haggadic and not halakhic [legal] force. The discussion at Jamnia have but scholastic value and are unrelated to a closing of the canon. The canon was already closed by the times these discussions took place.<sup>93</sup>

*David N. Freedman.* David Noel Freedman, a first rate scholar of international reputation, who is called "one of the last of the great Bible generalists,"<sup>94</sup> argued in a provocative essay published in 1976—(independent of the conclusions reached by Leiman)—

that the Law and the Former Prophets (the historical books of the OT) formed a literary unit which had received canonical status by 550 B.C.

A "second edition" of the canon, which included the Latter Prophets, that is, the prophetic books of the OT, appeared about 500 B.C. The Hagiographa (Writings) were added subsequently. Since the book of Daniel is dated in its final supposed edition to 165 B.C. the canon seems to have been closed at that time.<sup>95</sup>

In 1993 Freedman explained that Ezra and Nehemiah canonized "the whole Bible" in its final form, "all except Daniel."<sup>96</sup> He will elaborate on this in a future monograph.

*Roger Beckwith.* Roger Beckwith, lecturer at Oxford University, wrote in 1985 the most massive tome on the canon of the OT written in this century. Beckwith is in essential agreement with Leiman on the closing of the canon. Beckwith suggests that Judas Maccabeus finally gathered the Scriptures together in 164 B.C., and at that time the books of Esther and Daniel were included in the canon.<sup>97</sup> Thus, the OT canon was closed as early as 164 B.C.<sup>98</sup> Beckwith holds, however, that the other parts of the canon were recognized as canonical at much earlier times.

*Meredith G. Kline.* Meredith G. Kline, following new discoveries on ancient Near Eastern treaties, argues that there is an unbroken canonical continuity from the time of Moses to the end of the writing of OT books. He argues for the divine origin of the biblical books based on divine inspiration which guarantees authority and a faithful transmission of text as the Word of God.<sup>99</sup> He states, "The origin of the Old Testament canon coincided with the founding of the kingdom of Israel by covenant at Sinai."<sup>100</sup> The very covenant made by God at Sinai which "formally established the Israelite theocracy was itself the beginning of the nucleus of the total covenantal structure of writings which constitutes the Old Testament canon."<sup>101</sup>

For Kline the New Testament's claim "as to its primary divine authorship" means that it is to be "understood as the word of the ascended Lord of the new covenant . . ."<sup>102</sup> "And then the human authors of the New Testament books, authorized by their Lord to speak his word, will be seen to function as his 'ministers of the new covenant' (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6)."<sup>103</sup> He concludes, "Because the Bible is

the old and new covenants and because canon is inherent in covenant of the biblical type, canonicity is inherent in the very form and identity of Scripture as the Old Testament and the New Testament."<sup>104</sup> Thus, the canon is rooted and grounded for Kline in Scripture as the covenantal Word of God; it is not grounded in any external norming agent(s) which assign canonicity to the biblical books from the outside.

*Robert I. Vasholz.* A voice complementary to that of Kline is Robert I. Vasholz with his tome, *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church* (1990). He points to the "internal rationale for Old Testament canonicity."<sup>105</sup> Vasholz holds that OT canonicity is based on the vigorous and repeated assertion that it "is the 'Word of the Lord'."<sup>106</sup> "The whole of the Old Testament always presents the view that canonicity resides in the endowment of authority upon Moses and it is precisely here where we may discern the rationale for canonicity."<sup>107</sup>

Vasholz develops "the position that the rationale for accepting writings as authoritative, i.e. canonical, resides in the observation of contemporary eyewitnesses of some kind of manifestation of God's approval of the authors of scripture."<sup>108</sup> Thus, Vasholz makes a distinction between the inherent nature of canonicity which is said to reside in the Old Testament as "the word of the Lord" and the acceptance of that canonicity by the community.

The acceptance aspect of what is inherently canonical resides in the divine manifestation of "God's approval of the authors" to which the contemporaries are witnesses. This means that canonicity is grounded in the divine both with regard (1) to the origin of the books as deriving from God and (2) in the "recognition" on the part of the contemporary community to which God grants confirming, supernatural indications.

In the case of Moses, who produced the Pentateuch, there is ample evidence for God's "approval" of Moses as author.<sup>109</sup> The Israelites were eyewitnesses of what God did and accomplished through Moses.

How is the picture with the prophets and the writers of biblical books after Moses? Vasholz notes that "the Old Testament endorses the fulfilled prediction as the hallmark of canonicity, . . ."<sup>110</sup> God would fulfill short-term predictions in order to "reassure the

hearers that God would perform what he had promised [in the long-term prediction and in the other words of the writers of biblical books]."<sup>111</sup> The role of fulfilled predictions were to function "as proof that the prophet was genuine, and the Old Testament society understood them that way."<sup>112</sup> These fulfillments caused "the prophet's work or works . . . [to] be respected and retained. Once a prophet and his contemporaries passed from the scene there would be no way for a prophet to be established. The prophet proved himself by short-term prediction and miracles to his peers."<sup>113</sup>

The books of 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings contain numerous accounts of short-term predictions and their corresponding fulfillments.<sup>114</sup> This prophecy/fulfillments schema reveals the self-authenticating rationale "to determine canonicity."<sup>115</sup> The situation with regard to 1-2 Chronicles is similar to that of 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings. Vasholz concludes that "there is in the Old Testament a record of writing prophets whose authority had been publically attested each in his own generation to write the history of Israel's kings, and that these same prophets were contemporaries of the kings they wrote about."<sup>116</sup>

The predictions of the prophetic books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and so on functioned on the same basis of self-authentication.<sup>117</sup> "Prediction was the crux of the matter for canonicity just as it was purposed to be and as an avalanche of Old Testament data shows it to be."<sup>118</sup> The point Vasholz wishes to make is that the OT not only provides the internal criterion for canonicity in terms of its origin as the "word of the Lord," but it also provides the internal criterion of acceptance and recognition by the community. On that basis, the written product of the prophets was recognized as both authoritative and canonical.

These scholars manifest essential agreement regarding the closing of the OT canon long before the NT period began. Leiman, Talmon, and from some other perspectives Kline and Vasholz, hold that the canon idea is derived from the inherent quality of the inspiration of the books of the Bible. Beckwith is not opposed to it but has a different concern. The various communities in which the OT books function as canonical do either recognize them to be so (Kline, Vasholz) or ascribe in their usage of these books authority to them (Leiman, Talmon). It may be appropriate to conclude that

the respective communities, primarily contemporary with the inspired writers of the Bible, came to recognize the inherent quality of these writings as Holy Scripture on the basis of their inspired character.

An additional conclusion presents itself: the inspiration of the biblical writings was the guiding quality of canonicity. The canon which includes all thirty-nine OT books was in existence around 400 B.C.<sup>119</sup> when the last books were written by the last inspired writers.<sup>120</sup>

Ezra, a professional scribe as well as a priest, is not the one who canonized the OT even though he played an important role together with Nehemiah to affirm and popularize the canonized Scripture among the exiles. "Ezra had set his heart to study (*darash*) the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach (it)" (Ezr 7:10, NASB). Later Ezra brought "the Law" to the people and read it to them (Neh 8:2-8).

Those who hold to the Maccabean hypothesis for the book of Daniel<sup>121</sup> suggest a final second century B.C. date for the closing of the OT canon at about 164 B.C. However, if the book of Daniel is dated to the sixth century on internal grounds, and there is no need to date it later than that,<sup>122</sup> then the closing of the canon of the OT can be dated to about 400 B.C. when the last of the books were written.

The concept of an "increasing canon,"<sup>123</sup> that is, a canon which is enlarged, does not mean that the Israelite community on their own simply added books to their canon of Scriptures. Rather as the inspired authors of biblical books finished their products, these inspired writings increased the body of canonical books on the basis of their inherent and internal canonicity based in inspiration.

Ultimately, then, canonicity is not based on human decisions made by various communities, but on divine inspiration. For the biblical books,<sup>124</sup> inspiration implies canonicity.<sup>125</sup> Because of inspiration the biblical canon is self-authenticating, self-validating, and self-establishing. This means that the origin of the canon of the OT, and we may respectively add the canon of the NT where the same principles are at work, is not the same as its recognition by the respective faith communities.

These remarks on the inherent nature of canonicity reveal

that a distinction needs to be made between the origin of the canon and its recognition by the religious community. The existence of the canon is grounded and given through the inspired human agent(s) writing the biblical book(s). When a biblical book is completed under inspiration, it is canonical and "increases" the canon of Holy Scripture which began with the writings of Moses (Pentateuch) and ended with the production under inspiration of the last NT book. The subsequent activity of the religious community is that of recognizing what is inherently canonical. The religious community does not bestow canonicity on Scripture; it recognizes canonicity.

#### The Closing of the NT Canon

**Inspiration and the Canon.** As is the case for the OT, the origin of canonization is found in the writings of the NT itself. Divine inspiration is once more the key in this process.

Hebrews 1:1 reveals that in the past "God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, . . ." (NRSV). The inspired "prophets" produced the inspired Scripture called the OT (2 Pet 3:15-16). With Jesus Christ a new era breaks into history. "But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb 1:2, NIV). This text maintains that with the speaking of the Son the Divine revelation has reached its fullest disclosure.

It appears that with Jesus Christ, and those who are authorized by Him to speak for Him, biblical revelation has reached its climax and goal. In Luke 10:16 Jesus says to the seventy disciples He sent out, "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (NRSV). Jesus Christ identifies Himself with His disciples.

**Apostolicity and the Canon.** Apostolicity as a criterion of canonicity, if understood correctly, has a certain degree of importance. Apostolicity means the "apostolic," respectively inspired origin of the NT books.<sup>126</sup> Apostolicity does not mean that every single NT book is written by an apostle himself. But it means that the NT is written by an inspired "apostle" or a direct, inspired disciple of an apostle, an eyewitness. "Here we may think of Mark and Luke, whose apostolicity was derivative through association with Peter and Paul, respectively."<sup>127</sup> Jude and James, as brothers

of Jesus, are regarded as having apostolic stature. The letter to the Hebrews was considered to have been written by the apostle Paul.<sup>128</sup>

It is best to understand by apostolicity that all authors of the NT writings were apostles, or one of their immediate associates, who were guided by the Holy Spirit and wrote under inspiration.<sup>129</sup> If apostolicity means written under inspiration by the apostles of Jesus Christ or their immediate companions associated with them, then "apostolicity implies at the same time inspiration."<sup>130</sup>

Based on these considerations the NT canon was closed at about A.D. 100, whenever the last apostolic writing had been completed.

**Reception/Recognition of the Canon.** The subsequent lists of NT books such as are found in the so-called Muratorian Fragment<sup>131</sup> and in other lists of NT books,<sup>132</sup> do not tell us about the canonization of the NT, but about the reception or recognition. The Roman Catholic scholar Hans von Campenhausen has stated incisively "that the canon—from the point of view of its content—has succeeded on its own."<sup>133</sup> It is a self-establishing and self-validating entity.

The Continental Lutheran New Testament scholar and church historian, Kurt Aland, maintains that "the established church as such did not create the canon, but she has recognized the created canon."<sup>134</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, one of the foremost NT scholars in the United States, also concluded that the Church "came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authenticating quality of certain documents that imposed themselves as such upon the Church."<sup>135</sup> The "self-authenticating quality" is the divine revelation inscripturated in the Word of God by inspiration. The canon was created by God through inspiration and its divine authority and canonicity is inherent in the revelation-inspiration phenomenon.

**Canon and Post-canonical Inspiration.** Biblical revelation concludes with Christ, the fullest revelation God has given to humanity (Heb 1:1, 2). The apostles and their immediate associates have attested to his identity and significance under inspiration in their writings. Thus, it follows that the NT was canonized and closed when the last NT writing was completed, presumably the book of Revelation by John. No later prophet—even under inspira-

tion—could give a greater revelation than that given by Christ. Hence, the canon of Scripture naturally closes with the apostolic witness about Him.

Inspired Scripture ceased with the end of the first century A.D., the canon is closed, and nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted.

We have seen above that the “prophets” of the OT and the “apostles” (and their immediate associates) in the NT are the writers who produced Scripture under inspiration. A given of the “prophets/apostles” as inspired writers is that whatever may be written after their time cannot become Scripture. As a corollary to this, any later inspired person who speaks or writes will have to be judged on the basis of the canon of inspired Scripture, and if in harmony with the “law and the testimony” (Isa 8:20), if in harmony with Scripture, be recognized as inspired, but always subject to Scripture.

### Conclusion

Divine inspiration provides the internal, self-authenticating and self-validating criterion for canonicity. Bruce Metzger has noted incisively that “the canon is complete when the books which by principle belong to it have been written.”<sup>136</sup> At the moment when inspired books are written they are canonical. Canonicity is not something ascribed to the Bible whether we speak of the OT or the NT. Canonicity is inherent and indigenous to the books of the Bible themselves. The recognition that inspired Scripture has canonical status is not what makes them canonical. The Bible is canonical before the canonicity is recognized by any community of faith.

The distinction between the canonical writings and later ecclesiastical writings is not based upon arbitrary decisions. It has theological reasons. It is God who was at work in creating the biblical writings by prophetic/apostolic inspiration and His providence. Therefore, it is God who made them canonical. It is also God who caused these writings to be recognized for what they are, based on their inherent inspired nature.

It may be safely concluded that “the Church did not create the canon, but came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authen-

tifying quality of certain documents that imposed themselves as such upon the Church. If this fact is obscured, one comes into serious conflict not with dogma but with history.”<sup>137</sup>

Even if a few church fathers claimed some kind of inspiration for themselves, which may be better designated illumination by the Holy Spirit, their claim acknowledges the prior, foundational and definitive prophetic/apostolic inspiration of the Scriptures and their canonical authority.<sup>138</sup> The inherent, divine authority of the Bible, rooted in its divine origin through inspiration, makes it the continuing canonical norm for the faith and life of the church.

The biblical books became “canonical because no one could stop them doing so.”<sup>139</sup> Therefore, “the canon—understood on the basis of its content—has succeeded on its own.”<sup>140</sup> Thus, the Bible is not the product of the church.<sup>141</sup> “Ultimately, then, canonicity was based not on human decision but on divine inspiration: recognized intrinsic authority precedes canonicity.”<sup>142</sup> We can say that intrinsic authority, given through divine inspiration, both implies and produces canonicity. Through the process of inspiration, God purposed to make the writings of the Bible canonical and authoritative in themselves. The *recognition* of the canon is a secondary act, surely superintended by the Holy Spirit, but it is not an act determinative for the canonical nature of the biblical writings. Canonicity itself is primary. In itself, it is first of all and uniquely grounded in the “prophetic” (for the OT) and “apostolic” (for the NT) inspiration of Scripture as it constitutes the “Word of God” in human form for all time and in every place. Canonization is a divinely appointed inherent process rooted in inspiration. The variety of attempts to explain canonization as a mere human process, as assigning to the biblical writings authority, as giving them a status which they do not have inherently, or as attributing to biblical writings a superior quality on the basis of decisions of religious communities, do not square with the evidence contained in the biblical writings themselves. Canonicity is grounded in the biblical writings themselves and has its origin in their divine inspiration.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspira-



tion," *Interpretation* 29 (1975), p. 352; James Barr, *Holy Scripture. Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Typical examples are R. L. Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1957); N. L. Geisler and W. E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), pp. 136-147; Milton C. Fisher, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 1:385-392; and many others.

<sup>3</sup> The key essays were collected in the book edited by Ernst Käsemann, *Das Neue Testament als Kanon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970). Note also the following major publications: H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972); Kurt Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon* (Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1962); David L. Dungan, "The New Testament Canon in Recent Study," *Interpretation* 29 (1975), 339-351; David Noel Freedman, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 130-136; Jack N. Lighthouse, "The Formation of the Biblical Canon in Judaism of Late Antiquity: A Prolegomenon to a General Assessment," *Studies in Religion* 8/2 (1978), pp. 135-142; Leander E. Keck, "Scripture and Canon," *Quarterly Review* 3/4 (1983), pp. 8-26; William Farmer and Denis Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983); Jean Daniel Kaestli and Otto Wermelinger, *Le Canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire*. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984); H. P. Rüger, "Der Umfang des alttestamentlichen Kanons in den verschiedenen kirchlichen Traditionen," *Die Apokryphenfrage im ökumenischen Horizont* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1989), pp. 137-145; Odil H. Steck, *Der Abschluss der Prophetie im Alten Testament. Ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991); C. Dohmen and M. Oeming, *Biblischer Kanon—warum und wozu? Eine Kanontheologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1992); other publications are referred later in this essay.

<sup>4</sup> See Hartmut Stegemann, "Die 'Mitte der Schrift' aus der Sicht der Gemeinde von Qumran," *Die Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch*, eds. M. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 149-184.

<sup>5</sup> Such publications as Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1985); Lee M. MacDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988); F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988); Ingo Baldermann et al. eds., *Zum Problem des biblischen Kanons* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988); and Gerhard Maier, ed., *Der Kanon der Bibel* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus Verlag, 1990) give evidence of this continuing interest.

<sup>6</sup> A typical example for this view is expressed by A. C. Sundberg, "Canon of the New Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), p. 137: "It is no longer satisfactory to use the terms 'scripture' and 'canon' synonymously. The church received 'scriptures,' that is, religious writings that were in some sense regarded as authoritative from Judaism; but the church did not receive a canon, i.e., a closed collection of scripture to which nothing could be added, nothing subtracted." Sundberg holds to the now rejected view that the OT canon was "closed" in Jamnia at about A.D. 90 (ibid.).

<sup>7</sup> For example A. Jepsen, "Zur Kanongeschichte des Alten Testaments," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 71 (1959), pp. 114-136; idem, "Kanon und Text des Alten Testaments," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 21 (1965), pp. 358-370; Dominique Barthélemy, "L'État de la Bible juive depuis le début de notre ère jusqu'à la deuxième révolte contre Rome (131-135)," *Le canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire*, eds. J.-D. Kaestli et O. Wermelinger (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984), pp. 9-45; Hartmut Gese, "Die dreifache Gestaltwerdung des Alten Testaments," *Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch*, ed. Martin A. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 299-328; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Heiliges Schrifttum und Kanonische Bücher aus jüdischer Sicht—Überlegungen zur Ausbildung der Grösse 'Die Schrift' im Judentum," *Mitte der Schrift?*, pp. 45-79.

<sup>8</sup> Every recent tome on the formation of the canon of the New Testament discusses these criteria.

<sup>9</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1:2-3 speaks of the "ecclesiastical canon [kirchlicher Kanon]" and states that "the New Testament is the ecclesiastical canon of the early Christian books which are foundational for Christian faith and in whose origin and determination the church has essentially participated" [italics mine] (p. 3). This view is similarly stated by many other liberal Protestant theologians in the latter half of this century.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 3.452.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 48.31.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 3.515; pp. 403-404.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> It is usually noted that the Greek word *kann* is borrowed from the Hebrew *qaneh*, "reed, rod."

<sup>15</sup> See H. W. Beyer, "kanon," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1982), III:596-598.

<sup>16</sup> See the discussions in Harry Gamble, *The New Testament Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 15-18; Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, pp. 17-18; Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*, pp. 1, 13, 63; Theodor Zahn, *Grundriss der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), pp. 1-14.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Sand, *Kanon. Von den Anfängen bis zum Fragment Muratorium* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1974), 8-11.

<sup>18</sup> MacDonald, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Sand, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Beyer, III:598.

<sup>22</sup> Beyer, III:599.

<sup>23</sup> Sand, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 17; Sand, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> R. P. C. Hanson, *Origin's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 93.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 282-88.

<sup>27</sup> Cited by Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 18.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 36.

<sup>29</sup> A. Maichle, *Der Kanon der biblischen Bücher und das Konzil von Trient* (Freiburg: Herder, 1929), 74-99; Ziegenaus, 218-220.

<sup>30</sup> Anton Ziegenaus, *Kanon: Von der Väterzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1991), 220.

<sup>31</sup> See Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I, 38-42.

<sup>32</sup> Jude 14-15 is an alleged quotation from the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch. However, Jude does not quote a book, he quotes a man, the patriarch Enoch.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1957), p. 177.

<sup>34</sup> Metzger, *Introduction to the Apocrypha*, pp. 172, 262.

<sup>35</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, 1.13; 10.63; *Introductio to Ecclesiasticus*; Philo, *Vit Cont.*, pp. 25, 28; 2 Macc 2:13-14; *Baba bathra* 14a-b.

<sup>36</sup> See Origen's list of 22 OT books in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.25.

<sup>37</sup> Gillis Gerleman, "dabar Wort," *Theologische Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 1:439, lists only 242 usages. Our usage comes from a computer study of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>38</sup> Exod 4:28; 24:3,4; Num 11:24; Jos 3:9; 1 Sam 8:10; 15:1; Jer 36:4, 6, 8, 11; 37:2; 43:1; Ezk 11:25; Amos 8:11; 2 Chron 11:4; 29:15.

<sup>39</sup> Jer 23:36; Ezr 9:4; 1 Chron 25:5.

<sup>40</sup> Ezek 6:3; 25:3; 36:4.

<sup>41</sup> Judg 3:20; 1 Sam 9:27; 2 Sam 16:23; 1 Kgs 12:22; 1 Chron 17:3.

<sup>42</sup> Ludwig Koehler, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 106.

- 43 Ibid., pp. 106-107.
- 44 O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1934), pp. 71-77, for additional texts.
- 45 Note also the expression of "the ten words" for the Decalogue (Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4).
- 46 Included in this counting are the variations with insertions such as Adonay in 92 usages and other variations. See D. Vetter, "ne'um Ausspruch," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 2:1.
- 47 H. Eising, "ne'um," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 5:120.
- 48 It is used 11 times in Exodus (Exod 4:22; etc.), twice in Josh (7:13; 24:2), once in Judges (6:8), eight times in 1-2 Sam, 33 times in 1-2 Kings, 10 times in 1-2 Chron, 27 times in Isaiah, over 150 times in Jeremiah and the remaining times in the other prophetic books.
- 49 W. H. Schmidt, "amar, sagen," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 1:214.
- 50 Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13 (in reverse order); Lk 16:16, 29; 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 26:22; 28:23; Rom 3:21.
- 51 So W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* "Theologischer Handkommentar zum NT" (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), p. 411.
- 52 E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* "Das Neue Testament Deutsch" (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 324.
- 53 Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 390-91 n. 4.
- 54 W. Friedrich, "prophetes," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1968), 6:832.
- 55 This may find additional support in the combination of two categories of persons who are the foundation of the Christian church such as are mentioned in the expression "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20; cf. 3:5).
- 56 In the NT Jesus' disciples are the "apostles" (Mk 3:16-19; Matt 10:2-4; Lk 6:13-16; Acts 1:13, 23, 26; etc.). Paul is also called an "apostle" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Rom 1:1; Col 1:1; Eph 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1-2; 2 Tim 1:1, 11; Tit 1:1).
- 57 This is evident from the usage of "(books of) the law of Moses" in Josh 8:31, 32; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chron 23:18; 30:16; Ezr 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; Dan 9:1, 13; Mal 4:4.
- 58 See Gerhard F. Hasel, *Speaking in Tongues. Biblical Speaking in Tongues and Modern Glossolalia* (2nd ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1994).
- 59 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 264.
- 60 Additional passages are Rom 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gal 3:8; 4:30; Jas 2:8; 4:6; 1 Pet 2:6; 2 Pet 1:20.
- 61 Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2, 28; Hab 2:2; cf. Exod 17:14; 24:4; 34:1, 27; Deut 27:3; 31:19; 24-26; 2 Chron 26:22; Neh 9:38.
- 62 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 264.
- 63 See the unsurpassed study by Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1970), pp. 245-296.
- 64 E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 134, 262-263.
- 65 An alternative translation is the one provided in NASB, "You search in the Scriptures." The difference in translation does not matter for our study of the term "Scripture."
- 66 W. Schrenk, "graphé as Holy Scripture," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1964), 1:755.
- 67 W. Schrenk, "grámma in NT Usage," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1964), 1:765.
- 68 Schrenk, "graphé as Holy Scripture," 1:754.
- 69 This is conceded by Rainer Riesner, "Ansätze zur Kanonbildung im Neuen Testa-

- ment," *Der Kanon der Bibel*, ed. Gerhard Maier (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1990), p. 157, who suggests that with this exception the designation "Scripture" for NT books is found otherwise only in the middle of the second century A.D. (2 Clem 2:4).
- 70 Simon Kistemaker, "The Canon of the New Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20/1 (1977), p. 8.
- 71 F. D. Nichol, ed., "2 Peter," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7:618; Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe. Der Judasbrief* "Hthk 13/2" (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1980), pp. 236-238.
- 72 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 120.
- 73 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 265.
- 74 So KJV, NASB, TEV, NIV, NRSV, etc.
- 75 The syntactical question relates to the position of the adjective *theopneustos*, "God-breathed." The sentence is said to have the adjective in the attributive position, "inspired Scripture." This would be paralleled in such a phrase as "sacred writings" in vs. 15. The most widely used translation, "all Scripture is inspired by God," takes the adjective in the predicate position. The predicate position seems the more natural. It is for this reason that a scholar such as James Barr "refuses to make a definite decision between these two possibilities" (*Beyond Fundamentalism: Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Christianity* / Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 1).
- 76 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 95.
- 77 Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, p. 1.
- 78 Schrenk, "grapho," 1:754.
- 79 The claim that Paul used non-canonical literature has been a subject of discussion for about 250 years. An excellent and balanced review of this issue is provided by E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), pp. 34-37, 76-84.
- 80 The closing date of ca. 200 B.C. is supported by I. H. Eybers, "Some Remarks about the Canon of the Old Testament," *Theologica Evangelica* (Univ. of South Africa) 8 (1975), 111; P. Schäfer, "Die sogenannte Synode von Jamnia," *Judaica* 31 (1975), p. 116.
- 81 Sid Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture. The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamden, CT: Almond, 1976), p. 20. This tome is the published version of his 1970 dissertation referred to in the next note.
- 82 Sid Z. Leiman, *The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence for the Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture* (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1970), p. 48.
- 83 Published in German in *Mitte der Schrift?*, eds. M. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 45-79.
- 84 Ibid., pp. 50-52.
- 85 Ibid., p. 54.
- 86 Ibid., p. 57.
- 87 Ibid., p. 58.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid., p. 59.
- 91 Ibid., pp. 60-69.
- 92 Ibid., p. 75.
- 93 Ibid., p. 79.
- 94 Hershel Shanks in his introduction to David Noel Freedman in *Bible Review* 9/6 (December 1993), p. 28.
- 95 David Noel Freedman, "Canon of the Old Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1976), pp. 130-136.
- 96 David Noel Freedman, "How the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament Differ," *Bible Review* 9/6 (December 1993), pp. 28-39, esp. p. 39.
- 97 Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*, p. 312.
- 98 Ibid., p. 406.
- 99 Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, MI:

Eerdmans, 1972); idem, "The Correlation of the Concepts of Canon and Covenant," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), pp. 265-279.

100 Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, p. 43.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid., p. 71.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., p. 75.

105 Robert I. Vasholz, *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church. The Internal Rationale for Old Testament Canonicity*. "Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies, Vol. 7" (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990).

106 Ibid., p. 2.

107 Ibid., p. 9.

108 Ibid., p. 20.

109 Ibid., pp. 20-33.

110 Ibid., p. 47.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid., p. 49.

113 Ibid.

114 1 Sam 2:34=4:11; 15:1-2=15:7-8; 30:7-8=30:17-20; 2 Sam 3:18=5:17-21=8:1; 7:12-13=1 Kgs 2:24; 2 Sam 12:11-12=16:21-22; 12:14=12:18. For 1-2 Kings see 1 Kgs 11:31-9 and 14:2=12:15-17; 1 Kgs 13:3=13:5; 1 Kgs 13:8, 17, 22=13:26; 1 Kgs 14:7-13=17-18; 16:2-4=16:11-12, and many examples in 1-2 Kings.

115 Vasholz, p. 54.

116 Ibid., p. 57.

117 Ibid., pp. 58-68.

118 Ibid., p. 67.

119 J. W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (London: Tyndale, 1972), 134, states, "There is no reason to doubt that the canon of the Old Testament is substantially Ezra's canon, just as the Pentateuch was substantially Moses' canon."

120 The statement, "After the death of the last prophets—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi—(divine or prophetic) inspiration was removed from Israel" (b. San 11a; Tos Sot ed. Zuckerman 318, 21-23; b. Sot 48b; Yom 9a) as cited by Talmon, "Heiliges Schrifttum," 74, may be revealing in this connection.

121 This is the case in Leiman, Freedman, and Beckwith. The latter also includes the acceptance of Esther at that time.

122 See Gerhard F. Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook. "Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 2." (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), pp. 84-164.

123 This expression is used by Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 412.

124 Edward J. Young, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1958), p. 162, writes that "it may be asserted confidently that the passages invoked to support the idea that Ezra 'canonized' any portion of the Old Testament Scriptures do not yield the desired result. Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah nor the men of the Great Synagogue nor the council of Jamnia 'canonized' the Old Testament nor any part thereof."

125 A similar conclusion is drawn by Young, p. 162: "All the evidence supports the position that the books of the Old Testament, being of divine inspiration, were consequently authoritative, and were recognized as such from the time of their first appearance."

126 H. K. Ohlig, *Die theologische Begründung des neutestamentlichen Kanons in der alten Kirche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 57-156.

127 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, p. 68.

128 B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), lxiii-lxv, for the evidence which was disputed in Rome.

129 Gerhard Maier, *Biblische Hermeneutik* (2nd ed.; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1991), p. 134.

130 Ibid.

131 Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) argues, as does Sundberg ("Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *Harvard Theological Review* 66 [1973], pp. 1-41) before him, that the Muratorian Fragment is dated to the fourth century and not to the second. This late dating is not significant once the idea of canonicity is not tightly linked with the lists of canonical books as indicating the process of canonicity. For a contrary opinion on the late dating, see E. Ferguson, "Canon Muratori: Date and Provenance," *Studia Patristica* 18/2 (1982), pp. 677-683.

132 The first list which "names" the 27 New Testament books which make up our New Testament is provided by Athanasius in his so-called Easter Letter, dated to A.D. 367. For the text, see Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, pp. 208-209.

133 Hans von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Tübingen, 1972), p. 382 n. 12.

134 K. Aland, "Das Problem des neutestamentlichen Kanons," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie* 4 (1962), p. 147.

135 Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 287.

136 Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 287.

137 Ibid.

138 Tertullian states, "What we are ourselves, that also the Scriptures are from the beginning" (*On Prescr.* 38). The priority of "Scriptures" is the standard for what is later.

139 William Barclay, *The Making of the Bible* (London, 1961), p. 78, speaking of the New Testament.

140 Von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel*, p. 382 n. 12.

141 D. B. Knox, "Problems of the Canon," *The Reformed Theological Review* 36 (1977), 11: "No decision of church or council, nor growing Christian acceptance, can confer canonicity on a book. What Christian did was to recognize canonicity."

142 Ronald Youngblood, "The Process: How We Got Our Bible," *Christianity Today* 32/2 (Feb. 5, 1988), p. 26.