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What is the Canon?

by Jeremy Cagle

Our 2006 issue discussed The Bible: its importance, construction, and revelation. But many of you are probably wanting more detail in regards to the construction of the Bible. If you are like me, you want to know about the men who wrote the Bible, the books that were included in it, the books that were excluded from it, the creation of our English Bible, the process through which God wrote a perfect book through imperfect men, etc. The 2007 edition of j.t.s.t. will discuss those topics and other related ones. The following essay serves as an introduction to this issue.

I. Definition of “Canon”

Historically, the Bible was formed into a “canon.” F. F. Bruce describes the canon as “the list of books which are reckoned as Holy Scripture.”¹ This description originates from the Greek word *kanon*, which means a list or index, specifically “the series of marks on a measuring rod.”² “The word *kanon* appears in 2 Cor. 10:13, 15, 16; Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:16 – and in all these cases is translated ‘rule’ or ‘line.’ Thus the basic meaning of the word among the Greeks was a straight rod or rule, used as a measuring instrument.”³

Etymologically,⁴ the canon refers to the standard or measuring rod that the early church used to determine which books should be included in or excluded from the Bible. When a book was “canonized,” it was given a stamp of approval by the early church, saying that it was recognized as having been written under divine inspiration.⁵ If a book was not “canonized,” it was not to be included in the Bible.

The concepts of the canon and canonization are not simple ones. As Bruce Metzger indicates,

According to these two senses of canon, the New Testament can be described either as a collection of authoritative books, or as an authoritative collection of books.

In the former case, the books within the collection are regarded as possessing an intrinsic worth prior to their having been assembled, and their authority is grounded in their nature and source. In the latter case, the collection itself is regarded as giving the books an authority they did not possess before they were designated as belonging to the collection.⁶

In other words, there is a mutually exclusive presupposition⁷ involved in the study of the canon: either the church was an authority over the canon or the canon was an authority over the church. Either the church chose which books made it into the Bible, or the books in the Bible were already chosen before the church canonized them. The question is, did the church form the Bible or did the Bible form the church?⁸

II. Canonization of the Old Testament

The early church divided the Bible into two books: the Old Testament⁹ and the New Testament.¹⁰ In a synopsis of the canon’s history, these two testaments should be studied separately, for they had very different canonization processes.

Historians and Bible scholars have little information about the specific process used to form the Old Testament canon.¹¹ The Jewish¹² authors of these books included some of their writings to include in their “canon” and excluded others, long before the New Testament was ever written. When the writing of the New Testament began, the Old Testament had already been canonized.

While historians do not know the specific process involved in the Old Testament’s formation, they do know the people who formed it. These authors provide much information about the criteria for Old Testament canonization.

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The Jews tell us three things regarding the formation of the pre-Christian canon. First, the Old Testament was written by multiple authors. Moses, Samuel, King David, King Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Malachi, and Nahum, among others, wrote the books of the Jewish canon. This multiple authorship is important because multiple witnesses provide powerful evidence for any event¹³ by increasing its trustworthiness. According to Lee Strobel, this type of evidence is called “corroborating evidence.”¹⁴ This evidence “supports other testimony; it affirms or backs up the essential elements of an eyewitness account . . . In effect, corroborating evidence acts like the support wires that keep a tall antenna straight and unwavering. The more corroborative evidence, the stronger and more secure the case.”¹⁵

The Old Testament writers helped to confirm its authenticity by confirming and validating one another’s writings. When the Jewish people chose which books they would canonize, one test through which they screened the books was corroboration. For example, if the historical accounts in 1 Maccabees¹⁶ contradicted the historical accounts in 1 Kings, a book recognized as canonical, then 1 Maccabees would be left out of the canon. If the prophecies in the books of Baruch¹⁷ and 2 Esdras¹⁸ contradicted the prophecies in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel, Baruch and 2 Esdras would not be canonized.

Corroborating evidence helped the Israelites decide which books to include in – and exclude from – their canon.

Second, the Old Testament was written over an extensive period of time. The first book of the Old Testament, Genesis, was written around 1445 B.C.¹⁹ The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, was written around 435 B.C.²⁰ This time-gap spans ten centuries. It took a thousand years to write the Hebrew Bible!

This lengthy period actually helped the Jews in canonization because it allowed for another type of evidence: eyewitness evidence. The men who wrote about the events described in the Old Testament are the very men who saw them take place. Moses saw what happened in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Isaiah saw the events he wrote about in the book of Isaiah and Jeremiah witnessed the historical accounts he described in the book of Jeremiah. Similarly, Ezekiel and Jonah saw what they wrote about in

the books that bear their names.

Although not every historical author in the Old Testament witnessed the events he described,²¹ many did. And eyewitness evidence played a vital role in deciding which books would be canonized and which books would not.²²

Thirdly, the Israelites were not evangelistic; they kept to themselves. Deuteronomy 12:29-31 and 29:14, 18 tell us why:

When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?” You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

. . . so that there will not be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood.

The Jewish people were commanded to keep distance themselves from the nations surrounding them so that they would not worship the gods of those nations. This social seclusion played a significant role in the preservation of the Old Testament texts because the books in the Old Testament never left the people who wrote them. The same people who wrote Genesis through Malachi also translated and copied Genesis through Malachi. This consistent guardianship helped keep incorrect translations from occurring. The Old Testament was protected, screened, and canonized by one community, not several.²³ Even though it took a long time to write the Hebrew Scriptures, and even though they were written by multiple authors, the Old Testament never left the Hebrews.

When Jewish scholars decided to confirm a specific list of books to read as the Word of God, they had many centuries worth of their own material to consult.

Although we do not know the specific councils or meetings that led to the canonization of the Hebrew Bible, we do know that, due to the seclusion of the Hebrews, this canonization process must have taken place among the

Jewish people. Other nations did not decide which books would be in the Old Testament; the authors of the Old Testament did.

III. Canonization of the New Testament

The New Testament's formation was very different from the Old Testament's. Though church historians and biblical scholars know little about Old Testament canonization, they have ample information about the formation of the New Testament.²⁴ There were two main influences that affected the development of the New Testament Canon: persecution²⁵ and heresy.²⁶

Persecution forced the early church to choose which books they were willing to defend with their lives. When the authorities demanded that first century Christians hand over their Scriptures, they had to decide which ones they would surrender and which ones they would keep. Would they give their persecutors the Gospel of Thomas or the Gospel of Luke? Should they hide The Shepherd of Hermes or 1 and 2 Timothy?²⁷

Questions like this led the early church to form a canon and to create a distinction between the books they would hide and the books they would hand over.

The second influence for the development of a New Testament canon was heresy. The early church had to establish a complete list of authentic Christian books to keep early Christians from believing false teaching. There were three main heresies in the early church: Gnosticism, Marcionism, and Montanism.

Gnosticism taught that elect souls could obtain salvation by means of secret knowledge. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *ginosis*, which means "knowledge." According to Gnosticism, without this special knowledge, mankind was damned.

In Gnostic systems there is an ontological dualism – an opposition between an ineffable, transcendent God and an ignorant, obtuse demiurge (often a caricature of the OT Jehovah), who is a creator of the cosmos . . . The material creation is viewed as evil. Sparks of divinity, however, have been encapsulated in the bodies of certain pneumatics destined for salvation.²⁸

The apostles, especially the apostle Paul, often refuted this

heresy in their writings.²⁹

Gnosticism also taught that Jesus was not genuinely human and that there was a subordinate deity named Jehovah who created the world.³⁰ Because of these heretical but influential lies, the early church needed to distinguish between the Christian gospel and the Gnostic gospel: the church needed to form a canon.

Marcionism was the second major heresy in the early church. Marcion was a wealthy shipbuilder who gave large financial contributions to the Roman church. In his teaching, he made a distinction between a God of goodness and a God of justice, and he rejected the Old Testament as the Word of God because he thought it contradicted the New Testament. He rejected every Gospel except Luke due to this bias against the authority of the Old Testament. Consequently, he was excommunicated from the church at Rome.³¹

Marcion eventually formed his own canon, excluding the Old Testament and Matthew, Mark, and John. This rebellion contributed to the church's decision to form an official canon distinguishing between the Christian canon and Marcion's canon.

The third major heresy in the early church was Montanism. Montanism began with a pagan priest named Montanus who, when converted to Christianity, began speaking in tongues and prophesying. He taught that his prophecies were final revelations from God and that the New Jerusalem would be in the City of Pepuzza, near modern-day Greece.

Montanus's followers wrote down his prophecies and regarded them as Holy Scripture. This was another reason why the early church had to form an official canon: to differentiate between the Scriptures of Montanus and the Scriptures of the Christian church.

Persecution and heresy explain *why* the New Testament was canonized, but *how* was it canonized? When did the 27 books of the New Testament actually *become* the 27 books of the New Testament? The formation of the New Testament was the result of two church councils.³² The following is a brief history of each one.

Beginning under the Emperor Nero in the A.D. 60s, Christians were persecuted for almost three centuries until the Edict of Milan.³³ In A.D. 313, Constantine, the emperor of Rome, passed the Edict of Milan and legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire.³⁴ Before this decree, Christians were tortured and killed for their beliefs.³⁵

Many of the men who presided over the councils described below were disciples by martyrs and Christian men who were persecuted for their beliefs. Their mentors and predecessors died for what they believed in and, as a result, these

men did not take these councils lightly. **The Greek word, *apocrypha*, means “hidden.”**

The first time our modern New Testament³⁶ was officially recognized was in A.D. 393 at the Council of Hippo held in the North African city of the same name.³⁷ Hippo was the home of Augustine, author of *Confessions*³⁸ and *City of God*.³⁹ Augustine was one of the most influential Christian thinkers in history, and is arguably the most important writer between the time of the apostle Paul and the time of John Calvin.

The Council of Hippo was formed to discuss which books would, and would not, be recognized by the church as authoritative. They officially recognized a list compiled by Athanasius of Alexandria in A.D. 367; this recognized list was the same as our current list of New Testament books.

The second council was the Council of Carthage, held in A.D. 397,⁴⁰ four years after the Council of Hippo.⁴¹ This council was convened in Carthage, North Africa for the purpose of determining which books would be read in church services.

The Council of Carthage formally forbade the reading of any books other than the ones it deemed canonical. The list of books it chose as canonical was the same as the list we use today.

Both councils had two criteria for canonization:⁴²

- 1). The books had to be written by an apostle or close associate of an apostle.⁴³
- 2). The books had to agree with established canonical books and established church doctrine.

IV. Apocryphal Books

So far, this essay has discussed the books that made it into the Old and New Testament canon but what about the books that were left out of the canon? These books, written by anonymous authors, were called “apocryphal” by the early church. The Greek word, *apocrypha*, means “hidden.”⁴⁴ Apocryphal books were called apocryphal for one of two reasons: either they were heretical or they contained teachings that had been “hidden” from the church at large.⁴⁵

The following is a list of apocryphal books relating to the Old and New Testaments:

Old Testament Apocrypha⁴⁶

The First Book of Esdras
The Second Book of Esdras
Tobit
Judith
The Additions to the Book of Esther
The Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus
Baruch
The Letter of Jeremiah
Susanna
Bel and the Dragon
The Prayer of Manasseh

New Testament Apocrypha⁴⁷

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas
The Infancy Gospel of James
Secret Book of James
Acts of Peter and the Twelve
Acts of Andrew
Book of Thomas the Contender
Gospel of Thomas
Gospel of Peter
Gospel of Mary
Apocalypse of Peter
The Shepherd of Hermes
Gospel of the Egyptians

The Old Testament Apocrypha is a list of 14 – 15 books written in the two centuries before Jesus was born. Although the Old Testament does not quote or refer to any apocryphal books, it does quote several books that were not in the canon. For instance, 1 Samuel 1:18 refers to the Book of Jashar: “And he told them to teach the sons

of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.”⁴⁸ Numbers 21:14 quotes from the Book of the Wars of the Lord, “Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord, ‘Waheb in Suphah, and the wadis of the Arnon.’”

The Book of Jashar and the Book of the Wars of the Lord are not apocryphal, and they are not canonical. They are just a written collection of historic events that the Old Testament writers used as a reference in their writings.⁴⁹

The New Testament, on the other hand, does refer to an apocryphal book. Jude 14-15 quotes from a book from the Old Testament Apocrypha: 1 Enoch.⁵⁰

And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

This presents a problem: Why was a non-canonical book quoted in the canon? Why would Jude use 1 Enoch as authoritative when the Old Testament Jews did not?

Jude was not quoting 1 Enoch not as an authority but as an example. Paul did a similar thing in Athens when he quoted from some Athenian poets: “For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His offspring.’”⁵¹

After summarizing what the apocryphal books were, it is natural to wonder what the apocryphal books said, and why they were left out of the canon. Although another article in this edition will examine the contents of the apocryphal books in detail,⁵² it should suffice at this time to provide a brief example of the contents of one Old Testament and one New Testament apocryphal book.

Bel and the Dragon was written as an addition to the book of Daniel.⁵³ The entire book is a narrative of Daniel’s interaction with King Cyrus of the Persians. In one story contained in the book, King Cyrus asks Daniel why he does not believe in and worship Bel, the god of the Babylonians.

When Daniel informs the king that he worships a living God, King Cyrus replies that he too worships a living god. Every night, the priests of Bel leave 12 bushels of wheat, 40 sheep, and 50 gallons of wine in front of the statue of Bel, and every morning when they come in to worship, all of it is gone, consumed by Bel, the living god. King Cyrus is so sure of this, he declares that if Daniel can prove that Bel is not a living god, the king will acknowledge Daniel’s God and execute the priests of Bel.

That evening, Daniel orders his servants to pour ashes in front of Bel’s statue on the floor of the temple. The next day, the king returns and finds footprints in the ashes. Apparently, the priests have installed a trap door under the statue of Bel and every night they come out from under the statue to steal the 12 bushels of wheat, 40 sheep, and 50 gallons of wine. King Cryus, true to his word, executes the priests of Bel and their families, and acknowledges the God of Daniel.

Why was *Bel and the Dragon* left out of the Hebrew Canon? It sounds as if it contained some good material but the late date of its authorship has kept *Bel and the Dragon* out of the Old Testament canon. The composition of this work was not early enough to be penned by the hand of Daniel or any of his close acquaintances. Daniel was written in the 6th century B. C.,⁵⁴ while *Bel and the Dragon* was not written until the late 2nd century B. C.⁵⁵ This time gap of 400 years was too extensive for the Jews to include *Bel and the Dragon* in the Old Testament Canon.

The second apocryphal book we will examine is from the New Testament apocrypha. *The Gospel of Thomas* was written in Syria about 140 A.D. by an unknown author.⁵⁶ The book contains no historical account of the life of Jesus Christ, only various, alleged quotes from Jesus to His disciples.

The first three verses of the book read as follows:

These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas wrote:

And he said, “Whoever finds the explanations of these words will not taste death.”

Jesus said, "Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All."

Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you: 'See, the Kingdom is in heaven,' then the birds of the heaven will precede you. If they say to you: 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. But the Kingdom is within you and it is without you. If you know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the Living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you are in poverty and you are poverty."⁵⁷

The rest of the book is written in a similar style.

Why was the Gospel of Thomas left out of the New Testament Canon? There are three primary reasons:

1. It was not written by an apostle. In fact, it was written 50 years after the last apostle died.⁵⁸ It was probably written at least 70 years after the apostle Thomas died.⁵⁹
2. Its material is heretical. The book ends with a disturbing statement about Mary, the mother of Jesus:

Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go out from among us, because women are not worthy of the Life. Jesus said: See I shall lead her, so that I will make her male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.⁶⁰

This statement directly contradicts Galatians 3:26-28, which reads:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, *there is neither male nor female*; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.⁶¹

3. It contains no verifiable material. All of the Gospels in the canon contain history and geography⁶² that can be verified or discredited. *The Gospel of Thomas* has none of that. It contains no historical material about the life of Jesus; it is just a collection of quotations claiming to be from Him.

V. Conclusion

As believers, we can have complete confidence that the books of the Old and New Testaments were chosen for good reason. Old Testament apocrypha were excluded because they did not meet the standard set by the early Jewish community and the Old Testament Scriptures were included because they did. New Testament apocrypha were excluded because they did not meet the standard set by the early church and the New Testament Scriptures were included because they did.

It is our prayer that this next series of articles will increase your confidence in the Bible as the true and living Word of God.

End-Notes

The Books and the Parchments: How We Got Our English Bible (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984) 86. Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Greenville, S. C.: 2002) 76.

⁴ *Webster's New World Dictionary*, ed. by Michael Agnes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003) 224. Etymology is "the linguistic study of word origins."

⁵ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989). "Inspiration may be defined as the Holy Spirit's superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God's Word written – authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs," (160).

⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 283.

⁷ To “presuppose” is “to suppose or assume beforehand,” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*, 510). A presupposition, then, is “something that is supposed or assumed beforehand.” A more theological definition is offered by Greg Bahnsen in *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Philipsburg, N. J.: R & R Publishing, 1998). “A ‘presupposition’ is an elementary assumption in one’s reasoning or in the process by which opinions are formed . . . Presuppositions form a wide-ranging, foundational *perspective* (or starting point) in terms of which everything else is interpreted and evaluated. As such, presuppositions have the greatest authority in one’s thinking, being treated as one’s least negotiable beliefs and being granted the highest immunity to revision,” (2).

Presuppositions should not be blindly preserved. They can and should be weighed and evaluated in light of reason and Scripture and, if they are found to be wrong, they should be revised or abandoned. With respect to the canon, the history of the canon (discussed directly below) establishes the correct presupposition: the canon formed the church.

⁸ It is not the purpose of this essay to answer this important question. For those who are interested, this question is answered in “The Men Who Wrote the Bible.”

⁹ Genesis–Malachi.

¹⁰ Matthew–Revelation.

¹¹ Much of the following information regarding the history of the Old Testament Canon is found in “The Bible Compared to Islam and Mormonism” (see our 2006 – The Bible issue).

¹² The terms *Jew*, *Hebrew*, and *Israelite* are synonymous for the purposes of this article and will be used interchangeably from this point on.

¹³ Although not every author of the Old Testament witnessed the same event, there was some overlap between various passages and books. First Kings 6 and Second Chronicles 3 describe the same event. Second Kings 20 and Isaiah 38 do so as well. Several Old Testament books describe events that either coincide with or overlap one another (Ezra and Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Solomon, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles).

¹⁴ *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998) 73-74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶ For a description of this book, see “The Books Excluded from the Canon.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Word Publishing, 1997) 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1359.

²¹ The author of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles could not have lived through all the events described, since the history in those books is well over 100 years long. Also, Moses did not witness any of the events in the Book of Genesis.

²² For an example of a book that was left out of the canon because it was not written from eyewitness evidence, see the description of *Bel and the Dragon* below (IV. Apocryphal Books).

²³ For a comparison of the preservation of the Hebrew Bible verses the preservation of the texts of The Koran and The Book of Mormon, see “The Bible Compared to Islam and Mormonism” (see our 2006 – The Bible issue).

²⁴ Plenty does not mean thorough. Some of the information available contains controversial dates and events with little known detail but the following summary of New Testament canonization contains material that is generally agreed upon.

²⁵ The information regarding persecution is found in Bruce Metzger’s *The Canon of the New Testament*, 106-108.

²⁶ The information regarding heresy is found in Bruce Metzger’s *The Canon of the New Testament*, 90-106.

²⁷ For a description of the Gospel of Thomas and The Shepherd of Hermes, see “The Books Excluded from the Canon.”

²⁸ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. by J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974) 417.

²⁹ Colossians 2:8, 18; Titus 1:16; and 2 Timothy 3:7 allude to some Gnostic teachings: special knowledge, progressive revelation, and the doctrine of the purity of the ‘flesh’ are repudiated in these passages.

³⁰ See quote above.

³¹ These references to the church in Rome are not references to the Roman Catholic Church but to the recipients of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

³² Other factors went into the formation of the New Testament canon but they culminated in the decisions of these two

councils.

³³ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Ronald F. Youngblood (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 892. Nero actually blamed the great fire of Rome (A.D. 64) on the Christians and began to punish them because of it.

³⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984) 107-108.

³⁵ This decree, however, was not without its complications:

What would happen when those who called themselves servants of a carpenter, and whose great heroes were fisherfolk, slaves, and criminals condemned to death by the state, suddenly saw themselves surrounded by imperial pomp and power? Would they remain firm in their faith? Or would it be that those who had stood before tortures and before beasts would give way to the temptations of an easy life and of social prestige? (Ibid., 108).

³⁶ "Our modern New Testament," meaning the 27 books that comprise the New Testament.

³⁷ The following information is found at www.biblicalthology.com/Research/Martinez_R01.html as of July 7, 2006.

³⁸ *Confessions*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: University Press, 1991).

³⁹ *City of God*, trans. by Henry Bettenson (Baltimore, Mar.: Pelican Books, 1972).

⁴⁰ Metzger, 238. A second Council of Carthage was held in 419, and it further confirmed what the first Council decided.

⁴¹ The following information is found in Metzger's *The Canon of the New Testament*, 237-238.

⁴² These criteria for canonicity are taken from www.churchtimeline.com/imperial.htm as of July 7, 2006.

⁴³ *The NIV Study Bible* ed. by Kenneth L. Barker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). The author of the Gospel of Mark (Mark) and the author of the Gospel of Luke (Luke) were not apostles, but Mark was an associate of Peter (1486) and Luke was an associate of Paul (1527).

⁴⁴ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: T & T Clark, 2001) 51.

⁴⁵ Bruce Metzger, *An Introduction to The Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957) 5.

⁴⁶ This list of Old Testament Apocrypha is borrowed from Metzger's *An Introduction to The Apocrypha*, 3-4. This list is not comprehensive.

⁴⁷ This list of New Testament Apocrypha is borrowed from www.earlychristianwritings.com/apocrypha.html as of May 6, 2006. This list is not comprehensive.

⁴⁸ Joshua 10:13 also mentions the Book of Jashar.

⁴⁹ There are no copies of The Book of Jashar or The Book of the Wars of the Lord available today.

⁵⁰ Jude's quote is from 1 Enoch 1:19.

⁵¹ Acts 17:28.

⁵² See "The Books Excluded from the Canon."

⁵³ The following information for *Bel and the Dragon* is found in Metzger's *An Introduction to The Apocrypha*, 115-122.

⁵⁴ MacArthur, 1225.

⁵⁵ Information found at www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bel_and_the_Dragon as of July 9, 2006.

⁵⁶ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 85-86.

⁵⁷ *The Gospel According to Thomas*, trans. by A. Guillaumont (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976) 3.

⁵⁸ *Zondervan NASB Study Bible*, ed. by Kenneth Barker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999) 1846. The apostle John died some time in the later A.D. 90's. His final book, Revelation, was written in the early to late 90's.

⁵⁹ The exact year of Thomas' death is not known to us, but we do know that the apostle John was the last apostle alive (Jn 21:20-22) and he died some time in the A.D. 90's (Ibid.).

⁶⁰ *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 57.

⁶¹ Italics mine.

⁶² For instance, Luke 2:1 makes a reference to the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus and Luke 2:4 refers to three geographic locations: Nazareth, Judea, and Bethlehem. Here, Luke gives a reference to a historical person and a geographic location that can be verified or rejected.