

The Formation and Basis of the New Testament Canon

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1. Sufficient Questions: Inquiring Deeply Enough about Canonicity

a. Basic documentary question: What is the precise list of new covenant documents which, along with the OT, provide the authoritative rule of faith and life for the church?

b. Entailed in this question are four other, closely related questions

i. What is a canon? What kind of thing are we even asking about?

ii. Where does the notion of a “canon” of the NT come from at all?

iii. What is the canon itself based upon? Who or what legitimates or establishes the canon’s contents, objectively speaking?

iv. How do we know?

2. Insufficient Answers: Commonly Cited Criteria and Their Problems

a. Apostolic Authorship and Its Problems

i. Problem of necessity (I)

ii. Problem of necessity (II)

iii. Problem of sufficiency

iv. Problem of continuing historical uncertainty

v. Problem of authority

b. Rule of faith and its problems

i. Problem of identity

ii. Problem of sufficiency

iii. Problem of authority

c. Universal recognition and its problems

i. Problem of history

ii. Problem of authority

d. Inspiration and its problems

i. Problem of verification

ii. Problem of sufficiency

iii. Problem of authority