

Scripture in the Second Temple Period – from “the Law” to “the Law and the Prophets”

A Mental List – the idea of “Scripture” begins as a rough, somewhat amorphous, mental catalogue of holy writings, which are mostly contained on individual scrolls

- The basis for the concept of Scripture is the five “books of Moses”
 - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 - These are held by all Jews to be uniquely holy and divinely inspired
- In synagogue Judaism, they are joined by the hazy category “and the prophets”

The Development of “And the Prophets” (539 BC – 70 AD)

- When we today hear the phrase “and the prophets,” we think of the writing prophets of the Old Testament and their “books of prophecy”
 - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, “the Twelve,” and Daniel
- But ancient Jews commonly had a much more expansive list of “prophets” in mind
 - Modern Jews designate Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as the “former prophets” and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and “the Twelve” as the “latter”
 - The rest of the modern Jewish Bible is then referred to as “the Writings”
 - I.e. Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles
 - For ancient Jews, the picture is not so clear – personages like Enoch, Abraham, David, Solomon, Job, Daniel, etc. would have been viewed as “prophets” (cf. Acts 2.29-30) – so, if one were to possess authentic writings by (or possibly about) these persons, they might also be considered to be “prophetic” and a part of “the prophets”
 - E.g. Psalms (for David), Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (for Solomon), Lamentations (for Jeremiah), etc.
 - Lots of Jewish literature was composed about or in the name of ancient figures over more than a millennium (c. 400 BC – c. 600 AD)
- In the first century, there seems to have been a large degree of agreement on the spiritual authority of large portions of what Jews today call the Bible – but there were also debates
 - There was resistance to the authority of Ezekiel, Esther, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel amongst rabbinic communities – lasting deep into the first millennium
 - There were many, many books, written during the Second Temple period, to which some Jews ascribed authority, but which ended up being excluded from the Jewish Bible
 - All of the books of the Orthodox Old Testament that are not in the Jewish Bible fall into this category
 - Tobit, Judith, 1-3 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, and the Epistle of Jeremiah
 - A number of other books, especially those written in the name of an ancient author

- 4 Maccabees, 4 Ezra, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Apocalypse of Elijah, Ascension of Isaiah, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, etc.
- At the time of Christ, not every Jewish synagogue has all of the scrolls of what we now call the “Jewish Bible” and many have other scrolls that are read in the synagogue

Universally Agreed to be “Scripture”	Majority Agreement	Open Debate	Held by Few
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Samuel Kings Isaiah Jeremiah “The Twelve” Psalms Job* Proverbs* Ruth* Lamentations* Ezra* Nehemiah* Chronicles*	Ezekiel Song of Songs Ecclesiastes Esther Daniel Tobit* Judith* 1 Maccabees* 2 Maccabees* Wisdom of Solomon Sirach* Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah “2 Esdras” 1 Enoch Jubilees	3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees Ascension of Isaiah Apocalypse of Elijah Qumran ‘War Scroll’ ... etc., etc., etc.
Red = Accepted by Modern Jews and all Christians - Blue = Accepted only by RCC and Orthodox - Green = Accepted only by Orthodox Brown = Accepted only by the Georgian Orthodox Church Black = Not used by Jews, Protestants, RCC, or Orthodox			

Writing in the Second Temple Period (539 BC – 70 AD)

- Jews – who are now all over – become increasingly literate in the Second Temple period
 - They also become increasingly educated in Gentile forms and literary patterns
 - So, there is a sustained flowering of religious literature in traditional genres
 - Oracles (early on) – Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Malachi, etc.
 - Histories – Chronicles, 1-3 Maccabees, Ezra, Nehemiah, Josephus, etc.
 - Possible to include Ruth, Tobit, Esther, etc. in this category
 - Poetry – Lamentations, probably some Psalms
 - Wisdom Literature – Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon
 - And also in some new genres
 - Apocalypses – Daniel 7-12, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Testament of Abraham, etc.
 - Epistles – Epistle of Jeremiah, Epistle of Aristeas, etc.
 - Philosophic Discourse – 4 Maccabees
- In addition to this, some of them also start to lose their Hebrew altogether
 - So translation efforts begin and there is debate about whether the Law can be translated – is the Torah still God’s word in translation?
 - The Epistle of Aristeas is written to assert the divine inspiration of the LXX

- Also, Jews begin to produce religious literature in other languages such as Aramaic and Greek
 - Daniel – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
 - Ezra – Hebrew and Aramaic
 - Wisdom of Solomon and 2 Maccabees – Greek
- Many writings from this period were written in Hebrew but only survive in translation
 - E.g. 1 Maccabees, Sirach, Tobit, etc.

Multiple Fulfillment

- Due to the idea that the Scriptures were divinely inspired, most Jews came to believe that they had mystical and prophetic properties that extended beyond their original context
 - This led directly to the idea of “messianism,” where ancient phrases, stories, and prophecies were understood as referring both to past figures/events and to the time of a coming Messiah – God’s coming king who would set the world right
 - An overt biblical example of “multiple fulfillment” is what Paul does with the Law in 1 Cor 9

1 Cor 9.9-12 – For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

“The Law and the Prophets” as the Scriptures of the Early Church

- Like the first century Judaism it came from, Christianity began as both a sacramental and a textual religion
 - The sacraments of Christianity were new and different
 - But the early Church inherited its Scriptures directly from synagogue Judaism
 - Including the ambiguous edges
 - The tradition of “multiple fulfillment” was forcefully applied to Jesus
 - John 1.45, 5.39-47; Luke 24.13-47; Acts 3.20-6, 26.22-3, etc.
 - For Christians, “the Scriptures” (later called the Old Testament) had always been about Jesus
 - “The gospel” – the proclamation of Jesus’ identity, birth, death, and saving resurrection, had always been written in the Scriptures
 - Now, “the Scriptures” needed to be interpreted in light of the doctrines/dogmas of the new, Christian faith
 - Initially, there is no written “New Testament” – and probably no concept that there would ever be one – but this would change as the first century progressed