

God might have providentially have acted to make people agree on something and yet that might not be true. The concensus of the Jews doesn't prove these are the books that God inspired. But the concensus of the Jews plus Jesus' attitude toward it in setting his seal of approval upon the holy Scriptures --- these books which were God's divine teachings -- the books of which He said, You have made the Word of God of none effect through your traditions. He didn't say, You have left something out of the Word of God. He didn't say, You have added to the Word of God. He said ~~it~~ you have made it of no effect through your traditions.

He recognized that this was the set of books that God desired his people to have. It is very important for us to realize that the authority in these books comes from God, not from man. To us the authority comes from the Lord Jesus. He set His seal upon these books as having been given by God. But in the first place the authority came because God inspired the particular writers to write material that would be free from error and that would fit into his plan for the whole OT. Consequently each book was canonical from the time when it first was given.

When did people recognize them as canonical? It would have been possible in the providence of God that he would have chosen there be a great assembly of the people to look over 100 books and pick out the ones that they recognized as being the ones God has made canonical. But there is no evidence of any such meeting at any time.

It would have been possible for God to have inspired some great leader to have revealed to him in such a way that he would have had the divine wisdom to know what the right books were and what books were not to be included. But there is no evidence of any such action through an individual. God gave the books to the writers. They were taken from them, and the people of God came to this concensus within a very few centuries at least after the last book was written. Those are they facts as they happened.

Here let us not become confused as to the importance of the idea of the three-fold arrangement. It would have been possible for God to have caused that they would recognize certain books were canonical and then at a particular time they would recognize certain other ones, and than at a particular time they'd recognize certain other ones. That would be altogether possible that he might have done such a thing. But there is absolutely no evidence that he did such a thing.

If we had such a thing it would go a long way toward the critical approach, that namely the authority came not from God but from man. That is is say, the authority might have come from God and He might have made it known to us in that way. But He didn't. There is no evidence whatever that He did. But the critical view is that the group of people said, Let's take this combination of JEDP that is ~~fr~~ formed into what is now the Pentateuch, and let's make this a canon! And they'd say 2 Kings and 2 Chron. shows it. It shows Josiah making a canon.