

## Jude 1:14's Quote of Enoch and the Issue of Canonicity

**CANONICITY**- that which belongs to the “standard” or “rule”

**32:46** he added: "Take to heart all the words of warning I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions.<sup>47</sup> These instructions are not empty words-- they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River."  
(Deuteronomy 32:46-47 NLT)

Does Jude believe that the book of 1 Enoch, which he quotes, is inspired Scripture?

- Not necessarily as there are other quotes from non-canonical sources in the New Testament:
  - Paul, when debating with the Athenian philosophers, quotes a famous proverb, “For we too are his offspring” in proving God as the creator (Acts 17:28). The source he quotes is the Greek philosophers/poets Cleanthes (275 BC) in a *Hymn to Jupiter* and Aratus (275 BC) in *Phaenomena* 5.
  - In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul quotes the Greek dramatist Menander (300 BC) from his comedy *Thais* (218; fragment 187); “bad company corrupts good morals.”
  - There is quote by Paul of the Cretan poets in Titus 1:12 which reads, “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This comes from Epimenides (600 BC).
  - None of these quotes uses the standard introductory phrase, “it is written”.
- What precipitated the “need” to formalize the New Testament canon?
  - Persecution (which book would I die for?)
  - Increasing distance from the apostolic period
  - Pressure of Montanism (150 AD; belief that the voice of prophecy had supreme authority in the church- for a contra perspective see 1 Corinthians 14:37-38)
  - The rise of Gnosticism (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD; belief in the seeking of special secret knowledge which opens up avenues to the deeper truths; at least as authoritative as the Scripture)
  - Other movements which challenged or questioned Biblical truth (i.e. Marcion, 148 AD)<sup>1</sup>
- The need to formalize the canon also brought about the various principles deemed reasonable to recognize which books had inherent Biblical authority and inspiration. The principles included:
  - Apostolic Provenance (or association)- 2 Peter 3:15-16; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:2; 3:17; 1 Tim 5:18
  - The Rule of Faith- this asked the question of whether there was conformity between any document and the other Scriptural record (primarily the OT- see 2 Timothy 3:15-17). This is observed in Isaiah 8:20 and all the various quotations in the New Testament of “it is written” or “have you not read”. Additionally, Galatians 1:7-9; Col 2:8ff.; 1 Timothy 6:3ff.
  - Universal Acceptance- this principle asks about how accepted a particular book was in the early churches (East and West). During early times, most believers were not literate and so limits were placed on which books could be publicly read (1 Tim 4:13) to the church and also which kind of authority was attached to its reading. Other non-biblical books were read publicly, but were noted to not have the same level of authority as other Scriptural books.
  - Self-Authenticating Divine Nature<sup>2</sup>- This is not a simplistic subjective test by just anyone. Instead, the author maintains that the collective wisdom of believers bear testimony to the inherent divine nature evidenced in the Scriptures (cf. Romans 8:16).
- Is the Canon closed?
  - Based on the principles above (primarily #1), it does not reason out that there would be any additional authoritative Scripture given (Deut 4:2; Rev 22:18-19 is providential that it is at the end of the canon).

<sup>1</sup> These are from *An Introduction to the New Testament* by D.A. Carson & Douglas Moo, p. 736.

<sup>2</sup> At least one textbook offers this 4<sup>th</sup> principle in addition to the previous three, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, Peter Wagner, p. 149.

- It is important to remember that the doctrine of inspiration (God-breathed- 2 Timothy 3:16) is of the writings themselves and not the writers. Note that Paul wrote other letters which have been lost and are not found in the NT (letter to the Corinthians prior to 1 Corinthians [5:9]; “severe letter” between what is 1 and 2 Corinthians in our NT [2 Cor 2:4]; Epistle to the Laodiceans [Col 4:16]).
- Factors in understanding the Old Testament Canon
  - Evidence for the recognition of Mosaic authority of books of the “Law” (Josh 1:7-8; 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; 23:25; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Daniel 9:11; Malachi 4:4).
  - Evidence for the recognition of the authority of the prophetic books (cf. Josh 6:26-1Kings 16:34; “Thus says the Lord”).
  - Three fold division of OT books (Law, Prophets, Writings) found in Sirach prologue (200BC), Philo (Cnt 1:25- 40AD), Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1:38-40- 90AD; 22 Books divided into 5, 13, 4), Jesus (Luke 24:44); Church Fathers recognized only 39 books of OT.
  - New Testament quotations of all OT books except Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. No quotes of “apocrypha” are found in NT. Certainly some allusions as we have seen in Jude.
  - Luke 11:51, “From the blood of Abel to Zechariah...” covers entire OT from Genesis to 2 Chronicles (22 Books as represented in Hebrew and the Jewish Canon- same as our 39 books).
  - There are 12 additional books known as the “Deuterocanonical books” by Catholics and “Apocrypha” by everyone else which are added to the Catholic edition of the Old Testament.
  - There are 17 other books mentioned in the Old Testament text that did not become part of the Old Testament Canon.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 119 for list of these 17 books.