

Doctrine of Canonicity

Introduction

3-14-2018

1. What is history and how did we get it? Ancient written records are compared and archeological discoveries are analyzed and studied vis-à-vis the written records of antiquity.

1.1 To determine what is history versus fiction the following tests are used for written records: oldest documents take precedence (those nearest the event, the number of documents available, the number of mistakes in the various manuscripts and the substance of the errors and the time interval between the event and the document).

1.2 In summary, various external evidences such as established contemporaneous events, rulers, names of cities, civilizations known to exist at the time and archaeological records are compared and analyzed and conclusions drawn and codified.

1.3 Although the Bible is not a history book, the historical facts found in the Bible are remarkably accurate.

2. The Old Testament was written describing events taking place over a long period of time—c. 1450 B.C. to c. 450 B.C. The New Testament was written over a not so long period – c. 4 B.C. to c. A.D. 96; there was an intertestamental period of some 400 years in which there was no Scripture written. We have a great deal of history about events taking place during the intertestamental period known as 1st and 2nd Maccabees; as we will later see these books are classified by many as “Apocrypha.”



2.1 Bible teachers know of the events taking place in the intertestamental period from not only the Apocrypha but they also find records of these events described prophetically by Daniel; Particularly in Daniel Chapters 2, 7 and 8.

3. At the 11:00 A.M. service last week I taught the particulars of several of the most valuable of manuscripts discovered since the publication of the King James version of the Bible:

CODEX SINAITICUS

Tischendorf 1844 at St. Catherine's monastery—vellums being used as kindling. CODEX VATICANUS

Tregelles 1843 at the Vatican—the Pope's library reveals new insight.

CODEX ALEXANDRINUS

A fifth-century manuscript of the Septuagint and the entire New Testament given to Charles the First by the head of the Greek Orthodox Church at Constantinople.

EPHRAEMI RESCRIPTUS

Mark Antony to Cleopatra; Father Ephraem, a favorite of Catherine de Medici, but what was thought to be Ephraem's sermon turned out to be the very valuable "Ephraem Rescriptus."

THE POPYRI

The Oxyrhynchos Manuscripts (Och see rin quist)—crocodiles gave up very valuable popyri of ancient manuscripts going back to the seventh century B.C. -- worth millions.

4. Let's review some of that learned last week about the Chester Beatty Popyri.

The Chester Beatty Popyri

1. After the discovery of the Oxyrhynchos (Och see rin quist) there was increasing excitement over the discovery of popyri and searches for ancient popyri intensified.

1.1 Countless small hills and sand dunes were dug up, and many turned out to be only rubbish heaps of the past, containing bits of slates, vases, broken pottery and other reminders of a life long ago. The Arabs, not to be outdone, soon joined the hunt carrying off many valuable treasures. So, here and there, fragments of Biblical writings turned up for sale.

1.2 Among these was an ancient Jewish temple library of the seventh century B.C., discovered at Elephantine, Egypt. The acquisition and cataloguing took the greater part of two years---1906 to 1908.

2. Another great discovery came on November 19, 1931, when the Chester Beatty Popyri were found. Chester Beatty was a millionaire from Philadelphia who made a tour of Palestine and Egypt. He had heard that certain Old Testament popyri were being offered for sale. Even though the prices were exorbitant, Beatty paid immediately.

2.1 He then turned the entire collection of documents over to two scholars, F.G. Kenyon and H.A. Sanders. A detailed study of these second and third century popyri revealed some of the missing papers of the Codex Sinaiticus, portions of Paul's Epistles and the four Gospels. The 'haul' was well worth the price paid. This collection is now housed at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Work of Deissmann

1. The ever-increasing supply of newly recovered papyri furnished abundant material for research and evaluation by knowledgeable philologists. We owe much to a group of very famous German scholars who, under the leadership of Adolph Deissmann, shed new light on the language of the New Testament. His studies clarified the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of the Koine Greek. *Light From the Ancient East*, translated from the German, is a fascinating book on this subject and contains some of Deissmann's findings.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

1. In 1947, a fifteen-year-old Bedouin boy followed a goat which had strayed. When he casually threw a pebble into the cleft of a rock, he was startled at the sound of breaking pottery. Later he returned with a friend to explore the cave. Here they stumbled upon several earthenware jars that contained dirty, musty-smelling parchments.

1.1 What seemed like an accidental find turned out to be Biblical manuscripts antedating the oldest known Old Testament manuscripts by one thousand years. This included the complete book of Isaiah.

1.2 It would take many years and a small fortune to acquire these scrolls from the Arab black market, and even more patience to piece them together and decipher. There could be no doubt however, the scrolls were genuine.

2. In the following years many additional caches were located, including the main library of the Essenes, a Jewish sect. The Dead Sea Scrolls were named after the area in which they had been found.

3. Although the Scrolls provided little additional information as to the content of the Canon, they did in fact verify that what we had earlier discovered was in fact, accurate and reliable.

4. Now as promised when we began this study of Canonicity I am going to review an expanded translation of Daniel chapters 2, 7 and 8 with comment.

Daniel Chapter Two

Dan 2:1 Early in Nebuchadnezzar's reign as ruler of the Babylonian Empire, he began to have several very troubling dreams; he was greatly disturbed. So panic-stricken was the king that he developed a serious case of insomnia.

Dan 2:2 Accordingly, Nebuchadnezzar summoned his best-educated scribes, his best astrologers, his best diviners (men skilled in the black art of incantation) and his priests; they were told only that the king was troubled and could not sleep.

Dan 2:3 The king said to them, "I had a dream which greatly troubles me and I want to know its meaning."

Dan 2:4 The men summoned to the palace bowed before Nebuchadnezzar, saying in unison, "O King, live forever." Then the leader of the group said, "Now tell us the dream and we will tell you its interpretation."

Dan 2:5 The king answered, "I have already issued an irrevocable decree. If you do not tell me what I dreamed and then interpret it for me, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble where the refuse of the city will be dumped. Dan 2:6 But if you tell me what I dreamed and then tell me its meaning, I will give you gold bullion, silver utensils and a chest full of precious stones, along with a large monetary stipend and a promotion. So, take a shot and tell me the dream and its interpretation."

Dan 2:7 Once more their spokesman replied, "Tell us the dream, and then we will interpret it."

Dan 2:8 Nebuchadnezzar answered, "You are simply trying to buy time, because you realize I have issued an unalterable decree; a failure to tell the dream and its interpretation will result in your deaths.

Dan 2:9 If you fail to tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you. For you see, in the past, I have watched you develop misleading interpretations; I think you are simply stalling, hoping the situation will change. Tell me the dream, and then I will know that your interpretation can be trusted."

Dan 2:10 One of the more respected scholars answered, "There is not a diviner on earth who can do what the king asks! In fact, we know of no king who has ever ordered a scholar, enchanter or astrologer to tell a ruler what he dreamed.

Dan 2:11 What you are asking is frankly just too difficult. There is no human who can reveal your dream; only the gods know what you dreamed, but unfortunately the gods do not live among us."

Dan 2:12 This response made the king not just angry, but livid; he exploded and summarily ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

Dan 2:13 The decree to execute all his advisors was received by Arioch, Nebuchadnezzar's chief executioner, who immediately led a sweeping search for all diviners, and this included Daniel and his three friends.

Dan 2:14 When Arioch arrived at Daniel's palace apartment, the young Daniel met the chief executioner at the door; Arioch read the decree to Daniel, who answered with counsel and wisdom.

Dan 2:15 "Why is the decree being so hastily carried out?" Then Arioch told Daniel how the king had already met with the palace diviners and given each a chance to tell the king his dream.

Dan 2:16 Daniel went straight to the king's quarters and asked permission from his chief of staff to see the king; Daniel promised, "If you give me just a little more time, I will tell you what you dreamed, and then I will tell you its interpretation."

Dan 2:17 Later, Daniel met with his three friends and explained the entire situation. Dan 2:18 The four, in prayer, asked God to make known the dream and its interpretation, so that they would not be drawn and quartered with the rest of the Babylonian diviners.

Dan 2:19 The dream and its interpretation were given to Daniel in a night vision, and Daniel responded to God's revelations by praising Him.

Dan 2:20 Daniel extolled the name of Jehovah God by exclaiming, "Blessed be the name of God forever, for He is the source of all wisdom and might."

Dan 2:21 He went even further by proclaiming, "It is Jesus Christ who controls events and breaks up time into epochs; He both raises up kings and puts them down; and He gives wisdom to the wise, and more doctrine to those who desire it.

Dan 2:22 He reveals the deep and hidden things to those who know Him; God knows what is in the minds of men; and because my Father is omniscient, He has revealed all that I, Daniel, need to know.

Dan 2:23 I thank You and praise Your name, O God of my fathers who has given me wisdom and has revealed to me the king's dream."

Dan 2:24 Because Daniel's mind was full of information about the king and his dream, he asked Arioch to spare the wise men and take him to Nebuchadnezzar's quarters. He had earlier informed Arioch that he knew what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed and was ready to interpret for the great king.

Dan 2:25 Seeking further prestige for himself, Arioch hastened to the king with Daniel, asserting, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah who will tell you the interpretation of your dream."

Dan 2:26 Calling Daniel by his Babylonian name, the king said, "Belteshazzar, have you come to tell and interpret my dream?"

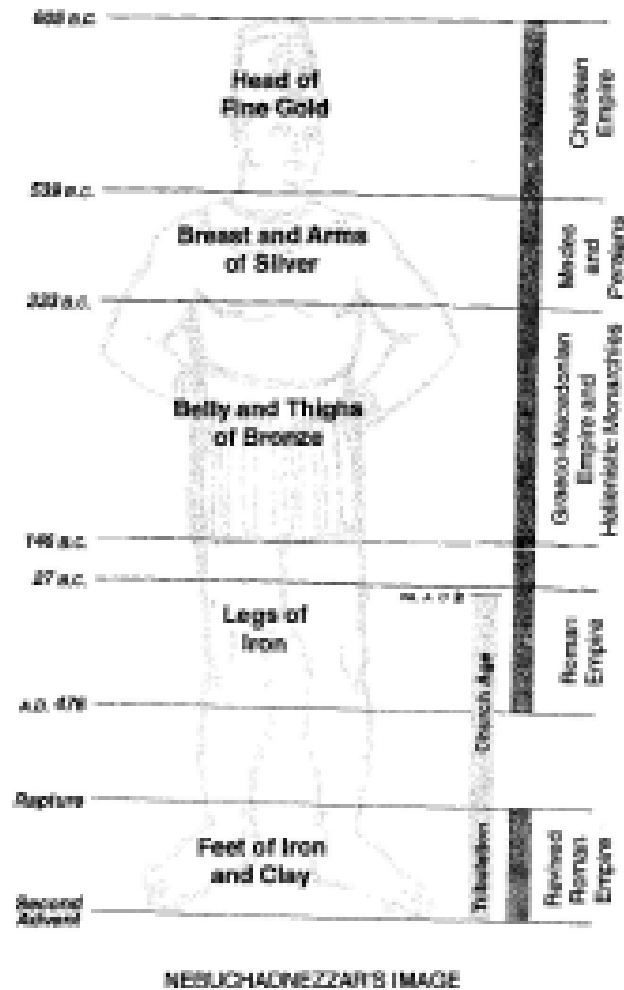
Dan 2:27 "I know your wise men, the astrologers, the magicians and priests have been unable to tell you what you dreamed!

Dan 2:28 But let me make it clear, O King, there is a God in heaven Who reveals secrets and makes known that which will come to pass, and this He has elected to do, just for you.

Dan 2:29 "O King, you dreamed about the future. While you slept on your bed, the God of heaven chose to reveal to you, and you only, certain events of monumental importance.

Dan 2:30 As for me, these secret things were not revealed because I am wise or wiser than anyone else, but rather the revelation came so that you, as the king, might know the thoughts of your own right lobe and thus understand what went through your mind as you slept.

Dan 2:31 “What you saw, O King, was this: there before you stood a great statue. This great image was awesome in brightness; its colorful appearance signified several future glamorous empires and its form was terrifying, it is a symbol of the great power of several empires to come.



Dan 2:32 The golden head represents you, O King, as ruler of Babylon. The breast and arms of silver represents the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians to follow, and the belly and thighs of bronze represents a Grecian Empire that will supplant the Medo-Persians.

Dan 2:33 The legs of the image were made of iron, representing a future Roman Empire, and the feet were made of both iron and clay, representing an even more distant and powerful Revived Roman Empire with ten supporting nations.

Dan 2:34 Then you saw a large uncut stone 6 rolling down a steep grade; it struck the base of the image, and the iron and clay were smashed into many pieces. The stone represents Jesus Christ at His Second Advent.

Dan 2:35 As a result of the Stone striking the image, the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken into pieces, and a great wind blew them away. Not a trace of the shards could be found: and the Stone became a great mountain and filled the entire earth. His rulership was recognized by all the nations of the world.

Dan 2:36 “Now, my King, with reference to what you dreamed, I shall provide further interpretation.

Dan 2:37 You, Nebuchadnezzar, are unique, for the God of the universe has given you a remarkable kingdom; a kingdom of glamour and military power.

Dan 2:38 God has given you authority over the entire earth; yes, O King, you are the head of gold.

Dan 2:39 But after you shall rise an inferior kingdom consisting of the Medes and Persians. In short order, the Persians shall dominate the Medes, and after the Persian Empire shall arise a Greco-Macedonian kingdom, led by a remarkable young man named Alexander the Great.

Dan 2:40 And then the Roman Empire, a fourth kingdom, strong like iron, shall break and subdue all things; the iron empire shall bruise all peoples, especially my people, Israel, who will in A.D. 70 be severely punished by these Romans.

Dan 2:41 “And then you saw the feet and toes made partly of potter's clay and partly of iron. The feet represent a revived Rome and the ten toes represent a ten-nation federation. After an intervening period (the Church Age), the feet, partly of iron and partly of clay, will consolidate into the Revived Roman Empire. The Revived Roman Empire (or Rome II, as it is also called) will be under the control of the Satan-indwelt Antichrist, headquartered in Rome.

Dan 2:42 And as the ten toes were partly iron and partly clay, so shall the kingdom be partly strong and partly broken, the clay being dominated by the stronger iron.

Dan 2:43 You saw iron mixed with clay, so the people of the ten nations shall serve the Romans under a Satan-indwelt Antichrist who will form a union of religious and political institutions, but they shall not completely adhere, even as iron does not mix with clay. Soon the Antichrist will destroy all ties with the inferior nations and their religious affiliations.

Dan 2:44 At the end of the time of Jacob's trouble, the Tribulation, God shall set up the Kingdom of Christ, which shall never be destroyed; it shall consume all the nations aligned with the Antichrist. Christ's kingdom shall stand forever.

Dan 2:45 “This is the meaning of the gigantic stone, the Messiah Christ Who was not cut out of the mountain, a giant stone made not with the hands of man, but solely a product of God; as you saw, the Great Stone broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold. The God of the universe has made known to Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future. The dream is accurate and the interpretation of it is sure.” Dan 2:46 Then the king fell on his face to worship Daniel and commanded others to worship him also.

Dan 2:47 And he said, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings; He is a revealer of secrets, having revealed my dream to you."

Dan 2:48 Because of the king's gratitude and admiration for Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar gave him gifts and made him ruler over all the satraps and wise men of Babylon.

Dan 2:49 Then, remembering his friends, Daniel requested that the king do something for them; the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to high positions in the land. Daniel was made head of the Babylonian court system while also serving as a special advisor to the king.

5. Now let's see what can learn from Daniel Chapter seven.

Daniel, Chapter Seven

Dan 7:1 In the first year of the Babylonian co-regency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar, in c. 556 B.C., I (Daniel) had a dream. I was lying on my bed when I saw several visions. I recorded the visions, in summary fashion, in my diary.

Dan 7:2 I, Daniel, was lying in my bed. I looked up and saw the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. It was clearly the Mediterranean Sea.

Dan 7:3 Four dreadful creatures, each different from the other, came out of the sea; the sea represented the vast confused gentile world.

Dan 7:4 The first was like a lion; it had wings like an eagle. This first creature represented Babylon. I watched until its wings were ripped off and it was made to stand on its two back feet like a man. The heart of a man was given to it. The bizarre series of events pointed to Nebuchadnezzar's bout with his zoanthropy, his temporary demise as ruler of Babylon and his recovery after his regeneration.

Dan 7:5 I saw a second awful creature; it looked like a bear. The second beast represented the Medo-Persian Empire. The giant grizzly rose up on one of its sides. Between its teeth, and protruding from its mouth, were three ribs. The three ribs represented Babylon, Lydia and Egypt; these were three nations conquered by the Medo-Persians. A command from one of the angels standing nearby declared, "Get up and eat more!"

Dan 7:6 And then I saw another beast rise out of the sea, one that looked like a leopard. On its back it had four wings. This beast also had four heads. It was given authority to rule. The nature of the leopard with its winged back spoke of Alexander the Great's speed of conquest. He conquered the world in 12 short years. The four heads represented Alexander's four generals who, after Alexander's death in 325 B.C., ruled four Hellenistic empires.

Dan 7:7 In a terrifying night vision, I saw a fourth beast, more terrifying, and frightening and powerful than the other three. It had huge iron teeth. What it didn't grind with its teeth it smashed with its feet. It was different from all the former beasts; it had ten horns coming out of its head.

Dan 7:8 While thinking about these horns, a little horn appeared before me. Three of the beast's horns were pulled up by the roots to make room for it. This horn had the eyes of a man speaking boastfully of the things that it would do; the little horn was particularly critical of God.

Dan 7:9 Suddenly my eyes were directed toward heaven. There I saw thrones being set in place by none other than God the Father, the Ancient of Days. He took His seat in the middle of the throne room. He wore a robe, as white as snow, signifying His Absolute Righteousness; the hair of His head was white and thick like wool, a sign of His earned respect. His throne was elevated, surrounded by flaming fire. The throne had wheels that were all ablaze, as a symbol of His omnipresence and severe judgment upon all who would deny His authority, rule and protocol.

Dan 7:10 I saw a river of fire flowing, like a sea of lava, from the throne room of God. Vast numbers of angels stood before Him. I estimate their numbers in the billions. It was announced that the Supreme Court of Heaven would soon be in session. A large set of books was brought into the heavenly court room.

Dan 7:11 I watched, in amazement, as the little horn, the Antichrist, boasted of his greatness and power. I kept on watching until he was slain at the Second Advent of Christ. I watched further, as Christ ordered that the Antichrist's body be thrown into the blazing fire of Hades.

Dan 7:12 Satan and his demons were allowed to live. They were chained for the greater part of one thousand years. At the end of the Millennial reign of Christ, they were released, but only for a short period of time.

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