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The Word of Christ, Discipleship & the Holy Spirit

1. Jesus’ words to His disciples – about the Holy Spirit

- If “you” love me, you will keep my commandments... (Jn 14:15)
- I will ask the Father & He will give you another Helper/the Spirit of truth (14:16-17)
- If “anyone” loves me, he/she will keep my word... (14:23)
- He will teach you all things & remind you of all I said to you (14:26)
- He will bear witness about Me & you will bear witness (15:26-27)
- He will guide you into all truth & declare the things to come (16:13)
- He will glorify me, taking what is mine & declaring it to you (16:14)

2. Loving Jesus & Keeping His Word:

- thru the indwelling presence & revelation of the Spirit and hearing what the Spirit says to the churches (Jn 14 – 16; 1Co 2:6-13; Rev 2 – 3)
- with God-centered confidence that “the Bible” is the inspired, inerrant, infallible & illuminated word of God (2Ti 3:16; Pv 30:5; Is 55:11; Jn 14-16)

Excursus: the Canon of Scripture

Sources: *Can We still Believe the Bible?* By Craig L. Blomberg, © 2014; *Systematic Theology*, by Wayne Grudem, © 1994; *Notes:* *Quote below in [brackets] is by Marcus Johnson. “Canon” refers to the books recognized by the church as Scripture, which serve as the standard or rule of our Christian faith & practice.

Regarding the Old Testament Canon (Grudem, pp.54-57).

Scripture itself bears witness to the historical development of the canon. The earliest collection of written words of God was the Ten Commandments ... This collection of absolutely authoritative words from God grew in size throughout the time of Israel’s history ... after approximately 435 B.C. there were no further additions to the Old Testament canon ... When we turn to Jewish literature outside the Old Testament, we see that the belief that divinely authoritative words from God had ceased is clearly attested in the several different strands of extrabiblical Jewish literature ... we have no record of any dispute between Jesus and the Jews over the extent of the canon ... According to one count, Jesus and the New Testament authors quote various parts of the Old Testament Scriptures as divinely authoritative over 295 times, but not once do they cite any statement from the books of the Apocrypha or any other writings as having divine authority.

Regarding the New Testament Canon (Blomberg & Grudem)

Apostolicity. The criterion of apostolicity does *not mean that every book was written by an apostle ... but rather that they were written during the apostolic age, before the last of the Twelve (most likely John) had died ... there is good reason to believe that these books come from the first century, the apostolic era. No book, moreover, is more than one person removed from an apostle or an authoritative eyewitness of the life of Jesus ... even more liberal scholarship assigns dates and authors for these books to the first century, so that the criterion of apostolicity as defined above remains satisfied. [*if not, they were associated with an apostle; Luke with Paul, Mark with Peter]

Catholicity ... “Catholic” as an adjective simply means “universal.” The books accepted into the New Testament were never those that were found among only one sect within Christianity or used in one small corner of the Christian world ... believers throughout the parts of the world to which Christianity had spread were in agreement on the abiding value of these books...

Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the criterion that refers to *faithfulness* to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles ... The criterion of orthodoxy ... extended to the Old Testament ... The first centuries of Christianity believed that the twenty-seven books ultimately included in the New Testament were the documents that best exhibited the continuity between the prophetic roles of the Old Testament books and their fulfillment in the life and times of Jesus and his first followers.

Inspiration and self-attestation ... This is a much more subjective criterion. What appears as inspired to one person may not to another. Given this fairly obvious observation, it is all the more remarkable that numerous ancient writers, like many theologians ever since, spoke about Scripture’s self-attestation. Jews and Christians alike frequently have believed that God’s Spirit testifies to his people as to which books are divinely revealed. (Blomberg, pp.58-63)

In A.D. 367 the Thirty-night Paschal Letter of Athanasius contained an exact list of the twenty-seven New Testament books we have today. This was the list of books accepted by the churches in the eastern part of the Mediterranean world. Thirty years later, in A.D. 397, the Council of Carthage, representing the churches in the western part of the Mediterranean world, agreed with the eastern churches on the same list. These are the earliest final lists of our present-day canon. Should we expect any more writings to be added to the canon? The opening sentence in Hebrews puts this question in the proper historical perspective, the perspective of the history of redemption ... The contrast between the former speaking “of old” by the prophets and the recent speaking “in these last days” suggest that God’s speech to us by his Son ... is his greatest and final revelation to mankind in this period of redemptive history. The exceptional greatness of the revelation that comes through the Son, far exceeding any revelation in the old covenant, is emphasized again and again through chapters 1 and 2 of Hebrews. These facts all indicate that there is a finality to the revelation of God in Christ that once this revelation has been completed, no more is to be expected ... the canon is now closed. (Grudem, pp.63-64)