

c. The Writings

The work of the writings "fell together" and was finally approved as canon at Jamnia about 100 AD in this critical analysis. The writings are a capstone to Israel's odyssey and do much to establish national heroes and national wisdom as being part of Jehovah's plan for His people.

As to the cause for the canonization of the writings, there is some doubt. Three factors are thought to be involved: 1) simple survival that told the remnants of a cherished but forgotten dream; 2) anonymous but pretended authorship, the work being assigned to some hero of antiquity whose deeds would give credit to such a work, and 3) popular taste, which in common language meant that if the people liked it, they kept it. Thus the writings exemplified a "last-ditch" attempt of the Hebrew cultural community to save itself in the face of national loss.

You can see, without mush of a lecture, that this removes from us what we might call Scripture and leaves us with certain humanistically appointed documents of very uneven value. The books of the Bible have become, at best, a collection of vain dreams and ideas.

5. Suggested causes for Canon development

I will just sketch these in a very quick and inefficient way.

--nationalism: ethnic pride and a place in the sun.

--reverence: respect for tradition and antiquity.

--universalneed: something was needed to keep the people from losing ethnic unity

And, as impressive as these might sound, it seems to us that they miss the only real biblical concept...that God had a love for His people and expressed it in giving them His truth and thereby revealing both Himself and His will.