THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS
CANON-CONSCIOUSNESS CURRENT PROJECT DETAILS

ABSTRACT

The earliest Jesus movement's thought and literature took shape within the context of canon consciousness. This consciousness was not primarily an awareness of a canonical list(s) but an awareness of authoritative traditions.

One such tradition is that of Israel's Scriptures as interpreted in a Second Temple context. Another is how this scriptural tradition shapes the movement's own canonical kerygma that proclaims Jesus as Messiah. This kerygma then also sets the framework for the movement's interaction with Israel's Scriptures and the formation of the New Testament.

Together, these traditions shape (a) assessments of which texts were canonical and (b) the relationship(s) canonical texts and testaments have to each other. These traditions even shape the content of newer literature not broadly judged canonical (e.g., New Testament apocrypha). And these traditions combination has continued influencing readers of canonical texts in subsequent centuries, including how readers understand the relationship between Christian Scripture's two testaments.

Therefore, this group explores how canon-consciousness manifests itself in Israel's Scriptures, the New Testament, and the earliest Christian writers (i.e., apologists and earlier), as well as this consciousness's ongoing hermeneutical implications for modern interpreters. Proposals are welcome but should avoid duplicating topics the group has already covered.

To join the group's mailing list, please register at jdavidstark.com/ibr.

FUTURE PLANS

The group's prior project focused on Hebrews's readings of Israel's Scriptures. That project resulted in the volume *Appropriating Hebrews's Scriptural Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Dana M. Harris and J. David Stark (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2025).

There are ongoing conversations with an interested publishing partner about a volume of essays collected from the papers for the current project on canon-consciousness. So, paper drafts delivered for the group's annual meeting be of (nearly) publishable quality. Final essays will likely be of 7500 words (+/- 10%). Firmer details will be provided once these are available.

PREVIOUS AND SCHEDULED PAPERS

2024

- David Stark (Faulkner University, The Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge), “Canon-consciousness as the Relationship between the Testaments”
- Dana Harris (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), “Interpreting and Reinterpreting the Canonical Whole: The Appropriation of Zechariah in Revelation”
- Collin Cornell (Fuller Theological Seminary), “The Bible Is Not One Big Unilinear Story: Canon Consciousness and the Geometric Bible”

2025

- Heath Thomas (Oklahoma Baptist University), “Canonical Pressure from the Other Direction: Mal. 3:19–24 [MT] in the Law and Prophets and the Presentation of Jesus”
- Stephen B. Chapman (Duke University), “Testamentary Priority: Canon-Consciousness in Contemporary Christian Biblical Interpretation”

2026

- George H. Guthrie (Regent College), “The ‘Christ Frame’ and Canon Consciousness: The Hermeneutic of Hebrews at 2:12–13”
- Tony Burke (York University), “Canon Consciousness in Early Christian Apocrypha”
- H. H. Drake Williams III (Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven), “Ignatius and the Memory of Scripture with a Comparison to the Presence of 1 Corinthians”

2027

- Amber Dillon (Denver Seminary), “The Fusion of Scriptural Roots: Canon-Consciousness and Composite Intertextuality”
- Megan DeVore (Colorado Christian University), “In Pigment and Stone: Early Christian Canon Consciousness and Visual Production”

2028

Three additional papers on areas of the project not already covered. Themes that the project would find especially beneficial include

1. recent scholarship's consideration canon-consciousness in connection to the relationship between the testaments,
2. the New Testament's (1) use of apocryphal or pseudepigraphic texts and (2) relation to the Hebrew Bible and its Greek versions, and
3. canon-consciousness in connection to the relation between the testaments in writings of one or more of the church's fathers (besides Ignatius) or mothers through the time of the first Nicene Council.