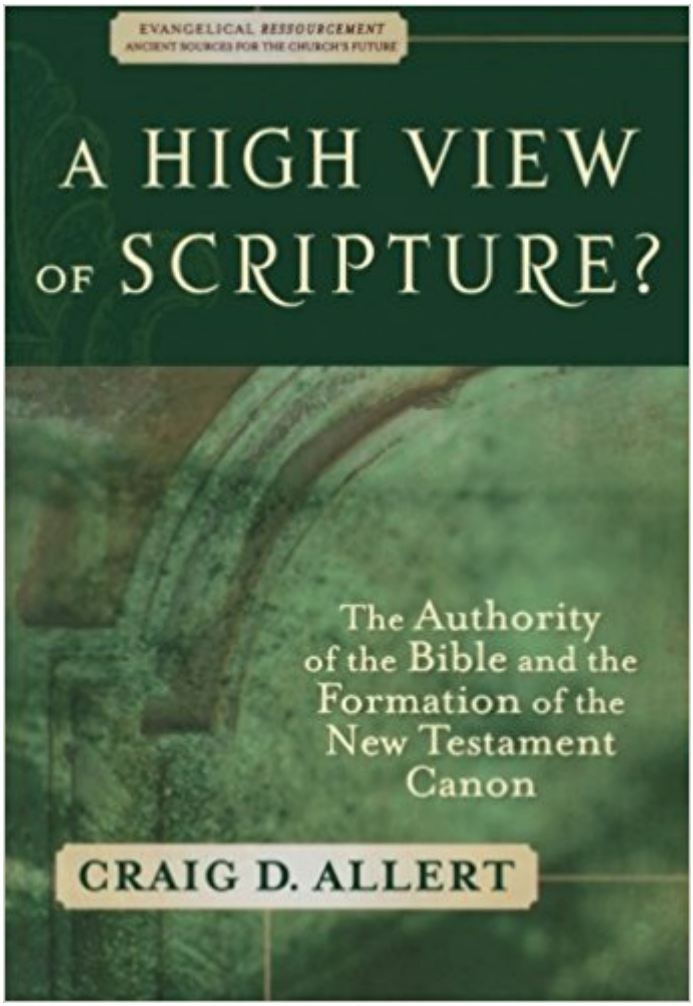
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A High View Of Scripture? The Authority Of The Bible And The Formation Of The New Testament Canon (Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources For The Church's Future)




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Synopsis

Where did the Bible come from? Author Craig D. Allert encourages more evangelicals to ask that question. In A High View of Scripture? Allert introduces his audience to the diverse history of the canon’s development and what impact it has today on how we view Scripture. Allert affirms divine inspiration of the Bible and, in fact, urges the very people who proclaim the ultimate authority of the Bible to be informed about how it came to be. This book, the latest in the Evangelical Ressourcement series, will be valuable as a college or seminary text and for readers interested in issues of canon development and biblical authority.

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Customer Reviews

The Evangelical Ressourcement series is grounded in the belief that there is a wealth of theological, exegetical, and spiritual resources from the patristic era that is relevant for the Christian church today and into the future. Amid the current resurgence in interest in the early church, this series aims to help church thinkers and leaders reappropriate these ancient understandings of Christian belief and practice and apply them to ministry in the twenty-first century. A High View of Scripture? is the third volume in the series. The series editor is D. H. Williams."Allert’s passionate insistence on historical integrity and his disarming honesty and candor will render it necessary for us to engage in serious soul searching about our approach to Scripture. This book’s convincing argument is also an opportunity for evangelicals to reassert the centrality of both church and tradition and to take both much more seriously than has often been the case. The vigor and erudition with which Allert locates

the New Testament in the ecclesial context of the tradition puts evangelicalism firmly in his debt."--Hans Boersma, Regent College; author of Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross"An informed and coherent account of the issues involved in the formation of the canon. A High View of Scripture? is a timely and nuanced critique of the anachronistic approach to canon studies adopted by too many evangelical scholars. It will surely be a valuable aid in helping evangelicals understand and value ever more deeply the wonder and authority of the Holy Spirit, the Scripture, and the church itself."--Christopher A. Hall, associate editor, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture"Allert asks how it is possible to have a 'high view' of Scripture if it is detached from the realities of the origin and formation of the Bible. This volume has the potential of opening up a useful dialogue among evangelicals on the origin and nature of Scripture and its relation to contemporary theological issues. I commend this book to pastors, students, and biblical scholars who want a challenging discussion of these important issues."--Lee Martin McDonald, Acadia Divinity College

Craig D. Allert (Ph.D., University of Nottingham) is associate professor and chair of religious studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia. He has published journal articles in the area of New Testament canon studies and bibliology and is the author of Revelation, Truth, Canon, and Interpretation.

Excellent book written lovingly by an author with an Evangelical background, for such an audience that might be curious about challenging their particular approach to the bible. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in Biblical Canon creation.

The arguments presented, though written from an Evangelical pen, reflects a highly Catholic point of view in the role of Scripture in the life of the Church, and how the Church in turn, was essential in giving Canonocity to the books that make up the Scriptures

Interesting and well written.

This is a very good and very important discussion about how the Bible was formed. It refutes the evangelical perspective that the canon was instantaneously "inspired" by God from the very beginning and that all the patristic fathers did was recognize that inspiration and pile them between covers. The books that make up the Western and Eastern Orthodox canon required decades of liturgical usage, general evaluation of orthodoxy and communal discussion before acceptance. In

fact, some of them, such as the controversial if not notorious Apocalypse of John, were deemed non-canonical by many in the early church (and to this day the Greek Orthodox Church refuses to even discuss it in their liturgy, a wise move that all other churches should emulate.) The author describes himself as an evangelical scholar, but I wonder with how much approbation his little book will receive in the ranks of these infamously narrow-minded so-called "Christians" of the American evangelical movement. In any case, for anyone interested in biblical history, a nice quick read that addresses many of the salient arguments about "inerrancy and infallibility." I would have liked to have seen some discussion of the role the Constaninian revolution had in accelerating the "formal" canonization process (notable that no ecumenical council ever affirmed or denied the modern canon) and the diversity of biblical canons that exist today (notably the Ethiopian and Syrian, which add and omits texts deemed canonical in European based Christianity.) But that would have required a much larger book, and this one is an easy one or two day read.

I have been very grateful for the "Evangelical Ressourcement" series put out by Baker. To their credit, the series challenges many popular beliefs among Evangelicals regarding the nature of authority, church, scripture and tradition. One of the main critiques that is leveled against Evangelical Protestants is that their understanding of the nature of the Bible is highly ahistorical, anachronistic and circular, claiming the Bible is the word of God because it says so, without ever addressing how the Bible was written and collected together in the first place, totally ignoring the worshipping tradition of the early faithful. In such a view, there is no room for human agency. Such question begging is the wobbly leg of the chair, and this book seeks to remedy that problem without throwing the scriptural baby out with the evangelical bathwater. The author himself, by the way, is a committed Evangelical Christian, so he has no bone to pick with anyone. He is seeking to strengthen the case for a truly "High View" of the Bible that can bear historical critique and benefit from those who defended the message of Christ with their lives.This addition to the series essentially poses these questions: "How did the Bible come about and what was the human activity involved in that process? And once we answer that question, what does that mean for our understanding of the nature and authority of the Bible?" While it is not always an easy pill to swallow, the truth is that modern American Christianity of the Protestant variety, and even the Lutheran Church in the more conservative synods (MS, WS), teach a view of the scriptures that is not in line with the early Church, and theoretically and functionally more akin to the Muslim view of the Quran. The author, Craig Allert, seeks to remedy this distortion by retracing the nature and tradition of the canonization of the Bible, and in particular the New Testament. In the process of this

investigation, Allert covers some key doctrines of modern Evangelical hermeneutics (or their presuppositions) that he claims are in disjunction with the Apostolic/Patristic eras, and really with the Bible itself.Challenging the idea that only those who hold to a verbal plenary understanding of inspiration can claim to hold a "High View" of the Bible, he shows convincingly that such a theory is not at all required to safeguard the inspiration of Scripture and is in fact not historically based and does a great deal to actually weaken the authority of the Scripture by providing critics of the Bible with straw men to flog and burn.Here is a brief summary of his main points in chapter order: 1. Evangelicals have developed a mistrust of the historic tradition of the Church as a reaction to their understanding of Reformation history and the abuses of the Roman Church and also, more recently, in the reactionary theology that has characterized the movement since the mid-1800s. The narrowest narrowing of such a reactionary theology is centered around the nature of the Bible, which has become what I mentioned above- verbal plenary inspiration akin to the Islamic view of the Quran (the author himself never makes that comparison by the way, it’s mine). 2. The canon was indeed open into the fourth century, although the influence of Adolf Von Harnak has tainted some to believe that it was closed by the end of the second. Moreover, the Rule of Faith (tradition) served as the true canon of the early church in defense against the heretics, not the New Testament. Canon does not equal NT. However, the criteria for scriptural canonicity had to do with how the Christians received the letters or gospels from the beginning and how they measured up against the tradition (Canon of Truth, Rule of Faith), and not as self-authenticating. 3 and 4. The Scriptures are the book of the Church, and they do not precede the Church like a pop-up book, and what constituted scripture in the early church differed from place to place and father to father- it was not a uniform collection; but that was fine, since the tradition safeguarded the gospel. 5. By examining lists of scripture, it is clear that it is anachronistic to claim that sola scriptura existed in the first four centuries. 6. Historical reflection shows us that we must trust that the Holy Spirit did not abandon the Church which formalized the canon of Scripture based upon her tradition. The Spirit is alive and active not only in the written word, but in the very life of the community which interprets the word. Scripture does not interpret itself, which is why sola scriptura was never used to combat the heretics, but rather the Rule of Faith was used to show how heretics were picking and choosing only the parts of the bible that suited their fantasies. This fact refutes the popular myth of a post-apostolic fallen church, a myth that was devised to divide the Scriptures from the Church, since much of the early tradition doesn’t look Protestant (all those liturgies, saints, fasting, sacraments!). Moreover, the Bible does not give a clear teaching about what inspiration actually means, so we should be slow to make inerrancy the logical conclusion of it. In other words, we need to take the Bible on terms

established by both itself and the community (Church) that created it by the grace of God, rather than imposing our own hermeneutical lenses upon it.There is also a useful appendix that samples the fathers' writings to show that a closed canon of Scripture was not the case until the fourth century.Other useful books include:Ã Â Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church (Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future),Evangelicals and Tradition: The Formative Influence of the Early Church (Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future),Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church: Exploring the Formation of Early Christian Thought (Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future),Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants,Reading Scripture With the Church Fathers,The Spirit and Forms of ProtestantismÃ Â andÃ Â By What Authority?: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition. Enjoy!

What an insightful work on the origins and formation of Scripture! A very thorough work that dispels many of the modern Protestant views and suppositions. I highly recommend to any "learner" or Theologian.

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