

I don't think there is anything more important in the whole year than the subject we're on right at the moment. I want to be sure everyone fully understands it.

We're on F. Why we Accept the Books we do. Under that # 1 is the Attitude of Christ. Practically every conservative book I have looked at agrees on this point: the reason we accept the OT books is because of the attitude of Christ and the Apostles. It's my guess the RC's would probably say this same thing even though they try to make out that the church has given us the Bible. Certainly the church hasn't given us the OT -- that came through the Jews.

This doesn't mean Christ set to work to identify each individual book. What he set his approval upon was the complete set that the Jews accepted as being God's canon for them. I understand that out of the 39 books of the OT there are only about 3 that aren't quoted some where in the course of the NT. This does not mean that these 3 are any different from the others. He was approving not each individual book separately but approving this consensus of the Jews. That is # 2

#2 The consensus of the people of God regarding the OT. By the people of God here I mean the people of God to whom the OT was given, Israel. God gave the OT to Israel. The Christian church received it from Israel. Christ and the apostles set their seal of approval upon that which Israel recognized as being the Word of God.

We know that in Christ's day there was great division among the Jews. There were great controversies among them. We have traces of this in the NT. We have references to it in Josephus writings. The various Jewish sects bitterly fought against one another, but there is no evidence of any disagreement among them as to the question of this particular selection of books in the Books that were the foundation of their knowledge of religious and spiritual things. They might differ widely on how to interpret them but there is not the slightest evidence of any disagreement among them as to what the books were. If any substantial group of the Jews at the time of Christ either omitted any of the books or added any books to that which we have in our present OT (there is no evidence for such).

When you think of this, this is a very remarkable thing that there would be such an agreement among them about this. When you think of how God gave the books, each one being given by its author as a book God had inspired and accepted by those who looked to him as a true representative of God, but there were many people in the nation who probably disagreed at various times. But God brought about in His providence this remarkable consensus. It is a very strange and remarkable thing -- this agreement. It is a result of God's providential action.