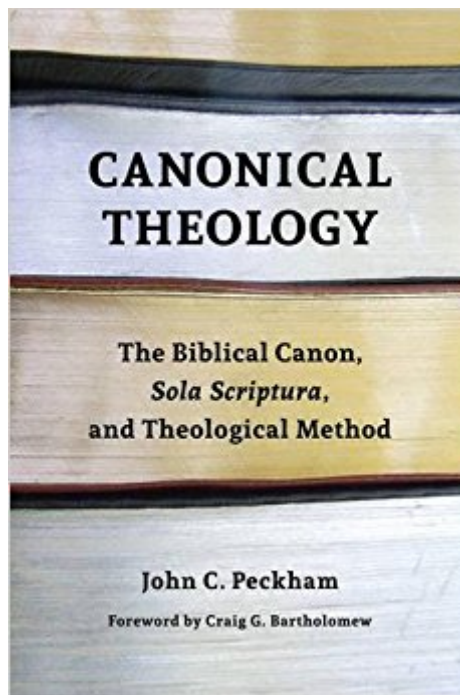




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# Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, And Theological Method



## Synopsis

What are the roles of canon and community in the understanding and articulation of Christian doctrine? Should the church be the doctrinal arbiter in the twenty-first century? In *Canonical Theology* John Peckham tackles this complex, ongoing discussion by shedding light on issues surrounding the biblical canon and the role of the community for theology and practice. Peckham examines the nature of the biblical canon, the proper relationship of Scripture and tradition, and the interpretation and application of Scripture for theology. He lays out a compelling canonical approach to systematic theology – including an explanation of his method, a step-by-step account of how to practice it, and an example of what theology derived from this canonical approach looks like.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Canonical Theology by John Peckham makes three timely and important contributions: first, it gives a robust account of what Peckham calls 'canonical sola Scriptura'; second, it sets forth a clarifying analysis of the difference between the concepts 'intrinsic' and 'communitarian' as applied to the canon, including a number of compelling arguments as to why the former is superior; third, it provides a platform on which exegetes, biblical theologians, and systematic theologians can meet, hopefully to fellowship and work toward an integrative theological method. In sum, Peckham has written what is perhaps the best account to date of what 'canonical theology' ought to mean and why it matters." - Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Peckham takes hold of one of the most pressing issues facing the

church today, and does so clearly, with a refreshing and astonishingly wide range of engagement, pushing toward the conclusion that Scripture is intrinsically authoritative as the Word of God." - Craig G. Bartholomew, Redeemer University College, From the Foreword Kevin J. Vanhoozer

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School "Canonical Theology" by John Peckham makes three timely and important contributions: first, it gives a robust account of what Peckham calls 'canonical' sola Scriptura; second, it sets forth a clarifying analysis of the difference between the concepts 'intrinsic' and 'communitarian' as applied to the canon, including a number of compelling arguments as to why the former is superior; third, it provides a platform on which exegetes, biblical theologians, and systematic theologians can meet, hopefully to fellowship and work toward an integrative theological method. In sum, Peckham has written what is perhaps the best account to date of what 'canonical theology' ought to mean and why it matters." Craig G. Bartholomew

from the foreword "Peckham takes hold of one of the most pressing issues facing the church today, and does so clearly, with a refreshing and astonishingly wide range of engagement, pushing toward the conclusion that Scripture is intrinsically authoritative as the Word of God."

John C. Peckham is associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He is also the author of *The Love of God: A Canonical Model*.

Peckham thoroughly and objectively approaches Sola Scriptura and the Biblical canon humbly and with an open mind. He presents an excellent argument for putting into practice the Bible as the standard and rule of the Christian faith. If you are looking for an excellent scholarly book on how to interpret the Bible, you will want to read this book!

muy bueno. Realmente es una obra maestra

Calling all theology nerds: Keep an eye on this author. This scholar is up and coming. As far as I can tell, his name hasn't hit the veritable vernacular of wanna-be scholars like myself but it's only now a matter of time. With endorsements from Vanhoozer and the Foreword by Bartholomew, the big-timers are already talking. After reading his previous book, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* I was floored

hook, line and sinker and I immediately set my sights on his latest work, which is

this one. It just came out a few days ago and I'm not ashamed to say that I've finished it already! :) Peckham's work is in my mind, one of a kind. Not just for the included information (think "erudite to the max"). But more so, it's his PROCESS which is so illuminating. I've found the results of his work to show such originality that I'm all but obliged to prod behind-the-scenes to see what's going on. In the last chapter of the book, Peckham lays this process out for all to see, which he is calling, the "Canonical Model". Briefly summarized, Peckham's process is the following:

- 1) Identify the issues and engage the ongoing scholarly conversation by way of a careful literature review of theological perspectives so as to highlight crucial theological questions at the center of the conflict. [In his footnote, "it is crucial first to read to understand and only thereafter to critically analyze the secondary material" (p247)]
- 2) Then conduct an inductive reading of the entire canon of Scripture, isolating any texts that even slightly impinged on such issues with care to avoid selecting passages based on predispositions (insofar as is achievable).
- 3) Attempt to then table presuppositions, subjecting them to the test of the canonical data. This requires a commitment to self-examination, self-criticism, and willingness to follow the canonical data wherever it leads.
- 4) The large amount of data is then extracted, analyzed and grouped in an ongoing spiral, which includes both narrowing and expansion of the data when themes become more or less significant than originally thought throughout the ongoing analysis.
- 5) Look for patterns. Do lots and lots of semantic analysis.
- 6) Now, engage sources from a broad spectrum. For example, in his previous book, Peckham engaged major commentary series and selected commentaries from across the spectrum of exegetical approaches (Including but not limited to: Anchor, ICC, Hermeneia, JPS, Word, Interpreter's, NICOT/NICNT, NAC as well as standalone volumes and exegetical works on concepts, words, topics, etc.).
- 7) Construct a minimal model from the data (leading to "many facts that I would not have anticipated at the outset of my study" and to "other delightful surprises" as he wondered what would happen in the end to the "apparent tensions").
- 8) Conclude with a discernible, demonstrable and defensible conception. All the while, seeking to:
  - 1) Approach the canon humbly
  - 2) Read ethically
  - 3) Derive from the canon minimally that which can be held with confidence as discernible, demonstrable and defensible
  - 4) Move in a disciplined, delimited fashion from the particulars of divine revelation to universal (metaphysical) conceptions
  - 5) Refrain from premature conclusions and overreaching extrapolations by restricting conclusions to minimal sound inferences that are also

discernible, demonstrable and defensible As stunning as all of this is, one of his last lines was the most exciting: “My hope is to implement this approach on a number of other topics in the future.” (page 257) To which I say, YESSS! I can’t wait to read more!

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