

SESSION THREE

*DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
BIBLICAL CANON*

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLICAL CANON

I. CANON DEFINED

- A. The Word originates from the Hebrew word, *kaneh*, meaning “measuring rod,” and the Greek word, *kanon*, meaning “rod” or “ruler.” We refer to it as the “rule of faith.”¹⁰⁴

GALATIANS 6:16; NIV

“Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.”

- B. A canonical book “measures up” to a standard of Holy Scripture and is considered the authoritative Word of God.

- C. A process by which the Scriptures received their acceptance¹⁰⁵

- D. Definitions¹⁰⁶

1. Exclusive definition: canon only exists when one has a closed, final, fixed list (4th or 5th Century).
2. Functional definition: suggests we have a canon as soon as a book is used as Scripture by early Christians (Canon established in the early 2nd Century)
3. Ontological definition: the books God gave His corporate church (Divine perspective). Canon established when the books are written.

II. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE CANON

- A. Holy Spirit guided the entire process.

- B. Oral tradition played an important role especially in the OT.

¹⁰⁴ Normal L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God To Us, How We Got Our Bible*, (Chicago, Moody, 2012), 87.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁰⁶ Michael J. Kruger, “10 Common Misconceptions about the NT Canon,” Blog on Canon Fodder, 3/28/12. <https://michaeljkruger.com/10-misconceptions-about-the-nt-canon-1-the-term-canon-can-only-refer-to-a-fixed-closed-list-of-books/>

- C. Concept of *widespread consensus*, not an official proclamation

- D. Canon “consciousness” slowly developed

- E. Tendency was exclusion, not inclusion.

- F. Content of the early church belief and teaching from the very beginning was emphasized.

- G. Recognition or establishment: The church recognized or discovered the books of the canon rather than establishing or creating them.

- H. Three types of books to be considered for canonization
 1. Protocanonical (*proto* (Greek) meaning first) books: Canonized with minimal debate.

 2. Deuterocanonical (*deuteron* (Greek) meaning second) books: Books that have been doubted; called *Apocrypha* (“hidden” or “secret,” Greek) by Protestants.

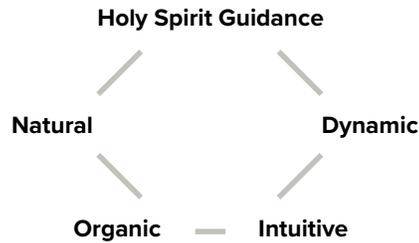
 3. Pseudepigrapha (*Pseudo* – false; *epigraphēin* – inscribe) = to write falsely: attempts to imitate Scripture under false names.

- I. The canon is *not* determined, regulated, or judged by the church or built on the church.

- J. The canon *is* discovered, witnessed, and recognized (deemed authoritative) by the church. It serves as the foundation of the church.

- K. A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the church. It is accepted by the church because it is the Word of God. Many misconceptions exist.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Michael Kruger, “Canon Fodder,” <https://michaeljkruger.com/new-blog-series10-common-misconceptions-about-the-nt-canon/>.



III. CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL BOOK INCLUSION

A. Geisler and Nix ¹⁰⁸

1. Was it written by a prophet of God?
Principle of Authority: Implicit or explicit Divine authority (...thus says the Lord..." or "the word of the Lord came unto me...")
2. Did the writer have credentials from God? (i.e. spirit-moved spokespersons or prophets)
3. Did the writer tell the truth about God, man..? (hallmark of inspiration was authenticity; a reason many apocryphal books were rejected)
4. Did it possess the life-transforming power of God?
"The word of God is living and active." (Heb 4:12) and is useful "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
5. Was it received or accepted by the people of God for whom it was originally written? (Limits in communication and transportation in ancient times required additional time and effort on church fathers to determine its recognition.)

B. Sean McDowell ¹⁰⁹

1. Was the book written by a prophet of God?
2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God?
 - a. Moses performed miracles as proof of his divine calling (Exodus 4:1-9).
 - b. Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).
 - c. The apostles performed miracles at the start of the early church (Acts 3:1-9).

¹⁰⁸ Geisler and Nix, 93-96.

¹⁰⁹ Sean McDowell, "Who Decided What Books to Include in the Bible?" 5 Principles. SeanMcDowell.org, Feb. 28, 2018, <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/who-decided-what-books-to-include-in-the-bible-5-principles>

3. Did its message tell the truth about God?
4. Does it come with the power of God (i.e. transforming message)?
5. Was it accepted by the people of God?

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 NIV

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

A. Storytelling and oral tradition dating back to its origin—2500 BC

1. When Abraham was called by God
2. God's interaction with Abraham's family and people in ancient Israel
3. Moses at Mt. Sinai
4. Torah commonly memorized by priests and scribes

B. Recording of events

1. Creation
2. Call of Abraham
3. Exodus in Egypt, wilderness wandering, promised land settlement; development of government with laws

C. Sayings of prophets

1. Written while alive or posthumously

D. Recording of wisdom figures

1. Solomon
2. Proverbs

E. Collections of Writings

1. Written Torah originated during the Babylonian exile (586 BC).
2. Other writings followed—prophets, recording of the kings, chronicles, and wisdom literature—finalized in the centuries that followed the Babylonian exile.

F. Jewish recognition that “the voice of God had ceased to speak directly” as noted in rabbinical writings (400 BC).

- G. **Ben Sira** (The Book of Sirach, Wisdom of Sirach, Sirach, Book of Ecclesiasticus) is the earliest reference to the canon of the Hebrew Bible (175-200 BC), translated into Greek (132 BC) by his grandson who wrote a prologue to his translation that contained the earliest reference to a three-part division of the Hebrew OT. This suggests a fixed or highly respected core canon.

“Many great teachings have been handed down to us through the Law, the Prophets, and the other books that followed them.”

– Sirach’s Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, 132 BC

H. Dead Sea Scrolls

1. No specific list, but evidence of all books of the OT affirmed except Esther (200 BC-100 AD)

I. Compare contents to the Leningrad Codex (1000 AD)

J. Jesus refers to the Old Testament books as “Scripture” and affirm the Old Testament (1st century).^{110 111 112 113 114}

¹¹⁰ Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures (Matthew 21:42).

¹¹¹ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45).

¹¹² Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matt 22:29).

¹¹³ “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matt 26:54).

¹¹⁴ “That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation” (Luke 11:50-51).

K. **Jesus and His Apostles quoted from or alluded to every OT book except Esther** (1st century).

L. **Philo of Alexandria attests to traditional list and divides OT into three sections—law, writings, and prophets** (38 AD).

*“And in every house there is a sacred shrine which is called the holy place, and the monastery in which they [Therapeutae] retire by themselves and perform all the mysteries of a holy life, bringing in nothing, neither meat, nor drink, nor anything else which is indispensable towards supplying the necessities of the body, but studying in that place the laws and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets, and hymns, and psalms, and all kinds of other things by reason of which knowledge and piety are increased and brought to perfection.”*¹¹⁵

– Philo of Alexandria

M. **Jamnia Conference** (90 AD)

1. New spiritual center after the fall of the 2nd Temple
2. No binding canonical decisions made, but rather 24 OT books already in place were affirmed.¹¹⁶
3. Rejection of the Apocrypha was alleged.

N. **Flavius Josephus** (93-94 AD) (Jewish historian)

1. *“From Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased”*¹¹⁷

– Artaxerxes 464-424 BC.

2. *“It follows that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but 22... which contain all the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death... the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.”*¹¹⁸ (Ruth-Judges and Jeremiah-Lamentations combined)

¹¹⁵ Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 3(25).

¹¹⁶ Robert C. Newman, *The Council of Jamnia and the Old Testament Canon*, Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1983. Accessed on 3/24/24 <https://www.newmanlib.ibri.org/RRs/RR013/13jamnia.html>

¹¹⁷ Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.8.

3. Validates 22 books (TaNaKh) contained within presumed canon

O. Seder Olam Rabbah

1. *“Until then [the coming of Alexander the Great and the end of the empire of the Persians] the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit. From then on, incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise”*¹¹⁹ (160 AD).

P. Melito’s list (170 AD).

1. Earliest list.
2. All OT books except Esther included
3. No Apocryphal books

Q. Tosepta Sotah

1. *“With the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi the latter prophets, the Holy Spirit ceased out of Israel”*¹²⁰ (late 2nd century).

R. Origen and Jerome listed OT books (3rd century)

S. Council of Trent (1546)

1. Roman Catholics approved Catholic canon - 46 OT books.

V. THE FINAL OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS IN THE CANON

A. Esther

1. The name of God is not found in this book, but the “hand” of God is evident as He protected the Jews from total destruction.
2. Ultimately, the absence of God’s name alone is not an adequate reason to deny canonicity.

B. Ecclesiastes

“The Church did not create the canon, but came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authenticating quality of certain documents.”¹²¹

– BRUCE METZGER

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Seder Olam Rabbah, 30.

¹²⁰ Tosepta Sotah 13.2, accessed on 3/25/24, https://www.sefaria.org/Tosefta_Sotah.13.4?lang=bi

¹²¹ Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance*, (Oxford, Oxford Press, 1997), 287.

1. Objections to this book are related to its negative and skeptical tone (i.e. “Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.”¹²²).
2. However, Solomon is showing that all people need God and that the world cannot provide ultimate satisfaction. Thus it is positive and edifying.

C. Song of Solomon

1. Objections to this book center on its alleged sensuality.
2. However, its primary message is to highlight the importance of marriage and is deeply spiritual. Its inspiration was never subject to doubt.

D. Ezekiel

1. Ezekiel’s inspiration was never doubted, but arguments against its canonicity included the interpretation that it spoke against the Mosaic Law.

E. Proverbs

1. Some believed the interpretation of passages from this book contradicted other intra-biblical passages.
2. However, using proper hermeneutics, these contradictions were eliminated.

VI. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

A. Additional Criteria of New Testament Canonicity¹²³

1. Apostolicity (Authorship)
 - a. Apostolic origin; Apostles’ fingerprints, colleagues of the apostles, influence, or personal writing (i.e. Matthew, John, Paul, Peter as authors); close associates: Mark (Peter); Luke (Paul) Jude and James (1/2 brothers with Christ); only those who had witnessed the events or had recorded eyewitness testimony.
 - b. If the Apostles wrote it, the book is in the canon.

¹²² Ecclesiastes 1:2

¹²³ Mike Licona and Lee Martin McDonald, YouTube Channel, “How Was the New Testament Canon Formed?” Part 1 of 2, Oct 15, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_55JSD0CbvM

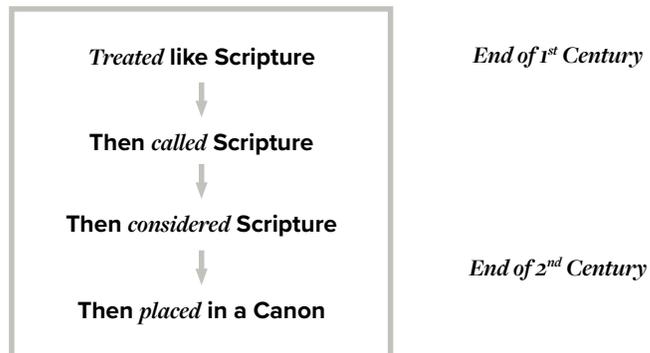
- c. Apostolic authority implied: “They were devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship” (Acts 2:42 NET)
2. Catholicity
 - a. Universal use or widely accepted
 - b. Books not limited to specific areas or people
 - c. Origen first described; Eusebius describes
 3. Orthodoxy
 - a. Content in each book must contain core traditional teaching of Christianity.
 - b. Continuity of the message, flow from the OT; consistent with other books

JOHN 14:26

“But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I said to you”

B. Overview of the Steps to New Testament Canonization ¹²⁴

1. Jesus: His words and actions: 1st canon of the early church
“If Jesus said it, it was Scripture; Jesus was the final authority.” ¹²⁵
2. Gospels: Focus on Jesus
Think of the quotes that say ... Jesus said...
3. Post-Apostolic Times (after the apostles’ death):
 - a. At least seven of Paul’s letters were circulating by the end of the 1st century.
 - b. The Gospels and seven of Paul’s letters were being *treated* like Scripture, *called* Scripture, and *considered* Scripture by the end of the 2nd Century.



¹²⁴ Metzger, Canon of the New Testament, 287.

¹²⁵ “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord)...” (1 Corinthians 7:10).

4. Many books were *called* Scripture long before they were put into a complete list or canon.
5. Other books that were *called* Scripture were rejected in the final canon (i.e. Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Shepherd of Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Epistle of Clement).
6. New Testament books never disputed
 - a. Matthew—earliest and cited more than the other Gospels
 - b. Mark, Luke, and John (after Irenaeus)
 1. There was temporary dispute by Tertullian (before Irenaeus 200AD). Tertullian chided Marcion because he cited Luke rather than an apostolic author (i.e. Matthew or John). He questioned Mark and Luke.

*“The church no more gave us the canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us the canon, just as God gave us gravity, by the inquisitive process of discovery.”*¹²⁶

– J.I. Packer

C. Timeline Development of the New Testament Canon

1. Initial Writings and Canonical Awareness (1st Century)
 - a. The New Testament texts were written during this period. (50-95 AD)
 - b. Early recognition of certain writings as “Scripture” begins.
 1. Paul refers to the Gospel of Luke as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18).
 2. Peter refers to Paul’s letters as Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).
2. Early Church Reception and Reaction (2nd Century)
 - a. Key Church Fathers (e.g., Polycarp, Justin Martyr) refer to apostolic writings as “sacred Scripture” or “memoirs of the apostles.”
 1. Polycarp (125 AD) refers to Ephesians as “sacred Scripture” when writing to the church at Philippi.

¹²⁶ J.I. Packer, *God Speaks to Man*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 81.

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read.”¹³²

– JUSTIN MARTYR

2. Justin Martyr quotes from the Gospels 17 times.
- b. Marcion’s heretical canon (144 AD) rejects the Old Testament and limits New Testament books, prompting the Church to clarify the canon.
 1. Accepted 10 letters of Paul (Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, (called Laodiceans) Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Philemon) and Luke
- c. Muratorian Fragment (170 AD) provides one of the earliest lists: 22 of the eventual 27 books as canonical.^{127 128}
 1. L.A. Muratori discovered and published the list in 1740.
 2. Contains Luke (3rd Gospel), Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, Paul’s 13 letters, Jude, 1st and 2nd John, and Revelation
 3. Also included the Wisdom of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Peter with the statement, “some of our people” do not want these read in church.¹²⁹
 4. Excludes the Shepherd of Hermas (140 AD) written “quite lately in our time in the city of Rome”¹³⁰
- d. Irenaeus (180 AD) affirms four Gospels as authoritative using the phrase “four pillars.”
- e. Chester Beatty Fragment (P45) dated to 200 AD¹³¹
 1. Gospels and Acts
 2. Oldest Mark’s Gospel
 3. No dispute over the 4th Gospel or Luke’s authorship of Acts

3. Expansion and Debate (3rd Century)

- a. Origen (185–253 AD) recognizes most of the current New Testament canon.
 1. Four Gospels, Acts, Pauls’ 13 letters, 1 Peter, 1 John, Jude, Revelation (250 AD)
- b. Affirms 27 books but expresses hesitations about Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2–3 John (He does quote Hebrews multiple times.)
- c. His metaphor in *Homilies on Joshua* symbolically includes all 27 books and may be the earliest list of 27/27. (He compares the NT authors with the trumpets of Christ).
- d. Origen’s 3rd century New Testament is very similar to ours today.

¹²⁷ The Muratorian Fragment, <https://trinityfellowshipiu.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/the-muratorian-fragment.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Bible-researcher.com, <https://www.bible-researcher.com/muratorian.html>.

¹²⁹ The Muratorian Fragment as quoted in Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition, (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2003), 157.

¹³⁰ Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin*, Public Domain, LXVII.1, <https://www.basilica.ca/documents/2016/10/St.%20Justin%20Martyr-The%20First%20Apology%20of%20Justin.pdf>.

¹³¹ The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P45.

¹³² Ibid.

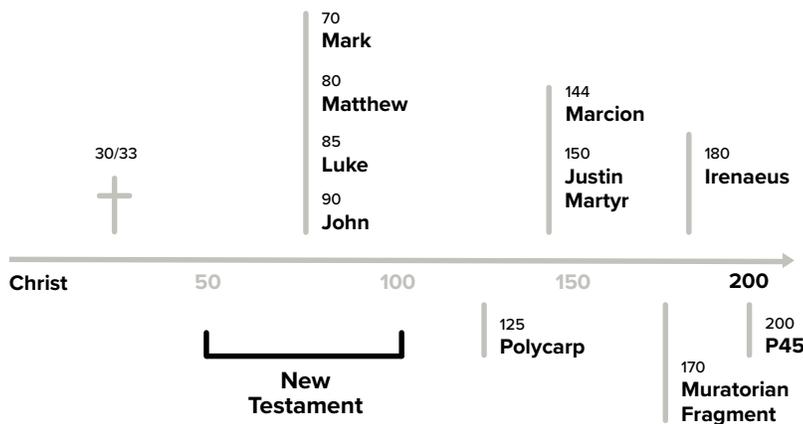
e. Origen's list and the Muratorian Fragment are highly similar.

*"It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars."*¹³³

– Irenaeus

*"But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing "trumpets hammered thin," the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles, and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, "I think God displays us apostles last," and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations."*¹³⁴

– Origen



TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating important New Testament Canonization Events or People (0-200)

¹³³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*.

¹³⁴ Origen, *The Fathers of the Church, Homilies of Joshua*, Barbara J Bruce (transl), Cynthia White (ed), (Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 74-75. (accessed through https://books.google.com/books?id=Y-q6reMYGKMUC&pg=PA74&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false)

SPECIAL THANKS...

to Thor Magnus Odland,
for his contribution to and
for reviewing this section
regarding councils and
the canon

4. Classification and Codification (4th Century)
 - a. Eusebius
 1. “Father of Church History”
 2. Wrote Ecclesiastical History (340 AD) which recognized 27/27 books (similar to Origen)
 - b. Eusebius categorizes texts (320-330 AD).
 1. Universally accepted
 - a. Four Gospels, Acts, 14 letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, Revelation
 2. Disputed, but recognized by the majority
 - a. James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2nd and 3rd John
 3. Rejected books or Apocryphal
 - a. Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Teachings of the Apostles
 - c. Church councils or prominent Theologians
 1. Council of Nicaea (325 AD) focuses on Christ’s nature— not canon formation. A canon could not form until the nature of Christ was understood.¹³⁵
 2. Cyril of Jerusalem (350) 26/27 books; wanted Thomas
 3. Laodicea Synod (363 AD) affirms most books (26/27); excludes Thomas.
 4. Athanasius of Alexandria (367 AD) lists all 27 New Testament books in his Festal (Paschal) Letter 39, identical to ours today. His list becomes widely accepted.
 5. Final Standardization of the Canon
 - a. Council of Hippo
 1. 393 AD
 2. Accepted 27 books of the New Testamentb.
 - b. Council of Carthage (Third)
 1. 397 AD
 2. Accepted 27 books of the New Testament
“It was resolved that nothing should be read in church under the name of divine Scriptures except the canonical writings. The canonical Scriptures are these...”
– Canon 24, Council of Carthage, 397 AD

¹³⁵ Mike Licona and Lee Martin McDonald, YouTube Channel, “How Was the New Testament Canon Formed?” Part 1 of 2, Oct 15, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_55JSD0CbvM

6. Gregory of Nazianus (AD 329-389) 27/27 (+/- Revelation)

*“These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these.”*¹³⁶

– Athanasius of Alexandria, 367.

6. Continued Use and Recognition (5th Century)

a. African Canons (393-419) 27/27

1. North Africa’s early church legacy timeline (Appendix E).

2. **Primary significance: Established a model of local conciliar authority and canonical autonomy that would influence later Western church governance and legal structures**

b. Jerome (394) 27/27

c. Augustine (395-400) 27/27

d. Carthage Synod (396) 26/27 (doubted Revelation)

e. Carthage Synod (419) 27/27

f. The canon gained near-universal acceptance by the end of the 4th century and remains consistent through Church history.

g. Other dates—Council of Trent (1545)

*“But now count also [the books] of the New Mystery;
Matthew indeed wrote for the Hebrews the wonderful works of Christ
and Mark for Italy, Luke for Greece,
John, the great preacher, for all, walking in heaven.
Then the Acts of the wise apostles,
and fourteen Epistles of Paul,
and seven Catholic [Epistles], of which James is one,
Two of Peter, three of John again.
and Jude’s is the seventh, You have all.
If there is any besides these, it is not among the genuine [books].”*

– The Canon of Gregory Nazianus¹³⁸

◆ **INSIGHT**

Once 27 books were established there has been no movement in Christianity to add or remove any books.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Paschal (Festal) Letter 39, AD 367, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2806039.htm>

¹³⁷ Geisler and Nix, 131.

¹³⁸ The Development of the Canon of the New Testament, (382-390 AD), www.ntcanon.org/Gregory.canon.shtml

VII. THE FINAL NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS IN THE CANON

A. Hebrews

1. Anonymous author
2. Late acceptance by Latin Christians
3. Orthodox in content

B. James

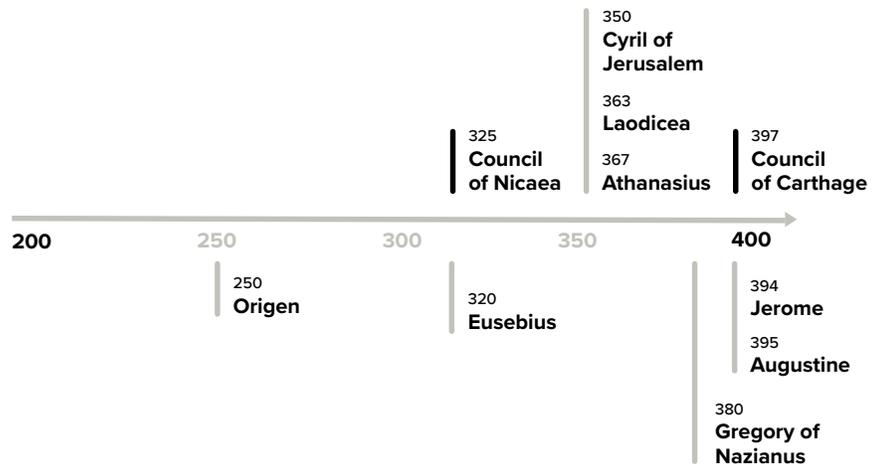
1. Emphasis on works: Did it contradict Paul's teaching on justification by faith and not by works?
2. Not theological emphasis, but practical: Fills gap between the doctrine and practice of Christianity.

C. 2nd Peter

1. Question of authorship due to stylistic differences between 2nd Peter and 1st Peter
2. Differences explained by Peter's use of amanuensis (secretary).
3. Content similar to Jude

TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating important New Testament Canonization (200-400)



INSIGHT

No Ecumenical Council or Committee was ever commissioned to determine the canon of the Bible

D. 2nd and 3rd John

1. Author not specifically stated; called “the elder”
2. Both letters addressed to individuals
3. Both letters very brief
4. Neither letter has much theological content.

E. Jude

1. Brief letter – accepted everywhere except Parthia (modern day Iran)
2. Questioned about use of the apocryphal Book of Enoch (Note: Paul quoted from pagan philosophers in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:2. A writer can cite non-canonical writings to illustrate a point.)

F. Revelation

1. Apocalyptic nature
2. Almost instant recognition everywhere except Parthia

VIII. SUMMARY

- A. OT and NT canon principles: Written by a prophet of God, with credentials from God, telling the truth about God, accepted by the people of God, and exhibiting the transforming power of God
- B. OT canon likely determined by 400 BC, but further affirmed at the Jamnia Conference (90 AD) and through 1st Century writings of Josephus, and Malito list (170AD); New Testament writers affirm TaNaK (24 books = our 39 books)
- C. Criteria for New Testament canonization: apostolicity, catholicity, and orthodoxy

- D. The Muratorian Fragment (170 AD) is one of the earliest lists of the New Testament canon (22/27 books), possibly Origen (250 AD) 27/27, while Athanasius' list (367 AD) is the earliest complete list (27/27).
- E. No universal ecumenical council defined the canon.
- F. Regarding the Apocrypha, protestants reject it (in part) because these books were not contained in the Hebrew Bible. Catholics accept (in part) because these books were contained in the Septuagint.

IX. STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Why does it matter that we have a Biblical canon?
- B. Explain the differences between the Hebrew OT, Protestant OT, Roman Catholic OT, and Orthodox OT? Are there differences in the NT for these groups?
- C. Did a group of ancient theologians unilaterally determine the book selection in our Bibles (i.e. Council of Nicaea)? Explain.
- D. Did Protestants remove seven books from their Bible during the middle ages? Did Roman Catholics add seven books to their Bible during the middle ages? Explain the controversy.
- E. Explain the difference between "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" books?

- F. Trace the key writings, events and people involved in the canonization of the New Testament. How about the Old Testament?
- G. How is the Holy Spirit at work during the canonization process of our Bibles? How would this differ from the concept of “canon consciousness”?

