

APOLOGETICS

IN ONE LESSON

↑
almost

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Lesson 7

The Primacy of the Primary Sources

Key Takeaways (review)

1

Events are **likely to be remembered** if they are:

1. Consequential
2. Vivid
3. Emotional
4. Unique
5. Rehearsed

2

The Gospel accounts include many of these events **would be memorable**

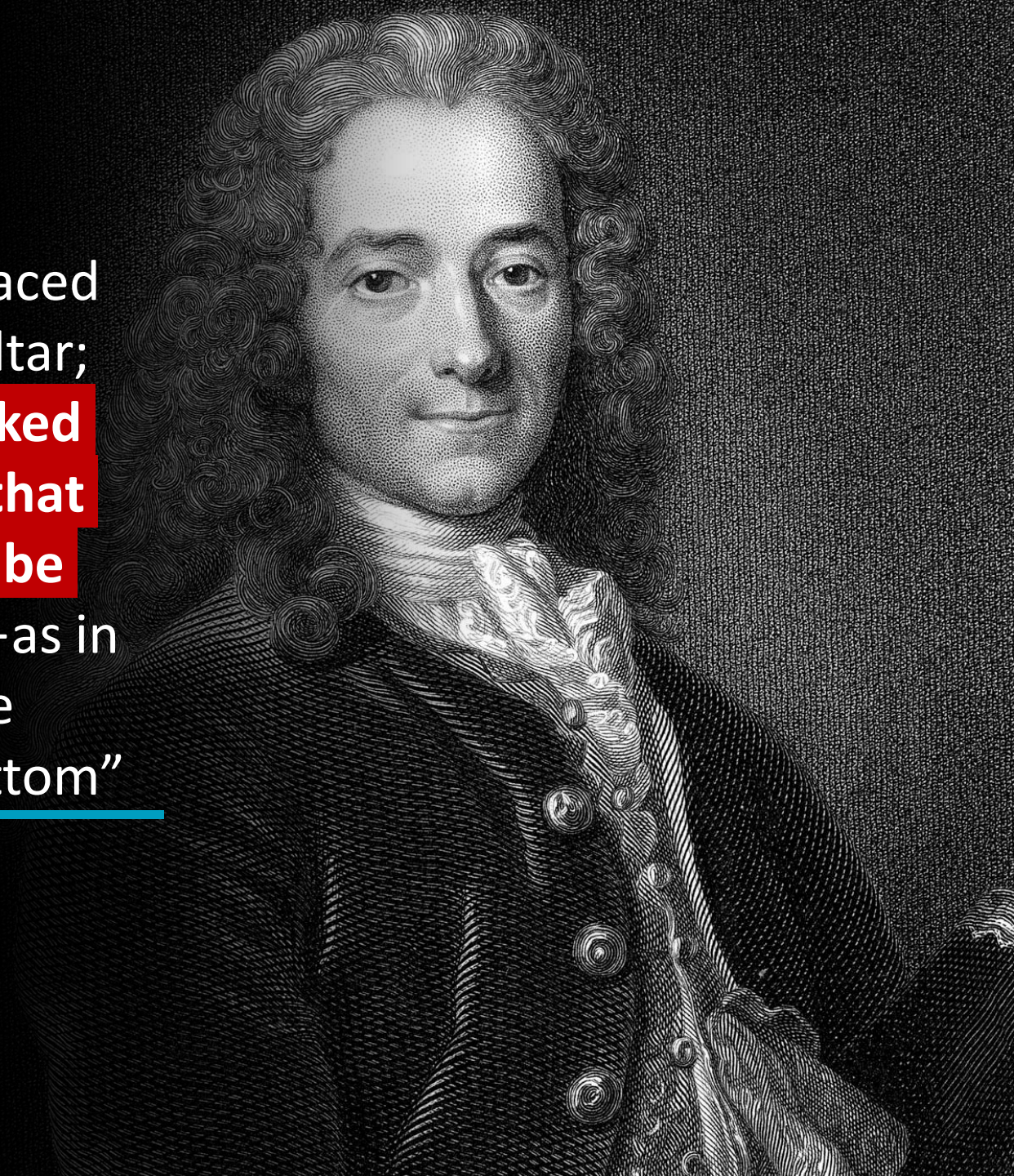
3

Known memory limitations **cannot adequately provide an alternate** explanation

“the books were placed
down by the holy altar;
then **the council asked
the Lord in prayer that
the inspired works be
found on top** and—as in
fact happened—the
spurious on the bottom”

VOLTAIRE

Synodicon Vetus, 35



Misconceptions [\[edit \]](#)

Biblical canon [\[edit \]](#)

Main article: [Development of the Christian biblical canon](#)

There is no record of any discussion of the biblical canon at the Council.^[77] The development of the biblical canon was nearly complete (with exceptions known as the [Antilegomena](#), written texts whose authenticity or value is disputed) by the time the [Muratorian fragment](#) was written.^[78]

First Council of Nicaea

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea#Biblical_canon

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"BOLD AND FASCINATING"
—ELAINE PAGELS

THE FIVE GOSPELS

WHAT DID JESUS REALLY SAY?

*The Search for the
Authentic Words of Jesus*

NEW TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

ROBERT W. FUNK,
ROY W. HOOVER,
AND THE JESUS SEMINAR

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LOST CHRISTIANITIES

The Battles for Scripture and
the Faiths We Never Knew

"Fascinating....
Lively, enjoyable,
and accessible."
— Elaine Pagels

BART D. EHRMAN

IDEA IN BRIEF

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What? | Understand the reasons that we can believe that the 27 New Testament books are the right books |
| Why? | In order to show that other apocryphal works ought not to be considered comparable |
| How? | By knowing that the New Testament writings are apostolic (and early enough to be so) |

Jesus



Apostles*



Apostles' writing

* By apostles, I mean anyone Jesus specifically commissioned (principally, the Twelve)

“For the scripture says,  Deuteronomy 25:4

*‘Do not muzzle an ox while it
is treading out the grain,’*

and, ‘The worker deserves his pay.’”

 Luke 10:7

1 TIMOTHY 5:18

Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

1

New Testament documents are **the earliest** Christian writings we have

2

New Testament documents are **Apostolic**

3

New Testament documents were ***not* chosen at a council** (i.e. Nicea)

4

New Testament documents are **self-authenticating**

Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

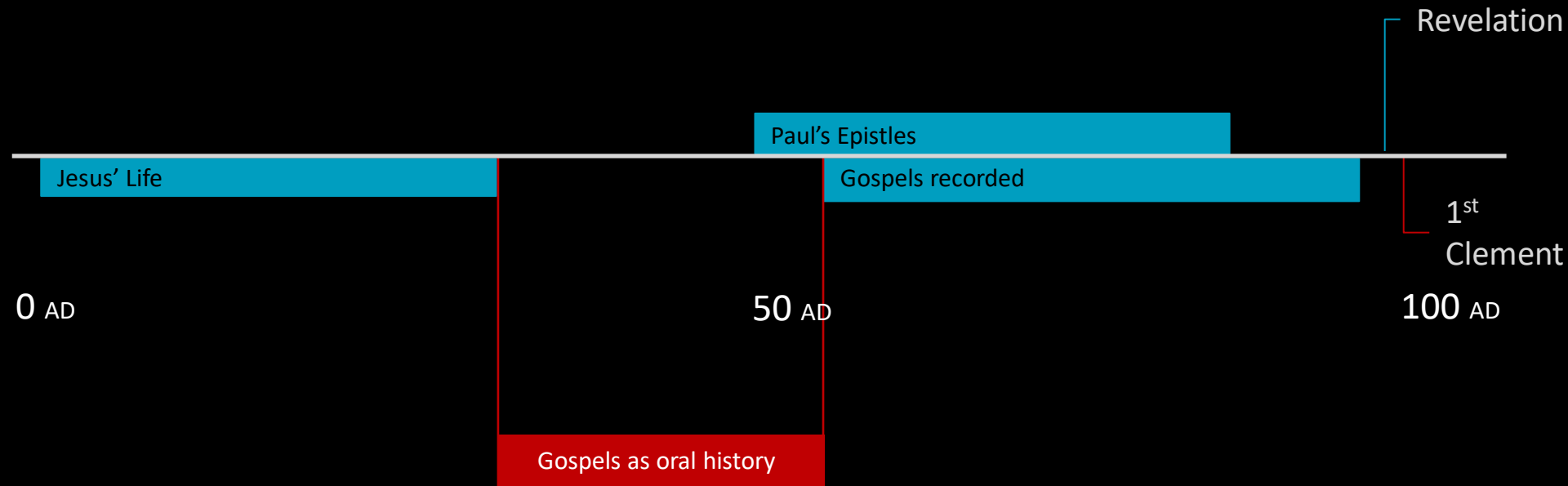
1

New Testament documents are **the earliest** Christian writings we have

All of the apocryphal “Gospels” are second century or later (too late to be eyewitness testimony)

Only one Christian document from the first century isn’t in the New Testament is 1st Clement (96 A.D.)

New Testament Timeline



Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

2

New Testament documents are **Apostolic**

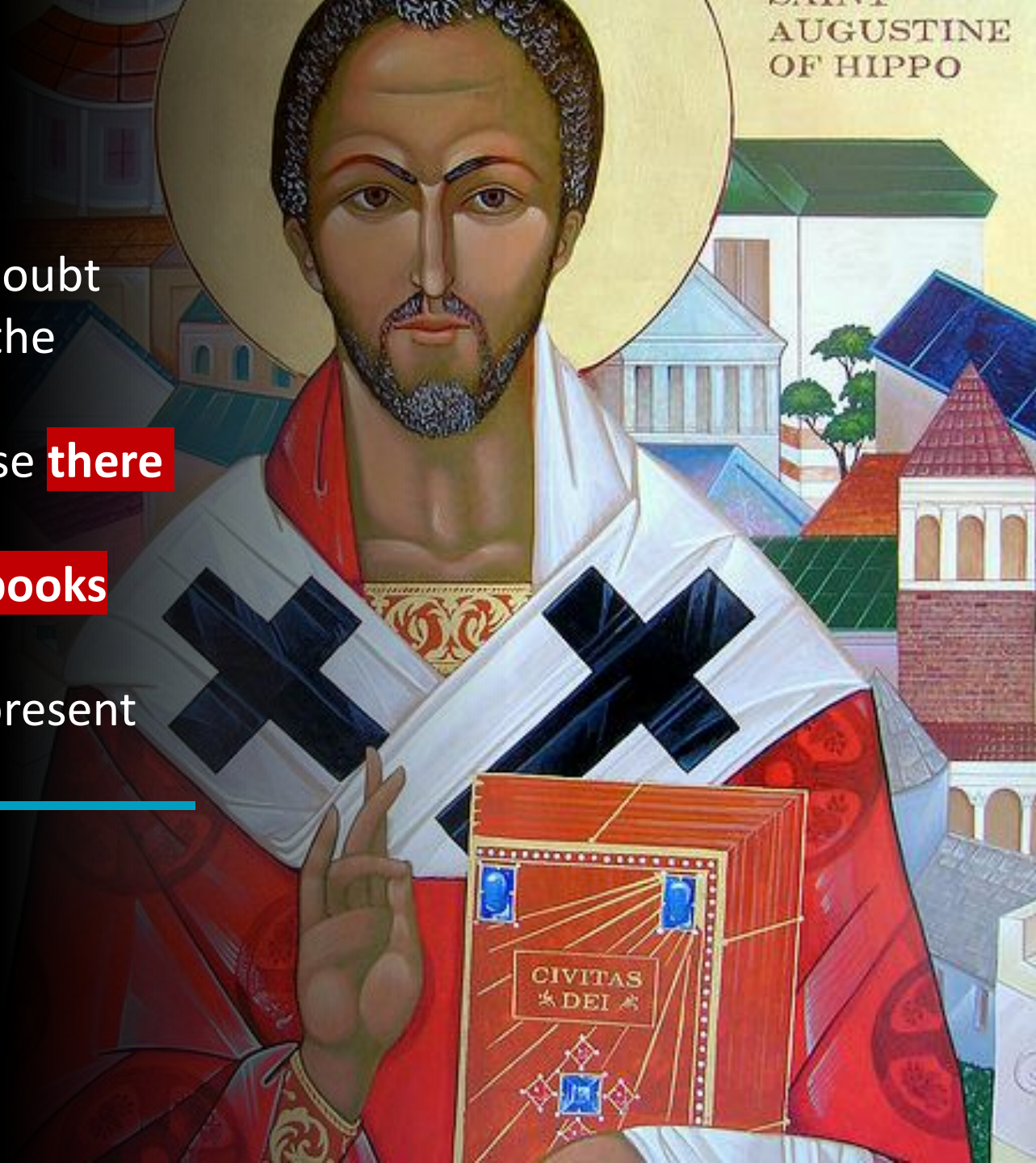
The documents were understood to be connected to the Apostles

Gospel authorship is consistent and early (and doesn't make sense to be made up)

The authors claimed to be writing scripture

“Why does no one doubt the genuineness of the books attributed to Hippocrates? Because **there is a succession of testimonies to the books** from the time of Hippocrates to the present day,”

AUGUSTIN OF HIPPO
Against Faustus 33.6



“How do we know the authorship of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Varro, and other similar writers, but by the **unbroken chain of evidence?**”

AUGUSTIN OF HIPPO
Against Faustus 33.6



Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

3

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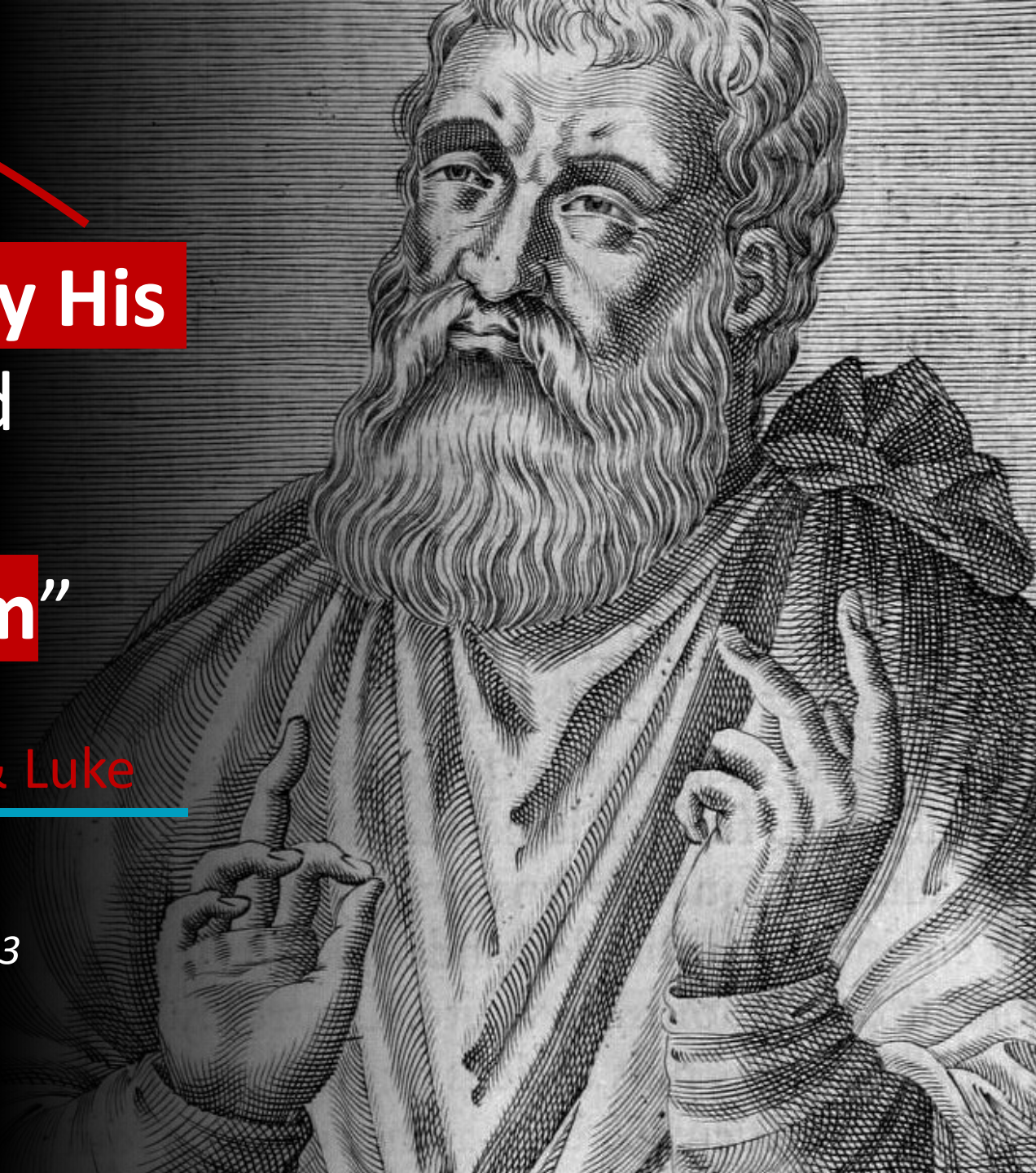
The 4 gospels are well established by the end of the second century

Matthew & John

“drawn up **by His**
apostles and
those who
followed him”

Mark & Luke

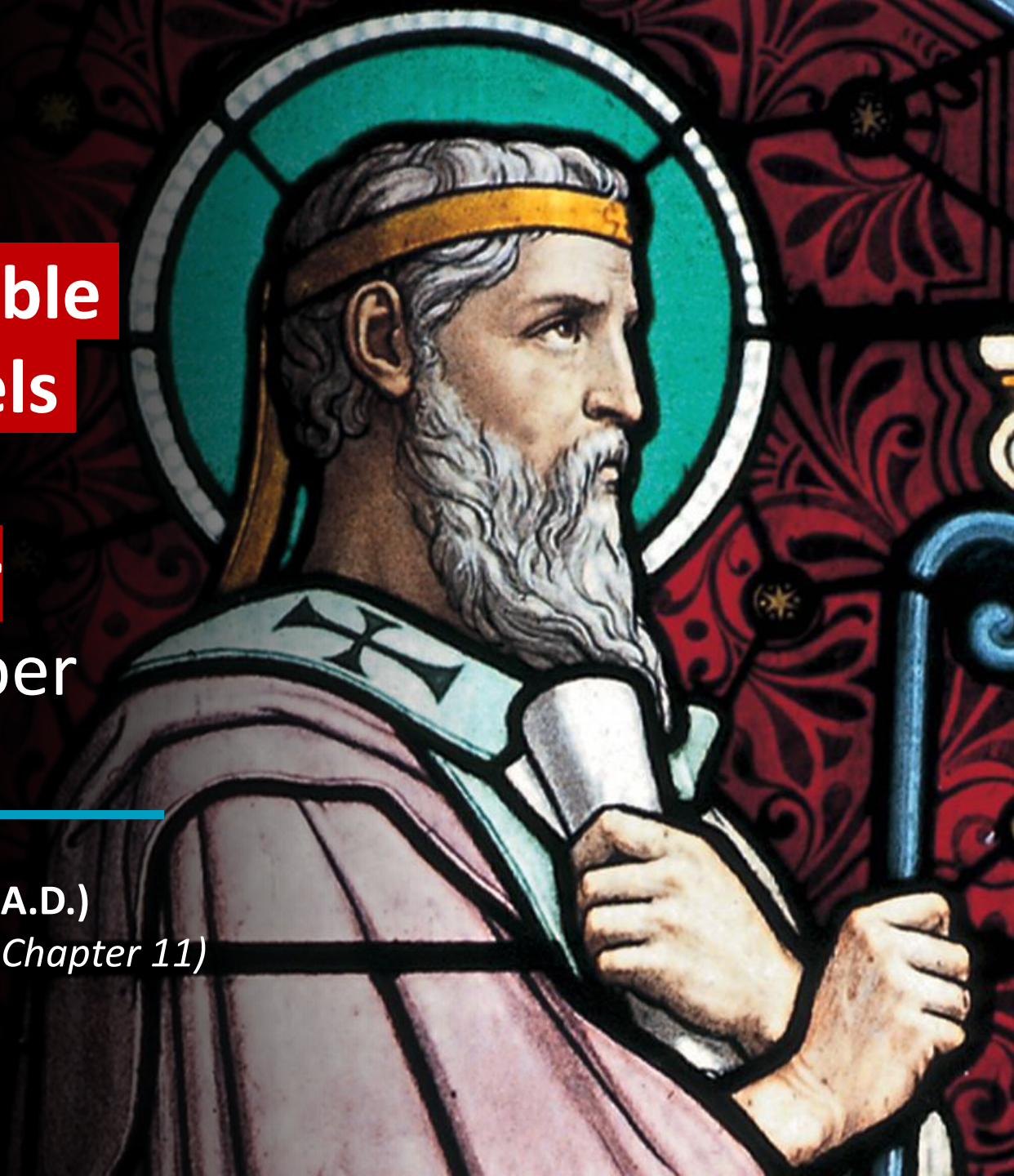
Justin Martyr (150 A.D.)
Dialogue with Trypho, 103



**“It is not possible
that the gospels
can be either
more or fewer
than the number
they are”**

IRENÆUS OF LYONS (180 A.D.)

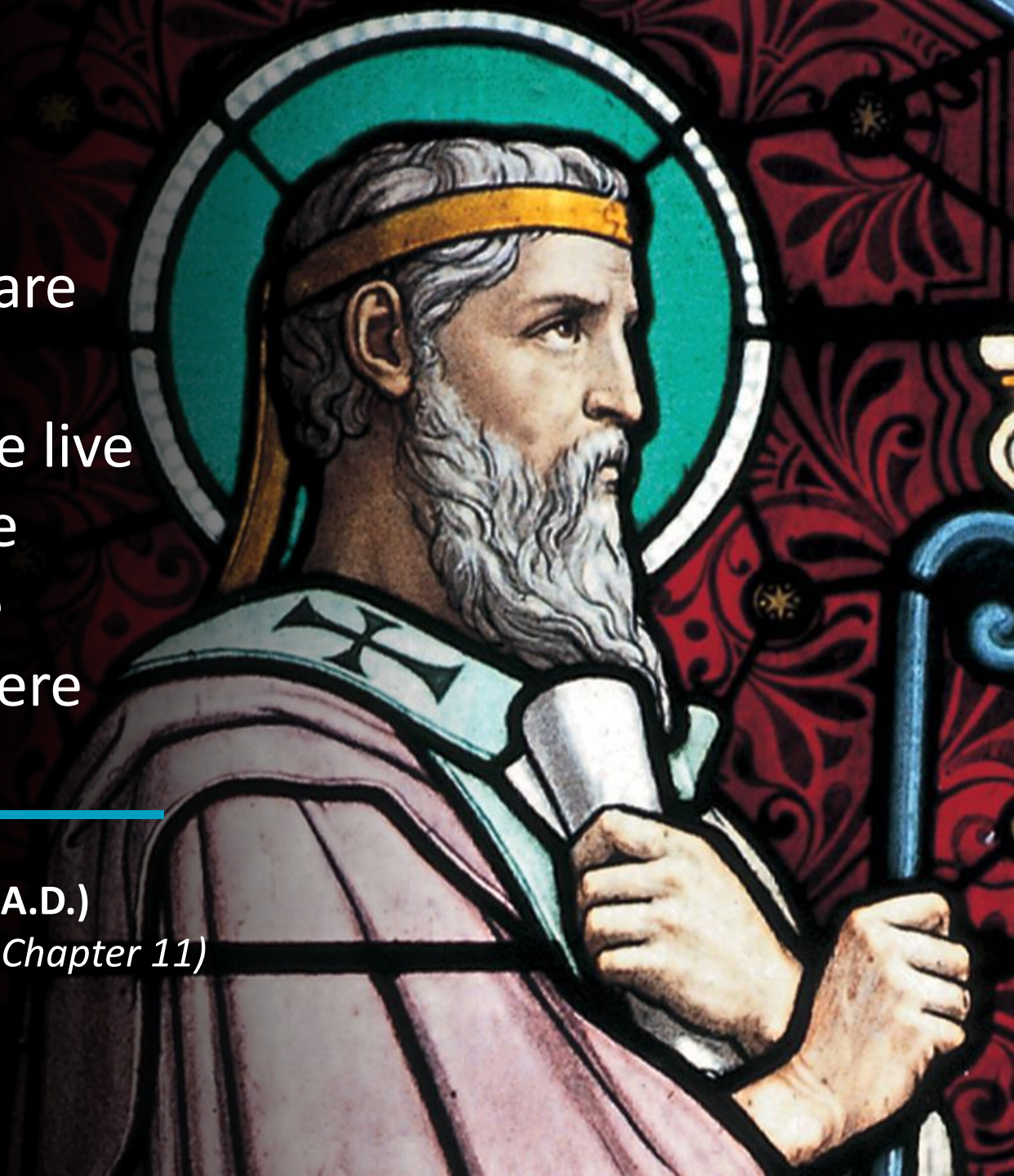
Against Heresies (Book III, Chapter 11)



“For, since there are **four** zones of the world in which we live and **four** principle winds... [and] the cherubim, too, were **four**-faced.”

IRENÆUS OF LYONS (180 A.D.)

Against Heresies (Book III, Chapter 11)



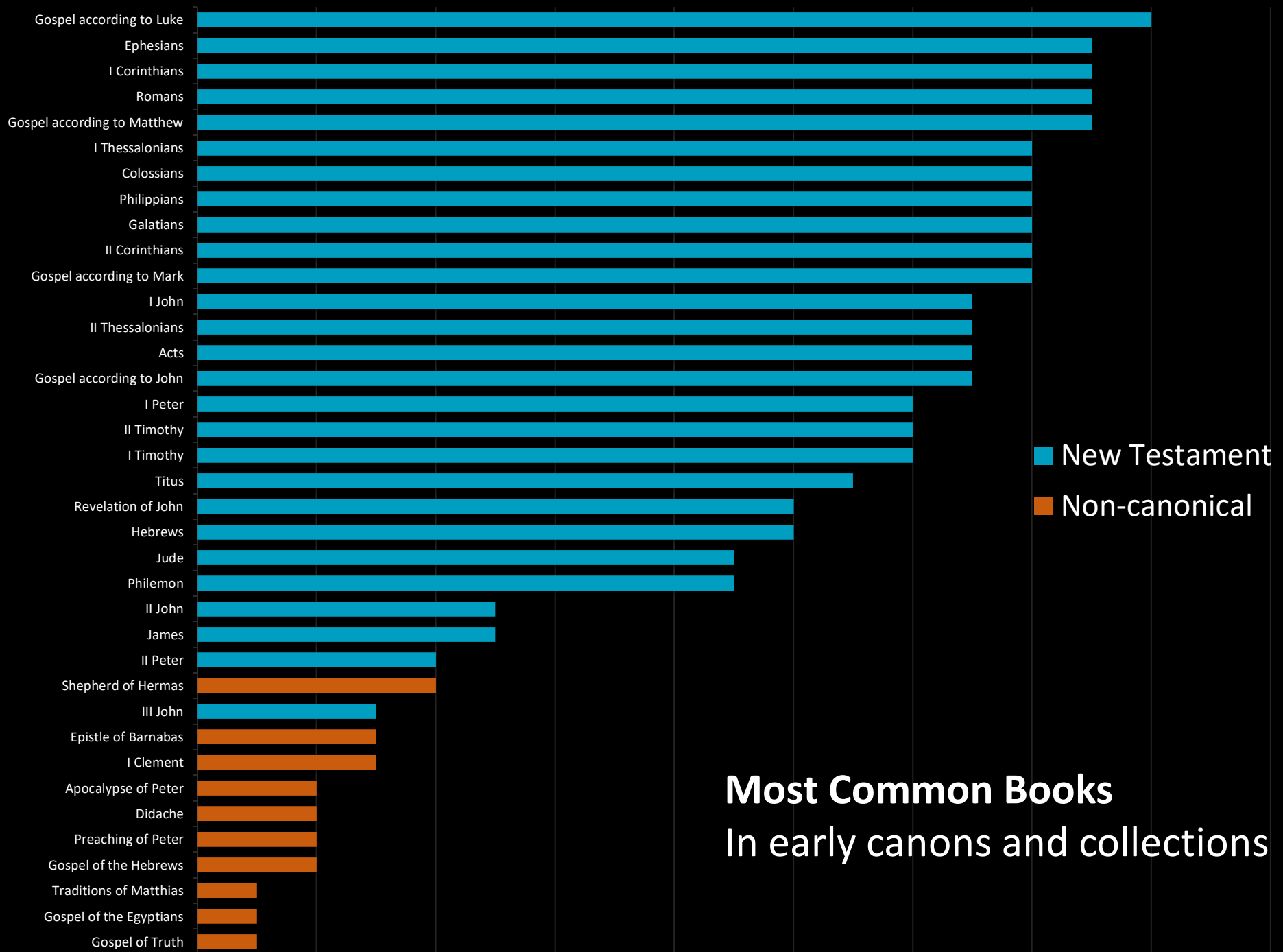
Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

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New Testament were **not chosen at a council** (i.e. Nicea)

The 4 gospels are well established by the end of the second century

At end of 2nd century, Muratorian fragment lists 22 of 27 books



Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

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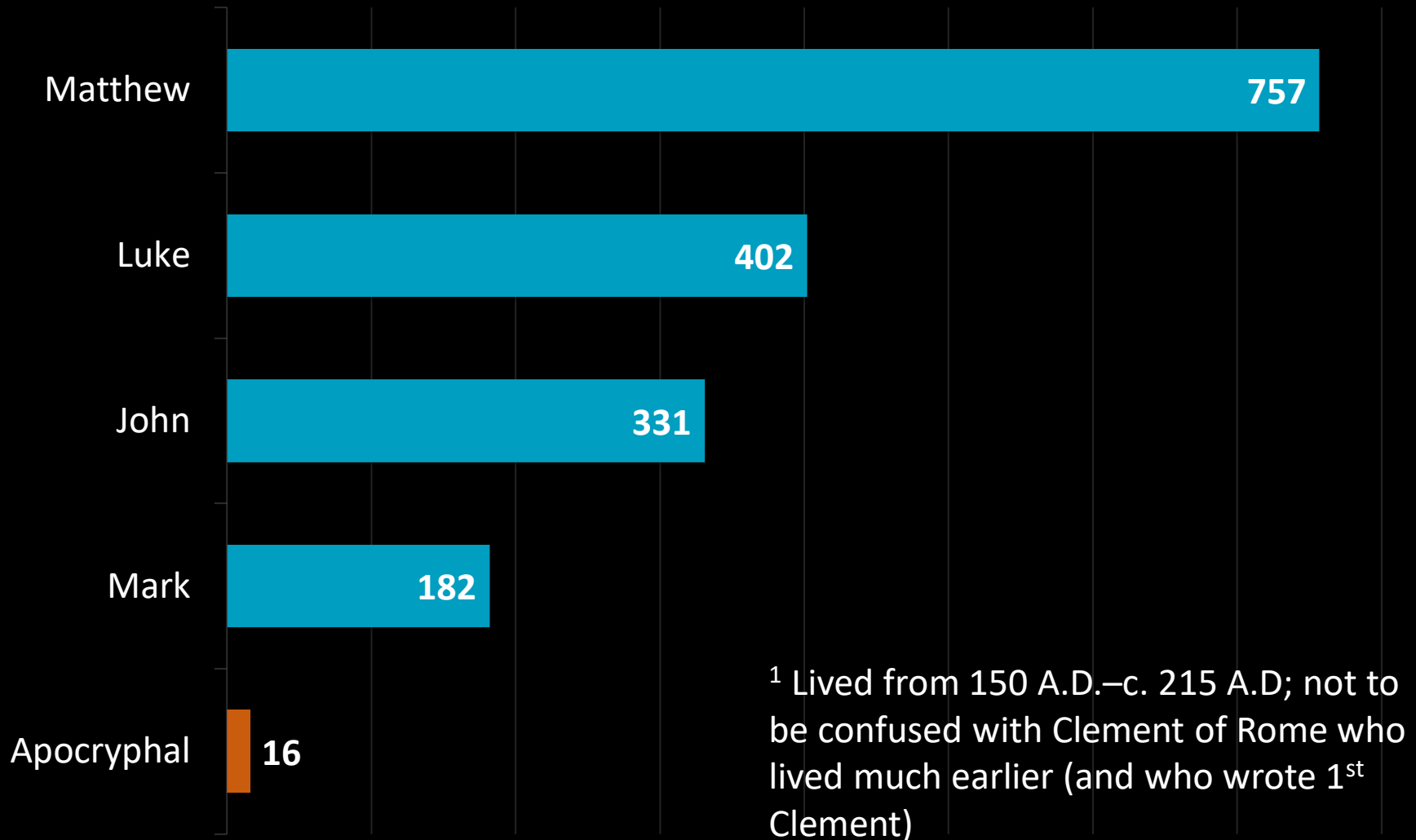
At end of 2nd century, Muratorian fragment lists 22 of 27 books

Early Christians used non-canonical writings, but not as the same as the NT docs as evidenced by:

1. The way they cited them (not as scripture)
2. How often they cited them (much less)

Clement of Alexandria¹ Citations

Frequency of citations of canonical and non-canonical Gospels



Why the 27 Books of the New Testament?

4

New Testament documents are **self-authenticating**

See other lessons: undesigned coincidences (lessons 12 & 13), fulfilled prophecy (lesson 17), wisdom (lesson 16)

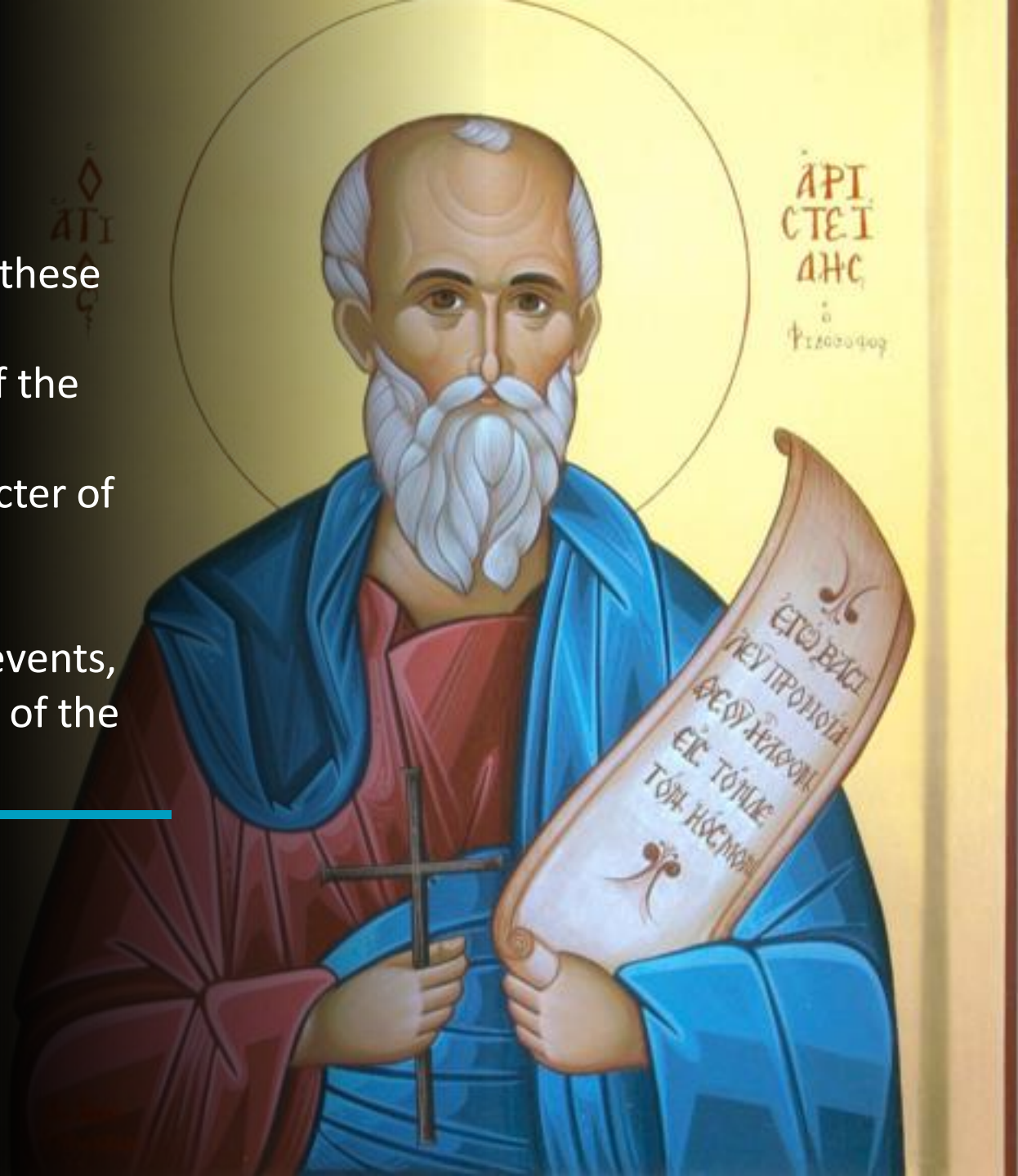
The NT docs are consistent with the Scriptures that the church had from the beginning: the Old Testament

“I was led to put faith in these [Scriptures] by the

1. unpretending cast of the language,
 2. the inartificial character of the writers,
 3. the foreknowledge displayed of future events,
 4. the excellent quality of the precepts”
-

TATIAN (120-180 A.D.)

Oratio ad Graecos, 29



Key Takeaways

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