



Church History, Canonicity of the New Testament

Categories of New Testament and Other Books as to Canonicity - Origen's listing. 185-254 AD.

All notes are the opinion of each listing.

Homologoumena: genuine, accepted by all the churches.

Gospels

13 Epistles of Paul

1 Peter

1 John

Acts

Revelation

Antilegomena: disputed, not accepted by all the church.

Hebrews

2 Peter

2 John and 3 John

James

Jude

Barnabas

Shepherd of Hermas

Didache

Gospel of Hebrews

Eusebius: 265 -340 AD Listing

Homologoumena:

4 Gospels

14 Epistles of Paul (including Hebrews)

1 Peter

Acts

1 John

Revelation

Antilegomena:

James

Jude



2 Peter

2 John and 3 John

Acts of Paul

Revelation of Peter

Shepherd of Hermas and others

Formal Lists of Canons

The First Canon - Canon of Marcion 140 AD included:

Luke: rejected chapters 1 and 2 with the Virgin Birth.

10 of Paul's Epistles (excluding the Pastorals and Hebrews)

Galatians

1 and 2 Corinthians

Romans

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Ephesians (with what he called Laodiceans)

Colossians

Philippians

Philemon

The Second Canon - Muratorian Canon 170 AD. The work is not complete.

Luke (called the third Gospel and implies Matthew and Mark precede it)

John, refers to the Gospel, but is listed as the first epistle.

Acts

1 and 2 Corinthians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

Galatians

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Romans

Philemon

Titus

1 and 2 Timothy

Jude



2 and 3 John

Revelation

Omits James, Hebrews, Peter's Epistles, Revelation of Peter, Revelation of John, Paul to Laodiceans, Paul to Alexandrians.

The African List: 360 AD

4 Gospels

13 Epistles of Paul

Acts

Revelation

1, 2, and 3 John (only one being true)

Two by Peter (only one true)

Athanasius List: 367 AD

4 Gospels

Acts

James

1 and 2 Peter

1, 2, and 3 John

Jude

Romans

1 and 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 and 2 Thessalonians

1 and 2 Timothy

Hebrews

Titus

Philemon

Revelation

The Councils and the Canon of the New Testament

Council of Laodicea: 363 AD (basically Phrygian area)

Council of Carthage: 397 AD. Decreed that the 27 books of the present New Testament would be



canonized.

Council of Hippo: 419 AD. Verified the decree of the Council of Carthage.

Three Stages of Development of the Canon

Writings of the New Testament books were quoted by authors who took the inherent force of the books for granted, not making them a point of debate.

Writers engaged in controversy over the books, seeking to define their authorities.

Church councils met to render their verdict of official recognition of canonicity or recognition of apocryphal works.

The Solidifying of the Church

Note that there is a real vacuum in teaching upon the distinction between the Body of Christ and the local church concept. These two were wedded into one and greatly perverted.

The three major factors in the solidifying of the church:

The development of the Canon of the New Testament.

The creation of the Authoritative Statement of Faith.

The obedience under and to the Monarchal Bishop.

The Monarchal Bishop:

This man would become the bond for the church. Steps of development:

Exalted position of the bishop: Ignatius was primarily the first supporter. This came out of a need for leadership. This came out of a need for unity.

The development of the Doctrine of Apostolic Succession. Iraneaus: Book Three.

The exaltation of the Lord's Supper.

The special honor attributed to the bishop at Rome. This is due to the Petrine Doctrine placing the primacy of Peter with the Roman Bishopric.

The Doctrine of Apostolic Succession: The successors of Peter function at Rome.

Apostolic Tradition: Martyrdom of Paul and Peter. The Roman church became the wealthiest church of the area. Rome was the capital city. Rome was the center of missionary activity. Other bishops began to decline in prominence.

The Creation of Authoritative Statements of Faith (by the end of the second century, 300 AD).

Creeds were written. A creed is a statement of faith for public use.

Creeds functioned for several purposes: To test orthodoxy. To recognize fellow believers by lining them up with the creed. They were summaries of essential doctrines.

The Apostles' Creed: the oldest statement of faith. Emphasized the Trinity. Emphasized the universal church. Emphasized eschatology.

The Development of the Canon of the New Testament:

The gathering of the Scriptures for compilation into a canon was completed by about 175 AD. But, as a



unit of compilation, it wasn't completed until 180 AD.

The tests for canonicity:

This section is classified by the term "Apostolicity." The first test for canonicity was Apostolicity. This will be further developed under two more concepts; first, apostolic authorship, secondly, apostolic authority.

They had to be recognized as inspired Scripture (which they were) by:

Paul acknowledged Luke's Gospel as Scripture: 1 Tim. 5:18.

Peter acknowledges Paul's writing as Scripture: 2 Peter 3:15,16.

Clement of Rome, 96 AD, recognizes 1 Cor., Matt., Luke and quotes from Romans, 1 Cor., Eph., 1 Tim., Titus, Hebrews and 1 John.

The Epistles of Barnabas quote Matthew as Scripture in the period of 70-79 AD.

The Didache, Teaching of the Twelve, assume the authority and inspiration of Matthew and Luke, and contains 23 borrowings from the New Testament.

Polycarp: quotes from the New Testament from Matt., Luke, John, Acts and ten of Paul's Epistles.

In the "Second Epistle of Clement" 120-140 AD, there are two quotes from Matthew.

Justin Martyr: uses many books of the New Testament as Scripture, Matt., Luke, John, Mark, six of Paul's Epistles, 1 John and Revelation.

Irenaeus: 125-192 AD, made 1800 quotations of the New Testament using it as Scripture. He recognized four Gospels, and only four. Besides the Gospels he uses Acts, 13 of Paul's Epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation. He considered them equal to the Old Testament in being inspired, canonical and authoritative.

Clement of Alexandria: 150-217 AD (scholar, bishop, teacher, writer). Acknowledged as canonical: four Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation. He called the New Testament the "divine Scriptures, the holy books."

Tertullian: North African Teacher. Quotes 1800 different passages from the New Testament. Makes 7220 references to it. Makes 200 references to the book of John. Makes 3800 references to the Gospels. Used 22 or 23 New Testament books as inspired.

They had to have apostolic authorship. This means written by an apostle directly.

They had to have apostolic authority. This meant they had to be written by companions of the apostles, who came from the apostolic circles and taught the apostolic doctrines.

They had to be books read in all the churches. This was held as one of the very important factors in the test for canonicity, not read in just some churches, but all of them.

They had to be recognized by the church fathers. This has been demonstrated under the section above regarding "They had to be recognized as inspired Scripture."

The books had to answer to the question: Does it agree with the doctrine, or rule of faith? Today, it is the opposite. Does the doctrine agree with the Scriptures?

The books had to edify. This was only minor, but included in the test.



The perfect assurance of the inward testimony of the Spirit. This is an early recognition that the Holy Spirit does not allow any error or false doctrine to enter into the realm of the human spirit. They counted heavily on this factor in determining the canonicity of a book.

The Development of the Liturgy of the Church:

The acts of worship became tools to present the superiority of the bishop.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper reached the point where only the bishops could do it, or an accredited minister. This gave a "holiness" connotation to the office of bishop.

Baptism became an act of initiation into the Christian church and usually took place on Easter or Pentecost.

In the first century only faith in Christ and a desire to be baptized were necessary for baptism.

By the end of the second century there was a probationary period of training before baptism could take place.

During the probationary period the candidate for baptism was not allowed to worship in the sanctuary, called the "nave."

Infant baptism, baptizing babies, and clinical baptism (baptizing of the sick) came into practice.

Next to develop, was the cycle of feasts during the year. Easter came in as a counterpart to the Jewish Passover, Christmas came later in 350 AD and was cleansed of its pagan significance by then. Lent had been accepted as a part of the church year before Christmas was accepted.

Places of worship:

Before 313 AD, Christians met in the catacombs of Rome and in cemeteries. They were 20 to 50 feet below the ground and were a series of passageways.

Later they built buildings on the style of the Roman Basilica, an oblong building.

The church structures and furniture:

An oblong building with a porch on the west where those under the probation worshipped.

Inside at the east end was a semicircle effect where the altar and seat of the bishop was located.

Inside also was the sanctuary or auditorium with seating and aisles on the sides. These buildings were very simple until after 313 AD when they began to become more fancy.