



The New Testament

2014 Winter Study

Defining Moment

- Destruction of Jerusalem and Jewish Temple in 70 AD
- 90AD Jewish leaders met at Jamnia to address the issue of how Judaism would survive
- Elevation of Scripture following Babylonian Exile and the Synagogue system
- Increased threat of Christianity claiming Scripture as their own

The Old Testament

- Jews call our OT the “Tanak”
- Torah (Law) (Pentateuch—GK for 5 books)
- Nebi'im (Prophets)
- Kethubim (Writings)
- Many believe that the Law and Prophets were already established, and so Jamnia settled on the Writings

Judas Maccabeus

- 165 AD Antiochus Epiphanes tried to destroy Judaism including the Scripture
- *Nehemiah also narrated the same things in his writings and journals. He also told how, when Solomon established a library, he gathered the scrolls concerning the kings and prophets and the scrolls of David and letters of kings regarding offerings for solemn promises. ¹⁴ In the same way, Judas also gathered together all the scrolls that went missing because of the war, so that those documents are now in our possession. 2 Macc. 2: 13-14*

Influence of Homer

- No one was quoted more frequently in the ancient world
- No author more highly prized than Homer
- Many considered him to be the source of all knowledge and wisdom
- Some scholars are now saying that while Homer did not influence the content of the OT, he did influence the way the books are numbered

Iliad and Odyssey

- Each chapter begins with a different letter of the Greek alphabet
- 24 letters in Greek alphabet
- 24 chapters in both the Iliad and the Odyssey
- Jews originally chose 22 books (22 letters in Hebrew alphabet)
- Judges/Ruth and Jeremiah/Lamentations as were Ezra/Nehemiah, The Twelve (Minor Prophets) and Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

Homer's Influence

- Homer's influence was so great by 90 AD that by separating Judges and Ruth, Jeremiah and Lamentations, the Jewish number of books is 24
- "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is and was and is coming, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8
- Twenty-four thrones, with twenty-four elders seated upon them, surrounded the throne. The elders were dressed in white clothing and had gold crowns on their heads. Revelation 4:4

Ancient Manuscripts

- Copying Manuscripts was a slow, tedious, and expensive process
- Very few churches or synagogues would have more than a few manuscripts
- Of the 121 papyrus manuscripts that remain, only 14 have more than one book!
- The early churches were not concerned with the overall Canon--they were just thankful to have a few books

New Testament Scripture

- The 27 NT Books written between 51-90 AD
- Paul's letters were the earliest (beginning with 1 Thessalonians or maybe Galatians)
- 2 Peter 3: 15 So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, . . .

Books of the New Testament

- Four Gospels
- Acts
- Pauline Epistles (13)
- General Epistles (James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude)
- Hebrews
- Revelation

Paul's Letters (No Question)

- [First Thessalonians](#) (ca. 51 AD)
- [Philippians](#) (ca. 52–54 AD)
- [Philemon](#) (ca. 52–54 AD)
- [First Corinthians](#) (ca. 53–54 AD)
- [Galatians](#) (ca. 55 AD) (some say 49 AD)
- [Second Corinthians](#) (ca. 55–56 AD)
- [Romans](#) (ca. 55–58 AD)

Paul's Letters (Some Question)

- First and Second Timothy
- Titus
- Ephesians
- Colossians
- Second Thessalonians

Lost Pauline Letters

- first epistle to Corinth, referenced at [1 Corinthians 5:9](#)
- A third epistle to Corinth, also called the [Severe Letter](#), referenced at [2 Corinthians 2:4](#) and [2 Corinthians 7:8–9](#)
- An earlier epistle to the Ephesians referenced at [Ephesians 3:3–4](#)
- The [Epistle to the Laodiceans](#), referenced at [Colossians 4:16](#)

Gospels

- Gospel of Mark written around 65 AD
- Gospel of John around 90 AD
- Matthew and Luke/Acts in between
- Matthew was the favored Gospel of the early church and was considered to be the earliest
- Mark was first because it is evident that both Matthew and Luke used Mark, and another common source known as Q

Early NT Collections

- Marcion (150 A.D.) 10 of Paul's Epistles and a short version of Luke.
- Marcion rejected all of the OT
- He is the first to make the church aware of the importance of limiting books as sacred and authoritative

Justyn Martyr (160 AD)

- Wrote against the heresies of Marcion
- Four Gospels
- Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians
- 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 Peter and . .
- The Didache

Irenaeus (Late Second Century)

- 4 Gospels (argued there could not be any number but 4 because 4 corners of earth and 4 winds)
- All of Paul's epistles except Philemon
- 1 Peter, 1 & 2 John, Hebrews
- Acts and Revelation

Origen (early to mid-3rd century)

- 4 Gospels (included Acts with Luke)
- Paul's 13 Epistles
- 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation
- 2 & 3 John (although he says these are questioned by some)
- Hebrews (states it is not by Paul)
- James and Jude (he argues are apostolic)
- Shepherd of Hermas and Epistle of Barnabas
- Leaves out 2 Peter

Eusebius (Caesarea in 4th Century)

- 20 books as “encovenanted” or “testamented”
- 4 Gospels and Acts
- 13 Epistles of Paul
- 1 John and 1 Peter
- He lists James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation as Disputed

Athanasius of Alexandria (367)

- He is the first one to list all 27 books we have in the NT Canon without qualification
- “These are the fountains of salvation”
- “Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these”
- He then lists “Other books that should be merely read:” Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, and Shepherd of Hermas
- All are in Apocrypha except Shepherd of Hermas

NT Canon Finalized

- Council of Hippo (393)
- Council of Carthage (397)
- Disputed books that made it: Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, James & Revelation
- Disputed books that did not: The Didache, Epistle of Barnabas, 1 & 2 Clement, and Shepherd of Hermas

Historical Events

- Burning of Christians Scriptures (303-313)
- Emperor Diocletian: Christians were forced under penalty of torture and death to hand over sacred texts to be burned



Constantine (313 AD)

- Requested from Eusebius that he produce 50 copies of the Church's Scriptures
- 4 Gospels and Acts
- 13 Epistles of Paul
- 1 John and 1 Peter
- Revelation
- He lists James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John as disputed

Constantine's Call for Unity

- Declared himself a Bishop of the Church
- Council of Nicea (325 AD)
- Nature of Christ: Fully God/Fully Man
- Constantine was at times gracious, generous, and even humble, but he did not tolerate differences of opinion or challenges to his authority in church matters
- After he dealt with Orthodoxy, it was time to deal with the Canon.

Council of Hippo (393 AD)

- 27 Books of Canon Established, later confirmed by the Council of Carthage in 397 AD



Criteria: Apostolicity

- The book was written by an Apostle (Eye-Witnesses)
- Hebrews
- Mark and Luke
- Second Criteria: Orthodoxy
- The primary “Canon” of the early church was Jesus is the Lord of the Church and the rule of faith!

Antiquity

- Was the writing produced by the earliest community of Christians?
- Many of the very popular writings that were rejected (Shepherd of Hermas, The Didache, Epistle of Barnabas, and letters of Clement) were not rejected because of Orthodoxy, but they were not written in Apostolic Times.
- Canon is therefore limited to a very short time-table (Approximately 51-90 AD)

USE

- Was the book widely used or cited by Christians in the majority of churches in the first three centuries?
- Eusebius established 3 categories:
- Those widely read and used (those agreed to)
- He lists 20 NT books
- Disputed Category: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation
- “Notha” Writings considered spurious by most

Adaptability

- Can the book adapt, and continue to adapted, to changing circumstances and needs.
- The Shepherd of Hermas and Epistle of Barnabas were widely used, orthodox, (and one could argue Apostolic and Ancient) but were not considered to be Adaptable.

Final Criteria

- Are these books Divinely Inspired?
- Are they “Breathed” by the Holy Spirit?
- Do they convey the Will of God?
- ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, ¹⁷ so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed. (2 Timothy 3: 16-17)

Holy Scripture

