

## **SECTION 3**

### **CANONICITY**

#### **Definition and Development**

## I. DEFINITION OF CANONICITY

- A. Root meaning – from Greek κανων, meaning rod, ruler, standard for measure.
- B. Theological – rule, standard, norm – normative writings (cf. Gal. 6:16).

## II. DESCRIPTION OF CANONICITY

- A. Sacred books – Deut. 31:24-36 (cf. II Tim 3:15, 16).
- B. Prophetic writings – Zech. 7:12; Luke 24:27 (cf. II Peter 1:20-21).
- C. Apostolic writings – Eph. 2:20 (cf. Acts 2:42); Eph. 3:5.

## III. DETERMINATION OF CANONICITY

- A. Inadequate views:

1. Age of the writing determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Many ancient books are not in the canon (Wars of the Lord – Numbers 21:14); (b) Many new books were placed in the canon immediately (Deut. 31:24; Dan. 9:2).

2. Language determines canonicity (e.g., Hebrew).

**Reply:** (a) Not all of the OT is in Hebrew (Dan. 2:4b – 7:28; Ezra 4:8 – 6:18; 7:12 – 26 are in Aramaic); (b) Not all Hebrew books are in the canon (e.g., Jasher [Joshua 10], The Apocrypha).

3. Agreement with Torah determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) This is a test for exclusion not inclusion; (b) Not even all the things that Jesus said and did are included in Scripture (cf. John 21:25).

4. Religious value determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Not all inspiring books are inspired; (b) Confuses cause (inspired) and result (inspiring).

5. Christian usage determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Also confuses cause (divine inspiration) and result (usage); (b) Then *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Imitation of Christ* should be in the canon too.

NOTE: Common mistake of inadequate views: they confuse determination (by God) and recognition (by men).

- B. Adequate View: Inspiration determines canonicity.
  - 1. God determines canonicity; man discovers it.
  - 2. Books receive canonicity from God and recognition from the people of God.

#### IV. **DISCOVERY OF CANONICITY (5 important questions)**

- A. Was it written by a prophet? An apostle? An association of an apostle? (Heb. 1:1; II Pet. 1:20-21).
- B. Were the writers confirmed by an act of God? (John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3).
- C. Does it tell the truth about God? (Deut. 18:22; Gal. 1:8).
- D. Does it have the power of God? (Heb. 4:12).
- E. Was it accepted by the people of God? (Dan. 9:2; I Thess. 2:13; II Pet. 3:15).

#### V. **DEVELOPMENT OF CANON**

- A. Progressive development of the OT canon.
  - 1. Moses wrote (Deut. 31:24).
  - 2. Joshua added (Josh. 24:26).
  - 3. Samuel added his writings (I Sam. 10:25).
  - 4. Prophets were collected (Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:12).  
(Note: Later prophets often quote earlier ones).
  - 5. The OT Canon was the Bible affirmed by Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44). The Jewish canon was Jesus' canon. This is a crucial point.
- B. Progressive Development of the NT canon.
  - 1. NT refers to OT law and prophets (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27).
  - 2. Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (I Tim. 5:18).
  - 3. Paul's letters circulated among the churches (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27).
  - 4. Peter had at least some of Paul's letters and called them "Scripture" (II Peter 3:16).
- C. Conclusion.
  - 1. Inspired books were circulated and collected into the growing canon as they were written.
  - 2. Later disputes concerning some books should not be confused with the original acceptance.

3. Continual disputes concerning a few books actually strengthens their eventual acceptance (eg. 2 Peter).
- D. The *Antilegomena* books (lit. “to speak against”) – NT books rejected by some and why.
1. Hebrews – anonymity, Jewishness.
  2. James – veracity, Jewishness, apparent conflict with Paul.
  3. II Peter – genuineness.
  4. II John – awareness, circulation.
  5. III John – awareness, circulation.
  6. Jude – awareness, apocryphal citations.
  7. Revelation – authenticity, difficult genre/interpretation.

## VI. THE PERFECTION (COMPLETION) OF NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- A. In “former days” God spoke through the prophets (Heb. 1:1).
- B. But in the “last days” God spoke through His Son (Heb. 1:1).
1. Christ and the Apostles initiated the “last days” (Heb. 1:1; I John 2:18).
  2. Christ is God’s last word in the last days (Heb. 1:2f).
    - a. Christ fulfilled “all things” (Matt. 5:17-18).
    - b. Christ promised “all truth” to His apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
  3. Christ’s 12 Apostles are the only official channel of His eyewitness teaching (Luke 1:1-2; John 15:27; Acts 1:21, 22; Heb. 2:3-4).
  4. The eyewitness Apostles lived only in the first century (John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22).
  5. The 27 books of the New Testament are the only apostolically confirmed literature extant about Christ.
    - a. Many books were written by eyewitness apostles (Matthew; John; I & II Peter; I, II, III John; Revelation).
    - b. Paul’s letters were confirmed by Apostles teaching (Acts 15; Gal. 2; II Pet. 3:15-16).
    - c. Hebrews was confirmed by the Apostles (Heb. 2:3-4).
    - d. Mark was a disciple and secretary of Peter (I Peter 5:13).
    - e. Luke (Luke, Acts) was an associate of Paul (Acts 16f; Col. 4:16)
    - f. James and Jude were associates of the Apostles [and half brothers of Jesus Christ] (Acts 15; Jude 1; James 1:1).
  6. Therefore, the 27 books of the New Testament are God’s last words in these last days (ie., the canon is closed).

## Which Books Belong In The Bible

by: Norman L. Geisler

The books agreed upon by all Christians

39 Old Testament Books  
27 New Testament Books

The books disputed by some Christians

*These books are not accepted by Protestants. Catholics accept 11 of these which are the ones starred (\*) or 12 if you count Baruch and the letters to Jeremiah separately.*

1. Book of Wisdom \*
2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) \*
3. Tobit \*
4. Judith \*
5. I Maccabees \*
6. II Maccabees \*
7. Esther: additions of 10:4-16 & 16:24\*
8. Daniel: addition of Prayer of Azariah (Dan. 3:24-90 in Catholic Bibles. This is not to be confused with Dan. 3: 24-30 in Jewish and Protestant Bibles).\*
9. Daniel: addition of Susanna (Dan. 13 In Catholic Bibles).\*
10. Daniel: addition of Bel and the Dragon (Dan. 14 in Catholic Bibles).\*
11. Baruch 1-6 – (Baruch 1 – 5; Letter to Jeremiah in Baruch 6, considered No. 15 by some).\*
12. Prayer of Mannasseh.
13. I Esdras (called III Esdras by Catholics).
14. II Esdras (called IV Esdras by Catholics).

At the time of Christ, the OT canon included the 39 OT books as they are found in today's Protestant Bible though they were in a different order (cf. Luke 24). It was not until 1546, at the Council of Trent, that the Catholic Church decreed that the 11 (12 if the Letter of Jeremiah is counted separately) books, listed above with (\*), should be included in the canon.

# THE BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA

I ESDRAS
II ESDRAS
TOBIT
JUDITH
ADDITIONS TO ESTHER

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON
ECCLESIASTICUS
BARUCH
THE EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH
THE SONG OF THE THREE HOLY CHILDREN

THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA
BEL AND THE DRAGON
THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH
I AND II MACCABEES
III AND IV MACCABEES

The word APOCRYPHA means hidden, or secret.

**ORIGIN.** The term Apocrypha is generally applied to a collection of books, from eleven to sixteen in number, which appeared in the interim between the Old and New Testaments.

They have come down to us in more or less close connection with the canonical books of the Bible.

They have had a strange history. Ecclesiastical opinion in different periods has differed widely as to the value of the literature.

The Jews of the Dispersion in Egypt placed high value upon these books, and included them in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (LXX), but they were rejected from the Hebrew canon by the Jews of Palestine.

**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH** in the Council of Trent, 1546 A.D., declared eleven of the books to be canonical, and they appear in the modern Catholic edition of the Scriptures.

## THE VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

It is commonly agreed that some of these books contain material of

literary merit and historical value. But their canonicity has been rejected, and they have been omitted from the modern editions of the Protestant Bibles, for the following reasons:

1. They are never quoted by Jesus, and it is doubtful if they were ever alluded to by the apostles.
2. Most of the early Fathers regarded them as uninspired.
3. They did not appear in the Ancient Hebrew canon.
4. The inferior quality of most of the writings as compared with the Canonical books stamps them as unworthy of a place in the sacred Scriptures.

## CHARACTER OF THE BOOKS

Authorities differ as to the classification of these books.

The Epistle of Jeremiah is often incorporated in the Book of Baruch, and III and IV Maccabees are often omitted.

**HISTORICAL;** - I and II Maccabees and I Esdras.

**TRADITIONAL;** - Additions to Esther, Susanna, Song of the Three Holy Children, Bel and the Dragon, Judith, and Tobit.

**PROPHETIC;** - Baruch and the Prayer of Manasseh.

**APOCALYPTIC;** - II Esdras and IV Esdras in the Latin Vulgate.

**INSTRUCTIVE;** - Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon (in style like the Proverbs).

## THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

<b>PROTESTANTISM</b>	<b>ROMAN CATHOLICISM</b>	<b>GREEK ORTHODOXY</b>
<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings  <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings  <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation
	<b>APOCRYPHA</b>	<b>APOCRYPHA</b>
	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Baruch Letter of Jeremiah Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Jews; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon” 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Baruch Letter of Jeremiah Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Jews; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon” 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees
		1 Esdras Prayer of Manasseh 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees Psalm 151

*Selected List of Early Christian Noncanonical Gospels,  
Apocalypses, and Other Writings*

*Works formerly appearing in some New Testament lists:*

The Epistle of Barnabas (attributed to Paul's Jewish-Christian mentor)  
 The Didache (supposedly a summary of the twelve Apostles' teachings on the opposing ways leading to life or death)  
 1 Clement (letter by the third bishop of Rome to the Corinthians)  
 Apocalypse of Peter (visions of heaven and hell Ascribed to Peter)  
 The Shepard of Hermas (a mystical apocalyptic work)  
*Gospels allegedly containing some of Jesus' teachings or other historical information about him:*

The Gospel of Thomas (a compilation of 114 sayings of Jesus found in the Nag Hammadi library)

The Gospel of Peter (a primitive account of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection ascribed to Peter)

The Secret Gospel of Mark (two excerpts from an early edition of Mark preserved in a letter from Clement of Alexandria)  
 The Egerton Papyrus 2 (fragment of an unknown Gospel)  
 The Apocryphon of James (a private dialogue between Jesus and two disciples, Peter and James)

*Other Gospels, most surviving only in fragmentary form:*

The Protoevangelium of James  
 The Dialogue of the Savior  
 The Gospel of the Egyptians  
 The Gospel of the Hebrews  
 The Gospel of the Nazareans  
 The Gospel of the Ebionites  
 The Infancy Gospel of Thomas  
 Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840

*Miscellaneous works:*

The Acts of Pilate  
 The Acts of John

The Epistula Apostolorum  
 2 Clement  
 The Epistle to Diognetus

*Other important early Christian writings:*

The Epistles of Ignatius:  
 To the Ephesians  
 To the Magnesians  
 To the Trallians  
 To the Romans  
 To the Philadelphians  
 To the Smyrnaeans  
 To Polycarp  
 The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians  
 The Martyrdom of Polycarp



**CANONICITY**  
**Discovery of Old Testament**  
(An expanded analysis)

**I. PRINCIPLE(S) OF DISCOVERY**

- A. Was it written by a man of God?
- B. Was he confirmed by an act of God?
- C. Did it tell the truth about God?
- D. Did it have the power of God?
- E. Was it received and collected by the people of God?

**II. PROBLEM OF DISCOVERY OF OT**

- A. *Homologoumena* – Books always accepted by all (all OT books except the OT “antilegomena”).
- B. *Antilegomena* – Books later disputed by some (with an evangelical/orthodox response).

- 1. Song of Solomon – thought to be *sensual* (speaks of sex in marriage).
- 2. Ecclesiastes – thought to be *skeptical* (3:20,21 views life without God).
- 3. Esther – thought to be *unspiritual*; absence of God’s name (God is providentially and sovereignly present).
- 4. Ezekiel – thought to be *anti-mosaical* (a millennial period, fulfillment eschatologically of the Mosaic covenant).
- 5. Proverbs – thought to be *illogical* (26:4-5; value judgments and general principles for life’s various situations).

- C. *Pseudepigrapha* – Books rejected by all.

- 1. Legendary
  - a. The Book of Jubilee
  - b. The Letter of Aristeas
  - c. The Book of Adam and Eve
  - d. The Martyrdom of Isaiah
- 2. Apocalyptic
  - a. I Enoch
  - b. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
  - c. The Sibylline Oracles
  - d. The Assumption of Moses
  - e. II Enoch, or the Book of Secrets of Enoch
  - f. II Baruch or The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
- 3. Didactical
  - a. III Maccabees

- b. IV Maccabees
- c. Pirke Aboth
- d. The Story of Ahikar

- 4. Poetical
  - a. The Psalms of Solomon
  - b. Psalm 151
- 5. Historical
  - a. The Fragment of Zadokite Work

D. The Apocrypha (“doubtful,” “hidden”)

\*Reasons for rejecting the Apocrypha as canonical:

- a. Judaism has never accepted it as inspired.
- b. Great Jewish leaders of old rejected it (Philo, Josephus, the Jamnia scholars).
- c. Jesus and apostles did not accept it.
- d. Most early church fathers rejected it.
- e. Great Roman Catholic biblical scholar, Jerome, rejected it.
- f. Augustine accepted it [for wrong reasons] and misinfluenced others.
- g. Roman Catholic acceptance of it in 1546 was:
  - (1) By wrong group (church rather than Jews).
  - (2) At wrong time (1600+ years later).
  - (3) For wrong reasons (Christian usage rather than propheticity).
- h. Apocrypha does not claim inspiration but even disclaims it (I Mac. 9:27).
- i. Apocrypha has no predictive prophecy or additional Messianic truth.
- j. Apocrypha has unbiblical teaching (prayers for the dead, II Mac. 12:45 [46]).

**CANONICITY**  
**Discovery of New Testament**  
(An expanded analysis)

**I. THE PROMISE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. Jesus promised “all truth” to the Apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
- B. The Apostles claimed this promise (Acts 1:1; 2:42; Eph. 2:20).
- C. The Apostolic Church recognized their authority (Acts 8, 15).

**II. THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. Gospels were written by eyewitnesses or associates (Luke 1:1).
- B. Epistles quote gospels as Scripture (I Tim. 5:18).
- C. Apostle Peter accepted Paul’s epistles as Scripture (II Peter 3:15-16).
- D. First century church read and circulated books (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27; I Tim. 4:13; Revelation 1:4).
- E. Last book of the New Testament was written before the end of the first century.
- F. Every New Testament book quoted as Scripture in the second century (except 3 John).
- G. Some books were later doubted by some in the second and third centuries: problems were basically 1) historical, 2) heretical, 3) geographical distribution, and 4) competition and confusion of pseudepigraphal writings.
- H. All books were accepted by virtually all by the fourth century (A.D. 397, Carthage).

**III. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. *Homologoumena* – Books accepted by all (20).
  - 1. All but seven “disputed” books (the antilegomena).
  - 2. Philemon, I Peter, and I John were more omitted than disputed in rare instances.

B. New Testament *Pseudepigrapha* – Books rejected by all (mostly 2-4<sup>th</sup> century frauds and heresies).

C. New Testament *Apocrypha* – Books accepted by some:

1. *Barnabas, Hermes, Didache, Clement, Polycarp, Gospel of Hebrews etc;*

2. Their nature:

a. Sub-apostolic, most second century.

b. Rise of heresy (e.g., Baptismal regeneration, allegorization).

c. There was only local and temporary acceptance of them.

#### Early Father's Quotations of The New Testament

WRITER	GOSPEL	ACTS	PAULINE EPISTLES	GENERAL EPISTLES	REVELA- TION	TOTAL
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Ireneaus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement of Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
GRAND TOTAL	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

The New Testament As It Gained Acceptance by the Early Church

A.D. 100	A.D. 200	A.D. 250	A.D. 300	A.D. 400
<p>All portions of our New Testament were written by this time, but not yet collected and clearly defined as 'Scripture'. In some instances, however, a status of Scripture was being applied (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16). Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writings and oral sources.</p> <p>Paul's letters were collected in the latter part of the first century. Matthew, Mark and Luke were brought together by AD 150.</p>	<p><b>New Testament used In the church at Rome (the 'Muratorian Canon')</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>James I &amp; II John Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon</p> <p><b>To be used in private, but not public worship:</b></p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Origen</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>I Peter I John Revelation of John</p> <p><b>Disputed</b></p> <p>Hebrews James II Peter II &amp; III John Jude</p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve Apostles (The Didache) Gospel of the Hebrews</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Eusebius</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>Hebrews James I Peter I John Revelation of John (authorship in doubt for some)</p> <p><b>Disputed but well known</b></p> <p>James II Peter II &amp; III John Jude</p>	<p><b>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage (397)</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>Hebrews James I &amp; II Peter I, II, &amp; III John Jude Revelation</p> <p><b>To be excluded</b></p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter The Didache</p>

FORMING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

Other Books Being Written

e.g., Pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal Books

140 – “Canon of Marcion” the heretic

The Gospel

- shortened Luke

The Apostle

- 10 edited Pauline epistles (less 1 and 2 Timothy & Titus)

- all OT references omitted

303 – EDICT OF DIOCLETIAN

Christ

AD 100

AD 140

AD 170

AD 230

AD 315

AD 367

- ♥ THE GOSPEL  
According to Matthew  
According to Mark Etc.
  - ♥ THE APOSTLE  
To Romans Etc.
  - ♥ PLUS (Acts: Pivotal Book)
- = 27 Books

**PERIOD OF ANTILEGOMENA  
AND PROGRESSIVE DEFINING  
OF CANON**

Church began to see necessity of defining the canon.  
1. 4 Gospels not 1  
2. 13 Paul’s Epistles not 10  
3. Acts  
4. Writings of some of the other Apostles

Muratorian Canon – 170  
- response  
“Counter to Marcion”  
  
- Omits Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter

ORIGEN  
  
- Does not enumerate all 27 as authentic

EUSEBIUS  
  
- States some of 27 to be disputed by some Christians

ATHANASIUS  
- First know list of 27 (AD 367)  
Jerome & Augustine (both affirm the 27)  
393 – Council of Hippo  
397 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Cn of Carthage  
419 – 4<sup>th</sup> Cn of Carthage

# CANONIZATION

## I. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE FORMATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

1. Practice of the early Christians in their worship (patterned after the synagogues). N.T. memoirs of the apostles were read along with the O.T. side by side (in history there was a continuous and growing acceptance and usage by a large number of churches over a long period of time).
2. Quotations from apostolic writings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century added support.
3. Presence of heresy caused them to see the need for a canon.
4. Persecution causes some writings to receive higher standing (which writings are you willing to die for?).
5. Method of book making (Codex allowed binding of several books). This aided in distribution and circulation of the N.T. books.

## II. INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Rule of faith (core of doctrine from which one cannot depart).
2. The real or related (contact with an apostle) apostolic origin of a book.
3. Internal witness of Scripture by the Spirit.

## III. ATTEMPT TO CANONIZE OFFICIALLY

1. Made first apparently by Marcion about A.D. 140 (accepts part of Luke and ten Pauline letters).
2. A.D. 170 Muratorian fragment (Hebrews, James, III John, I & II Peter not included).
3. A.D. 367 Athanasius set forth a list expressing the canon as it now stands. Widely accepted; 393 and 397 reaffirmed under the leadership of Augustine (came into official being because of heresy; authoritative because of its apostolic origin; enduring because of the witness of the Holy Spirit).

# NEW TESTAMENT

## I. WHY THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS COLLECTED

- A. Authoritative words of Christ needed preserving.
- B. Need for a New Covenant Document to complement the Old Covenant.
- C. Apostles were dying and their testimony needed to be preserved.
- D. Troubles in churches required authoritative instruction.
- E. Persecution necessitated a collection of the books for which one would suffer.

## II. HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE COLLECTED

- A. Test of Canonicity
  - 1. Inspiration
  - 2. Apostolicity
  - 3. Doctrinal Purity
  - 4. Genuineness
  - 5. Catholicity
- B. Things That Slowed the Process
  - 1. Position of the Old Testament
  - 2. Slow Communication/Travel
  - 3. Lack of Church Sponsor for some books
  - 4. Weak Internal Evidence
- C. History of Process
  - 1. Apostles to A.D. 140 – Dissemination, collection, and regional recognition
  - 2. A.D. 140-180 – Developments toward a fixed canon
  - 3. A.D. 180-240 – Universal confirmation and consensus
  - 4. A.D. 350ff Official recognition and final agreement

“The Christian movement hasn’t seriously examined the question of canon since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It’s time for academic scholars to raise the issue.”

*Jesus Seminar Leader  
Robert Funk  
Head of the Westar Institute  
Sonoma, CA  
U.S. News & World Report  
November 8, 1993*



But since we have referred to the heretics as dead, and to us as having the divine scriptures unto salvation, and as I fear, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, lest some few of the simple may be led astray by deceit from simplicity and purity by the wiles of men, and finally may begin to read the so-called apocrypha, deceived by the likeness of the names to those of the true books... Since some have turned their hand to draw up for themselves the so-called apocrypha, and to mingle these with the inspired writ, concerning which we are informed fully, as those handed down to the fathers who were from the beginning directly seers and servants of the word, *it seemed good also to me*, urged by true brethren, and having learned from time gone by, *to set forth in order from the first the books that are canonized* and handed down and believed to be divine, so that each, if he has been deceived, may detect those who have misled him, and the one remaining pure may rejoice at being put in mind of it again...[the books are listed]. These are the wells of salvation, so that he who thirsts may be satisfied with the sayings of these. In these alone is the teaching of godliness heralded. Let no one add to these. Let nothing be taken away from these...

Athanasius' 39<sup>th</sup> Festal Letter  
Easter A.D. 367