

church and thus were to be regarded as authoritative Scripture.

Who decided which books belonged to the canon?

The earliest decree of any church council regarding the complete canon was made at the Council of (38)_____ in A. D. 393 (and was repeated by the third Council of Carthage in A. D. 397). The wording of this resolution is significant: "Besides the canonical Scriptures, nothing shall be read in the church under the title of 'divine writings.' The canonical books are. ..."(both Old and New Testament books are listed).

- Now it is clear that this council did not in any sense create the canon. Rather, the statement assumes that the canon already existed and was recognized, and the council merely confirmed the prevailing opinion of the churches.

Nearly three hundred years before the Council of Hippo, Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, A.D. 96. In it he frequently cited the canonical writings of Paul, Matthew and perhaps some others to reinforce his argument. It is important to note that he shows no like concern for any writings other than our New Testament books, even though there were such in existence. The tenor of Clement's writing shows his recognition of one series of books which was valued similarly to the Old Testament.

In A.D. 367 Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, listed as canonical books the some twenty seven which we know. Yet his list was not a new pronouncement. Thus prior to any official council, the church was well aware of a canon of Scripture.

How did the church recognize the canon?

It seems assured from the records of early church leaders that (39)_____ was the chief criterion.

- Those New Testament books written by men who were not apostles were accorded apostolic authority because their authors were companions of the apostles.

Other tests of canonicity were sometimes appealed to, such as the use of the books in all geographical areas of the church.

New Testament Attestation

There is in existence over (40)_____ of the New Testament in whole or in part.

- The best and most important of these go back to circa (41)_____, the two most prominent being the Codex Vaticanus, the chief treasure of the Vatican Library in Rome. And the well known Codex Sinaiticus, which the British Government purchased from a bankrupted Soviet Government for 100,000 pounds on Christmas day, 1933, and which is now the chief treasure of the British Museum.

Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works.

- For *Caesar's Gallic War* (composed in 58 and 50 BC) there are (42)_____ or ten good manuscripts but they are from 900 years after Caesar's day.
- Of the 142 books of the Roman History of Livy (59 BC-AD17) only (43)_____ survive; these are known to us from not more than twenty manuscripts of any consequence, only one of which is as old as the fourth century.
- Of the fourteen books of the *Histories of Tacitus* (C. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the sixteen books of his *Annals*, ten survive in full and two in part.
- The history of Thucydides (who lived from 460-400 BC) is known to us from (44)_____ manuscripts, the earliest belonging to AD 900. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (C. 488-428 BC).

"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

-Sir Frederick Kenyon, a scholar whose authority to make pronouncements on ancient manuscripts was second to none.

Answers: 1-reliable 2-good news 3-Way 4-Life 5-God 6-history 7-character 8-records 9-fifteen 10-personally 11-eye witnesses 12-Papyrus 13-codex 14-biographies 15-points of view 16-synoptic 17-continuation 18-twenty-one 19-Paul 20-James 21-Jude 22-Peter 23-John 24-Revelation 25-50 26-first 27-50 years 28-crucifixion 29-Old Testament 30-lifetime 31-know 32-persecution 33-Worshipping 34-Holy Spirit 35-Heterodox 36-Canon 37-ruler 38-Hippo 39-apostolic authority 40-5,000 Greek Manuscripts 41-AD 350 42-nine 43-thirty-five 44-eight

First Family Church 7700 W. 143rd St, Overland Park,
KS 66223 913-681-3341 www.ffc.org



Pastor Jeremy Johnston's sermon
Wednesday, November 18th, 2009
Preview of Upcoming Series:
How We Got The Bible
Bible Text: Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 119:140

Psalm 119:140, "Your word is very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it."

Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."

Question #1: Does it Matter?

Does it matter whether the New Testament documents are (1)_____ or not?

For the Christian Gospel is not primarily a code of ethics or a metaphysical system; it is first and foremost the (2)_____, and as such it was boldly proclaimed by its earliest preachers and followers.

- Christianity in Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22 is called, "The (3)_____."
- In Acts 5:20 Christianity is called, "The (4)_____."

Christianity as a "Way" of life is inseparably linked to and depends on the way and life of (5)_____ who entered human history in the fullness of time and took on flesh to redeem mankind from their sin.

Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe the good news."

Christianity having its roots in (6)_____ is emphasized in the church's earliest creeds, which fix the supreme revelation of God at a particular point in time, when "Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord...suffered under Pontius Pilate."

The historical "one-for-all-ness" of Christianity, which distinguishes it from those religious and philosophical systems which are not specifically related to any particular time, makes the question of the accuracy, transmission, and historical reliability of the New Testament writings of first import.

"The Character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists."
-Historian and Scholar W.E.H. Lecky wrote in *History of European Morals* published in 1889.

- The (7)_____ of Jesus can be known only from the New Testament

(8)_____; the influence of His character is therefore tantamount to the influence of the New Testament records.

Question #2 What are the New Testament Documents?

The first of the New Testament documents did not appear until about (9)_____ years after the death of our Lord. As long as Jesus lived on earth His followers felt no need for any new written documents. The Old Testament was their Scripture.

- Those who first proclaimed the good news of salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ had known Jesus (10)_____.
- They had seen His miracles, had heard His teachings and were announcing this message in a land where Jesus Himself had been widely known.
- The power of the message and the exponential growth of the church was due to the

(11)_____ accounts.

Luke 1:1, "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us."

- Eight or nine different men contributed to the New Testament. Four of them were apostles: Matthew, John, Peter, Paul.
 - (Two were half-brothers of Jesus James, Jude).
 - One was a Gentile and the second largest contribution in bulk to the New Testament (Luke, writer of Luke and Acts).
 - Another was Mark, a companion of Peter and at various times an assistant to Paul, although he was not personally an apostle.
 - The identity of one author is uncertain, although many in the early church accepted the epistle as Paul's (Epistle to the Hebrews).
- ⁽¹²⁾_____ was the usual writing material of the first three centuries of the Christian era, and it is most likely that the original manuscripts of the various New Testament books took this form.
- A later development was the ⁽¹³⁾_____, in which the sheets were stacked and then sewed along the left edge, producing a form much like the modern book.

All four gospels relate sayings and doings of Christ but can scarcely be called ⁽¹⁴⁾_____ in our modern sense of the word, as they deal almost exclusively with the last two or three years of His life, and devote what might seem a disproportionate space to the week immediately preceding His death.

The aim of the Gospels was never intended to be "Lives" of Christ, but rather present from distinctive ⁽¹⁵⁾_____, and originally for different publics, the good news concerning Him!

- The first three Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, because of certain features, which link them together, are commonly called the "⁽¹⁶⁾_____ gospels."
- The fifth historical writing, the Acts of the Apostles, is actually a ⁽¹⁷⁾_____ of the third gospel, written by the same author, Luke the physician and companion of the apostle Paul.
- Of the other writings ⁽¹⁸⁾_____ are letters.
- Thirteen of these bear the name ⁽¹⁹⁾_____, nine of them being addressed to churches and four to individuals.
- The Epistle to the Hebrews, is anonymous, but if you study the patristic fathers was at an early date bound up with the Pauline Epistles and ascribed to Paul.
- Of the remaining letters one bears the name of ⁽²⁰⁾_____, probably the brother of our Lord; one of ⁽²¹⁾_____, who calls himself the brother of James; two of ⁽²²⁾_____; and there are three which bear no name, but because of their obvious affinity with the fourth Gospel has been known from early days as the Epistles of ⁽²³⁾_____.
- The final book, as you well known, is the apocalypse or book of ⁽²⁴⁾_____.

Question #3 What are the dates of these documents?

- The earliest New Testament work, either 1 Thessalonians or Galatians, was written about A.D. ⁽²⁵⁾_____.
- The last book, Revelation, appeared near the end of the ⁽²⁶⁾_____ century A.D.
- Thus, while the Old Testament may have taken about 1,000 years to write, the New Testament was written over only ⁽²⁷⁾_____.
- The ⁽²⁸⁾_____ of Christ took place, it is generally agreed, about AD 30.
- Jesus' public ministry lasted 3 1/3 years.

The Table of Dates

30	Pentecost; Birthday of the NT Church
32	Death of Stephen and Conversion of St. Paul
43	Founding of Gentile Church at Antioch: Paul
44	Summoned to Antioch by Barnabas
c. 45	Death of James the Son of Zebedee
46-48	EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES
48	St. Paul's First Missionary Journey
49	EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS
49-51	Apostolic Council
50 (early)	St. Paul's Second Missionary Journey
50	1 THESSALONIANS
(summer)	2 THESSALONIANS
52-56	St. Paul's Third Missionary Journey
55	1 CORINTHIANS
55 (spring)	2 CORINTHIANS
56 (early)	ROMANS
56-58	St. Paul's Caesarean Imprisonment
58-59	St. Paul's Voyage to Rome
59-61	St. Paul's Roman Imprisonment

59-61	COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS (The Captivity Letters)
50-70	GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK
c. 60	GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW
62-63	1 TIMOTHY
63	TITUS
64	Fire in Rome. Neronian Persecution
65-67	2 TIMOTHY
61-62	1 PETER
62 (?)	2 PETER
65-69	GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE. THE BOOK OF ACTS
60-70	JUDE
56-70	HEBREWS
70	Fall of Jerusalem
90-100	GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN'S. 1, 2, 3 JOHN
95	REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

Question #4 Did the Writers Know they were writing Scripture?

- Paul indicates that Luke's Gospel was regarded as Scripture, to be cited with the same authority as the ⁽²⁹⁾_____.
- In I Timothy 5:18 he cites as "scripture" both Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7.
- Peter also refers to Paul's epistles as "scripture" and even suggests a collection of Paul's epistles (II Pet. 3:15, 16) in existence.

It is clear that the recognition of certain New Testament writings as inspired Scripture was not a gradual process but was understood well within the ⁽³⁰⁾_____ of the writers.

1 Corinthians 2:13, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy^{gd} Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
1 Thessalonians 4:15, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep."

Question #5 Is the New Testament Credible?

"The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt. It is a curious fact that historians have often been much readier to trust the New Testament records than have many theologians."
 -Dr. F.F. Bruce

The canon of the New Testament (the list of books considered to be Holy Scripture) was shaped by several factors:

- The desire to ⁽³¹⁾_____ about Jesus and His teachings
- The need to fight heresy and ⁽³²⁾_____
- ⁽³³⁾_____ God and congregational services

The early Christian church did not "decide" what books were authoritative, but they did recognize the unique nature of the works that we know as the New Testament.

In his Easter letter to his congregations in A.D. 367. Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt, listed the 27 New Testament books as "divine" and called them "springs of salvation."

In A.D. 397, at Carthage in North Africa, a church council met (with Augustine in attendance) and confirmed the canon of the New Testament.

The ⁽³⁴⁾_____, who inspired the writers of Scripture, also guided the Christian church to identify which books are, in fact, part of the canon.

- ⁽³⁵⁾_____ is the term used that is the opposite of Orthodox.

"⁽³⁶⁾_____ The word itself means a straight rod, or reed, and developed the meaning of a "⁽³⁷⁾_____." As applied to the New Testament, it came to designate those particular books which were recognized as providing the norms and standards for the