

# The New Testament Canon

*Listen to the CD teaching by Bill Martin on “The New Testament Canon” (37 min.) and take careful notes below. Do the THINK ABOUT IT section and be ready to discuss.*

1. Canon - a rule or measuring rod, or “a \_\_\_\_\_ of books received by the church as authoritative.”
2. Impetus - at stake was apostolic \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Second Century Collections -
  - a. Tatian’s *Diatessaron* (~ A.D. 170) - a harmony of the f\_\_\_\_\_fold gospel (“The Gospel”)
  - b. “The Apostle” - ten letters of the Apostle \_\_\_\_\_. Eventually, the Bible included \_\_\_\_\_ Pauline epistles.
  - c. Book of Acts - ties together the two above collections
  - d. *Muratorian* fragment - discovered 1740; original dates to A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 4 Gospels, Acts, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, Revelation, Philemon, 2 letters to Timothy, Jude, letters of Peter plus a few other non-canonical documents.
  - e. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. AD 130-200) - corroborates the above list; the first to use the term N\_\_\_\_\_ T\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Third Century Acceleration -
  - a. Marcion - heretic who threw out the \_\_\_\_\_ Testament, 4 Gospels (except edited Luke) and all the epistles (letters) except Paul. The Church r\_\_\_\_\_ this!
  - b. Origen - ca. A.D. 230; same list as *Muratorian* fragment, with Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, plus Shepherd, Epist. of Barnabus, *Didache*
  - c. Eusebius - 3 classes of Sacred Writing
    - 1) Homologoumena - *accepted or uncontested books* - 22 of our 27
      - 4 Gospels, Acts, 13 Pauline epistles, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, Revelation
    - 2) Antilogoumena - *debated, most were used in the church*
      - James, Jude, 2 & 3 John, 2 Peter, Hebrews, Revelation
    - 3) Spurious / Heretical - *either questionable or clearly non-apostolic*

- *Spurions* (used but not inspired): Barnabus, Shepherd of Hermas , *Didache* (manual of church order)
- *Heretical*: Gospel of Thomas, Acts of John, Gospel of Peter
- SIDEBAR: “The Jesus Seminar”

5. Fourth Century Crystallization - by the 300s, we have the complete canon of Scripture
  - a. Athanasius’ Easter Letter, AD 367 -
    - “These are a \_\_\_\_\_ canonical”
    - listed \_\_\_\_\_ (number) books of the New Testament; same as we have today
    - received by the whole church, and *ratified* by two synods:
  - b. Synod of Hippo, AD 393
  - c. Synod of Carthage, AD 397

THINK ABOUT IT:

Conclusion: Did the church create the canon?

Why were certain writings included / excluded? Because of their inherent A\_\_\_\_\_ authority!

Final Issue: *Do we have a reliable copy of the Apostles’ teaching (such that our claims of infallibility and inerrancy are reasonably applicable to our Bible)?* (See Josh McDowell article, also Sproul, *Essential Truths*, chs. 7-9)

How does Bill’s answer relate to the need for biblical criticism?

Why do we need the NIV (besides the updated language)?

AFTERWORD: “The Secret Message” - an argument by analogy, which is *weak* because of:

1. The nature of the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The character of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The incentive for getting it \_\_\_\_\_! (see Ps. 119:1-8)