

From Norman Geisler and William Nix: A General Introduction to the Bible; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1986, p. 295...

Although many portions of this book have been duplicated and are found on the internet, I highly recommend that every believer have a copy of this book in their collection of reference books.

Early Determinations of Canonicity

Jesus Christ did not come and present the gospel one day; Paul sent out epistles on the next, and on the day after that, some important council gathered to determine which books belonged in the Bible and which did not. This was all a very natural, organic process, as we would assume. The church at Corinth would get a letter from Paul, and they would make copies of it, and someone from the church in Galatia would request a copy of that epistle and it would be sent to them. In this way, the letters of Paul and the other Apostles were circulated throughout the various churches. Pastors would rise up, study these letters, study the Old Testament, study the gospels (the biographies of the life of Jesus), and they would both teach and write. As they wrote, they would cite passages from this or that letter, from this or that gospel, from this or that Old Testament book.

At some point, various individuals and groups saw a need to determine which books of the New Testament were authoritative. As a result, individuals and groups began to specify certain books as clearly canonical, which meant that they were authoritative (that is, they could be cited as accurate). Also, as the gospel spread, translations were made for new peoples, and a determination must be made what to translate.

These are lists of individuals, councils and translations and which books they either cited or recognized as authoritative.

This first table has early translations of the New Testament and the decisions made by various church councils. The next page has individuals and lists of some of the canons developed at that time. There are undoubtedly other individuals, canon determinations and councils from this early era that have been lost to historians.

	Translations			Councils			
	Tat	Old Latin	Old Syriac	Nicea	Hippo	Carthage (397)	Carthage (419)
Matthew	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mark	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Luke	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
John	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Acts		O	O	O	O	O	O
Romans		O	O	O	O	O	O
1Corinthians		O	O	O	O	O	O
2Corinthians		O	O	O	O	O	O
Galatians		O	O	O	O	O	O
Ephesians		O	O	O	O	O	O
Philippians		O	O	O	O	O	O
Colossians		O	O	O	O	O	O
1Thess.		O	O	O	O	O	O
2Thess.		O	O	O	O	O	O
1Timothy		O	O	O	O	O	O
2Timothy		O	O	O	O	O	O
Titus		O	O	O	O	O	O
Philemon		O	O	O	O	O	O
Hebrews			O	O	O	O	O
James			O	?	O	O	O
1Peter			O	O	O	O	O
2Peter				?	O	O	O
1John		O	O	O	O	O	O
2John		O		?	O	O	O
3John		O		?	O	O	O
Jude		O		?	O	O	O
Revelation		O		O	O	O	O

X = Citation or allusion to
 O = Named as authoritative
 ? = Named as debated

Pseudo-Barnabas (c. 70–130)
 Clement of Rome (c. 95–97)
 Ignatius (c. 110)
 Polycarp (c. 110–150)
 Hermas (c. 115–140)
 Didache (c. 120–150)
 Papias (c. 130–140)
 Irenaeus (c. 130–202)
 Diognetus (c. 150)
 Justin Martyr (c. 150–155)
 Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)
 Tertullian (c. 185–254)
 Origen (c. 185–254)
 Eusebius of Jerusalem (c. 315–386)
 Jerome (c. 325–340)
 Augustin (c. 340–420)
 Marcio (c. 140)
 Murotorian (c. 170)
 Apostol c (c. 300)
 Cheltenham (c. 360)
 Augustine (367)

	Individuals																Canons					
Matthew	X	X		X	X	X		O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Mark	X			X	X			O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Luke	X			X		X		O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
John		X		X			X	O		O	X	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Acts				X	X			O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Romans		X		X		X		O		X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
1Corinthians		O		X	X	X		O		X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2Corinthians				X	X			O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Galatians				X				O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Ephesians	X	X	X	X				O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Philippians				X	X	X		O			O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Colossians				X	X			O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
1Thess.				X	X	X	X	O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2Thess.				X	X			O		X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
1Timothy		X		X	X	X		X			O	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
2Timothy	X				X			X				X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Titus	X	X						X	X		O	X	X	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
Philemon				X										O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Hebrews	X	X			X			X			O	X	?	O	O	O	O			O		O
James		X			X									O	?	O	O			O		O
1Peter	X			X	X			O		X	O	X	O	O	O	O	O			O	O	O
2Peter	X	X											?	O	?	O	O			O	?	O
1John				X	X			O			O	X		O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O
2John				X				X					?	O	?	O	O		O	O	?	O
3John													?	O	?	O	O		O	O	?	O
Jude								X			O	X		O	?	O	O		O	O		O
Revelation					X	X		O	O		X	O	X	O		O	O	O		O		O

