

LESSON 7

CANONIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction

The word canon means a "standard" or "rule." It signifies the list of sacred books accepted by the Church as authoritative in matters of faith and life. It is not difficult to understand why the Gospels came to be recognized as authoritative since they contain accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. It is not as obvious how the four Gospels of our New Testament were selected instead of others. It is less evident how the personal letters of Paul to Gentile churches were recognized as divinely inspired.

During the century after the death of Jesus, the 27 books of the New Testament were written and slowly collected into one volume. This fixed collection of works came to be recognized as authoritative for the faith and life of the Church. Practical usage determined which books should be included in the collection long before their official recognition in A.D. 397.

The valuable writings which expressed the early Christians' faith and commitment were preserved by the congregations throughout the Roman Empire. Eventually writings of religious value came to be associated with each other because of such factors as common origin or subject matter. Paul's epistles were perhaps among the earliest collections, especially in the Gentile churches. The churches which received his original letters began to share copies with other churches. Some of them were written with the intention of their being passed around (cf. Col. 4:16). The letters were so highly respected by the time of the writing of 2 Peter that the author stated: "So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters" (2 Pet. 3:15b-16a, RSV). The author equated Paul's epistles with other Scriptures. They were already recognized as containing religious authority.

To the twentieth-century mind, the process of canonization might seem to have been slow; however, when the difficulties of making copies of books and of travel are considered, the rapidity of the process is amazing. The inherent value and divine inspiration of the chosen books must have been evident from the time of their first reading. Perhaps the Gospels existed as a collection by A.D. 100, but Paul's writings probably became a collection earlier. The deaths of those who had been eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and teachings made the preservation of the books all the more important. By the end of the first century, letters and books which were associated with the names of the apostles were prized highly.

Additional Books Highly Regarded

The Christians of the first two centuries were not critical in their selection of educational literature. They did not attempt immediately to establish a fixed collection of authoritative books. Writings other than the 27 books of our New Testament circulated within the Church.

1 Clement.—A letter written by the pastor of the church in Rome in the name of his church to the church at Corinth (about A.D. 96) was highly regarded. Clement was an immediate disci-

"Canon" signifies the list of _____ books accepted by the _____ as authoritative in matters of _____ and _____.

(sacred, Church, faith, life)

What determined which books should be included in the one volume before their official recognition in 397? _____

(practical usage)

Writings of religious value came to be associated with each other because of such factors as _____ or _____.

(common origin, subject matter)

List two difficulties which slowed down the process of canonization.

(making copies of books, travel)

First Clement was a highly regarded non-canonical book which was read in the Church at _____ about A.D. _____.
(Corinth, 170)

ple of the apostles (perhaps Peter) and was overseer of the church. Westcott considered that his work was subsequent to the Pastoral Epistles.¹ Clement mentioned 1 Corinthians and "the words of the Lord Jesus" (13:46). He indicated an acquaintance with Hebrews and other writings. His doctrine of justification by faith was similar to Paul's. His emphasis on works of righteousness resembled that of James. First Clement was read in the public services of the church at Corinth about A.D. 170. Irenaeus of Lyon in Gaul, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria regarded it as valuable.

Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles).—This document is a collection of Christian moral precepts, directions for baptism and the Eucharist, and instructions to ministers. Clement of Alexandria and Origen considered it as Holy Scripture. It was written about A.D. 120 or before and quoted Matthew frequently.

The Epistle of Barnabas.—Clement of Alexandria and Origen treated this book also as canonical. It was probably written in Alexandria about A.D. 130. It shows some affinity to Hebrews.

The Shepherd of Hermas.—This book was written about A.D. 140 by Hermas, the brother of Bishop Pius of Rome. Irenaeus quoted it as Scripture.

The Apocalypse of Peter.—This book contains two visions: one of heaven and the other of hell. It was written about A.D. 150 and was used extensively in the Eastern Greek Church as well as in the Western Latin Church.

Factors in the Development of the Canon

A formal declaration of the Canon was not a matter of urgency at first. Westcott suggested that the formation of the Canon was impeded by:

- slow and precarious means of communication;
- the tediousness and cost of reproducing manuscripts;
- the destruction of the common meeting place of Christians in Jerusalem; and
- church groups in various parts of the Empire having their own choices of books.²

Before the end of the first century, circumstances required an authoritative literature. With the death of the apostles, the Church was left without an authoritative voice. Heretical groups arose, and the only way to settle disputes was by documents beyond the reach of change or corruption. The developing and expanding Church needed a guide in matters of faith and practice. God met the needs through the Spirit of truth who guided the apostles and the Church in developing and canonizing the inspired and authoritative Word.

Second Century Witnesses to New Testament Books

The first book of the New Testament was written about A.D. 50, and the last book was completed about A.D. 95. By the time 2 Peter was written, the Pauline Epistles were regarded as Scripture (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15,16). The Pauline Epistles seem to have been the first to be collected. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the centre of Christianity shifted to Antioch and Ephesus. The writings of Paul would naturally have been highly regarded in those areas. The Synoptic Gospels were probably collected about the same time as the Pauline Epistles.

¹ B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament* (6th edition; London: Macmillan, 1889), p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 4ff.

Didache is a collection of Christian _____ precepts, directions for _____, and instructions for _____ which was written about A.D. _____. (moral, baptism, ministers, 120)

Clement and Origen treated the Epistle of _____ as canonical. It was written about A.D. _____. (Barnabas, 130)

The Shepherd of Hermas was written by _____ in about A.D. _____. (Hermas, 140)

The Apocalypse of Peter was written about A.D. _____ and was widely used by the _____ Church and the _____ Church. (150, Eastern Greek, Western Latin)

What circumstance made an authoritative voice or guide necessary by the end of the first century? _____ (the death of the apostles)

2 Peter 3:15, 16 indicate the Pauline Epistles were regarded as Scripture by the time _____ was written.

Draw lines under the two earliest collections of New Testament books.

Gospels, Paul's epistles, General Epistles, 1, 2, 3 John. (2 Peter, Gospels, Paul's epistles)

The adoption of the codex form for books (stitching many leaves of papyrus together like modern books) by the Christians early in the second century made possible the collection of a larger quantity of material within one book. The collections of the four Gospels and the Pauline Epistles were recognized as authoritative early in the second century.

Clement of Rome (about A.D. 96).—Clement appears to have been acquainted with 1 Corinthians, the teachings of Christ (perhaps one of the Gospels), and the Epistle to the Hebrews; however, he did not refer to them as Scripture. Perhaps some of the apostles were still alive when Clement wrote. Church leaders were appointees of the apostles; therefore, the Church continued to feel a continuity with the apostolic authority and did not urgently need authoritative writings.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (about A.D. 116).—Rome and Antioch were strong Christian centres at the beginning of the second century. The writings of Ignatius, the influential bishop in the East, indicate that he knew the epistles of Paul and the Gospels of Matthew and John. He was influenced greatly by John. He made no reference to New Testament books as Scripture.

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (about A.D. 69–155).—In about A.D. 115, Polycarp wrote an epistle to the Philippians. He made more references to writings of the New Testament than any other early writer; however, he seldom quoted a New Testament book. He heard the Apostle John and became the teacher of Irenaeus who said he learned from apostles that which continued to be the traditions of the Church. He referred to Ephesians 4:26 as Scripture.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (about A.D. 80–155).—Papias also heard the Apostle John before his death. He said, "I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice" (Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.* 3:39). This statement explains why the writings were not highly regarded at the beginning of the second century. Papias stated that Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and he wrote down accurately everything that he remembered which was said and done by Christ. He stated that Matthew composed "the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could" (Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.* 3:39). Eusebius stated Papias also quoted 1 John and 1 Peter.

The Gospel of Truth (A.D. 140).—This document probably was written by Valentinus in Rome. It contains Gnostic tendencies. Harrison concludes that its comprehensive use of New Testament writings warrants the conclusion that the New Testament which was in existence in Rome in that period corresponded very closely with what we have today.³ It reveals that the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles of Paul, Hebrews, and Revelation were regarded as authoritative.

Justin Martyr of Samaria and Rome (about A.D. 140).—Justin Martyr had studied Greek philosophy before becoming a Christian. He found in Christianity the only philosophy that is sure and suited to man's needs. He established a school in Rome to satisfy the doubts of Greeks. In writing to the emperor, he took care to show the Scriptures were recognized by the Church and not just by him. He referred to the Gospels as the memoirs of the apostles. The Gospels were read in public services, and instructions were based upon them. Justin frequently inferred the

The codex form is the _____ together of many _____ of papyrus into a book.

(stitching, leaves)

Clement of Rome did not urgently need authoritative writings because some of the a _____ were still alive when he wrote.

(apostles)

Ignatius was greatly influenced by the Apostle _____.

(John)

Polycarp heard the Apostle _____ and was the teacher of _____.

(John, Irenaeus)

Papias also heard the Apostle _____ before his death, and he regarded the _____ of a living and abiding _____ more highly than sacred books.

(John, utterances, voice)

List 3 points from the writings of Justin to the emperor which imply recognition of the scriptural authority of the New Testament.

(Scriptures were recognized by the Church; the Gospels were read in public services; the use of "it is written" inferred scriptural authority.)

³ E. F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 95.

scriptural authority of the Gospels by using the formula "it is written." His writings indicate he was acquainted with the Acts, 1 Peter, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, and Revelation, as well as the Gospels.

Marcion of Pontus and Rome (about A.D. 140).—Marcion's father who was bishop of Pontus excommunicated him because of his immorality and doctrinal error. Marcion went to Rome and again was excommunicated because he embraced Gnostic teachings. He taught that the God who created and rules the world is not the father of Jesus because He enjoyed blood sacrifices and the death of people, according to the Old Testament. Christ came to deliver us from the Old Testament God. The God who is the father of Jesus is different from the God of the Old Testament. Christ was not a real man who came in the flesh; otherwise, he would have been under the control of the Old Testament God. The New Testament God did not require the keeping of the Law, but He emphasized faith, love, and trust. The gospel of Marcion's canon was a recension of Luke with numerous omissions. He accepted ten epistles of Paul as authoritative, but he rejected Acts because it contained too much of Peter's doctrine. He attempted to exclude all elements of Judaism from his canon.

Although the Church had no formally expressed canon, previous references have shown that by 150 A.D. most of the books of the New Testament were in practical use in Syria, Asia Minor, and Rome. By the middle of the second century, the strength of Christianity had shifted to Rome, the imperial city of the Empire. The heretical teachings of Marcion, his adoption of a canon, and the popularity of his teachings may have forced the Church to recognize formally a canon.

Tatian of Rome (about A.D. 170).—Tatian's Diatessaron (Gospel by four) is apparently the first recognition of a four-fold Gospel. He interwove the material of the four Gospels into a continuous story (a harmony of the Gospels). In addition to the Gospels, he revealed a knowledge of Paul's epistles and Revelation.

The Muratorian Canon (about A.D. 170).—A mutilated Latin document, which contained a list of New Testament books probably drawn up in opposition to the canon of the heretic Marcion, was discovered in the library at Milan. The beginning of the document was lost. It begins with the last words of a sentence which probably referred to Mark. The document says Luke stands third in order, having been written by Luke, the physician. The fourth place is given to the Gospel of John. The statement implies Matthew was the first Gospel. It mentions Acts, thirteen epistles attributed to Paul, Jude, two epistles of John, Peter, and Revelation. It refers to all the books of our Canon, except four: Hebrews, James, one epistle of Peter, and one epistle of John. The Apocalypse of Peter is the only one added which is not in our Canon. The Muratorian Canon appears to have been an expression of the views of the Church instead of those of an individual.⁴ The Muratorian Fragment represents an official collection of books which differs from our New Testament by excluding four books and adding one.

Irenaeus of Lyon, Gaul (about A.D. 177).—Irenaeus was probably born at Smyrna in Asia Minor. He heard Polycarp tell of his relations with John and with several other "eyewitnesses of the Word of Life." His associations enabled him to combine the traditions of Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul. He did not furnish a formal list of New Testament writings, but he definitely used most of the New Testament books.

⁴ Westcott, *History of the Canon*, p. 217.

Marcion's teachings and canon may have forced the _____ to recognize formally a _____.

(Church, canon)

The Muratorian Canon differs from the New Testament by _____ four books and _____ one.

(excluding, adding)

Clement of Alexandria (about A.D. 215).—Tradition assigns the beginning of Christian work in Egypt to Mark. A school for the “faithful” was conducted by Pantaenus, a hearer of the apostles. Clement was his student and wrote comments on all the books of the New Testament, except James, 2 Peter, and 3 John. Origen, who succeeded Clement, indicated that the books of the New Testament, with the possible exception of 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John, were accepted in the Church.

Bases for Selecting Canonical Books

Acceptance and usage by orthodox congregations.—The books which were eventually canonized carried an inherent authority which forced itself upon the churches. The books were used at an early date in various parts of the Roman Empire. With the exception of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation, all the other books of the New Testament were acknowledged as apostolic and authoritative throughout the Church before the close of the second century. Even the seven books which did not have universal support were widely used.

Doctrinal consistency.—The Church had struggled against the heresies of the Gnostics and the Ebionites. Gnostics attempted to combine Christianity with Hellenistic and pagan philosophies. They attempted to make Christianity acceptable to the intellectuals. They taught that salvation was achieved through the communication of some hidden or secret knowledge (“gnosis”) which might be revealed through a secret password, a ritualistic act, a doctrine about the world’s beginning, or the relation of spirit to the material. The goal of man was to escape the world which was considered to be evil. Since all material is evil because it is imperfect, a good God could not have created the world. Material creation came from some inferior power that was hostile towards God. The Gnostics denied the incarnation of Christ in “evil” flesh. Some took the position that since flesh is evil but cannot be escaped, the Christian is at liberty to indulge in immoral activities which do not affect the spirit. The spirit will eventually escape the flesh.

Ebionism was an outgrowth of Judaizing tendencies which are reflected in Acts 15 and in Galatians. An early issue confronting the Church concerned the relation of the laws of Moses and the “traditions of the elders” to Christianity. The decision of the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 freed the Church of Jewish tendencies. The Judaizers who opposed Paul emphasized absolute monotheism (one God); therefore, they concluded that Jesus could not be God. They held to the sacredness of the Law; thus they objected to the disregard of the Temple and rituals of sacrifice and purification. Since they opposed Paul and his writings, they preferred Matthew and James. They taught that Jewish Christians, as well as Gentiles, had to keep the Law after salvation by faith. They regarded Christ as an inspired man who was adopted at His baptism as the Son of God because of His worthy life.

Any books which hinted of Ebionism or Gnosticism were questioned by segments of the Church.

Apostolic origin.—Since the words of the apostles who had been with Jesus were highly regarded, it is expected that the writings associated with the apostle would have been highly regarded. Mark was not an apostle, and he had not followed Jesus, but his work is associated with the Apostle Peter. Paul was an apostle “born out of season.” The name of Paul was attached to the book of Hebrews by the Alexandrians, and that caused it to be more widely received in the East than in the West. Luke was highly regarded also because of his association with Paul.

Although Paul had not been associated with Jesus during his

Clement of Alexandria was a student of _____ who was a hearer of the _____.

(Pantaenus, apostles)

One basis for selecting canonical books was their _____ and _____ by orthodox congregations.

(acceptance, usage)

Doctrinal consistency was another basis for selecting _____ books.

(canonical)

A book had to have an a _____ o _____ in order to be included in the New Testament Canon.

(apostolic origin)

earthly ministry, the fact he was "father" of the Gentile churches increased the respect for his writings.

Inspiration.—The ultimate test for canonization was inspiration. The chosen books gave evidence of being divinely inspired and authoritative. The Holy Spirit guided the Church in discerning between genuine and spurious (counterfeit) writings. A period of time was needed before the Church in various parts of the Empire came to a unanimous decision concerning the 27 books. From the time of Irenaeus, the New Testament books recognized through practical usage were the same as the 27 books of our New Testament.

The Disputed Books

Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation were the last to be unanimously accepted into the Canon. The authenticity of 2 Peter, which claims to be the work of an apostle, was questioned. James, Jude, and Hebrews were associated with apostles in the same sense as Mark and Luke, but they were not the works of apostles.

Hebrews was referred to by Clement of Rome and possibly by Justin Martyr; however, it was not included in the Canon of Muratori (the Canon of the Western or Roman Church) because of the question of apostolic authorship. It did gain acceptance in the East under the plea of Alexandrians for Pauline authorship. Although Tertullian of the Latin Church in Africa mentioned it, he placed Hebrews below the authority of apostolic works.

James was questioned because of the uncertainty as to the identity of the man James. Second Peter was questioned because of the great difference in vocabulary and style from the first epistle. Second and 3 John are brief and personal in nature and make little doctrinal contribution. The lack of apostolic relation of Jude kept it from acceptance. Revelation was included in earlier works, but it was not accepted in the East during the fourth century. Dionysius of Alexandria pointed out the differences between Revelation and the Fourth Gospel which raised questions concerning its apostolic authorship.

The Canon in the Fourth Century

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and historian of the Early Church (about A.D. 270-340), lists only James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude as disputed books. He stated that the five General Epistles were controverted, but, nevertheless, they were well known and recognized by most. Books which he classified as heretical were the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd, the Apocalypse of Peter, Barnabas, and the Didache (Teaching of the Twelve).

Augustine of Hippo in North Africa (A.D. 354-430) accepted all the seven books that had been questioned in various sections of the Church. However, he made a distinction in the different degrees of value among the canonical books. Not all of the books were of equal authority.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the emperor Diocletian attempted to destroy the writings of the Church. After Constantine embraced Christianity in A.D. 313, he reversed the policy and had a number of Bibles copied. He arranged for fifty copies to be made on skins for use in the churches. By A.D. 325, the questioned General Epistles were recognized as a definite collection.

The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363)

Thirty-two Christian leaders assembled in a synod (a local gathering) and decreed in the fifty-ninth canon that only the

<p style="text-align: right;">6.</p> <p><i>The ultimate test for canonization was</i></p> <p>_____.</p> <p><i>(inspiration)</i></p>
<p><i>List the 7 disputed books which were the last to be accepted into the Canon because their apostolic origin was questioned.</i></p> <p>_____, _____, _____,</p> <p>_____, _____, _____,</p> <p>_____.</p> <p><i>(Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, Revelation)</i></p>
<p><i>List the books Eusebius considered as disputed.</i> _____,</p> <p>_____, _____,</p> <p>_____, _____, _____.</p> <p><i>(James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude)</i></p>
<p><i>Augustine of Hippo said (all, not all) the</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHOOSE ONE</p> <p><i>canonical books were of equal authority and value.</i></p> <p><i>(not all)</i></p>

canonized books of both the Old and New Testaments be read in the Church. The sixtieth canon gave a list of 26 books for the New Testament, excluding Revelation. The sixtieth canon, however, has been shown to be unauthentic. It appears that the books of the Bible were first made the subject of special study at the Council of Laodicea.

Athanasius of Alexandria (A.D. 298-373)

In his thirty-ninth festal epistle (367), Athanasius is perhaps the first to apply the term canonical to the exact 27 books we now have in our New Testament. He attached the Didache and Shepherd as useful for young Christians, but he distinguished these from the canonical books. He also mentioned the apocryphal books as a third class.

The Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397)

Under the leadership of the influential Augustine, bishop of Hippo, the Council adopted a list of books of Holy Scripture. The Council decreed that nothing be read in the Church under the title of Divine Scripture except the canonical books. The list of books given for the New Testament were: four books of the Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, thirteen epistles of the Apostle Paul, the one epistle of the same to the Hebrews, two epistles of the Apostle Peter, three Epistles of John, one epistle each of James and Jude, and one book of the Apocalypse of John. The decision of the Council of Carthage stabilized the books of the Canon, and it has been recognized by scholars as the climax to the process of canonization. The support of Jerome and Augustine caused the Canon to be accepted wherever Latin was spoken.

The New Testament in the Sixteenth Century

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had come to have supreme authority in all ecclesiastical matters. The official Bible of the Roman Church was the Latin translation by Jerome (the Vulgate). Jerome had distinguished between the canonical and apocryphal books, but he had included the apocryphal books in the Vulgate. During the Middle Ages, doctrines based on the apocryphal books had become established in the Church. The Church hierarchy claimed authority to interpret Scripture. It also claimed for unwritten tradition an authority alongside that of Scripture. The Reformers transferred to the Bible, in its collected form, the infallibility which before had been supposed to reside in the hierarchy of the Church. This action renewed the debate concerning the Canon.

Luther stated that Scripture only, without tradition, was the single and complete source of doctrine. He also said that only the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament and acknowledged books of the New Testament ought to be admitted as authoritative. The Catholic Church was divided in its condemnation of Luther's statement. Some wanted to include oral tradition as a co-ordinate source of doctrine with Scripture. Others wanted to form three classes of acknowledged, disputed, and apocryphal books of the Old Testament. Yet others desired to ratify all divine authority. On April 8, 1546, the decree was issued which stated: "The holy oecumenical and general Council of Trent, . . . following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates all the books of the Old and New Testaments . . . and also traditions pertaining to faith and conduct . . . with an equal feeling of devotion and reverence."⁵

Who was the first to apply the term
canonical to the exact 27 books we have in
our New Testament today? _____

(Athanasius in his 39th festal epistle)

The Third Council of Carthage adopted a
list of books of H _____ S _____
and decreed that nothing be read in the
Church as Divine S _____ except
the _____ books.

(Holy Scripture, Scripture, canonical)

⁵ Westcott, *History of the Canon*, p. 447.

Luther concluded that some books of the New Testament were superior to others. He listed the superior books as John's Gospel, Paul's epistles, especially to the Romans, and 1 Peter. He stated that the Epistle of St. James is a "right strawy epistle" when compared with them, for it has no character of the gospel in it. He placed Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse at the end of his translation since their acceptance into the Canon had been questioned. He concluded that James contradicted Paul by teaching righteousness by works. It fails to mention the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Spirit of Christ. For a book to be canonical, Luther believed that it must preach Christ, His death and resurrection. He considered Revelation to be a "dumb prophecy." In the Lutheran Bible, the Apocrypha was included but was separated from the Holy Scripture.

Calvin passed over 2 and 3 John and the Apocalypse. He accepted Hebrews as among the apostolic epistles, but he attributed it to Peter rather than Paul. He considered 2 Peter to be by a disciple of Peter. He accepted James and Jude, although he recognized they were disputed books. Despite Luther's opposition to James, the Lutheran Church has joined other Protestant groups in accepting the same New Testament Canon.

List the books Luther considered to be superior to the others. _____, _____, _____.

(John's Gospel, Paul's epistles, 1 Peter)

Home Study Exercises

Basic assignment (to be answered by Levels 1, 2, and 3)

1. Name the first two collections of New Testament books. _____
2. Name and give the dates of five early, non-canonical writings which some pastors of that time read in their church services as Scripture. _____

3. Give a Scripture reference which indicates the Pauline Epistles were regarded as Scripture by the time 2 Peter was written. _____
4. Why did Clement of Rome not have an urgent need for authoritative writings? _____

5. Name two Early Church fathers (bishops) in Asia Minor who heard the Apostle John. _____

6. What did Papias regard more highly than sacred books? _____
7. What did Papias say about the works of Mark and Matthew? _____

8. List three points from Justin's writing to the emperor which infer the canonization of the New Testament.
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____

9. What influence did Marcion's teachings and canon have on the formation of a canon by the Church?

10. How was the Muratorian Canon different from our New Testament?

11. Name four bases for selecting the canonical books.

12. What was the primary reason the acceptance of the seven disputed books into the Canon was slow in coming?

13. Which five epistles did Eusebius indicate were disputed?

14. What is the significance of the thirty-ninth festal epistle of Athanasius?

15. What is the importance of the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397)?

16. Which books of the New Testament did Luther consider to be superior?

Supplementary assignment (for Levels 2 and 3)

1. Concerning a witness to the Canon, what sections of the Church are represented by Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria?
2. Write a one-page summary of the development and recognition of the New Testament Canon.

Advanced assignment (for Level 3)

Read pages 179-194 in Geisler and Nix and answer the following questions.

1. Name the five stimuli for canonization.
2. What role did heretics play in the formation of the New Testament Canon? (This question is not necessarily based on Geisler and Nix.)

Seminar Discussion

1. Classify the 27 New Testament books and the five "highly regarded" books according to the divisions of Eusebius.
2. What do you consider to be the earliest date of the Canon of the New Testament?
3. Since the Canon is composed only of inspired writings, are all the books of equal value? What was Luther's view?