

Evidence for the current Canon

Quoted by the church fathers

Clement quotes from: the four gospels, Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews, Titus, James, 1st Peter and Revelation

Eusebius lists the books he said had been traditionally accepted without question as inspired

Disputed books: James, Jude, II Peter, 2nd and 3rd John and Hebrews

Tests for inspired books

Does the book claim inspiration?

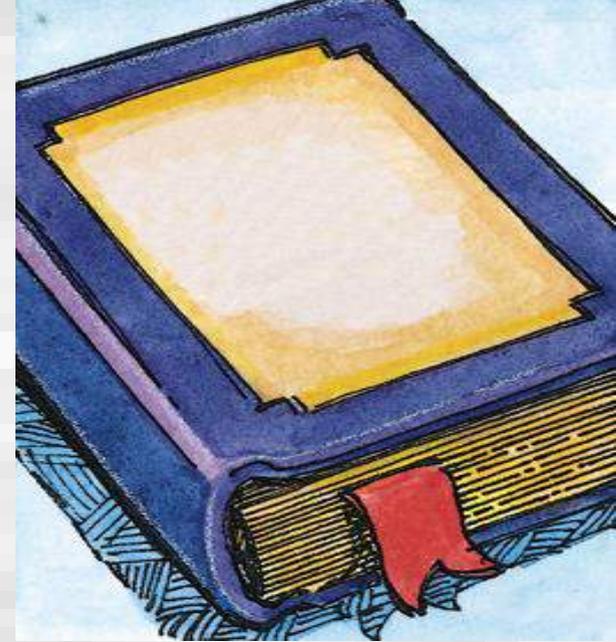
Clement did not claim to be inspired

Is it written by an Apostle or someone closely associated with an Apostle?

Is its content in keeping with Apostolic teaching?

Was it accepted by loyal Churches?

Does it have the ring of “genuineness”?



The Canon

By 175 - 20 of the NT books were considered inspired

By 250 all 27 were considered inspired

The following church councils only confirmed what the church had already accepted - they did not decide on the books to be included in the NT

325 – Council of Nicea – Did not even bring up any issues of the Canon. Discussion was on the nature of Christ.

We should not be surprised

1 Tim. 4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Thess. 2;

We should not be surprised

2 Peter 2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

Gal. 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Early Christian Writings



[New Testament](#) | [Apocrypha](#) | [Gnostics](#) | [Church Fathers](#) | [Other](#)

Browse by range of dating *or* by category. [New Testament](#) — [Apocrypha](#) — [Gnostics](#) — [Church Fathers](#) — [Other](#). *or* use the search box.

30-60	Passion Narrative	120-180	Trimorphic Protennoia	180-220	Bardesanes
40-80	Lost Sayings Gospel Q	120-180	Gospel of Perfection	180-220	Kerygmata Petrou
50-60	1 Thessalonians	120-200	Genna Marias	180-230	Hippolytus of Rome
50-60	Philippians	130-140	Marcion	180-230	Sentences of Sextus
50-60	Galatians	130-150	Aristo of Pella	180-250	1st Apocalypse of James
50-60	1 Corinthians	130-160	Epiphanes On Righteousness	180-250	Gospel of Philip
50-60	2 Corinthians	130-160	Ophite Diagrams	182-202	Clement of Alexandria
50-60	Romans	130-160	2 Clement	185-195	Maximus of Jerusalem
50-60	Philemon	130-170	Gospel of Judas	185-195	Polycrates of Ephesus
50-80	Colossians	130-200	Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus	188-217	Talmud
50-90	Signs Gospel	140-150	Epistula Apostolorum	189-199	Victor I
50-95	Book of Hebrews	140-160	Ptolemy	190-210	Pantaenus
50-120	Didache	140-160	Isidore	190-230	Second Discourse of Great Seth
50-140	Gospel of Thomas	140-170	Fronto	193	Anonymous Anti-Montanist
50-140	Oxyrhynchus 1224 Gospel	140-170	Infancy Gospel of James	193-216	Inscription of Abercius
50-150	Apocalypse of Adam	140-170	Infancy Gospel of Thomas	197-220	Tertullian
50-150	Eugnostos the Blessed	140-180	Gospel of Truth	200-210	Serapion of Antioch
50-200	Sophia of Jesus Christ	150-160	Martyrdom of Polycarp	200-210	Apollonius
65-80	Gospel of Mark	150-160	Justin Martyr	200-220	Caius
70-100	Epistle of James	150-180	Excerpts of Theodotus	200-220	Philostratus
70-120	Egerton Gospel	150-180	Heracleon	200-225	Acts of Thomas
70-160	Gospel of Peter	150-200	Ascension of Isaiah	200-230	Ammonius of Alexandria
70-160	Secret Mark	150-200	Interpretation of Knowledge	200-230	Zostrianos
70-200	Fayyum Fragment	150-200	Testimony of Truth	200-230	Three Steles of Seth

Gnosticism

Gnosis – knowledge

Separation from the material world

Asceticism vs hedonism

Denied the divinity of Christ since nothing in the flesh could be good

Rejected as false teachings by the church

Form Criticism

Form vs Source Criticism

Formgeschichte

Schmidt, Dibelius, Bultman – 1920s

Treat the N.T. Scriptures just like an other form of literature

Assumes:

- No miracles
- No inspiration
- Oral tradition until Gospel writers edited the sayings into stories for the church
- Attempts to “peel back” the layers of oral tradition to get at the original

Form Criticism

Methods:

- 1) Classify the material by form. - any chronology or narrative is rejected
- 2) Recover the original form
- 3) Search for *Sitz im Leben*

Sitz im Leben

1 Tim. 2:11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12
And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a
man, but to be in silence.

1 Cor. 6:9 Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters,
nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves,
nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will
inherit the kingdom of God.

Sitz im Leben

What cultural criteria are you using to determine whether a passage can be dismissed?

If I can dismiss this passage then which passages should stay?

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 2

Examples of Form Criticism

Mark 2:3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—

He said to the paralytic,

11 “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

Examples of Form Criticism

Form Critic:

5-10 are not original because

- No where else does Jesus pronounce forgiveness of sins
- No other association of sin with forgiveness

Answer:

Luke 7:47 - 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”

John 9:1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Jesus is using this miracle to directly challenge the authority of the scribes

Examples of Form Criticism

Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

6 He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

7 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’[b]

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men[c] —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

9 He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’;[d] and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’[e] 11 But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.