Week 2: The New Testament Canon

How was the New Testament formed?

The meaning of “canon”

F. F. Bruce, The Canon of Scripture

- A straight rod used as a rule might be marked in units of length (like a modern ruler marked in inches or centimeters); from this practice the Greek word kanon came to be used of the series of such marks, and hence to be used in the general sense of ‘________’ or ‘________.’ It is this last usage that underlies the term ‘the canon of scripture.’ . . . .

- While the ‘canon’ of scripture means the list of books accepted as holy scripture, the other sense of canon—________ or __________—has rubbed off on this one, so that the canon of scripture is understood to be the list of books which are acknowledged to be, in a unique sense, the rule of belief and practice.

The Meaning of ‘New Testament’

- The earliest references to the latter portion of the Christian Scriptures as the “________ ____________” are:
  - In Greek-Clement of Alexandria (150-215)
  - In Latin-Tertullian of Carthage (160-220)

- In Latin, the Greek term for “covenant” can be translated with either instrumentum (legal document) or testamentum (a will or testament). Tertullian used both to refer to
the Christian Scriptures and probably preferred the first of the two terms although the latter was more commonly used in his day (Against Marcion 4.1.)

- The terms indicates that Matthew-Revelation reveals the “_____ ____________” promised by Moses and the Prophets

**The New Testament as “Scripture”**

- Paul referred to _________ tradition as “Scripture” (1 Cor. 9:8-14)
- Peter referred to _________ letters as “Scripture” (2 Peter 3:15)
- The apostolic church __________ the NT documents as Scripture (Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:3) by reading them in corporate __________
- This high regard for the writings associated with the apostles continued among the “apostolic fathers,” leaders of the church in 2nd and 3rd generation Christianity

**Early Church’s Regard for the New Testament as “Scripture”**

- Papias (early 2d Sent.) mentions Matthew and Mark by name and writes a 5-vol. ____________ on the teachings of Jesus preserved in the Gospels
- Clement of Rome (AD 96) quotes the Sermon on the Mount and ascribes divine ____________ to it
- 2 Clement (AD 100-150) quotes Matthew repeatedly as “___________”
- Epistle of Barnabas (early 2d cent.) introduces quote from Matthew with “____ _____ ____ ____________”
- Polycarp quotes Ephesians as “Scripture”
- Basilides, an early gnostic leader contemporary with Polycarp, quotes Paul’s letters as “Scripture” and introduces quotes from Paul with “as it is written”
- Hegesippus of Palestine (AD 165-75) reports that the Gospels (and probably the other apostolic writings) were ____________ alongside the OT in churches everywhere
- Justin Martyr (c. AD 150) ascribes inspiration to the writings of the Apostles, says they were _______ publicly in church, and uses “it is written” with NT quotations

**THE FOUR-FOLD GOSPEL**

The canonization of the four gospels
Production of the Four Gospels

- As the apostles were martyred, they recognized the importance of preserving their testimony about the Lord in writing
- Mark-late _____
- Matthew-early _____
- Luke-early _____
- John-late _____
- The Gospels were accepted as authoritative and quoted as __________ from the moment they were produced

Distribution of the Gospels

- Initially churches in specific locations had access to only one Gospel
- Soon the Gospels circulated widely

Distribution and Affirmation of the Four Gospels

- Papias (60-130) described background of Mark and Matthew and wrote a commentary on the Gospels
- Justin Martyr (100-165) wrote that Mark preserved “__________ of Peter.” He referred to multiple written Gospels as “__________ of the apostles” and said they were read in church alongside the OT
- Tatian (110-172) produced his Diatessaron, a __________ of the four Gospels

Early Manuscripts

- P75 (Luke and John)
- P45 (Gospels and Acts)

Close of the Gospel Canon

- Irenaus (late 2d cent.) described in detail the __________ of the Four Gospels
- He argued that God “has given us the gospel in __________ form, but held together by one Spirit.”
• He added, “They are guilty of vanity and ignorance, and of audacity also, who reject the form of the gospel and introduce either _______ or ________ faces of the gospels . . .”

Cover of Gospels (1000-1050)

• This ivory plaque depicts in symbolic form the four writers of the Gospels surrounding the Lamb of God: Matthew by the winged man, Mark by the winged lion, Luke by the winged ox, and John by the eagle. The character of these symbols is based upon the vision of Saint John in the Book of Revelation (4:6-7). Originally this plaque would have covered a deluxe binding of a now-lost Gospel book. (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

PAUL’S LETTERS

Canonization of the Pauline Corpus

• Like the Gospels, _________ _____________ first circulated singly

• Even before Paul’s death, the churches were _________ and _____________ Paul’s letters and _____________ them in corporate worship

• Before the end of the first century, all of Paul’s letters had been gathered into a single _________________ (2 Peter 3:15) p46

• AD 200

• Contain _____ of Paul’s letters to churches plus _____________

• Possibly contained Pastorals and Philemon

Combination of Gospels and Apostle

• Around AD 140, Marcion published his edition of the NT which he called “_________ _______ ____________.”

• Most scholars believe that his NT was a revision produced in _____________ to the circulation of the _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ together among the orthodox churches

THE MURATORIAN FRAGMENT

• The _______ _______________ _______ of accepted documents
• Original text probably dates to late ______ century

• First part of text is missing

• Affirms [Matthew, Mark], Luke, John, Acts, Paul’s thirteen letters, Jude, 1 & 2 John, and Revelation

• Does not mention 1 & 2 ______, James, ______ ________, and Hebrews

• Includes Revelation of ________ and Wisdom of ________________

**Early Church Fathers**

• Origen (185-254)
  o ________________ : 4 Gospels, Acts, 14 letters of Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation
  o ________________ : Hebrews, 2 Peter, James, 2 and 3 John, and Jude

• Eusebius (c. 325)
  o __________________________ : 4 Gospels, Acts, letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation
  o Disputed by ________, approved by __________ : James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John
  o ________________ : Acts of Paul, Shepherd, Revelation of Peter, Barnabas, Didache
  o Publication of Eusebius’ canon

**COLLECTIONS IN EARLY UNCIALS**

• What do the surviving manuscripts tell us about the canon?

  **Sinaiticus (4th Cent)**
  **Vaticanus (4th cent)**
  **Alexandrinus (5th cent)**
Early Church Fathers

- Athanasius (367) first to list the 27 books of our NT without making any __________ between them
- Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) listed all books except ______________ as universally accepted
- Amphiloctius of Iconium (4th cent) listed the 27 books as “the most unerring __________ of the divinely inspired Scriptures”
- Rufinus of Aquileia (345-410) same list as Athansius
- Jerome (383) Vulgate contained 27 NT books
- Augustine (354-430) accepted the 27 books

Church Councils Dealing with Canon

- Council of __________ (393)
- Third Council of ___________ (397)
- Sixth Council of Carthage (419)
- Pope ___________ I (405)

Criteria for Canonicity

- __________
- __________
- __________
- __________
- __________