The Recognition of the Biblical Canon:

A Brief Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the historical recognition of the biblical canon, focusing on key councils such as the Synod of Hippo (AD 393)[1] and the Councils of Carthage (AD 397 and 419).[2] It analyzes the distinct textual traditions of the Septuagint (LXX)[3] and Masoretic Text (MT)[4] while addressing the evolving criteria used to determine canonical authority—such as antiquity, apostolic origin, universal acceptance, and orthodoxy.[5] Additionally, it highlights the role of figures like Origen in addressing textual discrepancies, the influence of heretical movements such as Marcionism, and the impact of the Protestant Reformation in shaping the differing canonical traditions of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox communities.[6] This paper argues that the recognition of the canon was a deliberate, community-based process aimed at preserving the integrity of Scripture rather than an arbitrary decision imposed by councils.[7]

[1] Synod of Hippo, *Canon Recognition and Christian Texts*, ed. John Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45.

[2] A. Brown, trans., *Decisions of the African Councils: The Synod of Hippo and the Councils of Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 72–73.

[3] Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), xx.

[4] Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 120.

[5] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 98.

[6] J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: Longman, 2006), 201.

[7] Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 136.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a remarkable anthology, revered as the divinely inspired Word of God and foundational to faith and culture across millennia. Its composition reflects a tapestry of divine revelation recorded by nearly 40 authors[8] over 1,500 years, writing in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek across three continents—Asia, Africa, and Europe.[9] The authors, ranging from shepherds, prophets, and kings to fishermen, tax collectors, and apostles, represent a diversity of backgrounds and experiences that underscore the Bible's universal relevance and profound unity. As detailed in Appendix D, the human contributors to Scripture include figures such as Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, Paul, and John. This list reflects not only the scope of human agency in its authorship but also the central role of divine providence in shaping its message. This multiplicity of voices unified under the Holy Spirit's guidance offers a compelling testament to the Bibles authority and its enduring impact on faith and practice across millennia.

The process by which the books of the Bible were recognized as authoritative and inspired Scripture—the canonization of the Bible—was equally remarkable. Contrary to a common misconception, no single ecumenical council definitively established the canon for all Christians. Instead, the recognition and affirmation of the canon unfolded over centuries through a series of councils, synods, and theological debates. This gradual

[8] The figure of approximately 40 authors applies specifically to the 66 books of the Protestant Bible. Other Christian traditions, such as Catholic and Orthodox, include additional books (e.g., the Deuterocanonical books) in their canons, which would result in a greater number of authors.

[9] Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov, eds., *Exploring the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 37.

process was influenced by broader theological and cultural tensions, such as the divide between Jewish and Christian communities over the use of the Septuagint.[10]

Unlike the Quran, whose compilation under Caliph Uthman (c. AD 650) involved the deliberate destruction of alternative versions to preserve a single authorized text,[11] the Bible's development followed a decentralized process. Uthman's efforts to standardize the Quran succeeded in establishing a uniform text for the Islamic world through an authoritative and controlled approach. In contrast, no single individual or council ever held similar control over the transmission and acceptance of the New Testament.

The Old Testament, for its part, was largely settled by the time of Jesus, with the Jewish Scriptures already widely recognized and used within the Jewish community, though differences existed in textual traditions, such as those found in the Septuagint versus the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

For the New Testament, the widespread and rapid dissemination of writings among early Christian communities ensured that no single person or group could enforce a strict version. Individual congregations often possessed portions of the New Testament, such as one Gospel or a few letters, which were copied and shared freely among believers. It was not uncommon for someone with a copy of the Gospel of John to leave their copy behind while transcribing the Gospel of Mark. This organic sharing and multiplication of texts made the suppression of alternative copies virtually impossible and fostered a robust textual tradition.

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[10] Timothy H. Lim, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57.

[11] John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 239–240.

This decentralized process ensured that the New Testament's transmission was shaped by the collective stewardship of the Church rather than the authority of any one figure or council. The canonization of the Bible thus reflects a community-driven affirmation of texts recognized as inspired and authoritative over centuries, rather than an imposed or controlled decision.

This paper examines the key historical moments in recognizing the books included in the Bible, exploring both Old and New Testament developments. It investigates the role of influential figures like Origen, whose Hexapla sought to resolve discrepancies between Hebrew and Greek texts, and the impact of early councils like those of Hippo and Carthage in affirming the canon.[12] For a more detailed discussion, see my study titled *Septuagint and Masoretic Text: A Comparative Study of Textual Divergences and Their Theological Implications*.[13] Additionally, it considers the practical and theological concerns that shaped the canon, such as the challenge posed by heretical movements like Marcionism, which forced the Church to clarify its authoritative texts.

Of particular interest is the role of the Septuagint, the Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Widely used by early Christians and quoted extensively in the New Testament,[14] the Septuagint became a point of contention between Jewish and Christian

[12] Origen, *Hexapla: A Critical Edition*, ed. Emanuel Tov and Robert Kraft (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 223–224.

[13] D. Gene Williams Jr., *Septuagint and Masoretic Text: A Comparative Study of Textual Divergences and Their Theological Implications*, accessed January 2, 2024, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

[14] Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 123.

leaders.[15] contributing to the distinct trajectories of the Christian and Jewish canons.[16] Finally, the paper explores how the canon continued to evolve in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and how different branches of Christianity—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—maintain distinct canonical traditions.[17]

II. THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON

In the early centuries, the Church relied on various texts that were recognized as authoritative. These included the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and the writings of the apostles and early Christian leaders (New Testament). However, formal recognition of a closed canon took time, and the process was shaped by both theological and practical concerns.

The Old Testament Canon: The Septuagint vs. the Masoretic Text

The word *"canon"* means *"standard"* or *"rule."* It is derived from a Hebrew word קָנֶה (*qāneh*) (Ezk 40:3 Rod)[18] denoting a reed or cane later transliterated in the Greek as κανών (*kanōn*) (Gal 6:16 Rule).[19] Hence it means something straight or something to keep straight; and hence also a rule or something ruled or measured. It came to be applied to the Scriptures, to denote that they contained the authoritative rule of faith

[15] Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 1:234.

[16] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 142.

[17] Albert Pietersma, *The Septuagint as Scripture: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretations* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 88.

[18] H.B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 299.

[19] Lee Martin McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 56.

and practice, the standard of doctrine and duty. A book is said to be of canonical authority when it has a right to take a place with the other books which contain a revelation of the Divine will of God.[20]

Let us start in the Old Testament (OT) first before sifting through the New Testament (NT). Today the majority of Protestants accept the Masoretic Text (MT) as authoritative.[21] I am Protestant but find the writings of the early church fathers inspiring. Reading these has made me question whether or not we have the same Hebrew text as our forefathers in faith had.[22] Studying the Dead Sea Scrolls really solidified my suspicions.[23]

I then started studying the history of the Septuagint (LXX).[24] I believe it is appropriate and beneficial to look into the Greek translation of the Hebrew, especially since out of the 418 OT quotations in the NT 340 (~81%) are found to match more closely to the LXX, 33 (~8%) quotations are found to match more closely to the MT, and 45 (~10%) quotations match both the LXX and the MT.[25]

The Story of the Septuagint

The Septuagint, derived from the Latin word for *"septuaginta,"* which means seventy, can be a confusing term since ideally, it refers to the third-century BC Greek

[20] *Letter of Aristeas*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Harper, 1951), 39.

[21] Philo of Alexandria, *Life of Moses*, trans. F.H. Colson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 2: 31.

[22] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 118.

[23] James Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Texts* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 55.

[24] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 47–48.

[25] Gregory Chirichigno and Gleason L. Archer, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*

translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, executed in Alexandria, Egypt.[26] But the full story behind the translation and the various stages, amplifications, and modifications to the collection we now call the Septuagint is complicated.[27]

The earliest and best-known source for the story of the Septuagint is the *Letter of Aristeas*,[28] a lengthy document that recalls how Ptolemy II, desiring to augment his library in Alexandria, Egypt, commissioned a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Ptolemy wrote to the chief priest, Eleazar, in Jerusalem, and arranged for six translators from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.[29] The seventy-two (altered in a few later versions to seventy or seventy-five) translators arrived in Egypt to Ptolemy's gracious hospitality and translated the Torah (also called the Pentateuch: the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures) in seventy-two days.[30] Opinions as to when this occurred differ, ranging from 282 to about 250 BC.[31]

Philo of Alexandria confirms that only the Torah was commissioned to be translated,[32] and some modern scholars have concurred, noting a kind of consistency in the translation style of the Greek Pentateuch.[33] Over the course of the three centuries following Ptolemy's project, however, other books of the Hebrew Scriptures were

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[26] Swete, *Old Testament in Greek*, 327

[27] *Letter of Aristeas*, 48.

[28] Pietersma, *The Septuagint as Scripture*, 35.

[29] Philo, *Life of Moses*, 2:41.

[30] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 127.

[31] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 95.

[32] Barr, *Typology of Literalism*, 77.

[33] Pietersma and Wright, *New English Translation of the Septuagint*, xxi.

translated into Greek.[34] It is not altogether clear which book was translated when and in what locale.[35] It seems that sometimes a Hebrew book was translated more than once, or that a particular Greek translation was revised.[36] In other cases, a work was composed afresh in Greek, yet was included in subsequent collections of the Scriptures.[37] By observing technical terms and translation styles, by comparing the Greek versions to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and by comparing them to Hellenistic literature, scholars are in the process of stitching together an elusive history of the translations that eventually found their way into collections.

The Septuagint's Role in Early Christianity and Judaism

By Philo's time, the memory of the seventy-two translators was vibrant and an important part of Jewish life in Alexandria (*Philo, Life of Moses* 2.25–44).[38] Pilgrims, both Jews and Gentiles, celebrated a yearly festival on the island where they conducted their work.[39] The celebrity of the Septuagint and its translators remained strong in Christianity. The earliest Christian references to the translation, from the mid-second century (Justin Martyr and Irenaeus), credit the entire Old Testament in Greek, whether originally written in Hebrew or not, to the seventy-two.[40] Thus, Christians conflated

[34] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 85.

[35] James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 62.

[36] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 136.

[37] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 145.

[38] *Letter of Aristeas*, 52.

[39] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 134.

[40] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 78.

(combined into one) the Septuagint with their Old Testament canon—a canon that included the so-called Apocrypha or Deuterocanon.[41]

Jewish rabbis, particularly Pharisees, reacted to the Christian appropriation of the Septuagint by producing fresh translations of their Scriptures (e.g., Aquila in AD 128 or Symmachus in the late 2nd century AD)[42] and discouraging the use of the Septuagint.[43] By the second century, Christian and Jewish leaders had cemented their positions on the form and character of the OT Scriptures. Christians largely embraced the prophetic character of their Septuagint, while Jews rejected it.[44]

Origen and the Hexapla

In the third century, the great Christian scholar Origen was keenly interested in the textual differences between the Hebrew and the Greek.[45] He set out to arrange the Church's Old Testament in six columns:

- The Hebrew.
- A Greek transliteration of the Hebrew.
- Aquila's translation.
- Symmachus' translation.
- The Septuagint (LXX).
- Theodotion's version.

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[41] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 120.

[42] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. G.A. Williamson (London: Penguin, 1989), 3:25.

[43] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 111.

[44] ohn Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 201.

[45] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 167.

In the third century, the great Christian scholar, Origen keenly interested in the textual differences between the Hebrew and the Greek, set out to arrange the Church's Old Testament in six columns: (1) the Hebrew, (2) a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew, (3) Aquila's translation, (4) Symmachus' translation, (5) the Septuagint (LXX), and (6) Theodotion.[46] The volumes were compiled in Caesarea, probably between AD 230 and 240, a project funded by Origen's patron.[47]

The resultant work, called the Hexapla (*"six-fold"*), was massive, and has perished except for fragments.[48] Origen was a very careful scholar, but he did not observe modern editorial conventions. His version of the LXX draws from several different manuscript families and embraces readings that bring the text closer to the Hebrew text of his day.[49] Thus, this fifth LXX column, while establishing the first *"standardized text"* of the Christian Church, created problems for modern scholars who would seek to recover a pre-Christian version of the LXX.[50]

For examples of the six columns and a map illustrating the Hexapla's influence on later manuscript traditions, see my study, *Septuagint and Masoretic Text: A Comparative Study of Textual Divergences and Their Theological Implications*.[51]

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[46] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 152.

[47] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 125.

[48] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:27.

[49] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 188.

[50] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 203

[51] Williams, *Septuagint and Masoretic Text*, accessed January 2, 2024.

Further recensions (revisions of text) of the Greek text in the fourth century are attested. Hesychius (fl. 3/4th c.) is said to have created a recension for the Church in Egypt; Lucian (d. AD 312), in Antioch.[52] Some scholars posit other recensions from this period. Thus, we find some Greek Church Fathers quoting the same Old Testament texts, but in very different forms.[53] There is no indication, however, that this troubled Church leadership.[54]

The insistence on letter-for-letter, word-for-word accuracy in the Scriptures was a feature that was not to emerge in Christian thought for many centuries and only then after a similar insistence appeared in Judaism and Islam.[55] As far as most early Christians were concerned, any Greek version of the Old Testament read in the Church merited the term *Septuagint*.[56]

Textual Divergences Between the LXX and MT

The Septuagint preserves several readings that differ significantly from the later Masoretic Text. Key examples include:

- **Jeremiah**: The LXX version is approximately one-eighth shorter and follows a different chapter arrangement than the MT.[57]

[52] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 185.

[53] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 137.

[54] Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 95.

[55] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 245.

[56] Pietersma, *The Septuagint as Scripture*, 107.

[57] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 196.

- **Job**: The LXX text is about one-sixth shorter and concludes with an alternate ending not found in the MT.[58]
- **Esther**: Nearly half of the verses present in the LXX are missing from the MT.[59]
- **Exodus**: The LXX and MT diverge in some places, with variations in verse order, word choices, and the inclusion or exclusion of specific material.[60]
- **Isaiah 7:14**: The Septuagint (LXX) translates the Hebrew term *ʿalmâ* as *parthenos* (*"virgin"*)[61], which is cited in Matthew 1:23. While the Masoretic Text (MT) uses *ʿalmâ*, often understood as *"young woman,"*[62] the cultural and linguistic context suggests the term inherently includes the assumption of virginity.[63]

These differences illustrate the fluid nature of the Hebrew text during the Second Temple period, further corroborated by the Dead Sea Scrolls.[64] For the early Church, the Septuagint's theological significance outweighed its textual inconsistencies, as seen in the New Testament authors' preference for LXX quotations.[65]

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[58] Swete, *Old Testament in Greek*, 245.

[59] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 212.

[60] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 151.

[61] Pietersma and Wright, *New English Translation of the Septuagint*, 87.

[62] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:39.

[63] D. Gene Williams Jr., *Almah, Bethulah, and the Septuagint: A Defense of the LXX's Reliability in Biblical Linguistics and Theology*, accessed December 5, 2024, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

[64] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 227.

[65] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 157.

Wherever Christianity spread, translations of the Hebrew Scriptures were made based on the LXX. It became the basis for translations into Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, Old Latin, and Old Church Slavonic.[66] However, it was not the basis for the Syriac *Peshitta*, a pre-Christian translation directly from the Hebrew, nor St. Jerome's Latin *Vulgate*, which also relied on Hebrew manuscripts.[67]

Modern scholars have developed several critical editions of the Septuagint to recover its earliest form. The *Göttingen Septuagint* (1931–present) is the most comprehensive and critical edition, drawing on over 120 manuscripts.[68] Meanwhile, Rahlfs's edition (1935) remains popular due to its accessibility, even though it is less critical.[69]

III. THE PROVIDENTIAL ROLE OF THE LXX IN THE GREEK WORLD

The Septuagint (LXX) was not merely a translation to accommodate non-Hebrew-speaking Jews; it represented a pivotal cultural and theological intersection between Hebrew revelation and Greek intellectual precision. By translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Koine Greek, God facilitated a deeper engagement with the Scriptures for both Jews and Gentiles. This translation of Hebrew truths into the lingua franca of the time ensured that the gospel message resonated far beyond the boundaries of Israel, penetrating the

[66] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 236.

[67] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 213.

[68] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 298.

[69] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 176.

heart of the Greco-Roman world and could be articulated with the rigor of Greek thought.[70]

During this period, Hellenistic Judaism flourished, producing texts such as *Enoch* and *Jubilees* in Greek, reflecting the intermingling of Greek philosophical frameworks with Hebrew theology—a process I term *Conceptual Amalgamation*: the blending of distinct theological and philosophical frameworks into a cohesive whole. The precision of Greek grammar and vocabulary allowed for a nuanced expression of concepts like justice (*dikaiosynē*), grace (*charis*), and covenant (*diathēkē*), making these ideas accessible to a broader audience.[71] This was no historical accident but a providential preparation for the first century A.D., ensuring that the gospel message would resonate within the cultural and intellectual milieu of the Greco-Roman world.

The Apostle Paul epitomized this divine preparation. As a Pharisee trained in Hebrew theology and deeply familiar with Greek philosophy, Paul's ability to navigate both worlds made him an unparalleled instrument for the spread of Christianity. His writings, saturated with both Jewish scriptural references and Hellenistic rhetorical techniques, testify to the providential alignment of cultures and languages.[72]

Had the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament been confined solely to Hebrew or Aramaic, the gospel's dissemination would have been significantly hindered. A Hebrew-only text would have limited the reach of these revelations to a small ethnic

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[70] Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 75–77.

[71] Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12–13.

[72] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 104.

group, while Greek's universal accessibility during this period enabled rapid evangelization. This dual preparation—rooting the Scriptures in Hebrew truths and translating them into the common tongue of the Hellenistic world—illustrates the providential alignment of language, culture, and theology.[73]

The Septuagint's development demonstrates a divine strategy of *Theological Consolidation* and *Conceptual Amalgamation*, as discussed in my paper *Tracing Satan's Development: Theological Consolidation, Conceptual Amalgamation, and Greek Influence*.[74] This process integrated diverse theological ideas and cultural frameworks into a cohesive narrative. It not only preserved the depth of Hebrew theology but also adapted it for engagement with the broader Hellenistic world. The Septuagint's creation and adoption reflect the divine wisdom of preparing the ancient world for Christ.

By aligning the theological depth of Hebrew revelation with the precision of Greek philosophy, the LXX exemplifies *Theological Consolidation*, *Conceptual Amalgamation*, and Greek Influence. This alignment shaped the New Testament's articulation of the gospel and ensured its accessibility to the diverse audiences of the Greco-Roman world. The LXX remains a testament to God's sovereign plan to unite diverse peoples under the transformative message of salvation.

[73] F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 51–52.

[74] D. Gene Williams Jr., *Tracing Satan's Development: Theological Consolidation, Conceptual Amalgamation, and Greek Influence: A Brief Historical Overview*, accessed December 6, 2024, https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr; https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html.

V. KEY COUNCILS AND CANONICAL RECOGNITION

The Synod of Hippo and the Councils of Carthage

The Synod of Hippo (AD 393) and the Councils of Carthage (AD 397 and 419) played crucial roles in recognizing the 27-book New Testament canon.[75] These councils did not invent the canon but formalized what had already been recognized by Christian communities through consistent use.[76]

The Council of Rome and Constantine's Influence

The Council of Rome (AD 382) also confirmed the canon.[77] Constantine's commissioning of 50 Bibles[78] for the churches in Constantinople helped standardize the text.[79] Key manuscripts, such as *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*, reflect the state of the canon during this period.[80] While these codices contain the 27 books of the New Testament, they also include additional texts no longer considered canonical by Protestant traditions, such as the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.[81]

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[75] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 389.

[76] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 205.

[77] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 297.

[78] Constantine's commissioning of 50 Bibles, described by Eusebius (*Life of Constantine* 4.36), would have required extraordinary resources. Modern estimates suggest the cost to produce a single Bible like the Codex Sinaiticus could range from $500,000 to $750,000, with the entire commission costing approximately $30 million in today's terms. Each Bible likely required the parchment from an entire herd of around 50 sheep.

[79] Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 215.

[80] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 341.

[81] Pietersma and Wright, *New English Translation of the Septuagint*, xxii.

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON: GRADUAL RECOGNITION

Early Christian Writings and Criteria for Canonization

The writing, selecting, and canonizing of the New Testament (NT) was a gradual process. The early church relied on five key criteria to determine which texts were canonical:

- **Ancient**: The text had to originate from the earliest period of the Church, ideally from or near the apostolic era. This requirement ensured its authenticity as a product of the foundational period of the Christian faith. Later writings, which could introduce innovations or stray from the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, were excluded. By establishing antiquity as a criterion, the Church maintained continuity with the earliest Christian witness.[82]
- **Apostolicity**: The text had to demonstrate a clear connection to the apostles, either through direct authorship, endorsement, or alignment with their teachings. Provenance—a traceable history confirming its apostolic origin—was essential in establishing its authenticity. This criterion ensured that the text faithfully reflected the theological foundation laid by the apostles, safeguarding the integrity of their message.[83]
- **Catholic:** The text had to be widely recognized and used across diverse Christian communities, demonstrating its universal significance for teaching, worship, and edification. Books accepted only in isolated regions or by fringe groups were excluded. This widespread acceptance confirmed the text's ability to resonate

[82] Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 128.

[83] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 239.

across different cultural and theological contexts, fostering unity within the early Church.[84]

- **Orthodox**: The text had to align with the core faith and teachings handed down by the apostles, adhering to the essential truths of Christianity. This included fidelity to doctrines universally affirmed by the early Church, ensuring that the text upheld sound theology and proper practice. Writings that deviated into heretical teachings, such as Gnosticism, or that distorted apostolic tradition were excluded. By requiring doctrinal fidelity and theological consistency, the Church safeguarded its unity and preserved a solid foundation for worship, teaching, and discipleship.[85]

These texts were entrusted to the apostolic community and their successors, ensuring their preservation and authoritative role within the early Church. Apostles like Paul explicitly instructed that their letters be read publicly and shared among churches (e.g., Colossians 4:16), establishing a precedent for their use in teaching and worship. As these texts were copied and widely disseminated, their authenticity and authority were safeguarded by the consistent testimony of early church leaders such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp. These leaders frequently cited or alluded to New Testament writings within decades of their composition, providing a living chain of custody that affirmed their apostolic origin and theological reliability.

While the earliest Christians relied on various texts, including the Gospels, Paul's letters, and other apostolic writings, a fully closed New Testament canon did not exist in

[84] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 242.

[85] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 180.

the first few centuries. Clement of Rome (c. AD 96) quotes from Paul's epistles,[86] and Ignatius of Antioch (c. AD 107) references the Gospels and Acts. Papias of Hierapolis (c. AD 120–130) provides early testimony regarding the authorship of the Gospels, particularly attributing Mark's Gospel to Peter's recollections and affirming Matthew's authorship of a Hebrew account of Jesus' teachings.[87] By c. AD 180-200,[88] the Muratorian Fragment lists 22 of the 27 books now recognized as part of the New Testament, omitting Hebrews, James, and 1 & 2 Peter.[89] This gradual recognition process underscores the organic yet deliberate manner in which the canon was affirmed, with the apostolic community and their successors playing a central role in safeguarding and transmitting the Scriptures.[90]

Controversies and Heretical Challenges

Heresies such as Marcionism catalyzed the need for a clearly defined canon. Marcion (c. AD 140) rejected the Old Testament and created a truncated New Testament consisting of Luke and some of Paul's epistles. This prompted the Church to clarify which texts were authoritative.[91] Popular writings such as the *Gospel of Thomas* and the

[86] Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, trans. J.B. Lightfoot, ed. Michael W. Holmes, in *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 13..

[87] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.14–17.

[88] Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1:3.

[89] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 345.

[90] Ibid., 39–41.

[91] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 190.

Shepherd of Hermas were ultimately excluded because they failed to meet the necessary criteria for inclusion.[92]

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. AD 320) categorized New Testament writings into four groups:

- **Recognized (Homologoumena)**: These were universally accepted books that formed the core of the New Testament canon. This category includes the Gospels, Acts, Paul's epistles, 1 Peter, and 1 John. These texts were widely used in worship, teaching, and doctrinal discussions and faced little to no controversy regarding their authority or authenticity.[93]
- **Disputed (Antilegomena)**: These books were sometimes questioned by certain communities or individuals but were eventually included in the canon. Examples include James, Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 & 3 John. Reasons for dispute included questions of apostolic authorship, limited circulation, or content that some viewed as doctrinally ambiguous. However, over time, their acceptance became more widespread.[94]
- **Spurious (Notha)**: These writings were deemed valuable for moral or devotional purposes but were not considered inspired or authoritative Scripture. Examples include the *Acts of Paul* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. While respected in certain

[92] Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 173.

[93] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:41.

[94] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 277.

Christian communities, these texts failed to meet the criteria for inclusion in the canon.[95]

- **Heretical (Apocrypha)**:[96] These texts, such as the *Gospel of Peter* and the *Gospel of Thomas*, were outright rejected due to their doctrinal errors, dubious origins, or association with heretical movements like Gnosticism. These writings often presented views incompatible with the apostolic faith and were excluded to protect the theological integrity of the Church.[97]

VI. DIVERGING CANONS AND THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Traditions

The Protestant Reformation introduced further changes to the canon. Martin Luther questioned the inclusion of books like Hebrews, James, and Revelation,[98] though these remained in most Protestant Bibles. Luther also attempted to remove the book of Esther in its entirety from the cannon to the deuterocanonical.[99] His reasoning was without the deuterocanonical additions to the Book of Esther, the text of Esther never mentions God.[100]

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[95] Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 200.

[96] The term *Apocrypha* originally meant "hidden" but has been applied differently over time. While it often refers to texts like Tobit or Wisdom of Solomon in Catholic and Orthodox traditions, Eusebius did not use this term for heretical writings but instead referred to them as *spurious* or *heretical*

[97] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 279.

[98] Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 14.

[99] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 290.

[100] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 312.

The Council of Trent (AD 1546) reaffirmed the Roman Catholic canon, including the Deuterocanonical books.[101] In contrast, the Orthodox Church finalized its canon at the Synod of Jerusalem (AD 1672), which also included the Apocrypha.[102]

In 1825, the British and Foreign Bible Society effectively closed the Protestant canon by excluding the Apocrypha, resulting in the 66 books used by most Protestant churches today.[103]

VII. CONCLUSION

The recognition of the biblical canon was a gradual and complex process shaped by theological, historical, and cultural factors. Key councils, such as the Synod of Hippo and the Councils of Carthage, played essential roles in affirming the New Testament canon,[104] but the influence of earlier texts like the Septuagint cannot be overlooked.[105] Furthermore, heretical challenges like Marcionism spurred the Church to clarify its canon, while the Protestant Reformation further reshaped the understanding of canonical texts within Christian communities.[106]

These developments demonstrate the dynamic nature of Scripture within Christian tradition, with each tradition—Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox—defining its canon

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[101] Council of Trent. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*. Translated by H. J. Schroeder. Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978, 39.

[102] Synod of Jerusalem. *Acts and Decisions*. Translated by D. Cummings. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006, 71.

[103] McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 425.

[104] Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 213.

[105] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 276.

[106] McDonald, *Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 332.

differently over time.[107] Ultimately, the formation of the biblical canon reflects the Church's commitment to preserving the integrity of the Scriptures and ensuring their alignment with apostolic teaching. The canon's development was not merely a bureaucratic decision but the culmination of a long and deliberate process aimed at preserving the faith's essential teachings. While the canon differs across traditions, the enduring message of Scripture remains central to the Christian faith, uniting believers in their commitment to the inspired Word of God.[108]

[107] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 326.

[108] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 318.

APPENDIX A: KEY MOMENTS IN CANON FORMATION

1. **AD 96**: Clement of Rome, a disciple of the Apostle John, quotes Christ three times—two from Scripture and one from oral tradition. He quotes from Apostle Paul's writings as well.

2. **c. AD 96**: *Didache* seems to call Matthew's Gospel *"Scripture"* and places a curse on those who change it.

3. **AD 107**: Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostle John, quotes Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians.

4. **AD 110**: Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, quotes the New Testament over 100 times and the Old Testament 12 times. He quotes three Gospels (excluding John), Acts, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philemon, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, 1 Peter, and 1 & 3 John.

5. **c. AD 125**: Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, was said by Irenaeus to be a friend of Polycarp and possibly heard the Apostle John preach. He quoted from all four Gospels, Revelation, 1 John, 1 Peter, and some of Paul's epistles.

6. **AD 144**: Marcion, an anti-Semite, removed all scriptures with Jewish elements, leaving only parts of Luke and Paul's epistles (excluding Hebrews).

7. **AD 180**: Justin Martyr quotes all four Gospels and Revelation. He refers to the Gospels as *"memoirs of the Apostles."*

8. **AD 180**: Irenaeus declared there are four—and only four—Gospels. He quoted from 23 of the 27 New Testament books, excluding Philemon, James, 2 Peter, and 3 John.

9. **AD 180–200**: Clement of Alexandria quoted 22 of the 27 New Testament books. He did not quote Philemon, James, 2 Peter, or 3 John. He also accepted as divine the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Traditions of Matthias*, *Preaching of Peter*, *1 Clement*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Didache*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, and *Apocalypse of Peter*.

10. **c. AD 200**: The Muratorian Fragment lists 22 of the 27 New Testament books. It does not quote Hebrews, 1 & 2 Peter, or James, and mentions one Epistle of John as divine without specifying which one. It also accepts the *Wisdom of Solomon* (from the Apocrypha), *Apocalypse of Peter*, and *Shepherd of Hermas* (stating it is good for reading but not Scripture). It quotes Revelation but notes that some do not want it read in churches.

11. **c. AD 200**: P46 Codex contains 86 leaves, with only Pauline letters—Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians—but omits the pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus).

12. **AD 210–220**: Tertullian of Carthage quoted 23 of the 27 New Testament books but did not quote 2 Peter, James, or 2 & 3 John. He credited Hebrews to Barnabas, cited Jude to support the *Book of Enoch*, and accepted *Shepherd of Hermas* as Scripture. He explicitly rejected the *Acts of Paul*.

13. **AD 250**: Origen of Alexandria quoted all 27 New Testament books but expressed doubts about James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and 2 Timothy. He also accepted the *Gospel of Peter*, *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Acts of Paul*, *1 Clement*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Didache*, and *Shepherd of Hermas*. He credited Hebrews to Luke or Clement of Rome instead of Paul, although he believed it reflected Paul's thoughts. Origen rejected the *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of the Twelve*, *Gospel of Basilides*, *Gospel of Matthias*, *Gospel of the Egyptians*, and *Preaching of Peter*.

14. **AD 300**: Codex Claramontanus lists 23 of the 27 New Testament books. Philemon, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Hebrews are omitted. It includes *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Acts of Paul*, and *Apocalypse of Peter*.

15. **AD 320**: Eusebius of Caesarea developed a voting system for ancient scriptures, categorizing them into four groups.

16. **Recognized by all churches**: The four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistles, 1 John, 1 Peter, and, with some doubt, Revelation.

17. **Disputed but accepted by most**: James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John.

18. **Spurious but accepted by some**: *Acts of Paul*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Didache*, Hebrews (and possibly Revelation).

19. **Heretical—rejected by all**: Works such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Peter*, *Gospel of Matthias*, *Acts of Andrew*, and *Acts of John*.

20. **AD 331**: Constantine the Great commissioned Eusebius to produce 50 identical Bibles for the churches in Constantinople. It is unknown which books these Bibles contained.

21. **AD 325–350**: Codex Vaticanus contains 22 of the 27 New Testament books. It omits 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation, though the missing pages suggest they may have been included. The codex also contains a full copy of the Septuagint.

22. **AD 330–360**: Codex Sinaiticus contains all 27 New Testament books and includes the *Epistle of Barnabas* and *Shepherd of Hermas* as Scripture.

23. **AD 350**: Cyril of Jerusalem listed 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation. He explicitly rejected the *Gospel of Thomas* and warned, *"Whatever books are not read in the churches, do not read even by yourself."*

24. **AD 363**: The Synod of Laodicea accepted 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation, and approved the Apocrypha with the Old Testament.

25. **AD 367**: Athanasius of Alexandria was the first to list all 27 New Testament books without comment. He acknowledged the *Didache* and *Shepherd of Hermas* as good for Christian reading but not as Scripture.

26. **AD 389**: St. Gregory Nazianzus accepted 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation.

27. **AD 380**: The Apostolic Canons accepted 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation.

28. **AD 393**: The Council of Hippo confirmed all 27 New Testament books.

29. **AD 394**: Amphilochius of Iconium raised concerns about Hebrews and the Catholic epistles. He rejected 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

30. **AD 397**: The Council of Carthage confirmed all 27 New Testament books.

31. **AD 400–440**: Codex Alexandrinus lists all 27 New Testament books and includes *1 & 2 Clement*.

32. **AD 492**: The *Decretum Gelasianum* confirmed the 27-book New Testament and included the Apocrypha.

33. **AD 546**: Codex Fuldensis, a Latin Vulgate manuscript, includes all 27 New Testament books and adds Paul's *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. It is the oldest manuscript to follow the Diatessaron's order.

34. **AD 616**: The Peshitta, originally excluding 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and Revelation, became the standard Syriac Bible. These books were later added in the Harklean Version by Thomas of Harqel.

35. **AD 692**: The Synod of Trullo accepted 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation.

36. **AD 810**: St. Nikephoros I of Constantinople accepted 26 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting Revelation. He placed Revelation alongside the *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Apocalypse of Peter*, and *Gospel of the Hebrews* in his Stichometry.

37. **AD 1534**: Martin Luther attempted to move the Book of Esther to the Apocrypha and to exclude Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation from the canon, as they conflicted with Protestant doctrines. While his attempt failed, these books are still placed last in the Luther Bible.

38. **AD 1546**: The Council of Trent (fourth session) confirmed the Roman Catholic canon, including the Apocrypha, for a total of 72 books.

39. **AD 1647**: The Synod of Jerusalem confirmed the Greek Orthodox canon, including the Apocrypha, for a total of 76 books.

40. **AD 1825**: The British and Foreign Bible Society, also known as the Bible Society, officially closed the Protestant canon at 66 books, excluding the Apocrypha.

APPENDIX B: DEUTEROCANONICAL / APOCRYPHAL TEXTS[109]

Book	Protestant's Bible	Roman Catholic Bible	Greek Orthodox Bible
1 Esdras	✗	✗	✓
Tobit	✗	✓	✓
Judith	✗	✓	✓
Additions to Esther	✗	✓	✓
Wisdom of Solomon	✗	✓	✓
Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	✗	✓	✓
Baruch	✗	✓	✓
Epistle of Jeremiah	✗	✓	✓
Song of the Three Children	✗	✓	✓
Story of Susanna	✗	✓	✓
Bel and the Dragon	✗	✓	✓
Prayer of Manasseh	✗	✗	✓
1 Maccabees	✗	✓	✓
2 Maccabees	✗	✓	✓
3 Maccabees	✗	✗	✓
4 Maccabees	✗	✗	✓
Psalm 151	✗	✗	✓

[109] This table is not an exhaustive list but represents a selection of the most widely recognized deuterocanonical/apocryphal books. The inclusion of specific books varies across traditions and manuscripts.

APPENDIX C: THE RECOGNITION OF THE BIBLICAL CANON: A HISTORICAL

This image visually represents the scholarly and spiritual journey of canon formation. At its center is an open Bible radiating divine light, symbolizing the authority and inspiration of Scripture. Surrounding it are ancient scrolls and manuscripts, highlighting the textual traditions of the Septuagint and Masoretic Text.

In the background, key figures such as Origen, Jerome, and Augustine are depicted engaging in theological debate, reflecting their contributions to the recognition of the canon. The scene also includes a representation of the Synod of Hippo and the Council of Carthage, with clergy deliberating under the soft glow of lit candles. This composition captures the complexity and reverence of the historical process, emphasizing the enduring significance of Scripture in the Christian faith.

APPENDIX D: BIBLICAL AUTHORS WITH APPROX. DATES OF COMPOSITION

The dating provided in this appendix applies specifically to the Protestant canon of 66 books. Books from other Christian traditions, such as those included in the Deuterocanon, may reflect different timeframes and authorship assumptions, as they follow distinct canonical traditions.

Interestingly, while later Christian writers, including early church fathers, often interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 as divine judgment for rejecting Christ, the New Testament itself remains silent on this monumental event. This absence may reflect the priorities of its authors, who focused on proclaiming the Gospel, addressing theological issues, and nurturing the early church. Furthermore, the dating of many New Testament books to a pre-AD 70 context supports the conclusion that the destruction had not yet occurred when these texts were written.

This appendix highlights the diversity of authors and contexts that contributed to the formation of the biblical canon, offering insights into the historical and theological landscape in which these texts emerged.

Author & Timeline:

Old Testament[110]

1. **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (Pentateuch)**
   - Moses (traditional attribution): c. 1400–1200 BC.
2. **Joshua**
   - Joshua, with possible contributions by later writers: c. 1400–1200 BC.
3. **Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel**
   - Samuel, with later additions by other authors: c. 1050–930 BC.

[110] Old Testament Dates: Earlier books like Job and Genesis are difficult to date precisely, as they may have originated as oral traditions before being written.

4. **Kings, 2 Kings**
   - Traditionally attributed to Jeremiah or unknown prophets: c. 600–550 BC.

5. **Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah**
   - Ezra (chronicler) for Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah: c. 450–400 BC.

6. **Esther**
   - Possibly Mordecai or an unknown Jewish historian: c. 450–330 BC.

7. **Job**
   - Possibly Job, Moses, or an unknown author: c. 2000–1000 BC (debated; earliest speculative origin for poetic traditions).

8. **Psalms**
   - Multiple authors:
     - David: c. 1000–970 BC.
     - Asaph, Sons of Korah, Solomon, Moses (Psalm 90), and Anonymous authors: Various, c. 1000–400 BC.

9. **Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon**
   - Solomon (primary author), with possible later contributions for Proverbs: c. 970–930 BC.

10. **Isaiah**
    - Isaiah (traditional view, though some suggest multiple contributors): c. 740–680 BC.

11. **Jeremiah, Lamentations**
    - Jeremiah: c. 626–580 BC.

12. **Ezekiel**
    - Ezekiel: c. 593–571 BC.

13. **Daniel**
    - Daniel: c. 605–530 BC.

14. **Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (Minor Prophets)**
    - Each book traditionally attributed to its named prophet: c. 850–430 BC (varies by prophet).

New Testament[111]

15. Matthew

- Matthew (Levi), a disciple of Jesus: c. AD 50–70.
  Possible pre-AD 70 date due to references to temple practices and Jesus' prophecy about its destruction.

16. Mark

- Mark (John Mark), based on Peter's account: c. AD 50–60.
  Likely written before AD 70, as it includes Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction without reference to its fulfillment.

17. Luke, Acts

- Luke, a physician and companion of Paul: c. AD 60–85.
  Acts concludes with Paul in Rome and makes no mention of Jerusalem's destruction, suggesting a pre-AD 70 date for Luke and potentially Acts.

18. John

- **Gospel of John: c. AD 60–100.**
  - Some argue for a later theological development (c. AD 85–100), but the absence of explicit post-destruction references leaves open the possibility of pre-AD 70 composition, especially if written for a Jewish-Christian audience.
- **1 John, 2 John, 3 John**
  - Likely written between c. AD 70–90, addressing theological and pastoral concerns, such as combating early Gnostic heresies.
- **Revelation**
  - Traditionally dated to c. AD 95–96 during Domitian's reign, though a minority of scholars argue for a pre-AD 70 date (c. AD 65–68), interpreting its references to judgment as tied to the Jewish-Roman War and Nero's persecution.

19. Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

- Paul (Saul of Tarsus): c. AD 48–67.
  Paul's epistles predate the destruction of Jerusalem, as his writings primarily address Gentile audiences and theological issues.

20. Hebrews

- Traditionally anonymous; possible authors include Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, or Luke: c. AD 60–90.
  Frequent references to temple rituals without mention of the destruction suggest a pre-AD 70 date.

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[111] New Testament Dates: Reflect scholarly consensus but may vary based on debates over dating specific letters and Gospels.

21. James

- James, the brother of Jesus: c. AD 45–60.
  Likely one of the earliest writings, addressing Jewish-Christian communities before the temple's destruction.

22. Peter, 2 Peter

- Peter, a disciple of Jesus: c. AD 60–68.
  Written during the early persecution of Christians, prior to Jerusalem’s fall.

23. Jude

- Jude, the brother of Jesus: c. AD 60–80.
  Dating is less certain, but no specific reference to the temple suggests flexibility in dating.

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