

The question arises often, whether talking with Catholics or Episcopalians or atheists – how do we know that the 27 books which make up our New Testament are actually the ones chosen by God?

1Pe 1:22-25 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, (23) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God. (24) For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, (25) BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

2Pe 1:2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; (3) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2Ti 3:15-17 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (17) that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Evidence from Catalogues
Evidence from Versions
Evidence from Quotations

Gospel of Matthew

Internal evidence from Mt 24 indicates it was written before 70 AD as the events foretold in Mt 24.1-35 are fulfilled in the destruction of the temple by Vespasian and Titus in 70 AD

Verses indicating Mt written before 70 AD

Mat 24:19-21 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! (20) Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. (21)

For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again.

Verses indicating Mt written before 70 AD

Mat 27:8 For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

Mat 28:15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews,
and is to this day.

“For example, while the other writers, in their lists of the Apostles, give Matthew's name without the opprobrious epithet, 'the publican,' an omission quite proper under the circumstances, this writer, with a humility equally proper, if Matthew is he, gives it, 'Matthew the publican.’”

Consider the accuracy of the Scriptures –
“The man who fell among robbers was going '*down*
to Jericho' (Luke 10.30); everybody went '*up* to
Jerusalem' (Matt. 20.17, 18; Luke 19. 28, 29; Acts
11.2, 15. 2; Gal. 1. 17); they went '*down* to Gaza'
(Acts 8. 26); '*down* to Caesarea' (9. 30); '*down* to
Lydda'(9. 32); '*down* to Antioch' (11.27); and so
with equal accuracy of every other place.”

Imagine yourself describing the movements of men
from place to place in Palestine, and noting when
they go up and when they go down [in elevation].

The earliest catalogue of the Canon by the church is found at the Council of Carthage, which met in A.D. 397.

the New Testament books in the following order:
"Four books of the Gospels, one book of Acts of Apostles, thirteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, one of the same to the Hebrews, two Epistles of the Apostle Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Judas, one book of the Apocalypse of John." It concludes: "We have received from our fathers that these are to be read in the churches."

The next catalogue which is from the pen of Athanasius, who was Bishop of Alexandria from 326 to 373 A. D.

The New Testament is the same that we now have. He declares that these books had been "delivered to the fathers" by those who were "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word,"

Cyril, who was Bishop of Jerusalem lived from
315 to 386 A. D.

He gave “lectures for the instruction of
candidates for baptism. In one of these he
gives a list of the books which were to be
read as the inspired Scriptures, and it agrees
precisely with ours except that he omits
Revelation.”

Eusebius, lived from 270 to 340 A. D., and was Bishop of the Church of Caesarea in Palestine. He was 45 years old when Cyril was born, and 56 when Athanasius was made Bishop of Alexandria; his testimony, therefore, reaches back about half a century earlier than that of our last two witnesses.

Eusebius lived through the persecution under the Emperor Diocletian, which continued from A. D. 303 to 311, and Books viii and ix of his history are devoted to an account of this persecution. The edict under which it was inaugurated required that all the churches be razed to their foundations, and that all copies of the Scriptures be burned.

Aren't you glad that Christians living then did not obey the government?

Act 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men.

Eusebius mentions every book
“contained in our New Testament. He
says, however, of seven, that though
they were well known and recognized by
most persons, they were controverted by
some. These were Hebrews, the Epistles
of James and Jude, II Peter, II and III John
and the Apocalypse.” (wait for the
earlier authors Irenaeus and Polycarp)

Origen, who was born at Alexandria,
A. D. 185, and died in 254, in a
homily on the book of Joshua he
names the books of the New
Testament as we now have them.

Clement of Alexandria, so called to distinguish him from an earlier Clement, of Rome, is the next writer whose testimony we cite. He lived from about 165 A. D. to 220.

we find in his extant writings that he names and quotes from every book in the New Testament except Philemon, James, 2Peter and 3John.

The Muratorian Canon claims to have been composed by a cotemporary of Pius, Bishop of Rome, who died in the year 157 . His list starts with Luke as the 3rd book, and John the 4th, then all the other books except the two Epistles of Peter, I John, James and Hebrews

Marcion, who came from Pontus to Rome about the year 140, claimed that Paul was the only Apostle who understood the gospel correctly, he rejected all the New Testament writings except ten of Paul's Epistles, and Luke's Gospel.

the ground on which he rejected the latter was not their want of genuineness, but, admitting their genuineness, he denied the apostolic authority of their authors.

Between 175 and 200 AD, two versions were made into the two dialects of the Coptic language, the dialects of Lower and of Upper Egypt, and both of these versions contained the whole of our present New Testament.

“Peshito Syriac version carries the evidence to a still earlier date. It was made, ...about the 150 AD, and it contained all the books of the New Testament but five, viz.: II Peter, II and III John, Jude and Revelation.”

(wait for earlier authors)

Irenaeus (130-202) quoted from all the books of the New Testament except the three short epistles, Philemon, Jude and 3John, and the longer Epistle of James.

"But Polycarp (69-155 AD) was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 202, 203.

Justin, called martyr (100 – 165AD) wrote what is called his “First Apology”, in 146 to the emperor Titus.

“Justin's argument in all three of his works pertains not to the doctrine or discipline of the church, but to the person and character of Jesus, and to the moral status of Christians, [hence] his quotations from the New Testament are ... [from] gospel narratives. He makes about one hundred and twenty quotations setting forth all the characteristic teachings of Jesus, and nearly all of the prominent events of his life.”

Justin designates the 4 gospels by these titles: "The Gospel," "The Memoirs of the Apostles," "The Memoirs composed by the Apostles, which are called Gospels," "The Memoirs which were drawn up by His Apostles and those who followed them."

“For the Apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered to us what was enjoined on them; that Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, said: 'This do ye in remembrance of me; this is my body;' and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, he said: ' This is my blood;' and gave it to them alone.”

In describing the regular order of service in the meetings of the Christians, "on the day called Sunday," he says, "The memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read so long as time permits."

Justin quoted from five of Paul's epistles, viz., Romans, First Corinthians, Colossians, Second Thessalonians, and Hebrews and names the Apocalypse.

To sum up the evidence from the writings of Justin, we may state, that it proves beyond question the general and public use within the first half of the second century, of the four Gospels, of all of Paul's Epistles except Titus and I and 2 Timothy, of the Apocalypse, and almost certainly of the Second Epistle of Peter.

**Polycarp was baptized in 70 AD at 14 years of age,
being 12 when Paul was beheaded and living for
30 years only 50 miles from Ephesus where John
lived until near his death. Polycarp was martyred
in 156 AD**

**"Then the proconsul urging him and saying:
'Swear and I will set thee at liberty, reproach
Christ Polycarp declared, 'Eighty and six years
have I served him, and he never did me an injury,
how then can I blaspheme my King and my
Savior?" *Martyrdom of Polycarp, c. IX., Ante-
Nicene Library, vol. I.***

Polycarp wrote a letter to the church at Philippi. In the first of the fourteen very short chapters into which the epistle has been divided, he in this way quotes Philippians, Acts, First Peter and Ephesians. Several whole chapters, and large parts of others might be styled a patchwork of quotations, the quotations being taken from the first three Gospels, Acts, all of Paul's Epistles except Titus and Philemon, the First Epistle of John, and the First of Peter.

“the New Testament back to the apostolic age, except Philemon, the Second and Third Epistles of John, Jude, James, and possibly II Peter. From 2Peter we have found three probable quotations (those by Irenaeus, 190 AD, Justin 150AD and Clement d 99 AD); from II John one (that by Irenaeus); but from Philemon, Jude and 3John, no quotations at all. We have traced the first three Gospels all the way to Clement, and the fourth to Papias d 100 AD. We have traced Acts and all of Paul's epistles except Philemon back to Polycarp d 155, and five of the latter back to Clement d 99. “

“We have traced Peter's first epistle to Clement d 100 AD, and his second by evidence not so conclusive to the same period. That of James is quoted by none as early as Irenaeus d 202. Finally, we have traced John's first epistle back to Polycarp d 155, and the Apocalypse to Papias d 99. Thus all these books, with the exceptions named, are found to have been in actual use among the Disciples at a period too early for them to have originated and come into use after the close of the apostolic age.”

Joh 14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

Joh 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Joh 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 20:30-31 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name

Jud 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Heb 1:1-2 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, (2) in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

God sent a Messenger to Saul to get him to follow His commands.

Will you do the same?

Act 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'